

Nature Matters

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Nature Matters

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Puffins in trouble



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Cover photograph:
© Mike Armitage

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Foreword

Welcome to issue 27 of Nature Matters.
I have included a broad mix of short pieces - signposts - to more information online, and a few longer articles, punctuated with photographs where possible,

The cover story in this issue is a piece about the potential extinction of the Puffin. There are also features on EcoBuilds, the Tawny Owl, the Curlew and lots of shorter news items.

Happy reading and, as ever, I welcome your news and comments..

Michael Armitage
Editor

PS - You can also find other news items on the Nature Matters News page (www.naturematters.org.uk/news.html)

 Download free -
Adobe Acrobat Reader

Getting in touch

Nature Matters is a periodic e-zine that informs its readership about wildlife and environmental issues.

Suggestions, comments and contributions are always welcome.

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:: www.naturematters.org.uk

COVERSTORY

Puffins in trouble

Also known as the sea parrot, there are concerns that Britain's best-loved seabird is vulnerable to global extinction.

The National Picture

Fair Isle once had a population of 20,000 birds but this number has halved. Britain's most important puffin site on St Kilda now has fewer than 130,000 pairs, half of the number recorded back in the 1970s.

Marine ecologists feel that changes in sea temperature due to increasing carbon dioxide have meant significant declines in cold water zooplankton. In turn these declines have resulted in fewer sand eels, a staple foodstuff of the puffin.

Puffins can live for as much as 20 to 30 years but concerns are that if all the older adult birds die off after failing to breed over many years, their numbers could rapidly plummet.

The Wider Picture

The Puffin is on the Red List due to its global assessment as Vulnerable. Bird Life International has examined the puffins status and concludes that it is likely to decline by between 50 and 70 per cent by 2065. Opinions among the experts differ as to the predicted outcome and some say that talk of extinction is too strong at this stage.

Old Evidence

A serious concern is that the data which informs the picture of the current and future status of puffins is now out of date. A full survey of our seabirds was carried out in 2000 but this data is now 16 years old. This work was carried out by the JNCC¹ which is sponsored by the Defra. However, because of government cuts, it is unlikely that there will be another detailed survey in the foreseeable future.

The puffins predicament is symptomatic of the fortunes of much of our marine wildlife. The worry is that the current UK government seems unconcerned

My thanks to Mark Cocker and New Statesman magazine for the background information used in this article.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/nature/2016/07/puffins-peril>

¹ Joint Nature Conservation Committee



Photograph:
© Mike Armitage



Photograph: **Mike Armitage**



ECO BUILDS

Why is environmental building so important?

Learning to design, build and live sustainably is becoming ever more important to us in the 21st Century.

Buildings consume 40% of the world's total energy and 16% of its water consumption. If we are to reduce emissions and mitigate even worse climate change outcomes than those currently predicted, it is vital that we learn to construct buildings that absorb energy, are durable, and provide non-toxic environments for their inhabitants.

The problem with traditional buildings is that they consume vast amounts of energy in the materials with which they are built and in the energy used by their occupants. This results in burning more fossil fuels with consequent damage to the climate. The cement industry alone accounts for 10% of the world's CO₂ emissions.

Some building materials cause major ecological damage during their extraction or result in toxic emissions during production, use or disposal. But

the technology and know-how exists to build buildings that minimise these impacts and are healthier for their occupants, without excessive cost.

Just as important as the use of low carbon materials and energy efficiency is the question of aesthetics. But these environmental buildings, constructed to maximise the sun's natural light and energy, can also be great spaces to live in.

Most of our domestic construction in the UK continues to be the traditional block, brick and concrete buildings which are thermally inefficient and environmentally unsustainable.

However, luckily, there are some exceptions and Western Solar's eco hamlet in Glanrhyd in Pembrokeshire is a groundbreaking housing project that bucks this trend.

The next few pages explain how this came about.

Mike Armitage

Eco BUILDS

Western Solar's eco hamlet in Glanrhyd is a groundbreaking and innovative venture which demonstrates how the use of renewable energy can help tackle our national problem of a lack of affordable housing. This is their story.



Most of the UK housing stock is quite inappropriate for today when energy costs rise steadily upwards and there is also concern for global warming. Bricks, cement, stone, tiles and other building materials are not only carbon intensive in manufacture but hard to recycle and have terrible thermal properties.

In 2013 we sought to change that by deciding that homes should be made of material that was cheaply available, had excellent thermal properties and that each home should generate its own energy.

Well, we succeeded in our first phase by building a prototype and developing the first solar village in Wales. Now we're on our next phase of convincing the rest of the industry that things need to change.

This is our story.

Our company Western Solar built the first solar farm in Wales in 2011. We were delighted that a year later we had produced 1.2 GW of clean energy without much in the way of maintenance costs. At about that time a report was published highlighting the issue of energy poverty in low-income households, the costs to the health service and even early deaths in the elderly.

We decided to invest our income from the solar farm in a thought experiment. What if we could produce a house that was cheap to build, uncompromising on energy efficiency and produced its own energy from solar photovoltaic panels.

We researched for several months talking to people who had done similar projects in the UK and in Europe where ambient temperatures are far lower in the winter. We concluded that :-

1. Locally sourced timber was the cheapest material to use. It had excellent thermal properties and it was one of the most sustainable materials we could work with (trees absorb carbon from the atmosphere).
2. We should manufacture as much of the house in a factory before erecting it on site.
3. Re-engineering the design of traditional homes was vital to reduce costs. We eliminated one roof, redundant spaces such as attics and most of the plumbing.
4. We would maximise the use of insulation to make the house highly thermally efficient. Recycled newsprint was ideal
5. And finally the house would be south facing to maximise the solar gain from daylight. All windows would be on this side to draw in the energy from daylight.

The result was Ty Solar, our 100 sqm 3-bed prototype. It was clad in larch, covered in solar panels on its mono-pitched roof facing south and generated 6000KwH of energy over the year. The solar gain from daylight accounted for 80% of the space heating requirements and its 275mm insulated walls with treble glazed windows retained heat several hours after darkness. Visitors came to the opening and were impressed but there continued to be resistance to the idea. This was too innovative. Too risky. And yet all over Northern Europe similar homes were the norm..

The Solar Village

So we decided to build our first solar village of six homes to further demonstrate that the idea was viable on a bigger scale. We eventually managed to acquire the site of a disused garage and build six homes, four 2-bed and two 3-bed homes based on our prototype. The homes will be for rent at 20% below the market rate, making them affordable and tenants will enjoy very low energy living, approximating to a saving of more than £1000 pa.

There have been a few other benefits too in terms of job creation, new skills, and local supply chains. Around 60% of the total cost of the development has gone into the local economy. On future developments we estimate that for every £1m spent:-

1. 10 affordable homes can be built.
2. £600,000 will go into the local economy helping local businesses and establishing local supply chains
3. 100 tonnes of carbon will be saved per annum
4. 60,000KwH of electricity will be generated
5. The development could return 4% pa to investors if the project were financed by a community trust or private financier.

Going forward

Looking ahead there are challenges to see if this approach will succeed. The industry is still locked down in traditional forms of construction. Affordable land too is difficult to acquire. But we are confident that once people begin to move into their new homes they will be our best advocates of change.

<https://westernsolar.org.uk/>



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the Scarlet

A luxury eco hotel on the edge of the ocean: could the Scarlet be the greenest hotel in the UK?

Picture views of cliff, sea and sky at every moment with light airy spaces designed to connect you to the outdoors.

Imagine totally unwinding in an Ayurvedic inspired spa, with views over Mawgan Porth Beach and on to the wild and beautiful Atlantic beyond.

Tucked down a residential road in Mawgan Porth, the Scarlet doesn't announce itself with the pizzazz and fanfare you might expect of Cornwall's "luxury eco-hotel".

Curved wooden walls and a sea-thrift roof camouflage it against the cliff, but step into reception and the Scarlet shows its five-star credentials with floor-to-ceiling windows displaying a breathtaking view of the beach below.

Art with a Cornish coastal theme brings open spaces to life. Furniture is retro 50s with an ergonomic Scandi-feel.

Rooms are arranged over five levels, each with their own special views over gardens, cliffs, beach, sea and sky.

Open to hotel guests for breakfast, and to hotel guests and day visitors for lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. Menus are based on seasonal Cornish ingredients.

Does the Scarlet live up to its aim to be "luxurious without costing the planet"? It certainly takes its green pledge seriously. With measures such as grey- and rain-water harvesting, a biomass boiler, innovative insulation and ventilation and a commitment to using recyclable materials, its credentials are anything but ordinary.

Enjoy the great outdoors this summer with alfresco eating, outdoor adventures, or relaxing by the fireside or poolside.

The Scarlet could be your perfect place to celebrate the most special of occasions

Bird in Focus ...

TAWNY OWL

The tawny owl is the most common owl in Britain, able to live in a wide variety of habitats. Being nocturnal, though, it is rarely seen.

Adults have large brown eyes, while chicks have blue eyes. It has a facial disc surrounded by a ring of dark feathers. Upper parts are usually reddish brown, with a line of dark and light patches on its wings and crown of the head and much paler below.

Tawny owls establish static territories but change their roosting places frequently - this may be because their presence is often given away when they are mobbed by smaller birds. (I once found an adult Tawny roosting in bright sunlight only eighteen inches off the ground - Editor).

In urban areas, tawnies prey mainly on small birds such as sparrows, thrushes, blackbirds and starlings, with rodents making up only about 7% of the owl's total diet.

In woodland areas, rodents make up over 80% of their diet with small birds and rabbits making up the rest of the owl's diet.

Tawny owls nest in tree cavities, old crows' nests, squirrel dreys and nest boxes.

The tawny owl usually lays 2-3 large, white, round eggs in late February and March and incubates them for 28-30 days. The young tend to leave the nest about four weeks after hatching, but are still dependent on their parents for two to three months afterwards, and occasionally on into autumn.

It can be extremely difficult for the young owls; sometimes only one or two owlets are successfully raised each year by each breeding pair.

A study published by the Royal Society in 1997 revealed that, when laying eggs in March, tawnies could predict field vole numbers on their territory in June when the young would be fledging. This study also pointed to a bias towards female young when vole numbers were high.

NEWSBriefs

CENTRE FOR ECOLOGY & HYDROLOGY

**New study:
neonicotinoid
insecticides linked
to wild bee decline
across England**

Exposure to neonicotinoid seed treated oilseed rape crops has been linked to long-term population decline of wild bee species across the English countryside, according to research published today in Nature Communications.

The research, led by the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology using data provided by Fera Science Ltd and the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Scheme, examined changes in the occurrence of 62 wild bee species with oilseed rape cropping patterns across England between 1994 and 2011 - the time period spanning the introduction of wide-scale commercial use of neonicotinoids.

The scientists found evidence suggesting that neonicotinoid use is linked to large-scale and long-term decline in wild bee species distributions and communities.

The decline was, on average, three times stronger among species that regularly feed on the crop such as Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) compared to species that forage on a range of floral resources, indicating that oilseed rape is a principle mechanism of neonicotinoid exposure among wild bee communities.

more information

<http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news-and-media/news/new-study-neonicotinoid-insecticides-linked-wild-bee-decline-across-england>

BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**Biodiversity begins
at home: saving old
villages helps save
farmland birds**

Preserving old villages and farm buildings – and being more creative in designing new rural homes – could help halt the decline in European farmland bird populations, according to new research published today in the Journal of Applied Ecology.

The study, led by Dr Zuzanna Rosin of Adam Mickiewicz University, found that traditional villages in Poland are biodiversity hotspots for farmland birds, whose populations have declined at an alarming rate across Europe over recent decades.

As agriculture becomes ever more intensive, traditional villages will play an increasingly important role in farmland bird conservation, says Rosin, so preserving the variety of farms, homes and building materials is key to conserving farmland birds, whose numbers have fallen dramatically.

more information

<http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org>

BBC

**Thames Water
hit with record
£20m fine for huge
sewage leaks**

Thames Water has been fined a record £20m after pumping 1.9 billion litres of untreated sewage into the River Thames.

The company admitted water pollution and other offences at sewage facilities in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Fish and birds died following the incidents in 2013 and 2014.

The £20.3m fine is the largest penalty handed down to a water utility for an environmental disaster. Judge Francis Sheridan said the scale of the problem was such that it must have been known up the chain of command.

The spills occurred at four Thames Water Utilities Ltd sewage treatment works, at Aylesbury, Didcot, Henley and Little Marlow, as well as a large sewage pumping system in Littlemore in Oxford.

Staff recorded a "failure waiting to happen", he said. Robert Davis, from the Environment Agency, called it some of the worst pollution he had witnessed.

more information

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-39352755>

PTES

**Study reveals
declining brown
hares could
benefit from
non-native
crops grown for
bioenergy across
Britain's farmland**

A study published today (Monday 8th May 2017) has revealed that declining brown hares could benefit from non-native crops grown for bioenergy across Britain's farmland. This research was carried out by the universities of Cambridge, Hull and the Open University, and was funded by wildlife charity People's Trust for Endangered Species.

more information

<https://ptes.org/press-release-study-reveals-declining-brown-hares-benefit-non-native-crops-grown-bioenergy-across-britains-farmland/>

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RENEWABLEUK

Clean energy industry growing faster than rest of economy says CCC report

A new report by the Government's advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change, highlights the benefits that wind and marine energy bring to the economy by growing new industries, and to consumers by providing insurance against volatile international fossil fuel prices.

The study, "Energy Prices and Bills 2017 – impacts of meeting carbon budgets" states that having renewables on the system drives down bills by providing more competition among a wide range of energy sources.

It notes that offshore wind costs have fallen dramatically and will continue to do so, and that onshore wind offers a cost-effective way to keep bills down, so it is one of the technologies which can provide new generation in the 2020s.

With Government looking to invest in industries of the future through the Industrial Strategy, the CCC's findings clearly demonstrate that wind and marine energy should be priorities".

more information

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SOIL ASSOCIATION

SA to launch new in-depth report on ideas for supporting agriculture post-Brexit

The Soil Association has launched a new report, setting out six proposals for domestic agricultural policy after the UK leaves the EU. These are game-changing ideas that have the potential to transform farming and land use at the scale and pace required to meet multiple challenges - from tackling climate change and nature degradation to supporting rural livelihoods and improving public health. Every farming practice we talk about here already happens on the ground in the UK, but is currently the exception rather than the norm.

The Soil Association wants to see:

- a national agroforestry strategy
- investing in soil
- a tipping point for organic
- a good life for farm animals
- support for farmer innovation
- making the most of public procurement

more information

<https://www.soilassociation.org/blogs/2017/march/20/future-of-british-farming-outside-the-eu/>

BES

Challenges ahead after Article 50 triggered

As the UK Government proceeds with the Brexit negotiations, it is vital that the ecological community makes itself heard by engaging proactively with the debate. Since the referendum, we have held two high profile events on the consequences of Brexit for science and the environment, met with the Brexit Minister to discuss our concerns, and successfully informed a number of Parliamentary inquiries. We have been, and will continue to work in partnership with a wide range of partners in order to communicate our messages, including Wildlife and Countryside Link, the Campaign for Science and Engineering, the Royal Society of Biology and other environmental learned societies and professional bodies.

And new legislation is likely in two policy areas profoundly linked to the environment – agriculture and fisheries – where the UK will be developing its own approach outside the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy. Yet these policies will also be strongly affected by the Brexit negotiations; for example the terms of any trade deal will have a substantial impact on UK agriculture, with potential environmental consequences.

<http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/article50/>

UK GOV

Garden villages: Locations of first 14 announced

England's first garden villages have been proposed for 14 sites spread across the country from Cornwall to Cumbria, the government has announced.

Ministers have lent their support to 14 planned developments which will each deliver between 1,500 and 10,000 properties and establish new villages.

The new garden villages could provide 48,000 homes, the government says.

Larger garden towns in Buckinghamshire, Somerset and the Essex-Hertfordshire border were also approved.

Proposals include building a 1,000-home garden village on the site of a former airfield in Deenethorpe, Northamptonshire, and a garden town on green belt land on the Essex-Hertfordshire border.

The developments will be distinct new places, with their own community facilities, rather than extensions to existing urban areas, the government said. It has said there is no "single model" of design to be approved as a garden village, but they should be built to a high quality, be attractive and well designed, and be built as a response to meeting local housing needs - especially for first-time buyers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-ever-garden-villages-named-with-government-support>

World tiger population increases for first time in 100 years

Conservation data shows that the number of tigers in the wild has risen the first time in 100 years, marking a major turning point in the big cat's plight against poaching and habitat loss.

Figures collated from national surveys conducted in tiger range states and from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), estimated the number of tigers living in the wild to be at 3,890 in 2016.

By the year 2010, tiger numbers had been plummeting for a century. It's thought that there were once around 100,000 wild tigers, but that had dropped to as few as 3,200 – a drastic decline of over 95%.

An urgent conference was called by WWF, where the governments of countries with wild tiger populations agreed that to save tigers we needed to do something extra special. We needed a goal big enough to get tigers thriving again.

That's where 'Tx2' was born: a 12 year plan to double the number of wild tigers by 2022, the next Chinese Year of the Tiger.

The success so far has come from only a few of the countries with wild tiger populations. India, Nepal, Bhutan and Russia

have all stepped up their tiger conservation efforts since 2010, and have all seen an increase in tiger numbers.

Other tiger range countries aren't faring so well, especially in south-east Asia, where poaching is at unprecedented levels. If tiger conservation becomes a priority across Asia, tigers will be well on their way to achieving the Tx2 target.

2016 marked the halfway point, and for the first time in conservation history, the terrible decline in global tiger numbers has been reversed and there are now close to 3,900 tigers in the wild.

This is especially interesting to me as, in 2010, I was fortunate to visit India and see wild tigers at close quarters - Editor

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/wild-tiger-numbers-rise-first-time-100-years>

Iolo Williams brands M4 relief road plan 'a joke'

Plans to build a £1.1bn M4 relief road through the Gwent Levels have been described as "government sponsored ecocide".

Nature presenter Iolo Williams said species including otters, water voles, bats, dormice and rare beetles would be affected by the motorway.

The Welsh Government said mitigation works would include new mammal tunnels.

But in a statement to the public inquiry in Newport Mr Williams said these were "nothing short of a joke".

In the written submission the BBC naturalist accused the Welsh Government of sponsoring "ecocide" - the extensive destruction of non-human life.

The Welsh Government's preferred route - known as the "black route" - cuts across the Gwent Levels and four sites of special scientific interest (SSSI).

MORE

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-39413106>

Using the power of your phone and social media to clean up Britain

Litter currently costs Britain £1bn per year. Right now we are ranked as the 3rd most littered nation globally. This statistic indicates we sit alongside under-developed countries – alarming to say the least.

"My idea is simple; make littering socially unacceptable and highlight the issue using a social media app that will connect the citizens of the UK with all 433 councils so that together we can put the Great back into Britain."

Danny Lucas - Littergram
<https://www.littergram.co.uk>

MOTH WEBSITE! ukmoths.org.uk

I recently needed to identify a species of moth I found in a local garden. I found the website UK Moths very useful and when I had trouble distinguishing between two species, the owner of the site - Ian Kimber - was also very helpful. Take a look!
<http://ukmoths.org.uk>



Photograph: © Mike Armitage

Tidal energy project proposed off Bardsey Island

A tidal energy project could be developed near Bardsey Island in Gwynedd.

Local community enterprise YnNi Llyn has teamed up with Edinburgh-based Nova Innovation to explore the possibility of deploying a 3MW array of turbines under the water in Bardsey Sound.

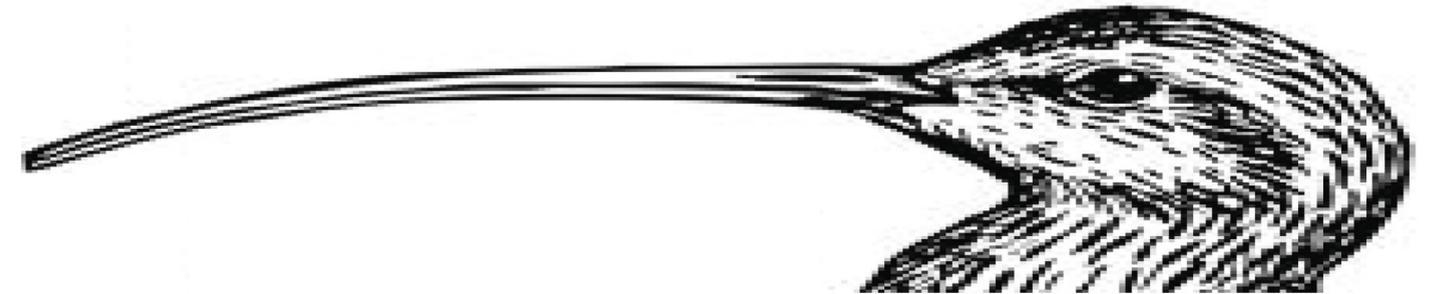
Some fishermen told Newyddion 9 it could "devastate" their livelihoods.

But YnNi Llyn said the project would be developed to benefit the local economy.

The plans are at an early stage, but an application has been submitted to The Crown Estate to start the process of assessing the feasibility of the project, as well as the suitability of the site near the island, known as Enlli in Welsh.

MORE

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-39450279>



CURLEWS under threat

Curlews used to be common throughout the UK and thousands bred on the mountains, fields and coasts.. From the 1980s numbers of breeding birds plummeted and a recent estimate puts breeding pairs at around 68,000 pairs in summer, rising to 150,000 birds in winter with as few as 600 pairs in Wales¹. The breeding population has declined by 62% (1969 - 2015), therefore curlews are on the Red List in the UK. Internationally, curlew are classified as 'near threatened'.

The curlew is the UK's largest wading bird, about the size of a herring gull on long legs. It is predominantly brown, but closer inspection reveals an intricate patterning of brown, cream and grey that shifts in hue with the sun. In the winter you'll see many around our coasts and estuaries, the numbers boosted by winter visitors from Finland and Scandinavia. Come the Spring however, most of these return home to breed and our own birds head

for the meadows and hills to nest.

Mary Colwell had always been fascinated by the curlew and its evocative call. She was so saddened by the drastic decline in numbers that she decided to take time out and walk from the West coast of Ireland through Wales to the East coast of England to raise awareness about the curlew's plight and to raise funds for projects to protect this beautiful bird and its habitat.

The Curlew Walk is now finished. As a result two workshops have been held so far to devise ways forward. A further workshop will be held in January 2018 - please see page 22 of this issue for more information.

You can contact Mary via <http://www.curlewmedia.com/>

¹ sources: BTO/RSPB

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NATIONAL BADGER WEEK

24 June - 1 July 2017

"Sadly but necessarily the badger has become a conservation icon - it has been lured from its nocturnal secrecy and thrust into the limelight. But this is no bad thing because we can now all see it for what it truly is... a creature which plays an essential part in the ecology of the U.K. landscape and enjoys huge popularity" - Chris Packham.

MORE
<https://www.badger.org.uk/>
#LOVEBADGERS

WELSH CURLEW CONFERENCE

Date: 24 January 2018
Venue: Royal Welsh Showground

Mary Colwell whose campaign highlighted the plight of the curlew in Britain is organising a one day conference to highlight the plight of the Curlew throughout Wales.

Those who are working with curlews in Wales or are interested in helping them to return to the countryside are asked to get involved.

The conference will be opened by Welsh naturalist and TV presenter Iolo Williams.

"The curlew is such an iconic species in Wales. It's an integral part of our cultural and natural history and it's vital that we do everything possible to prevent it from disappearing altogether as a breeding bird."

MORE
<http://www.curlewmedia.com>

TAILPIECE

Experts predict nature would be safer inside the EU

The impact of Brexit on our natural environment would be significant and should not be overlooked according to a survey by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

In a recent survey, members of the Institute expressed concern over the potentially negative impact that leaving the EU could have on our efforts to safeguard our environmental quality and its effects on our health, well-being and prosperity. Over 93% of the 800 members surveyed said that EU membership had been beneficial to the environment and 89% said that, for this reason, the UK would be better inside the EU.

The benefits of EU membership were cited as improvements in air quality, water quality and wildlife protection amongst others. CIEEM President, Dr Stephanie Wray, said "Protection of the natural environment is important both for its intrinsic value as well as it being fundamental to a prosperous economy. Good management of the natural environment in the UK, which, for the last 20 years at least, has been largely based on meeting the requirements of EU Directives, is vital if we are to enhance our biodiversity and maintain fully functional ecosystems. Ninety percent of respondents said that leaving the EU would have significant negative impacts upon wildlife conservation, and 85% do not believe that environmental protection could be delivered to the same standard if the UK was outside of the EU."

Management of the natural environment by government officials, advisory bodies, NGOs, and consultants, as well as performing

a vital service, is important for maintaining healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Concerns from respondents, if the UK left the EU, also included less effective and integrated action on climate change, invasive species and plant and animal diseases, as well as negative impacts on protected areas and environmental schemes on farmland. CIEEM CEO, Sally Hayns said "It is clear that leaving the EU would have far-reaching effects for the UK's biodiversity and natural environment. Not only would there be an impact on wildlife and habitats, but also on, for example, water quality and pollution. The skills that are playing such a significant role in delivering improvements in environmental quality could be lost, and there would be significant repercussions for the UK's natural environment."

The potential for Brexit comes at a particularly problematic time, when strong, effective and pragmatic environmental regulation is essential to deliver major infrastructure projects in a way that works to enhance the natural environment. Dr Wray said "A change in regulatory regime, or worse, a policy vacuum, would be disastrous at a time of high development activity, both for the environment, and for the delivery of major projects without a clear legislative framework."

MORE
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