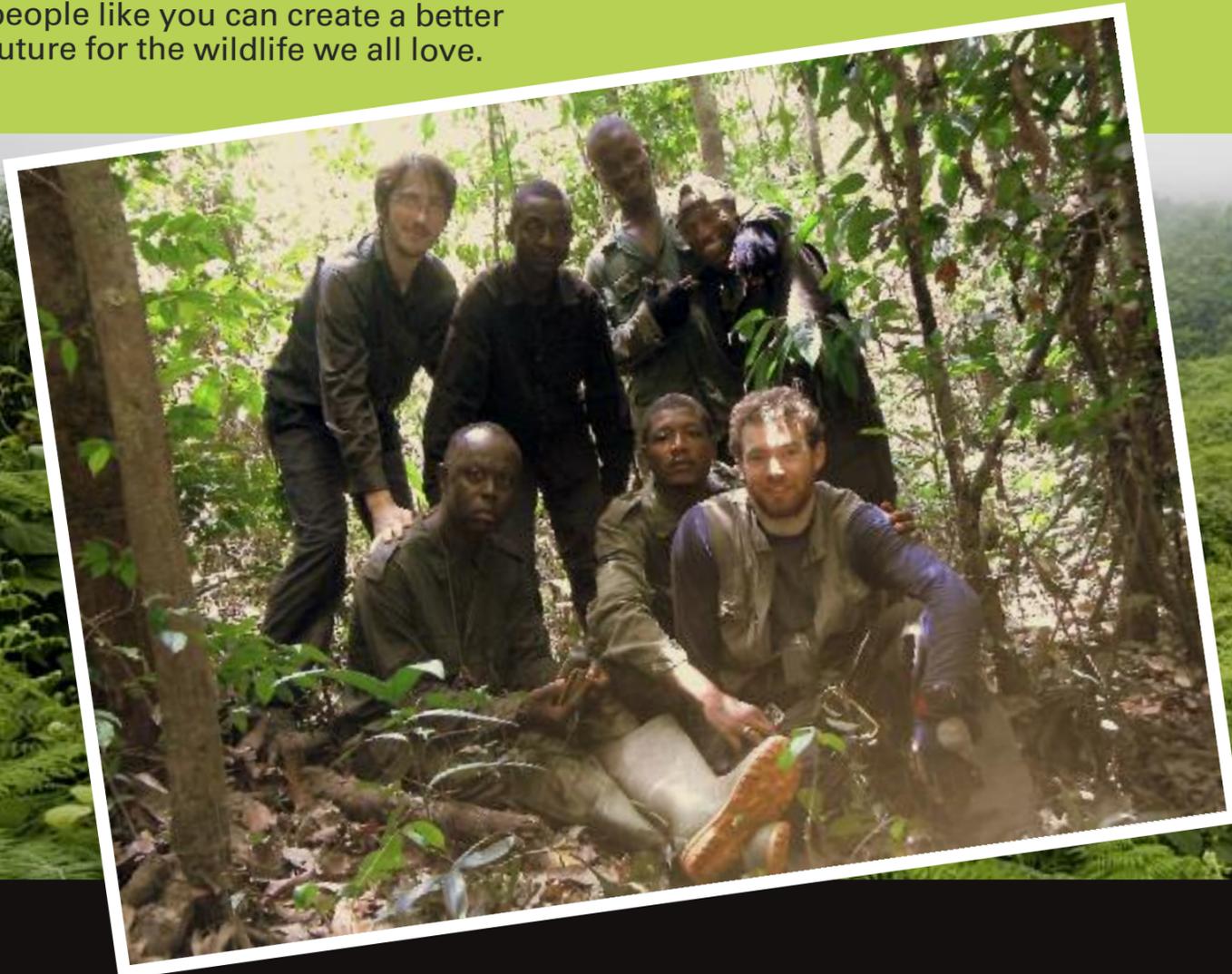


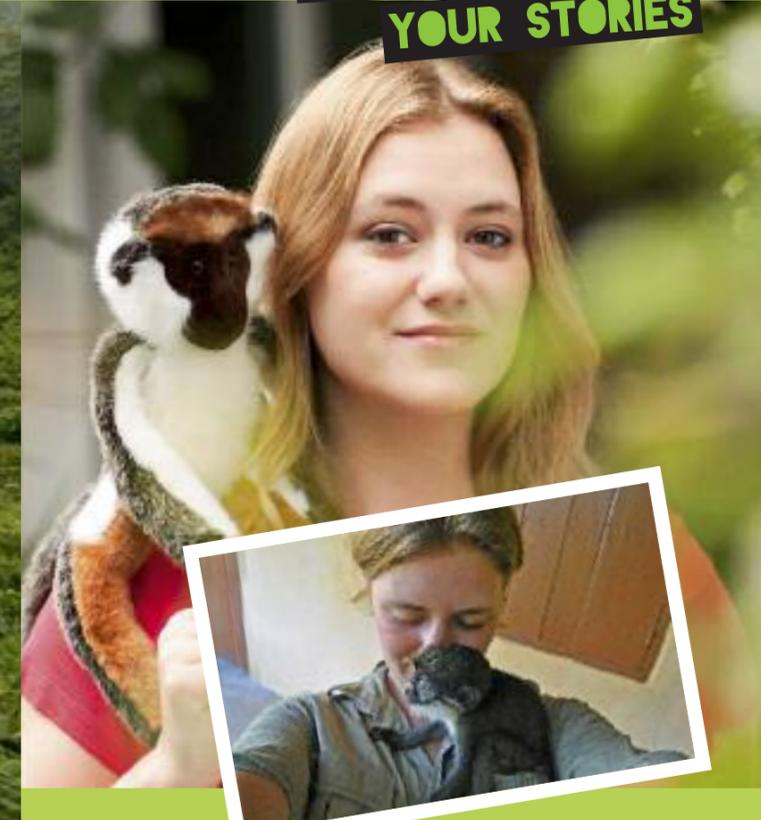
The small steps for nature taken by people like you can create a better future for the wildlife we all love.



**STEPPING UP ✓
FOR NATURE
YOUR STORIES**



“The sight of a leopard cub as we crawled through tangles of underbrush was another stand out moment, though rather nerve racking.”



I was a rainforest ranger

Stepping up for nature doesn't come much more extreme than joining the forest guards to protect Gola Rainforest from poaching and illegal logging.

SEVEN KILOS OF RICE, five litres of water, three changes of clothes, hammock, sleeping bag, pan, torch, GPS computer, map, compass, ample insect repellent – just some of the contents of my 20 kilogram backpack as I step into the world of the forest guards of the Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone.

The guards are at the forefront of conservation, working tirelessly to patrol the forest, protecting it against illegal activities such as poaching, mining, logging, and agricultural encroachment. My job as an RSPB volunteer was to join a small team of forest guards to measure and reflect the ongoing health of the national park and indeed the conservation programme itself through monitoring the extent of illegal activity.

Unforgettable adventure

The fourteen days of trekking well over 100km through the forest took us on an unforgettable adventure through swamps – home to the pygmy hippo – cathedral-like tall, open, bamboo glades, into dense and often incredibly thorny forest with enormous buttressed-root trees, tangled with thick vines and creepers. I felt incredibly privileged to witness troops of monkeys eyeing us suspiciously, before fleeing in the tree tops, or simply staring at us examining our every move. The sound of chimpanzees calling was almost as good as seeing them, as was stumbling over dinner-plate-sized elephant footprints. The sight of a leopard cub as we crawled through tangles of underbrush was another stand out moment, though rather nerve racking.

Taking a dip

Bathing and washing our sweat drenched clothes in clear fast flowing streams, large rocky pools, or large slow flowing rivers every night was always as soothing as any spa treatment I can imagine. Drying our clothes over camp fires, rendered them smelling pungently of smoke, just as our boiled water tasted somewhat smockey. Both the smell and taste of smoke was something we came

“The sound of chimpanzees calling was almost as good as seeing them, as was stumbling over dinner-plate-sized elephant footprints.”

to enjoy due to the reassurance of having dry clothes to start out the day in and clean water to drink.

The forest guards were incredibly fit and strong, handling the rigours of the unforgiving, often seemingly impregnable forest, with relative ease. Their ingenuity in using vines to secure hammocks, weave stools and fishing nets, and even repair and bind broken shoes was amazing.

Gethin Evans

I monitored monkeys

My role was to monitor the endangered Diana monkeys of the Gola rainforest. These monkeys live high up in the trees, eating fruit, and their droppings help disperse seeds through the rainforest, making them crucial to the survival of the forest.

Most people think about birds in connection with the RSPB, so it might seem strange that this was an RSPB project. But the best way to protect endangered birds around the world is to preserve their habitats, which is why the RSPB is helping to safeguard the rainforests.

Catherine Brewis

Step up volunteer

If you're interested in volunteering with the RSPB, please get in touch using the details below. We'd love to hear from you.

volunteers@rspb.org.uk

www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering

Call your local RSPB office (details on page 8).

Artists for wildlife

Twelve works of art by students from Lancaster and Morecambe College have been unveiled on platform two at Carnforth station. The artworks were sponsored by local organisations that included TransPennine Express, Carnforth Station Heritage Centre, Arnside and Silverdale A.O.N.B – and the RSPB. The RSPB-sponsored works were produced by students Lucy Wilson and Will Young (far right).

Andrew Bell



Carpenters in the making

We held a taster day for prospective carpentry students and an open day for the general public at City College, Brighton and Hove. To give the students some hands on experience we decided it would be great for them to build a bird box. We downloaded the plan from the RSPB website and the students chose either a box suitable for tits, sparrows or robins. Over the two days, we made about 50 boxes and advised on positioning the boxes ready for next spring.

David Golding

Enter our Virtual Balloon Race

The RSPB's Race for Nature is a balloon race with a difference – there are no balloons! It's not because we can't be bothered to blow them all up; real balloons litter the countryside and fall into the sea, where creatures like turtles mistake them for food. We don't want you to miss out on the fun though, so buy your £5 virtual balloon today for the chance to win a fantastic prize. There's a choice of migratory bird designs: will the swift be fastest; will the tern make the right turn? The rest is down to the winds on the BBC Weather website. You can track your balloon's progress online via the Balloon Race website. We're releasing all the balloons virtually from our one year old reserve Middleton Lakes in Warwickshire on 15 November. You can't have a first birthday without balloons!

If your balloon migrates furthest, you'll win one of these fantastic prizes

- 1st Prize: £1,500
- 2nd Prize: £1,000
- 3rd Prize: A stay for two (at least one adult) at the world-famous Belfry resort, including dinner on both evenings and full English breakfast. The winner and guest will also be treated to a two-ball with use of a golf buggy on The Belfry's PGA National championship course and a behind-the-scenes guided tour of RSPB Middleton Lakes. Prize donated by The Belfry and worth over £600.
- 4th Prize: £500
- 5th Prize: RSPB HD Compact Binoculars worth £235, donated by RSPB Optics.
- 6th and 7th Prizes: Oregon Scientific Professional Weather Stations worth £150, donated by Oregon Scientific.

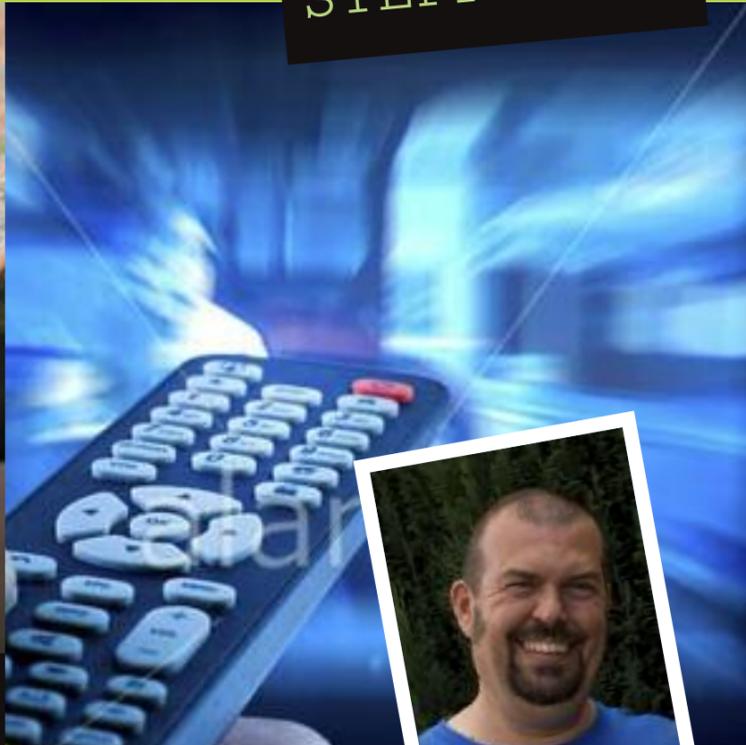
Thank you to all the generous donors of the prizes.

The race finishes on 22 November. Winners will be informed and announced within a week of the race ending.

Step up enter the race

To enter and see full terms and conditions

www.rabr.co.uk/rspb



Mine's a pint

Members of RSPB Bolton Local Group have been nipping round to the pub a lot, but it had nothing to do with a liking for the beer.

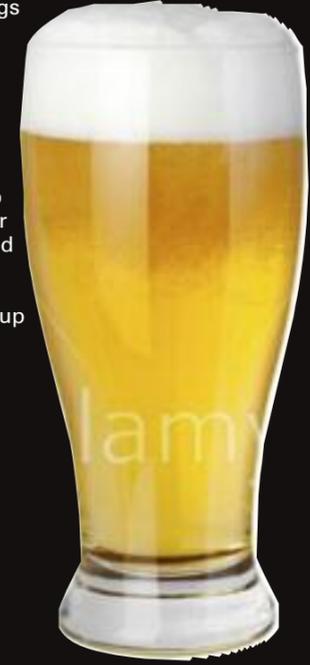
For the second spring in succession, we were called in by a town councillor to give advice in a planning wrangle that will eventually mean the demolition of the empty Greenwood pub in Chorley New Road in Horwich.

Last year, developers wanted to bulldoze the building to make way for shops and flats. Local people believed birds were nesting in the eaves, so the Group's committee members were asked to provide written evidence that house martins and house sparrows (above) were using the old building to raise their young. As a result, Bolton Council blocked the demolition until the nesting season was over and the fledglings had flown.

This spring, it was an action replay, because the developers again failed to demolish the building before the 2012 nesting season arrived.

Councillor Richard Silvester, who has been leading the fight to delay demolition, again asked our group to monitor the situation and provide written proof that birds were nesting there.

Frank Wood, Bolton Local Group



I used to be a TV addict

Let me introduce myself. I am you. Yes you out there. I'm that enthusiastic nature lover that you are. Never more happy than when walking around a nature reserve with a bit of warming sunshine on my back, hoping this visit will bring something a bit different and new, but always going home satisfied that you saw something today that made you go, "Wow, isn't nature wonderful!"

I love nothing more than to share my enthusiasm with people. I'm a bit of a gabber, and once you mention something about a bird you have seen in your garden to me, I'm afraid I may keep you some time. I hope that some of this enthusiasm rubs off on you, and you decide to Step Up For Nature and do something. It doesn't matter how small or how big, to quote a well-known supermarket - "Every little helps"

I have a confession to make. I never used to be like this. I was a television addict. I was never happier than when ploughing through a series of Doctor Who, or wandering through the documentary channels on Sky.

I was a shift worker in a chemical factory in Pontypridd. Life had hit one of those rocky patches and I needed an escape and I needed a release. My journey from the laboratory work bench to the nature reserves around the country started utterly by chance.

Anthony xxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxx

Follow the Swallow



Wroxham Barns is a popular visitor attraction in the Norfolk Broads. We're working with the RSPB on a Follow the Swallow project at our Junior Farm. A 'Swallowcam' has been installed in our goat barn so visitors can watch nesting swallows via live footage of chicks screened in our small animal barn.

The RSPB developed special children's swallow activities, which were run daily by our team at Junior Farm at weekends until the school summer holidays. There was also a monthly swallow art competition and RSPB staff were regular visitors during the summer.

We are really pleased to be working closely with the RSPB at Junior Farm. We opened our hide three years ago to help visitors understand more about the birds on site and have had excellent support and advice from the RSPB. Our 'Swallowcam' will give children and adults a greater appreciation of the natural world. It was also fun watching the swallow chicks (right) develop over the summer months!

Ian Russell, Director, Wroxham Barns



Stepping up for the skylark

The Caravan Club has just renewed and revamped its long-running partnership with the RSPB. A new twist in the relationship will see the Club stepping up for the skylark – a species in dramatic decline.

Over the next three years, support from The Caravan Club will go towards the RSPB's work with local farmers, which ensures farmland is managed in the best way to benefit the skylark, as well as a whole range of other wildlife.

The skylark is a natural choice for The Caravan Club. It can be seen all year round and with such an easily identifiable song, our members will be able to hear them from a large number of caravan sites.

There are over 200 Caravan Club sites in the UK, many of which are amazingly close to RSPB reserves. Working with the RSPB on this bird in need helps us to enrich our members' holidays by bringing them closer to nature.

Beth Cooper,
Connections & Acquisitions Marketing Manager,
The Caravan Club



Big Brother volunteers for wildlife

Given the task of organising a day of volunteering for my colleagues at Brother, Manchester, I picked up the phone to the RSPB and set up a day for a large group of us at a reserve close by.

On the 28 June (and now with a much larger coach than we had originally planned!), 40 of us set off for RSPB Hesketh Out Marsh near Southport in Lancashire.

Fingers were well and truly crossed that the day would not descend into this summer's pattern of torrential rain. Fortunately, the heavens only opened near the end, adding to the atmosphere of a really enjoyable day. The tasks were expertly supervised by the wonderful wardens, Tony and Alex and ranged from building an otter holt, to mulching a newly planted hedge.

We were delighted to contribute our enthusiasm and 'expertise', as well as make a donation of £1,200 and become RSPB corporate members. With colleagues already asking about a return trip, organising the event seemed well worthwhile!

Diane Carling, European Environmental Co-ordinator, Brother

Step up and get involved

Please visit our website for more ways you can help nature. We update it regularly with the latest seasonal steps

www.rspb.org.uk/steppingup

