

# New Nature

## Joe Harkness

Matt Williams talks to the  
man behind *Bird Therapy*  
Page 22



An Alien World  
Jo Cutler takes us on  
a journey into our own  
coastline  
Page 10

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National Parks  
Andrew Hall tells us of the  
fight to reverse declining  
wildlife in National Parks  
Page 18

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Explorer by Nature  
Camila Quinteros Peñafiel  
takes a glimpse into the 2nd  
journey of James Cook  
Page 30

**SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE:** Alice Johnson gets some career advice  
from their marketing and communications officer, Sally Fish  
Page 26

# Contents

Welcome: find out how to get in touch 4

Reader's Photos: your August submissions 5

What to Watch For: Elliot Dowding gives us the low down on the species to look out for this month 6

Underrated Species: Elliot Dowding takes a closer look at hogweed 8

Contributors: check out our brilliant contributors 34

Meet the Team: meet the volunteers behind New Nature 35

Contact us: send us your submissions and follow us! 36



8



10



18



22



5



26



14



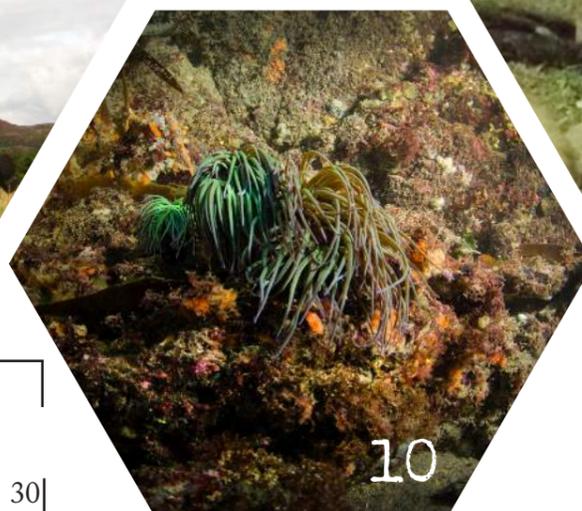
30



20



6



10

An Alien World: Jo Cutler takes us on a journey into our own coastline 10

Sussex Fieldnotes: Sophie May Lewis on cultivated wildlife 14

Underwater Tales: Hannah Rudd shares her sharktacular summer 16

Think Bigger and Be Ambitious: Andrew Hall tells us of the fight to reverse declining wildlife in National Parks 18

Golf Courses: Stephen Thompson, Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year 2018 in the Golf Environment Awards, tells us how this sport and conservation can work together 20

Interview: Matt Williams talks to Joe Harkness, the man behind *Bird Therapy* 22

Sally Fish: Alice Johnson gets some career advice from the marketing and communications officer for Surfers Against Sewage 26

Explorer by Nature: Camila Quinteros Peñafiel takes a glimpse into the 2nd journey of James Cook 30

Images: Starfish, Harriet Gardiner; Kingfisher, Lukas Bieri.

Images: White Tailed Sea Eagle, Bill Heaney; SAS, Ian Lean; Flowers, Sophie May Lewis; Explorer, Camila Quinteros Peñafiel; Stephen Thompon; Painted Lady Butterfly, Jörg Hempel; Snakeslock Anemone, Harriet Gardiner

## On the Cover

Our wonderful cover shot this month was taken by Oscar Dewhurst.

Oscar is an award-winning wildlife photographer from London. He has taken photos in locations ranging from the side of the A1 in London to photograph waxwings to the heart of the Peruvian Amazon.

Find him on Twitter @OscarDewhurst and online at [www.oscardewhurst.com](http://www.oscardewhurst.com)

# WELCOME TO NEW NATURE

With the release of our August edition, *New Nature* has hit a significant milestone: the completion and publication of our 20th monthly magazines. As such, now seems the perfect time to inform you, our fantastic readership, of an important change set to be enacted moving forward.

From this month, *New Nature* magazine is going bi-monthly! There, I said it, and feel somewhat better for it. Truth be told, there are a multitude of reasons behind our move away from our usual schedule; though foremost is the need and desire to ensure the high quality of the publication. Publishing monthly requires an incredibly quick turnaround: from our designer, Harriet; from our editorial team and, of course, from our contributors. Although we have achieved this, to date, the need to quickly iron out the magazine means that mistakes often go unnoticed and avoidable errors, from time to time, do appear in print – to no fault of anyones we are, after all, volunteers attempting to fit work on *New Nature* around jobs, education and myriad other commitments. We hope that, with ample time construct the magazine, we can fix this issue and ensure high quality over the months and years to come.

Of course, a shift to bi-monthly publication and the ensuing increase in production time also means that we can increase the size of *New Nature*. Squeezing in more articles for your enjoyment and featuring content our readers care about. Never a bad thing, right?

Here at *New Nature*, we are beginning the process of transitioning into a ‘proper’ organisation: engrossing ourselves in (rather arduous) process of branding, strategy planning and development. All of which we have committed to with the aim of improving our value to young environmental writers and delivering more benefits to our contributors. We remain committed to promoting, emboldening and nurturing the next generation of young British nature writers, and with a little more time, intend to make our many aspirations a reality. We very much hope that you will accompany us on this journey!

Now, to this edition - and we hope you enjoy our latest offering. From superb nature writing from Sophie May Lewis (p. 14) and the fight to reverse wildlife declines in our national parks (p. 18), to a careers interview with Sally Fish of Surfers Against Sewage, our August edition is brimming with content for your enjoyment. Whether you're a fan of sharks or history, birding or underrated botanicals, this issue has something for everyone.

James Common  
Managing Director

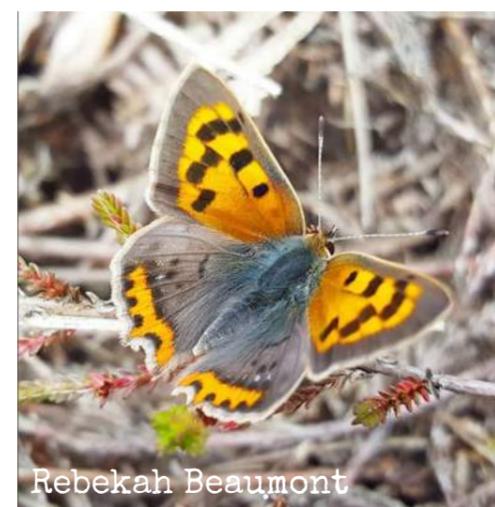
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Readers'  
Photographs



Andrew Fusek Peters



Amy Benton Photography

Want your photographs featured in next months issue of *New Nature*?

We love seeing your nature pics and hearing the stories behind them so get in touch!

You can email us at [editorial.newnature@gmail.com](mailto:editorial.newnature@gmail.com) or tweet us @newnature\_mag

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What to Watch for in



# AUGUST

Words by Elliot Dowding

August is the best month to get to grips with grasshoppers and crickets, as most UK species are active and chirping in tall meadows and scrub. Short and long-winged coneheads are expanding their range in southern England in response to climate change; females have distinctive long ovipositors and the males produce very high-pitched songs. The UK's largest species, the great green bush cricket, is truly huge and a stunning sight to behold if you can find one in its somewhat limited southerly range. One of the more distinctive and also scarce grasshoppers is the stripe-winged grasshopper, told by its relatively large size and bold white stripe and crescent mark on the wings.

A particularly striking and late-flowering plant that can be found adding colour to mostly gone-over meadows and downland this month is devil's-bit scabious. Its deep purple, nearly spherical flower heads look almost like a ladies swimming cap from the 1920's and attract many bees, flies and butterflies at a time when many other plants have gone to seed. The odd name comes from a country legend explaining that the scabious has such stubby roots because the devil bit off half of the root out of anger at its supposed medicinal properties.

With so many insects on the wing this is a great time to go out in the evening and look for bats hunting along woodland rides, hedgerows and heaths – a search along a river or lakeside could produce Daubenton's bats hunting low over the water. Another strong flyer could possibly appear in large numbers this month – the

painted lady butterfly. Migrating northwards from the Mediterranean and North Africa these attractive insects have several broods throughout the year staggered across continents and if conditions are just right they can arrive on our shores in monumental numbers. Another migrant is the clouded yellow butterfly, which has stunning lemon-curd wings bordered with black that can also arrive here in large clouds or more often in dribs and drabs.

August is also a top month for watching passing seabirds from headlands, piers or even from pelagic trips aboard a boat. The western coasts of Britain and Ireland are most productive and at this time of year it is possible to see some scarce and rare shearwaters, gulls and petrels as they migrate from distant breeding grounds to even more distant wintering sites. A watch in good conditions (overcast weather with a strong onshore wind is best) from a Cornish or Welsh clifftop or beach could produce sightings of Balearic, sooty, great or Cory's shearwaters amongst the common Manx shearwaters and a pelagic trip, such as one from the Isles of Scilly, may see tiny ocean travellers such as storm and Wilson's petrels.

The coast is also a great place to be if you fancy taking in a common seal colony – at this time of year they will have young pups or will be about to give birth, so watching these large sea-going mammals as the young suckle or learn to swim will be very rewarding. Just remember to stay at a safe distance and minimise disturbance to pupping sites.

# Hogweed

*Heracleum sphondylium*

Words by Elliot Dowding

Underrated  
Species

It is late summer, there is a taste of autumn in the air as the natural world begins to wind down in preparation for winter, yet there are still plenty of insects going about their business and some flowers blooming in the hedgerows. Perhaps the most numerous, widespread and obvious plant is the hogweed; a tall umbellifer with broadly lobed, dark green leaves, thick corrugated stems and flat heads of prolific white flowers. It may be an obvious plant, yet it is hardly one that people stop purposefully to look at and I doubt most, even nature-enthusiasts, give it more than a second thought.

Mostly, this is a PR problem; it has an unfortunate choice of name – ‘hogweed’ isn’t exactly as romantic or interesting as, say, the related ‘sweet cicely’ or ‘lovage’ – so it’s a bit of a turn off before you’ve even seen the plant. Then there’s its choice of habitats, which are often mundane and everyday places like roadside verges, the edges of suburban playing fields, waste ground and almost every footpath in Britain. Hogweed’s robust, plain appearance is also hard to sell, as in general the most popular wildflowers are both delicate and colourful – this is neither.

Yet this plant has a lot going for it, maybe not in the eyes of the general public but certainly it should receive more attention from those with an interest in nature. As it flowers from June right through to September it becomes increasingly a major component of the countryside flora as

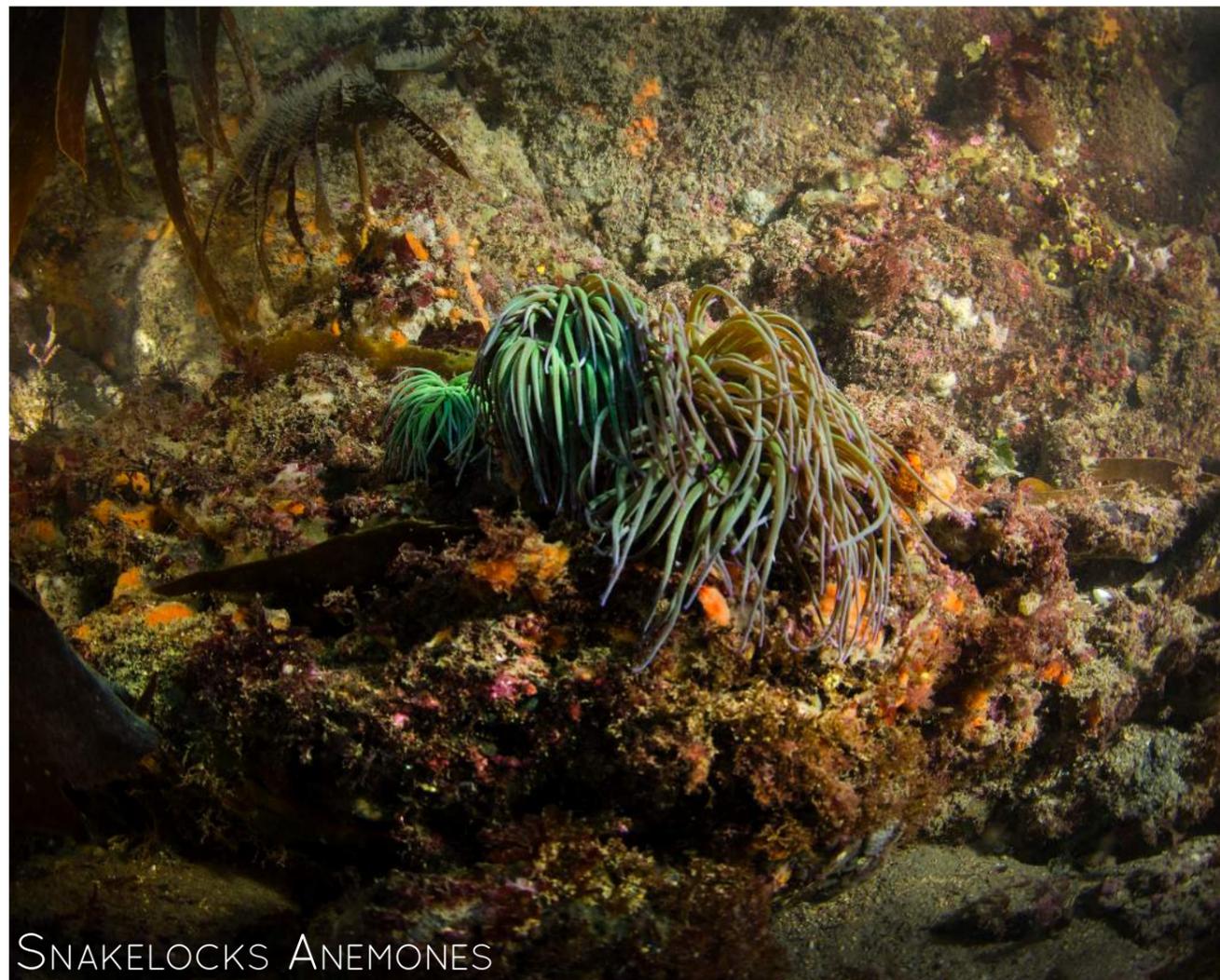
summer progresses and other flowers go to seed and fade away. This makes it a characteristic and vital plant of high summer and without it our lanes and hedgerows would look considerably emptier than they already do. Of course, it’s importance isn’t all aesthetic; it is of great value as a source of pollen and nectar for insects.

Unlike some plants that have complex flower shapes that only allow certain species to pollinate them, the umbels of hogweed are an open buffet that allow a huge range of species from beetles and flies to honey bees and butterflies to pollinate the flowers. This is probably the aspect that makes hogweed so much more interesting than it first looks; rarely are their flower heads lacking in an insect visitor or even one of their predators – such as a crab spider or hornet hoping to snatch an unwary hoverfly.

For any budding entomologists the hogweed can be a huge help in getting to grips with groups such as longhorn beetles and hoverflies in particular without having to spend hours with a sweep net or beating tray. The strong, sickly scent that the flowers produce advertise the wealth of nectar and pollen openly available to any passing fly, and insects are often very approachable and photogenic as they lazily sup on the white blooms. So, armed with some insect ID guides and a camera why not take a stroll in search of the UK’s invertebrate equivalent of an African watering hole.

# AN ALIEN WORLD

JO CUTLER TAKES US ON A JOURNEY  
INTO OUR OWN COASTLINE.



## SNAKELOCKS ANEMONES

**M**esmerising, alien, strange. Welcome to the world of marine creatures. Our coastlines are full of some of the most fascinating lifeforms you could imagine. When you imagine a colourful array of aquatic wildlife, you may think of the tropical fish and the coral reefs of Australia. Yet once you've experienced some of the incredible creatures around the UK, you will be open to a whole new world. From starfish that can grow back limbs to tentacles that glow in the dark, the ocean is truly magical and mysterious.

You may come across strange star-like patterns on the rocks. Whilst

star ascidians may just look like a child's drawing, they are actually a complex colony of zooids. These zooids live in a protective gelatinous substance and each 'segment' is an individual. Whilst the star shape looks very pretty its purpose is not so. Ascidians arrange themselves in this manner so that they share a communal 'toilet' and flush out any unwanted waste!

Furthermore, these strange creatures are actually hermaphrodites, with the ability to reproduce sexually and asexually. Sexually, by releasing eggs and sperm out into the ocean, which fertilise and turn into free-swimming larvae, and then

eventually stick to a surface and metamorphose into an adult – known as broadcast reproduction. Also, these creatures have the ability to reproduce asexually by 'budding' – when a miniature clone sprouts out from the side of the colony.

Another monster-like aquatic animal is the snakelocks anemone. As its name suggests, it has a Medusa-style array of wiggling tentacles, snatching whatever comes within its reach. This anemone comes in a variety of colours, the most striking of which is bright green with purple tips. Interestingly, the purple tips

Images: Harriet Gardiner

are visible because of a symbiotic relationship with algae.

In addition to this, snakelocks anemones glow in the dark! Under UV torch light, they emit an eerie greenish glow. Scientists are not really sure why this beautiful luminescence occurs, perhaps it is an accidental by product of evolution or it may be useful in ways that haven't been discovered yet.

Last but not least, our oceans are filled with an array of starfish. So, what should you do if your arm is caught in the vice-like grip of your arch-enemy a crab? You allow it to fall off as a decoy of course, and get out of there! Much like a human may throw a wallet away from themselves whilst being mugged in a bid to get their attacker away from them, the spiny starfish has the ability to lose an arm to avoid a hungry predator.

How doesn't it die of blood loss? I hear you ask. Well as it turns out, starfish don't have blood. Instead, they use seawater to pump nutrients through their bodies. These little ninjas have developed a drastic yet effective way of avoiding predation.

As you can see, our oceans are far more exciting and colourful than they may first appear. True, the ocean surface often looks steely grey and lifeless. Yet when you actually explore the rock pools, looking into nooks and cracks and underneath piles of seaweed, you will be surprised at the sheer diversity of strange creatures we live so near to and understand so little about.



## SEA FAN



## SUSSEX FIELDNOTES: CULTIVATED WILD

SOPHIE MAY LEWIS



Based in rural West Sussex, Sophie finds inspiration for her writing and photography in the South Downs and the Weald. Introduced to wildlife and landscape history through family walks as a child, she has been hooked ever since.

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This year, summer is intense. The nation is hovering in those sultry days between Wimbledon and the World Cup, and the children are leaving school behind for the holidays. Meanwhile, the countryside is parched. In my area of the South Downs, we have seen little precipitation of any significance since the first May bank holiday. The effects of the drought are starting to show. Verdant greens of spring were late arriving after a cold and dark start to the year, and they are little more than a memory now. Grass is uniformly brown, trees have taken on a dusty film, whilst the flowers of roadside verges are sparse and racing to seed early – even the nettles are wilting.

All this I noted as I drove south, through the villages of Cocking and Singleton over the Downs towards Chichester, on a sun-baked Thursday afternoon. I had a week off work, scheduled ahead of my colleagues who needed to take their annual leave during the school holidays. A week off in summer was a treat to make the most of, and so I decided to dedicate a few days to watching wildlife; I didn't expect to be so disappointed.

I couldn't find the kestrel that often hunts over the flood meadows on the edge of town, nor did I see the fox that slinks across the grassy slope, senses primed for small rodents. I walked past buddleia bushes bereft of a single butterfly.

Where was the myriad of nature marvels that seemed to populate my memories of my past summer holidays so densely? Was it the heatwave taking effect, or something more sinister; an ecosystem-wide crash that we should be sitting up and taking notice of?

Discontented and discombobulated, I decided I needed a change of scene. I chose to visit West Dean Gardens simply because it was nearby, and I had whiled away many happy hours there in the past simply pottering about with my camera. As soon as I arrived, a possible answer to the apparent lack of wildlife in the wider countryside became instantly clear; here within the gardens there was shade, there was water, and there was colour. Bees greeted me at the front gate, my presence presumably went unnoticed on their part, but I stopped to appreciate them. A patch of purple heliotrope and bright orange rudbeckia was drawing in the insects with a strong show of blooms. It makes sense when you consider that these cultivars originate from plants native to South America and as such are much better adapted to prolonged heat waves.

Stepping inside the garden walls, in contrast to the parched land outside, was like stepping into the antipode of Narnia; a summer land of plenty. Borders and flowerbeds jostled with blooms, and clouds of insects brought the air to vivid, delicate life. There were more bees and butterflies here in this garden, than I had seen anywhere all year. Firstly I noticed the quintessential honey bees and fuzzy bumblebees, then

there were various unidentified parasitic and solitary wasps, and ladybirds with shiny spots. A bright orange fritillary butterfly, glided through the orchard, with the airs and grace of a fine queen in a ball gown, afraid to tatter the hem. Small white butterflies, frilly edged comma and dainty common blue butterflies were here too; the fairies of my childhood. More intimidating were the hunting hornets, patrolling like menacing invertebrate Chinooks.

The buffet on offer in the flowerbeds was obviously treasure worth risking life and limb for; with every flight the bees ran the gauntlet of predators. They risked being gobbled by goldfinches or snaffled by swifts. One lapse in attention however and these birds could suddenly find themselves preyed upon; a large female sparrowhawk cruised intermittently overhead, waiting for her chance.

But what was it that attracted the wildlife into this cultivated space, when I had seen such little biodiversity beyond the garden walls? The truth is, that although it cannot be disputed that wildlife needs wild space to thrive, when conditions get tough, our gardens and managed landscapes can offer a vital, life saving refuge. In West Dean Gardens for example, insects are supported by nectar rich flowers; flat landing pads of daisy-type blooms such as calendula and zinnia for the bumblebees, cluster flowers including marjoram and lavender for the honey bees, and umbrella like sprays of dill and *Ammi majus* for the hoverflies. Regular watering not only keeps the plants fresh and productive, but leaves behind droplets and puddles; a much needed drink to wash down all that nectar and pollen. Cracks and holes in old brick walls are the perfect sun-warmed nesting spot for solitary bees, whilst plant supports, pergolas and nearby mature trees offer perches for opportunistic birds. A hole under the garden gate, perhaps originally designed to allow the smooth transition of hosepipes, offers the same function to hedgehogs.

My visit provided inspiration in a time of conservation concern, and a poignant reminder that when considering what we can do to help wildlife. At least some of the answers lie closer to home than we might initially think – right in our own back gardens.

# SHARKTACULAR British Summer

As more and more holidaymakers flock to the British seaside, you'll start to notice the media engaging in scaremongering as sharks are sighted more frequently. Often, these sightings are of gentle giants, like the basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*), the world's second largest fish. Rarely are they of the menacing great white (*Carcharodon Carcharias*), feared since the release of *Jaws* in 1975.

The Shark Trust says that over 40 species of shark can be found in British waters, "including some of the fastest, rarest, largest and most highly migratory sharks in the world". This comes as no surprise really, when you think that the Irish Sea provides one of the main migration routes for several shark species.

An estimated 21 species inhabit British waters all year, as well as 11 deepwater species, like the kitefin shark (*Dalatias licha*) and the gulper shark (*Centrophorus granulosus*). This number could rise, as 10 species of shark currently found in warmer waters could inhabit British seas by 2050 due to climate change, including the great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*) and the blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*).

Dive in deeper and expand your shark-tacular knowledge with five of Britain's brilliant species

## ANGELSHARKS (*Squatina*)

This elusive group of sharks were once commonly seen in British waters but are now sadly registered as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List. Since 2008, angelsharks have been domestically protected within British waters, with three species being present in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean – the angelshark (*Squatina squatina*), sawback angelshark (*S. aculeata*) and the smoothback angelshark (*S. oculata*).

These dorsoventrally flattened sharks highly-resemble another superorder of elasmobranchs – the rays. Regardless of their rarity, you are unlikely to find these flat sharks, despite their preference of coasts and estuaries from 5-150m deep, as angelsharks are a nocturnal species, spending their daylight hours camouflaged amongst the sand and mud.

## BASKING SHARK (*Cetorhinus maximus*)

These enormous fish venture inshore to shallow bays, almost to the surf line, where you may be able to catch a glimpse of them from land at certain times of the year. You can find the basking shark in British waters between May to October annually. There are a couple of iconic locations to view these gargantuan fish, like the Hebrides in Scotland, Cardigan Bay in Wales, Dorset in England, and the waters off the Isle of Man, which are a world-famous hotspot.

Basking sharks are normally found at or near the surface, frequently being mis-identified as more threatening species like white sharks. They are not to be feared however, as basking sharks are passive filter feeders, swimming with their mouths open to strain water through their pharynx for plankton. Despite this, basking sharks have been recorded as deep as 1,264m.

## BLUE SHARK (*Prionace glauca*)

As a pelagic species, the slender-bodied blue shark is potentially one of the widest ranging of all the chondrichthyans, being found to a depth of at least 350m. It has a beautiful metallic blue colouration

on its back and flank, which gives this species its name.

Recently, a breath-taking 9ft individual was spotted close to shore in St. Ives, Cornwall. Blue sharks are seasonal visitors to British waters and to witness one this close is a privilege, particularly as they are not often seen inshore. Tragically, blue sharks are one of the most heavily fished species throughout their range, predominantly by pelagic longlines and hook-and-lines. Despite their relatively high fecundity and large range providing a buffer from substantial fishing pressure, population declines in blue sharks have been documented globally.

## PORBEAGLE SHARK (*Lamna nasus*)

Porbeagles are frequently misidentified as great whites. As far as white sharks are concerned, despite having great conditions for them here in the UK, there have been no confirmed sightings of them in British waters and scientists lack sufficient evidence to suggest that they're here. As exciting as it would be, you'll have to venture further afield if you'd

like to come to face to face with these apex predators.

Porbeagles are characterised by the white rear tip on their first dorsal fin and their secondary caudal keel. They are a large, streamlined mackerel shark with a conical snout. In the Northern Hemisphere, porbeagles can only be found within the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean; specifically within British waters, they are typically 7-8ft and weigh 300lbs.

## THRESHER SHARK (*Alopias vulpinus*)

Threshers have been in the media recently, with a 350lb individual leaping from the water off the Devonshire coast. With their whip-like tails, thresher sharks stun their bony fish prey! They feed on shoaling fish, like anchovies and sardines, and their dorsal caudal fins can be as long as their bodies. Threshers are thought to engage in breaching behaviour to rid their skin of troublesome parasites.

Like other lamnid sharks, threshers have a great 'rete mirabile' system that enables

them to maintain a higher body temperature to that of the surrounding water. This unique system is rare among fishes, featuring only among the mackerel sharks (*Lamnidae*), tunas (*Thunnini*) and billfishes (*Xiphiidae*, *Istiophoridae*). Thanks to this unique adaptation, threshers can range much further into temperature regions than other cold-blooded species and so can be found within the temperate Atlantic coasts of Europe and the USA.

Sharks are dangerously under threat, with many species seeing dramatic declines in estimated populations. As well as the direct threat of industrialised fishing, sharks are also at risk from indirect problems like habitat alteration, pollution and coastal development. It has been estimated that 100 million sharks are killed through anthropogenic activity annually, but the true figure could be anywhere from 63 million to 273 million. Sharks are vital to healthy ecosystems and as they are becoming scarcer, an encounter with one should be a cherished moment.



HANNAH RUDD is an active marine conservationist and in her final year at Lancaster University. With an appetite for documenting the marine world and inspiring others through her writing, Hannah is an aspiring wildlife broadcaster. She will begin MSc Marine Environmental Management at the University of York in September 2018.

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# Think **BIGGER** and be **AMBITIOUS**

The fight to reverse declining wildlife in National Parks.

Have you been to a National Park recently? Thousands of naturalists and curious tourists will go to one this summer, hoping to catch a glimpse of a rare songbird, a family of otters or the ever-adorable red squirrel. National Parks are so important for our native wildlife, with huge areas specially protected for the vital role they provide for nature.

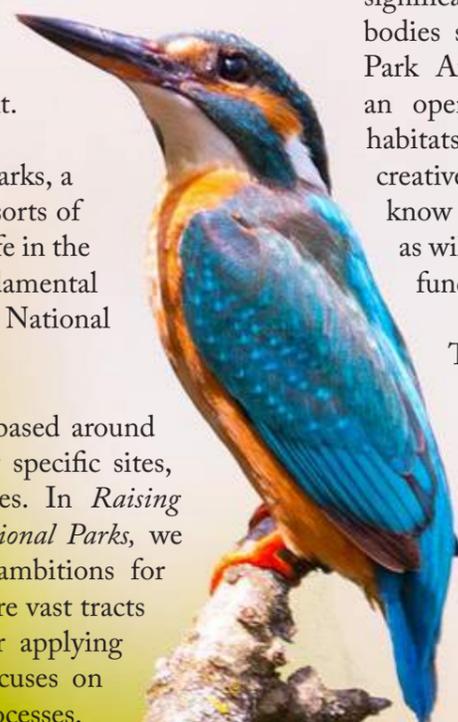
However, while the Parks are important for wildlife they could and should be doing more. 56% of species across the UK are in decline; species such as the New Forest cicada and natterjack toad are on the precipice of being lost in England and Wales. And the National Parks are not bucking these depressing national trends. To me, as I'm sure it is to you, this is astonishing, and leads me to question if we can't reverse these trends in National Parks where can we?

Writer and environmentalist George Monbiot likes to call National Parks "ecological disaster zones" but such extreme rhetoric is viewed by some as unhelpful

and simplistic. We all want to see wildlife flourishing in the Parks, so that everyone can enjoy the thrilling sight of our fantastic native wildlife in thriving landscapes. But getting there is difficult.

That's why Campaign for National Parks, a charity that wants everyone from all sorts of backgrounds to be able to enjoy wildlife in the National Parks, is calling for a fundamental rethink of nature conservation in the National Parks.

Traditionally, nature conservation is based around prescribing management regimes for specific sites, designed to maintain certain species. In *Raising the bar: improving nature in our National Parks*, we make the case for scaling up our ambitions for nature conservation. National Parks are vast tracts of protected land, they are ideal for applying landscape scale conservation that focuses on restoring a wide range of ecological processes.



But there are barriers. Such a change will require a significant alteration in thinking from government bodies such as Natural England and the National Park Authorities. These bodies must demonstrate an openness to moving away from maintaining habitats in a specific state and instead encourage creative solutions and innovative approaches. I know there's some fantastic work being done, but as wildlife continues to decline, we urgently need a fundamental re-think.

The majority of the land in our National Parks is in private hands. 95% of the Yorkshire Dales is privately owned, for example. So that means working together, especially with land owners and managers, will be essential in order to see National Parks richer in nature. To achieve this we have to have sensible, mature debate that nonetheless reflects the seriousness and complexity of the challenge.

Transformational change will require strong

leadership. In many of the Parks, illegal persecution of wildlife is a persistent problem, including for some of the very rarest species such as hen harriers. So the charity is calling for the Welsh and Westminster governments to make a change and properly protect wildlife from persecution.

This is an exciting time to be talking about this urgent challenge. Next year will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the legislation that led to the creation of National Parks, a review of England's designated landscapes is underway and we will soon see the shape of new farming payments that could incentivise environmental action.

Throughout the summer, Campaign for National Parks is looking at the issues facing wildlife in the National Parks and some of the many fantastic projects to tackle those challenges. Check out our website, [www.cnp.org.uk](http://www.cnp.org.uk), for more details and use #summerofbeauty to get involved in the conversation! The time is now to call on National Parks to lead the charge for nature.

Words by Andrew Hall



# Can golf courses be a haven for wildlife?

Stephen Thompson, Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year 2018 in the Golf Environment Awards, tells us how this sport and conservation can work together.

## WHAT ARE THE GOLF ENVIRONMENT AWARDS?

The Golf Environment Awards were devised by Bob Taylor (ecologist) from the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) as a way of highlighting the good environmental/conservation work that courses and individuals do up and down the country. This helps to dispel the myth that golf is no good for nature. There is an awful lot more to see than just grass and hopefully I have done my bit to help prove that.

## WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

It all started for me with a few rather special birds – the barn owl and the kestrel. With help and advice from the Hawk & Owl trust we installed a barn owl box in 1996 and a kestrel box in 1998 on the John O’Gaunt course. A few years later a second box for each was installed on the Carthage course. The barn owls left us in 1998 but were back in 2012 when we had a pair nest on each course, but not successfully. Then in 2016

they nested on the Carthage course and fledged four young! The kestrels nest regularly on the John O’Gaunt course, but in the last two years we have had a pair nest on both courses.

In 2000 I started putting up some small boxes for birds like blue tit and great tits. A local expert suggested I could get 70-80 boxes around both courses – we now have around 125 of varying sizes! Stock doves and tawny owls both nest in boxes, and jackdaws, robins and nuthatches have nested in a box once.

## WHAT WILDLIFE DO YOU SEE ON THE COURSES?

I have now recorded approximately 100 species of birds at the club including red kite, merlin, osprey, waxwing, reed warbler, spotted flycatcher and even a nightjar on one evening in 2017! But, it’s not just birds that I have an interest in now. There is an awful lot of other wildlife to be found on both of our courses. 22 species of mammal have been recorded including badger, otter, water vole and hare, as well

as eight species of bats including brown long eared, serotine and barbastelle.

22 species of butterfly have been recorded, including purple hairstreak, white letter hairstreak and marbled white, with one record of a clouded yellow noted by a member in 2013. I have also been running a moth trap regularly over the past three years plus a few other moth nights and I have now recorded over 350 species including one rather special and rare moth, the white spotted pinion. This species feeds exclusively on elm and is only found in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and parts of Essex. It is found in remnants of elm woodland on the edge of the Carthage course along a public bridlepath and as a result the whole length of the path is now a designated county wildlife site!

I have been instrumental in introducing Operation Pollinator to the club, which is a scheme designed to help our native bees and other pollinating insects by preparing areas on the course for wildflowers. We now have several

wildflower areas and they are always full of life in the summer.

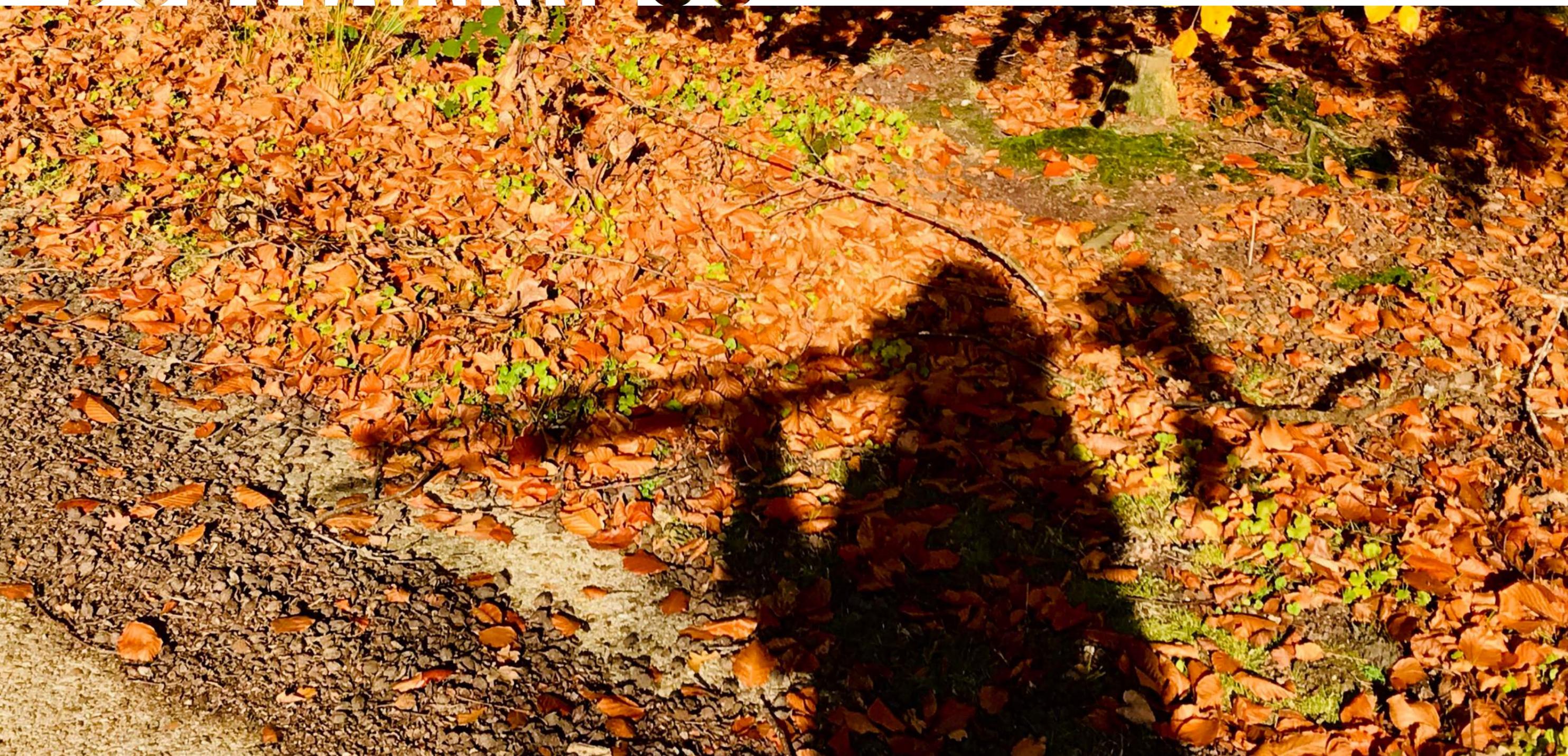
## HOW DO YOU SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT YOUR WORK?

Communication plays a vital role in my conservation work, trying to get the message across to the members and other people around the country that golf courses can be good for wildlife. I do this in several ways. I hold nature walks at the club, bat walks and badger watches are always very popular. I also now do talks but not just at the club, I have spoken at several industry seminars and at the Badger Trust conference in 2016 in front of about 100 people, including Bill Oddie, Mark Avery and Mike Dilger. I write a regular article in the club newsletter and have also written for other national magazines. I have even done some work with a local school helping the children prepare wildflower areas and talked to them about my work on the golf course. If managed correctly, a golf course is not just a golf course, it is a conservation dream for wildlife.



# JOE HARKNESS

Matt Williams talks to the man behind *Bird Therapy*



**WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR FAVOURITE EVER WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS?**

Every experience that I have with wildlife is arguably my favourite. Different experiences hold different meanings and invoke different feelings when I reflect on them. All are positive and all are uplifting. Take the pair of buzzards I saw when I was at my lowest ebb, soaring and mewing over a crop field. Or the woodlark, whose mesmerising song flight rescued me from a terrible day at work. For sheer exhilaration, it would be standing on Blakeney Point in the pouring rain amidst a fall of drift migrants. All of these moments are described in more detail in the book but there is one that really sticks with me and that's the first time I ever truly noticed the beauty in everyday birds. It happened during the first time I took part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. I wasn't visited by many birds, but throughout the whole hour, I shared the companionship of a dunnock. The more time I spent looking at it, the more I noticed how intricate its feather markings were – the mottled browns and smoky-greys were beautiful and I'd just never noticed! This was an epiphany and led to me spending more time observing the wonder of everyday birds.



**WHY DOES BIRDWATCHING MEAN SO MUCH TO YOU?**

I call it my avian escape clause. It's something to escape into when I'm struggling with my mental health or with anything else, such as work. I have a long-rooted interest in birds and nature, instilled by my grandad as a child, but suppressed in my hedonistic early-adulthood. Now, I connect nature and place, mentally, with better times and better wellbeing. Birdwatching is my grounding and focus. It provides me with an outlet for my obsessive behaviours and lessens anxieties in work and home life. My mind wanders with and syncs to nature's calendars so that I feel connected to my patch and my local area by the changing flora and fauna.



**HOW DO YOU BUILD BIRDWATCHING INTO YOUR DAY/WEEK?**

With great difficulty! It was hard working full-time, but I'm now a Dad too, so it's a rare occurrence. Mostly I observe and notice the birds around me – at home and at work. I try to spend my lunch break outside where possible too. I used to stop at my patch, or at local sites, on the drive home from work – but as priorities change, so does birding time. What it means though, is that every nature experience is all the more profound and precious now.

**WHY DO YOU THINK MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE ON THE RISE (INCLUDING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE)? AND HOW DO WE BREAK DOWN THE STIGMA SURROUNDING THESE ISSUES?**

We are a digital society now and the dangers of the internet and social media are vast. I struggle with social media myself and have blogged about it numerous times. It impacts on young people, by being a hidden platform for peer pressure and bullying. There are deeper reasons too, often socio-economic, which also have huge impacts on mental health. The word 'access' is intrinsic here – young people are increasingly unable to access what they need to flourish and thrive. Education is the key, starting age-appropriately in schools. Powerful role models, with lived experience, can also play a positive role in breaking down negative stereotypes.



**WHAT ROLE DOES NATURE PLAY IN HELPING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS?**

Nature is constant and cyclic. Consistent in a way that people rarely are. It provides us with a microcosmic world to fall into and forget about our issues. It gives me and others, space to think, focus and relax. I took the five ways to wellbeing model and made my own five ways to well-birding, which are covered in depth in the book. These are five things you can do to improve your wellbeing, which marry perfectly with birding – connect, take notice, give, be active and learn. Ultimately, they can apply to any nature experience.

**YOUR BOOK, *BIRD THERAPY*, IS COMING OUT SOON AFTER YOUR SUCCESSFUL UNBOUND CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF CROWDFUNDING?**

It was horrible, I found it induced the most hyper-anxious state I've ever been in. It made me sick, obsessed with social media and if it wasn't for the support of others, it would've been worse. I really didn't want to do it but I suppose I'm glad I did.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG NATURE LOVERS WHO WANT TO DEVELOP THEIR WRITING?**

Write for yourself and not to please other people. Stay true to your voice and what you believe in. Negative feedback can destroy you, remember it's all subjective. My writing has been heavily criticised, to the point that I've almost cried, but then other people absolutely loved it – which proves my point. Finally, keep stoic records of what you see and write about the senses and how it makes you feel as these are often the keys to unlocking the beauty of a moment.

To find out more, go to [www.birdtherapy.blog](http://www.birdtherapy.blog)



# SALLY FISH

Marketing and Communications Officer  
for Surfers Against Sewage

Image: Ian Lean at Watergate Bay, April 2018



SALLY FISH at The Charity Awards where SAS won the award for Environment and Conservation for their Plastic Free Communities campaign.



with a fun-loving, adventure-seeking family. If I wasn't in the water with my big brother, I was up a hill, or in the garden making magic potions out of plants. I was aware of the incredible beauty all around me from a very young age."

Sally's family were also an inspiration to her. "We had about eight different bins in the kitchen because my Dad was a militant recycler and made his own compost to grow our vegetables. Absolutely nothing went to waste and it's something I've adopted ever since," she said.

**WORKING WITH SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE**

There are a variety of tasks that need completing when working in marketing and communications as Sally explained, "There isn't really a typical day. Sometimes I'll be working on fun videos for our social media channels, other times I'll be taking calls from Sky and BBC wanting to feature us on their plastic pollution stories, and sometimes I'll be helping to organise events or working with brands to launch collaborative projects. I do have to do all of the normal mundane things too, like emails, spreadsheets and reporting."

Working to protect the environment is a very rewarding job. Sally told us her highlights, "I love making videos. They go down

really well with our followers and they allow me to be really creative. I also love anything else creative like writing and photography. Weirdly, I also quite like the reporting sides of things. There's something really satisfying about looking back over the past month, knowing you've worked really hard and seeing the reach, engagement or press mentions that reflect that."

**KEY SCHEMES FOR SAS**

SAS run a variety of different projects to get people and communities involved in reducing waste and protecting our seas. The scheme Plastic Free Communities sees them inspire individuals to take action to reduce their plastic footprint by signing up and downloading the action plan, as well as encouraging community leaders to create a local movement.

The charity's want for a reduction of use in plastic and greater awareness continues with their Plastic Free Schools project, which is a pupil-led education scheme that sees students take positive steps towards reducing plastic pollution, therefore inspiring future campaigners for plastic-free living.

This year is also The Long Swim in which the endurance swimmer and UN Environment Patron of the Oceans Lewis Pugh swims the English Channel! This highlights the beginning of the worldwide campaign Action for Oceans, which aims to encourage governments to

protect a minimum of 30% of the world's oceans by 2030.

Sally also explained about less well-known schemes, "We're continuing our work with water companies to monitor water quality and alert the public of any sewage incidents in real-time via our Safer Seas Service. Other projects involve putting pressure on industry and government to improve their approach to single-use plastic. We've had some pretty major campaign victories recently and we need to make sure that pressure is maintained and the vital work is carried out." Examples of positive results include the success of the Plastic Free Parliament campaign, and the announcement of a plastic bottle deposit return scheme. Read these full stories on the SAS website news pages.

**GET INVOLVED WITH SAS THIS SUMMER**

Sally told us about what the charity will be up to this summer, "We'll be at Boardmasters Festival in Cornwall from 8-12 August. If you're there, come and say hello! There are also beach clean events taking place to celebrate The Long Swim!

"There are many things you can do to get involved with SAS and make a difference where you are. Join a beach or river clean, or do your own #MINIBEACHCLEAN; lead a Plastic Free Community and help your college, university, village, town or city reduce its

plastic footprint; download your Individual Action Plan to say goodbye to avoidable, single-use plastics; and become a member, volunteer or fundraise for SAS!"

**CAREERS ADVICE**

Sally gave us some great advice for those who wish to work for an organisation such as SAS. "Get work experience, volunteer, do anything you can to get into the workplace and get known. Organise a beach clean, be active in your community – if there is a group that does something you believe in, join it. Getting the marks at school, college or university is all well and good, but showing that you care enough about a cause to actually do something about it is even better. Almost everyone who works at Surfers Against Sewage was a volunteer at some point in time."

**FIND OUT MORE**

For more information about the different aspects of Surfers Against Sewage's work, go to their website [www.sas.org.uk](http://www.sas.org.uk) or visit the following pages:

- Plastic Free Communities – [www.plasticfree.org.uk](http://www.plasticfree.org.uk)
- Plastic Free Schools – [www.sas.org.uk/our-work/education](http://www.sas.org.uk/our-work/education)
- The Long Swim – [www.bit.ly/thelongswim](http://www.bit.ly/thelongswim)
- Safer Seas Service – [www.sas.org.uk/map](http://www.sas.org.uk/map)
- Beach clean events in your local area – [www.sas.org.uk/regions-reps](http://www.sas.org.uk/regions-reps)

The plight to protect our oceans has become a hotly debated topic throughout this year, and many people are taking steps to help, from carrying out beach cleans to reducing their own plastic use. One charity dedicated to the protection of oceans is Surfers Against Sewage (SAS). Starting out in 1990 based at Porthtowan Village Hall, this group has grown in strength

and is now a well-known environmental charity striving to protect our marine environments for wildlife and people. Alice Johnson spoke to their Marketing and Communications Officer, Sally Fish, to find out more about what she gets up to and how the public can get involved with SAS activities this summer.

**THE BEGINNINGS**

The Surfers Against Sewage headquarters is based in St Agnes in Cornwall, and asking Sally how her love for the environment started, it is no wonder that this beautiful county inspired her. She commented, "I was lucky enough to grow up in the heart of Cornwall

Top Image: Barry MacDonald - Hove Lawns BSBC Brighton  
Bottom Image: Ian Lean at Watergate Bay, April 2018

# Explorer by Nature

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Camila Quinteros Peñafiel  
takes a glimpse into the  
2nd journey of  
James Cook



During my childhood, I grew up in one of the most remote inhabited islands of the world – the Polynesian Easter Island in the Pacific Ocean. This gave me the sensation of freedom, as I was surrounded by water, so walked barefoot, slept on the beach, grew my own crops, chased cattle... and connected with nature immensely.

20 years later, what I thought was just a holiday became the experience that changed my life. Scotland was, and still is, a huge influence that injected its inspiration so very deeply within me. With all its pioneers, travellers and naturalists throughout British history, for those with an explorer, adventurous, restless spirit, and willingness to submerge in isolated and unknown areas, this place is a massive motivation.

After my research in Scotland, I had to go back to my hometown in Patagonia. Once there, I felt it was too late to think about settling as I was already too energised and hungry for life, with a genuine interest in other cultures. I wanted to pack my rucksack and go out to explore some more.

By adopting the pace of nature, being patient, I waited. And so, a new opportunity arose, a bit further than the Scottish Hebrides. This time it was in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean, on an island in Melanesia that I had never heard of before. In the beginning, I was slightly scared about taking this opportunity. But the scariest moment is always just before you start, so I sewed my patches of the Scottish and Patagonian flags on my rucksack and I went to the unknown – again.

My journey lasted for nearly four days, where I crossed the Pacific Ocean, New Zealand, Australia and finally arrived in the country named Vanuatu. This archipelago formed by 83 islands, before its actual name was known as the “New Hebrides”, baptised by the British voyager, Captain James Cook in 1774 because of its similarity to the Scottish Hebrides!

In 1906, the New Hebrides became a French and British colony in response to German expansionism – hence why two of the three official languages here are French and English (the third is the local language, Bislama). The

archipelago gained independence as Vanuatu in 1980 and is a real epicentre of cultural conservation and investigation of the hidden side of nature. There are more than 100 local languages, and traditions have been preserved through time. Cook circumnavigated the globe twice, visited all seven continents and crossed the Arctic and Antarctic circles. On his second voyage which was one of the greatest journeys of all time, I have, too, found a magical and mystic connection. Once in the Antarctic Circle, Cook sailed north, arriving at Easter Island (the island where I was brought up) in March 1774. En route for New Zealand, he sailed west and explored the islands which he called the New Hebrides. He then returned to Britain via the Southern Ocean in November 1774 and arrived at Tierra del Fuego in South America – my hometown.

The Ni-Vanuatu culture, just like the Scottish, can captivate our interest and incentive willingness for learning, studying and aiming to go further. Life itself, as well as its population and customs, are valuable fields of investigation.

Images: Camila Quinteros Peñañiel



Inner Hebrides

Farming in Vanuatu on horseback



# Our Contributors



Andrew Hall

Andrew is the Communications and Campaigns Officer for Campaign for National Parks having previously been employed in politics and the business sector. He enjoys volunteering for London Zoo in his spare time.



Camila Quinteros Peñañiel

BSc in Agriculture, MSc in Biodiversity & Taxonomy of Plants. In other words, sheep lover, field botanist and passionate explorer with an adventurer heart that follows the north of the biological compass.

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Jo loves the natural world as she finds it magical and fascinating. She is a passionate beach cleaner and wants to teach people about the amazing creatures we share the planet with, in order to protect them.

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Let us know what you thought about this issue of New Nature, or what you would like to see in future issues.

We are always on the lookout for young writers, photographers and artists. Please get in touch if you are interested in submitting work.

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