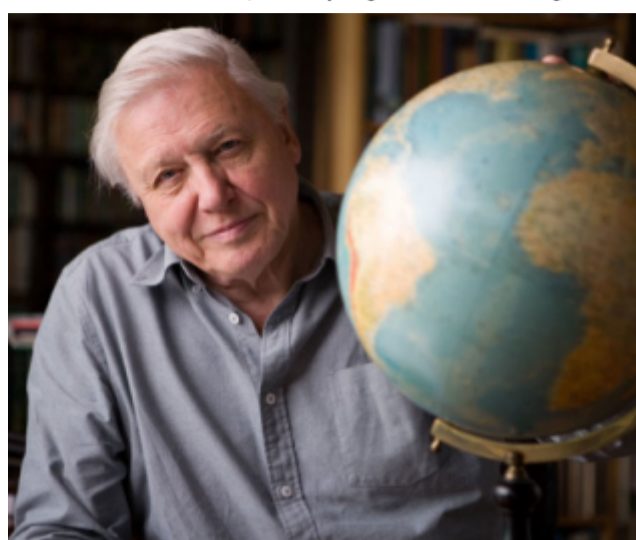




### Save what we have before 'rewilding' with wolves, says Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough has spoken out against plans to reintroduce extinct species like wolves to the British landscape, saying there's enough to be done keeping the surviving wildlife alive and well.



"Putting beavers back [in the wild] seems relatively innocuous. But I just feel we've got enough on our plate as it is," said Sir David Attenborough. As a result, schemes to reintroduce now former native species such as wolves, bears, beavers and lynx are either happening or on the cards. But opponents of the movement point out that wild animals can be unpredictable and prone to wreaking havoc and say there may be unintended consequences to putting them back into an environment which has been developing without them for hundreds or thousands of years.

"We have got a hell of a lot of problems even keeping alive what is already surviving here." Sir David told BBC Focus magazine.

But Sir David came out in defence of zoos, after an episode of Horizon asked whether they were still relevant. He said zoos had a hugely important role to play in educating people about wild animals they would never normally see. "Until you've actually seen [an elephant] shifting and creaking as it moves around, you don't understand how big it is."

### Bee-killing pesticides will be kept off our fields this summer!

Environment Minister Andrea Leadsom has listened to thousands of us and decided to keep the ban on these dangerous chemicals.

#### In Britain

Join Friends of the Earth for the Great British Bee Count from 19 May to 30 June 2017 and discover the wonderful world of bees in our gardens, streets and green spaces this summer.



Bees are essential: we rely on them to pollinate many of the plants in our landscape, including most of our fruit and veg.

But right now they're in trouble. Since 1900, the UK has lost 20 species of bee, and a further 35 are considered under threat of extinction. So it's vital that we better understand how they're doing across the country. You can help by counting and recording all the bees you see this summer.

Last year 383,759 bees were spotted – and helped us get a better picture of bee populations. This year we'd love even more of you to join the buzz, and be part of the generation that helps save our bees.

For more information visit <https://act.foe.co.uk/act/join-great-british-bee-count>

### Thiamethoxam, reduces egg development in queen bees.

Thiamethoxam is one of three neonicotinoid insecticides currently restricted for use by the EU. They have been restricted amid concerns about their impact on wild bees.

A study, published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B, investigated the impact of thiamethoxam on four species of bumblebee queen which had been captured in the wild in spring.

The effects of the insecticide at levels deemed similar to those encountered in the wild were investigated in the laboratory. After two weeks of exposure, two of the four species of bumblebee took in less food. There were effects on egg development in all four species.

"We consistently found that neonicotinoid exposure, at levels mimicking exposure that queens could experience in agricultural landscapes, resulted in reduced ovary development in queens of all four species we tested," said lead researcher, Dr Gemma Baron of Royal Holloway University of London. "Impacts of neonicotinoid exposure on feeding behaviour were species-specific, with two out of four species eating less artificial nectar when exposed to the pesticide. These impacts are likely to reduce the success of bumblebee queens in the spring, with knock-on effects for bee populations later in the year."

The scientists say the work provides "a major step forward" in understanding the impact of neonicotinoids on wild bees - both generally and in specific species.

They say bumblebee queens are not currently considered in pesticide risk assessments for pollinating insects.

Prof Mark Brown of Royal Holloway University of London said: "Future studies across different species are likely to demonstrate further variation in the impact of neonicotinoids, and conducting such studies needs to be a priority for scientists and governments."

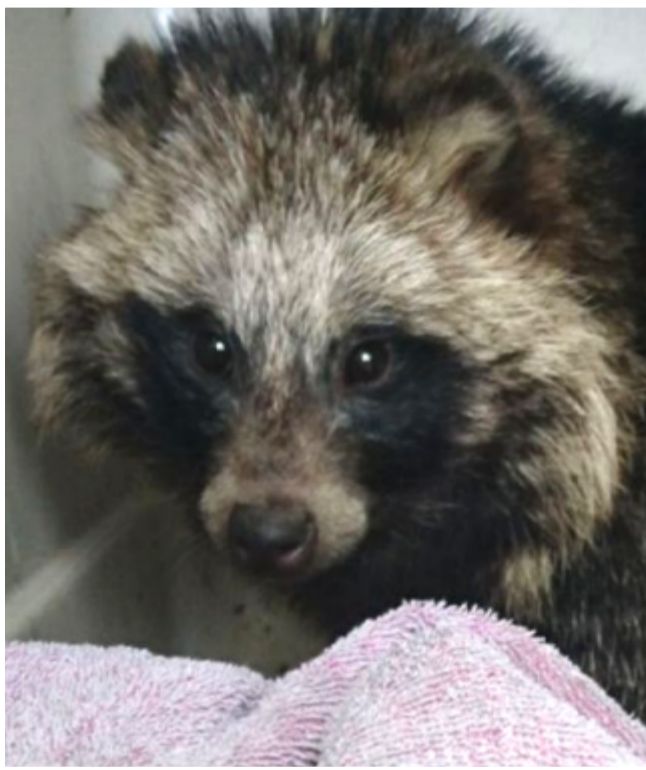
### The RSPCA has issued a warning against what it says is a growing trend for keeping raccoon dogs as pets.

It comes after one was found hiding under a water tank in a garden at Kirton Holme, near Boston, Lincolnshire, over the Easter weekend.

Inspector Becky Harper said: "While he is very cute, we'd like to stress that raccoon dogs don't make good pets."

"They are wild animals and we would strongly discourage people from buying or keeping one," she said.

"They need a great deal of space, and their needs cannot be met in a typical domestic environment."



The RSPCA said it had dealt with a number of call-outs in recent years to stray pet raccoon dogs that have escaped, or been deliberately released to the wild.

Ms Harper added that the animals posed a high level of threat to our native wildlife.

### Urban Butterflies in Decline

*Butterfly Conservation*

It isn't a huge shock to discover that butterflies are declining faster in our towns and cities than they are in the countryside. But the findings of a new report reveal that the rate at which butterflies are disappearing from urban areas has reached alarming levels.

Scientists from Butterfly Conservation joined forces with the University of Kent and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to compare trends for 28 species in urban and countryside environments. Over a 20-year period urban butterfly numbers plummeted by 69% compared to a 45% decline for butterflies in rural areas.

The report uncovers which species are struggling the most, reveals the differing life cycles of city-dwelling and rural butterflies and indicates the potential impact of climate change.

