

# The Challenges and Opportunities of Climate Change

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We are in the middle of both an ecological and climatic crisis. The two are intrinsically linked and we cannot solve one without solving the other. The need for action has never been clearer and climate change is set to be one of the biggest challenges facing nature globally.

Climate change brings many challenges to conservation but also brings some opportunities too. Our area may no longer be suitable for some species if we do not put measures in place to help support them. There are ways in which we can help to mitigate these effects, these are discussed in the following cases studies. Allowing species to move through the landscape is essential, meaning that although still of vital importance, we need to think beyond nature reserves. Climate change will bring new species to the area, this in itself has its benefits and problems. Our area may become important for new species and some areas of our fauna and flora will become more biodiverse. On the other hand, climate change is likely to bring new challenges in the form of invasive species that may negatively influence other species and agriculture.

Due to climate change, people are opening their eyes to the challenges affecting our wildlife. This allows us to engage with new people and encourage them to be more environmentally friendly. Nature-based solutions are essential for climate change mitigation. We must therefore use nature as an ally in our efforts to fight climate change by building a nature recovery network for the good of nature and people. This will involve not only looking after the habitats and species we have but allow nature to recover too. The increased reliance on fossil fuels needs to be tackled by nature-based solutions which can work alongside switching to more renewable sources of energy.

## Water Works

The Water Works project is piloting, through field-scale trials a new, sustainable system of farming. Wet farming, also known as paludiculture is now taking place at the Great Fen. This system has the potential to change the face of farming in the Fens, whilst protecting peat soils, locking in carbon, supporting wildlife, and creating new economic opportunities for farmers, growers and producers, providing a model for similar initiatives worldwide. The project is managed by a partnership between the Wildlife Trust BCN, Cambridgeshire ACRE, UK Centre For Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) and the University of East London. It is funded by a grant awarded in 2019 by the People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund. Working with climate change experts at UKCEH, Water Works is also producing the site-specific data to demonstrate the high levels of carbon sequestration that can result from this type of land management.



Find out more  
[greatfen.org.uk](https://greatfen.org.uk)



One of the most damaging effects of climate change is not the average weather conditions, but the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Local actions to restore ecosystem complexity and structure can have a profound effect and increase species' resilience to these events. Our work on nature reserves and the wider countryside acts as an essential buffer to mitigate these effects. A key challenge that we face is that we do not yet know how species and ecosystems will be affected by climate change, therefore we need to be proactive in our approach to tackling this problem.