

# Bugs United

## Buglife Strategy 2014-2020



### Buglife – ‘Saving the small things that run the planet’

Established in 2002 Buglife has become the focus point for efforts to save bug species from extinction and to halt the declines in bug populations. Buglife is a world leader and the only European champion for the conservation of all animals without backbones, from bees to earthworms and spiders to corals.

Our track record is strong; including advising on habitat management; transforming the conservation of neglected habitats; creating new bug habitats; saving the homes of highly endangered animals from destruction; and restricting uses of deadly insecticides that were destroying aquatic life and bees.

‘Bugs United’ builds on our established reputation and base of volunteers and supporters. While improving the status of wild bugs and achieving the outcomes of this strategy will be very hard work, we know we can make new friends for bugs and build momentum and capacity to deliver a better future for them and for people, a future that achieves our vision of “A wildlife-rich planet where species, including invertebrates, thrive alongside people.”

### Our Mission

***Buglife’s aim is to stop the extinction of invertebrate species and to achieve sustainable populations of invertebrates.***

We will accomplish our aim by protecting, improving and expanding their habitats (homes) and strengthening the respect given to bug species. We will achieve this by:-

- Mobilising, inspiring, enabling and persuading others to take action, through the development and dissemination of knowledge and values.
- Undertaking practical conservation projects.
- Promoting the value of invertebrates and raising awareness about the challenges to their survival.
- Shaping the development of relevant legislation and policy.



# The Business Case

*Buglife stands up for invertebrates: the little things that make the world go round. They process our waste, create soil, pollinate plants and allow life to blossom. They are the beating heart of every ecosystem. We all need their work more than we realise or imagine. But ignorance is driving bugs to extinction and it needn't be the case.*

Invertebrates are essential to life:-

- feeding us - pollinating £18 billion worth of EU crops every year, directly (e.g. scampi), and via fish that depend on invertebrates
- recycling nutrients, building fertile soils, and cleaning water
- providing medicines that save thousands of lives
- sustaining a countryside rich in birds, flowers and fruit
- being an accurate indicator of the health of our environment
- inspiring people with their beauty, adaptability and industry



We have enjoyed these benefits and it is right that we should enable our children and grandchildren to do so as well.

Bugs are declining faster than vertebrates and plants. Most species are in decline and the wild places we value are under threat.

Almost everyone says that it is important to respect and preserve the environment and to prevent extinctions, but conventional conservation measures and a 'business as usual' approach will not achieve sustainable populations or stop extinctions of bugs. However, we do know how to make a difference. Targeted action can stop and reverse the decline of species. The best way to achieve healthy bug populations is to protect, create and maintain good habitats and to give help to particular species where that is required.

Protecting and enhancing nature is enshrined in statutes that should commit us to conserving biodiversity, maintaining species in 'Favourable Conservation Status', and fully addressing the potential wildlife impacts of developments. One of the reasons why these laws are not delivering is that bugs are unable to represent their own interests - it falls to Buglife to stand up for bugs.

Loss of species and habitat degradation come with an economic, not just an environmental, cost. As Theodore Roosevelt said "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value".

However, austerity measures have hit the natural environment hard. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has a planned 49% budget cut between 2009 and 2016 and, apart from agri-environment funds, biodiversity budgets are vaporising.

People want a healthy environment and a wealth of wildlife and when they come together through organisations they make a huge difference. The conservation movement has saved species, rescued habitats, restored special places and re-introduced lost British animals. However, nature conservation accounts for a very small proportion (0.7%) of grants given by charitable trusts and active environmental charities have not yet been sufficiently well-resourced to enable them to stop and reverse biodiversity loss.

Never-the-less, between 2005 and 2010, before a recent modest decline in funding, environmental non-governmental organisations saw strong income growth - an average of 21% in real terms. In addition a

flourishing of partnerships between charities and businesses has contributed to the growth of environmental action.



With a high profile, a sound record of success and an established network of volunteers and supporters, Buglife is best placed to continue to lead on invertebrate conservation, using messages that resonate with large numbers of people and innovating through partnership.

Buglife fosters partnerships. For example we have established our first nature reserve at Canvey Wick, managed with the Land Trust and the RSPB, and supported a national scheme in which anglers monitor the health of insect populations in rivers.

Buglife has grown to have an annual turnover of £1 million and 26 staff members. We have achieved significant national and international victories for bugs, built many partnerships and persuaded numerous people to take up our cause. The charity

has lots of solutions to contribute, and reversing the declines in invertebrates will be achieved by influencing the efforts of many other organisations and individuals - deepening and broadening our partnerships. Buglife will have to grow in capacity to be able to deliver change and manage the new partnerships. By 2020 we aim to have doubled the size of the charity by growing support from individuals and charitable trusts, while increasing significantly the number of mutually beneficial relationships with businesses.

While our primary focus will remain in the UK, we will also take action in the EU, help to conserve the wildlife of UK Overseas Territories and seek opportunities to develop invertebrate conservation in other parts of the world.

## What We Will Achieve by 2020.

- 1. Improved management of key habitats, including preventing loss and restoring and creating habitat, to enable the recovery of bug populations and to stop further local and national extinctions.**
- 2. Fewer key invertebrate species in decline; no preventable extinction of native species, or of globally significant populations of introduced species, in any of the UK countries**
- 3. Increased acknowledgement amongst decision makers and the public (particularly children):-**
  - of the wonder, beauty and importance of bugs and their requirements
  - of the big issues affecting bugs and the action required to achieve positive change
  - that individuals and society should take responsibility for resolving threats to bugs
- 4. Improved quantity, quality and availability of science, data and evidence directly relevant to bug conservation, including long term monitoring.**

## Themes

We will embed across our work two themes addressing urgent, topical issues that impact directly on people:

### ***Theme A) Tackling the Pollination Crisis***

Threats to pollinators and the services that they provide are of primary and growing concern. The science shows that pollinator declines are already reducing our ability to feed ourselves and the ability of wild plants to produce seeds. Actions to fix the problem are piecemeal and insufficient.

Buglife's Pollinator Manifesto 'Get Britain Buzzing' sets out the actions that we will have to persuade society to adopt if we are to arrest the alarming decline in UK pollinator populations.

Slowly, we are winning. Work initiated by Buglife that questioned the safety to wild pollinators of modern insecticides resulted in a partial ban in neonicotinoid insecticides across the EU, and Buglife schemes such as 'B-Lines' are providing practical solutions by restoring large areas rich in wild flowers and wildlife.

### ***Theme B) Securing Healthy Freshwater***

Our freshwater habitats – rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, ditches, swamps, springs and seepages - and the bugs they sustain are subject to multiple threats, despite their essential role in maintaining a sustainable environment and a healthy human population. Only 8% of ponds are in good condition, while 87% of headwater streams in South East England are degraded by pollutants, poor management, climate change and invasive species.

We will develop a Freshwater Bug Manifesto to establish consensus for the actions required to save our aquatic invertebrates.

Bugs are already used to measure the health of some water bodies. Buglife action has helped to stop pollution from Cypermethrin sheep dip, establish a volunteer network to monitor river health, rescue populations of endangered crayfish and promote the conservation of under-valued habitats such as ditches and seepages.

#### **Photo Credits:-**

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#### **Buglife.....**

- .....is passionate about bugs.
- .....is the voice of the invertebrates.
- .....disseminates knowledge.
- .....is outcome focussed.
- .....works with others.
- .....is courageous.