

The member magazine for Kent Wildlife Trust

WilderKent

Winter 2021

SAVE SWANSCOMBE!

Fighting to protect
this wildlife-rich haven
from destruction

BRAND NEW REPORT FROM WILDER CARBON

Unlocking the climate
benefits of large-scale nature
restoration across the UK

6 PLACES TO SEE...

Birds of *Prey*

Where to see the sky's
top predators in Kent



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FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

Protecting Wildlife for the Future





Welcome

to the winter edition of **Wilder Kent**

I love short-eared owls. For years they were my 'bogey bird': the bird I never saw when everyone else did, despite always seemingly being in the right place at the right time.

Then, during a trip to the Isle of Mull, one flew over the car I was using as a hide, passing within a metre of the windscreen. The view I witnessed was pretty much the photo on the front cover of this edition of Wilder Kent: talons curled inwards, wings fanned out, the sunshine lighting up the intricate, dappled pattern of its feathers, and buttercup yellow eyes focused on something ahead.

Short-eared owls are mesmerising birds; they are the epitome of a winter raptor, surveying frost-bitten marshes against a crisp, clear sky on the hunt for small birds and other creatures. They are still among my favourite birds now; I have forgiven them for holding out on me for so long, having now seen them on many occasions, including on classic winter days like the one I just described.

I would like to say a huge 'well done' to the Communications team for putting together such a fantastic magazine again. I hope that you all find something of interest in here and, more importantly, something that inspires you to get out into the Kent countryside over winter, preferably on one of those fantastic cold, crisp days. I hope that you can catch a glimpse of a **near-mythic bird of prey** (page 10) or a **murmuration of starlings** (page 6); hopefully these gorgeous species will not become your 'bogey birds'.

There's plenty of choice inside the magazine: starting off with a **tribute to former Chief Executive Fred Booth**, (page 5) who some of our longer-serving members will, no doubt, remember; there's an **update on our chough reintroduction project** (page 14); there's **re-bugging and re-birding** (pages 20 and 24); and there's an update on our **bison which should be en route to Kent** by the time I write my next editorial (page 18).

There's also a major article highlighting the massive opportunity for locking up carbon through the **large-scale restoration of nature across the UK** (page 16). We – the UK conservation sector – can help mitigate, and adapt to, the climate and nature crises, irrespective of what our governments agreed to at **COP26**.

The Wilder Carbon project, like everything we do, represents a local contribution to tackling global issues. We can all do something positive, and whether you're a local business (page 30), a gardener (page 26) or a potential legator (page 48), you can all help us deliver a **Wilder Kent**.

In short, this magazine contains everything you need to become enthused and inspired by Kent's wildlife, particularly as the colder nights draw in.

Thank you as always for your unwavering support. Happy holidays and see you all in the spring. 🍷



Evan Bowen-Jones
Chief Executive of Kent Wildlife Trust
Follow me [🐦 @EcoLlogik](#)

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MARK HAMBLIN/2020VISION



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The Wilder Kent magazine team



Editor
Isabelle Rayner



Designer
Katy McCarten



Sub-Editor
Mollie Amor

With special thanks to our incredible team of proofreaders and quality checkers: Ashton Dreyer, Julia Hunt, Tamarin Ward and Natasha Ruskin.

CONTACT US - WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU 🦋

- **Email us** info@kentwildlife.org.uk
 - **Speak to us** 01622 662012
 - **Find us online** kentwildlifetrust.org.uk
 - **Write or visit** Tyland Barn, Sandling Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3BD
- Charity no. 239992. Company no. 633098. Registered at the above address.

Let's be wilder together

Follow us on social media for updates and to share nature photos and your thoughts with us!

JUST SEARCH FOR
Kent Wildlife Trust



✉️ DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Keep informed of all our latest work, news and events. Email info@kentwildlife.org.uk with your member ID and up-to-date email address and we'll do the rest.



Comments from the Leadership Team

WILDER BLEAN

Wilder Blean steps up a gear

Page 18

We're thrilled that our Bison Rangers have had the opportunity to spend time with our colleagues at the Wisent project in Kraansvlak, Holland, to learn more about bison from those who have been working with these animals for many years. The rangers found the experience infinitely valuable, learnt a great deal about bison behaviour and gained an enhanced understanding of their health and welfare. They received training in approaching bison on foot, about body condition scoring and monitoring, and saw first-hand the wonderful effects bison have on restoring natural processes and increasing biodiversity. All of these skills and experiences will now be transferred to the Wilder Blean project and we can't wait to see these efforts pay off. 🍷



Simon Bateman-Brown

As Head of Land Management, with over 25 years of experience in conservation management, Simon manages Area

Managers and Wardens to ensure that the 80+ reserves managed by Kent Wildlife Trust are maintained in the most effective way possible.



Chloe Edwards

As Head of Wilder Landscapes, Chloe leads a team to drive forward innovative conservation projects. She has 15 years

of experience delivering conservation initiatives, demonstrating effective collaboration and championing co-existence to enable wildlife and people to share landscapes.

FARMER CLUSTERS

Marden Farmer Cluster rallies their village to boost biodiversity

Page 22

The proactive work of Marden farmers and the local community is a wonderful example of the kind of local collaborations that are going to be absolutely pivotal in restoring nature across our farmed landscapes and reigniting our own connection with the natural world. The work in Marden provides a blueprint for how this can be done successfully, working to enable people and wildlife to thrive in the landscapes they share. We are thrilled that Kent Wildlife Trust can play a part in supporting these efforts.

WILDER CARBON

Brand new report from Wilder Carbon

Page 16

This report highlights the sheer scale of the opportunity we have to address the climate and nature crises and, at the same time, realise levels of funding for restoring nature at scale that have not

been available to date. We are excited to be working with a wide range of partners in Kent and across the country to develop pathfinder projects that will lock up carbon and restore some of our most valuable habitats for the long term. We hope this is just the beginning of the journey to reverse the decline of biodiversity and make a large-scale contribution to nature's recovery. 🍷



Richard Bloor

As Head of Wilder Solutions, Richard is responsible for nature-based solutions. He has worked within

the Wildlife Trust movement for the past seven years and previously gained a PhD in conservation policy and finance as a result of research in the Malaysian Borneo.

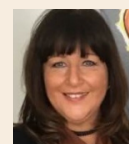
CHOUGH APPEAL

Restoring the choughs to Kent

Page 14

We are delighted to be working in partnership with Wildwood Trust to return this charismatic and acrobatic bird to the iconic White Cliffs of Dover. It is astonishing that 50% of the world's chalk grassland is found in the UK, with

2.5% in Dover. Chalk grassland is not only a hugely biodiverse habitat, it's also perfect for the choughs and we can't wait to see this beautiful bird flying wild and free across the coastline of Kent. I have been involved with our vision to return chough to Kent from the beginning and these clever little birds with their bright red beaks and legs have captured my heart. I really hope the people of Kent will embrace and love the choughs as much as I do. 🍷



Keeley Atkinson

As Head of Wilder Engagement, Keeley engages and empowers people to take action to improve their lives and the

lives of those around them. She is an advocate for improving people's knowledge about the climate and nature crises to have a positive impact on nature's recovery.



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Farewell Fred Booth, pioneer of Kent's marine conservation.

Fred Booth, former CEO at Kent Wildlife Trust and a champion of marine conservation in Kent for over 30 years, has sadly passed away.

Conservation was not Fred's first career; he initially served as a police officer from 1950 until he retired with the rank of Chief Superintendent in 1982. Retirement gave Fred the ideal opportunity to pursue his burgeoning interest in wildlife and conservation. He became a stalwart member of the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation and served as its first CEO, stepping down in the mid-80s to become a more hands-on conservationist.

Fred loved spending time outdoors in fair weather or foul, carrying out surveys either as a volunteer with the likes of the Kent Field Club, or as an independent field surveyor with the fledgling Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy. Fred remained active in this latter role until 2014 when health issues forced him to step down.

Fred was also a long term, active member of the Trust's Conservation Committee and one of its vice presidents.

Whilst always a keen conservationist and naturalist, Fred's enduring passion was the marine environment. After realising that no one was recording the wildlife found around Kent's coastline, he undertook a walk along the shore to record local wildlife. Following its initial success, Fred expanded the walk into a large-scale survey, a precursor of the national 'Shoresearch' initiative, and established the Kent Marine Group.



Fred taught me so much when I first arrived in Kent. He was an inspiring mentor to all who knew him, always willing to share his knowledge and experience, but always modest about his achievements. He is one of those giants on whose shoulders we stand as we continue to grow the conservation work that he started all those years ago in Kent. He will be sadly missed, but never forgotten, by those who had the privilege of working alongside him.



A personal tribute to Fred from Anne Waite, Project Manager at KWT Consultancy Services



In 2011, Fred was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to conservation and the environment. In 2017, he was awarded the Marsh Volunteer Award for Marine Conservation, a national award with people nominated from across the 47 Wildlife Trusts. In February 2019, he was honoured by then Prime Minister Theresa May with a Point of Light Award for his outstanding public service.

In a personal letter to Fred, May said: "Your work with Kent Wildlife Trust has led to the discovery of a new [invasive] species on the Kent Coastline and has helped to identify the now protected areas of Kent's Marine Conservation Zones. You should be very proud of the progress you have made by following your passion for marine conservation." 🍀



MURMURATION © DANNY GREEN, STARLING © JON HAWKINS SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

YOUR ● WILD winter

Spotted?
Share a picture on social media by tagging @KentWildlife and using #WilderKent

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The starling is a familiar bird of farmland, parkland, gardens and towns. Starlings eat insects and fruit and will visit bird feeders. They make untidy nests in holes in trees or buildings, where the female lays five to seven eggs. Both parents raise the chicks.

Look out for these mesmerising murmurations

IDENTIFY THEM

Adult starlings have beautiful, onyx black feathers with an iridescent purple and green sheen. In the winter, they are covered in tiny beige spots. Young starlings are a dark grey-brown colour.

STARLING MURMURATION

Enormous winter flocks of starlings can number more than a million birds. These flocks are predated on by peregrine falcons, and the flock can be seen wheeling and diving in one great pattern as individuals try to avoid being caught.

As dusk arrives, the starlings set off for their communal roost in one of the most staggering natural spectacles of all. Flocks arrive from all directions, gathering in the skies above their roost sites. As numbers of airborne birds reach into the tens and hundreds of thousands, the "murmuration" (as it's known) takes on incredible shapes in the sky, contracting and expanding as one flock merges into another, swirling back and forth in ever more complex and beautiful patterns. 🐦

CONSERVATION STATUS

Classed as Red

(high concern)
under the Birds of Conservation concern 4 list.

Protected under the UK's Wildlife and Countryside Act.

A Priority Species under the UK's Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.





Dr Amir Khan

 @DrAmirKhanGP
  @doctoramirkhan

A dose of nature



I have just come in from the garden, having filled the bird feeders with sunflower hearts, topped up the watering station with fresh water and refilled the bowls the hedgehogs like to eat from with crunchy kitten biscuits. As soon as I come inside, a magnificent male bullfinch plonks itself onto one of the feeders and starts eating the seeds, dropping as many onto the floor as it manages to get into its mouth. Luckily an opportunistic chaffinch is on clean up duty, guzzling any seeds the messy bullfinch drops. It is a lovely scene to watch unfold, calming and beautiful in its simplicity.

Many of you reading this article will be familiar with the feeling of positivity that fills our bodies when we spend time in nature, and as a doctor it is something I am increasingly “prescribing” for my patients. I have to be honest, sometimes I do get incredulous looks when I suggest a “dose” of time spent in green spaces to my patients to help sooth their ailments, either on its own or in conjunction with modern medicine; but for those who heed my advice, I have never had any complaints.

That is because there is scientific evidence that nature is good for us. When we go outdoors and embrace our natural surroundings, our bodies produce less of our stress hormone, cortisol, lowering our heart rates and blood pressure. We also produce more of our “happy” brain chemicals, dopamine and serotonin, increasing our sense of calm and wellbeing.

It is relatively easy to spend time outdoors in the summer months when the sun is shining and everything is more inviting,

but we can get huge health benefits from nature as autumn and winter set in too. We need that boost to our mental health that nature gives us more than ever when longer nights set in, but the benefits don't stop there. Plants and trees naturally produce chemicals called phytoncides that help protect them against damage from bacteria, fungi and insects. As we spend time in green spaces, we breathe these chemicals in and they can help stimulate our own immune systems to produce more natural “killer” cells, which are vital for fighting off viruses, perfect for winter when respiratory viruses are more common. Nature can also help our brains focus better; by spending time looking at wildlife and plants during our breaks at work, we can give the parts of our brain a rest that are needed for attention and focusing, so when we return to work or a task we need to complete, we will be more productive. Being out in natural light is good for improving sleep — so make the most of those shorter days and get out there!

Sometimes it can feel difficult to go out if the weather isn't quite right, but it is important to carry our good summer habits into autumn and winter. For those who do go outdoors regularly, spread the word and encourage your friends and family to do the same, so they too can reap the benefits of our natural world. 🍂

Find inspiration to get outdoors and discover wildlife this winter with our selection of seasonal spectacles!



wildlifetrusts.org/winter-wildlife



WILD HOUSE CALL

You don't have to travel far for your dose of nature. Even in built-up areas, there are wild wonders to soothe your soul. Listen for the cheerful chirps of house sparrows in the bushes, or the soft cooing of pigeons perched on buildings.

If you have a garden, we've got lots of great tips to help attract even more wildlife at wildlifetrusts.org/actions



Dr Amir Khan

As an ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts, Dr Amir Khan is an advocate for Green Prescribing and champions the benefit that being in nature has on health and wellbeing.

Six ways to enjoy nature this WINTER

1 Go for a winter walk and capture incredible photos

Here are some fantastic wildlife shots taken during the winter months. From delicate icicles draping from trees to an owl in flight, there is so much to experience and capture.

We would love to see your photos so please tag Kent Wildlife Trust when you post your images on social media. We can't wait to share your work across our channels and get everyone into the holiday spirit.



2 Make a snow-animal

Everyone needs animal friends, even snowmen. Wrap up warm and bring your favourite animals to life from the snow this holiday season. We will keep our fingers crossed for a white Christmas.

If we don't get any snowfall this winter, you can still get creative! Make your favourite animals from playdough, create a beautiful drawing or painting of them, or feature them in a Christmas craft activity. Find out more on the next page.



3 Hold your own bake off!

If the outside air gets nippy, stay inside and bake! As a Kent Wildlife Trust twist on the classic Christmas cookie, we would love to see you create some animal shaped goodies.

Cut out a chough, bison, beaver, or anything you fancy, pop them in the oven, then decorate to your heart's content.



4 Help wildlife

As we dive into winter, food becomes scarce for our animal neighbours. You can help your local wildlife by making sure there is always fresh water and a stocked bird feeder in your garden. Perhaps place your bird feeder in front of a window so you can watch your feathery friends grab their breakfast as you eat your own!



Find out more ways that you can help wildlife on our website: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions



5 Help protect the UK's most precious places

There are many ways to fight for nature this winter, including telling the Government that you want them to take action. We are currently fighting against plans to construct a theme park on the ecologically precious and biodiverse Swanscombe Peninsula and we need your help. You can read more about this on page 36.



Find out more and sign the petition here: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/save-swanscombe



6 Have fun with some eco-friendly Christmas crafts

Grab a hot chocolate, settle down and get crafting! There are so many holiday crafts to try: draw the wintery world on your Christmas cards; make origami animals as gifts; or create some sustainable decorations to give your home that extra festive touch. Another great eco-friendly gift option for your friends and family is our **Adopt a Bison pack** – find out more on page 39. 🐾



From a kestrel hovering above a roadside verge to a barn owl drifting over a grassy field, spotting a bird of prey is always a special experience. One of the best things about these feathered predators is that they can be seen almost anywhere – practically any patch of sky could hold a circling buzzard, and sparrowhawks often venture into gardens. But some birds of prey have to be sought out, and by visiting a nature reserve you can often see several species in action. Winter is a great time to track down many of our birds of prey, with some roosting in large numbers, others attracted by gatherings of ducks, starlings or other small birds, and some even starting their courtship or territorial displays.

6 places to see birds of prey



See the spectacle
for yourself in Kent

1 Oare Marshes

This wetland reserve is of international importance for migratory, overwintering and breeding birds. During winter, marsh harriers catch small birds amongst the reeds whilst kestrels and barn owls hunt small mammals in the grasslands. You might even spot a peregrine falcon, merlin or short-eared owl.

Where: Faversham, ME13 0QD

2 Darland Banks

The mosaic of scrub, grass and woodland at Darland provides perfect hunting and nesting territory for kestrels. Some years you might even be able to spot them nesting around the oast house roundels. Sparrowhawks also use the nearby urban gardens to find prey, returning to the safety and shelter of the woodlands to feed.

Where: Gillingham, ME7 3ER

3 Queendown Warren

Buzzards have been raising large broods in the Yelsted Valley for some years now, with groups of 8-10 young soaring high above the pastures as flight practice. We are also hoping that this reserve may be one of the first to welcome back a breeding pair of red kites.

Where: Sittingbourne, ME9 7XH

4 South Swale Reserve

This reserve boasts a variety of bird species in the winter, including thousands of wildfowl and waders. In the evening you might spot marsh harriers swooping in to roost or barn owls silently soaring over the reed beds.

Where: Faversham, CT5 4BP

5 Conningbrook Lakes Country Park

Running alongside the Great Stour river, and connected to farmland between Ashford and Canterbury, this has become a great spot to see barn owls. During cold weather, their usual prey of mice and voles become less active so barn owls must work twice as hard to find food. This can make it easier to spot them, as they will often need to come out during daylight hours to hunt.

Where: Ashford, TN24 0LS

6 Hothfield Heathlands

Following successful breeding on the reserve, kestrels and buzzards can often be seen at Hothfield Heathlands in the winter. Before they breed in the spring, you might see groups of six or more birds circling in the sky.

Where: Ashford, TN26 1HD 

Did you spot any birds of prey?

We'd love to hear how your search went.

Please tweet us your best photos! [@kentwildlife](https://twitter.com/kentwildlife)



REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

Dover Castle choughs head home for winter

Four choughs spent the summer in an aviary at Dover Castle, looking out at the frothing sea beyond and the blue sky above.

We would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has supported this project so far and visited the choughs in their regal summer home on Dover's coast.

The aviary at Dover Castle forms part of a wider project to reintroduce wild choughs in Kent. You can read more about this project on pages 14 and 15 of this magazine, and find out how you can help us reintroduce these iconic birds to our county.

In November, the choughs returned to Wildwood Trust. However, if you didn't manage to visit them this summer, don't worry: they'll be back at Dover Castle in spring 2022! 🐦



CREATING A WILDER KENT

Fantastic new wilding opportunity at Delmonden

A generous supporter has left Delmonden Farm, a wonderful woodland in the heart of the Weald of Kent, to Kent Wildlife Trust in their will.

Delmonden is a beautiful spot, far off the beaten track with a bubbling stream running through it. The woodland is a diverse mix of sweet chestnut, oak, silver birch, hazel and others. It's a wildlife haven and with your support we can really make it thrive.

With your help, we can bring back quintessential woodland species to this habitat, such as pine martens and beavers. This will restore the natural processes of the area and have an incredible impact on

the habitat, creating a greater abundance of birds, plants and insects.

Loss of habitat, the fur industry and predator control almost made pine martens extinct in the UK. This small but important predator can re-balance populations of other prey species, leading to benefits further down the food chain. Bringing back the pine marten could even pave the way for the return of the red squirrel to Kent!

Look out for our upcoming appeal and help us restore these incredible species back to Delmonden. 🦊

WILDING SUCCESS

Update on the pigs at Nashenden

The pigs have settled in well at Nashenden Down. After a few weeks, they built up the courage to explore the whole site. They have been digging over small areas of creeping thistle and mugwort as well as grazing the grass and wallowing in the ponds. They take great delight in hanging out with the livestock checkers and other volunteers when they are on site. The disturbed ground they create is rapidly filling up with all kinds of specialist plants which should provide a good variety of food sources for our farmland birds and insects. 🐷



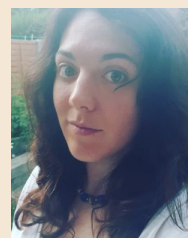
SUPPORT US

Become a Flourish supporter

Donate £500, or more if you can, to our Flourish fund and your money will work hard to release substantial amounts of additional financial investment. Flourish supporters have helped Kent Wildlife Trust secure significant funding so that, together,

we can achieve important gains for Kent's wildlife.

For example, it is thanks to funds donated by Flourish supporters that we were able to unlock £48,073 from Biffa Award for a new pond-dipping platform at our Tyland Barn Visitor Centre! 🐦



If you would like to know more about Flourish, call **01622 357827** to speak to Hazel Eddy, Head of Fundraising.



or visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/flourish-fund

HELP PROTECT OUR SHOREBIRDS

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay

Thousands of shorebirds are attracted to the vast mudflats of Sandwich and Pegwell Bay every year. Species such as the turnstone, curlew, sanderling, and grey and golden plover come to call this unique nature reserve home when the cold weather at their northern breeding grounds signals that it is time to depart before low temperatures lock away food resources underneath thick ice.

Sadly, many shorebird species are in decline in this National Nature Reserve. Factors including climate change and food shortages play a role. However, data from Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS) suggests local pressures have a significant impact too: various recreational activities take place on the bay and, unfortunately, birds can be unintentionally disturbed.

We can all take simple steps to help the wildlife of Sandwich and Pegwell Bay. By using the extensive network of paths around the bay's edge, and keeping off the mudflats and saltmarsh, we can give the birds the space they need to feed and rest.

Keeping our dogs on leads also minimises disturbance.

A special thanks to all the visitors who are already helping us protect our feathery friends, and to the wonderful volunteers who are helping us spread the word. 🐦

If you would like to be a Wilder Coast Volunteer, please email



volunteering@kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

VISITOR CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

New pond-dipping platform coming soon

We have been awarded £48,073 from Biffa Award, as part of the Landfill Communities Fund, to replace Tyland Barn's pond-dipping platforms.

The new platforms should be in place by spring next year. This project will benefit local children visiting Tyland Barn to take part in pond-dipping activities, whether through schools, youth groups, during half-term, for birthday parties or as part of our Nature Tots programme.

The new boardwalks will also benefit all our other visitors, ensuring that we can maintain full access to the pond area within the nature park and continue to provide a tranquil and relaxing spot in which people can connect with the sights and sounds of nature and enjoy its health and wellbeing benefits. The new installations will help us show our visitors the value of wildlife and our work to conserve it.

Thanks also to The Cobtree Charity Trust and Blakemore Foundation for their support of the project. 🐦



Restoring choughs to Kent

Help us return choughs to our county and be part of history

Today, very few people have heard of the red-billed chough (*pronounced "chuff"*), or know of its place in the tales, myths and legends which pepper our history, from former Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket to Shakespeare's King Lear.

Sadly, its experience in the real world is an all too familiar story.

Once a common sight on the chalk grassland and cliffs around Dover, this striking member of the crow family fell victim to historical persecution and

intensive farming practices, leading to its widespread extinction. The choughs have now been missing from Kent for over 200 years.

But the Kentish chough story is far from over. Kent Wildlife Trust and Wildwood Trust are working in partnership to bring back this charismatic species, having restored large areas of precious chalk grassland habitat to create thriving spaces that are teeming with colour and life, perfect for choughs.

Over the past 30 years, Kent Wildlife Trust has worked hard to



Hazel Eddy

As Head of Fundraising for Kent Wildlife Trust, Hazel is passionate about the protection and restoration of the natural world and works with philanthropic individuals and organisations to facilitate and finance this.

protect and restore vital reserves of habitat. Thanks to the incredible support of our members and supporters, we are now able to take the next step in restoring this landscape. We can now return missing choughs to our county and create an even Wilder Kent.

Wilder Kent is our vision for the restoration of nature in Kent, creating wildlife-rich landscapes and seascapes and returning our missing species to their rightful places. Our approach is all about reconnecting people with nature; and choughs, with their cultural significance in Kent, can do exactly that.



DID YOU KNOW?



- 1** Chalk grassland is one of our rarest habitats: **80% of it has been lost since the Second World War.**
- 2** A massive **50%** of the world's remaining chalk grassland can be found in England, and **2.5% of this is within Dover.**



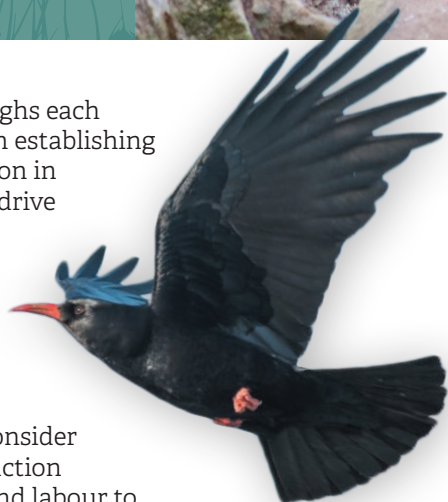
FACT BOX


- ❶ Choughs are the rarest member of the crow family in the UK.
- ❷ They are the only crows with red bills and legs.
- ❸ Choughs nest on rock ledges, cliff faces, and abandoned buildings, such as the war-time structures found along the White Cliffs of Dover.
- ❹ Choughs mate for life.
- ❺ Choughs and grazing animals have mutually beneficial relationships. Grazing livestock keep grassland short which helps choughs find insects in soil and dung. Choughs eat the parasitic insects which affect livestock and consume crops, thereby regulating animal disease and helping farmers.
- ❻ These iconic birds feature strongly in the cultural history of our region; choughs can be found on pub signs and coats of arms throughout Kent.
- ❼ Legend has it that, as former Archbishop Thomas Becket lay dying, a crow flew down and paddled in his blood, acquiring a scarlet beak and feet, transforming into a chough.



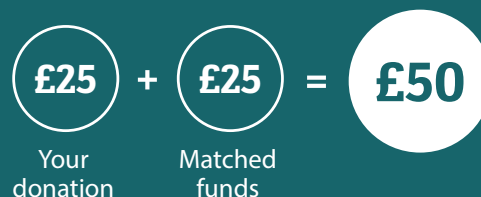
CHOUGH GROUP © PARADISE PARK, CHOUGH FLYING © JANET PACKHAM, CHALK GRASSLAND © JIM HIGHAM

We plan to release young choughs each year and support these birds in establishing a self-sustaining wild population in Kent. This reintroduction will drive the restoration of rare clifftop grassland habitat, benefitting other species across southern England, including bats, birds and some of our rarest butterflies.



There are a range of costs to consider to make this historic reintroduction possible, including materials and labour to construct a release aviary, feed and veterinary care, monitoring equipment, volunteer training, and more. 

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION double your impact



Kent Wildlife Trust and Wildwood Trust now have an amazing opportunity: a generous funder has offered to match every pound we raise up to **£60,000** per organisation – that's up to an additional **£120,000!** This means that every donation you make will have **DOUBLE** the impact, helping us return these iconic birds to their habitat, flying wild and free across the coast of Kent.



If you would like to donate to the Chough Appeal and help us welcome the choughs back to Kent please visit:

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/choughappeal

BRAND NEW REPORT FROM WILDER CARBON:

Unlocking the climate benefits of large-scale nature restoration across the UK

The climate and nature crises pose threats to our entire planet, putting the survival of every species at risk, **including our own.**

These dual challenges are inextricably interlinked so we must tackle them together. We need to act now to avoid crucial ecological tipping points and prevent runaway climate breakdown.

The time for action, and the solutions that nature offers, are now being acknowledged across the world. By restoring native habitats at scale, we can capture carbon from the atmosphere and store it for the long term, reducing the risks to nature and climate.

Until artificial carbon capture technologies become cheaper and more easily scalable, **Natural Climate Solutions (NCS)** offer the most affordable, politically sensible solution.

NCS are conservation, restoration and improved land management actions that increase carbon storage or avoid greenhouse gas emissions across landscapes and wetlands. They harness natural processes and utilise '**ecosystem engineer**' species to restore habitats and create biodiverse and climate resilient land and seascapes.

We must not tackle the climate crisis in isolation, leaving the nature crisis to worsen in the background. NCS provide a mechanism to deal with both challenges together.

Wilder Carbon is an NCS project established by Kent Wildlife Trust with a simple proposition: to ensure that large-scale restoration of native ecosystems across the UK becomes a major weapon in our arsenal for combating the climate and nature crises.

The abundance of world-class conservation organisations across the UK offers an amazing



Paul Hadaway,
As Director of Conservation at Kent Wildlife Trust, Paul develops and implements conservation and green space policies and drives nature-based solutions across Kent.

opportunity to deliver large-scale nature restoration. Wilder Carbon is teaming up with carefully selected organisations – those with a proven track record of safeguarding local wildlife habitats, locking up carbon and working effectively with businesses - to convert residual organisational emissions into a premium quality, ethical investment in local nature.

In our recent report, we used the most accurate scientific information available to estimate how much carbon could be locked up if we restore habitats at a large scale across the UK, as well as how much money could be generated as a result.

Read the report here

 Wilder Carbon Summary and Modelling reports

wildercarbon.com/publications



THE HEADLINE FIGURES OF THE REPORT ARE STRIKING:

native habitat restoration across the UK could lock up **676.48 million tonnes of CO₂** over the next 30 years.

In fact, the report shows that feasible, large-scale restoration of nature could lock up the carbon equivalent of 17 years of UK aviation emissions back into landscapes.

This is a relatively big number despite our very conservative modelling approach. That's the point: there is massive untapped potential for climate mitigation and adaptation in restoring our native ecosystems across the UK.

The World Economic Forum estimates that NCS could deliver 7GtCO₂e globally each year (Adams et al., 2021).

The Finance Gap for UK Nature report shows that a minimum of £44 - £97 billion of additional investment will be needed over the next decade to meet the UK's nature-related ambitions. Our estimates on the potential financial value of Wilder Carbon, although extremely conservative (given that carbon prices are ever increasing), still suggests this approach could generate £30.44bn towards this target.

Projects like Wilder Carbon have the potential to help us meet climate targets, tackle the nature crisis and close the climate agenda's funding gap.

Our report concludes that, in governmental terms, the large-scale restoration of nature should be seen as a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)'. Nature is even more fundamental than roads or rail or energy, all of which are seen as NSIPs. The ecosystem services that nature provides are the foundation of our economy. It's time to restore nature for the sake of our species and those we live alongside.

The restoration of native habitats needs to become our **Nationally Critical Natural Infrastructure Project**. Such scalable restoration should be prioritised by the Government to ensure that the UK is resilient to current and future climate change.

NCS need to be delivered through native habitat restoration and natural regeneration.

Perhaps even more importantly, future 'management' should be achieved by (re)instigating natural processes. For example, leaving the seabed alone, returning beavers to naturally re-engineer our wetland landscapes and implementing low-intensity grazing regimes that mimic native animal activity.

This will increase structural complexity, ecological dynamism, biodiversity and bio-abundance (greater numbers of different types of animals and plants) in our native habitats. These actions will also maximise co-benefits like improved water quality or flood and drought prevention. Most critically, they will improve landscapes' resilience and adaptability to climate change and, therefore, increase their ability to lock up carbon in the face of changing weather patterns and increasing risks of fire and disease.

Our short-hand for this approach is making land and sea 'wilder' – a term encompassing approaches which deliver a unique set of benefits for the climate and nature.

Our report highlights the necessity to act and unlock the untapped potential of nature-based solutions in the UK before it is too late. We have emerging NCS assurance mechanisms, such as the Wilder Carbon Standards, to enable private sector investment and get Wilder Carbon-type projects going now, while we can still make an impact.

There is a political and ethical imperative to act.

We have the workforce to deliver for nature in the form of world-class land management, nature conservation and academic sectors.

We cannot afford to wait. 🌱



WILDER BLEAN

steps up a gear



Stan Smith

As Wilder Landscapes Manager at Kent Wildlife Trust, Stan brings wilding experts together with farmers to promote nature-based solutions for the modern world.

As spring turns to summer next year, after the frost thaws and the buds burst open on the trees, four European bison will be arriving at Blean Woods. To prepare for their arrival, Kent Wildlife Trust and Wildwood Trust will be hard at work this holiday season.

In early summer 2022, the bison will be travelling to Kent from across Europe. Their initial steps into Blean Woods will be the first semi-wild bison hoofprints to mark British soil for thousands of years.

Thanks to funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery, Kent Wildlife Trust and Wildwood Trust have partnered up to show how European bison can provide a sustainable solution to woodland management in South East England.

Similar projects across Europe have proved that bison, known as 'ecosystem engineers', can restore the natural biodiversity of a landscape. Natural bison behaviours - grazing, dust bathing, eating bark and felling trees - enable other species to thrive.

The presence of bison at the Blean, alongside Exmoor ponies and Iron-Age pigs, will transform the woods into a lush, thriving, biodiverse environment once more and allow us to step back from hands-on management.

Now that we are in the winter season, preparations have really started to pick up pace at Blean Woods.

We've created new ponds for the animals to drink from and we're rapidly putting up fences which will keep the animals safe.

Our Bison Rangers, Tom Gibbs and Donovan Wright, recently travelled to Holland to learn from rangers working on similar projects and have brought this precious expertise back to the UK.

If you're visiting the Blean over the next few months, please be aware that it is a busy place with all this work going on, but you'll find new maps to help you navigate this beautiful reserve.

We can't wait for the animals to arrive, the machinery to leave and the Blean to start becoming a much wilder place. 🐾



You can help!
Text **WILDERBLEAN** to
70470 to give £5 now!



To learn more about our Wilder Blean project and to find out ways in which you can help, please visit

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderblean

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



REBUGGING OUR HOMES



Several species of spider thrive in houses



Vicki Hird

Having worked on environment, food and farming issues for over 25 years, Vicki explores more insect stories in her new book, *Rebugging the Planet: The Remarkable Things that Insects (and Other Invertebrates) Do — And Why We Need to Love Them More*

I've always loved bugs, from the ants in my garden to the huge rhinoceros beetles that wander our woodlands. Concerned by their alarming signs of decline, I've tried to share my love and encourage everyone to do what they can to help save them.

We can all benefit — humans and bugs alike — by rebugging our lives and homes; starting with how we think and view bugs, to how we eat, garden, what we buy and even how we talk about them.

Wildlife is all around us: it's not just out in the countryside, in woodlands or other remote wild places. It's in our towns, our gardens and even our homes! Here I explore — and celebrate — some of the tiniest housemates that have moved in with us, either permanently or just for a short stay (and that you might not even know about)...





Sharing your space

Your home and garden can be wonderful places, and not just for you. Thousands of creatures, visible and hidden, share these spaces with you. From the fly-catching spiders sheltering in the corners of your bedroom, to the worms wriggling through your garden soil, the teeny pollinating wasps in your window box, and the cavity-nesting tree bumblebees tucked into a gap in your eaves. Not only do these creatures live peacefully and often unnoticed around you, they also contribute much to your life. They are gardeners that help your flowers flourish, farmers that lend a hand with your home-grown veg, and bouncers that get rid of other less welcome house guests.



Nooks for nature

The cracks and crevices around our houses are hugely important for our bugs. They serve as everything from a nesting place for bees and wasps, to a lurking space for others. One species that may move in is a centipede. Centipedes, whilst harmless to us, use their huge jaws to feast on other bugs you won't want around like silverfish, carpet beetle larvae, and cockroaches. They will hide in cracks around your house, such as drains and damp dark spaces. If you spot a centipede scurrying from its hiding place, take a close look as they are fascinating to watch.



Eight-legged lodgers

Do you shudder with fear when you see a spider? It's worth giving that reaction a rethink, as these wonderfully diverse and useful creatures are very unlikely to harm you. You are a far bigger threat to them and if you can resist the urge to hurt them, that's a great start. Your home and garden provide cosy spaces for these handy housemates.

Spiders make great neighbours as they munch through huge volumes of insects each year, including ants, mosquitoes, cockroaches, aphids, flies, and even fleas. They are food too for your garden birds. Welcome the spiders with open arms (even if it is at arm's length!)



The hidden underworld

Your garden soil is home to many more critters than worms. The soil, in which we grow most of our food, is created largely by the guts and jaws of worms, mites, springtails, termites, beetles and many more. If you can imagine the soil as a cooking recipe, the bugs basically do all the cutting, grating, mashing, grinding and, given their role in moving fungus and microbes about, they ensure fermentation happens too. They also help draw down air, water and nutrients; your flowers, grass and spuds would not grow without the huge array of hard-working hidden beasts beneath your feet. 🐛



IMAGES CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TREE BUMBLEBEE © KIM TAYLOR NATURE PL; CELLAR SPIDER © VAUGHN MATTHEWS; GLOBULAR SPRINGTAIL, CENTIPEDE © ALEX HYDE NATURE PL

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Marden Farmer Cluster rallies their village to boost biodiversity

Marden farmers are working with local volunteers to improve our landscape, ways of working, and existing perceptions of the Low Weald. The day job of farms, producing food for all of us, continues uninterrupted, while increasing biodiversity is becoming a joint effort with the village.

Our conservation efforts started when the fields north of Marden Meadows sprouted green-winged orchids from a sea of willow and fleabane. Thanks to fresh, green hay (containing an incredible array of wildflower seeds) that was collected from Marden Meadows and spread over the fields, the number of orchids has drastically improved. A Kent Wildlife Trust survey in 2019 recorded over 2,000 orchids.

Meanwhile, local farmer Peter Hall's collaboration with ornithologist Ray Morris has improved populations of rare farmland birds, and other farms have signed up to the Countryside Stewardship scheme, and are experimenting with regenerative agriculture.

After comparing notes with Peter Hall in 2020, we decided to launch more ambitious Countryside Stewardship applications and see how many of our farming neighbours were interested in forming a Kent Wildlife Trust Farmer Cluster, where best practice and joint initiatives could be shared.

The village became involved and formed Marden Wildlife, through which volunteers are given access to farmland to observe and record wildlife.



Lou Carpenter, Marden Farmer

As a plant enthusiast, Lou is inspired by the biodiversity of the woods and meadows of the Low Weald.



Kent Wildlife Trust has been working with groups of farmers to facilitate conversations about improving the situation for wildlife in their local areas. Around our Marden Meadow Nature Reserve, the farmers and local community have been making positive changes for wildlife, and we are very pleased to share some of their work with you.



Stan Smith, Kent Wildlife Trust



By working together on shared initiatives, village volunteers and farmers have formed new friendships and an improved understanding of how the countryside can better support wildlife in the future.

A farming friend recently asked how to 'do a Marden?'

I replied: 'It takes a village.' 🐝



To find out more, follow @MardenWildlife on Facebook and Twitter or visit mardenwildlife.org.uk

Living with us on our farms...

Turtle doves Yellowhammers

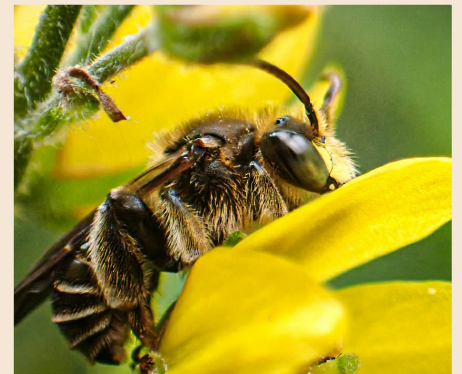
Barn owls 6 orchid species

True fox and elongated sedges

Tiger sawgill mushrooms

Many rare bee species

400+ moth species Glow worms



Marden Wildlife volunteers are helping wildlife by:

- Ringing birds to monitor populations
- Sharing information on bird movements
- Mapping hedgehog distributions
- Monitoring trail cameras
- Counting bats, butterflies and reptiles
- Collecting small mammal droppings for Sussex University
- Systematic cataloguing of plants and animals
- Sharing knowledge and photographs
- Contributing sightings to Operation Turtle Dove



Citizen scientists are helping us understand the plight of insects in the UK

Gathering evidence to show the need for urgent action is the first step in making a difference, and it starts with you.

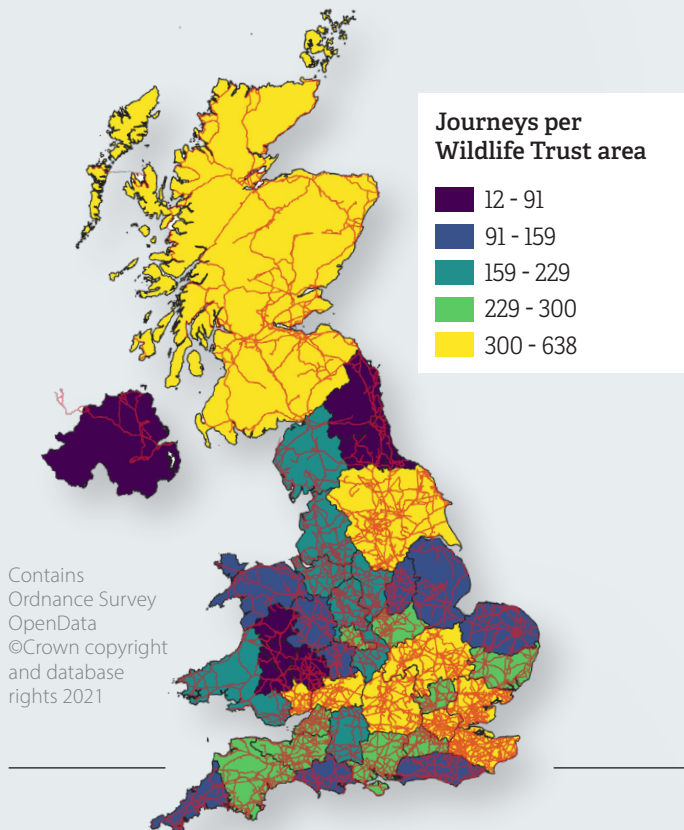
On behalf of the Bugs Matter project partners at Buglife and Essex, Somerset, Gwent and Kent Wildlife Trusts, we want to thank everyone who took part in our Bugs Matter survey over the summer!

We have really enjoyed collecting your findings on our new citizen science app, Bugs Matter. Developed by Kent Wildlife Trust with Natural Aptitude, the app helps to monitor insect populations by recording the number of bugs accidentally squashed on your car number plates.

Participation this year was fantastic, with a **total of 4,998 journeys** logged on our Bugs Matter app nationally. In Kent alone, **337 people collectively recorded 638 journeys**. Insects are a critical component of ecosystems; without them, life on earth would collapse. You've taken the first step in helping us gather crucial information about our insect populations, which will help us figure out how to protect them.

We know there have been catastrophic declines in insect numbers over the past several decades but there is hope. The fast reproductive rates of insects mean that

This map shows all the journeys taken over the survey period, and the number within each Wildlife Trust area.



populations could bounce back, if they are given a chance.

By running this survey every summer over the coming years, we will be able to better understand local differences in insect populations and help target efforts to save them. Your participation is vital to us so please keep your app, and join in again next year. 🟢

🟢 For more information on Bugs Matter and how to download and use the app, visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/bugs-matter

In the meantime, here are some ways you can help insects in your home and garden:

Please avoid chemicals – insecticides, slug pellets and weedkiller are harmful to wildlife, including bats and hedgehogs. In fact, why not go one step further and sign this petition to ban urban and garden pesticides: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/pesticideban

Leave a wild area in your garden for wildlife to shelter, feed and hibernate. Brambles, nettles and long grass are great for all kinds of insects, including butterflies and moths. Birds, such as goldfinches, love teasel and wildflower seed heads.

If you have space in your garden, a pond with sloping edges and a few plants is one of the best things you can create to help wildlife to thrive.

Create a beetle bucket, perfect for small gardens: filling a bucket with rotting wood and leaves makes an ideal home for all sorts of beetles and other insects.

🟢 For more advice about wildlife gardening, visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/action-insects

A HOPEFUL JOURNEY THROUGH A CRISIS

Rebirding by Benedict Macdonald



Hazel Eddy
As Head of Fundraising for Kent Wildlife Trust, Hazel is passionate about the protection and restoration of the natural world and works with philanthropic individuals and organisations to facilitate and finance this.

To suggest a book or topic for a future review please email comms@kentwildlife.org.uk

Despite the title, *Rebirding* is not only for the keen birders among us.

This book is for anyone and everyone with a desire to understand the biodiversity crisis we currently face.

The author, Benedict Macdonald, took me on a historical journey of biodiversity loss that astounded and, in parts, horrified me. He eloquently and passionately explains that we are not even aware of how much biodiversity we are missing, making the first half of this book a sobering read.

Macdonald narrates his own journey of self-discovery as he uncovers innovative approaches to conservation with a boundless enthusiasm for wildlife, and summarises how the latest scientific

studies support his thinking. He discusses the conflict between the human desire for neatness and order and nature's refusal to work within these artificial boundaries. This war on nature has been systemic and brutal, and we are on the cusp of running out of time to make amends.


This summary might sound negative, but this book gives us something we all need right now: hope. Macdonald shows readers that we can turn the tide on the biodiversity crisis we are facing, and that the urgency and pace which we need to mobilise is already present. Kent Wildlife Trust, with the support of its members, is well placed to make significant positive change, and I am incredibly proud that we are at the forefront of this shift.

Rebirding has opened my eyes to a world I have missed. I have never experienced clouds of butterflies or the deafening sounds created by an abundance of wildlife, certainly not in the UK. The closest I have been to that visceral hum of life was during a visit to Tortuguero National Park in Costa Rica, and I do not want to have to travel to the other side of the world to encounter vibrant ecosystems. I would like to see them here in our national parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and beyond the pockets of our nature reserves.

“ ..we can turn the tide on the biodiversity crisis we are facing.. ”

After this read I am, more than ever, desperate to give nature the space it needs to recover. I would recommend *Rebirding* to anyone who wants to learn more about the biodiversity crisis, wilding and how our vision of a Wilder Kent will help in the fight to save nature. Things must not get any worse for wildlife; we must try anything and everything to improve its plight.

I, like the author, can only defend our attempts to do more with one key question, and that is: why not? 🍷

 *Rebirding* is available to purchase from our visitor centres and online shop at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/shop






Open gardens season is over... but there is plenty to get involved in this winter!

Our volunteers are looking back on a successful season of travelling across the county to stunning garden settings and sharing their knowledge and experiences with a variety of people - perhaps even some of you reading this.



We would like to thank our guests for their lovely feedback. Here are just a few comments shared with us:

-  "Came away bursting with ideas"
-  "Inspired to plant a wildlife-friendly garden"
-  "I could really relate to it. So impressive how much the garden owner has done with a small space, and how colourful and vibrant it looks. I hope she will open it next year so I can come again."

Over the coming winter months, we will be running a series of **interactive Zoom workshops** which people can enjoy in the comfort of their own homes, whatever the weather.

Participant numbers will be restricted to ensure everyone has the chance to ask questions.

You can find the dates and times of these workshops on page 47.

Our 2022 season starts on 10 April and will include some new gardens, as well as some of our past favourites. There will be more details in the spring edition of this magazine but, if you would like a sneak preview, we are aiming to share these events on our website in the new year. 🗨️



Find out more about open garden events at

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events



If you have topics of particular interest or would like a bespoke workshop for your organisation or family, please contact maureen.rainey@kentwildlife.org.uk



Booking is essential: you can visit our website at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events, or scan the QR code here.



GARDEN © JIM HIGHAM, STAG BEETLE © R&S PILBOROUGH

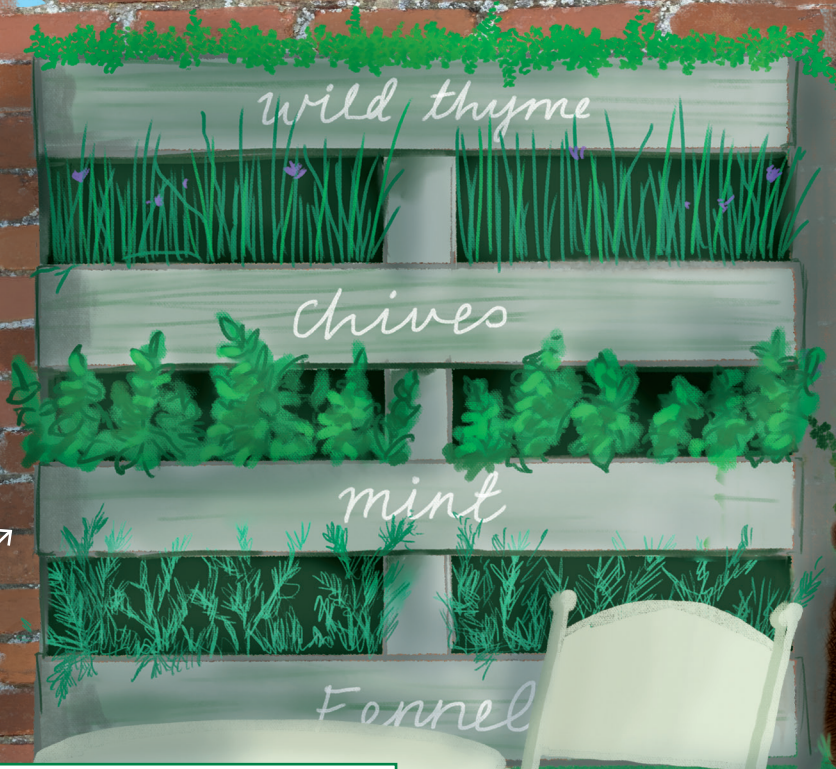
Upcycle your garden for wildlife

Wildlife gardening needn't be expensive. There's nothing more rewarding than upcycling old, broken or unused household items into wildlife habitats for the garden.



Use hessian bags to grow bee-friendly plants

Many bee-friendly plants grow well in pots and hessian bags make excellent alternatives that you can pack away in winter. Choose drought-tolerant catmint, lavender and Mediterranean herbs like oregano and mint.



Pallet herb garden

An upturned pallet can add height to your garden. You can paint it a nice colour and simply wedge plants in their pots between the slats.

Grow plants in saucepans

Drill holes in old saucepans and other kitchen containers to make plant pots. They're perfect for salad crops such as lettuce and radish, plus herbs such as chives and parsley.



Upcycling is a fantastic way to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, while saving you money too. Who needs to buy expensive plant pots when there are old saucepans, wellington boots or even basins and toilets that can be used instead? Or how about making a pond from your old bath or kitchen sink?

There are no limits to what you can do with old, broken and unused items. Use your imagination to find creative ways to find new uses for forgotten possessions in the loft or shed. What can you use to make a cosy bird box for a blue tit or a refugium for slow worms? Do you have enough old bits of wood to knock up a hedgehog or bat box?

Whatever you choose, make sure you use materials safely and effectively. Upcycled gardens look fun, quirky and unique. They can make fantastic wildlife habitats, too. 🍀

Get more wildlife gardening tips on our website

 [wildlifetrusts.org/actions](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions)



Kate Bradbury

Passionate about wildlife-friendly gardening, Kate is the author of *Wildlife Gardening for Everyone* and *Everything* in association with The Wildlife Trusts.

ILLUSTRATION BY KATY FROST, PHOTO © SARAH CUTTLE

Tin can bee hotels

Fix an old tin can to a fence or wall and pack it with dried, hollow plant stems from 1mm to 12mm in diameter, to attract a range of solitary bees and wasps. Make sure the can overhangs the stems so they don't get wet.

A teapot bird house

An old teapot can make the perfect nest site for a robin or wren. Hang it with the spout facing down, in a sheltered site away from cats and other predators.

Plant tray bird bath

Fill an old plant pot tray with water to make a bird bath. Stand it on old bricks to raise it from the ground or leave it low to provide water for hedgehogs. Add a stone to help bees escape if they get stuck.

Old sink pond

A Belfast sink or old baby bath make attractive mini container ponds, or sink a full-sized bath into the ground for a bigger pond. Pile up logs or stones to make sure wildlife can get in and out safely.



GIVE THE GIFT OF CONSERVATION

Visitor Centre **Events**

Bringing birds to you!

Winter is a great time of year to attract birds to your garden and there are plenty of ways to encourage more to visit your home this Christmas season.

If you have space, you could set up a range of birdfeeders for all kinds of small garden birds including sparrows, robins, blue tits and the larger blackbirds and thrushes.



GILLIAN DAY



It is amazing seeing birds jump around and interact with each other. In my garden I have

two feeding stations which I watch with a morning cup of tea. This gives me hours of entertainment.

The placement of the stations is important because you need to make the birds feel safe enough to come to the feeders. I like to hide my feeders amongst branches at different levels so I can see them all at the same time.

At the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre, we have a feeding station outside the window of the café, placed in a clearing between bramble and teasel.

At Sevenoaks Visitor Centre, we have two feeding stations: one amongst the trees which can be seen up close by sitting in the hide next to the centre; and one in the elemental garden where you can watch some of our lovely garden birds.

If you are interested in improving your garden for wildlife, please speak to our visitor centre staff who would love to share their knowledge with you! 🐦

Jake Jones
Visitor Centre Manager

Why not help our visitor centre volunteer team with online sales in 2022?

By giving the gift of your time, you can help Kent Wildlife Trust grow the funds that support our crucial conservation work.

 You can find out more information by emailing volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk or visiting our website: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering



Did you know that you can donate some of the income of any items that you sell on eBay to Kent Wildlife Trust?

Just select “donate a portion to charity” when listing your items and eBay will automatically send your desired percentage to the Trust when your items sell.

Find out more at charity.ebay.co.uk/charity/Kent-Wildlife-Trust/145548

 Shop at [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) and Amazon will donate to your favourite charity at no additional cost to you.

Make sure to select **Kent Wildlife Trust** and support local wildlife while you shop!

Give an experience

Struggling to tick someone off your Christmas shopping list? Why not treat them to a trip in the new year? Tickets to our Wilder Kent Safaris, workshops and other events make great gifts, and you'll know that the experience you're giving is helping wildlife in Kent.

 To book, go to kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events



Last-minute Christmas shopping

For last-minute Christmas gifts that also support the Trust, visit our online shop! By choosing to shop with Kent Wildlife Trust, you will be supporting wildlife from the comfort of your own home. Find a selection of gifts for friends and family at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-shop

Please order by **15th December** if you want your items in time for Christmas.



CORPORATE PACKAGES

Your business can make a difference



Become a **Corporate Member** and directly support local wildlife conservation today

KINGFISHER © ROB BATES



Ask your employer to become a **Corporate Member**.

It's easy: all they need to do is contact Lucie Bolton, our Corporate Partnerships Manager, at lucie.bolton@kentwildlife.org.uk

Or visit our corporate webpage for more information: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/support-us/become-business-member

Our mission is to create a Wilder Kent, but we can't do it alone. We know businesses can help, so if you work for a business or are a business owner, we want to hear from you.

There are many ways for a business, no matter how big or small, to support Kent Wildlife Trust and our work to protect and restore wildlife habitats. From corporate membership to bespoke partnerships, we can work together.

The world is waking up to the climate and nature crises we are facing. Show your staff and customers you support our work with exclusive use of our corporate logo alongside other benefits, including staff membership discount, fundraising and sponsorship ideas, volunteering days, talks, guided walks, networking opportunities and much more. 🐦

“ Jarmans and Kent Wildlife Trust have a fruitful and longstanding relationship given Jarmans' commitment to nature and the ecosystem. Kent Wildlife Trust do a great deal of amazing work and we are proud to support them to ensure that our world – and the natural cycles on which it is so reliant – are there for future generations to enjoy. We would encourage others to do the same. ”

Jay Sahota, Senior Partner, Jarmans Solicitors, Current Corporate Member



Our Consultancy Services offer professional ecological advice

Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy Services works with landowners, developers, businesses, Parish Councils, and transport and statutory organisations to create a Wilder Kent.

We are the South East's leading ecological consultancy company. Our small team of experienced and dedicated ecologists, arboriculturists, GIS experts, land managers and surveyors work across Kent throughout the year, tackling the combined challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change.

We have extensive expertise in applying nature-based solutions which put wildlife at the heart of planning and land management decision making. We create networks for nature's recovery using the latest evidence-based conservation advice. Working locally helps us understand the condition of important wildlife sites so that we can advise on

how to protect them from development and other damaging human activities.

We focus our unique approach on projects which offer the greatest benefits to Kent's wildlife, utilising specialist local knowledge while always working with landscape-scale conservation in mind. This means that we can effectively and efficiently restore wildlife and wild places. Crucially, all our profits go back into conservation work in Kent.

This is a critical time for our environment. Developers must follow new rules and principles including Biodiversity Net Gain, under which they must preserve and restore existing habitats, and create new habitats, so that their development leaves the environment in a better state than they found it.

At Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy Services, we are at the forefront of developing and testing these approaches, ensuring the best possible boost for local nature while influencing land management across the country.

CASE STUDY

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve

Human activities on our coast, such as kite surfing, jet skiing, and out-of-control dogs, were suspected to be the cause of declining populations of wintering and breeding coastal birds. But, to drive change, we needed evidence.

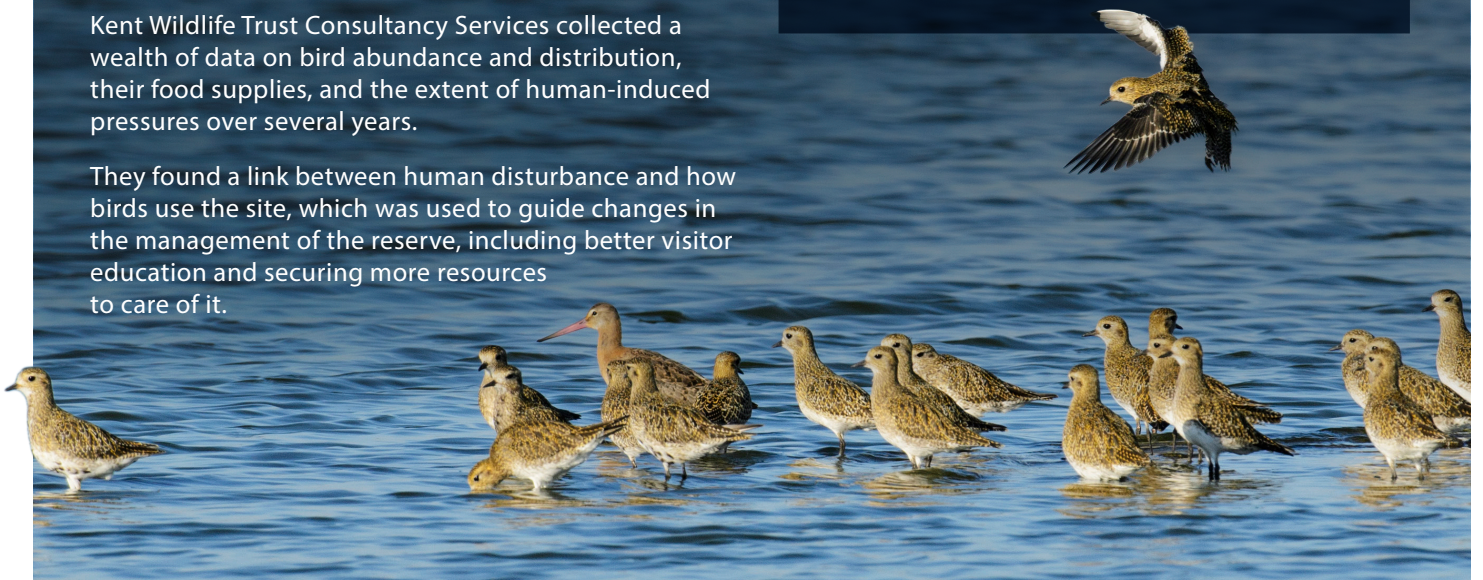
Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy Services collected a wealth of data on bird abundance and distribution, their food supplies, and the extent of human-induced pressures over several years.

They found a link between human disturbance and how birds use the site, which was used to guide changes in the management of the reserve, including better visitor education and securing more resources to care of it.

“ Managing human activity and its impact on wildlife, however, is an ongoing challenge. ”



Find out more about our work at kwtconsultancyservices.org.uk





The Restless World of
SALTMARSHES



It is currently estimated that there are 48,250 hectares of saltmarsh in the United Kingdom — that's just under 70,000 football pitches!

The Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould's melodrama, *Mehalah: a Story of the Salt Marshes*, is a cautionary tale of estuarine life where the heroine's fate is bound up in a maze of creeks and back channels. The novel celebrates the marshes:

'A more desolate region can scarce be conceived, and yet it is not without beauty'.

My childhood memories are those of *Mehalah's* marshes, which surround Mersea Island, off the Essex coast. The reek of silty ooze never really leaves you, nor do the reflections on engulfing tides or the astonishing concentration of life in so superficially barren a place.

Saltmarsh habitats can be found wherever plants are soaked in brine. As an island nation we tend to think of saltmarshes as coastal habitats, but that is not always the case — Worcestershire Wildlife Trust care for a saltmarsh near landlocked Droitwich Spa, where avocet chicks feed amongst the saline turf and pools. For all lovers of wildflowers, wherever you live, there will be a kerbside near to you where a suite of salty species has followed the spread of council gritters.

Shaped by cattle

Like most of our country's habitats, the ecosystems of saltmarshes co-evolved with large wild mammals. Aurochs, the native wild cattle of Europe, were last known on our saltmarshes some 3,500 thousand years ago, by which time domesticated cows were well established as their successors. The most diverse saltmarshes for birds, plants and invertebrates are those with high structural diversity which is created by extensive cattle grazing.

To the eye, high structural diversity means a patchy landscape of flowery creek sides with lawns of shorter turf; it's a tough world to live in, where few things thrive but many survive. Such tensions are integral to biologically-diverse places.

Before the advent of industrial farming, our saltmarshes were some of the most important pastures in the rural economy. Not only do tidal marshes get a twice-daily dose of silty fertility, but their saltiness also suppresses the disorders of livestock that abound in freshwater wetlands.

For at least 2,000 years, our ancestors tried to tame this wild abundance by building seawalls, so creating the vast brackish grazing marshes of our southern estuaries. The Gwent and Somerset Levels of the Severn Estuary retain some of our richest marshes, including those cared for by the Gwent Wildlife Trust, that have recently been reprieved from a realignment of the M4 motorway. Unfortunately, the natural wealth of our



Grazing cattle create diverse marshes



Saltmarshes are being lost at a rate of c.100ha a year, mostly to sea level rise

Our nature reserves help us to appreciate the importance of local distinctiveness in this superficially desolate but unquestionably beautiful landscape.

saltmarshes is overlooked by some people who mistakenly regard them as worthless places that are just waiting to be built on.

The very best marshes are where there is a gradient from hyper-saline brine pools, crystallising under the summer sun, to channels with full-strength seawater that grade upstream to a point where the smallest pinch of salt is barely detectable. These complete transitions can be found around sea lochs and sheltered bays in the North-West, but they are exceptionally rare in the South where those coastal landscapes have become fragmented. One such site can be found upstream of Southampton

Docks where the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust manage the Lower Test marshes. Surveys of the saltier parts of these marshes show their restless character, moving around the floodplain and migrating upstream as sea levels rise in response to climate change.

An ever-changing landscape

Past experience shows us that manipulating saltmarshes comes at a cost. Saltmarshes are naturally dynamic; over generations they shift across the landscape with the ebb and flow of the tide. As conservationists, we have no status quo to conserve; we have to embrace change

because we cannot stop it. Attempts to fix a saltmarsh to the spot, as a nature reserve or somewhere that's been built on, create long-term liabilities, not only in terms of maintaining the sea walls but also in terms of coping with the enhanced flood risk that this brings. We can delay responding to these natural processes, but each deferral means that when change comes, it is all the greater.

Essex Wildlife Trust has led the way in realigning seawalls so that there are new marshes that meet the needs of today. We now have the confidence that the wildlife who rely on these saltmarshes is eminently capable of moving into fresh sediments when the opportunity is offered. At the same time, the revived marsh becomes a nursery for the local fishery and a buffer against storm surges; and the thick organic sediments sequester carbon at a rate that exceeds most tree plantings. Once rejuvenated, healthy saltmarshes offer us a way to address the crisis of climate change.

There are 44 different plant communities recognised from British saltmarshes



Clive Chatters

Having worked for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust since the 1980s, Clive has written a celebration of Britain’s saltmarshes — *Saltmarsh, No.5* in the British Wildlife Collection — which was published in 2017 by Bloomsbury.

Wildlife havens

Saltmarshes, and particularly the abundant birdlife they support, inspired the establishment of the nature conservation movement in Britain. It was the opportunity to acquire the marshes at Cley on the north Norfolk coast that led to the foundation of the first Wildlife Trust in 1926. The guaranteed seasonal spectacle of migrating birds has enthused our movement to protect some of our largest nature reserves, from the sheltered Montrose Basin in Angus to the Rockcliffe marshes where Cumbria’s Solway coast meets the borderlands of Scotland.

Flocks from all over the northern hemisphere head to winter on our sediment shores: brent geese from Siberia, oystercatchers from Norway, knots from the Arctic and teals from the Baltic. The great journeys taken by estuarine birds are worthwhile because here, on the wet western limits of Europe, they find a winter refuge, free from the deep freeze of their breeding grounds.

The Wildlife Trusts have a particular role to play in safeguarding the diversity and wonder of saltmarshes. For generations, local people have treasured what makes their patch special — be that the super-diversity of beetles in a brackish creek or a picotee strand of thrift along the tideline. Collectively the Wildlife Trusts have taken responsibility for an astonishing assortment of habitats that we lump into the clumsy category of saltmarsh. Our nature reserves help us to appreciate the importance of local distinctiveness in this superficially desolate but unquestionably beautiful landscape. 🌱

Saltmarsh is one of our ‘super hero’ habitats when it comes to combatting climate change. Find out more about this habitat and others that need protecting and restoring to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to change:

wildlifetrusts.org/emergency





Save Swanscombe!

How Kent Wildlife Trust and partners are fighting to protect this biodiverse haven from destruction.

The Swanscombe Peninsula is one of the UK's best-kept conservation secrets. With a history of heavy industry, this protected area is a fantastic example of how nature, when left to its own devices, will reclaim and rewind.

This site is a mosaic of diverse habitats, from intricate wetland systems which are home to charismatic otters and water voles, to wet grazing marsh and dense scrub teeming with birds, to wildflower banks with beautiful, rare orchids.

Some of the most important areas of Swanscombe are the patches of bare ground interspersed with tiny flowering plants.





Swanscombe Peninsula



Marsh Harrier

These areas may not look like a typical wildlife haven, but they are home to the UK's most impressive population of invertebrates.

Natural England has recognised the incredible national importance of the Swanscombe Peninsula and has declared it a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This designation was confirmed in November following considerable support from environmental organisations and the public.

Yet the future of Swanscombe is far from secure: **the area is threatened with destruction by one company's quest to build a theme park.** This project has been classed as a 'Nationally Significant

Infrastructure Project' on economic grounds, meaning it can bypass many of the usual planning processes.

Kent Wildlife Trust has teamed up with Buglife, RSPB, CPRE Kent, and community groups to call on the UK Government to protect Swanscombe Peninsula, not only for the wildlife and people that depend on it, but to avoid setting a dangerous precedent for the destruction of our most precious wildlife sites.

A healthy economy is reliant on a healthy ecosystem; schemes which promise 'quick wins' for the economy must not threaten our survival. 🗳️

YOU CAN HELP

Our campaign is growing and our experts have been interviewed by newspapers and TV news stations across the country. On Saturday, 2 October 2021, over 100 people gathered on site to call for this special place to be saved.

Even celebrities have taken notice, with supportive messages from Kate Bradbury, Isabella Tree, Dr Amir Khan, Richard Taylor-Jones and many more.



Over 25,000 people have already signed the petition to fight for Swanscombe's future.

Go to kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/save-swanscombe to sign and tell the world that you think irreplaceable wildlife is more important than a theme park.



Follow **#SaveSwanscombe** to keep up-to-date with the campaign and hear about future opportunities to get involved.



Wilder Kent AWARDS



Does your village, town or city want to help fight the climate and nature crises?

Enter the Wilder Kent Awards



Kent Wildlife Trust will open registrations for the **2022 Wilder Kent Awards** at the end of this year.

Over the past year, schools and community groups across Kent have been taking part in Kent Wildlife Trust's Wilder Kent Awards.

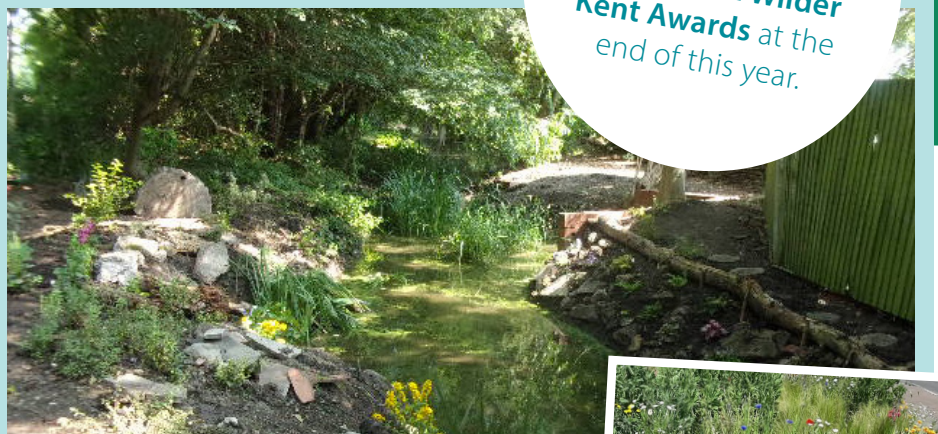
Launched in 2020, this scheme was created to make a real difference in communities by protecting nature and wildlife for future generations.

And, this year, we are launching new Wilder Kent Awards for villages, towns and cities.

Wildlife is in crisis. The natural world isn't just something for us to enjoy; it sustains us. The decline of nature puts our very survival and prosperity under threat, so we must work together today to restore nature and create a Wilder Kent.

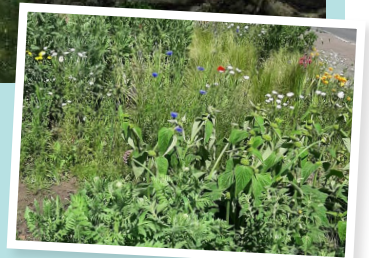
As well as celebrating positive actions that address threats to the natural world, the Wilder Kent Awards also promote groups that help connect adults and children with wildlife. In doing so, the scheme acknowledges the important role that nature plays in supporting mental health and wellbeing, and the positive impacts that connecting with nature can have on people and communities.

The Wilder Kent Awards will help Kent Wildlife Trust work with communities, developers and local councils to ensure that we all have access to wildlife in our towns and cities. We will help create new green spaces, improve existing ones and make sure people can enjoy them.



What Faversham Town Council has done to become a Wilder Kent Town

- Set up a Climate and Biodiversity Committee
- Committed to become carbon neutral by 2030
- Created an annual action plan to achieve key climate targets
- Adopted a 3-year Pesticide Free Towns action plan
- Set up a community garden initiative called 'Keep Faversham Buzzing'
- Organised a tree and seed giveaway so local people could plant them at home
- Set up a Youth Climate Panel to shape the council's decisions



This way, wildlife and people can flourish together.

Creating nesting spaces and insect-friendly road verges will help fill our skies with swifts again. Making our gardens wildlife friendly means we'll be able to show hedgehogs to our children in the coming years.

Over the past two years, we have worked alongside Faversham Town Council who have helped us to develop

the villages, towns and cities award based on the innovative work they have undertaken to become our first Wilder Kent Town.

We hope this award will inspire and help more urban areas to protect and restore nature, benefitting us all. ♡

To find out more, visit

 kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-kent-awards

Adopt a Bison!

Help fund our Wilder Blean project as we introduce these epic Ice Age animals to Kent!



Standing at 6ft tall, with their thick fur, horns and hump, bison might seem daunting but they are very mild mannered.

And they form a key part of our ecosystem. Bison like a good scratch and a spot of dust bathing, which creates bare earth and open woodland areas, benefitting countless other species in the area.

By adopting a bison today you can be part of this incredible new journey for Kent's wildlife – for now and many years to come!



Visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/shop
or call **01622 357812** to find out more.

UK UPDATE

We can't COP out on nature

Nature has a vital role in combatting the climate crisis



This November, world leaders gathered in Glasgow to discuss the actions needed to tackle the climate emergency. The 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties, known as COP26, brought together more than 190 world leaders and tens of thousands of representatives to find solutions to the worsening crises. Countries set out their latest plans to reduce emissions and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as well as adaptation plans for the climate changes that are now inevitable.

There was a sense of urgency around this conference, with the effects of current warming becoming increasingly evident, from record temperatures and widespread wildfires to an increase in episodes of very heavy rainfall and flooding. Changes to the climate are not just dangerous for people, they are also threatening wildlife, including here in the UK. In the run-up to COP26, The Wildlife Trusts worked hard to raise awareness of the connection between nature and climate, and to encourage the UK Government to take ambitious actions that focus on restoring wildlife, reducing emissions and improving the resilience of our natural world.

Nature must be at the heart of action on climate. Healthy natural landscapes can take in and store carbon, whilst damaged habitats often release even more

carbon into the atmosphere. Only by integrating climate action with nature's recovery can we achieve a net zero (where the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount taken out), climate resilient UK where nature is thriving by 2050. We need all of our national policies to be contributing to nature's restoration, not leading to further degradation. This includes affording better protection to the wild places we already have, such as upgrading Marine Protected Areas to Highly Protected Marine Areas, and designating new sites to create more space for nature.

Our 30 by 30 vision, which would see the UK restoring at least 30% of land and sea by 2030, is a minimum requirement for nature's recovery and relies on commitments and funding from the UK Government. Nature can't thrive in fractured pockets; we need to think bigger and link up our wild places.

However, it's not just the UK Government that needs to act. We can't achieve nature's recovery without wider support, which is why The Wildlife Trusts are so passionate about empowering people to take action. We want to see a wildlife-rich natural world at the heart of everybody's education and learning journey, inspiring a connection to nature that lasts a lifetime.

To help teachers inspire students about the habitats that can help combat the

Among other asks, The Wildlife Trusts are calling on Government to:

- Reform the planning system so that it helps to address the nature crisis by establishing Nature Recovery Networks and creating a new Wildbelt designation that promotes the protection and restoration of land.
- Effectively incentivise sustainable land use through new Environmental Land Management schemes to allow UK agriculture to significantly contribute to meeting net zero targets and securing 30% of land for nature's recovery.

The end of COP is just the start of the time for action! We will push for reforms until the future of nature is safe.

climate crisis, we recently launched a new climate education tool for Key Stage Two: Nature's Climate Heroes. Not only is this tool packed with information, it also provides students with positive actions to take so that they can make their own contribution to tackling the climate crisis.

If your school days are behind you, don't worry: we've also created some advice pages about actions you can take in your own life. Together, we can ensure a wilder future.

To find out how you can play your part, visit wildlifetrusts.org/taking-climate-action

UK UPDATE

Big vision, high ambition: A year of progress

This September marked the first anniversary of 30 by 30, our vision for 30% of land and sea to be restored for nature by 2030. In the past year we've launched some inspirational projects to restore land for nature, from saving meadows for mountain pansies in Shropshire to restoring Rhos Pasture in Radnorshire — marshy grasslands home to rare butterflies, curlews and snipes. Thanks to your generous support, we will continue to bring nature back across the UK, linking up wild places and protecting and repairing others. Our latest projects include securing more land for nature in Somerset's Avalon Marshes, an internationally important wetland landscape, home to waders, wildfowl, and rare insects and plants, as

well as establishing England's first large-scale community rewilding project on 170 hectares of land near Bere Regis, Dorset. 🐦

Discover more of our 30 by 30 projects at wildlifetrusts.org/30by30



SUNFLOWER © MATTHEW ROBERTS, WHITING INSIDE OF JELLYFISH © IAN WATKIN & CORNWALL WILDLIFE TRUST, SNIFE © ANDY ROUSE/2020VISION



Vine House Farm grows over 100 acres of sunflowers

Sunflower power

Vine House Farm, a birdfood supplier, has generated £2 million to support the conservation work of The Wildlife Trusts. For the past 14 years, The Trusts have been in partnership with the wildlife-friendly farm in Lincolnshire, with a percentage of each purchase of their bird seed going to local Wildlife Trusts and helping wildlife across the UK. This year saw the contribution pass an

impressive milestone, with the Covid-19 pandemic prompting more people than ever to purchase food for their garden birds. Vine House Farm grows 400 acres of bird seed crops, including the ever-popular sunflower seeds, as well as being a haven for wildlife itself, with a thriving population of tree sparrows and other farmland birds. Learn more at wtru.st/2-million

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 Great news for gulls

Gull chicks have fledged at South Walney Nature Reserve for the first time since 2015, thanks to a new predator-proof fence. Since 2017, no chicks have survived longer than a week, but this summer Cumbria Wildlife Trust recorded over 100 large and healthy chicks of lesser black-backed gulls and herring gulls — a red-listed and declining species. Find out more at wtru.st/Cumbria-gulls

2 Tadpole triumphs

The northern pool frog has been successfully reintroduced to Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Thompson Common, the last place it was recorded before its extinction in Britain in the 1990s. Since 2015, more than 1,000 pool frog tadpoles have been released onto the site, with early indications showing that the frogs will form a self-sustaining population. Learn more at wtru.st/frogs-return



3 Jelly jeopardy

Cornwall Wildlife Trust supporter Ian Watkins spotted the unusual sight of a whiting trapped inside the bell of a compass jellyfish whilst on a walk during National Marine Week. Juvenile fish often hide amongst jellyfish tentacles for protection from predators, but are occasionally stung and eaten.

It takes a county

Kent Wildlife Trust is leading the way in developing and showcasing **nature-based solutions** to politicians and industry alike.



Julia Hunt

As Head of Advocacy at Kent Wildlife Trust, Julia works with communities across Kent to persuade decision-makers like MPs that they can, and should, stand up for our wildlife.



At Kent Wildlife Trust, our vision is to create a Wilder Kent: where nature is restored on a massive scale with abundant, diverse wildlife thriving in every nook and cranny, making us happier, healthier and more resilient to the climate and nature crises.

But, we've said it before and we'll say it again: **we can't do this alone.** It takes everyone to drive change, from the highest level of government to each one of our fantastic members and volunteers.

For decades, the Wildlife Trusts have influenced important changes in UK legislation: from the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act which sets out how to manage our seas sustainably, to the recent Government commitment to set legal targets for nature's recovery, focusing not just on protecting nature, but on improving and restoring it.

As a national network of organisations with local expertise, we are in a unique position to create and deliver solutions that are practical and sustainable, despite wide regional differences in habitat, resources and politics.

Creating a Wilder Kent

Kent Wildlife Trust has always been at the heart of creating and delivering solutions. Our strong relationships with local MPs enable us to campaign for the laws we need to keep our wildlife safe, and you have been instrumental in demonstrating the public appetite for change. Whether you sign our petitions, join one of our volunteer activities or donate to our appeals, your support has helped us make key changes, from preventing poorly planned housing developments that threatened rare nightingale populations at Lodge Farm, to securing Marine Conservation Zones around Kent's coast. Just last month, the UK passed the long-awaited Environment Act, a landmark law that would never have been made as strong without your help.


This announcement came in the midst of a global climate conference, known as COP26, which was held in Glasgow in November. Over the course of two weeks, world leaders came together to accelerate global action to tackle the climate crisis.

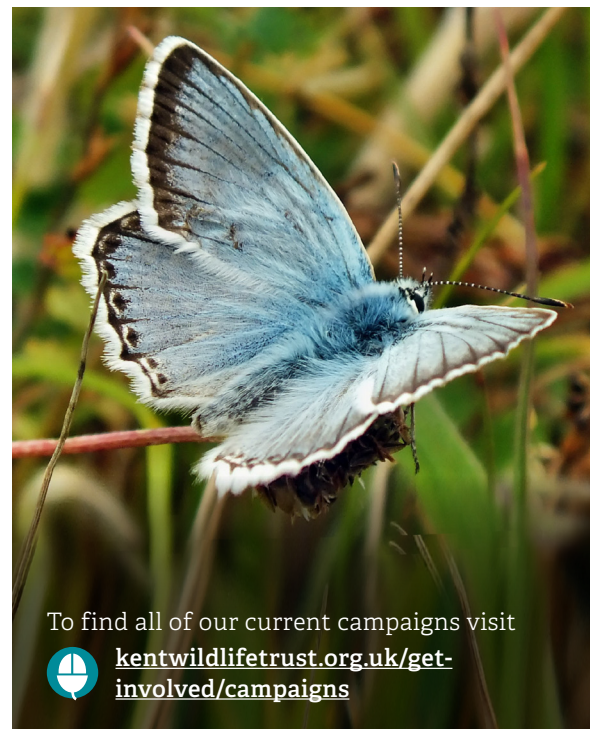
You can read more about this conference on pages 40 and 41. This conference was just the start: the time for talking is over and now it is time for action.

Whilst governments create policies and set targets for industry investment, emissions reductions and more, it's often non-governmental organisations like ours that figure out how to deliver these in practice.

Never has this been more true. We know that the climate and nature crises are inextricably linked and that we cannot fix one without the other. Kent Wildlife Trust is leading the way in developing and showcasing nature-based solutions to politicians and industry alike, from demonstrating how we can fund nature's recovery through the Wilder Carbon project to showing how we can restore landscapes on a massive scale, like our Wilder Blean bison project.

We need you more than ever, so please do speak up and act! Why not explore the wealth of opportunities we offer to help you learn new skills and meet new people as you double your impact for wildlife?

From saving a precious Site of Special Scientific Interest from destruction at Swanscombe (see page 36) to learning about wildlife-friendly gardening and sharing tips with your friends and neighbours (see pages 26 and 27), there are so many opportunities for you to make a difference to nature's recovery. 



To find all of our current campaigns visit



kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns

SMALL POND ©ROSS HODDINOTT/2020VISION, BUTTERFLY © PATRICK JEFFERIES

Join us on a Wildier Kent Safari!

Explore Blean Woods, where bison will soon roam. Wander the waterways of Ham Fen, which have been transformed by beavers. Learn about iconic choughs as you delve into the legends of our county.

This year, our specialist safari tour guides have been helping you to discover more about Kent Wildlife Trust's work: using nature-based solutions to manage landscapes and improve habitats across the county.

Walking safaris at Ham Fen have shown how the introduction of beavers 20 years ago has restored the waterways of Kent's last surviving fenland. We have also been running safaris at West Blean woods, where you can learn about our exciting plans to transform the landscape with bison, ponies, longhorn cattle and pigs as part of the Wildier Blean project.

Now, we are adding new locations and uncovering more stories about how natural solutions can help us respond to the climate and nature crises and create a Wildier Kent.

“The marshes provide internationally important habitat for overwintering and breeding wetland birds.”

In September, we met the team who look after the reserves on Kent's north coast, including the atmospheric Oare Marshes near Faversham. The marshes provide internationally important habitat for overwintering and breeding wetland birds. You can learn all about this on the new Oare Marshes safari, and see how the reserve's resident cattle herd are helping to create a rich and varied habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Next, we'll be heading to Kent's famous White Cliffs of Dover to learn about the reintroduction of choughs to the county!

These distinctive birds, with their bright red legs and beaks, became largely extinct due to intensive farming practices and historical persecution. They haven't been seen in the wild in Kent for over 200 years, but that's about to change. You'll be able to join us on a safari in the new year to explore the landscape that these birds will soon be flying over, and hear about all the fascinating historic links that choughs have to Kent.

Wildier Kent Safaris are the ideal way to find out all about these exciting projects. All income from ticket sales is reinvested in projects across the county, so when you buy tickets, you're supporting us to create a Wildier Kent. 🐦

Find out more at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/safaris



Wilder Holiday Club is coming!

There are countless benefits to be gained from children playing and learning outside, and connecting with nature. However, many parents and carers juggle work, childcare and other commitments. This means that we cannot always find time to spend outdoors with the children we look after. Kent Wildlife Trust is here to help.

What are we doing?

We are developing a new Holiday Club for children aged 5 - 11 years old. It will be full of fun activities, such as mini beast identification and pond dipping, and allow plenty of time to explore nature, learn about local wildlife, make new friends and let imaginations run wild.

When and where?

Our very first Wilder Holiday Club will take place in April 2022 (dates to be confirmed) at Tyland Barn, Maidstone, ME14 3BD.

Our Holiday Club will provide a fantastic opportunity for children to get outdoors and experience wildlife and nature.

The benefits of outdoor activities, play and learning for children include improvements in:

- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- Social skills
- Motor skills
- Language and communication skills
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical health
- Creative and critical thinking
- Assessing risk and learning self-control
- Motivation
- Curiosity and enthusiasm to learn

For parents and carers, the benefits to you include:

- Peace of mind, knowing that your child is safe and having fun while you attend work, care for others or take a well-deserved break.
- Opportunities to connect, as your child will come home with stories to tell, some inspirational ideas for you to discuss, and activities for you to do together.
- A sense of achievement because you are offering your child the chance to enjoy good old-fashioned fresh air, nature, fun and let their imaginations soar. We think this is what school holidays should be all about.

Outdoor play also helps children to develop a connection with wildlife and an appreciation for the natural world. ♡

For updates on Wilder Holiday Club news, you can join our mailing list and visit our website: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-holiday-club
We look forward to seeing you in the spring!

Wilder Volunteering

MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER

Welcome Alana Skilbeck

Alana joined the volunteering team as the Wilder Kent Volunteering Officer in July. She co-ordinates an ever-growing volunteer programme and promotes the efforts and hard work of Kent Wildlife Trust's fantastic volunteers. You may recognise her from her work on the Nature's Sure Connected project, recruiting volunteers for butterfly and reptile surveys.

"I have worked at Kent Wildlife Trust since February 2019 and previously for other conservation organisations, including Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the RSPB. I am

passionate about volunteering and conservation action, and I hope to bring this to my new role. My favourite things are watching cricket and football, going out bird ringing with my local group, exploring the countryside and researching my family history."



Have you thought about volunteering with us?

We have three exciting roles that could be perfect for your skillset:



Livestock Checkers

Do you adore the outdoors and visiting local reserves?

We need responsible people to check on various conservation grazing animals once a week.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Wilder Kent Volunteer Award winners

Each year, Kent Wildlife Trust staff are asked to nominate individual volunteers or volunteer teams for the Wilder Kent Volunteer Awards, in partnership with the Marsh Charitable Trust.

The awards recognise six individuals or groups who have gone above and beyond in their volunteer roles. From these nominations, the Marsh Charitable Trust (previously Marsh Christian Trust) chooses the winners.

View this year's winners at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/marshawards



The six areas of volunteering:

- Office and administration
- People engagement
- Outdoor tasks
- Livestock checking
- Freshwater and marine
- Wildlife surveys



Garden Volunteers

Do you have green fingers?

Why not try your hand at one of our Garden Volunteer roles, based at Tyland Barn and Sevenoaks Nature Reserve.

Wilder Coast Volunteers

Do you enjoy chatting to people and exploring your local coastline?

We are looking for people to become Wilder Coast Volunteers at Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve. These volunteers will raise awareness about how people can share the bay responsibly with wildlife.

Find all of our current volunteering opportunities at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities



CREATING A WILDER KENT

Volunteer Task Force

Kent Wildlife Trust's Volunteer Task Force plays an important role in helping us to support our wider volunteer workforce, whose dedication is critical to creating a Wilder Kent.

The Volunteer Task Force is made up of eight volunteers from various roles across the Trust. They help us to identify the needs and opportunities of the

broader volunteer teams they represent. Their efforts have contributed to the departments' data management systems and communication plans, and improved how we celebrate volunteers. They also help ensure that all our volunteers understand the direction of Kent Wildlife Trust and can play a part in decision making.

To find out more, visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer-task-force-team



WHAT'S ON?

Find information about all our events and easily book online at kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events

Study days

Courses are continually being added to our Study Day programme, so please check our website regularly for more up-to-date information: kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/studydays

The courses below are currently fully booked, but keep an eye on our website because spaces may become available and we run repeats of courses with high demand or long waiting lists.

Birds of Prey of the North Kent Marshes (fully booked)

Friday 3 December 2021
10am – 4pm,
Friday 28 January 2022
10am – 4pm

👤 PP

Capel Fleet Raptor Viewpoint, Isle of Sheppey

Spend a day observing birds of prey. Learn about their habitats, characteristics and behaviour, and how to identify different species.



Key

PP Per person

👤 Fees or donations apply

Please note that booking is essential for our events

December 2021

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) online training course

Friday 10 December 2021
10am – 3:30pm

👤 PP

Online event

An online training day on the UK Habitat Classification: a new comprehensive classification system for vegetation habitats used in conservation and land management.

January 2022

Nature-friendly gardening for beginners

Thursday 13 January 2022
7:30pm – 9pm

👤

Online event

Learn how to make your garden more attractive to both people and wildlife at this online session.

Managing garden pests and diseases in a nature-friendly way

Wednesday 26 January
10:30am – 12pm

👤

Online event

Learn practical solutions for protecting flowers and vegetables from pests and diseases when you garden for wildlife.



February 2022

Building and maintaining a garden wildlife pond

Saturday 5 February
3pm – 5pm

👤

Online event

Learn how to construct, plant around, and maintain a pond for wildlife and pleasure.



March 2022

Amphibian ecology and survey techniques

Saturday 5 March 2pm – 8pm

👤 PP

Tyland Barn, ME14 3BD

This course will help you understand the importance of different habitats to amphibians. You will learn how to recognise key amphibian species and take part in a torchlight survey.

Wilder lawns

Monday 7 March
7:30pm – 9pm

👤 PP

Online event

Learn how to create "mini meadows" in your own garden, whatever the size.

Using "weeds" and wildflowers in a traditional garden setting to attract bees, butterflies and moths

Saturday 26 March
11am – 12:30pm

👤 PP

Online event

Learn how to attract insects and other invertebrates by growing wildflowers along your garden borders. 🍷

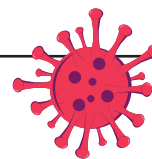
COVID-19 AND OUR WILDLIFE EVENTS

Lots of events have been affected by Covid-19 restrictions.

We are working hard to bring our wildlife and study days to you but only where they can be conducted safely on site or remotely online.

As this is a continuously changing situation, please check our website regularly for further information on the events listed here and the latest updates, cancellations or precautions.

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events



Act
local for
global
change



Leave the legacy
of a **Wilder Kent**

By including a gift in your Will to Kent Wildlife Trust, you can be part of tackling the global climate and nature crises. Help us make the world a better place for wildlife, for people and for future generations.

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/legacy



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