



## **20x20 Vision for walking in 2040 from Nick Hunt - Transcript**

My name is Nick Hunt. I'm calling from Bristol in Southwest England where I am currently walking my dog in the rain. I am the author of several books about walking in different parts of Europe. The first of which details an eight month walk from the Hook of Holland to Istanbul in the footsteps of Patrick Leigh Fermor. I went on to follow the pathways of four of Europe's winds in different parts of the continent and then to track feral parakeets that have taken over large parts of London. The book I have been working on most recently: "Outlandish" - which is being published in May 2021 - is a series of walks into what I'm calling the 'unlikely landscapes of Europe'. Some are journeys into imagination I suppose, as much as across physical terrain. I've also been writing a novel this year, which hasn't involved much walking, obviously, it's been quite sedentary, as it has for many people across the world. But this novel in a sense involves re-walking landscapes and places I visited 10 or 20 years ago so mentally I have been retreading old ground

### **My vision for 2040**

Well, we can't be still be driving cars. That can't be happening. My vision for 2040 involves fewer cars. We can't still be building roads, slicing through habitats, ecosystems, and environments separating animal populations and human populations and presenting impassable barriers for the walker as I found time and time again on my walks in different parts of Europe. So my vision for the future involves fewer roads and this isn't just a dream, right, this is a necessity, an ecological imperative.

There is a resurgence of interest in, interestingly, the idea of pilgrimage not necessarily for religious reasons. In my future, there is an extended network of pilgrimage trails or long-distance walking trails connecting culture to culture. I think that would be a wonderful thing. At the moment there is an interesting campaign here in the UK that calls for an extension of the Right to Roam, linked to the Rights of Way and Countryside Act that was passed 20 years ago. Currently in England and Wales, we have the right to walk across 8% of our land and this campaign is calling for what they enjoy in Scotland and Scandinavia that is the right to roam over all of the land. Accompanying responsibilities including teaching people to respect what are the wild places and the countryside and not to ruin it. And I think this really benefits people and nature, because nobody is going to be wanting to protect forest or mountains or other areas of wildness unless they have been to those places, unless they've seen their beauty with their own eyes and felt the wildness in their hearts. So 2040, I'd like to think that we will have far greater access to land and that for people there will be not so much a barrier between the city and the countryside. That's not to say that the countryside is



not protected it is just to say that people will be able to experience it and act on its behalf. Fewer roads, fewer cars, more walking trails; maybe just a kind of, a sort of greater simplicity. There's always this tendency to think of the future as full of machines and speed, but I think our current trajectory is teaching us that machines are leading us to one place and that is off the cliff. So I would like to think that rather than falling off a cliff in 2040. We are, rather, on a rocky trail going down the edge of the cliff, picking our way over the rocks carefully, still descending but not head long for a messy ending on the rocks below, instead we are making our way slowly, carefully and we are doing it on two feet.