

“Help us secure the future of the conservation science that underpins your sport” says GWCT chief executive as membership drive hits the halfway mark

Monday 28 September, 2020

“Our world-leading scientists have moved heaven and earth to continue with their vital research but, as a charity, the Coronavirus pandemic is having a serious impact on our ability to fundraise,” said Teresa Dent, Chief Executive of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT).

In July the GWCT launched its 500 Club, a proactive move to boost membership and make up for some of the loss of voluntary donations and income estimated to be in the region of £1.4million for 2020. The aim is to encourage more people to join as members and to celebrate those who commit to supporting the charity at this difficult time for everyone. The cancellation of numerous country shows, fundraising dinners and auctions due to Covid 19, has severely limited opportunities for fundraising.

Since July more than 250 people have signed up and become valued members of the GWCT 500 Club. “We are thrilled to have reached the halfway mark and grateful to new and existing members,” said Teresa, “Now that the shooting season is well underway, we are asking those people who benefit from our research: those who work in the countryside, or enjoy country sports, to support us by joining. Help us reach our target of 500 new members by the end of 2020 and secure the future of the conservation science that underpins your sport.”

Richard Negus, hedgelayer and writer, said: “I can think of no better way to demonstrate a true respect for the British countryside and its wildlife than to say “I am a supporter of the GWCT.””

Adam Steed, part-time gamekeeper and winner of the GWCT Grey Partridge Award for his conservation efforts agreed: “The GWCT are a gold standard organisation. Without their scientific research, the Wild Justice challenge to the use of general licenses could have been a car crash for agriculture and wildlife diversity.”

GWCT 500 Club members receive a specially commissioned 500 Club badge and an invitation to welcome drinks in 2021 to meet our existing members (date to be announced). The 500 Club is open to those deciding to support the GWCT through one of their main membership types*, who make a single annual payment and who are not already a member (or were one in the last 12 months). New members who are part of a shooting syndicate can also join the 500 Club when they sign up for the new Syndicate Membership, saving 30% of the cost of membership for syndicates of eight or more, and enjoy all the benefits of Syndicate membership and the 500 Club.

Members' support, through subscriptions and donations, supports the GWCT's leading research, practical advice for land managers and the GWCT's policy input at government level. Research that has increased global understanding of woodcock, pheasants and partridges, that informs the future of our national agriculture policy and that puts facts at the forefront of decisions made about the countryside.

To join the GWCT 500 Club visit gwct.org.uk/500club

Comments about the GWCT and game:

“The GWCT's research, advice and leadership has enabled individuals and organisations to carry out many innovative projects that have helped transform our environment. We need them now more than ever.”

Rob Denny, Monnow Rivers Association Project Officer

“We need the GWCT now more than ever. They are undoubtedly the most critical of organisations and one I feel we simply couldn't survive without.”

Rachel Carrie, writer, campaigner & countrywoman

“I have always flown the flag for British game, it's part of Britain's culture and history. All chefs have a duty to serve game, and I'm pleased to see there's an upward trend at the moment. It's important that we recognise its real value, the game industry fits in so well with our efforts to produce quality, healthy food on a more sustainable basis, and it employs tens of thousands of people.”

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Michel Roux Jr., chef, le Gavroche

Notes to editors:

* Our main membership types include: Premium, Individual, Joint, Overseas and Syndicate. Other types, including: Trade, Corporate and Keeper, are excluded.

The 500 Club is open to those:

- a) deciding to support the GWCT through one of our main membership types*
- b) committing to making a single annual payment
- c) not already a member (or were one in the last twelve months)

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust – providing research-led conservation for a thriving countryside. The GWCT is an independent wildlife conservation charity which has carried out scientific research into Britain's game and wildlife since the 1930s. We advise farmers and landowners on improving wildlife habitats. We employ 22 post-doctoral scientists and 50 other research staff with expertise in areas such as birds, insects, mammals, farming, fish and statistics. We undertake our own research as well as projects funded by contract and grant-aid from Government and private bodies. The Trust is also responsible for a number of Government Biodiversity Action Plan species and is lead partner for grey partridge and joint lead partner for brown hare and black grouse.

ISDN radio broadcast line - at our Fordingbridge HQ we have an ISDN radio broadcast line, allowing us to conduct interviews remotely.

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