

# WILDLIFE ZONE NEWSLETTER

December 2011 - 20th Edition

Contact details for the Wildlife Zone

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The Foundation for Endangered Species trustees, chief executive and John Randall, government minister would like to send all Wildlife Zone readers their best wishes for the Christmas Season. For many of us it has been a difficult year, but for some of us who keep persevering, things always get better.

So it has proved to be with FES. Despite some setbacks, there have been a number of successes which will be discussed in the New Year.

One improvement has been with this newsletter. Gemma Cress, Andy Mydellton and Peter Wheeler have a lot of time and effort to improve its overall design. It has also been given International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs). This gives it a greater importance as it is official archived in the British Library and is accessible to everyone.

The International Year of Forest CD, published this year has proved to be a great artistic success, with only a couple of people not being entirely happy with it. So once again Andy would like to say a public thank you to all of those artists and people who helped produce it.

Andy Mydellton has lead two conservation groups on BTCV holidays to Portugal (see article on page 3) and has been recording an audio-book for FES which the Wildlife Zone will be released sometime in 2012.

It could prove to be another artistic success, as Billy Coburn has been hard at work with composing

it's different styles of music.

We look forward to Christmas and celebrating the New Year. But what does 2012 hold in store for us? We are looking forward to moving into a new head office in South Bucks, getting a new business plan together, having some more website makeovers, taking the UNESCO Schools Group into more permanent 'hosting' and being involved in at least one conservation project abroad or in the UK. That is an absolute daunting set of tasks to undertake, even if they don't seem so, at first. However, they are most important.

## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS CD

The International Year of Forests is available at £10.99 and makes an extremely good Christmas present. This CD helps raise awareness of the Foundation for Endangered Species (FES) and publicises its important message. The CD also helps raise much needed funds that enable FES to continue to help prevent animals from becoming extinct.

The CD includes a quality wildlife booklet that explains FES aims and objectives, as well as its projects and programmes.

FES would like to say a special 'thank you' once again to Sarah Wilson and Catfilms, who sponsored much of this production. Simply contact us and order your Christmas copies.

50p  
ISSN 2046 763X

## Radio Wexham. Andy Mydellton Wildlife Zone,

Broadcasts on Medium Wave 945Khz on Wednesday 7 - 9 pm  
(In some areas this may conflict with a stronger BBC 2 broadcast)



In the next few weeks the regular features of 'The Zone' will include:-

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSE;** These will feature mountain terrains and wildlife;- Islands in the sky; Survival above the tree line; large mammals above the timberline; Sheep and goats; Birds and small mammals; Communities of small animals; Then we will move onto Oceanic Islands.

**ENDANGERED ANIMAL NICHE;** The Humpback whale; Steller's sea cow; Florida manatee; Proboscis monkey; Chimpanzee; Mountain gorilla; Western lowland gorilla.

**FEATURED SUBJECT.** I will be reading FES or Wildlife Zone articles that have been published in a number of independent magazines. Others may be published on the Pen and Ink Club website or here in the Newsletter.

**WILDLIFE MUSICAL MOMENT;** This is a selection of songs from the FES Christmas album 'The International Year of Forests'.

**THE WILDLIFE LITERARY CORNER;** This will be a serialization of Gerald Durrell's best seller, How to Shoot an Amateur Naturalist.

If you wish to contact the radio programme, telephone the radio studio on Wednesday evening on 01753 570033 or any other times at the FES registered office at 01895 520184.

Alternatively email [andy@wildlifezone.org](mailto:andy@wildlifezone.org) for more information, or to share your thoughts on this newsletter, broadcasts or publication.

## Coopers Hawk

This photograph is of the North American Coopers Hawk. It is a specialist hunter of songbirds, especially in wood and scrubland. Other members of the hawk family are found in most regions throughout the world, with many of them facing survival difficulties.



Being top predators, hawks need healthy populations of prey species which they must continually 'harvest'. Therefore their habitat is of utmost importance. It means that when the hawk's habitat is destroyed their food supply is decimated.

Moreover as hawks are often viewed as being similar to other birds of prey such as falcons, harriers, kites and eagles, they suffer persecution by farmers and gamekeepers. Policing the countryside can be a very difficult business for any law enforcement agency which means that huge amounts of crime is left undetected.

As human populations increase, they need more and more living space. This means extra housing and urban areas, as well as more agricultural land to feed the ever expanding towns and villages.

The present policy, which is ultimately unsustainable, is to use previous wilderness and wildlife areas.

Another problem exists. Despite being an offence, egg thieves continue to raid rare birds' nests for their eggs. Many eggs are sold on the black market for private and illegal collections. FES is a member of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW), and supports the enforcement of wildlife law.

One major aim is to reduce the widespread persecution of birds of prey throughout the UK.

FES aims to continue its work in PAW, helping police and other law enforcement agencies such as Interpol. FES also wishes to work in partnership with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). In recent years, FES has had talks with CITES at the United Nation's Environmental Programme (UNEP) headquarters at Geneva.

*"I've promoted the causes of these animals at the Houses of Parliament, the EU Parliament, and inside some United Nation's organisations. My work has only just begun as I feel that many animals are staring down the barrel of extinction every day."*



**Andy Mydellton FLS.**  
**Chairman & Environmental Concern Adviser to UNESCO Schools Group**

*"I am very happy to have joined the Foundation for Endangered Species. For many years I have loved birds, animals and places of wonder."*



*"It is imperative to save these types of animals, as wildlife is important and our global natural inheritance."*

**JOHN RANDALL,**  
**GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

## MERLIN THE MAGICIAN

A Wildlife Zone article that has appeared in several independent publications.



Alvaro National Park

Many years ago I led some conservationists to do project work on the Cornish coast, where we saw some exciting animals, including choughs, buzzards and other birdlife.

According to legend King Arthur and his magician, Merlin, lived nearby at Tintagel Castle. As I was enthralled by this ancient history, I visited the castle and Merlin's cave. Recently I led an international BTCV conservation group to the Portuguese national park of Alvaro. I never thought that the name Merlin and Cornish wildlife could link these two very different areas and projects. So how on earth did it come about? As birds of prey are amongst my favourite animals, I kept a lookout for them. I did so, even on my initial coach trip along the winding mountain road from the historic city of Porto. In one dramatic incident a sparrow hawk suddenly launched up from behind a row of trees, into a patch of clear blue sky. I immediately lurched forward to focus clearly through the large windows and gleaned every possible detail. Sadly, in an instant the hawk vanished, ending the spectacle. I relaxed once more and leant back in to my comfortable, soft seat to finish my journey. Soon, the group caught up with me at the Alvaro national park. We stopped at a mountain retreat, high above the clouds overlooking the ancient town of Vila Real in the valley, far below. We were alone, miles away from everyone else and our supplies had to be ferried up to us by our hosts and park rangers. Unfortunately for the group observing other marvellous hunting birds was sometimes arduous. However we soon saw the largest birds of prey, the raptors. The first was a buzzard, an awesome killer that has recently become more widespread throughout Britain. The second raptor was a kite. As soon as I spotted it, I wanted everyone to share my joy. So as it was gliding over the nearby reservoir I pointed to the bird and bellowed "Kite. Kite. It's flying away from us – over the water, towards the trees". This large bird of prey was not a red kite which has been so successfully reintroduced into the British countryside. Instead it was the black kite that is usually found near large lakes but is absent from the British Isles.

I was really pleased with this because it was only the second time that I had such a clear and close view of black kites. The first was nearly 20 years ago, when I was on safari in the Ngorogoro Crater, Tanzania. Not only had I watched these glorious birds, but also had an encounter with them. Over time, the massive birds had learned to take food from people's hands as they were eating their lunch. Swooping kites, when scavenging for food, can be dangerous because they have large and razor sharp talons. Whilst they did not intentionally hurt anyone, I still gave warnings of the hazard. Despite this, one member of our group soon gained three, two inch gashes on his nose. The next morning, dark crimson scabs had started the healing process, and proved that the kite had grabbed more than just the sandwich that the man

was putting into his mouth. Back at our mountain lodge there was even more exciting bird-watching ahead. We saw buzzards regularly. Then we managed to get some magnificent views of a booted eagle, majestically soaring high in the sky. Shortly afterwards, miraculously emerging from somewhere on the mountainside, a honey buzzard began silently gliding towards us. This is a specialist raptor, so named because it preys on wasps, bees and honey. It slowly continued to glide low over our heads, only occasionally flapping its four foot wingspan to maintain its speed and height. We clearly saw its mottled and blotched underside markings. A few days later we witnessed a theatrical fracas in the sky. At first, we could not fathom out exactly what was happening. But with the help of Henrique, a park ranger, it soon became clear. It was a rare event for any British ornithologist or conservationist to witness. We spotted two crows flying near a rocky mountain peak. Then another larger, lighter coloured bird came into view. The three birds changed their flying position, got very close and then became entangled with each other. Then someone shouted "Falcon!" Immediately, we all focused on the chase, as we felt that the bird of prey was probably attacking the two smaller crows. Within seconds, Henrique shouted "Choughs!" Somehow my mind wandered back to the choughs in Cornwall a few years before on one of those earlier conservation projects. I was pleased to witness their return to the county as they had been absent from the region for decades.

Because the chough is the Cornish emblem, it was only fitting to have them back again. But because of the intense drama straight ahead of us, I instantly doused this flashing memory. Henrique then quickly explained that these two jet-black, red billed birds were not crows, but choughs. Nor were they being chased or hunted; but it was the choughs that were harrying the deadly falcon. We were spellbound watching this rare spectacle, silently anticipating an outcome.

I even managed to get a photograph of this aerial fight, although the image seemed like three small dots in the sky. Immediately the choughs had fended off the falcon they turned back and disappeared over the mountain ridge towards their home territory. I got the field guide out to check exactly what member of the falcon family it was. Because of the region, habitat and behaviour, I knew it could only be one of two species: a merlin or hobby. It was a merlin.

Once again my mind wandered back to the legends of King Arthur, Merlin the magician, and the Cornish flock of choughs. But it was this enchanting Portuguese merlin that had managed to weave us all into a fantastic dream, a divine and charming spell.



Merlin harried by Choughs

Written by **Andy Mydellton**

## Diary dates:

### Beach-cleaning

The provisional dates for Beach-cleaning for 2012 are:-

Winter... Sunday 26th February

Spring.....Sunday 27th May

Summer..Sunday 22nd July

Autumn...Sunday 16th September. This will also be the international and global Beach Sweep.

### Photographic Exhibition

There will be another FES-WZ Photographic Exhibition at Uxbridge Library between Friday March 30th and Thursday April 12th. The theme will probably be 'Sustainability for All', as it will tie in with the United Nation's General Assembly's declared theme year for 2012. This has yet to be confirmed, although we will keep you informed of developments.

We will be trying to create more events, talks and presentations throughout the fortnight, although it has sometimes proven to be difficult in the past. We will be getting some qualified people to visit the exhibition, as we have done in the past. Both John Randall, the Uxbridge MP and government minister, and His Excellency the Ambassador of Nepal has supported the previous UN themed exhibitions, the International Year of Biodiversity and the International Year of Forests. The exhibition is also available for sponsorship, if anyone is interested in doing so, by all means contact us. Moreover we need volunteers to help us fulfil our intentions, so for those who may be able to offer time and effort, please also let us know.

### Olympic year

2012 will be Olympic year and London will be heaving. There are some schemes around for the environment, but none that FES has seen that are appropriate so far. Have you seen anything that may suit us? If so, please contact us and let us know. Whilst we already have a heavy year ahead of us (see front page), we may be able to accommodate something else.

Andy Mydellton provides wildlife talks, lectures and presentations.

Subjects include wildlife photography, the working of FES, practical fieldwork projects, endangered animals and wildlife gardening amongst others.

Many groups, clubs, organisations and businesses have felt that these talks have been extremely interesting and useful for their members. Please contact us for your details.



## VOLUNTEER SALES ROLE DESCRIPTION

### The Foundation for Endangered Species

Sales Representative

**Region:** South Buckinghamshire

**Role type:** to work from home and travelling to see people

**Where:** London, Home Counties and occasionally further afield

**Commitment:** flexible, but to be agreed

**When:** all year round depending on specific agreements made.

**Duration:** specific term agreed or ongoing.

**Activities:** recruitment and team building may be necessary. To pass on certain sales elements to other volunteers and contract personnel. To develop business opportunities or longer lines that have already been set up.

**Requirements:** enthusiasm and an interest in conservation is welcome. A variety of skills are needed including sales, commerce, business, representing and promotional skills. Also diligence with administrative skills and IT is necessary. A good personal presentation is necessary when meeting clients or the public.

**What is in it for you:** to help the Foundation for Endangered Species; to help animals from becoming extinct; and to educate the public. There are also excellent learning potentials.

**Why we want you:** we need volunteers to begin action in a new area; to develop the *Conserving Wildlife* magazine potential; and to get an income for the charity. All tasks are vital for the Foundation for Endangered Species as we need an income to develop our services.

### Notes

Appropriate training will be provided and certain expenses could be reimbursed if they are agreed beforehand. The Foundation for Endangered Species works for a healthier environment rich in wildlife, and will protect and to promote the natural and physical environment. It relies on these support and generosity of volunteers to make a difference. The Foundation for Endangered Species is a member of UNESCO, the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) and other national organisations.

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