

# SAVING NATURE: WHERE HAS OUR WILDLIFE GONE?



**One in six species in the UK are at risk of extinction**

THE UK's wildlife is in serious trouble. In this *FYI Investigates*, Scarlett and Jeriah look into the state of nature in the UK, learn about the species struggling to survive and meet those fighting to protect the natural world before it's too late.

## WATCH THE FILM

*FYI Investigates* are short documentaries from our partner weekly news show that dive into fascinating topics such as vaping, gaming and mental health. Watch the full film *Saving Nature: Where Has Our Wildlife Gone?* and more episodes of *FYI Investigates* at [first.news/investigates](https://first.news/investigates) or by asking a responsible adult to scan the QR code.

sky kids



**SAVING NATURE:  
WHERE HAS OUR WILDLIFE GONE?**

A GROUP of leading conservation organisations called the State of Nature Partnership has recently found that on average, wildlife in the UK has fallen by around a fifth since 1970, with one in six species threatened with extinction. They believe that there are several main reasons for this, including climate change, intensive farming, overfishing, invasive species and pollution. It's sad to know that all of this is happening, but the good thing is, you can do things to help out! Let's look at some of the animals and habitats that are suffering, and why, and find out how you can help them to recover.

### Rivers

One of the factors having an impact on the UK's biodiversity is pollution. In the last year alone, there were over half a million recorded incidents where sewage flowed into rivers and lakes.

Scarlett wanted to find out more about the impact of pollution in waterways and where it comes from, so went to meet wildlife presenter and naturalist Steve Backshall. He lives by the River Thames and has been monitoring river water there for several years. Over that time, he's seen a decrease in wildlife and an increase in pollution. Steve tells Scarlett that pollution is a big threat facing UK rivers, and it mainly comes from farming and sewage.

THERE were half a million recorded incidents where sewage flowed into rivers and lakes in England And Wales last year. That's the same as sewage pouring in for about four and a half million hours.



### What can you do to help UK rivers?

Learn about wildlife in UK rivers and help to raise awareness of how we can protect it. You could also join a campaign against pollution in rivers. Charity Earthwatch says one simple thing you can do is to only put the three Ps down the toilet: pee, poo and paper!

### Butterflies



The *State of Nature* report, about the UK's wildlife, found that over the last 50 years, the number of pollinating insects like moths, bees and butterflies have fallen.

The Butterfly Conservation charity

has even declared a butterfly emergency. But one person who is trying to help them, is Becca. She is very passionate about protecting butterflies, and has been since she was just three! This summer, Becca and 85,000 others took part in a big UK survey called the Big Butterfly Count. It found that butterfly numbers are down nearly half compared to last year. Butterflies are a key indicator of climate change, so if numbers are low, it can mean climate change is getting worse. There are lots of reasons the number of butterflies is falling, including:

- New buildings taking away their habitats
- The use of chemicals that are harmful to butterflies
- Wet and windy weather

### How can you help to boost butterfly numbers?

Find out which butterflies are in your local area and plant some wildflowers as food for them. You could also find out where your local wildlife meadow is and get a group of friends together to help take care of it!

Butterfly numbers are down nearly half compared to last year.

Becca and Jeriah outside the butterfly farm she created in her back garden

### Red squirrels

There used to be 3.5 million red squirrels in the UK, but now they are one of our most endangered animals. This is mainly due to an invasive species, the grey squirrel.

The grey squirrel is a problem because it has been out-competing red squirrels for food and habitats. It also carries the squirrelpox virus, which is really harmful to red squirrels. In the film, Scarlett goes to a Scottish nature reserve where a team are doing everything they can to increase the population of red squirrels there. She learns that the only effective way to help red squirrels is by controlling the greys. This means taking them out of the environment and humanely killing them. Although it is really sad to kill an animal, it's essential to improving biodiversity and the numbers of native species.

### What can you do to help?

Monitor and report any squirrel action in your garden. If you are lucky enough to have a red squirrel, leave out some food for it, like nuts and seeds.



I'm here to take over!



No you're not, that's nuts!

Scarlett speaks to wildlife presenter and naturalist Steve Backshall about pollution in UK rivers

