



Rewilding our World

Global Perspectives, Local Actions

Keynote Speakers



STORK SISTER
**PURNIMA
DEVI BARMAN**

UN CHAMPION
OF THE EARTH



ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE
**SULAIMAN
TAMEER**

WORLDWIDE VETS
GOLDEN STAR
AWARD



BIOLOGIST
**FRANS
VERA**

REWILDING PIONEER
AND VISIONARY



FARMER-TURNED-REWILDER
**DEREK
GOW**

UK
REWILDING CHAMPION

Programme

Saturday, 20 September 2025

9.30	Welcome & Opening Remarks Opening ceremony by Chair: Michele Robson Marc Wilbers Dr. Purnima Devi Barman	1. Video messages 2. Introduction of the Global Rewilding Manifesto
9.45	Opening act and warm-up by stand-up comedian Rogier Bak	

10.00	<p>Community-Centred Conservation and Rewilding</p> <p>Dr. Purnima Devi Barman <i>UN Champion of the Earth, Hargila Army, Assam, India & Director of Species Restoration & Community Climate Education, Rewilding Academy</i></p>	<p>Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist from Assam, India, founded the Hargila Army, mobilizing 20,000+ women to protect the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork. A Whitley Gold Award winner, she has quadrupled the stork population in Assam and earned global acclaim, including the UN Champions of the Earth Award, is one of Times Women of the year 2025, is a TEDx speaker and was featured by National Geographic.</p>
10.30	<p>Legacy of Conservation and Rewilding</p> <p>Sir Humphry Wakefield <i>2nd Baronet, FRGS Wilderness Pioneer & Heritage Rewilder</i></p>	<p>Sir Humphry Wakefield, custodian of Chillingham Castle and its iconic wild cattle, has long championed conservation and rewilding. He co-founded the Wilderness Foundation with Dr. Ian Player and Laurens van der Post, later leading land restoration initiatives in North Africa. A trustee of the Chillingham Wild Cattle Association and director of the Tree of Life Foundation, he integrates heritage, forestry, and philanthropy with global conservation leadership, reflecting a lifelong commitment to restoring wild nature and ecological resilience.</p>
11.00	Morning Coffee / Tea Break	
11.20	<p>Rewilding: My experience with Oostvaardersplassen en the role of loss of aversion</p> <p>Dr. Frans Vera <i>Biologist and Conservation Specialist, Pioneer in rewilding in the Netherlands</i></p>	<p>Frans Vera is a Dutch biologist and founding father of rewilding in the Netherlands, known for the “wood-pasture hypothesis,” which challenges traditional views of European primeval landscapes. His influential work at Oostvaardersplassen and key publications shaped rewilding strategies and conservation practices. Vera has also led the restoration of rivers and floodplains through the Stork Plan (Plan Ooievaar), reintroducing natural dynamics to restore biodiversity and enhance ecological resilience in Dutch river landscapes.</p>
12.05	<p>Rewilding & Reintroduction</p> <p>Derek Gow <i>Conservationist, farmer, and author, Devon, United Kingdom</i></p>	<p>Derek Gow is a British conservationist, farmer, and author, renowned for his work in species reintroduction and rewilding. He has successfully restored species like beavers, white storks, and wildcats to the UK, turning his Devon farm into a model for rewilding with native species. Gow has authored Bringing Back the Beaver and Hunt for the Shadow Wolf, advocating for the reintroduction of apex predators like wolves. His pioneering work in conservation aims to reverse biodiversity loss</p>

		and reshape Britain's natural landscapes through bold, transformative projects.
12.50	Q&A session, moderation by Conference Chair: Michele Robson	Speakers: Purnima Devi Barman, Sir Humphry Wakefield, Frans Vera, Derek Gow
13.00	Buffet & Networking Lunch	
14.00	Wildlife Rescue and Rewilding Dr. Sulaiman Tameer <i>Wildlife Veterinarian & Rescue Specialist, Kurdistan Organisation for Animal Rights Protection, Iraq</i>	Sulaiman Tameer, an award-winning wildlife veterinarian from Kurdistan, Iraq, is a pioneer in animal rights and conservation. Founder of the Kurdistan Organization for Animal Rights Protection, he authored Iraq's first animal rights law and leads wildlife rescue and rehab efforts, inspiring regional action for animal welfare and conservation. Featured in many documentaries, Sulaiman was also host to an episode of the famous Dutch tv-series " Floortje gaat mee ", with Floortje Dessing and photographer Jasper Doest.
14.30	From past to future: Unlocking the potential of the palaeoecological record for nature restoration challenges Prof. Danielle Schreve <i>Palaeoecologist and Biogeographer, University of Bristol</i>	With a background in physical geography, palaeontology, and archaeology, Danielle Schreve has developed a model for understanding climate and environmental changes in north-west Europe over the last 500,000 years, widely adopted in various scientific fields. Her research focuses on mammalian responses to abrupt climate change and long-term faunal history, and is increasingly linked to conservation initiatives like rewilding and natural resource management. Additionally, Danielle explores societal responses to climate change through collaborations in the GeoHumanities with artists and performance makers.
15.00	Social acceptance of rewilding with large herbivores Dr. ir. Susanne Vogel <i>Interdisciplinary Conservation Scientist, Open University</i> The importance of large herbivores for biodiversity conservation	Susanne Vogel is an assistant professor in socio-ecological modeling at the Open University, specialising in human-wildlife interactions. She integrates ecology and social science to study coexistence between people and large herbivores, particularly African elephants, and works with NGOs and communities on conflict mitigation and coexistence strategies.

	Szymon Czyżewski M.Sc. <i>Ecologist</i>	Szymon Czyżewski is a PhD researcher at Aarhus University's Center for Novel Ecosystem Dynamics. His work explores the role of large herbivores in shaping vegetation and biodiversity, aiming to define a pre-Homo sapiens baseline for European forests. He promotes trophic rewilding in Poland and supports local NGOs in creating rewilding reserves.
15.40	Refuel & Refresh - Tea & Refreshments Break	
16.30	The European Wildcat in Germany Stefanie Huck <i>Wildlife keeper and Chief Animal Caretaker</i>	Stefanie Huck is Chief Animal Caretaker at Retscheider Hof e.V., specialising in the rescue, rehabilitation, and reintroduction of polecats and wildcats. Alongside her hands-on conservation work, she leads nationwide monitoring and research to support the long-term survival of these carnivores.
17.00	Wild Horses, Wild Landscapes Lucy Rees <i>Ethologist, Pioneer of Equine Ethology and Rewilding</i>	Lucy Rees, Welsh ethologist and horse trainer, is renowned for her pioneering studies of wild and feral horses. Through the Pottokas en Piornal project in Spain, she demonstrates how free-roaming ponies shape landscapes and social bonds, advancing understanding of equine behavior while contributing to conservation, rewilding, and ecosystem restoration.
17.30	Panel Discussion Trailblazers in Rewilding, From Vision to Action	Panel: Purnima Devi Barman, Derek Gow, Danielle Schreve, Frans Vera, Leo Linnartz Meet the pioneers pushing the boundaries of nature recovery. This panel brings together leading voices in rewilding to share bold ideas, practical lessons, and fresh visions for restoring ecosystems and reconnecting people with the wild.
18.00	Conference Dinner Gathering	Join us for an evening of seasonal, locally inspired dishes and great conversation. This dinner is a moment to relax, celebrate the day's insights, and connect with fellow rewilders.

20.00



Film Screening: Kees' Backyard – A Year on the Veluwe through the Eyes of a Naturalist

Q&A:
Kees Ravensbergen, Filmmaker
Marcel Everts

In this film, viewers follow Kees Ravensbergen through the 'backyard' of the Netherlands—the Veluwe. Filmmaker Marcel Everts, inspired by Kees' lifetime of unique wildlife footage, creates a journey through the seasons, capturing everything from large game to returning species and intimate natural moments across this remarkable landscape.

Sunday, 21 September 2025

9.00	Day 2 - Welcome & Opening Remarks	Michele, Marc
9:10	Rewilding human dominated landscapes Prof. Liesbeth Bakker Professor in Rewilding Ecology	Liesbeth Bakker a wetland and wildlife ecologist studying how wildlife shapes biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, and landscapes under global change. She is a senior scientist at NIOO-KNAW and the first professor of Rewilding Ecology at Wageningen University. Her work bridges science and practice to advance rewilding and restoration ecology.
9:40	Global rewilding as a beacon of hope Alister Scott Executive director of the Global Rewilding Alliance	Alister Scott is the Executive Director of the Global Rewilding Alliance , a worldwide organisation dedicated to mainstreaming rewilding in science, policy, and practice globally by 2030. It serves as an umbrella body, supporting over 250 partner organizations across every continent that are actively restoring ecosystems and reintroducing species
10.00	Megafauna and rewilding Leo Linnartz <i>Ecologist and Conservation Specialist</i>	Leo Linnartz is a Dutch ecologist specialising in landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, and rewilding. He has led and contributed to numerous European habitat restoration projects, combining ecological research with practical land management. His work focuses on large herbivores and their role in ecosystem resilience, while promoting the integration of ecological science into policy and global nature recovery efforts.
10.30	Morning Coffee / Tea Break	
10.45	Rewilding the implementation of Conservation policy: experiences from the Netherlands. Prof. Dr. Ir. Raoul Beunen Environmental Governance Expert	Prof. Raoul Beunen, professor of Environmental Governance at the Open University, specializes in sustainability transitions and biodiversity policy. He champions nature conservation, offering expertise on governance, nitrogen challenges, and biodiversity enhancement. With extensive experience in policy development, he also contributes to shaping strategies for effective environmental governance and nature

		restoration at local, national, and international levels.
11.15	<p>Agriwilding: Food forests & Agroforestry</p> <p>Wouter van Eck <i>Food forest pioneer, farmer, expert</i></p> <p>Dr. Euridice Leyequien <i>Professor Forested Landscapes</i></p>	<p>Wouter van Eck is a pioneer of the Dutch food forest movement and co-founder of Food Forest Ketelbroek, the country's best-known example. As chair of Stichting Voedselbosbouw Nederland, he helps farmers shift to regenerative practices, combining deep botanical knowledge with decades of activism.</p> <p>Eurídice Leyequién is a researcher and advisor with over 20 years of experience in agroforestry and climate-smart ecosystem management. She bridges science, policy, and practice to promote sustainable livelihoods and nature restoration in forested and delta landscapes.</p>
12:15	Q&A session, moderation by Conference Chair: Michele Robson	Speakers: Liesbeth Bakker, Alister Scot, Leo Linnartz, Raoul Beunen, Wouter van Eck, Euridice Leyequien
12.30	Buffet & Networking Lunch	
13:30	<p>Rewilding, a Climate Strategy</p> <p>Reinier van den Berg <i>Meteorologist, climate change expert, former RTL4 weather host, the Netherlands</i></p>	Reinier van den Berg is a Dutch meteorologist, environmental advocate, and former RTL4 weather presenter. Passionate about nature and sustainability, van den Berg has actively engaged in climate research, including expeditions to Greenland. As Rewilding Academy's ambassador, he promotes rewilding as a powerful, nature-based solution to climate challenges, fostering resilience for people and the planet.
14.00	<p>Rewilding from a butterfly perspective</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Michiel Wallis de Vries <i>Insect Conservation Expert</i></p>	Prof. Dr. Michiel Wallis de Vries is an emeritus professor in Insect Ecology at Wageningen University and has worked for over 25 years in butterfly conservation at De Vlinderstichting. His research focuses on biodiversity impacts of global change and land management, with rewilding emerging as a promising strategy for insect recovery.
14.30	<p>Brown Bears and Rewilding</p> <p>Bernd Nonnenmacher <i>General Manager Foundation For Bears</i></p>	Bernd Nonnenmacher, Managing Director of the Alternative Bear Park Worbis, transitioned from international business consultancy to wildlife conservation, driven by a lifelong passion for bears, wolves, and lynxes. He has overseen the rescue of 16 bears, 16 wolves, and 6 lynxes, advocating for animal welfare and ecosystem restoration. Bernd believes in cross-border

		collaboration to create lasting change for both wildlife and people.
15.00	Chemical Pollution and Rewilding Walter Schrader Physician, General Practitioner	Walter Schrader's talk explores how chemical pollution hinders rewilding efforts. Half a century after Europe's first major conservation campaign, new threats loom: PFAS and other chemicals accumulate through food chains, harming species from great tits to blue whales. These "forever chemicals" endanger top predators, undermining rewilding efforts and linking ecosystem health directly to human health.
15.20	Weaving Livelihoods and Landscapes: Rural Women in Conservation Economies Dr. Purnima Devi Barman <i>UN Champion of the Earth, Hargila Army, Assam, India & Director of Species Restoration & Community Climate Education, Rewilding Academy</i>	Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist from Assam, India, founded the Hargila Army, mobilizing 20,000+ women to protect the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork. A Whitley Gold Award winner, she has quadrupled the stork population in Assam and earned global acclaim, including the UN Champions of the Earth Award , is one of Times Women of the year 2025 , is a TEDx speaker and was featured by National Geographic.
15:40	The Ultimate Global View: Delivering Local Action Rob Spurrett CEO Lacuna Space	Rob Spurrett MBE FREng is a space engineer and entrepreneur with over 40 years' experience in technology and business development for the space sector. He co-founded Lacuna Space, headquartered in Harwell (UK) with offices in the Netherlands, which delivers low-power, direct-to-orbit IoT connectivity via a growing satellite constellation. Their work supports smart agriculture, environmental monitoring, wildlife tracking, and other off-grid applications.
16.00	Refuel & Refresh - Tea & Refreshments Break	
16.15	The Role of Scavengers in Rewilding Hans Pohlmann <i>President of the Vulture Conservation Foundation</i>	Hans Pohlmann is president of the Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF), where he leads efforts to restore Europe's vulture species, including the Bearded Vulture's return to the Alps. He is also Director of Conservation at Stichting Landschap Overijssel, managing 64 nature reserves. With a background in Spatial Planning, consultancy, and a passion for birding, he brings wide-ranging expertise to landscape and wildlife conservation.
16.35	Panel Discussion From Crisis to Regeneration – Nature-Based Solutions for a Shared Future	Panel: Leo Linnartz, Raoul Beunen, Wouter van Eck, Liesbeth Bakker, Alister Scott? This panel addresses the urgent overlap of the biodiversity, climate, and nitrogen crises in the Netherlands. Through rewilding, agriwilding, and systemic change, the discussion will explore practical, nature-based solutions that restore

		ecosystems, support rural livelihoods, and foster long-term resilience.
17.00	A predator is back in Holland Marc Wilbers <i>Forest Ranger & Education Director, Rewilding Academy</i>	Marc Wilbers is a forest ranger and dedicated naturalist specializing in wolf behaviour and bison reintroduction. With a lifelong passion for nature, he has a deep understanding of ecosystem interactions. Marc has played a key role in awareness raising after the wolf's return to the Netherlands, organizing lectures, tours, and media contributions to educate the public on wildlife conservation.
17:20	Presentation of the Global Manifesto for Rewilding and the Rights of Life (Rewilding Manifesto)	Launch of the Global Rewilding Manifesto, uniting scientists, Indigenous peoples, policymakers, and communities. Explore how recognizing the Rights of Nature, restoring ecosystems, and rewilding landscapes can foster biodiversity, climate resilience, ecological justice, and intergenerational responsibility, guiding humanity toward coexistence with the living Earth.
17:35	Rewilding our World: Closing Remarks	Marc Wilbers <i>Forest Ranger & Education Director, Rewilding Academy</i>