

# THE NEWS

## GOLA PROJECT UNDERWAY

The RSPB's work to conserve the magnificent Gola forest in Sierra Leone is progressing well. The Gola forest is home to endangered birds such as the white-necked picathartes (below), as well as pygmy hippos, chimpanzees and forest elephants.

The joint conservation project between the RSPB, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (our BirdLife Partner) and the Sierra Leone Government received a boost in June when President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah launched the project and gave it his seal of approval.

Our task for the next 18 months is to create a management plan to conserve the forest and win community support. If we are successful, we will be on the road to conserving the 71,000 hectare (175,000 acre) Gola forest as a resource for people and wildlife far into the future.

The launch of the project is good news – it shows that after years of war, Sierra Leone is on the road to recovery. We are delighted to be working with the Government of Sierra Leone to support their long-term vision of conserving these forests. This work is also being supported by funding from Conservation International and the Darwin Initiative.

We now have more than 30 committed and hardworking staff in place. These include forest officers who are patrolling the forest's boundaries – not an easy task, as many boundaries have not been surveyed in decades and have disappeared under dense vegetation. Other staff are carrying out environmental education and are working with communities living around the forest to help them with development projects.

For more information on the amazing birds and animals of the Gola forest, and our work to conserve them, visit [www.rspb.org.uk/international/conservation/sierraleone](http://www.rspb.org.uk/international/conservation/sierraleone)

DAVE FLUMM (RSPB)



## BIRDWATCHING BY TRAIN

Rail passengers on the St Ives to St Erth branch line, which passes alongside the RSPB's Hayle Estuary nature reserve in Cornwall, are being encouraged to spot wildlife, thanks to a set of posters funded by the Environment Agency. Each of the five stops along the Wessex Trains route now has its own poster featuring wildlife likely to be seen nearby. Andrew Griffiths from Wessex Trains and Jenny Parker, assistant warden at our Hayle and Marazion nature reserves, show off the poster at Lelant (above).



DAVID LEVENSON (RSPB-MAKERS.COM)

## RESERVES UPDATE

Visit [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves) for the latest information

### PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF TITCHWELL

The dunes at our Titchwell Marsh nature reserve in Norfolk were put under pressure last winter, with considerable erosion taking place. We are looking at flood defence options to protect the mix of coastal and wetland habitats for the future. We will let you know more in future issues. Titchwell is open from 9.30 am to 5 pm. Phone 01485 210779.

### IMPROVEMENTS FOR RESERVES IN WALES

Our nature reserves in north Wales, such as Ynys-hir and South Stack, will soon have more visitor facilities and improved access, thanks to a grant of £271,626 from the EU Objective One programme, as part of the Phoenix project. We will also be able to improve habitats at these reserves.

## RSPB CHELSEA GARDEN A WINNER

We were delighted that the RSPB's show garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show was awarded a silver medal. Designed by Claire Whitehouse and sponsored by the SITA Environmental Trust, our Real Rubbish Garden (featured last issue and pictured above) impressed the judges at the show in May. The three themes to the garden were re-using, recycling and reclaiming. Find out how to make your garden more wildlife-friendly at [www.rspb.org.uk/gardens](http://www.rspb.org.uk/gardens)

## 'EXTINCT' WOODPECKER REDISCOVERED

The ivory-billed woodpecker has been rediscovered in America, 50 years after the last confirmed sighting there. It was confirmed in Arkansas after a series of sightings between February 2004 and April this year. The last accepted sightings were in Cuba in 1987 and 1988. Alistair Gammell, the RSPB's International Director, said, 'It's not quite like finding a dodo, but it comes very, very close. Thrillingly, we now have a chance to save this great species.'