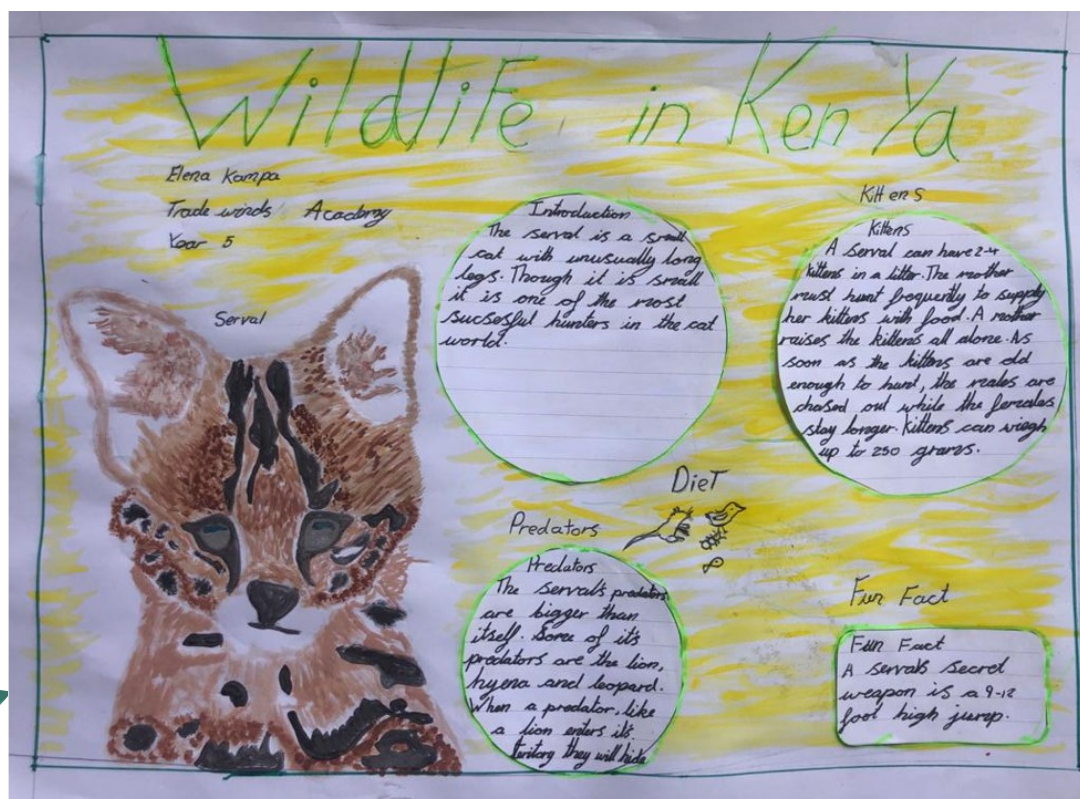


AN UPDATE FROM OPCA

April came and went in the blink of an eye, as too did the sunny weather. Here at OPCA we took advantage of the warmer weather to get out and start filming for an exciting new project we are working on with the **University of Plymouth, The Plastic Pledge.**

With most of the filming done, we are now busy making edits and preparing educational resources to go with the videos. The project aims to **educate and inspire young people** to become more plastic aware and reduce their impact on **plastic pollution**. We look forward to being able to give you more information on this project over the coming months.



TradeWinds Academy Student's Poster of Wildlife in Kenya

In other news, our **Conservation Pals** project has got off to a great start with some amazing pieces of art from the students of TradeWinds Academy in Kenya. The students made incredible posters highlighting some of the **amazing species that Kenya** has to offer. We are looking forward to see what the other schools in the project have up their sleeve.

We are very proud to have put out an inspiring interview about **ecosystem services** for our latest 'Let's Talk About..' series with **Tony Juniper**, one of the most important and influential ecologists in the UK. We discussed what is required to protect and restore the UK environment, as well as Tony's work at the top of **Natural England**, the government's advisor for England's natural environment.

On April the 22nd we celebrated this year's **Earth Day**, a day to celebrate and discuss the protection of our natural world. This year's theme was **'Restore Our Earth'** focusing on natural processes and emerging green technologies that have the potential to help in the restoration of the world's ecosystems.

Here at OPCA we celebrate the work of all kinds of people around the world who are doing their bit to restore and protect our precious planet. We can all contribute something in our own way, and we just love seeing more and more people each day **reconnect with nature** and take responsibility for our natural world into their own hands.



Tony Juniper, Author, Campaigner and Chair of Natural England



NETWORK NEWS ROUND-UP

This month's Network Roundup starts in Mozambique with the Love the Oceans team starting their **Ocean Conservation Champion** education program. Education is key to creating long-lasting change and successful conservation strategies. Local students will be **trained up as ambassadors** in their community; raising awareness of local conservation issues, delivering workshops and leading in marine conservation efforts. You can support the project on their website.



Mario and Bento, the first Ocean Conservation Champions



Students receiving a workshop in waste management

In Australia, the Wild Education team have started a new initiative called **Wild Clean-up**. Every second Sunday they will be hosting either a beach or nature clean up on **Sydney's Northern Beaches**. Anybody is welcome to join and help clean up the area. Wild education also encourage those that are not able to join, to get their own communities involved in Wild Clean-ups and share their experiences on their social media platforms.

The Conservation Education Society in Kenya have been continuing their work with the local community on the **war against waste**. In their Wazili Project, in partnership with other local community and education groups, the team are working with schools in Diani and Msambweni, providing **workshops on waste management**.

Our friend Alex Ngabirano, founder of the Bwindi Development Network has been exploring how behavioural insights can be applied to complement and strengthen efforts aimed at **tackling green corruption**. Poaching is still a big problem across Africa, and the issue unfortunately sometimes reaches into the very authorities who are trying to stop it. Thankfully, BDN continue to work hard to put a **stop to poaching** across the Bwindi region, protecting the lives of mountain gorillas and other wildlife species.



Mountain Gorilla in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

Over in Costa Rica, the rescue centre hosted students from the Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, commonly known as UNA. These future veterinarians came to the rescue centre to study and learn about **salmonella in primates**. Important research that is sure to help primates across Costa Rica. As usual the rescue centre has also been busy taking care of orphaned baby animals like Gonzalo, a young **woolly opossum** who was bought in to the centre earlier this month.



Gonzalo the woolly opossum



REINTRODUCTION & REWILDING SUMMIT



Earlier this month the teams at **Birds of Poole Harbour** and the **Self-Isolating Bird Club** came together to bring us the very first Reintroduction and Rewilding Summit. This virtual event allowed us to explore some of the UK and Europe's most exciting conservation projects.

Rewilding is a progressive approach to conservation, it is about interfering as little as possible and letting **natural processes shape the environment**, often involving the reintroduction of key species, such as wolves, that have been lost from the ecosystem. It is a method that can repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes.

The summit featured some of the **biggest names in UK conservation**, and we would like to highlight some of these people and share with you their work!



ROY DENNIS

Dennis has devoted his life to returning **eagles, osprey, red kites and red squirrels** to Britain, species that were once common before human persecution. The Roy Dennis foundation was established in 1995 to act as a catalyst for large scale conservation and reintroductions. The project's latest achievement is the reintroduction of the enormous and beautiful **white-tailed eagles** to the south coast of the UK.



DEREK GOW

Gow is a farmer turned nature conservationist, and now arguably one of the leaders of the UK rewilding effort. Gow has been the driving force behind the reintroductions of **Eurasian beavers, water voles and white storks** into our wetland freshwater systems. With an inspirational, no-nonsense approach, Derek Gow gets things done and his work to bring back the beavers will have lasting improvements on the UK's ecosystems.



ISABELLA TREE

You can't talk about rewilding without mentioning Isabella Tree. Another farmer turned conservationist, Tree and her husband have revolutionised the goal posts for conservation, taking a step back from their land at Knepp Estate, and allowing natural processes to take place. The biodiversity has reached historic levels, with species such as **nightingales, cuckoos**, and for the first time in hundreds of years, **white storks**. Knepp Estate is a time capsule of what a wilder Britain should look like.

Rewilding is something we can all do ourselves, we can rewild our gardens and our streets by making small ponds and planting wild flowers. We can **give nature some breathing space** in our urban areas. We can also rewild our minds, allow ourselves to reconnect with our natural roots and realise all the benefits nature has to offer us.

You can catch up with the full recording of this virtual event on **The Self-Isolating Bird Club YouTube Channel**