



# Hope for the world

## Give Nature A Home

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Looking at the world, from nature's point of view, it can be hard to see where there's hope.

The world seems on course for at least a two-degree rise in global temperature, often considered the threshold of dangerous climate change. In the UK, 60 per cent of wildlife species have declined over the past 50 years, and more than 30 per cent have declined strongly.

Take climate change. Scientists estimate that it could cause more than a third of bird species worldwide to be on the way to extinction by 2050. In Britain, it's already affecting nature in various ways – such as by earlier springs and rising sea levels.

Iconic wetland birds such as the bittern are on the front line. In 1990 there were only 11 booming males left in the UK, most of which were nesting in coastal reed beds that are at increasing risk of flooding with seawater, due to rising sea levels and increased storminess.

Where do we find hope?

The psalmist rightly tells us not to put our trust in princes, and we don't often see hope in the corridors of power. Politicians often fail to deliver. Yet the apostle Paul also tells us to pray for those in authority.

Far-reaching political deals are possible. We banned CFCs, we agreed global targets to restore biodiversity,

and last year, governments agreed to phase out lead ammunition and take action on other poisons affecting wildlife.

We also see hope in local projects that are restoring nature and benefitting people, too. The bittern was on the way out in the UK. But we've created a network of new reed beds inland, in places like Lakenheath in Suffolk and Ham Wall in Somerset. From 11 booming male bitterns, we now have at least 140, safe from rising sea levels.

We see hope in people who care about nature. Earlier this year, more than half a million people took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch. The membership of wildlife conservation organisations comfortably exceeds all the political parties put together.

And we see hope in Christians and churches working to care for creation – whether it's protecting the Alvor estuary in Portugal, or restoring the Aammaq marsh in Lebanon – both places I've been privileged to see.

Each of us can give nature a home – in our garden, our church, our community. Remember that this pleases God, who commands us to care for his creation, and who sent Jesus, the true hope of the world.



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