



## Hen Harrier Action: October 2023 Newsletter

October sees Hen Harriers leaving the nesting area and setting out on independent journeys to find wintering locations in lowlands and coastal areas, although we know that some will migrate overseas. By the end of the month, most will have arrived at their communal roosting grounds, often in reedbeds and fenland.



## Hen Harrier Action News

### Hen Harrier Action attends the Restore Nature Now Rally at DEFRA

Our intrepid wildlife and documentary filmmaker **Paul Samuels** added his voice to those of more than 40 conservation and environmental groups and thousands of campaigners demanding that the government acts now to restore nature in the UK. The rally followed the publication of the latest **State of Nature 2023** report, which makes grim reading. It showed that the UK is now one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

Below you can see one of Paul's shots from the day, and he has posted two films of the event on our [YouTube channel](#).

In [Restore Nature Now! - Part One](#), you can hear from speakers representing **River Action UK**, **WWT** and **Butterfly Conservation**, among others, plus **Megan McCubbin** and a barnstorming off-the-cuff speech from **Dr Ruth Tingay** calling attention to the plight of Hen Harriers on grouse moors.

In [Restore Nature Now! - Part Two](#), there are speeches from campaigners, scientists, and a rousing address from actor **Samuel West**, finishing with a compelling speech from the indefatigable **Chris Packham**.



## News of our 2023 satellite tagged Hen Harriers

Our sole surviving tagged Hen Harrier from 2022, **Macha**, continues to spend time in the North Pennines AONB around Balderhead Reservoir, which lies west of Barnard Castle.

Our newly tagged female **Isla** fledged from a nest on the island of Kerrera off the coast of Oban, has spent the last few weeks exploring the area around Faslane and Gare Loch.



## A stimulating and thought-provoking interview with Mark Avery



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I think that Wild Justice are the Pine Martens of wildlife legislation! We create a ‘landscape of fear’ for the establishment around wildlife legislation, because they know that we will challenge them if we have a good case. And we’re not scared of doing it.

Mark Avery

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We caught up with lifelong conservationist, author, campaigner, and **Wild Justice** co-founder **Mark Avery** a few weeks ago to discuss his new book – **Reflections: What Wildlife Needs and How to Provide It** – and find out more about his future plans.

Never one to pull punches, Mark shares his views on the current political landscape in relation to conservation issues and spells out some eminently practical proposals to deliver a better future for wildlife.

Find out why Mark thinks that **Wild Justice** are the Pine Martens of wildlife legislation!

You can read the [full and frank interview here](#).

## Exclusive Video Interview with Presenter, Zoologist and Activist Megan McCubbin

### In Conversation with Megan McCubbin

In the first in a new series of conversations with leading figures in the nature conservation world, Hen Harrier Action’s Jonathan



Wilson talks to **Megan McCubbin** about her new book, **An Atlas of Endangered Species**.

*Read an excerpt here:*

**HHA: We're here to talk about your latest book, but before we do that, I know that you travel a lot with your work. Where do we find you today?**

I'm currently in the Scottish Highlands, one of my favourite places. I've been spending a lot of time here over the last year and it's become a second home for me. If I am working from home, I am generally here in the Highlands.

I enjoy being where the nature is, and we are very fortunate here. We have a family of four badgers that come in every night. We sometimes get Pine Martens - I'm trying to make that a regular occurrence! It is a great habitat to explore because there is such biodiversity here. This part of the world is a gem in terms of what's left in the UK and it's a great example of what can be achieved. It is part of the Cairngorms Connect project, and there is lots of rewilding happening here. There's still a long way to go, but it is as wild as you can get in the UK.

**HHA: Turning to your latest book, you say in the introduction that this is a book about inspiring people doing inspiring things to save some incredible and unique species. Why did you decide to write this book now?**

When we are talking about climate change and the biodiversity crisis it can feel a bit overwhelming when you're facing this big problem, and you're facing it alone as individuals. What difference could I possibly make?

It can feel a bit isolating at times, and people talk about 'eco anxiety' and 'eco fatigue' to the point where we don't know what we can do. We become paralysed. But my standpoint is that we are all, as individuals, incredibly lucky and incredibly powerful, with our voices and the power of our pound. We have everyday choices we can make that can really make a difference.

When we face problems like climate change and biodiversity loss together, then those problems immediately become a lot smaller. All

our individual actions add up, and if we are all working together towards a common goal, then we will succeed.

So, when it came to writing this book, I love UK wildlife, but I've also been very fortunate to travel and see some amazing endangered species that are right on the brink, that many people have not even heard about before.

I wanted to bring attention to them but also to the scientists, the rangers, the indigenous communities that are out there risking their lives for the protection of these animals and plants, every single day, trying their hardest to make that difference. And in many cases, they are succeeding, but they do need more support.

It is about empowering people by telling these individual stories and saying, 'look at what this person is doing'. There is a wonderful man who is saving frogs out in the cloud forest, and you have Pungky, a Sumatran conservationist who is single-handedly saving orchids from plant poachers. Look at all these individual actions and how important they are, and if that is not empowering us to do something on our own ground, then I don't know what is!

There are some inspiring individuals out there and we can learn a lot from international conservation strategies. It really is just one planet, even though we have created all these borders and paperwork. We have one beautiful planet, one beautiful landmass, and it is all interconnected.

*(Continued...)*

To hear what Megan has to say in full, you can [watch the interview](#) on our **YouTube channel**, or [read the transcript here](#) on our **website**.

## News roundup

### **110 Hen Harriers confirmed 'missing' or illegally killed since 2018**

Raptor Persecution UK has published the latest update to the rolling list of Hen Harriers confirmed missing in suspicious circumstances or illegally killed. The number has now reached 110, and that's just the ones we know about.

You can read the full [blog post here](#).

### **One in six UK species risk extinction, says the 2023 State of Nature Report**

The latest State of Nature Report, published last week and widely reported, shows that since 1970, the abundance of species studied has declined on average by 19%, and bird species have fared especially badly, with 43% at risk of extinction. Intensive farming and climate change are the two biggest drivers of nature loss, according to the report.

But the report also highlights some conservation successes, such as the Lyme Bay marine protected area, and the RSPB's Hope Farm initiative, but points out that action needs to be taken on a much bigger scale.

You can read the [full report here](#).

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### Hen Harrier Action

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