

Registration number: 07474287

Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Limited

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Hepworth Griffiths
Chartered Accountants
47/49 Grove Street
Retford
Nottinghamshire
DN22 6LA

Chartered Accountants' Independent examination report to the Board of Directors of Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Limited

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 4 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

examine the accounts under section 145 to the 2011 Act;

follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and

state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and

to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

John A Hepworth ACA
Hepworth Griffiths
Chartered Accountants
47/49 Grove Street
Retford
Nottinghamshire
DN22 6LA

03 August 2024

Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Limited
(Registration number: 07474287)
Balance Sheet at 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	437,159	437,159
Other financial assets	6,203	6,203
	<u>443,362</u>	<u>443,362</u>
Current assets		
Debtors	46,297	-
Cash at bank and in hand	150,141	178,623
	196,438	178,623
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	<u>(30,780)</u>	<u>(16,196)</u>
Net current assets	<u>165,658</u>	<u>162,427</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	609,020	605,789
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	<u>(100,385)</u>	<u>(111,303)</u>
Net assets	<u><u>508,635</u></u>	<u><u>494,486</u></u>
 Capital and reserves		
Other reserves	-	21,963
Profit and loss account	<u>508,635</u>	<u>472,523</u>
Total equity	<u><u>508,635</u></u>	<u><u>494,486</u></u>

Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Limited
Profit and Loss Account
For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Turnover (analysed below)		183,947		176,229
Cost of sales - Spurn shop		<u>(3,139)</u>		<u>(3,257)</u>
Gross profit		<u>180,808</u>		<u>172,972</u>
Gross profit (%)		98.29%		98.15%
Administrative expenses				
Employment costs (analysed below)	(65,854)		(59,591)	
Establishment costs (analysed below)	(35,612)		(18,480)	
Administrative expenses (analysed below)	(38,295)		(28,428)	
Finance charges	<u>(148)</u>		<u>(198)</u>	
		(139,909)		(106,697)
Income from fixed assets investments (CAF)		-		-
Bank interest receivable		2,094		232
Loan interest		(6,881)		(4,608)
Profit before taxation		<u><u>36,112</u></u>		<u><u>61,899</u></u>

Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Limited
Profit and Loss Account
For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Turnover		
Caravan pitches	23,946	23,200
Accommodation fees	25,214	22,808
Donation's recived	83,442	66,180
Friends of Spurn subscriptions	26,775	28,370
Radio donation and rent	1,855	2,057
Tax refunds	6,498	7,253
Spurn science income	3,114	9,167
Spurn shop income, reports/books	5,424	5,872
Rent from Warden	5,100	4,550
Other income	2,579	1,438
Grants and subsidies receivable	-	5,334
	<u>183,947</u>	<u>176,229</u>
 Employment costs		
Wages and salaries	<u>65,854</u>	<u>59,591</u>
 Establishment costs		
Rates	1,398	1,409
Light,heat and power	15,540	9,493
Insurance	1,343	1,448
Repairs and maintenance	7,670	3,334
Site maintenance	9,661	2,796
	<u>35,612</u>	<u>18,480</u>
 Administrative expenses		
Telephone and fax	1,005	1,069
Domestic supplies and services	311	245
Guided walks and events	8,884	4,885
Fundraising expenses BBQ	461	464
Rings and ringing equipment	4,490	2,104
Bird food	748	381
Printing, postage and stationery	16,595	15,697
Trade subscriptions	249	249
Sundry expenses	4,518	2,324
Motor expenses	1,034	710
Legal and professional fees	-	300
	<u>38,295</u>	<u>28,428</u>



SPURN BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST LTD
Charity Registration No. 1141408

Annual Report 2023

This is the twelfth annual report of the Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Ltd ('the bird observatory').

The bird observatory draws on a history of operation at Spurn since 1945 when it was the third in the UK and the first on the UK mainland.

We acknowledge the inspiring, foundational work of two pioneering birders in the 1940s, our co-founders Ralph Chislett and George H. Ainsworth. The Trust registered as a charitable company with Companies House and as a charity with the Charities Commission on 20 December 2010. The bird observatory is an accredited member of the Bird Observatories Council as it meets specified criteria relating to activities and facilities for the long-term monitoring of bird populations and migration.

Aims and objectives of the Trust

For the advancement of the education of the public by:

the long-term monitoring of bird populations their distribution and migration; the study and recording of objects of ornithological, botanical, entomological, zoological, geological, archaeological, historical or scientific interest in the Area of Benefit and other surrounding areas as may from time to time be considered reasonable and appropriate; and disseminating the useful results from such research for the benefit of the community by the conservation of wildlife and the encouragement of the breeding of wild birds, animals and insects in the Area of Benefit and its environs.

The **Area of Benefit** is the area of the Spurn Peninsula, including Kilnsea and Easington, in the East Riding in the county of Yorkshire.

Administration

The bird observatory is administered by a board of directors who are assisted by a voluntary, co-opted management committee of nine further individuals. The directors and management committee met three times during the year. Copies of the minutes of the meetings are displayed in the common room of the bird observatory building for reference by any interested party. Key items from the minutes are included in the bird observatory monthly newsletter as appropriate. The Trust employs a full-time warden and full-time operations manager to carry out and oversee the daily activities of the charity in pursuit of its aims. In 2023, three seasonal wardens were also employed to conduct the Little Tern protection scheme and were assisted by a team of volunteers.

We remain grateful for the support of our ambassador, the multi award winning author and naturalist, Mark Cocker.

The bird observatory operates self-catering residential accommodation in a converted four-bedroom property in the village of Kilnsea. The premises can accommodate up to 13 visitors, available at a modest charge to any visiting naturalist or other individual who is prepared to support the aims of the Trust.

A small bungalow owned by the Trust that provides residential accommodation for the warden and observatory manager, was replaced in 2023. A new, better-insulated and more energy-efficient building replaced the bungalow on the same footprint. This has reduced our overall environmental impact. Thanks to financial support from members, as well as a grant from East Riding Council, the building includes solar panels and battery storage. The new energy performance certificate is A-rated, which is exceptionally rare for a new building.

The observatory owns a certificated caravan site, sited next door to the warden's premises. This provides pitches for up to five touring caravans. The pitches are available for rent to anyone who wishes to experience and enjoy the local area. Three permanent caravan pitches are available for long-term let at the rear of the bird observatory building. A further five pitches for long-term let are located at Sykes Field.

Review of the year

2023 was another successful year for the charity. Within our defined recording area of Spurn, we recorded 267 bird species. The highlights included Dartford Warbler, Upland Sandpiper and Black-throated Thrush as new species for the recording area. Other notable rarities included the second American Wigeon, the third Ring-necked Duck, the fourth Red-eyed Vireo, trapped and ringed at the Warren, a showy late spring Great Snipe, three Red-flanked Bluetail, one or two Pacific Golden Plover, American Golden Plover, Kentish Plover, three Alpine Swifts, two Coue's Arctic Redpolls and a Pallid Harrier.

It was yet again a productive year for scarce birds. For example, with sightings of Woodlark, Nightjar, Hen Harrier and Red-backed Shrike. Good numbers of Waxwings were seen in the last two months of the year. There were record counts of Bee-eater (12 in May), Glossy Ibis (three in October) and Cetti's Warbler (eight in September); with the increase of these three southerly species seemingly indicative of a warming UK climate.

The Friendship Agreement between Spurn Bird Observatory, Cape May Bird Observatory (USA), Falsterbo Bird Observatory (Sweden) and Long Point Bird Observatory (Canada) entered its eighth year in 2023. The partnership continued, including regular Skype meetings were held throughout the year involving the heads of each observatory to share experiences and insights.

The Easington Little Tern Protection Scheme ran for the 23rd consecutive year. The local project, led by the Trust, is a joint partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Environment Agency, Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and South Holderness Countryside Society. See below for further details.

The annual Friends of Spurn barbecue in August and our annual bird migration festival (MigFest) in early September enabled the bird observatory to continue to engage with birders from around the UK. We are very grateful to Friends of Spurn for their ongoing support through their voluntary work and financial support through membership fees. We promoted Spurn Bird Observatory at the Leeds Bird Fair in May 2023. When attending the Global Bird Fair in Rutland in July, we reached some of the 11,500 attendees to explain our work.

Our tenth annual bird migration festival (MigFest) took place on the weekend of 8-10 September 2023. Through this event, the bird observatory engaged with approx. 500 people. Birders, friends and families came to watch birds, talk and learn together. The bird observatory organised opportunities or inspiring seminars and lectures, guided walks and bird ringing demonstrations. Visitors also had opportunities to purchase books, magazines and artwork from visiting stall holders. At MigFest, we also conducted our annual Martin Garner Young Birder of the Year competition in partnership with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

We are very grateful to the owners of Sandy Beaches caravan park for providing an excellent venue for MigFest event. The festival included a series of fantastic lectures, such as keynote talks from Stephen Menzie about bird moult and from Sacha Dench about flying with Bewick's Swans on migration. There were approximately 100 volunteers who contributed their time, helping to again make MigFest a great success. Paul Willoughby oversaw the organisation and operation of MigFest 2023. The arrangements for food at MigFest again benefited from the efforts of Pat Degnan and Andrea Vaughan and their coordination of the work of many others.

The directors and committee of the Trust wish to record thanks to the warden Paul Collins and operations manager Rob Hunton, for their work to ensure the smooth working of the bird observatory during 2023. The ten seasonal and many other volunteers have also made many helpful contributions to our charitable work throughout the year, for example assisting with habitat management, bird recording, visitor liaison and the operation of MigFest. The directors and committee of the Trust are particularly grateful for many voluntary contributions to the work of the bird observatory during the year from local residents. These include Richard Boon, Steve & Pam Exley, Ian & Sharon Smith, Jacob Spinks and Paul J & Thomas Willoughby.

This directors and committee of the Trust wish also to acknowledge the contributions of many sponsors and supporters of the bird observatory in 2023, including British Birds Charitable Trust, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Opticron, Rare Bird Alert, Swarovski Optic, The Phil Ridsdale Sheffield Bird Study Group Young Birder's Memorial Bursary and Yorkshire Coast Nature. The support of these organisations has, for example, enabled the charity to increase engagement with young people to support and develop their interest in birds and natural history.

A summary of how our activities have fulfilled our aim of providing public benefit now follows.

Benefit to the Public

1. Advancement of education:

The bird observatory provides inexpensive self-catering accommodation for rental by individuals, or groups, in support of their own research or so they can participate in the long-term studies of the Trust.

Staff and volunteers conduct a daily census of resident and migrating birds. All records are provided to the BTO and YWT as well as being made available to any bona fide researcher. The daily bird log, which continues to be enhanced by our systematic counts along Spurn Point, is inputted into an excel spreadsheet and fed directly into the BTO BirdTrack database. A daily list of individual species counts is also entered on the international bird migration Trektellen website. Monthly counts of birds using the Humber estuary were also carried out under the auspices of the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), a national initiative supported by the major conservation and research bodies in the United Kingdom: the BTO, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, RSPB and Natural England. Counts are conducted at both high and low tide in order to increase our understanding of the way in which the Humber estuary is used by wading birds and wildfowl. The Trust again assisted the Humber Wader Ringing Group in its long-term study of wading birds on the Humber estuary. Target species are Redshank, Curlew and Bar-tailed Godwit which are being colour-ringed with the aim of monitoring their movements within the estuary.

An annual breeding bird survey was again conducted, using the BTO's guidelines for their breeding bird census. For the fifth consecutive year the breeding bird survey included the whole recording area, rather than the 'old observatory' area. This allows us to establish the true status of breeding birds in our area and feeds into our conservation work. A total of 59 species were confirmed as breeding in the recording area in 2023.

Birders come to Spurn to witness bird migration, as well as to observe scarce and rare birds. In support of this activity in 2023, staff and volunteers continued to actively share bird news via our registered two-way radio system, frequently update the bird observatory's social media feed on x (approx. 425 followers) and WhatsApp groups, update a sightings screen at the bird observatory hub and post a daily summary of bird sightings on our webpage.

All of our historical records from the 1940s onwards are stored at the East Yorkshire Archives at the Treasure House in Beverley. The catalogued information includes all the annual written bird logs and ringing and recovery data from 1945, together with notebooks, photographs and a range of typical administrative material. The focus is on birds, but there is also a wealth of additional material on lepidoptera. The information is stored there under proper climatic care and security, to national standards. The catalogue being linked to the National Archives at Kew.

Due to the protection programme, 58 pairs of Little Tern bred this year, fledging 107 chicks – a record year. The first successful breeding of Little Ringed Plover occurred, with a pair fledging at least two young.

The bird observatory ringed 6,563 birds of 99 species in 2023. This activity remains an integral part of our work as a bird observatory, undertaken within the national scheme which is licensed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and co-ordinated by the BTO. Our work provides data that contributes towards the conservation policies of such bodies as Natural England. Data on recoveries of ringed species added further to our knowledge of bird migration.

The bird observatory again provided a programme of regular walks (led by employees and volunteers) for visitors during the spring and autumn. These events coincided with public bird ringing demonstrations when weather conditions were

suitable. Once again, the walks were well attended and appreciated by beginners and experienced naturalists alike.

After birds, our second most important area of study is *Lepidoptera* (butterflies and moths). Three mercury vapour traps were operated by the observatory this year. Traps in Church Field and Kew Villa were in use from March to November, with one in the bird observatory garden run sporadically throughout the season. A total of 24 species of butterfly were recorded at Spurn in 2023. Highlights included excellent numbers of Meadow Brown, Comma and Speckled Wood, whilst Peacock also made somewhat of a recovery following a number of poor years. There were 21 new moth species for the area this year.

Dragonflies recorded in 2023 included the third records of both Norfolk Hawker and Lesser Emperor, as well as the first Red-veined Darter for two years. It was a record year for sightings of Broad-bodied Chaser.

A total of 19 species of mammal were recorded in 2023. The highlight being the discovery of a Pine Marten hunting rabbit at the Point, followed by a series of further sightings of this fabulous mammal across the recording area in April and May.

The observatory science and research sub-committee continued its work to continue standardised counts in the recording area. Bird ringing continues as does the collating of data from seawatching, wildfowl counts and visual migration watches. The observatory continues to contribute to colour-ringing and tagging projects: four Twite were ringed with unique combinations of colour rings for *The Twite Network*. The study of breeding Little Terns included pulli fitted with a uniquely coded larger plastic ring (a darvic ring), along with the standard BTO ring. The sub-committee continues to oversee discounted researcher rates for staying in the observatory. Grants are made available to researchers, academic or otherwise, to apply for funding from the bird observatory to support research costs as well as travel, accommodation and food.

The bird observatory continues to participate in an international research network that uses coordinated automated radio telemetry to facilitate research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory birds. We continue to operate a Motus receiver at Spurn. Using the Motus receiver, it is possible to get 'hits' (records) of birds with tags in the area, tagged elsewhere. Mostly this acts as a receiver of information from birds tagged on the continent where tagging is carried out more frequently than here in the UK.

The International Young Persons Exchange between Spurn Bird Observatory, Cape May Bird Observatory, Long Point Bird Observatory and Falsterbo Bird Observatory in 2023 continued. Two birders from Spurn visited Long Point. The programme allows young people to: (i) develop new skills and experience the work of overseas observatories (ii) contribute to the work of the host observatory (iii) increase awareness of key international bird migration and conservation studies.

2. Conservation of wildlife:

The Easington Little Tern Protection Scheme at Beacon Ponds was managed by the Trust for the 23rd consecutive year. A warden was employed thanks to external funding and they were assisted by several volunteers in order to give 24-hour coverage. The bird observatory is grateful to Richard Boon for coordinating this work.

Management of our land at Church Field, Corner Field and Sykes Field continued and was enhanced further for birds, bees and insects, dragonflies, moths and butterflies. The previous acquisition by the bird observatory of two hay meadows named as Schipper's Field resulted in carefully planned habitat management work, such as the planting of 300 trees by a volunteer work party.

The wardens and volunteers continue to liaise with the other land owners as Spurn, in particular the YWT, Westmere Farm and Sandy Beaches caravan park in pursuit of our aims and objectives. We are grateful to both organisations for access to their land.

In 2023, the bird observatory signed a long-term lease agreement with South Holderness Countryside Society (SHCS) for the land that SHCS owns at Beacon Lagoons Nature Reserve. This will make running the Little Tern project a little easier for the bird observatory in its liaison with Natural England and Environment Agency when consents are required, but nothing else is planned to change, with access still being restricted.

Also see the 'Advancement of Education', section re the conservation work being carried out by the Science and Research Sub-committee.

A full summary of our records and activities can be found in our annual publication: *Spurn Wildlife 2023*

Directors

Rob Adams

Tim Jones

Tony Hull (until 21 December 2023)

Sarah Harris

Directors of the Trust are recruited by the charity from keen birders who contribute to the voluntary work of the bird observatory. They have specific expertise to help guide the ongoing work of the charity in pursuit of its stated aims and objectives.

Management Committee

Marcus Brew

Paul Collins (warden)

Rob Hunton (observatory manager)

Gareth Picton (treasurer)

Kieran Lawrence

Ollie Metcalfe

Pete Short

Graham J Speight

Tim Vaughan (secretary)

Nick P Whitehouse

Science and research sub-committee

Daniel Wade

Richard Boon

Adam Hutt

Marcus Brew

Paul Collins (warden)

Rob Hunton (observatory manager)

Sarah Harris
Kieran Lawrence
Tim Jones
Ollie Metcalfe

Staff

Observatory Warden: Paul Collins
Observatory Manager: Rob Hunton
Seasonal Little Tern Wardens: Jacob Spinks, Tom Wright, Harry Coghill.

Publications

Jones, T. (ed): Spurn Wildlife 2023
Roadhouse A (2006) The Birds of Spurn ISBN 978-0-9565571-7-9

Bankers

HSBC Bank plc, 33 St Nicholas Street, Scarborough, YO11 2HN

Solicitors

Burstalls, PO Box 31, Ocean Chambers, 54 Lowgate, Hull, HU 1 1JF
Hamers, 5 Earls Court, Priory Park East, Hull. HU4 7DY

Independent Examiners

Hepworth Griffiths, 47/49 Grove Street, Retford, Notts. DN22 6LA

Insurers

Zurich Insurance plc, The Zurich Centre, 3000 Parkway, Whiteley, Fareham, Hants, PO15 7JZ.
The Caravan Club, East Grinstead House, East Grinstead, RH19 1UA

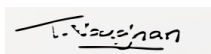
Investments

Charities Aid Foundation, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA

Spurn Bird Observatory Trust Ltd is a registered charity No. 1141408.
Registered Office: Kew Villa, Seaside Road, Kilnsea, Hull HU12 0UB

The directors declare that they have approved the Trust's report above at the Annual General Meeting of 3 August 2024.

Signed on behalf of the charity.



Tim Vaughan
Secretary