

Charity pledges to tell the 'untold story' of conservation

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WHO is responsible for our wildlife? is the question the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) is hoping to answer in a [new campaign](#).

The national conservation charity, which is based in Fordingbridge, is writing '[The Untold Story](#)' a fresh look at how Britain's landscape is managed for wildlife.

With almost 80% of land in the UK managed for farming or other pursuits, GWCT aims to show the role farmers, gamekeepers and land managers have as custodians of the landscape. These areas are home to some remarkable and rare wildlife, often due to the tireless work of those responsible for their own small corner of the countryside.

Director of communications Andrew Gilruth, who is launching the campaign, said: "It's time the public got to hear about those who are making the countryside thrive. As well as producing the food for our tables, they're making sure there are curlew in the sky, harvest mice in our fields and water voles in our rivers."

"The public don't know how much our wildlife depend on the dedication of individuals managing their own land, so it's time we did something about it."

Those engaged in the countryside see the impact of management with their own eyes, but it rarely goes wider than that. The GWCT hopes to change that by telling the story of what's being done right now on fields and moors across Britain every single day.

"People like Graham Denny who, while turtle doves, pictured above, face extinction elsewhere, has several breeding pairs on his farm thanks to a combination of wildlife-friendly farming and predation management", added Andrew.

"He is making a real difference and his story deserves to be heard. There are hundreds of men and women across Britain doing what they can for the species they love, be it tree sparrows, great crested newts, bees or curlew. These hardworking people are the blueprint for British conservation."

Earlier this year, the GWCT launched its first series of "Working Conservationists" a booklet of nine case studies - written by former Shooting Times editor Joe Dimbleby - about real people achieving real results on their own land.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said that it "provides a vision of a country of which we can all be proud". It encouraged the Defra policy team to get out on the ground and see what's being done for grey partridges, a bird in continuous decline.

With a new Agriculture Bill around the corner, the spotlight is falling on the 'public goods' farmers provide. The new Environmental Land Management system promises to reward environmental benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, recognising the value of the wildlife on our farmland and the vital role land managers have in preserving it.

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