



Hen Harrier Action: March 2023 Newsletter

March is behaving like it usually does - giving us a spring-link weekend followed by a wintry week. But the snowdrops are flowering and the days are getting longer, so spring is definitely on the way. This month, we are very focused on our Young Filmmaker Challenge and Paul Samuels has some useful tips for young people thinking of entering. If you know such a person, please encourage them!



Hen Harrier Action News

New website!

We have been improving our website; the new version goes live soon - keep an eye on our social media for news. We've made it easier to navigate and find information. We'd love to get your feedback - what do you think?

The Biodiversity Intactness Index

In our last newsletter, I asked if anyone knew the source of the oft-quoted claim that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Thank you to everyone who replied, and specially to Mark Alexander, who was the first to get in touch and who steered us towards the [Biodiversity Intactness Index](#) (BII) developed by the Natural History Museum in London and originally published in 2016. It uses data from ecological surveys to calculate a country's BII which gives a measure of its current biodiversity abundance as a percentage of its original state. The higher the percentage, the better for nature. The NHM says that a BII of 90% or more indicates enough biodiversity to be a resilient and functioning ecosystem. A BII of less than 30% or

less indicates an area with depleted biodiversity and an ecosystem at risk of collapse.

The data currently on the NHM website gives the UK a BII of 42% in 2010, with quite a wide range of uncertainty, from 39.9% to 59.7%. For comparison, the figure for northern Europe as a whole is 82%, with a range from 79.2% to 86.4%.

The NHM portal doesn't make it easy to create a league table, as you have to extract the data for each country individually. The RSPB appear to have done that for an [article about the BII](#). In this, they cite the UK's BII as 50% (which I assume is the average of the upper and lower boundaries in the NHM data). This puts us bottom of the G7, 3rd from bottom in Europe (ahead only of Ireland and Malta) and in the bottom 12% worldwide. It also cites figures for all the UK's nations: England 47%, Northern Ireland 50%, Scotland 56% and Wales 51%. Must try harder!

Advice for Young Filmmakers from Wildlife Film Maker Paul Samuels

With the 31st March deadline for our Young Filmmaker Challenge fast approaching, we asked our own expert wildlife and documentary film maker, Paul Samuels, for some advice and tips for young people planning to submit an entry.

HHA: What prompted you to choose 'survival' as this year's theme?

Paul: Survival is what Hen Harrier Action is all about, and it's a common theme in many conservation conversations right now, about rewilding, and the depleted state of nature in the UK and throughout the world. And of course, in winter, the focus for much of our wildlife becomes surviving the season. So I think it will be a fruitful subject for young people to consider in their entries.

HHA: What kinds of entries are you hoping to see this year?

Paul: We wanted to be as non-prescriptive as we could and keep the focus on young people's creativity. I hope that they will speak from their own experiences and think creatively about the story that they want to tell. It's all about content, content, content! We want them to find stories in their local environment that reflect the resilience of nature in the face of adversity. Look in the unexpected spaces for examples of survival.

HHA: For young people working with a limited budget, what is the equipment that will be most useful?

Paul: You can create a compelling entry simply using a smartphone, but I'd always recommend adding an external microphone with a windshield - the fluffy bit - to reduce the interference from the wind. There are plenty of camera apps available, like Filmic Pro or Beastcam, that will help get the best film quality from a smartphone.

Of course, if you have a camera that can capture video, that's even better. We also hope that some schools may be prepared to loan equipment to their students for a worthwhile project like the Young Filmmaker Challenge. You can always ask.

HHA: And what about film editing software?

Paul: There are phone apps that will help with the editing process, but the best approach is to ensure you get the best footage in the first place. Then the editing will be simpler. Take several clips of the same thing, move the camera and take the same clip from a different angle, to give you options in editing. There's a great piece of software called Da Vinci Resolve which has a free version, and several other open source editing packages.

HHA: Can you recommend any useful reading or viewing for our young filmmakers?

Paul: I'd suggest they spend some time looking at other short videos on YouTube for inspiration and techniques. Think about how to set the context for your survival story first, use your footage to bring the story to life, and then find a way to bring your story to a conclusion. What should the viewer think? Is nature capable of surviving unaided, or should we intervene?

HHA: Finally, Paul, what would be your most important piece of advice?

Paul: Everyone has something unique to contribute, a story to tell. Don't worry about the limitations of your kit, get out there and film something, and learn from the process. I would encourage them to ask themselves - Have I translated into effective film the idea I had in my head?

Some excellent expert advice from Paul Samuels there for all our young filmmakers. Don't forget, the deadline for entries is midnight on 31st March, and there are three prizes of vouchers to spend on photographic or filmmaking equipment, with the best entries to be shown at our Skydancer event in May.

News roundup

Wildlife Trusts report reveals huge flaws in HS2 Ltd evaluation of nature loss and compensation.

A new [report](#) painstakingly compiled by Cheshire Wildlife Trust has concluded that the natural habitat and biodiversity loss along HS2's route has been significantly undervalued, while the nature compensation measures proposed have been overvalued, leading to a huge gap in the No Net Loss of biodiversity commitment by HS2 Ltd.

Holding our breath for Oscar-nominated raptor rescue film

This year's Oscars will be uniquely memorable for the nomination of a film documenting the efforts of two brothers dedicated to saving New Delhi's neglected Black Kites from the city's smog-choked skies.

[All That Breathes](#), already internationally recognised with best documentary at Cannes and the grand jury prize at Sundance, is Oscar-nominated in the Best Documentary Feature Film category.

Support us: support hen harriers

Many thanks to all the supporters who have once again been so generous in supporting our work. As ever, the encouragement it gives us is at least equal to the monetary value of the donation. So we always welcome donations, especially new regular contributions. To make a donation, click [here](#), (if eligible please click the Gift Aid box too).

You can still buy the Stronghill song premiered on Skydancer Day [here](#) – Stronghill have very generously donated all the proceeds to us and we are very grateful.

Hen Harrier Action

Website: henharrierday.uk

Registered charity: SC049943

Registered company: SC653279

The Hen Harrier Day logos are a Registered Trademark and must not be used without permission.

This email was sent to {{contact.EMAIL}}
You've received it because you've subscribed to our newsletter.

[Unsubscribe](#)

