

EP73 - Rebugging the Planet with Vicki Hird – Uk Wildlife Podcast

Hello and welcome to the UK Wildlife Podcast. I'm Neil Phillips and I'm joined today by Vicky Herd. Hello, Vicky.

Hello. Hello.

Welcome to this show. Before we go any further, can you explain who you are and what you do?

Sure. Yeah. No, great to be here. Yes. I'm the author of a new book called Rebugging the Planet. The remarkable things that insects and other invertebrates do and why we need to love them more. But also as my day job, I'm head of sustainable farming at Sustain the Alliance for Better Food and Farming. So I do a lot of lobbying and farm policy work. That's what I do a lot of the time.

Oh, brilliant. We like to start with our recent wildlife sightings, and as the guests you get to go first. So any interesting sightings Recently,

I did have a new one on me. I was in a wonderful organic orchard last weekend in Durham, in fact, and saw a can. Harvestman Spider and I haven't spotted one before. It was very beautiful, lots of golden golden parts to it and happily got it identified and it's, it was very beautiful and obviously wonderful Andd cuz it's gonna do a lot of pest control. Yeah. And if you'd like to know about Harvestman, there's an episode coming up very soon on those. So ooh, I will listen out for that.

Yeah, so it is a good one now. Yeah, my wildlife sightings, even though we're talking bugs today, I'm gonna have to mention a couple birds. Good job. Vic's not here. I saw yesterday I was out doing a management meeting with some people at Do Hall Nature Reserve. Lots of exciting plans there, but I might talk about that a later date.

We're walking along and we had our resident onologist with. And I saw a bird of praise shoot behind some trees and went, Oh, kl, no sparrowhawk, no hobby. And it looked round and it ev and this, it was beautiful evening sun. It first it landed in the tree. And then it looped around with perfect light behind it.

And I did have my camera in my hand, so I'm quite happy. And that's the second one I've seen there in a week cuz we had a home education class there

and they all got to see one as well. And a couple of the parents there were a bit of a bird, so they were very happy to see that. Yeah, that's brilliant.

I think it's youngsters moving south, I suspect. And we've also had the usual buzzards, but also quite a lot of red kites. And I saw two possibly free circling around this evening before I came home. So that was really nice. But I can't not mention some sort of insects to us, of course. Good. So I went to specifically, No, I'll be recording this podcast today.

I went to a big patch of Ivy Flower and I recommend going to a big patch of Ivy Flower this time of year. And there was all sorts on there, solitary wasps, social was. And bees, which also wasp, I suppose. Lots of wasp. But the weirdest thing was the seven spot Ladybird that seemed to be feeding on the nectar.

Yeah, interesting. That interesting. Yeah. That's a bit of an odd one, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. I should have to ask Ke Roy what she thinks of that. Yeah. Always look for your ivy flowers at this time of year, as you say, and make sure you don't dig 'em out cuz there's such an important food source right now. Yeah, and I'll just put it out there.

Most of the time they do not strangle the tree despite what some people. Yeah. . Get the Ivy myths crushed. Yes. We're here to talk about your book and the topic of your book. Could you tell us what your book's all about? Yes. Well, as I said Alex, it's called re I got the idea of that from the Rewilding and Rebidding books that are out there getting the wildlife back into our lives.

And I thought, well, not many people have larger states or farms to re. But everybody sees wildlife all the time, even in their houses, let alone when they step out the door. So I thought it would be a good way to get people to underst. The role that wildlife has in their lives. Cuz most people don't really think about the invertebrates apart from the bees.

They often know about bees, but also what they can do to help them to help us. So I thought, you know, we can re bug our houses, our gardens, we can re bug our lives and our habits. You know, there's all, all sorts of things we can do that I cover in the book. But also learning about how brilliant they are and thinking about how you talk about bugs to other people, particularly young people.

Because one of the things I do want people to do is help with re attitudes to bugs. Cause a lot of people think bugs are all awful dirty. They'll sting you, they'll bite you, they're a nuisance, and so on and so forth. And actually it's very, very tiny, tiny percentage of bugs that are really a nuisance.

Most of them are actually really useful or. But an awful lot of them are hugely useful to us. We wouldn't be on this planet without them. So I talk about what they do for us. I talk about what you can do for them and why, and explore some of the issues and also some of the incredible bugs out there.

That was the point of the book really, and I hope people have learned a bit from it. Yeah. You've kind of covered the next question I was gonna ask, which was what inspired you to write this book? Yeah, it was also, no, there are other things. The rewording movement inspired me cause I think it's very important for people to be able to see.

What we're trying to save and understand it, and I think, you know, actually experiencing it is really, I. But I also was inspired by the horrific statistics on loss of invertebrates. The data is quite clear that we're having some crashes in populations. In diversity of bugs. Obviously there's lots of and more data needed.

There's always more data needed, and you know, some bugs are doing all right, particularly the generalists. But there are really scary statistics and climate change and the catastrophic harm to ecosystems like rivers and soils, all having a huge impact on bug. So that terrifies me as a, as a entomologist in my background.

I, I did train a bit as an entomologist many years ago before I became a campaigner. It frightened the hell out of me. So I thought that. But I also think things like BBC Spring Watch and other things like organizations doing be watch and getting citizen signs. People are more interested, more people understand it.

So I wanted to build on that and get them to be ambassadors and more and more people to understand the smaller. Around us, and I think that is, there is growing interest and concern. So one, three things really. The scary statistics, the inspiring rewilding and the interest that is growing out there for, for bugs of all sort.

Mm. Yeah, I think you credit there. I do find there is like bees. 10 years ago if you said, Oh, everyone would be worried about bees, I wouldn't have believed you. You'd be like, Oh no bee. Everyone sees bees are things that sting them and oh, maybe they'll make a bit of honey. But people are starting to get that.

It's really changed, doesn't it? Yeah. I think it's partly because there's a lot of concern about their Nina and cotton oil didn't set aside and a lot of organizations

like Friends of the Earth and Bug Life and the Wildlife Trust all run campaigns to to raise awareness of why. You know, why you need to tell your MP and your government to, to not allow these products be used.

But also getting people to love them because they started to do be watch. You know, you'd identify, be in a garden and send it off and helps the scientists understand what's going on. So, yeah, I think P Bees have got more love, but I think it's growing as well. I think more people are thinking about the other invertebrates as.

Yeah, I think the next one, I think we've gotta push these earthworms. I think people would, you know, Absolutely, Absolutely. Talk, Talk about keynote species. Yeah. Yeah. And they, they're actually really amazing creatures. I mean, they're not maybe the most aesthetically pleasing, shall we say. I mean, at these species have got that lovely yellow and black color scheme going and are not all wiggly.

Yeah. I think they're incredible though. I mean, people, if they saw them up close, they'd probably be quite impressed with the bristles and the, the sheer engineering involved in an earthworm. I think they'd probably be quite impressed. That's what also impressed me when I was writing the book, the engineering, the design, the, the communication, the organizational skills.

These, these have got it in spades and they've had it for thousands, millions of years before us. They really know how to do all these things very well, and we are, we are just beginning to learn from them, you know, how to design buildings, how to design materials, to be, you know, strong and light and all sorts of ways we can learn from the bugs as well, but earth worms.

Yeah. Super organisms. That's a nice, neat segue into the, just discussing some of the chapters in your book, cuz you mm-hmm. , you have all these wonderful, as you go through the book, the, what would you call 'em, fact boxes, I suppose the, the little gray boxes where you talk about stuff like that on top of the main text, which some of those are absolutely fascinating and I, I consider myself.

Quite knowledgeable about such things, but there was some nice neat bits in that I didn't know. It was brilliant. Yeah, it's a huge palette to draw on, you know? Yeah. You could draw, write millions of books really, cuz there's so huge in number. So what are the chapters? What are the topics in your book? Yeah.

Well, I sort of start looking at why they're so important to us. All the things that they do for us. In terms of, you know, all the services they provide. I don't like think of them as service providers, but they do do amazing things for us. And then I go on to talk about how we can really help, you know, we spaces, green spaces, parks and also we attitudes.

So when you talk about bugs to particularly young children, as I said, you know, don't immediately say. Don't touch it, don't let it near you. Actually try and be positive about it and say, Oh, that's interesting, isn't it? When a child come up you, with you, with a handful of earthworms or is near some small.

Bees or whatever, just don't immediately cry out that that's a terrible thing. Try and have a different attitude towards and talk to, to them about to your family and friends about how great bugs are. You can become a bug ambassador. It's really important. And then I, the latest chapters I talk about what you can do in terms of your lifestyle in terms of what you eat and what you wear, because those things, Because they have such a huge impact on the land, that's where the invertebrates live.

So it's gonna have a huge impact on invertebrates and it's really staggering. You can make just small changes to your diet and make a big difference to the invertebrates and you can make changes to what you wear. Ideally not changing what you wear to as often as people do, not buying new clothes all the time.

Looking at things like cotton, it's really staggering how harmful the cotton industry is, but it can be better. You can get organic cotton, but also reus. Fabrics and stuff is really important. And then one of my final chapters is around the politics of it, the power and inequality both of which cause huge problems for the invertebrates, which we can talk about if you want, but it, it's sort of, I try and not make it too heavy, but it's important for people to recognize that the power of the big big chemical industries and big ag industries, we need as a, as a community, as a movement to be pushing back against that power.

Cuz that's the only thing that can stop the, the weakening of rules that protect invertebrates and the birds and everything else. We need. Some of that power back and make sure our politicians are protecting the invertebrates. So I talk about that and, and various things like that. And then there's the last chapters, a whole load of useful organizations and tips and ideas about how to, to do what you can mean all the way through.

There's tips and ideas of what you can do if you've got no time at all, if you've got little bit of time. And if you've got a bit more time. And some of the things I

talk about are very much about what you can do in your garden or in your local. Local green spaces, any green space can be a refuge for a bug.

That is certainly true. You've just mentioned that one of the chapters is all about, in fact, all the way through the book, there's lots of tips of what you can do to help rebel the planet or help our insects. So would you like to give some examples for the listeners? Yeah, yeah, of course. I mean, one of the things, cuz there is quite a lot you can do, and you know this.

Things all the way through. You don't have to do everything all at once. Obviously, what I suggest to people is they have a bit of a, a re plan with three different areas. The first area is what you can do in your space, like in your house or in your garden and in your garden. There's so many things you can do that really help the bugs, like having a, a wood pile, that would be great for, for the beetles.

Mowing less or not at all, making sure you've got spaces for wild flowers. Or weeds, if you want to call 'em that. But weeds are amazingly important for a lot of bugs. Providing a 3D environment for the invertebrates to find refuge in and nest and eating, but also flowering plants, ideally throughout the year.

So there's lots of, look, there's tips in there of what plants are good to do and upon. So the first thing is about your space and also the space around you. For instance, your local parks getting involved. The second part of your bugging plan can be about what you buy and what you wear and what you eat, and there's loads of ideas in the book about what you can do that will really help things like where you buy from trying to buy fresh produce rather than really process produce, cuz process produce, it looks really cheap, but it's actually cheap calories and not very good for you and not very good for the bugs because it relies very heavily on very cheap monoculture production and very cheap material.

For these junk foods. So trying to get fresh where you can, and I recognize everybody's, you know, big cost of living crisis, but we can all do a bit if you can buy organic or from farmers, you know, are using better processes on their farm. So that's fantastic. Even if you can do it a bit, that's gonna make a big difference.

And what you wear the most sustainable clothes you wear is what you're wearing right now, really. trying to reuse, recycle, that kind of thing. So that's the second point. And then the third point, if you can get a bit political with a small. Get involved with the local friends of the park or a group that campaigns

for their local authority to, to do things differently, not use sprays on the local green spaces.

And if you can, you know, get involved with national campaigns, they're really gearing up. We've put an attack on nature. You've probably seen that. So join Bug Life. Friends of the Earth, Wildlife Trust, anybody. You know is doing something for the bugs cuz they need your support. Even if you can't join them financially, you can join them in terms of giving your voice.

And they do really easy actions and things and often it can help find your new friends and local groups that are really fun to be with. So it's just a bit of a plan. Three areas, whatever you can do. Fantastic. Oh, that's really good. Whenever people say, Oh, what can I do to help? I always of course go straight to pond cause that's just my, my nature.

Any, even a foot across little dish. When we had that drought, my pond dried out, but I didn't wanna put tap in it. So I put two little dishes in my garden, one in a shady and one in a warmer spot. And every night there was three or four around them. So, and that's just a frog, unfortunately. Lots of slugs as well.

Well, slugs are amazingly important. The garden they. An important recycler of plant material. The majority of 'em don't eat your plants. They eat dead material. And if you've got leopard slugs, wow, you're really winning cuz they will eat the proper slugs, you know, and they're beautiful. I would say that.

But they are beautiful. But I started a pond in lockdown and it was the container from the bottom of the fridge. You know, there's square containers, you put your vegetables in and I put that in and I. Everything coming in to drink. So now I've built a bigger one and it's gonna get bigger again. It's irresistible, isn't it?

Yeah. I got the first damsel flight and dragon flying my garden when I put that little pond in. I haven't had any since, so they were probably just checking it out and deciding it wasn't big enough. But I did. That's the first time I've ever seen them in my garden. If it was a running joke on this podcast and just generally on my social media that the ethics recorder and.

Dragonflies in my garden. I'm up to about six or seven species, but I've never had one intro, any interest in my pod, let alone find a nim for lava in there. Plenty of ponds. I've been involved on other sides of, lots of dragonflies around. Brilliant. Now, we did touch on the campaigning and politics sides of things, so

some of the stuff you put your book off, What was, I mean, it's gonna be easier for people to read.

It's go buy the book. , it's a paperback as well. It's not too expensive. So could you perhaps sort of, It's hard to simplify down into five minutes of talking, sort of the sort of problems we are up against and what we can do about it. Really important for people to recognize that they do have power. I think people often feel that, you know, I can't go and talk to my mp.

I, I have no power in local authorities. I can't, you know, writing a letter won't make any difference or an email, but it will, it really will. It does make a difference and especially if you join with others and also just going to see your MP on your own, it can be quite powerful. Or getting them to your local park or your, your, you know, own garden, you know, even cuz then they will see that there's a constituency that really cares.

Because they get so many that don't come to them. So the most important thing is doing that. But also if you do join with organizations like your local Wildlife Trust or local Friends of the Earth Group, or do a Bug life beeline project, the Bug Life Bee Lines is very exciting. Join with others to create corridors of green space for the bugs to travel through.

All those things can help you to create the. On your elected representatives in local authority or at national level to do the right thing. And we know the pressure is so strong from the other side, those producing agrichemicals, those wanting to produce monocultures, to force farmers to do things in extremely unsustainable ways.

A pressure is so strong. So the more that you can join with organizations to, to support them doing things differently and through your pound of course, and what you buy is absolutely critical. And. You know, I, I do give ideas about how to get involved in local action and how to think about it and writing letters and things like that.

There's lots of advice on the web as well about how to do that in ways that will really make a difference and it all does make a difference. So, you know, I think. Right now we've got a real problem with the kind of policies that coming out from this government that are really potentially rolling back really, really important regulations that protect nature.

It's being called an attack on nature. You can Google it and join with those organizations in writing to your MP and making your voice heard. Absolutely

critical. Very critical for the invertebrates cuz they often get neglected. So yeah, please do get involved if you can. We'll come back to the various stories cuz if anyone that's listen to the last podcast that was recorded before the full details came out, or as they came out actually I was recorded.

It the RSPB Wildlife Trust and National Trust of all declared it on nature. That's organizations with it's 800,000, The Wildlife Trust, just over a million for Irish V and it's something like three or 4 million for the national. It's millions. Yeah. It really runs millions. Yeah. These are all three organizations that are always very So you say conservative with they're very careful.

They're very careful usually. Yeah, very careful. Yeah. Cause they have to be, and they weren't holding back at all on this. And there's a very good reason they have. And when I come onto the ELM scheme, I think at the end I think's probably good one. But a couple things in the book I, like you mentioned Back from the Brink, which we've had the coordinator of on the show, and it is, it is true.

Invertebrates do just get overlooked, don't they? With all the protections and not, Maybe they, I think, Do you think it's going the right direction? I feel like there's more interest in invertebrate conservation from both the NGOs and absolutely. The public. Absolutely. I do. I do feel that, and I, I think some of those organizations have, you know, should take the credit, you know, that bug life, really getting people to sort.

Get it really, you know, the importance of bugs and, and how they're critical parts of the food chain. If nothing else, you know, you lose those, you lose the birds and the mammals and the bats, anything else you like and you lose the trees and a lot of the flowers if you lose the invertebrate. So I think they've done a lot to raise that profile of the bugs and not just the insects.

And not just the bees. I think there's, and, and that back from the brink being some of those. Critical species. I think the lady bird spider was one of them, wasn't it? And some malts. Yeah. So fantastic to see that and fantastic to see the growing interest and, and younger interests as well. Young people be really interested in the invertebrate community also, cuz they're closer to it.

It's easier for them. They can see things that we don't often see cuz they're a bit close to the ground. So yeah, we should nurture that and build on it. Not, not to get them to get the. As we did when we were younger. Yeah, that's the only reason I have kids, cuz I have a pair of two pairs of younger eyes.

Brilliant spot things for me. That's brilliant. Yeah, you can go and bug bug hunts with them doing bug hunts with children. Absolutely fantastic. Oh yeah, we've already done a few of those. I was very lucky. I got invited to go and help with relocation of. Bill Crickets. And there's a podcast on that. Oh, actually I should have all the episodes memorized.

It's episode 40 something. You need poster on your wall, . You can, That would be easy. Oh yeah. It's gonna be increasingly long. This is gonna be episode 70. Wow. Fantastic. Yeah, I think Or two. So we're doing all right. We're doing It is nice to see. Invertebrates getting a little bit more credit. And like I say, there's a few young bird, but a lot of them, one, one movement I find is helping a little bit is hand listing is getting people, And if you come across pan listing, I don't think I have actually.

No, what's that? So, you know, people keep a bird list pan listing is everything. Ah. So you tick everything you find. And it's helping with, you know, bri fights and things that most people look overlook. Yeah. And it gets more records for them. I'm a sort of all around rou anyway, so the panelist is for me is keeping a record of what I have seen cuz I can't remember everything I've seen.

That sounds great. So the whole ecology, everybody needs to understand how, it's a system, it's not single species. They've all got to work together and that's, that's what sounds really sensible. A lot of people are anti tick lists and train spotting type thing. But you know, I always think if it gets people engaged, go for it.

I like to think macro photography is helping as well. A little bit. You know, cuz it, it is drawing people in and people that look at the pictures go, Oh, jumping spiders are quite cute. Actually, that's the brilliant thing. I do talk about my smartpone insect joy, because just having a smartphone the last few years has made it so much easier to see the beauty, like the spider.

Yeah. Jumping spider gone. I keep climbing in my garden. And you can't see that unless you actually photograph it and then zoom in. And you could do that even with fairly basic smartphones. And that's really good way to spread the word as well. You can show people the, the bugs you've seen even from a distance cuz you can zoom in and show how beautiful they'll, So so there's a brilliant thing, but macro photography also hugely important as well.

But everybody can do the photographs now with their smart. Yeah, you might not be matching a thousand pound camera, but I'll tell you what, if you would stick it on Twitter, no one's gonna be able to. Absolutely. I'm, I've take some

crackers with my smartphone and I am not a photographer, but they look amazing.

Really. Some forms of crab, spiders catching prey. Oh yeah. Everybody's got crab spiders if they've got a garden and they catch prey with the two, four legs and it looks really. And you might think, Oh, it's, that's awful. But it's actually, it's like the Serengeti in your garden, you know? It's just brilliant and I've got some great photographs of that.

And they can be bright yellow and white. They can't match their flower plant that they're on. They're able to change color. Yeah, and they just, and they're very still as well. That's the important thing in a way. Easy to photograph cuz they stay very still and they don't have a web. Although when I try and get close up, they usually just duck under the flower for me.

They're too noisy or too vibration. Too much vibration, Probably fill craft failure with me usually sort of a bit rusty. And then I mean they go, we just touched on, just on spiders they're going through. Those are cool things you find in your garden. Yes. I'll have to mention distinguished jumping spider.

I mean, 10 years ago, would that spider have stopped a massive theme park being built? I mean, it hasn't stopped it. But it has stalled it for a long time. Yeah. It's really important. Yeah, that's That's so exciting that that worked. Yeah. And Bud Life for doing a lot of that, but loads of local people as well.

Oh yeah. Absolutely. Brilliant campaign communities there to stop it happening. Yeah. Well, for contrast that to Tilbury Power Station, which is just down the road for me, which had Hornet rubber fly and loads of other rare species, and when. Dense Reptil populations. But unfortunately that time only Buglife really got involved and they weren't enough on their own.

But I think people have learned they and others have saved can bewick. Right. And the other distinguished jump inspir site, West Farrick marshes, which literally is just a pile of ash from an old power station. But it's amazing. It's got marsh hares. Mm-hmm. . It's got pantaloon bees. Wow. And it's got distinguished jump inspir.

So just says that invertebrates can really recolonize help the recolonize and they bring the seeds, they bring the microbes that will help soil form that really important transporters will a lot of things that will help, but a devastated state become wild again. Yeah. Really important part of the. You touch on the book, don't you?

Bringing in the vgi for the soil and Yes, exactly. In both worms and other soil creatures on their skin and in their, in their stomachs, they'll be carrying an awful lot of really critical microbiota to reinject a new. Environment with those critical fungi and microbes. Yeah, so transporters. Yeah, that's just one of the things I picked up from that book.

Brilliant stuff. Well finish on Elms because that is extremely topical at the, It is. There's a, there was lots of rumors and people had Elms meetings canceled, didn't they? So they f thought the scheme might have been dropped. Could you quickly explain what Elms is? Cuz you could do it much better than I can, I'm sure.

And then what? What the situation is now. Yes. Elms, the environmental Land Management schemes, or Elms for short, was the design for England. It's different in the other three nations, but in England, the design of a new scheme to replace the old common agricultural policy support schemes, the subsidies that we had in in England and the Elms were designed to be.

Farmers and land managers for public goods. So the nature, climate change, mitigation, and all sorts of wonderful public goods that won't be paid before by the market would be paid for by payments that are basic taxpayers, but things that you know, really, really need to see on the farm, land across the country.

And so Elms was there being designed for the last five years. With incredible amount of meetings between farmers, other stakeholders, all the environment groups, and I was there in the meetings from the beginning. So we've been working on this for years. There's gonna be a very sort of good set of, of grants that farmers will be able to access, so to a basic and a middle level, and a much more advanced level.

So it's really exciting. Think about how it could really. Farmers go on. Then transition towards agroecological farming that will protect nature, protect food security cuz we need nature for food security, but protect our wider environment as well and really restore nature, et cetera, et cetera. Loads of different good ideas.

It was complex, it's going to slow and all sorts of other reasons, means that it's been under attack for quite a long time. And farmers are very worried because they're losing their basic payment schemes, but the ELM scheme isn't quite in place to replace that, and it's not really there to replace it.

But in terms of income, they really need to see some income. When we got the cost of prices, their input costs are going through the roof, energy costs, et cetera. So it's a really tricky time. And what happened last weekend was that there were big rumors that Elms was being ditched, and we're going back to the old style of area based payments, just in income payment.

With no real delivery of public goods that the environmental goods that we really need. But I think the rumors were overblown. The Department of Environment Food Rural Affairs have actually sort of said, sort of said, say, cuz I'm not a hundred percent sure, but they've said we're keeping elms. We're still going down that route.

But we're doing a review. And a good review could look at, you know, where there are gaps, where farmers are falling through the gap. Whether they can do things faster. We know they need more money and we know they need to be more ambitious and they need to monitor things. So the things that a review could do, useless usually, but what we don't want to see is any pause or any backtracking.

What we do want to see is support for farmers from other budgets, and that's available, their availability of other budgets for emergencies as outlined in the Agriculture Act of 2020. So yes, support farmers, but. Don't delay elms cuz we need it for, for all sorts of reasons. Not least to protect the environment on which we depend to produce our food.

And that's the soil, the air, the water, the natural systems, the pollinators, the pest predators, everything. It's really, really vital to be protecting the farmed environment. So the last week has been a frenzy of, of trying to find out what's going on, finding. As you say, our meetings were being canceled, but that was a bit of a red herring cuz they were gonna be canceled and they're redoing their set of meetings.

Anyway, it's all gone. Gone a bit complicated. But there are other things that are threatening nature that isn't to do with Elms. It's to do with European retained legislation like the habitats directive and. Changing in planning rules to allow zones which don't have protections for nature or protections even for workers.

I dunno. There's real threats ahead, which is why we've got the attack on nature campaigning going on. It's ju it's broad and we still need to nail what Elms is gonna do. So it needs to be ambitious and have the right budget. So yeah, as I said, a lot going on and really support those organizations that got got actions and keep us, keep an eye out for.

What we need to do next. Oh, that's a nice summary for there. Thank you very much. So, yeah, basically everything I said in the last episode came true and unfortunately looks like it's gonna happen and, possibly worse things as well. Mm-hmm. , we've really got to get active, particularly in the 38 places where they're thinking of having these zones where planning regulations are being entirely relaxed.

How horrific. Will that be for the nature in those areas? You know, the, the bitty bits of nature, not just the reserves. Nature everywhere. I don't wanna scare monger or anything, but we must remember that the government has the power of compulsory purchase. So in theory, in theory, and I'm, I stress the in theory bit, nowhere is safe.

You never know. So people need to be Yeah. Out on the streets if they need to be at the times. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yes. We may, it may come to keep an eye on RSV England. And wildlife trust Twitter accounts is quite good at the moment, and I'll put a link so in, in lieu of giving me likes and sending me coffees or whatever, please don't do any of that.

Just go onto RSV website or just email your MP directly. Actually, if you go for the R Review website and do it, they have a thing, you'd be able to find it quite easily up at a link. Say you are not happy with the way things are going and wildlife protection's being removed, they may f you off and say, Oh, it'll be fine.

We had the department secretary yesterday, I think it was on Twitter, going, Oh, everything's fine. Now none of this is true. Look what we did with the Environment Bill, and if you listen to last episode, the Environment Bill involved legalizing sewage into our rivers. So, and the environment Bill isn't safe.

The targets aren't safe, and a lot of the money for the environment bill actions was from the agriculture Elms budget. So, yeah. Yes. Awful lot of. Yeah. All connected and, Yeah. Yeah. Even better. Yeah. And the environment bill targets, so wishy washy would you say would mm-hmm. , yes. Yeah. I mean, gosh. Yeah. And, and we need, unambitious was another word I heard, which was I think was a very kind way of putting it.

Yes. Yeah, and this is our home as well as the Wildlife's home. You know, we should all be able to speak to our own piece about it and, and get a proper response. And it's solid action. Don't you say it's not just nature under threat here. If all the soil washes away, if our water becomes polluted, , it will be in trouble.

The serious trouble. Yeah. They need to. Sort themselves out and quickly and reassure everyone and that that could also count for other things. But we don't cover those topics on this show. Yes, Right. , Yes. But I, I think that's probably a good place to start wrapping up there. Yeah. Yeah. I'm glad you as you asked me on Re The Planet is something everybody can do bit bit of.

So hopefully if people buy the book, they can see where can people buy the book? Any good bookshop? Chelsea Green are the publishers, so you can get it on their website. They did have a discount. I'm not sure it's still going, but have a look at the Chelsea Gearing UK website and you might be able to get a discount and a lot of bookshops have it Waterstones, so Yeah.

And many independent ones. I like to mention independent ones, but if we can, Yes. And there is a, there is an audible version of, Oh, fortunately it's audible, but you can get a Yeah. Recorded version. Oh, that's lovely. And where can people find you online on social media? I do an awful lot of tweeting.

Just to warn you, I'm on at Vicky Herd, v i c k I h i r d, and Instagram the same. I do have a website, www.re, theplanet.org, but I, Twitter is a good way to, to find me. I'm always on it. Brilliant. I have been for 40 long , but it's, it's useful though. You find great entomologists on there as well as great farmers and campaigners.

So I always say that there's, there's alike everywhere in life. There's a lot of annoying and idiotic people, but it's worth putting up with cuz. Yeah, there's, you made so many good contacts on there and Exactly. You need psych id. You can usually find somebody or somebody will tag the person that can for you.

It's brilliant for that. Yeah. Yeah. And I do a lot of my photographs on there, so they're not, they're not professional at all, but I look, put them both on Twitter and Instagram and encouraging other people to do the same thing. Show how beautiful they, but you know what? I wanna end on something quite positive.

So what is your favorite Invertebrate is right on the spot. One, it's really tricky one, I, I usually say ants because that's what stops choice me off when I was about six. And they are such keystone species absolutely critical everywhere. And there's so amazing at communicating amazing at social organization, amazing building.

I mean, they're. Extraordinary. And I talk about the wood A in the book from the can GOs, they take the wood out out of the wood and the wood falls apart.

You know, the forest falls apart, you know, they're that important and it's, so I, I would say the end. Yeah, But I've got a giraffe neck weevil tattoo.

And that's a whole other story. Good choice. , they're, they're, they're funky, funky looking beasts. They are draft next. They are. Yeah. I thought I'd have something completely unique from Yeah. Madagascar. So I'm gonna have a joint halfway up the neck. , There's weird to figures. Ups. Fight to fight. Yes. But then there are so many weird things in the Inver world.

They are like nothing else, aren't they? Well, that's right. Just. Well, I say it many times in this show, which is, birds are boring, but they're not boring. They're just boring compared to the invertebrates because you know, a bird is bird shape, might have long legs, might, you know, all got wings, you know, might have a long neck.

It's a pretty standard format, isn't it, really? Compared to invertebrates. I think invertebrates incredible when they're so similar to each other. They can't tell without genetics who's related to who. Yes, that says wear in the insects. Okay. Get convergent evolution there too. But you know, you compare an ant to a Goliath fee to war, you know?

Yeah. And I'm a big fan of wood answer myself, so that was a good choice, . Oh, great. Great. Yeah. Well, we'll finish it there. Viji. I think that's a good spot to end. Thank you so much. Coming on. Thank you for asking me. That's great. You're most welcome. It's been great to have. So, and I should add that I arranged Vicky to come on about a year ago and I've been so disorganized and various things coming , but I've only just got round to do it, so that's fine.

So thank you for your patience. I've always got time to talk bugs. No problem. Brilliant. Okay, well that's it for me guys. Please do go and email your MP if you can. It'd be much appreciated and we can make a difference that way. So see you next.