Saving our precious species requires dedicated and professional effort. This does not come for free and currently there is insufficient funding to save all the species.

On farmland agri-environment funding makes a major contribution, but this is of limited help to species that live on special habitats (e.g. little terns live on beaches and natterjack toads on heathland and sand dunes); or species such as Manx shearwater and White-clawed crayfish that are threatened by invasive species; or a great many species needing community engagement and partnership development (e.g. hen harriers, shrill carder bees, bitterns and marsh fritillaries).

The National Lottery and Landfill Tax have provided important funding, but sales of lottery tickets and landfill tax receipts are both in decline. The comparatively well protected EU LIFE funding has been another significant source, but its post-Brexit future is uncertain.

What can MP Species Champions do?

- Call on the Government to protect and increase funding for species conservation
- Table Parliamentary Questions or write to Ministers
- Support constituency bids for Heritage Lottery or LIFE funding

Please get in touch with us if you would like to help.

**Case Study: Natterjack toads**

It’s no wonder that one of the local Merseyside names for the natterjack toad is the Birkdale Nightingale. Over the last few months, their high-pitched, ratchet-like call has been ringing out along the Sefton Coast. Male natterjack toads call loudly to attract mates, so much so that you can hear them a mile away on a still night. Which is lucky, as this helps with monitoring the toads – a key part of the Gems in the Dunes project run by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) Trust, under the umbrella of Back from the Brink initiative.

ARC has been recruiting and training local people to keep tabs on the toads. The findings reveal that natterjack toads urgently need help. Whilst breeding colonies still exist, numbers along the coast are much reduced compared to the recent past. The declines are largely due to a lack of habitat management, and the dunes becoming more fixed. Other problems arise from disturbance and non-native species.

Gems in the Dunes is making a difference, for example by clearing invading scrub and creating shallow pools for the toads to breed in. The enthusiastic volunteer recruits will also help. ARC is grateful to Damien Moore, Species Champion for the natterjack toad, for expressing his support for Gems in the Dunes. Yet natterjack toads need change on a larger scale than we can offer. That means better land use regulation and sustained funding from government, if we are to secure the future for these incredible amphibians.
Climate change needs a step change in wildlife conservation

Marsh fritillary butterflies, round-headed rampion, puffins – what do they have in common? As well as being championed by an MP, they’re all highly vulnerable to climate change. Defra’s new National Adaptation Programme, a 5-yearly requirement of the Climate Change Act, outlines actions to help us live with climate change in the UK. Wildlife is a top concern, along with droughts and flooding, food, human health and pests and diseases.

These three highlighted species need wetlands, better connected nature sites and healthy seas. The NAP goes some way to fulfilling these – the need for adaptation in the 25 Year Environment Plan, developing a Nature Recovery Network to help link sites, and improving management of our seas. Yet the NAP largely misses the need to adapt to living in different climates as we race towards a 2 degree world – this must be picked up in the Environment Bill, to achieve the Government’s environmental ambitions over the next 25 years.

Is the Fisheries White Paper green enough?

July saw the launch of the white paper ‘Sustainable fisheries for future generations’ – the scene-setter for the Fisheries Bill, expected in January.

The media focus on clawing back fish overlooks the paper’s broader canvas of ensuring that fishing operates within environmental limits, highlighted in the commitment to ‘pursue an ecosystem approach to fisheries management that... seeks to minimise impacts on non-commercial species and the marine environment’.

However, this will only have legal teeth if an ecosystem approach is on the face of the Fisheries Bill, and we ask our species champions to hold the Government to account on this. This would confer the mandate to tackle environmental threats such as Denmark’s harvest of ‘UK’ sandeels, to the detriment of puffins and Atlantic salmon for which they are a staple diet.

Species Champion Project update

Since our last newsletter...

... we welcome 3 new MPs: Jenny Chapman (white-clawed crayfish), Hilary Benn (water vole) and Victoria Prentis (corn bunting)

... there have been more than a dozen site visits, for example Neil Parish to the launch of a farmers’ group in the Blackdown Hills aimed at conserving species like the marsh fritillary, Thangam Debbonaire and Kerry McCarthy to Brunel House in Bristol to see a wildlife friendly building development, and John Glen to a local farm to learn about arable plants such as pheasant’s-eye.

... several MPs have asked PQs on wildlife conservation, including Kerry McCarthy, Scott Mann, Layla Moran, Anna Turley and David Drew.

If you haven’t been out on site and want to learn more about your species, please get in touch with your Species Champions partner organisation.

Who are the Species Champion MPs so far?

- Debbie Abrahams
- Harriett Baldwin
- Hilary Benn
- Richard Benyon
- Jake Berry
- Steve Brine
- James Cartlidge
- Jenny Chapman
- Therese Coffey
- Tracey Crouch
- Jon Cruddas
- Thangam Debbonaire
- David Drew
- Philip Dunne
- Mark Garnier
- John Glen
- Chris Grayling
- Helen Hayes
- Peter Heaton-Jones
- Nick Herbert
- Kevin Hollinrake
- Norman Lamb
- Tim Loughton
- Caroline Lucas
- Scott Mann
- Rachael Maskell
- Kerry McCarthy
- Alison McGovern
- Huw Merriman
- Damien Moore
- Layla Moran
- Caroline Nokes
- Neil Parish
- Claire Perry
- Jess Phillips
- Rebecca Pow
- Victoria Prentis
- Barry Sheerman
- Angela Smith
- Caroline Spelman
- Gary Streeter
- Desmond Swayne
- Derek Thomas
- Kelly Tolhurst
- 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

Species Champions in England is coordinated by the Rethink Nature partnership

Species Champions in Scotland is coordinated by the Scottish Wildlife Trust & RSPB Scotland

Species Champions in Wales is coordinated by the Natural Resources Wales & Cynnal Cymru

Species Champions in Northern Ireland is coordinated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in Northern Ireland

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[Image 466x60 to 553x82]
[Image 164x56 to 193x86]
[Image 391x673 to 554x783]
[Image 391x254 to 553x386]

Climate change needs a step change in wildlife conservation

Marsh fritillaries are vulnerable to drying of wetlands

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- Tim Loughton
- Caroline Lucas
- Scott Mann
- Rachael Maskell
- Kerry McCarthy
- Alison McGovern
- Huw Merriman
- Damien Moore
- Layla Moran
- Caroline Nokes
- Neil Parish
- Claire Perry
- Jess Phillips
- Rebecca Pow
- Victoria Prentis
- Barry Sheerman
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