

Under the weather?

Mammals have always been very good at overcoming the challenges and dangers life throws at them. But now they face a new threat – climate change. **Emily Jones** looks at how changing weather patterns may affect the lives of some of our favourite creatures.

Summer is over and autumn is here, however when I look out of my window children are playing in just shorts and t-shirts, the trees are still green and there are even baby hedgehogs in my garden! So why are the seasons getting confused and how will this affect life around us? And exactly what is climate change?

What's it all about? The climate of the Earth is always changing, however it is thought the changes we have seen in recent years and those expected in the future are due to the actions of humans rather than natural cycles. Winters are getting warmer, which means there is less snow, summers are getting hotter and there is more rain. This will affect many animals' homes and the food sources they need to stay alive. Weather extremes such as flooding or drought will directly affect wildlife, but it's the changes to animals' habitats that are most worrying. Animals can adapt in order to survive, as they have done before, for example during the Ice Age. However this takes a long time and the animals can't change as quickly as the climate around them.

Polar regions... The most seriously affected areas will be the Arctic and Antarctica where ice is already beginning to melt due to warmer temperatures. One mammal facing possible extinction as a result is the polar bear. Ice fields are their hunting ground, so with less ice they are less able to move around and find enough food to stay alive. As well as this, seals, the bears' favourite food, are also affected by the shrinking ice as they need it to rear their pups on. So fewer seals, means less food and fewer polar bears. Nearly every part of the food chain is affected by changes in climate, with knock-on effects for all.

Closer to home... Climate change will also affect habitats and species here. At the moment northern parts of the UK, especially some areas in Scotland, have cold and snowy winters and the species that live there are well suited to these conditions. However in the future this may all change and it will become warmer, similar to the weather in southern England. In turn southern England will get hotter and drier, more like southern

Cool climate tips...

Turn off tvs, computers and stereos when not in use and save energy.

Buy a wormery to recycle your food waste.

Don't throw away old toys and clothes in the rubbish - take part in a car boot fair or donate them to a charity shop so they can be reused.

Support **People's Trust for Endangered Species** so we can help to protect habitats and wildlife for the future.

Europe. Animals such as birds and insects may be able to fly away and migrate to cooler areas but other wildlife left behind will suffer. Plants that cannot cope with the changing conditions will die out and animals relying on them for food and shelter will struggle to survive. Take the example of beech woodland in southeast England. Experts predict temperatures will increase by 3°C by 2050 and there will be nearly half the amount of rainfall we have now. Beech trees won't cope

Webster's message



Hi all! Hope you had a great summer! On my holidays I read a great book, **The Adventures of Rusty Redcoat Volume 1** by Ernie Gordon. The story follows the early life of a brave and lovable red squirrel called Rusty. He is fascinated by the strange world of humans and his curiosity leads to many a caper. The book is a fantastic way to see life from a red squirrel's point of view, and I can't wait to find out what happens next in Volume 2! There's even a website (see below) all about the series.

The book is published by Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd. RRP £12.99. It's available from www.rustyredcoat.com or call 01271 862557.



with this change and will become extinct in some areas. This will cause problems for woodland mammals such as badgers, hedgehogs, bats and rodents, who will have to try and find new homes. And it's not just land mammals that are affected. Harbour porpoises, one of our most common marine mammals, are declining due to a lack of food caused by warmer waters in the North sea.

On the bright side... Although the UK may lose a number of species due to the effects of climate change, we will almost certainly gain a few

as well. Many more warm water species of dolphins and whales, such as striped dolphins, are being sighted around our coasts as the seas are getting warmer. New crops such as grapes, sunflowers and olives will attract different wildlife as well as bring more money to farmers. And between storms the warmer weather may encourage us to spend more time outdoors enjoying our wildlife! Many experts believe it is not too late to save our wildlife, so check out our top tips for easy ways you can help to reduce climate change, and help us make a difference.

This is my friend Kate. She's a real-life bat-crimefighter! Now that's what I call a...

GOOD JOB!



Name: Dr Kate Barlow
Age: 37
Job title: Bat Crime Investigations Officer

Tell us a bit about BCT...
The Bat Conservation Trust is devoted to the conservation of bats and their habitats in the UK. BCT runs projects and initiatives which all aim to create a better world for bats, where they can live in harmony with people.



What does your job involve?

All bats and their roosts are protected by law. Many bats rely on buildings for their roosts, and so when people carry out building and maintenance work they are supposed to make sure no bats living there are harmed or made homeless. Unfortunately not everyone follows these rules. My job is to give people all the advice and information they need to deal with bats responsibly, and to help police and bat workers investigate when crimes against bats take place.

What are your qualifications?

I have a degree in zoology and a PhD in bat ecology.

What attracted you to this job?

I wanted to be directly involved in the conservation of bats, feeling that I was really making a difference.

What are the best bits about your work?

I enjoy the feeling that I am helping to protect bat roosts that are otherwise under threat of destruction. I also get great satisfaction from working with a network of dedicated people who have a passion for bats.

And the worst....

Realising that we only manage to prevent a small number of incidents and that many bat roosts are disturbed or lost without anyone knowing. It's a great incentive to make sure the message gets across!

What advice would you give someone who is interested in a job like yours?

Get involved with conservation. Find out what is happening in your area and get as much experience in conservation activities and working with conservation groups as you can.

It really could be you...

Find out more at www.bats.org.uk

KIDS GONE WILD!

Welcome to all of you who donated to us over the summer and are now official *Kids Gone Wild* members! And a big thank you to all of you who wrote to Webster. **Zac Riley** wrote in to tell us about his adventures on the moors and **Molly Stockwell-Allen** sent us a great picture of an otter. Why not write to or email Webster with your wild stories and pictures? You could even design a Christmas card for him. The best entries to Webster's mailbag will receive a *Kids Gone Wild* goody bag!

Become a wild child by donating just £15 a year to People's Trust for Endangered Species (that's less than 29p per week) and you will receive a welcome pack and more as a great big thank you. You could even ask an adult to donate for you as a Christmas present! Email webster@ptes.org or call 020 7498 4533 for more details.

OFFICIAL WILD CHILD



NAME: **Molly** AGE: 10
FAVOURITE MAMMAL: **otter**

Bluebell woods, an important mammal habitat, are among the native habitats likely to suffer adverse effects of climate change.

