



# WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS

CHESTER ZOO IS WORKING TO PROTECT UK  
WILDLIFE AND **YOU** CAN TOO



Over the past 40 years or so...

Bullfinch, greenfinch & dunnock numbers have declined by 25-50%  
starling, song thrush & house sparrow numbers have declined by 50%+



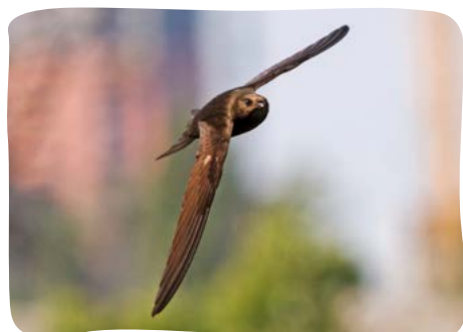
Hedgehogs have declined by 30% since 2002. They are still declining in the UK by 5% per year. There are fewer than 1 million left in UK.

Toads have declined by 68% between 1985 & 2015. They are still declining by over 2% per year.



97% of flower-rich meadows lost since 1930 affecting bumblebees & wildflowers

Swifts declined by almost 50% between 1995 & 2015



# WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Those aren't the only species that are in decline, UK wildlife is in trouble. Using a special measure called the Biodiversity Intactness Index we know that the UK is ranked 189 out of the 218 countries assessed.

## One way of assessing how damaged nature is across the world is the **Biodiversity Intactness Index**

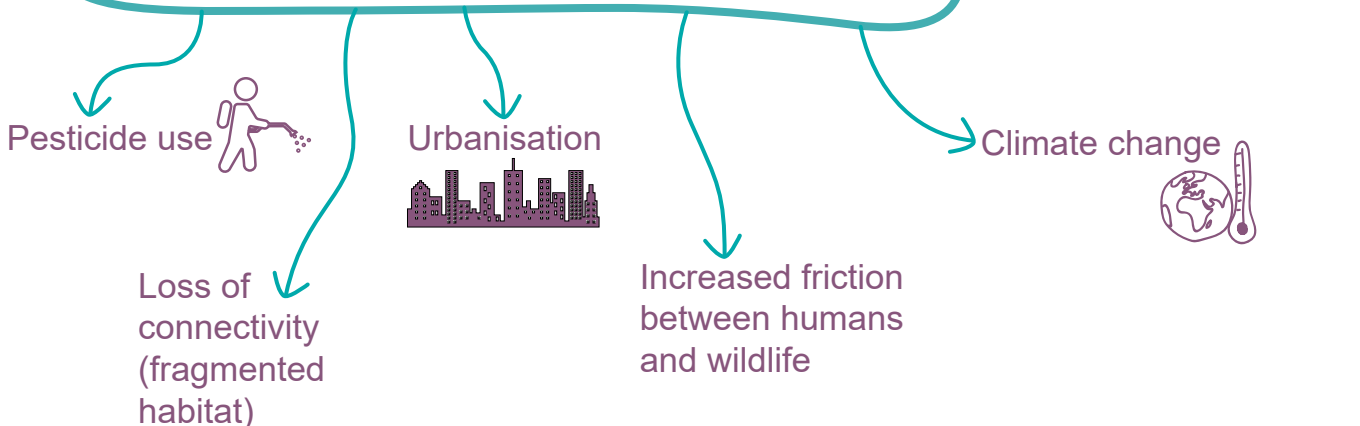


Between 2006 and 2012, **22,000 hectares** (the size of 22,000 international rugby pitches) of green space was converted to “artificial surfaces”

The 2016 State of Nature report tells us that...

- Over half (56%) of UK species have declined since 1970.
- More than one in ten (1,199 species) species in the UK are under threat of disappearing from our shores altogether.

There are a number of **major issues** causing declines



# HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The 2010 Every Child Outdoors report found that there are “strong correlations between connection to nature and pro-nature behaviours and pro-environmental behaviours.” We need more initiatives that work to protect and increase UK biodiversity, and also **engage and connect people** at the same time.

We need to make our urban environments a bit more **WILD**

If EVERYONE did something **small**, then the whole world would be in a better place



**Wildlife Connections** is a campaign led by Chester Zoo which encourages people to take action to help local wildlife. We're asking everybody to help create a network of safe spaces for wildlife by taking simple steps such as recording wildlife, opening up gardens to hedgehogs or toads and growing wildflowers.

We have loads of really useful online **guides and resources** that can help everyone take action to protect UK wildlife. There's something for everyone and if everyone does their bit then we truly can reverse some of these declines and increase the resilience and stability of our local ecosystems.

There are loads of ways you can **take action to help local wildlife** – whether you make a change in your own garden, local community space or workplace. Do you know a green space where you could take any of these actions

[www.chesterzoo.org/connections](http://www.chesterzoo.org/connections)



Wildlife

# CONNECTIONS

**1. FLOWERS**  
Provide food for pollinators and other insects all year round by growing plants that flower at different times of year.

**2. BAT BOX**  
Bats look for safe places to roost near areas with lots of food. Putting bat boxes up in different areas means that bats might use them at different times of year.

**3. TOAD ABODE**  
A shady shelter for toads to hide in during the day.

**4. COMPOST HEAP**  
The perfect place for hedgehogs, toads, birds, bats and reptiles to find lots of food and somewhere to hide.

**5. ROCK PILE**  
Gives insects somewhere to live, so hedgehogs, toads and birds have plenty to eat. Slowworms and other reptiles use them as basking spots too.

**6. HEDGEHOG MONORAIL**  
Makes sure hedgehogs and other wildlife can move in and out to find everything they need to thrive.

**8. BUG HOTEL**  
Different sized nooks & crannies and different materials make the perfect place for lots of different bugs and insects to live.

**10. BIRD BOX**  
Different birds like different designs so having a variety will provide homes for loads of different birds.

**12. BIRD FEEDER**  
Seeds, nuts, mealworms and fruit are all great for birds. Put your feeders in different places so the birds don't have to fight over the food.

**9. HEDGES**  
Hedgehogs love hedges as do lots of other wildlife. Having plants like hawthorn and barberry in your hedge will provide food and shelter for all sorts of wildlife all year round.

**11. LOG PILE**  
Perfect place for beetles to live, which are fantastic food for all sorts of wildlife. Make sure it's not disturbed and you might get hedgehogs, toads or reptiles hibernating in there too.

**13. POND**  
Even a very small pond can be the perfect place for insects and amphibians to live. Birds and hedgehogs will come to drink and bathe too.

**14. LEAVE THE GRASS TO GROW**  
Long grass and wild areas where thistles, nettles and brambles are allowed to grow are really important to provide food and shelter for lots of wildlife.



To create your own **WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS** garden, here are few top tips to get you started.

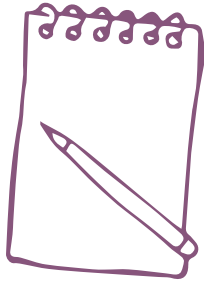
Find out more  
[chesterzoo.org/connections](http://chesterzoo.org/connections)

Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



# RECORDING HOW-TO

Recording wildlife is a fun thing to do all year round and can help conserve the species you see around you.



Where you are, the date and time can effect what you're likely to see, so make a note of these things.

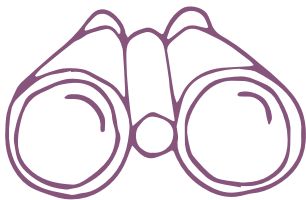
Check all the different places that wildlife might live.

Note down what species you see in each habitat. Depending on the time of year you might need to rely on things like bark, leaves, colour and behaviour to do this.

Use simple equipment like binoculars, bug pots and a magnifying glass to help you see species that can be difficult to spot.

Use guides to help you identify which species you've seen.

If you can't figure it out there and then, take a photo and a few notes to look it up later.



Look out for things like feathers, footprints and poo which can tell you a lot about who's visited when you weren't about.

Jot down how long you were recording for. This might help explain why you've seen loads more on one day than another.

Use books or websites to help you identify the species in your photos.

Use our online recording form to share what you've seen with your local record centre.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
RECORDING WILDLIFE, GO TO  
[CHESTERZOO.ORG/CONNECTIONS](https://chesterzoo.org/connections)

## DID YOU KNOW...

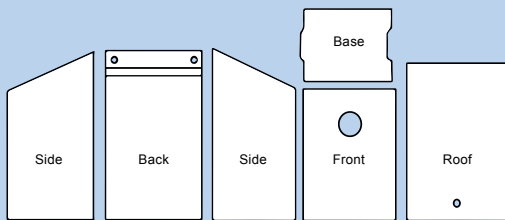
That Chester Zoo has its own **nature reserve**? We're protecting 14 acres and making that area the best that it can be for UK wildlife. We also have lots of spaces around the zoo designed to encourage UK wildlife to thrive.



# HOW TO BUILD A BIRD BOX!

## You'll need...

- Your Bird Box kit!
- A hammer
- Nails
- Gloves
- A screwdriver
- Screws



## All you need to do is...

1. From the rear of the back (without the groove) nail it to the two sides
2. Position the base between the two sides and the back then nail it into place
3. Fit the front panel to the front! Don't forget to check that the sloping top is in line with the base. Nail it into place
4. Slide the roof into the groove at the back and screw it down into the front panel. Be careful, make sure you don't miss the wood underneath!

## To put up your bird box...

- Find a nice sheltered spot - make sure the entrance hole of your nest box is protected from winds, rain and direct sunlight. We don't want our feathered friends getting wet!
- Get your ladder out - small holed nest boxes are best put at heights of 1.5 to 3m. If you can't find a suitable tree, the sides of sheds and houses make good spots. Be careful if using a ladder!
- Keep it safe from intruders - make sure that it's not easily accessible for cats or squirrels!





# HOW TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR WILDFLOWERS!

## You'll need...

- Wildlife Connections seeds
- Gloves
- Spade
- Bucket
- Rake

## All you need to do is...

1. Clear any brambles or taller vegetation
2. Use the spade to mark out the area where you're going to prepare and cut into the ground/turf
3. Turn the ground over using the spade
4. Pick out any large stones, and any big weeds with roots
5. Rake over to loosen up soil
6. Take seeds
7. Sprinkle evenly over prepared ground
8. Rake to cover with a bit of soil
9. Wait to see your wonderful wildflowers grow!

You might want to build a scarecrow to stop the seeds being eaten before they grow!



# Wildlife Connections Quiz

Can you match the facts to the species?

There are five facts for each species/group



|                                                                                                      | Fact numbers | Fact list                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Hedgehog</p>     |              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tail 2cm long</li> <li>2. Can run up to 40m per minute</li> <li>3. Eats beetles, caterpillars and earthworms, with some bird eggs, slugs and snails</li> <li>4. The Queen builds a nest in early spring</li> <li>5. They use echolocation to find food</li> </ol>                                             |
| <p>Swift</p>       |              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Has dry, warty, brown skin</li> <li>7. Some individuals live for over 20 years</li> <li>8. Use a long tongue to get nectar from flowers</li> <li>9. Visit Britain in summer</li> <li>10. May catch 10,000 insects per day when feeding young</li> </ol>                                                       |
| <p>Bumblebee</p>  |              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Has around 5,000 spines</li> <li>12. 18 species are resident in Britain</li> <li>13. Length 15 – 25mm</li> <li>14. Live in small colonies</li> <li>15. Have fat, furry bodies that may be black, yellow, fawn, white or red.</li> <li>16. Usually hibernate between November and the end of March</li> </ol> |
| <p>Toad</p>       |              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Can be seen in screaming parties</li> <li>18. Like to nest under the eaves of houses and other buildings</li> <li>19. Females can be up to 50% larger than males</li> <li>20. Return to deep ponds and lakes to breed</li> <li>21. Often seen crossing roads in early spring</li> </ol>                      |
| <p>Bats</p>       |              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Can spend weeks at a time in flight</li> <li>23. Lay their eggs in long strands</li> <li>24. Only mammal that can fly</li> <li>25. Females gather together in the summer to give birth</li> </ol>                                                                                                            |

\*Answers on the next page

# Challenge tasks

Pick a **UK native species** that is in decline that you would like to take action to help

Describe the characteristics of that animal/plant and the habitat in which they live

Explore why that animal/plant is important for a healthy ecosystem and what might happen if they continue to decline or go extinct

Explain the threats they are facing and how it's affecting their population

Review the work that Chester Zoo is doing to protect UK wildlife

As an individual/  
class/school/  
family/community

Apply what **you** have learnt and develop a project to take action to help UK wild life

Share your story, let other people know about what you've been doing and how they can take action too.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT THESE LINKS;

[chesterzoo.org/connections](http://chesterzoo.org/connections)

[chesterzoo.org/schools/resources](http://chesterzoo.org/schools/resources)  
(search UK wildlife)

SHARE YOUR PROGRESS WITH US

#WildlifeConnections

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 [volunteers@chesterzoo.org](mailto:volunteers@chesterzoo.org)

