

We need to be awake to nature

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One of the strangest consequences of running a blog that has quite a high volume of traffic is that I receive a great many press releases a day. Most go straight into the electronic bin, but there are exceptions that demand that I read them. One of those came in from Extinction Rebellion this morning.

It said, and I unashamedly quote:

Extinction Rebellion, BBC Wildlife legend Chris Packham and tens of thousands of members of the public will 'unite for nature' by joining a legal and family-friendly demonstration on the streets of central London on Saturday 22 June 2024.

Backed by a wide-range of nature, wildlife and climate groups, from RSPB to the National Trust, the demonstration aims to be the biggest-ever gathering of nature and climate supporters in the UK.

The Restore Nature Now demonstration will bring thousands of people together to call on all political parties to take action to restore nature and tackle climate change in the UK, as one of the worst nations for nature loss.

Environment campaigners are urging everyone who cares for nature to unite and march through London to Parliament Square on Saturday 22 June, with a simple demand to all political parties: Restore Nature Now.

The press release includes quotes from Chris Packham, the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts and others. XR is clearly working with them on an agenda that they say demands:

- **A pay rise for nature** - Farmers manage 70% of UK land and have a huge role to play in supporting environmental recovery. But they need more support. We want to see the nature and climate-friendly farming budget doubled.
- **Make polluters pay** - Big businesses - from Water, to retail, to energy - all contribute to environmental decline. We want new rules to make them contribute to nature and climate recovery, and an end to new fossil fuels.
- **More space for nature** - just 3% of English land and 8% of waters are properly protected for nature and wildlife. To meet UK nature and climate commitments we need

to expand and improve protected areas, and ensure public land and National Parks contribute more to recovery.

A right to a healthy environment – Limited access to nature, and pollution in the air and water, affects everyone's health. We're calling for a commitment to an Environmental Rights Bill, which would drive better decisions for nature, improve public health and access to high-quality nature.

Fair and effective climate action – We cannot save nature without solving the climate crisis. We want to see investment in warm homes and lower bills by increasing home energy efficiency, supporting active travel and public transport, and replacing polluting fossil fuels with affordable renewables to ensure we at least halve UK emissions by 2030.

As they also note:

Polls have revealed that the British public is highly concerned over inadequate UK climate and nature action. Results from [two UK-wide surveys](#) conducted by The Wildlife Trusts showed that irrespective of voting choice, nature matters to people across the electorate, with 93% of voters reporting that they believe nature loss is a serious threat to humanity. Recent YouGov UK [polling](#) on behalf of WWF-UK also showed that the majority of people (70%) think it's possible to avoid the worst effects of climate change but more than half (58%) think it's only possible with more drastic action.

I am in that last category.

As a founder member of the Green New Deal Group, as well as an enthusiast for nature, I unsurprisingly support these demands made by organisations, many of which I belong to. I will look to take part in this activity in some way.

There is, however, I think much more to this. As John Harris [suggested in an article in the Guardian earlier this week, our attitude towards nature might now represent the real faultline in politics and the source of the new radicalism that we need if our society is to survive.](#)

Business does, through its actions, deny the reality that we are facing. For example, I noted a Telegraph headline this morning suggesting that airports want more tax exemptions for tourists to encourage greater air travel to the UK, which is exactly the opposite of what our planet needs.

Similarly, tech companies work their very hardest to make sure that children's exposure to nature is minimised as their screen time is maximised. In the process they undermine the understanding that our existence is utterly dependent upon our relationship with nature, which relationship is in peril.

Despite these best efforts by those businesses and others, I am also quite sure that a growing majority are aware of the risks that we face. There may not be enough people willing to take action as yet. Far too many remain

dedicated to consumption-based lifestyles. The reality of the need for change has not permeated the consciousness of sufficient people as yet, but maybe it is beginning to be a major concern for enough people to effect change.

That is my hope. That is why I share this. That is why I am more than happy to be considered decidedly woke on this issue. I am awake to nature. We need everyone to be so.