



# Species Champions

MPs standing up for our most threatened wildlife

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## The Nature Recovery Network: what you need to know

A key plank of any future Environment Bill will be the legal underpinning of a new Nature Recovery Network (NRN) for England. The NRN should play a major role in reversing wildlife declines by creating a bigger, better and more joined-up network of wildlife habitats. These new habitats will also make it easier for species to move in response to climate change, whilst also providing critical ecosystem services and benefits to people.

MPs can strengthen the NRN by supporting amendments as the Environment Bill progresses and by working with your local communities on proposals for your constituency.

We hope MPs will ensure the NRN is:

- primarily focused on recovering nature;
- fully resourced in the long-term, through a new dedicated biodiversity fund to replace EU funding;
- underpinned by statutory duties on public bodies to incorporate the NRN into spatial plans and to contribute to its delivery and maintenance;
- supported by statutory guidance on the creation and



▲ On the edge of Bodmin Moor Butterfly Conservation is working with land managers to create a mosaic of different habitats for rare species like the Marsh Fritillary. The NRN must ensure projects like these form a coherent national network and are massively scaled up to reverse wildlife declines.

implementation of nature recovery maps and plans at a local level;

- protected, monitored and reported on.

## Champions in Action

Since the beginning of the year 5 MPs have joined the project. A warm welcome to **George Eustice** (silver studded blue), **Sandy Martin** (stag beetle), **Alistair Burt** (nightjar), **Anne-Marie Trevelyan** (kittiwake) and **Robert Courts** (cuckoo).

**Derek Thomas** secured a Westminster Hall debate on World Health and the 25 Year Environment Plan with a number of species champions debating the link between thriving wildlife and our health and wellbeing. **Angela Smith** and **Richard Benyon** took part in a panel debate on grouse moor management and **Helen Hayes** hosted a Biodiversity in Planning event to launch the Wildlife Assessment Check.

Beyond Parliament many MPs have been out on site visits, learning about species conservation and even getting their hands dirty. **Bill Wiggin** finally got to see critically endangered spreading bellflowers and **John Glen** planted pheasant's eye seeds. **Nick Herbert** helped ring lapwing chicks, **Helen Hayes** ventured out on a bat walk and **Angela Smith** visited the moors to see blanket bog restoration. In the West Country **Neil Parish** spent a wet couple of hours on Dartmoor looking for marsh fritillaries and **George Eustice** visited Godrevy to hear about silver-studded blues.

Please get in touch with your project partner if you would like to arrange



▲ Nick Herbert joins the lapwing ringing study at RSPB Pulborough Brooks.

a site visit or host a Parliamentary debate relating to your species.

You are invited to the 2019 Annual Awards Reception on Monday 14 October at 1830 in The Jubilee Room, Westminster. Prizes to be awarded by Frank Gardner, President of the British Trust for Ornithology and BBC Security Correspondent. RSVP [philippa.goodwin@rspb.org.uk](mailto:philippa.goodwin@rspb.org.uk)

## Q&A with Kerry McCarthy, Best Parliamentary Champion 2018

### What difference can you make that people and swifts will notice?

I'm hopeful there will be an increase in Swift Bricks in new housing developments across the country.

### What do you think are the greatest challenges facing swifts?

Sadly, more than half of British Swifts have been lost since 1995. In part, this is due to a loss of nesting sites with Swifts returning to their yearly spot only to find it has been blocked or destroyed.

### What do you feel you have achieved for swifts as their species champion?

By asking questions about Swifts in Parliament I hope I've helped persuade the Government that protecting their habitat and preventing further decline is really important.

### What kind of things could Parliament do to make a difference for all endangered species?

To secure nature's recovery the Environment Bill must require the production of Nature Recovery Network Maps, including measurable targets that can be enforced by an independent watchdog.



▲ Kerry helps to raise the profile of swift bricks at Barratt Bristol.

### What is your most vivid wildlife memory?

I've been lucky enough to go on river safaris in Botswana, and dive with sharks in Belize, but there are many special, smaller moments in the UK like seeing birds and butterflies in their natural habitats.

## 2019 is the International Year of the Salmon

Otherwise known as the 'silver tourist', the Atlantic salmon is probably the most iconic sporting fish that graces English waters. Sadly, our salmon are in real trouble. The 2014 catches were the lowest ever on record and subsequent dry years and reduced flows have continued to drive their decline.

We need to see Ministers take urgent action to tackle the complex cocktail of issues that have driven salmon decline. These include problems well within our control, such as pollution from farming, reduced river flows from too much water being abstracted, and loss of access to habitat through the construction of weirs.

**Charles Walker**, Species Champion for the salmon, said: "I will be pushing the Government every step of the way to make sure that the forthcoming Agriculture and



▲ Over-abstractation of water leads to low flows in the River Colne, Hertfordshire, negatively impacting aquatic species such as salmon.

Environment Bills address the major ecological challenges that have decimated salmon stocks."

**Who are the Species Champion MPs?** • Debbie Abrahams • Harriett Baldwin • Hilary Benn • Richard Benyon • Jake Berry • Steve Brine • Alistair Burt • James Cartlidge • Jenny Chapman • Thérèse Coffey • Robert Courts • Tracey Crouch • Jon Cruddas • Thangam Debbonaire • David Drew • Philip Dunne • George Eustice • Mark Garnier • John Glen • Robert Goodwill • Chris Grayling • Matt Hancock • Helen Hayes • Peter Heaton-Jones • Nick Herbert • Kevin Hollinrake • Norman Lamb • Tim Loughton • Caroline Lucas • Scott Mann • Rachael Maskell • Sandy Martin • Kerry McCarthy • Alison McGovern • Huw Merriman • Damien Moore • Layla Moran • Caroline Nokes • Neil Parish • Claire Perry • Matthew Offord • Jess Phillips • Rebecca Pow • Victoria Prentis • Barry Sheerman • Angela Smith • Caroline Spelman • Gary Streeter • Desmond Swayne • Derek Thomas • Kelly Tolhurst • Anne-Marie Trevelyan • Anna Turley • Charles Walker • Matt Warman • Bill Wiggin • Gavin Williamson • Sarah Wollaston • Daniel Zeichner

For more information on the Species Champions project visit our microsite at: [www.buglife.org.uk/specieschampions](http://www.buglife.org.uk/specieschampions)

Species Champions in England is coordinated by the Rethink Nature partnership



Working in partnership with: **The Angling Trust, The People's Trust for Endangered Species and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society**

Different habitats on Bodmin moor by Simon Phelps, Nick Herbert with lapwing chick by Alan Johnson, Kerry installing swift brick by Neil Phillips, Drought impact on River Colne by Angling Trust.  
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