



# Action

THE MAGAZINE FOR WWF MEMBERS

SUMMER 2024



## AFRICA'S MAJESTY

How you can help us protect a vital landscape for people and wildlife



### PROTECTING UK NATURE

Pioneering projects you're supporting that could influence conservation change worldwide

### GROWING GREENER

Discover how compost is an unlikely ally in keeping tigers and communities safe in India



# BLUE-SEA THINKING



The ocean is one of our greatest allies in the fight against climate change. Around our coasts, marine habitats such as saltmarshes, seagrass meadows and kelp forests are highly efficient at capturing carbon and locking it away. And further offshore, deep-sea sediments are one of the greatest stores of 'blue carbon'.

The world is facing a climate and nature crisis. Yet the solutions offered

by our ocean are regularly overlooked in climate policy. So we're working with the RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts to create the first full inventory of the blue carbon stored in UK seas.

Our new report, *The United Kingdom's Blue Carbon Inventory*, maps blue carbon across all marine habitats, from shellfish reefs to deep-sea mud. And the results are staggering. More than 243 million tonnes of organic carbon are stored in the UK's marine environment, with at least 424,000 tonnes added every year as algae

and plants sink to the seabed. That's equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered by a forest the size of Devon.

The actual amount of carbon captured in our seas each year could be much higher. So we'll use the report to highlight the vital role of marine habitats in mitigating climate change, to improve the way they're managed and protect precious ocean life. **Tom Brook, blue carbon officer**

You can read more about our work to safeguard UK marine habitats on p18.

Two male common cuttlefish compete for a female during courtship. They're part of vital marine ecosystems that capture and store carbon in the seabed



# "BLUE CARBON IN MARINE HABITATS IS CRITICAL FOR TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE"

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## MEET THIS ISSUE'S GUEST CONTRIBUTORS



**ROB HARRIS** is based in east Africa as our Ruvuma

Transboundary Landscape coordinator, supporting communities living alongside endangered animals: "We've worked to reduce conflict with wildlife in villages."



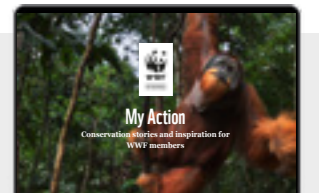
**LUCY LEE** is our chief adviser on UK nature, and

in this issue of *Action* is excited to discuss WWF's work close to home. "Nature is our life-support system and it's our responsibility to love, protect and restore it."



**ALEXANDER THOMPSON-BYER** is a gardener,

farmer and blogger who swapped London for a croft in the Outer Hebrides. "The weather humbles you," he says, "but you can still work your magic."



## VISIT MY ACTION

Explore our brilliant online hub for members where you'll discover...

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- Videos and galleries of amazing wildlife
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Find all this and more at [myaction.wwf.org.uk](http://myaction.wwf.org.uk)

**EXTRA!** Scan the QR code when you see this logo

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**YOU HELPED CREATE A NEW NATIONAL PARK IN COLOMBIA**

Thanks to your support, we helped establish a new national park in Colombia to protect some of the world's richest biodiversity. The Serranía de Mancacías National Park will provide a critical safe haven for wildlife in a region under pressure from expanding industrial agriculture and mining. At 68,000 hectares – about the size of Exmoor – it covers an amazing variety of habitats, including seasonal tropical savannahs, palm groves, wetlands, rivers and lagoons. The park's incredible wildlife includes about a quarter of all bird species found in Colombia, which is home to around a fifth of the world's 10,000 known species of birds – more than any other country.

In fact, Colombia is the second most biodiverse country in the world, home to an estimated 10% of all our planet's species. Through a programme called Heritage Colombia, we're working with the Colombian government, Indigenous and local communities, and other partners to secure the lasting protection of 30% of the country's territory by 2030. As well as expanding the network of protected areas, the programme is helping to lock in the political commitment and finances needed to ensure national parks and other conservation areas are looked after. ■

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Thanks to your membership, we can help protect wildlife and wild places. Here are some of the great things supporters like you have helped achieve



My Action

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[wwf.org.uk/myaction](http://wwf.org.uk/myaction)

Visit your members-only site to find more successes you're helping achieve around the world

**YOU HELPED BRING IN NEW UK LAWS TO CURB DEFORESTATION**

Because of you, the UK government has announced details of new measures to prevent products linked to illegal deforestation overseas from being sold here. It means large businesses won't be allowed to sell products that contain commodities produced on land that's been illegally deforested, including palm oil, cocoa, beef, leather and soy.

Back in 2020, an amazing 60,000 of you responded to a government consultation demanding more protection for forests. The government said it would ban products linked to illegal deforestation in its Environment Act in 2021, but didn't include details of the commodities or companies it would cover – so we kept up the pressure.

In autumn 2023, more than 10,000 of you wrote to your MPs to demand the government act to keep illegal deforestation out of our shops, with seven of the UK's leading supermarkets also supporting our campaign. The new rules, finally announced in December 2023, will help protect the habitats of some of the world's most precious and endangered species.

We're not there yet though: the legislation still needs to go through parliament, and we'll be working hard to make sure this happens and that any possible loopholes are closed. ■



© Chris Radcliffe / WWF-UK



**YOU HELPED FISH FOR THE FUTURE IN TANZANIA**

Thanks to you, communities in Tanzania are taking the lead in conserving a vital wetland ecosystem and the fish that provide food and livelihoods for tens of thousands of people.

The Mara wetlands are home to amazing wildlife, and are an important breeding ground and refuge for fish in Lake Victoria, Africa's largest inland fishery and a hotspot of fish biodiversity. The wetlands are a lifeline for local people too. But mining, overgrazing and farming too close to the riverbanks are affecting water quality, and overfishing is threatening people's food security and means of making a living. In a recent survey, 92% of local people said they'd noticed a decline in fish catches over the past three years.

With your help, and with funding from the UK government's Darwin Initiative, we've been working hard to promote sustainable fishing and allow stocks to recover. We've encouraged fishers to exchange illegal fishing gear – such as nets with mesh too narrow to let young fish escape – for legal and more sustainable alternatives, with the illegal gear being publicly destroyed at a village event. We've also helped train 327 women in handling and processing techniques such as sun-drying, smoking and salting so that fish doesn't spoil, which reduces food waste and improves food security. ■

© Emanuel Mushi

**“OUR SHARED VISION IS A FUTURE WHERE THE MARA WETLANDS THRIVE AS A SYMBOL OF SUSTAINABILITY”**

**JOHN KIMARO, PROJECT OFFICER, FISHERIES AND WETLANDS CONSERVATION, WWF-TANZANIA**



**YOU SUPPORTED INDIA'S FIRST NATIONAL SNOW LEOPARD SURVEY**

Thanks to you, we now know there are more than 700 snow leopards in India following the country's first-ever national survey. That's about 10-15% of the total global population. Because these elusive big cats range across remote mountain regions, at an altitude of 3,000-5,400m, accurately estimating their populations is a huge challenge. With your help, we supported the Indian government to carry out its first scientific survey of snow leopards – a massive undertaking lasting nearly five years and involving multiple partners.

In total, survey teams in India walked 13,450km of trails – equivalent to three times round the England Coast Path – to record signs of snow leopards. They deployed camera traps in 1,971 locations, and 241 different snow leopards were identified from photos. Based on all the data collected, the total population was estimated at 718.

Having a good understanding of where snow leopards are found and how many there are, as well as the status of their prey populations, is essential to plan effective conservation strategies. Snow leopards are classified as vulnerable due to threats including habitat loss, poaching, dwindling prey populations and growing conflict with local herder communities. ■



© Sikkim Forest Department

**TOGETHER, WE DID IT!**

# WWF IN ACTION

How we're bringing our world back to life



Many companies let staff use working days to volunteer with environmental or social projects. Ask your employer if they'd consider doing this

## MAKE NATURE YOUR COMPANY'S BUSINESS

When your job takes up a significant amount of your time, it makes sense to act sustainably at work like you do at home. But whether you're an employee or an employer, introducing nature-friendly changes at work can be hard. Our new guide will help start those conversations.

The Save Our Wild Isles campaign, launched last year, is a call to action for people to stand up for UK nature. Together with the RSPB, the National Trust and Silverback Films, we produced four Save Our Wild Isles business films to raise awareness of how companies can act more sustainably.

Following screenings around the country, feedback showed that many people

are worried about their organisation's impact on nature – but don't know how to change it. We listened, and have created *Nature's Workforce*, a guide to help you talk about nature at work and help your business become more sustainable. From understanding the nature crisis and the role that business can play, the guide then explains how to talk to colleagues about nature and what that first conversation looks like, before offering tips on making an action plan.

The good news is that a lot of the ways you can boost biodiversity are also great for team-building. The tips in our guide range from tackling your supply chain to using company volunteer days to help out with local nature projects. There are

many ways that a business can start to reduce its impact, and the journey for each organisation will be different, as will the actions each of you take.

Whatever your place in the workforce, you have the power to shape your business – to ask questions, start conversations, make plans and start putting nature on the agenda.

### MAKE A CHANGE TODAY

There's so much that businesses can do to create a world rich in nature. Download our guide today to find out how your organisation can make a difference: [naturesworkforce.org.uk](https://naturesworkforce.org.uk)

## FOUR STEPS TO GREENER BUSINESS

From the building you work in to the partners you work with, there are many ways to make your organisation more sustainable



### FINANCES

From default pensions to company investments, checking where your organisation invests is a good way to reduce your global impact on nature.



### PHYSICAL FOOTPRINT

Looking at the impact of your office on the landscape around it is often where most businesses start to engage with nature. Perhaps you could pledge to keep a local river clean?



### WORKFORCE

Introduce meat-free Mondays in your canteen, or use company volunteer days to give nature a hand.



### SUPPLY CHAIN

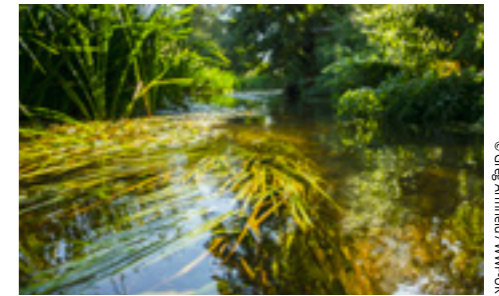
By working with your suppliers, you can help everyone raise their standards and create a better relationship with nature.

### WATCH AT WORK

It's easy to organise a screening of a Save Our Wild Isles business film – find out all you need to know at [saveourwildisles.org.uk/business](https://saveourwildisles.org.uk/business)



### NEWS IN BRIEF



© Greg Armitfield / WWF-UK

### CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!

In a major boost for the world's rivers and wetlands, 46 countries – including the UK – have signed up to the Freshwater Challenge. Launched last year, and supported by WWF, this global initiative aims to begin restoring 300,000km of degraded rivers and 3.5 million sq km of wetlands by 2030 – that's an area 14 times the size of the UK! People and wildlife depend on healthy freshwater ecosystems, but they're in trouble worldwide. Bringing them back to health is vital to reversing the loss of nature. It will also help people and wildlife adapt to climate change.

### NEWS IN NUMBERS

66



© Bryan and Cheryl Alexander / WWF

Using satellites, scientists from British Antarctic Survey have discovered four new emperor penguin colonies – one of which was previously thought to have vanished. This brings the total number of known colonies in Antarctica to 66. Changing sea ice conditions along the coast have forced several emperor colonies to move in search of more stable sea ice to breed on.

800



© Jonas Lyscholdt Eiderskov

In Denmark, WWF has helped establish the world's first eel sanctuary in Copenhagen harbour. We've created 800 tonnes of pebble banks on the harbour floor to provide hiding places for young eels. European eels are critically endangered: the number of young eels reaching Europe from their spawning grounds in the Sargasso Sea has fallen by more than 90% since 1980 due to illegal trade.

NEWS IN BRIEF



© Andy Rouse

TIGER TRACKING

Tiger populations are expanding but their range (the area they occupy) is still shrinking, meaning there's a growing risk of conflict between the big cats and people. In India, we've been using camera traps and surveys to understand more about how tigers are using the areas of farmland that lie between the protected forests of Dudhwa National Park and the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary. Local volunteer patrols are also closely involved in monitoring the cats' movements. The work is providing critical information to support tiger conservation, avoid potential conflicts and enable people and predators to live side by side more safely.



© Emmanuel Rondreau / WWF-US

COMMUNITY RIGHTS IN NEPAL

The rights of Indigenous peoples in Nepal to make decisions about the sustainable use of their natural resources have been formalised. This is the result of new government guidelines we helped draw up with Indigenous peoples' representatives. For generations, Indigenous peoples have played a vital role in looking after Nepal's wildlife and landscapes, but their needs and knowledge haven't always been integrated into conservation decisions. The new guidelines will ensure Indigenous communities benefit fairly from development and conservation projects, are involved in all stages of decision-making, and have the right to give or withhold consent for actions that affect them.

PROTECTING OTTERS, SUPPORTING PEOPLE

**Our new project in Nepal is offering hope for threatened otters and a lifeline for local communities.**

Wherever they're found, otters are an indicator species – when they're doing well, it's a sign of a healthy habitat. As top predators, they play a key role in keeping river ecosystems in balance.

In recent years, numbers of smooth-coated otters have been falling across Asia – they're classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Threats include poaching and illegal trade, but they're also particularly sensitive to environmental changes, including pollution, disturbance and declining populations of the fish they eat.

Together with our partners in Nepal, we're supporting local communities to safeguard smooth-coated otters in a stretch of the Karnali river – part of the Terai Arc Landscape, one of the most important biodiversity hotspots on the planet. Along with the otters, the river is home to threatened wildlife including Ganges river dolphins and critically endangered gharial crocodiles.

But illegal and destructive fishing, coupled with habitat disturbance caused by extracting sand and gravel for the construction industry, has severely depleted fish populations. This threatens

the river's rich biodiversity as well as the livelihoods of the Tharu and Sonaha communities who depend on fishing.

We're supporting these Indigenous communities to manage their own stretch of water in collaboration with local partners and government authorities. So far, we've helped set up 15 community management groups that will jointly look after 10km of river. Together, we're working to promote sustainable fishing practices and alternative livelihoods, protect fish spawning grounds and key otter habitats, and address threats such as habitat loss.

Conserving the river habitat and restoring fish populations will help secure food supplies and the livelihoods of local communities, while enabling otter populations to thrive. And when otters thrive, other species do too.

"This project will enhance the resilience of freshwater-dependent households and increase their stewardship of the Karnali river, safeguarding otters and other biodiversity," says Rajesh Sada, who leads WWF's freshwater programmes in Nepal.

The project is funded by the UK government through the Darwin Initiative, which supports locally led conservation projects worldwide.



Found mainly in slow-flowing waters, smooth-coated otters are highly sensitive to environmental changes

© WWF-Nepal / Sagar Giri



Denise Boulanger's stunning photo captured the beauty, fragility and rich biodiversity of our forests

THE POWER OF PICTURES

Images say much more than words, so a photo is the perfect way to celebrate the beauty of the natural world – and raise awareness of its fragility.

In last autumn's issue of *Action*, we asked you to share your photos of forests and woodlands. Forests are essential for nature, people and a stable climate in the UK and around the world. But leaders, businesses and human activity are failing our forests on a catastrophic scale. The images you sent in highlight the rich variety of the UK's forests and are a powerful reminder of what could be lost if we don't protect them.

Our favourite photo (above) was taken by Denise Boulanger in the New Forest in Hampshire. "I love going for walks in the woods," says Denise. "I spotted this old oak tree and thought it had personality. I really liked its twisted branches and the recently broken branch creating a potential refuge for all sorts of creatures."

Sharing your snaps is a great way to become an advocate for nature. Turn to page 30 to see how you can enter our latest photo competition. Enjoy our forest gallery at [myaction.wwf.org.uk/your-forest-photos](http://myaction.wwf.org.uk/your-forest-photos)

© Denise Boulanger

My Action

DISCOVER MORE

See how solar power is supporting dairy farmers: [myaction.wwf.org.uk/dairy](http://myaction.wwf.org.uk/dairy)



SUN-CHILLED MILK: TRANSFORMING INDIA'S DAIRY INDUSTRY

**In India's hot climate, keeping milk cool is a big challenge – but sunshine could be the solution, as one of our projects is proving.**

Globally, the dairy industry is responsible for around 3.5% of greenhouse gas emissions – more than international aviation. And nowhere is the dairy industry more important than in India, which produces around 220 million tonnes of milk each year – almost a quarter of the total global supply.

Much of this comes from smallholders, including many women, who keep just two or three cows. For around 80 million rural households in India, milk provides a vital part of their income. But most small farmers don't have the facilities to chill their milk, so it's not unusual for some of it to go off before it reaches the nearest dairy. This means wasted milk and lost income for farmers. When the milk does get chilled, erratic rural power supplies mean the electricity usually comes from expensive and highly polluting diesel generators.

But there's a better alternative. Our colleagues in India have been helping farmers install solar-powered instant milk chillers. By cooling the

milk straight away, without a need for diesel generators, they prolong its shelf life while saving costs and avoiding carbon emissions. Plus they reduce food waste and improve people's incomes.

To date, we've installed enough solar units to chill 26,000 litres of milk every day across two major milk-producing states, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, as part of our Climate Solutions Partnership with HSBC and the World Resources Institute. We aim to promote this clean, green technology across India.



© WWF-India

# CONSERVATION BEYOND BORDERS

Wild and unspoilt, Ruvuma is a rare natural haven for people and wildlife. In this vast yet vulnerable east African landscape, it's vital we support communities to sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce conflict with wildlife

**W**hat is a border? It might be a fence, a mountain ridge or a river – or simply a line on a map. It's almost always a human idea, and often very arbitrary. Yet to wildlife, borders can be nonexistent, or represent an existential threat. Many animals need to roam widely to survive – to find food, water, a mate – but borders can stop them, or hinder international conservation coordination.

In one border region of east Africa, though, we see a huge opportunity to secure a brighter future for wildlife and the communities living there. This is the Ruvuma Transboundary Landscape, straddling southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique, named for the river that forms the international frontier. This vast, spectacular area spanning some 370,000 sq km – almost twice the size of the UK – is one of Africa's largest, most intact natural habitats.

Much of it is forest, predominantly dry miombo woodland, but it also encompasses coastal forest, grassland, rivers, lakes and other freshwater habitats. It's richly biodiverse, harbouring 60 mammal species including leopards, antelopes and one of east Africa's largest elephant populations. It hosts probably the biggest connected populations of lions and African wild dogs, too, plus more than 430 bird species and over 2,000 plants.

## ROOM TO ROAM

"In Ruvuma, the international border doesn't impact the connectivity of the habitat or its wildlife," observes Rob Harris, WWF's Ruvuma Transboundary Landscape coordinator. "The miombo woodland is still largely intact across swathes of this landscape, enabling large numbers of flagship species such as wild dogs, lions and elephants to roam vast ranges and move safely between protected areas."

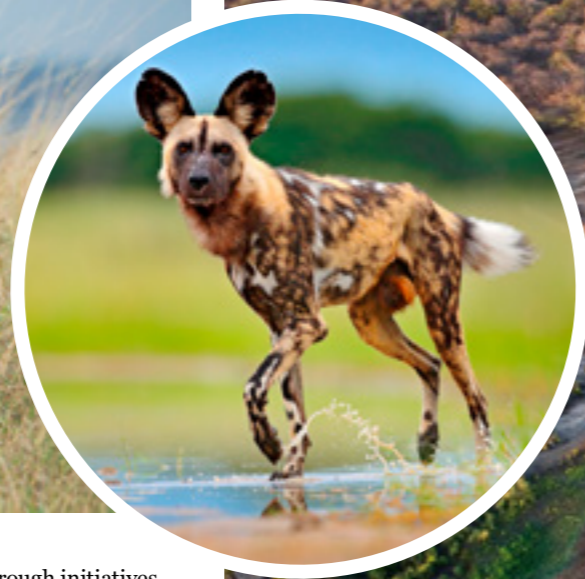
Those protected areas – Tanzania's Nyerere National Park and Selous Game Reserve, and Niassa Special Reserve in Mozambique – comprise about a quarter of the total landscape. But Ruvuma is also home to about eight million people, creating challenges for both nature and communities here. The landscape has suffered extensive habitat loss from illegal logging, mineral exploitation and conversion of land for farming and grazing, among other pressures.

But by far the biggest issue facing wildlife today comes from encounters with people and crops. "This area has some of the most frequent human-wildlife interactions in ►

It's vital that elephants have enough room to roam, to enable them to move to new territories to breed, forage for food and water, and respond to other pressures such as overcrowding



As people eke out a living, the pressures of encountering wild animals or losing their much-needed cattle to lions can be too much to bear



▼ There are only around 6,600 African wild dogs left in the wild



Named after the Ruvuma river which forms the border between Tanzania and Mozambique, this spectacular region contains a rich mix of habitats, including miombo woodlands that support local people and wildlife

Tanzania,” says Dr Dennis Ikanda, WWF’s national coordinator for the Ruvuma landscape in Tanzania. “That’s partly due to the sheer number of large wild animals that live here. But it’s also because the protected areas aren’t fenced, so wildlife and people frequently come face to face.”

**A POACHING CRISIS**

Until about five years ago, the region suffered from heavy poaching. Elephant numbers in Selous-Nyerere alone had plummeted nearly 90% since the 1970s, from around 110,000 to a little over 15,000. But that wasn’t the only problem.

“Poaching forced elephant herds out of protected areas and into community lands,” explains Dennis. “Elephants became used to living alongside people, leading to some of the most severe conflicts in Africa. They persistently damaged crops, plunging households into poverty, and even trampled people to death. It’s a similar story with lions: until as recently as the mid-2000s, over 50 lion attacks were reported every year.”

The big cats were often killed in retaliation for attacks on livestock or people, or poached to fuel the illegal trade in wildlife parts. It’s a widespread problem: across Africa, lion populations are estimated to have declined by more than 40% in just two decades.

We’ve long worked with communities to combat poaching and find solutions to living in close proximity with wildlife. To that end, we support community-run wildlife management areas that protect nature and create long-term, sustainable

economic development through initiatives such as ecotourism.

“In Ruvuma, wildlife management areas form much of a contiguous 9,000 sq km wildlife corridor between Selous-Nyerere in Tanzania and Niassa Special Reserve in Mozambique,” explains Rob. “We work with these areas on forest protection and monitoring, as well as helping equip and train village game scouts. We advise on

**“WE WORK WITH COMMUNITIES TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO LIVING WITH WILDLIFE”**

patrol techniques, how to collect information on illegal activities, and how to record wildlife sightings. We’ve also worked to reduce conflict with wildlife in villages – for example, with non-harmful interventions such as using chilli or beehive fences to deter elephants.”

Ecotourism has the potential to bring substantial investment and employment, but that won’t happen overnight. Unlike more famous northern Tanzanian reserves such as the Serengeti, reaching a Ruvuma wildlife management area typically

► “Something that has made me very happy is a reduction in poaching incidents,” says Hassan Mohamed Nihuka, a village game scout. “Before, there were no animals. But now they are seen if we maintain protection”



involves several hours bumping along rough roads. And once here, animal encounters aren’t as frequent or dramatic. “It’s not so easy to spot wildlife in miombo forest,” explains Rob. “There are amazing moments, but it’s not suitable for first-time safari-goers.” Though roads are being upgraded and authorities are promoting investment, there’s a way to go until significant ecotourism arrives.

Fortunately, communities can improve their livelihoods while protecting the Ruvuma landscape through other initiatives such as village land forest reserves (VLFRs). Forests are important resources for local people, yielding fuel, charcoal and building materials, and other benefits. But, as human populations grow, they’re vulnerable to

overharvesting and fragmentation. These reserves balance those demands. “Many village lands encompass patches of forest, but most communities don’t know how to manage them sustainably as population pressure increases,” explains James Wumbura, a forest programme officer for WWF in Tanzania. “We support communities in establishing village forest reserves, and train individuals to manage woodland on behalf of the community.”

Money from sustainably harvested timber flows to the village, funding practical initiatives agreed by the community. These can have big impacts – the construction of schools and dispensaries, for example, or health insurance for women – and everyone shares the benefits. “If villagers stick to sustainable levels of harvesting, and are supported by buyers and investors who purchase timber, the

project can run and run,” says Rob. “Income can reach tens of thousands of dollars – huge sums for small communities that previously would have had limited access to cash or investment opportunities.”

We also help communities increase their income from forests, without needing to cut down more trees. “WWF is helping us develop solutions to bridge the gap between ►

▼ To help reduce conflict between animals and people around wildlife management areas, village game scouts – recruited from their communities – help monitor wildlife and illegal activities



© Richard Barrett / WWF-UK | © Getty | © Michael Poliza / WWF



◀ Poverty rates are high, particularly in rural areas, with most people relying on subsistence farming and cash crops such as cashew, sunflower and sesame for their livelihoods

▼ In Ngarambe village, Tanzania, farmers like Mohamedi Kindemba lose their crops to elephants all too frequently. “When our crops are ruined, it’s not only food we lose, but also income to pay for school fees and healthcare. We lose everything! It’s devastating to wake up destitute, with nothing to eat or sell to support your family.” Beehive fences like this one are an effective way to protect their fields



### SAFETY MEASURES

Understanding wildlife numbers and distribution is crucial for planning conservation and tackling conflict with local communities. But in such vast landscapes, keeping track of animals that roam huge distances is hard.

Satellite-tagged elephants have helped us study how herds in Tanzania navigate areas where poaching is rife and identify the places where they seek refuge, so they can be protected. This year, we’re also deploying collars on elephants, lions and possibly wild dogs in the Selous-Niassa corridor.

This will help authorities monitor the movements of these threatened species in community wildlife areas. It will also show where elephant migration routes cross cultivated areas, providing better protection for communities and helping us measure the effectiveness of interventions in deterring crop raids. The collars will shed light on how wildlife corridors help connect core populations of lions, too, highlighting the importance of protecting these areas in the face of increasing pressures.



timber and products,” says Almas Kashindye, WWF’s forest programme coordinator in Tanzania. “For example, we’re supporting the construction of a carpentry workshop in Tunduru, and looking at initiatives involving products such as fruits and basketry.”

### A LIVING LIFELINE

This community-focused approach gives nature a double boost. Not only does it protect forests – validated by Forest Stewardship Council certification of timber from several VLFRs – it also helps build tolerance towards the wildlife in these woodlands. “Because the economic and social benefits can be so significant, village forest reserves can massively shift the dial on communities’ acceptance of coexistence with potentially dangerous animals,” says Rob.

“Village forest reserves enable us to conserve the environment and prevent overharvesting,” agrees Nkwepu Ali Nkwepu, village executive officer of Mchakama village. “The communities

## “WE MUST PROTECT THIS IMPORTANT TRANSBOUNDARY LANDSCAPE”

understand and respect the boundaries, and this has helped restore vegetation that was under threat. My hope for the future is a 100% acceptance of the conservation agenda in my village.”

Thanks to your support, the area under VLFR management in Tanzania’s part of the Ruvuma Transboundary Landscape is already close to 600,000 hectares – the equivalent of almost 750,000 football pitches. Our work with these reserves is part of a nationwide strategy developed with the Tanzanian government to help deliver

its pledge to restore 5.2 million hectares of forest by 2030 – one component of our Forest Landscape Restoration in Africa initiative across nine countries.

With support from the international forest protection campaign Trillion Trees, we’ve also launched the Foresters of the Future programme, through which primary schoolchildren help nurture tree seedlings at seven nurseries in the Ruvuma landscape. Tens of thousands of germinated seedlings have been planted in areas in need of forest restoration, and it’s inspired a new generation of conservationists.

Together, wildlife management areas and VLFRs can play a huge part in protecting the habitats and wildlife of the Ruvuma Transboundary Landscape. “We know that community-managed areas have been key to the survival of the remaining 40% of elephants in Ruvuma,”

says Dennis. “Clearly, they are crucial sanctuaries in times of stress.”

Following the end of the last major poaching crisis in 2018, elephant numbers in the region are rising again, reaching an estimated 20,000 in the Selous-Niassa corridor, with more moving in and out of neighbouring protected areas. “This highlights the value of the transboundary landscape,” says Rob. “Wild habitats are badly fragmented across huge swathes of the continent, so where such great habitat connectivity exists and straddles a border, we must protect it.”



### WILL YOU HELP US CREATE A RESILIENT RUVUMA?

Ruvuma’s future is in the balance, but you can help us do more to protect this important landscape. An extra gift today could support communities to reap the benefits of living in harmony with wildlife while keeping the forests healthy.



- £10 could buy a spade for planting tree seedlings in areas of degraded forest
- £20 could go towards a village game scout’s uniform, including a cap and boots
- £50 could support monitoring of elephants and lions in the Selous-Niassa corridor
- £100 could help pay for training to support communities to develop nature-friendly livelihoods

You can donate today using the enclosed freepost envelope, by scanning this QR code or at [www.org.uk/ruvuma](http://www.org.uk/ruvuma)



## COUNTING AND CARING

**This lion cub has his whole life ahead of him, and with the care of his pride and your support we can help make sure it's a bright one.**

African lion numbers have declined by more than 40% in a little over 20 years. Shrinking habitat and diminishing natural prey are bringing these predators into ever-closer contact with people, where livestock attacks can lead to lethal retaliation.

We're helping to protect lion habitat in east Africa, and to support coexistence between people and lions, by working closely with community-led conservancies and government agencies to provide equipment, training and resources to manage these critical landscapes. In Kenya, where Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award nominee Mark Boyd saw this cute cub, we're supporting our partners to monitor lions.

In 2020, we helped with Kenya's first-ever nationwide lion census to determine how many lions live there and how best to protect them. Last year, Tsavo became the first national park in Kenya to repeat the census using the same survey technique, thanks to training we provided for nearly 30 local ecologists. Developed by our partners, the 'spatially explicit capture recapture' method involves taking and analysing thousands of images of lions to identify individuals and estimate lion populations in any given area. The results are being finalised, so watch out for future updates.

You can see other amazing wildlife photos at [nhm.ac.uk/wpy](https://nhm.ac.uk/wpy)



© Mark Boyd / Wildlife Photographer of the Year  
Wildlife Photographer of the Year is developed and produced by the Natural History Museum, London

# THE NATION'S NATURE

**We're taking a new approach to protecting nature on our doorstep – with your support. Explore this showcase of 10 of our most ambitious and inspired projects across the UK**

**N**ature news can seem pretty bleak. On land, in fresh water and in our ocean, we're losing the biodiversity that keeps our planet and all its nature stable. Population sizes of global wildlife have declined by an average of 69% since 1970, and our most precious landscapes are dangerously close to irreversible tipping points. In the UK alone, almost 40% of species have declined since 1970.

But look more closely at the success of the projects you're helping to support right now, and you'll see there's plenty to be excited about. At WWF, we're forging new connections and partnerships to reverse nature loss in the UK, as the scale of the challenge needs us all to work together. We're developing ways to feed a growing population, limit climate change and restore our declining wildlife. It's what we call the 'triple challenge' – tackling these three critical issues at the same time with the best outcomes for people, climate and nature.

Our chief adviser on UK nature, Lucy Lee, is excited about supporting pioneering projects that could influence change around the world. "The biggest impact on UK wildlife over the past 50 years has been the intensification of agriculture, so we're working in three key food-production landscapes to support a transition to regenerative agriculture," she explains. "We're focusing on what we call 'wholescapes' – areas that integrate land, freshwater and coastal habitats. On the Forth in Scotland, for example, it just felt natural to work from the coast, where we're helping restore seagrass meadows, upstream into the river catchment and the land around."

"We're working with partners – from farmers and major supermarkets to volunteer groups – to meet the triple challenge, and we're demonstrating that a joined-up approach is possible. We can restore degraded habitats, involve and support communities, unlock finance to reverse nature loss, and create fair policies that promote the sustainable management of entire ecosystems. Nature is our life-support system, and it's our responsibility to love, protect and restore it." ▶

**"HERE IN THE UK YOU'RE SUPPORTING PIONEERING PROJECTS THAT COULD INFLUENCE CHANGE AROUND THE WORLD"**



**FIRTH OF FORTH, SCOTLAND**  
**KEEPING COMMUNITY AT HEART**

Community is at the heart of an initiative to restore seagrass meadows and oyster beds. Last year, the Restoration Forth project released the first European flat oysters in the estuary in 100 years, in the hope that they'll remove excess nutrients from the water and help stabilise the seabed. Meanwhile, with the help of volunteer planters the project hopes to inspire the restoration of up to four hectares of seagrass by the end of 2024 – and influence the government to increase support for nature.

1

**WYE & USK CATCHMENTS, HEREFORDSHIRE & WALES**  
**2 FARMING WITH NATURE**

We're working with an unusual team to help revive wildflower meadows in Herefordshire: a flock of 55 rare breed sheep. Kath Killick's sheep graze the grassland, which improves conditions for wildflowers. This is part of work with the Wye and Usk Foundation and Herefordshire Meadows to improve species-rich meadow habitat. We also liaised with over 70 farms in the catchments through our former partnership with Tesco, which supported rivers trusts to reduce agricultural pollution in three priority UK catchments.



**YORKSHIRE DALES**  
**3 GREENING THE DALES**

A vision of reviving a popular part of the Yorkshire Dales with black grouse, cuckoos, bird's-eye primroses and juniper is being fulfilled thanks to Wild Ingleborough. This ambitious project, supported by WWF and Aviva, aims to restore up to 1,500 hectares where native woodland and natural habitat exist in isolated fragments. We'll be working with local communities to use more sustainable ways to help the area recover. With the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust we've planted almost 66,000 trees, as well as reinvigorating neglected woodland and grassland. A key aim of the project is capturing carbon to fight climate change.

3

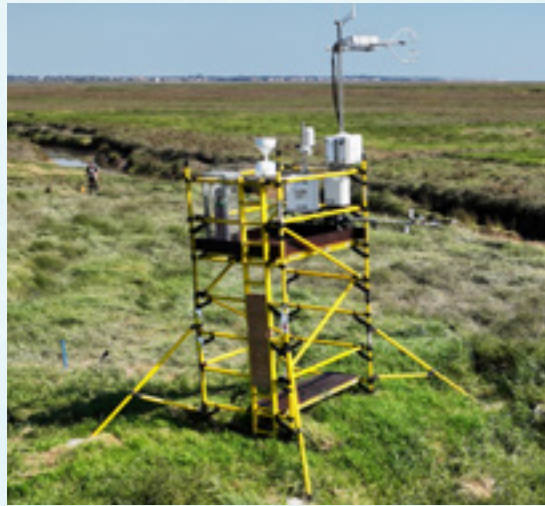


**RIVER SOAR CATCHMENT, LEICESTERSHIRE**  
**4 CREATING FLOWER-FULL CORRIDORS**

Wildflowers are blooming on road verges in Leicester thanks to the 'bee roads' project. In partnership with Trent Rivers Trust and Leicester City Council, we're giving vital pollinators such as bees fuelling stops between open spaces and nature reserves on local road networks. This work in Leicestershire is one of three projects supported by Air Wick that has restored over 20 million sq ft of precious wildflower habitat in the UK, including the Wye and Usk (see above) and Norfolk (page 21).



Words: Derek Niemann | Illustrations: Esther Curtis | Images: © Andrew Parkinson / WWF-UK  
© Jon Hawkins / Yorkshire Wildlife Trust / WWF-UK © Joseph Gray / WWF-UK  
© Paul Rogers / WWF-UK | © Raymond Besant / WWF-UK



**RIBBLE ESTUARY, LANCASHIRE**

**STUDYING THE CARBON-BUSTING POWER OF SALTMARSHES**

How could the nation's saltmarshes help protect the planet in the climate emergency? A carbon-flux tower on the Ribble estuary is helping us assess the role of saltmarsh as a long-term, natural store of carbon. This sophisticated tracker is monitoring levels of carbon cycling between the land and the atmosphere, producing data to show how much carbon is captured, how quickly and for how long. Supported by Aviva and run in partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, this project is part of our mission to make trading carbon credits (the Saltmarsh Code) a financial reality.

5



**NORTH NORFOLK**

**RESTORING THE LANDSCAPE**

8

A team of furry landscape engineers are vital to restoring some of Norfolk's major waterways and key species. We're supporting the Norfolk Rivers Trust and others to release eight beavers into a site in north Norfolk. Known for creating dams and ponds, these mammals are part of a bigger plan to improve Norfolk's rivers, which includes changes in how farmers manage and use land and nature-based solutions to help relieve pressure on freshwater systems. We're also working downstream to learn more about otters, water voles, spoonbills and natterjack toads and what they need to thrive into the future.

**LLŶN PENINSULA AND ANGLESEY, WALES**

**6 PLANTING NEW SEAGRASS MEADOWS**

In north Wales, we've been working with volunteers, local communities and other partners to restore 10 hectares of seagrass meadow – the equivalent of 18 football pitches. In time, these meadows will become a safe haven for cod fry, a place for cuttlefish to lay their eggs, an anchor for snakelocks anemones, a shelter for crabs and shrimps, and a source of winter food for wigeon. We're now experimenting with mechanising parts of the process to see if it could be quicker and easier to restore larger areas of seagrass.



**WENDLING BECK CATCHMENT, NORFOLK**

**9 SOWING SEEDS OF PLENTY**

Local provenance wins out in a seed mix sourced by a farmer and wildflower specialist to create 15 hectares of new wildflower meadows in the Wendling Beck catchment just west of Norwich. The seed mix used has over twice the species diversity of most commercial mixes, which is particularly important to create a thriving and diverse meadow. Over time, the ecological value of this land will increase hugely, supporting a wide range of insects and invertebrates, which in turn support small animals and birds. Its non-cultivation will also benefit the soil micro-organisms that live beneath the ground and help sequester carbon.



**PEMBROKESHIRE, WALES**

**BOOSTING BLUE-CARBON SOLUTIONS**

In Wales, we're supporting the Câr-y-Môr community-owned seaweed and shellfish farm to pioneer new ways to farm at sea and revolutionise the way we grow food. This mixed-species farming doesn't need any of the damaging fertilisers relied on by land-based agriculture. And seaweed absorbs carbon and creates ideal conditions for marine life such as dolphins, mussels and seabirds. Seaweed fertiliser could even help regenerate our soil, reducing the need for chemicals. We've also planted about 1.2 million seagrass seeds off Pembrokeshire, tackling issues of water quality, climate change and supporting coastal economies.



7

My Action

**DISCOVER MORE**

Find out more about some of these UK projects with our short films: [myaction.wwf.org.uk/the-nations-nature](http://myaction.wwf.org.uk/the-nations-nature)



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**SOLENT, ISLE OF WIGHT**

**TESTING INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES**

10

A range of novel methods for restoring seagrass meadows are being trialled in the waters between the UK mainland and the Isle of Wight, as part of our bid to help restore 15% of seagrass habitats by 2030. Until now, hessian bags have been the go-to planting medium, but these innovative trials include injecting seagrass seed into the seabed and replanting washed-up fragments. Both of these experimental operations are showing encouraging results, a welcome boost for the combined efforts of WWF, Natural England, Project Seagrass, Swansea University and coastal communities.

# THE WORM THAT TURNS

With your support, regenerative farming is transforming tiger landscapes in central India

In the Satpuda-Pench wildlife corridor, we're working with local communities to ensure crops provide a reliable income, but also benefit biodiversity across the wider landscape



**D**aybreak in rural Madhya Pradesh. Wood smoke rises from the village and a farmer tills the cotton fields, breaking the soil with his trusty oxen. A peacock yowls from the forest behind, where a tiger pads silently among the towering sal trees.

This is life in the Satpuda-Pench corridor, a 4,256 sq km mosaic of forest and farmland that stretches across central India between the national parks of Pench and Satpuda. This landscape is home to 20% of the world's tigers, and the corridor enables them to travel between protected areas. Other threatened species here include leopards, sloth bears and red-headed vultures. It's also home to many rural communities, with small-scale agriculture accounting for 40% of the corridor's land use.

For centuries, people and wildlife have lived here side-by-side. Today, the landscape faces multiple threats. Road and rail development has fragmented the forest into smaller pieces, bringing people and wildlife into greater proximity. This brings the challenges of human-wildlife conflict, poaching and exploitation of forest resources. Meanwhile, pressure to boost productivity has increased the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, which are depleting soil, polluting waterways, affecting biodiversity and threatening human health.

## RESTORING FARMS AND FORESTS

For WWF, preserving the Satpuda-Pench corridor is a conservation priority. Today, thanks to you, we're working with commercial partners to support a regenerative farming project that aims to restore a landscape where people and nature can thrive. "Agriculture should be biodiversity-friendly," says Sumit Roy, our head of production landscapes in India. "By switching from conventional to regenerative practices, we can maintain the farm and forest mosaic so that the corridor's ecological integrity remains intact."

Regenerative agriculture is an approach to farming that improves the resources it uses rather than destroying or depleting them. By using nature-based solutions to improve soil health, water management and other processes, it can benefit biodiversity. At the same time, it can reduce costs and make farmers' livelihoods more profitable in the long term.

Small-scale cotton farming is critical to the economy here. "Our role is not to change crops but to transform agriculture to more nature-friendly forms," says Sumit. He explains how the key is managing inputs – the materials farmers put into the soil to boost productivity – to reduce the footprint of cotton farming. By using natural, locally available inputs, farmers can cut down on harmful and costly chemical fertilisers, improving the soil and saving money.

This new approach means they can also diversify their output. "Regenerative agriculture is not a monoculture," confirms Sumit, explaining how pulses and oranges are among other crops increasingly being grown. Healthier soil brings other benefits, including greater insect biodiversity, which boosts the numbers of pollinators.

The first step towards making and monitoring these changes was collecting baseline information from each cotton farm in our critical project area, working with farmers to assess their soil health, productivity and income. Using this data, ►



▲ Our regenerative agriculture project shows small-scale farmers how to restore and enhance the productivity of their land by improving soil health with organic fertilisers. This makes farming more profitable and sustainable

we've helped them set targets that, over time, will regenerate the soil and increase production. Step two has been introducing the use of natural bio-inputs. This involves converting waste from livestock and crops and harnessing locally sourced organic ingredients to produce organic compost.

It also includes vermicomposting; a form of composting that uses the digestive processes of earthworms to convert organic material to nutrient-rich manure.

**PROVIDING SUPPORT**

To help farmers adopt these new regenerative practices, our colleagues in India have launched an ambitious training programme. Through demonstrations held at 19 bio-input centres across the corridor, farmers have learned how to make vermicompost and other natural fertilisers to help manage their soil, water and crops. The villagers provide the labour and raw materials, while we distribute neem cake (organic manure) and worms to all participants. Training is also given in how to identify and encourage pollinating insects.

In traditional farming communities, it's women who manage the composting. We've therefore been working with women's self-help groups, formed to share solutions to common problems. Feedback from these groups has been very positive. "Vermicompost has transformed our lives," says Vandana Ingle, from Marai village in Chhindwara.



"Our input costs are down, we get higher prices because our produce is organic and we are healthier due to zero-pesticide use."

Ramwati Bai Dhurve agrees: "Due to regenerative agriculture, my farm's soil has

**"WE'VE HELPED FARMERS SET TARGETS THAT WILL REGENERATE THE SOIL AND INCREASE PRODUCTION"**

become soft and the input cost has been reduced by more than 25%."

The training has brought other benefits. By using cost-free, natural bio-inputs, women can diversify their output, producing organic products such as natural insecticides to sell within the community. They're also

improving their business practices, pooling resources and managing a loan fund from which they can benefit as needed. To support this, we're providing training in bookkeeping and other appropriate skills.

**GIVING SOMETHING BACK**

Living alongside wildlife brings challenges: tigers and leopards sometimes take livestock, while pigs and monkeys raid crops. Our project is helping the women's groups develop sustainable solutions to these problems, while promoting an awareness of basic dos and don'ts when entering the forest, in order to reduce conflict with wildlife and avoid forest fires. It also supports training for income-generating activities that reduce the pressure on these forests.

Progress to date has been impressive. By the end of 2023, some 3,000 farmers had received training. Our goal is to reach 6,000 by the end of 2025 and ultimately, as the word spreads, to include every farmer in the corridor. But Sumit isn't resting on his laurels. "The transformation that's currently happening is incredible, but we have long miles to go." He explains how standardising bio-inputs to ensure their quality remains a

challenge. "Quality determines how much of the compost goes into the soil; if the bio-inputs aren't mature enough there's no point in applying them to the field." Research is continuing in the lab to make the processes as effective as possible.

Ultimately, there's a broader principle here that extends far beyond the Satpuda-Pench corridor. "We need to connect with the bigger picture," says Sumit. "The world is moving from chemical to biological." He explains how the corridor initiative is an exciting opportunity to show how conservation organisations and corporate partners can benefit biodiversity and reduce nature loss worldwide by working with small-scale farmers.

"Today, the entire world is talking about regenerative agriculture," says Sumit. "These women may just be producing vermicompost in a small village in Chhindwara, but they're also serving a global mandate. There is a train that has been started." ■



**VERMICOMPOSTING HOW IT WORKS**

Vermicomposting harnesses the natural digestive process of earthworms to create a compost that's rich in vital nutrients, including carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and beneficial micro-organisms. It's an efficient and sustainable fertiliser for boosting plant growth.

Earthworms feed on the decaying organic matter in soil and excrete undigested food as casts. A thin oily layer on each cast takes up to two months to break down, releasing its nutrients slowly into the soil.

Vermicomposting uses natural waste products. These include dung and urine from cows, goats and sheep; poultry droppings; crop and vegetable clippings or peelings; and sawdust and slurry from biogas plants. The worms used aren't typical garden earthworms, but smaller 'redworms' that reproduce faster.



▲ Vermicomposting can be done in a pit, on a heap or in a bin. It should take place in a cool, dark place and any container should be well ventilated. Effective compost can be produced after six to eight weeks

Images: © Dr. Kaushtik Ghosh / WWF-India | © Getty | © WWF-Sweden

# ISLAND LIFE

"Being in nature makes me feel more like me. I'm never more happy than when I'm standing in the middle of a field thinking, 'What am I going to do here?'"

## CROFT LIFE

Watch Alexander gardening with nature in our short film



## Outer Hebrides crofter and blogger *Alexander Thompson-Byer* tells us about his passion for gardening with nature

### *Did you grow up surrounded by nature?*

I grew up around south London, in the big old concrete jungle. As a kid, nature didn't play a big role. I loved to play in the park, and my nan's friend Doreen used to bring me the WWF magazine, bless her. But not much more than that.

### *What challenges did you face?*

Growing up as a black man in London had its difficulties. The way a few people would perceive me, the microaggressions, took their toll. It made me stressed. If I didn't go into gardening, I don't know where I'd have ended up. I'm not your usual-looking gardener, so I felt I had to prove myself. But if you're passionate about something, it will shine.

### *Why do you love gardening?*

I was taught the traditional way of gardening: hoe, mow, blow and go. Most of my clients wanted pretty, pristine gardens. But even in suburbia, you can create a nice hub of nature in a small space. There's a lovely buzz of bees, you've got robins bouncing around over your shoulder, blackbirds, starlings doing their beatbox thing. Gardening kept me smiling, kept me alive. I enjoyed doing my job, making people happy, being creative in a green space and getting my hands dirty.

### *How did you learn to garden with nature?*

I needed more space for my equipment so I bought three acres of land in Surrey. That's where I learned about working with nature and not against it. I got fed up with mowing and soon the thistles and docks were taller than me. Then I saw 20 goldfinches doing loop-the-loops in this 'meadow', and I listened and the birdsong was deafening. There were dragonflies and butterflies; the nettles were filled with caterpillars. It was lush.

### *What's your approach now?*

I realised this is how I needed to garden in the future: let nature move in, just leave

things, let it all grow. Don't be so quick to seek and destroy. Welcome all the pest predators. I call them 'workmates'. I used to dig up dock all the time, but dock is amazing – it attracts blackfly away from your plants and vegetables. Stinging nettles create a nice home for greenfly and for ladybirds whose larvae eat the greenfly. Dandelions aren't weeds, they're wildflowers in the wrong place. They provide so much for wildlife, from seed heads for goldfinches to nectar for bumblebees, hoverflies, you name it.

### *Why did you move to the Outer Hebrides?*

We were attracted to North Uist by the slower pace of life. We ended up buying a croft on the east side of the island, which is rocky, peaty and acidic. The weather humbles you. It's wet and windy with sporadic sunshine. There's no trees, no protection. And red deer just jump over your fences and devour everything. But you can still work your magic.

### *What's your vision for your croft?*

Crofting is basically small-scale farming. My vision is to have a beautiful, sustainable, permaculture-inspired patch – permaculture just means working with nature instead of against it. Mother Nature knows best. I want greens and vegetables, rotational agriculture, a greenhouse underground and a nice space for myself and my son to learn and have fun in, somewhere all the animals can benefit from. I'm not just doing it for me; I'm doing it for everything around here.

### *What does the future look like?*

It's important to me that my son, Cedar, is well-rooted in nature, because I know how good it makes me feel. My dream for Cedar is to carry on this lovely croft. By that time, it should be a space that buzzes and sings, and is vibrant with life, where everything works together to create a beautiful and fun space to be in – for Cedar and for everything around. I hope he'll keep up my tradition of permaculture-inspired fun with a lot of love.



# YOUR PASSION, YOUR IMPACT

**My Action**

**LEAVE A GIFT**

Learn how you can leave a gift in your will to WWF: **myaction**.  
[www.wwf.org.uk/gifts-in-wills](http://www.wwf.org.uk/gifts-in-wills)



Leaving a gift in your will is an important decision and one that could have a lasting impact. Here, our supporters share their legacy stories

**P**ause for a moment and try to remember when you first got hooked on nature. Were you a child with animal posters on your bedroom wall, stickers on your school books, badges on your coat? Did you go rockpooling or pond dipping, or belong to a wildlife club?

So many of us find it hard to remember if there was ever a time when we weren't passionate about wildlife. It's as if fur and feathers were in our DNA. As we've grown into adults who understand our responsibility for the natural world – and who support work to care for it – it's hard to imagine ever stopping. And we don't have to.

These stories tell of WWF supporters who've found joy and comfort in knowing their support for nature will endure after they've gone. For a variety of personal reasons, they've chosen to leave a gift in their will for wildlife. It may be in memory of a loved one; to protect an endangered species or special place; or it may be driven by a desire to continue fighting for the planet they love. They're helping us work on their behalf to protect the wildlife they care for so much.

You can find out more about leaving a gift in your will by calling or emailing Grace on 01483 412153 or [grace@wwf.org.uk](mailto:grace@wwf.org.uk)



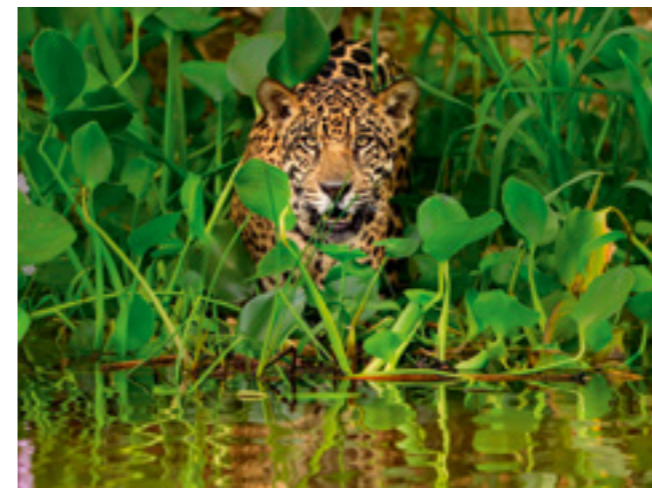
## JON CANDY

After my wife Diane died, my son Solo and I agreed we'd like to leave a legacy to WWF in her name. We all love nature, but Diane was passionate about it. She loved all wildlife; she kept all her childhood books about exotic animals and chose to work at a vet's. She supported animal charities and adopted an animal with WWF.

In our late twenties, we went on safari to Kenya. At the time, she couldn't swim but she was determined to snorkel over the coral reefs to try to see moray eels. So she learned. She had that kind of determination.

Diane loved nature and this planet and lived her life doing all she could to protect it. It always felt right to me that we should give to WWF. The WWF team offered suggestions about what our gift might fund and one of the options was to support a long-term project. I'd like my wife's name to be associated with a project, so that she's remembered in some way. If our gift can help protect endangered animals and put right some of the wrongs that humans have done, then that gives me comfort. I like to think that Diane's passion for nature lives on and will have an impact on WWF's work.

▶ Jon's wife, Diane, loved animals!



## VAL AND PIP LAWRENCE

We're retired civil servants who have supported WWF all of our married life, going right back to the 1970s. We like buying items from the WWF gift shop and Val raises funds by creating and selling animal paintings and greetings cards. It's fantastic to know we're making something for a good cause.

Though we've supported WWF projects all over the world, we don't travel widely – we're too conscious of the environmental impact. Even though we don't go to these places, we're with WWF on the journey. And when we're invited to events, experts keep us up to date with what's happening, what they're doing and how we're supporting them, whether it's finless porpoises in the Yangtze or jaguars in the Amazon.

Our wills are important to us, and when we decided to update them we chose to let WWF know that we wanted to include them. They put us in touch with the National Free Wills Network. The whole process was so straightforward and simple, and they made us feel at ease. We want to give something that lives on after us, and we can't think of a better way of doing this than leaving a legacy to WWF.



## CINDY HOCK

Born in the Netherlands but restless from the moment I took my first steps, I started exploring the world immediately after graduation – though I inevitably come back to my present home in Scotland. I developed a love of big animals in Africa (everyone does!) but I just like nature. In my garden, I love watching the foxes, badgers and birds, everything!

I first adopted an animal with WWF when I lived in Namibia, and the more I travelled, the more animals I adopted. Then I became a WWF Guardian supporter. Wherever I moved or went on holiday, I would always ask about WWF projects in the area and visit those locations if I could. I follow Unicef as well to see what's being done for children all over the world.

The connection between nature and people is so important – we can't protect nature if we don't include communities in conservation work.

I want to contribute to something that's close to my heart with my legacy. I don't have children, but my brother does. I hope there'll be a world for them that's full of animals when they, and their children, grow up.





## WIN! AN ECO-FRIENDLY PICNIC PACK

We've got a bright blanket and stylish bottle to give away. Summer's the perfect time to get out in nature. And to help you get ready for sunny days exploring, we're giving away a chic reusable panda bottle from Ohelo and a gorgeous recycled wool picnic blanket.

Made from stainless steel, the stylishly sustainable Ohelo bottle is reusable, leak-proof and built to last. The triple-layer vacuum insulation keeps drinks hot for 12 hours, and cold for 24 hours. The beautifully vibrant recycled wool blanket from The Tartan Blanket Co is the perfect eco-friendly companion for picnics. It's super-soft, lightweight, machine-washable and folds into a handy compact size, making it ideal for days out. **For your chance to win, follow the instructions in the 'How to enter' box below. See our full range of bottles and blankets at [shop.wwf.org.uk](https://shop.wwf.org.uk)**

## WIN! CHEEKY PANDA BAMBOO GOODIES

A £100 gift card or household bundle could be yours

Sourced from responsibly managed forests in China, bamboo is the world's fastest growing, self-regenerating plant. It's also incredibly versatile and can be used as an alternative to everything from hard plastic to soft fabrics.

The Cheeky Panda is a sustainable brand on a mission to cut carbon, reduce plastic and save trees, so it uses bamboo in all its household, beauty and baby products. And when you buy certain products in its range, a donation will go to WWF (find out more at [uk.cheekypanda.com](https://uk.cheekypanda.com)).

We've got a £100 Cheeky Panda e-gift card to give away to one lucky winner. Ten runners-up will each receive a Give Bamboo A Go bundle, worth £15 and filled with all your eco-friendly household essentials. **For your chance to win, follow the instructions in the 'How to enter' box below.**



Discover our club for nature-loving kids

# Go Wild

Inspire young wildlife champions with the gift of Go Wild membership. It's totally roar-some!

Find out more at [www.wwf.org.uk/go-wild](https://www.wwf.org.uk/go-wild)

Things to make and do

- Four animal-packed mags a year
- Cool posters
- Great gifts!
- Animal cards to collect

## HOW TO ENTER OUR ACTION GIVEAWAYS

Send an email with your name, address and phone number, along with Picnic Competition or Cheeky Panda Competition in the subject line, to [competition@wwf.org.uk](mailto:competition@wwf.org.uk)

Alternatively, post your entry to **Action Magazine, WWF-UK, Living Planet Centre, Rufford House, Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4LL.**

Closing date: Friday 26 July 2024. For full terms and conditions, visit:

[www.wwf.org.uk/comptersms](https://www.wwf.org.uk/comptersms)



Gorilla tourism and conservation can boost community livelihoods in many ways

## A CHANGE OF HEART



I haven't always worked in conservation. In fact, I used to be a poacher. Quite a notorious one. In my younger days, I would often sneak into Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park to hunt for small animals. It was risky – you could be killed by a buffalo or arrested by the park's authorities.

But it was a way to make a living.

You might think my story is unusual, but there are about 5,000 reformed poachers like me who belong to community-based conservation organisations around Volcanoes National Park. Like many others, I was encouraged to support conservation through the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, a coalition supported by WWF that's working to protect endangered mountain gorillas here in Rwanda and in neighbouring Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

They know that the best way to ensure the long-term future of the gorillas is to work with communities who live around the edge of the protected areas. Gorilla tourism ensures that communities benefit from jobs and income, while other initiatives improve livelihoods and tackle conflict with wildlife.

### POACHER TURNED PROTECTOR

I quit poaching, embraced conservation and joined a community-based conservation cooperative called Duterimbere, which means 'let's grow together'. I'm now the chairman, and we're working to teach community members about the benefits of conservation and ensure people and wildlife can thrive together.

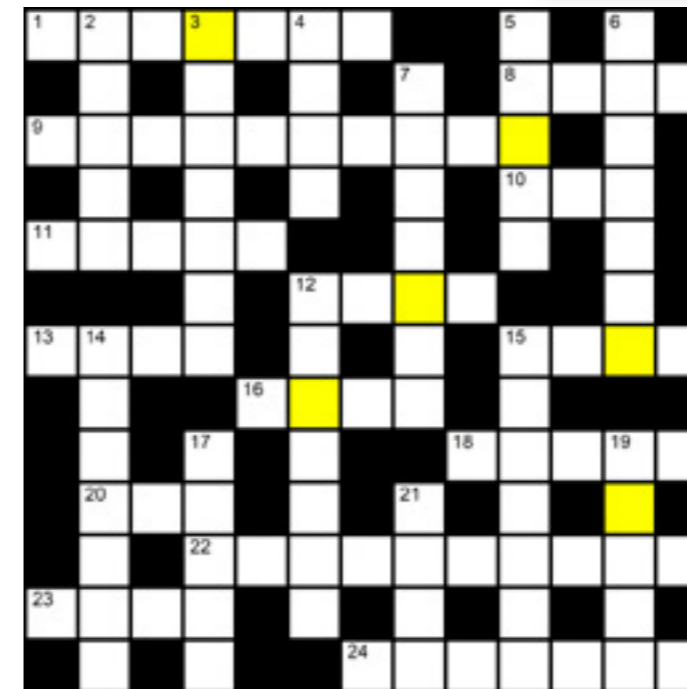
We take the lead in reducing conflict by maintaining the buffalo wall and trench – a long barrier made of volcanic rocks to prevent wild animals like buffaloes and mountain gorillas from raiding community gardens. We also plant alnus trees and bamboo as a source of firewood. When people go into the park to gather firewood, it can damage the forest and bring them into contact with wild animals. There are challenges. Even with the wall, buffaloes still come, so we take turns guarding the gardens at night, using torches to chase the animals away. Embracing conservation is the best decision I ever made. I've grown to love wildlife, especially gorillas. I know we can coexist peacefully.

**Eliezar Twizerimana**

Chairman, Duterimbere cooperative, Rwanda

## CROSSWORD

Solve our puzzle and you could win a copy of *A Year of Garden Bees & Bugs* by Dominic Couzens and Gail Ashton, and published by Batsford.



WWF ACTION CROSSWORD 57: Summer 2024. Compiled by Aleric Linden

After solving the crossword, take each letter from the shaded squares (going from left to right and top to bottom) to spell out the prize word. To be in with a chance to win, just send a postcard with the prize word to the address on page 30, or email it to [competition@wwf.org.uk](mailto:competition@wwf.org.uk). The closing date is Friday 26 July 2024.

### Clues across

- 1 These world regions are also known as the Torrid Zone (7)
- 8 Ground transportation route (4)
- 9 The Ruvuma Transboundary Landscape is in Tanzania and which other country? (10)
- 10 \_ quality – it's severely impacted by smog (3)
- 11 In which home county is Blackwater estuary? (5)
- 12 Home of a badger (4)
- 13 Cattle species commonly used as a draught animal in Asia (4)
- 15 A burning threat to ecosystems and forests (4)
- 16 An area of heather land known as a muir in Scotland (4)
- 18 Food plants (5)
- 20 \_ sands, highly polluting petroleum mining sites (3)
- 22 A word similar to environmental (10)
- 23 Ferrous metal (4)
- 24 Worm-like creatures found in decaying organic matter (7)

### Clues down

- 2 Common installation sites, up above, for solar panels (5)

- 3 An area of high flat land (7)
- 4 Young lions or tigers (4)
- 5 & 6 \_ \_ Reef, World Heritage Site and in Australia (5,7)
- 6 See 5 down
- 7 Dividing line between the northern and southern hemispheres (7)
- 12 Somebody who pledges financial support to charity fundraisers (7)
- 14 \_ lowland gorilla, critically endangered primate (7)
- 15 Regenerative agriculture employs a nature-positive approach to this growth business (7)
- 17 River in central England – third longest in the UK (5)
- 19 Place crops in the ground to grow (5)
- 21 Farming of this food crop has caused Amazon deforestation (4)

### Spring 2024 answers

Across 6. Laser 8. Dolphin 10. Malayan 11. Sabre 13. Tame 14. Flights 16. Organic 17. Etna 19. Tahoe 21. Nitrous 23. Deserts 24. Waste

Down 1. Climate 2. Grey 3. Eden 4. Alps 5. Andes 7. Saltmarshes 9. Habitat loss 12. Zinc 14. Fins 15. Daisies 18. Study 20. Ears 21. Nose 22. Town

Prize word: Shrew



# STOP THE DESTRUCTION OF NATURE

**We're asking UK leaders to take urgent action to protect our planet. Will you add your voice?**

Sign our petition today. We'll hand it to all the major UK political parties to prove that people want real action from the next government to stop the destruction of nature.



**SIGN OUR  
PETITION NOW**



[www.org.uk/take-action](https://www.org.uk/take-action)



For a future where people and nature thrive | [www.org.uk](https://www.org.uk)

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FSC logo to  
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All information correct at time of printing, June 2024

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