ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

England & Wales · Charity number 207076

Details

Other names	R S P B, THE RSPB
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Company number	RC000521
Registered	1962-09-22
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	R S P B The Lodge Potton Road Sandy SG19 2DL
Phone	01767 680551
Email	membership@rspb.org.uk
Website	www.rspb.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 1) TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY:A. CONSERVING WILD BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT ON WHICH THEY DEPEND; B. PROTECTING, RESTORING AND RE-CREATING HABITATS. AND, IN FURTHERANCE OF THAT PRIMARY OBJECTIVE, TO RAISE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SUCH MATTERS. 2) TO ADVANCE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT."

Activities: To promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit by conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend,protecting, restoring and re-creating habitats.To raise public understanding and awareness,and to provide information on,such matters.To advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment

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Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, Animals, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

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Geography

- Anguilla
- Argentina
- Ascension
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Chile
- China
- Cyprus
- Falkland Islands
- Ghana
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Ireland
- Isle Of Man
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Namibia
- Nepal
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Northern Ireland
- Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie And Oeno Islands
- Poland
- Saint Helena
- Scotland
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone

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- South Africa
- Taiwan
- Tristan Da Cunha
- Turks And Caicos Islands
- Zimbabwe
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£194,964,000	£176,791,000	£293,391,000	2486
2024-03-31	£169,877,000	£167,994,000	£263,466,000	2517
2023-03-31	£164,702,000	£164,817,000	£270,314,000	2406
2022-03-31	£157,699,000	£143,112,000	£278,869,000	2231
2021-03-31	£117,865,000	£121,618,000	£236,200,000	2101

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Sir Andrew Thomas Cahn	Chair	2024-10-12
Catherine Thea Dugmore		2024-10-12
Dr Benjamin Lian Caldecott		2022-10-15
Dr Grace Deepa Senapathi		2025-10-04
Emyr Lloyd Williams		2025-10-04
James Nicholas Lowther		2022-10-15
Jane Elizabeth Reeves		2024-10-12
John Kenneth Mason		2021-12-07
Simon Patrick Loftus Butcher		2024-10-22
Stephen Peers Aston		2025-10-04
Susanna Clare Dinnage		2024-10-12
William James Sutherland		2023-01-17

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Linked charities

- EDITH LOUISA HITCHCOCK FOR A BIRD SANCTUARY (207076-1)
- ARTHUR LEIGH BARKER FOR A SANCTUARY FOR WILD LIFE (207076-2)
- DUNGENESS BIRD SANCTUARY (207076-3)
- ENDOWMENT FUND FOR THE FORMER BIRD SANCTUARY KNOWN AS BOWLING ALLEY WOOD (207076-4)
- BISHOP BEQUEST (207076-5)

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ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

England & Wales - Charity number 207076

Accounts

2024–25

Annual report

Restoring nature for wildlife, people and the planet



From restoring habitats to protecting species, everything we do aims to help create a world where wildlife and people can thrive.

Jake Stephen (rspb-images.com)

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The front cover of the report depicts a peatland scene which has been created by illustrator Lucy Davey (**lucydavey.co.uk**). You can read more about the RSPB's work to restore peatland habitats to benefit birds and other wildlife on pages 34–37.

Welcome

Our Chair of Council and Chief Executive reflect on the events of the past year, as we continue our work to protect and restore nature.



I have been so inspired in my first 12 months as Chair of Council, visiting our reserves and meeting our staff and volunteers. Their expertise and enthusiasm, and the science underpinning all our work, is key to protecting and restoring bird species. Truly, the RSPB is an indispensable organisation.

It has been a testing time. The continuing cost of living crisis, a new government in Westminster and a global politics less committed to conservation and net zero, have all set challenges. The Council has had to take some difficult decisions. But I am confident we are in good shape and on the right track.

We undertook a review of our operations to ensure we are using our resources effectively and to strengthen the RSPB's ability to protect and restore nature across its network of reserves. We concluded that whilst we had to make some changes to our reserve operations, we are now better set up for long-term sustainability and to achieve our conservation objectives.

Adding to the land we manage is always exciting. This last year has seen major acquisitions which will be transformational. Thanks to the generosity of donors and supporters we added the final piece of the jigsaw at RSPB Geltsdale in Cumbria, which is now our largest reserve in England. This will become a flagship for what Britain's upland landscapes could look like.

In Essex, we added 100 hectares to RSPB Wallasea Island. Already a ground-breaking project and an extraordinary place for wildlife, the £2.2 million grant – the largest we have ever received from a trust – means we now own the whole island, which we can make an even more welcoming stop-off for migrating birds. It welcomed some 39,000 last winter.

"A big thank you. Your support is vital to our mission, and we could not achieve what we do without you."

And in Wiltshire, we are delighted to be taking over the management of Roundbarrow Farm. Over the coming years we will be transforming this former intensive dairy farm into a chalk grassland and woodland nature reserve, benefiting species such as the Stone-curlew and Chalkhill Blue butterfly.

Our work both at home and abroad has gained international recognition over the past year. For example, we won Prince William's Earthshot Prize in the 'Protect and Restore Nature' category for our work on the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative in Kazakhstan. Using the £1 million award we will be able to scale up our partnership work here to help wildlife, such as Steppe Eagles, across an area roughly the size of Turkey.

And in Scotland, the world's largest swathe of blanket bog, which includes RSPB Forsinard Flows, has been awarded World Heritage Site status. The Flow Country joins other iconic sites, such as the Great Barrier Reef, offering a brighter future for birds such as Greenshanks and Black-throated Divers. Now we need to get the same status for the UK's East Coast Wetlands.

We have also been holding governments to account on everything from farming support policy, to planning law, to nature conservation, and offshore wind infrastructure. Our public policy work is essential to get better decisions for the future of nature in the UK.

But without our members none of this would be possible. A big thank you. Your support is vital to our mission, and we could not achieve what we do without you.



Sir Andrew Cahn
Chair of Council

We live in tumultuous times and the past year has been dominated by global geo-political upheaval. But amidst all the challenges and noise the world faces, I firmly and passionately believe that with civil society organisations like the RSPB and our wonderful members, volunteers and supporters behind us, our wildlife and wild places do have a voice. You can read more about our policy and campaign work on page 24.

Above all, the RSPB offers hope, based on our many years of experience of understanding and reversing the fortunes of species. Hope that the downward trajectory of birds and the decline of landscapes can be bent upwards towards recovery. Every sinew of this organisation is striving for that, as you can read in the many examples brought to life in this *Annual Report*.

In 2021, we said we would measure our progress each year and conduct a fuller review at the midpoint of our 10-year strategy. True to that, we have been busy taking stock of our achievements to date, the new challenges and opportunities we face, and clarifying our direction for the remaining five years to 2030.

Are the outcomes we set ourselves in the midst of the pandemic still right today? Where are we at the RSPB uniquely placed to deliver impact? What can we really deliver with the resource that we have available to us?

We will share the results in the next Annual Report, but our mission remains the same. We want to see a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive. To achieve this we must advance the conservation of birds, wildlife and the natural world, and help end the nature and climate emergency.

We will continue to:

- save our 100 priority species, both in the four countries of the UK and around the world. These are species like the Puffin, Turtle Dove and Curlew, which are most in need of conservation action and where we are uniquely placed at the RSPB to deliver impact.
- transform 25 key landscapes for nature across the UK – delivering conservation at scale both on our own nature reserves, but also through partnerships and within the wider landscape.
- work in unison with our BirdLife International partner organisations to protect and restore species and landscapes around the world – particularly on global flyways for migratory birds and in the UK Overseas Territories.
- tackle the systemic drivers of nature loss, for example by advancing the cause of nature-friendly farming within our food system and tackling the pressures affecting seabirds in the marine environment.
- grow our supporter base to 1.5 million members, because we believe we can only achieve nature's recovery by coming together in our efforts.



"I passionately believe that with organisations like the RSPB and our wonderful members, volunteers and supporters behind us, our wildlife and wild places do have a voice."

To do this we will continue to use all of the skills, experience and perspectives that make this organisation such a unique force in saving nature: working across species, science, policy, places and people.

Together we fly.



Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

About the RSPB

The RSPB is a charity for the conservation of birds and nature. We bring people together who love and want to discover more about birds and other wildlife, and who want to take action to restore the natural world.



We were founded in 1889 by Emily Williamson, Eliza Phillips and Etta Lemon to fight against the fashion for feathers.

Our purpose
Our purpose is to advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature, for public benefit.

We recognise that the health and resilience of individuals, our society and the economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems. We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which we all depend are interconnected.

Our vision
Our vision is a shared world where wildlife, wild places, and all people thrive. We believe we're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species and it has the right to flourish. We believe that the planet is facing a nature and climate emergency and that we have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

How we deliver public benefit
We carry out conservation work that you can see from space, built from the ground up. We are effective because we bring the breadth of our capabilities to bear on the complex challenges facing species and ecosystems. The RSPB's strategy sets out how we meet those challenges to make a difference over the current decade. Find out more in the sections 'Our highlights' (pages 12–65), 'Our impact', (pages 66–77) and 'Looking to the future' (pages 78–79).

Royal Charter
Like many historic not-for-profit institutions, the RSPB was established by Royal Charter, which was originally granted in 1904. Together with the Statutes, the Charter defines the RSPB's purpose and powers, its operating rules and guidelines. As a Royal Charter non-statutory body, the RSPB was subsequently registered as a charity in 1962.

Objects of the RSPB
The objects of the RSPB as set out in its Royal Charter are to:
(1) promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively by:
- conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend;
- protecting, restoring and recreating habitats. This includes raising public understanding and awareness of, and providing information on, such matters.

(2) advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment.

Governance
The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, following the Charity Governance Code. How we apply the Code is described throughout this report, in particular on pages 86-97. By setting and reviewing strategic objectives, the RSPB's Trustees test, refine and account for the performance and delivery of the organisation and plan for new challenges as they emerge. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities.

Patron
His Majesty the King.

A **shared world**
where wildlife, wild places,
and all people **thrive**.



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

We advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world.



David Levenson (rspb-images.com)



Greg McKinney (rspb-images.com)

We protect and restore habitats and landscapes, save species and connect people to nature.



Tom McSherry (rspb-images.com)

Protecting nature for over 130 years

We have a long history of protecting threatened wildlife and wild places, and we are determined to realise a world where nature can thrive alongside people.

What we do

We work locally in the UK and around the world protecting habitats, saving species and addressing the nature and climate emergency. We do this through five main work areas: **science**, **species**, **places**, **people** and **policy**.

We're proud that we can apply our broad capabilities to the many complex challenges facing species and ecosystems to make a positive difference.

Science

Our world-leading research allows us to take a 'bird's-eye view' of the overarching problems facing nature and the planet, and then identify the solutions that make a real difference. We establish the conservation interventions that will have the most impact, and then we monitor and test these actions to measure success.

Species

The survival of wildlife species is the best sign of whether conservation is working. We are an evidence-based conservation organisation working to protect species from a huge variety of threats like habitat loss, decline of food sources, and threats from introduced species.

Places

Nature needs other nature to survive. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and well-connected protected areas for nature on land and at sea. We manage more than 200 nature reserves in the UK from the Shetlands to the Suffolk coast.

People

We're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species – including us. Together with our amazing members, volunteers, supporters and partners, as well as communities, farmers, campaigners, landowners, business leaders and many more, we all work to save nature.

Policy

To save nature, we must tackle the drivers of its decline, and put laws, policies and funding in place to help save it. All too often, political decisions don't consider nature. That's why we've been advocating, campaigning, influencing and successfully securing laws to protect nature for 135 years. Taking action will always be at the heart of what we do at the RSPB.

We **act**,
we **influence**, we **collaborate**,
and we **empower**.

How we do it

We bring people together who love birds and other wildlife, and who want to restore the health and diversity of the natural world. We enable more people to take positive action for nature. **We act**, **we influence**, **we collaborate**, and **we empower**.

We act

Our evidence-based conservation work shows that birds and other wildlife will thrive if they're given a chance. We're intensifying our efforts to give nature more opportunities to recover, every single day. We carry out conservation across land- and sea-scapes, protect and restore habitats and save birds and other wildlife from extinction. We won't stop while the threat to nature persists.

We influence

We use our voice to help people understand the threats facing nature, and the solutions to save it. From individuals to businesses and governments, we encourage everyone to play a positive role for nature, and help change the world for the better.

We collaborate

We have the capacity and the expertise to make a difference on a global scale. When we partner with other organisations, businesses, governments and individuals, we increase the impact we have. And by working together, we will deliver results for birds, nature and the climate at an even greater scale.

We empower

The closer people feel to nature, the more likely they are to defend and restore it. We bring people together, across the countryside and in cities, in person and online. From experienced naturalists to fledgling enthusiasts, we help everyone connect, champion and take action for nature.
By supporting local conservation groups, projects and initiatives, we encourage everyone to get involved.



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Our strategy

In 2021, we launched our strategy to 2030, to ensure that the RSPB is making the biggest impact possible for nature.

Six strategic shifts to increase our impact

We have identified six main areas where, by stepping up our efforts, we can increase our impact.

1 Delivering conservation at greater scale, through deeper collaborations.
As the UK's largest nature conservation organisation, we have a vital role to play in ensuring nature's recovery. But the challenge is too big to tackle alone, so we want to develop stronger partnerships with other organisations, businesses, governments and individuals to increase our collective impact.

2 Enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.
Nature is in crisis, and we all need to act to save it. But increasingly, people are disconnected from the natural world. That's why we will reach out to more people, of all ages and all backgrounds, to give them the opportunity to discover the joys of nature and act to save it.

3 Being a bolder and more influential campaigning organisation.
We're in the midst of a nature and climate emergency, but it's clear that decision-makers are not going far or fast enough to tackle it. We'll be bolder, and campaign harder, to ensure the plight of nature is no longer ignored or side-lined. We need to turn warm words and pledges from government into legally-binding targets and well-funded actions to restore nature by 2030.

4 Becoming more relevant to the world we're trying to change.
If we're to achieve our vision of creating a world richer in nature, we need as many people as possible on nature's side, taking action to protect the birds and other wildlife that they love. By becoming a more inclusive organisation that represents the diversity of the people and communities we work with, we can encourage more people to join our cause, creating a stronger force for nature.

5 Diversifying our income and opening up finance opportunities.
Nature needs conservation work on a massive scale. To achieve this, we must find new ways to increase the funding for conservation work, both within the RSPB and the wider environmental sector.

6 Making the RSPB the best it can be.
We must ensure we have the right structures, systems, values and people in place, to help us collectively perform at our best, and respond appropriately to a rapidly changing world. As the RSPB evolves, we will keep reviewing these elements to remain fit for purpose as an organisation.



Putting **nature** on the road to **recovery**

10 outcomes for nature's recovery

These are the changes we believe we all need to make happen to put nature on the road to recovery by 2030.

Species recovery
The future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), the East Atlantic migration route and in other selected areas around the world.

People engagement
More, and more diverse, people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.

UK land
At least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.

Seas
Threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.

Global land
A network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic Flyway, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high-impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.

UK Overseas Territories
The conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UKOTs will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.

Food and farming
The majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy (where the carbon emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the carbon removed from it), as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.

Nature positive economy
The frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.

RSPB capabilities
The RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will reflect the strategic need.

RSPB greening
Not only will the RSPB be a nature positive organisation, we will progress towards delivering a net climate cooling impact, having both reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced net emission removals and reductions through our land management activities.

What we do between now and 2030 is vital. We have set clear measures against these outcomes, which we use to keep ourselves focused and to track the impact of our contribution. The following highlights on pages 12–65 demonstrate how our contribution is helping work toward achieving these outcomes.

Our highlights

Species recovery

We work across the UK and globally to improve the fortunes of threatened birds and other wildlife and set them on a path to recovery.

Saving Species on the *Edge*

We're part of Species on the Edge, an ambitious partnership programme of eight nature conservation organisations, all working to secure a brighter future for Scotland's most rare and vulnerable coastal wildlife.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project is based across seven areas and aims to improve the fortunes of 37 threatened coastal and island species, including Little Terns, Great Yellow Bumblebees, Twites and Natterjack Toads.

To help address the threats these species face, project partners deliver both practical action, such as monitoring and habitat improvement, and community engagement, to create more opportunities for people to get involved with protecting species. By engaging with people who live alongside these priority species the project is creating a lasting legacy to secure a brighter future for Scottish wildlife.

Here's a snapshot of what we've achieved together so far.



Lyn Ibbiston Elks

In 2024 90% of Little Tern colonies in Scotland were surveyed.

Surveying Little Terns

Species on the Edge takes action for Little Terns in four project areas, creating additional nesting habitat, protecting colonies from disturbance and engaging with communities to increase awareness of the threats they face and how people can help.

In 2024, the Little Tern survey was incredibly successful, with over 90% of Little Tern colonies in Scotland surveyed. Species on the Edge volunteers in Orkney dedicated over 80 hours to monitoring, protecting, and raising awareness to help Little Terns. In February 2025, the volunteers received recognition from NatureScot for their work.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Getting people involved to protect species.

Training the conservationists of tomorrow

The project will fund two new paid RSPB traineeships, designed to equip those at the beginning of their conservation career with the skills and experience needed to get their first paid role in conservation. This training will be largely practical, focusing on skills such as surveying, habitat management and engagement, and trainees will have the opportunity to gain certifications in different aspects of practical management.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

RSPB conservation advisers work with farmers and landowners to help provide habitat for Turtle Doves.

New hope for Turtle Doves

Once the soundtrack of summer, the gentle purring of Turtle Doves is now missing from much of our countryside. But the future is looking brighter for these special summer visitors.



increase in the western European breeding population of Turtle Doves since 2021

For decades, the Turtle Dove has had the unenviable title of the UK's fastest declining species of bird. With its population reduced to just 1% of the number breeding here in the early 1970s, this has been a species in desperate need of concerted conservation action. And it's thanks to this action that there's now cause to hope that we're turning a corner for Turtle Doves.

Research has shown that a loss of breeding habitat and unsustainable levels of hunting were both key factors in the Turtle Dove's decline in western Europe. "Until recently, every autumn around one million Turtle Doves were legally hunted in France, Spain and Portugal – the countries through which all UK-breeding Turtle Doves migrate. The data showed that these losses were unsustainable," explains Guy Anderson, the RSPB's Migrants Recovery Programme Manager.

With urgent action needed, the RSPB led on the creation of an international conservation action plan, with recommendations on sustainable hunting, which the European Commission adopted. As a result, hunting was halted in all three countries between 2021 and 2024. In that time, the western European breeding population soared by 40% – that's 615,000 more breeding pairs.

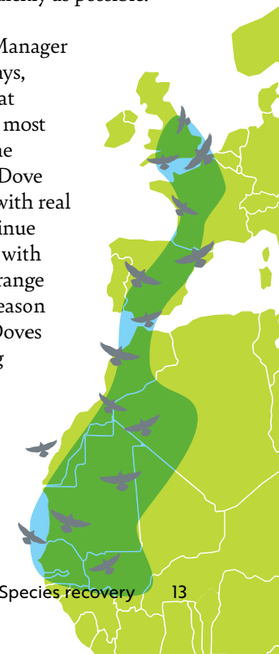
Following the success of the first phase of the hunting management system, the European Commission has decided to allow hunting to recommence in autumn 2025, but at a limited level that will allow the rapid start to the birds' population recovery in Western Europe to continue.

With action being taken on unsustainable hunting, the work of our Operation Turtle Dove project has never been more important in addressing the other side of the conservation equation: creating breeding season habitats for the birds. In anticipation of more Turtle Doves reaching our shores, we've been accelerating our efforts to make sure the UK landscape is 'Turtle Dove ready' by providing the habitats these birds require. This was made possible by funding from our new partnership with Tesco (see page 56), as well as the Big Give campaign in December 2024, which raised over £107,000 and enabled us to expand our team of Turtle Dove conservation advisers – thank you to everyone who donated!

It was another record-breaking year for Operation Turtle Dove, with 442 farmers and land managers joining us to provide feeding and nesting habitat. In addition, specially formulated seed mix was provided at 425 supplementary feeding sites to ensure that returning birds could get back into breeding condition as quickly as possible.

Rick Bayne, Senior Project Manager for Operation Turtle Dove says, "Following years of worry that we might lose one of nature's most familiar summer sounds – the gentle purring of the Turtle Dove – we can finally look ahead with real optimism. Provided we continue our efforts working together with farmers across the breeding range here in the UK, there is no reason that we can't expect Turtle Doves to return once again to being a much more common sight in our countryside".

Find out more about Operation Turtle Dove at operationturtledove.org



Bringing back Beavers

Beavers were hunted to extinction in Britain in the 16th century, but we're working in partnership to return them to some of their former haunts.

Beavers are what's known as 'ecosystem engineers' because of their ability to create a variety of different habitats. For example, by gnawing through trees and dragging the branches into water, they can build dams, which provide shelter and spawning areas for fish. Their handiwork also creates complicated underwater structures that offer a home to a range of creatures, including dragonflies and other insects. These, in turn, are eaten by birds, mammals and amphibians.

Beavers can help to reduce downstream flooding too, as the structures they build hold water and release it very slowly. These industrious rodents are an integral part of healthy wetland ecosystems, so we're delighted that 2024 was another successful year in our work to re-establish Beaver populations in Britain.

In Scotland, we're part of a project to return Beavers to the Cairngorms National Park, which is being led by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, alongside partners, land managers and local communities. In spring 2024, three Beaver families were released into different areas of RSPB Insh Marshes. The Beavers continue to be seen regularly on trail cameras on and around Insh Marshes and their damming helped to maintain water levels in an unusually dry spring in 2025. Following the release of a family of Beavers at RSPB Loch Lomond in 2023, an additional pair was released in 2024.

After years of advocacy by the RSPB and others, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced the licensing of Beaver releases in the wild in England, in late February 2025. The first licensed release took place on the Isle of Purbeck and the RSPB is engaged with further projects in England that are now in the pipeline. In addition, Beavers that are already present in the wild are expanding their range, with some setting up home at a second RSPB nature reserve in southern England.

In Wales, we've continued to support the Welsh Beaver Project. Progress was made in September 2024, when the Welsh Government announced that it supports managed reintroductions and launched a consultation on proposed legislative changes to make the Eurasian Beaver a European Protected Species in Wales.



Beaver Trust (rspb-images.com)

Beavers help to create vital habitats for other wildlife.



Paul Insua-Cao (rspb-images.com)

Drug ban boost for India's vultures

In a significant step forward for vulture conservation, India's government banned the use of nimesulide, a veterinary painkiller which research by the RSPB and our partners, the Indian Veterinary Research Institute and the Bombay Natural History Society, showed to be highly toxic to these threatened birds. As scavengers, vultures are vulnerable to poisoning if they eat dead cattle treated with the drug. The latest ban follows previous bans on three other drugs proven to be toxic to vultures.

The return of Wildcats

Wildcats were declared 'Functionally Extinct' in the UK in 2019, but now, work led by the Saving Wildcats partnership is aiming to reverse their fortunes.

Following previous releases in 2023, another nine Wildcats were released into the Cairngorms Connect landscape in 2024, where RSPB Scotland and other land managers are delivering an ambitious 200-year vision to enhance the area for nature and people. The landscape-scale restoration work taking place within the Cairngorms Connect area, including at RSPB Abernethy and Insh Marshes, is helping to provide Wildcats with a range of suitable habitats for hunting, creating dens and raising young. So we were delighted when, in 2024, the first kittens from released Wildcats were born, marking a significant milestone in the recovery of this species in the UK.

Together with other Cairngorms Connect partners, we work with Saving Wildcats to host release sites and facilitate the careful monitoring and tracking of the Wildcats using GPS-radio collars and camera traps. There is still a long journey ahead for Wildcats in Scotland, but these births and releases signal hope for the last remaining native feline in the UK.



Peter Cairns (rspb-images.com)

Nine Wildcats were released in 2024.



Paul Sawer (rspb-images.com)

Greenfinches are at risk from a disease called trichomonosis.

Making bird feeding better

The safety and welfare of birds is always our priority, and in 2024 we began an important scientific review into garden bird feeding.

We know that many people love feeding garden birds and some bird species really benefit from us putting out extra food for them, especially in winter. However, there is increasing evidence that for other bird species, especially finches, feeding can have some negative effects, such as the spread of disease.

We want to make bird feeding as safe as possible, so we have been working on a new study with the British Trust for Ornithology and Institute of Zoology, with funding from Natural England. This looks at the disease trichomonosis, which is caused by a protozoan parasite. The parasite develops in the throat of affected birds and causes problems with swallowing food and water. Finches, such as Greenfinches and Chaffinches, are seriously affected by the disease, which has led to severe population declines.

One way it is thought to spread is through contaminated food and water. RSPB scientists have visited gardens where finch trichomonosis has been found to collect data and samples that will tell us how the disease spreads, and to see whether certain methods of bird feeding can play a part.

While we await the findings of the review, we have suspended sales of all our bird tables and related products, Table Mix and Table Mix Extra, window feeders, and feeder guardians with trays. This is because there is evidence to suggest that some birds, particularly finches, can be more exposed to disease when fed on flat surfaces.

Suspending these products until we have a better understanding of how the disease spreads is our best option, as the safety of birds is paramount. In the meantime, there is guidance on our website on how to make sure feeders are kept clean: **rspb.org.uk/keepbirdshealthy**

In 2025, we will complete the scientific review and carefully consider its conclusions. We will then share updated guidance on how best to support and enjoy the birds in our gardens.

Making space for nature

After five years, the EU-funded LIFE on the Edge project came to an end in July 2025, leaving a legacy of new, improved and protected coastal habitats for wildlife.

From shingle beaches to saltmarshes, the UK's coastal habitats are internationally important for millions of birds that flock to our shores to feed, breed and spend the winter. But since 1945, we've lost 8,000 hectares of saltmarsh, as well as 46% of shingle and 18% of dune habitats. With increased coastal development, and sea levels rising due to climate change, wildlife is increasingly being squeezed out.

To tackle this, we've been working in partnership with the National Trust and others through the LIFE on the Edge (LOTE) project to protect, restore and create vital habitat at seven key sites across England. Here are just a few examples of what we've been up to.

Creating islands for Sandwich Terns

At RSPB Hodbarrow, in Cumbria, we've created five new islands, protected by predator-exclusion fencing, to provide more safe breeding habitat for terns and other nesting birds. These islands have been a huge success and in 2024 Sandwich Terns had their most productive breeding season at the reserve on record, with 332 pairs fledging 396 chicks.

Giving Little Terns a lift

Over in Essex, we've completed an ambitious project to raise the level of the eroding beach at Horsey Island, using almost 50,000 cubic metres of sand and shingle from harbour improvement works in Harwich. LOTE, Harwich Haven Authority and the Environment Agency all contributed funding to the project and as a result the eggs and chicks of the Little Terns and other birds that nest there should now be safely out of reach of high tides for years to come.

Little Terns were quick to move onto the new nesting habitat after its creation and in 2023 we celebrated a bumper year, with 42 chicks fledging from Horsey Island – the highest number since 2006.

Protecting nesting birds from disturbance

Disturbance by humans and dogs can be a big problem for beach-nesting birds, causing adults to abandon their eggs and chicks. That's why we've supported the creation of a network of protected sites for beach-nesting birds, including Ringed Plovers and Oystercatchers, across England.

At many of these sites, dedicated teams of staff and volunteers find nests and watch over the birds throughout the breeding season. Our beach wardens also do public engagement work to help raise awareness of the birds' plight, and put up temporary fencing to keep people and dogs away from the most sensitive areas.

Thanks to their hard work, and the support of visitors and local people, we've seen encouraging increases in nesting success, including three sites in the Solent recording their highest number of fledged birds during the project delivery phase.

An uncertain future

At a time when nature is under pressure, the brilliant results achieved by LOTE projects are an inspiring reminder of wildlife's ability to bounce back when given a helping hand.

However, now that the UK has left the EU, we are no longer able to access EU LIFE funding. With no equivalent UK fund set up to replace it, our ability to access sufficient funding to carry out important habitat protection and restoration projects like these in future remains uncertain.

Kevin Sawford (rspb-images.com)

Beach-nesting birds, like Ringed Plovers, have benefited from nest protection work.



RSPB (rspb-images.com)

Volunteers are helping Swifts to thrive in urban areas, such as Manchester.

608 volunteers

People-powered conservation

The RSPB's Species Volunteer Network puts volunteers at the heart of key conservation projects for some of the UK's most threatened species.

Ever since the RSPB was founded, volunteers have played a crucial role in our mission to save nature. The RSPB has more than 13,000 volunteers who generously give their time to the RSPB. They undertake 18,000 roles and make up 83% of our workforce by head count.

Some of these volunteers are part of the Species Volunteer Network (SVN), a community of over 600 volunteers who dedicate their time and skills to helping the populations of some of the UK's most vulnerable species recover. SVN is now operating in Wales and Scotland thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery. Here we highlight just four of the projects volunteers are helping to deliver.



Swifts declined by 62% between 1995 and 2021

"This teamwork, alongside the incredible support from local communities, is truly making a difference, helping Swifts thrive in urban areas and enriching our shared environment."

Rallying the community for Swifts in Manchester

Swifts are some of our most iconic summer visitors, but they declined by 62% between 1995 and 2021 and urgently need our help. Volunteers form a key part of our plan to save Swifts by taking direct action, raising awareness, and working with their local communities to ensure that these birds have safe places to nest.

In Greater Manchester there are now over 30 volunteers taking action for Swifts through the Swift Champion network, supported by funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery. Natalia Curi Ayala (pictured above), Volunteer Coordinator for the Manchester project explains what the volunteers have been up to:

"Volunteers surveyed Swifts across Manchester during the summer, and reviewed planning applications to ensure Swift bricks and boxes were included in new developments.

We connected with diverse communities through events in parks, museums, and large-scale gatherings, sharing knowledge and enthusiasm for Swifts with families, students, environmentalists, and people from all walks of life. It's been heartening to see more homes installing Swift nestboxes and an ever-growing community rallying around Swift conservation.

This teamwork, alongside the incredible support from local communities, is truly making a difference, helping Swifts thrive in urban areas and enriching our shared environment."

26 projects supported in the UK

Monitoring Red Kites in Northern Ireland

In 2008, Red Kites were reintroduced to Northern Ireland. RSPB volunteers have been actively monitoring the Red Kite population and monitoring their nests during the breeding season, so that chicks can be tagged under licence.

In 2024, the volunteer team were able to identify 25 territorial pairs of Red Kites in County Down, with 19 active nests. One of these nests was found thanks to the keen observations of volunteer Maria (pictured right). Working alongside the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group, she witnessed the tagging of the chick, which she has watched grow and thrive. Thanks to the chick's satellite tag, we'll be able to follow his progress and discover more about the lives of Red Kites in Northern Ireland.



Volunteer Maria watching a Red Kite chick being tagged.

Red Kites were reintroduced to Northern Ireland in **2008**

Saving Dark-bordered Beauty moths in the Cairngorms

Dark-bordered Beauty moths are extremely rare and have been recorded at just three sites in Scotland and one in England. Pete Moore took on the role of Species Champion for these endangered moths as part of the Rare Invertebrates of the Cairngorms project and here he explains some of the work underway to help them:

"We are at an exciting stage in Dark-bordered Beauty moth conservation. The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland set up a conservation breeding facility at the Highland Wildlife Park. From an initial batch of eggs taken from RSPB Insh Marshes in 2021, this project rears enough moths to enable us to release them into new suitable sites. In 2024, monitoring at Insh Marshes found more than twice as many moths on site than had been recorded in any previous year! And there was also a record count near Balmoral in Deeside. Looking to the future, I'm working on building up a relationship with a local farmer to create more habitat for the moths."

Our thanks go to the Nature Restoration Fund, who funded habitat work for the Dark-bordered Beauty at Balmoral in 2021, as well the Cairngorms National Park Authority for their support.



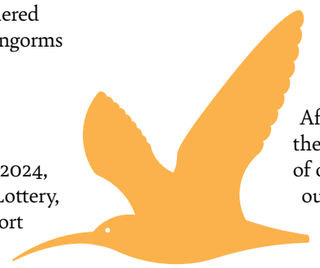
Roy Leverton

Dark-bordered Beauty moths are extremely rare.

33 species helped

Supporting Curlews in Wales

The SVN launched in Wales in September 2024, thanks to funding from People's Postcode Lottery, and one of the first projects to receive support was the Cri'r Glyfinir or Cry of the Curlew project. To kick-start project support and volunteer engagement, a winter social was organised in November 2024. Emily Hewison, the Curlew Project Officer reflects on the day:



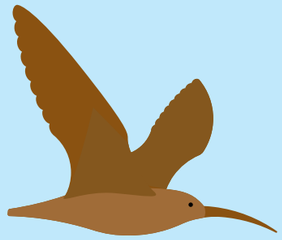
Volunteers have helped to create open, predator-free habitat for Curlews

"We headed out to a hotspot for Curlew activity and with the help of 12 fantastic volunteers we removed regenerating conifers that, if left to grow, would dry out the bog and create all sorts of issues, including providing potential nesting habitat for predators like Buzzards and Crows. By clearing these conifers, we're helping maintain the open, predator-free habitat Curlews need to breed successfully.

Afterwards, we crafted Christmas wreaths using the conifer cuttings, under the expert guidance of one of our wonderful farmers, who supports our habitat restoration efforts on their land. It was a lovely opportunity to come together and thank our volunteers for all their hard work and a brilliant way to strengthen the growing relationships between volunteers and the farmers whose land they're surveying to support our nest protection efforts."

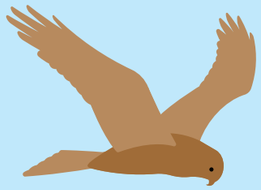
Counting success!

We care for more than 200 nature reserves across the UK, with many of them providing habitats for rare and special wildlife. Here are just a few of the highlights from our nature reserves, and beyond, over the past year.



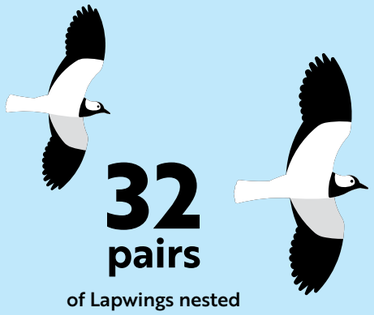
289%
increase

in Curlew nesting success on Orkney, thanks to the Orkney Native Wildlife project



1st

Marsh Harriers to nest at Mersehead in Dumfries, and Ynys-hir in Powys



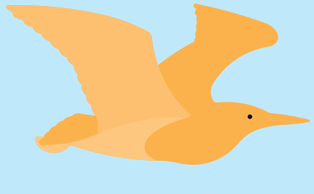
32
pairs

of Lapwings nested at Glenwherry in the Antrim Hills – up from 22 in 2023



12

bird species were recorded for the first time in Sumatra's Hutan Harapan Rainforest, including Bonaparte's Nightjar, bringing the total list of birds to 312



138

booming Bitterns were recorded on RSPB nature reserves – up from 116 in 2023

150

Endangered Southern Damselflies were recorded at Aylesbeare Common in Devon – up from 94 in 2023

29

lekking male Capercaillie were recorded at Abernethy in the Highlands, the fourth yearly increase in succession

1st

time that Pine Martens bred at Gwenffrwd-Dinas

175

Roseate Tern chicks fledged from Coquet Island off the Northumberland coast – the highest number ever!



Our highlights

People engagement

People are more likely to take action to protect things they care about, so we engage with people from all backgrounds to help them discover the wonders of the natural world.

Over and out: final Winterwatch filmed at Arne

Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan, Iolo Williams and the team returned to RSPB Arne in January 2025 for BBC *Winterwatch*, the fourth and final series of the Watches to be filmed at the reserve since 2023.



Chris Packham helped to showcase Arne's wonderful wildlfe.

RSPB Arne in Dorset nestles at the heart of the UK's first ever 'super National Nature Reserve' – Purbeck Heaths. With its spectacular mosaic of heathland, woodland and wetlands it's home to a huge array of wildlife, including all six of the UK's native reptiles, making it the perfect setting for the BBC's popular nature programme.

Each series required a temporary production village to be carefully built on the reserve, consisting of production trucks, marquees, catering facilities and presenter greenrooms, housing around 90 BBC staff. These were all powered by innovative hydrogen generators to minimise environmental impact.

RSPB staff and volunteers played a vital part in ensuring the series ran smoothly and were involved in all aspects of the project, from supplying stories and advising on the best places to find species, to marshalling the public and ensuring the local community felt part of the action.

Across the four series, viewers have been treated to some fantastic footage, showcasing the beauty of the reserve's landscapes as well as its wildlife, including White-tailed Eagles, Spoonbills and Sand Lizards. They also witnessed extraordinary nest-cam dramas – who could forget the world-first footage of a Nightjar eating its own chick!

Thanks to 'The Watches' effect', visitor footfall has increased at Arne and memberships are up too. Following the first Springwatch series in 2023 new members soared by 80% and visitor figures in January 2024 were 40% higher than the previous year.

As well as appearing live on BBC2 each night during the live series, as a result of the Watches, Arne also featured on BBC's The One Show, BBC Breakfast and in numerous national, regional, and local press articles and radio shows, helping to boost the profile of this fantastic nature reserve even further with a wide range of audiences.

Meet our new Ambassadors

Four new nature champions have joined the RSPB as Ambassadors, volunteering their voices to help raise awareness of the nature and climate crisis, and inspire people to take action.

We're delighted to announce that this year we welcomed four new additions to our team of RSPB Ambassadors: Sam Bentley, Rachel Bigsby, Mya-Rose Craig and Dave Sexton. They join our President, Dr Amir Khan, and nine existing Ambassadors who have been in place since our AGM in 2022. Our Ambassadors are passionate and dedicated volunteers, who make amazing contributions to our mission, and we are grateful to have their support.

When announcing our new Ambassadors, RSPB Chief Executive Beccy Speight said: "I'm thrilled to welcome our four new Ambassadors. Each of them brings a wealth of expertise and enthusiasm to support our mission in this crucial decade and beyond. They join our flock of incredible Ambassadors who already champion our causes, celebrate our achievements and importantly help us reach new and diverse audiences. Whether standing alongside us as we campaign or getting hands-on with conservation on one of our reserves, I can't wait to see the many ways our Ambassadors will support our work in the coming years."



Sam Bentley
Sam is a content creator and sustainability advocate who creates videos making environmental progress accessible and inspiring. Sam's videos share good news stories from around the world and explain exciting sustainable solutions to his combined audience of nearly 3 million people on TikTok and Instagram.



Mya-Rose Craig
Mya-Rose is an environmental and diversity campaigner and charity founder. Mya-Rose began her blog 'Birdgirl' when she was 11 years old, writing about her love of birds and encouraging her followers to campaign about biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. Mya-Rose founded the charity Black2Nature to encourage equal access to nature.



Rachel Bigsby
Rachel is an award-winning wildlife photographer specialising in seabirds. Rachel has been a recipient of the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year award in the Natural Artistry category and the Portfolio Award in Bird Photographer of the Year. Rachel has also been contributing to the RSPB's image library for several years.



Dave Sexton
Dave is a conservation expert and has recently retired from a 36-year career with the RSPB. He was instrumental in the successful reintroduction of White-tailed Eagles to the UK and protected Mull's first White-tailed Eagle nests in 1984, as well as the first chick in 1985.

To find out more about our President and Ambassadors, visit:
rspb.org.uk/rspb-president-and-ambassadors

Puffin snaps provide vital data

The results are in for a ground-breaking citizen science project which invited members of the public – or 'Puffarazzi' – to submit photos of Puffins carrying food for their chicks. An incredible 602 people submitted 1,402 photos from 35 colonies and these images were analysed by a team of volunteers, dubbed 'Puffineers'. The results suggest a possible link between prey availability and Puffin population change: in regions where Puffin numbers are declining, adults collect more, but smaller, prey items for their chicks than those in successful colonies.





Thousands take to the streets for Restore Nature Now march

On Saturday 22 June 2024, the RSPB joined 350 other organisations and more than 60,000 people in London to deliver a clear message ahead of the UK general election: we must Restore Nature Now.

In the largest ever march for nature, thousands of RSPB members, supporters, staff and volunteers flocked to the streets of London to show their support for nature. The RSPB stood shoulder-to-shoulder with other organisations, including WWF-UK, the National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts, and together we shared five joint asks with political parties and the public, outlining essential actions needed to protect our environment:

- Doubling the nature-friendly farming budget.
- Making polluters contribute to nature and climate recovery.
- Expanding and improving protected areas for nature.
- Introducing an Environmental Rights Bill giving people the right to a healthy environment.
- Fair and effective climate action.

With the UK Government that would be elected the following month responsible for ensuring that we meet legally binding targets for nature's recovery by 2030, it was a crucial time to speak up for nature and we delivered our message loud and clear. Every placard, every chant and every cheer showed that protecting and restoring our natural world must be a priority for the next UK Government.

Planning for the march began back in 2023, well before the general election was announced. The RSPB played a key role, working closely alongside Wildlife & Countryside Link and Chris Packham to organise the march and secure support from other NGOs in the sector. The march became the single biggest campaign action on any issue in the run-up to the general election and secured more than 200 pieces of media coverage, including on Sky News and BBC Breakfast, as well as over 20 national newspaper articles.

Celebrities, including Dame Emma Thompson and Steve Backshall, joined the family-friendly march, and live drumming and singing created a fun, festival atmosphere, with our giant Avocet puppets providing a unique focal point.

The rally held in Parliament Square at the end of the march was led by Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin, along with the RSPB's President Dr Amir Khan. The RSPB's Executive Director for Global Conservation, Katie-jo Luxton, explained to the crowd why she is so hopeful for the future of nature, while RSPB Ambassadors Indy Kiemel Greene and Nadeem Perera reminded attendees of the importance of unity in the fight to save nature.

Several times during the march, members of the crowd were treated to the sight of Peregrines soaring over Parliament Square. These flypasts, by a species that suffered severe declines in the 1960s, were a poignant reminder that, with our help, nature can make a remarkable recovery.

To support the RSPB's campaigning work, please visit: **rspb.org.uk/action**

Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Thousands of people of all ages attended the Restore Nature Now march.


Kirsty Martuccio

Vibrant Vyrnwy

Through our Vibrant Vyrnwy partnership project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, and in collaboration with Hafren Dyfrdwy and Llanwddyn Community Council, we've been working to support and develop a vibrant volunteering community in the heart of Wales.

Our aim is to build a brighter future for nature and people around Lake Vyrnwy, by bringing people together to celebrate and connect with the rich cultural and natural heritage of the area.

Since the project's launch in July 2021, we've worked closely with communities to break down barriers and provide over 3,000 people with opportunities to discover nature at events and volunteering days. Wellbeing has been a key focus, and we have helped empower people to take positive actions to improve not only natural habitats but also their own health and wellbeing, through events such as herbalism workshops, hedge laying and mindfulness walks.

We have also enabled six young farmers, between the ages of 18 and 25, to undertake a five-month residential traineeship in conservation farming techniques. Working alongside our farm and conservation team at RSPB Lake Vyrnwy provided them with a platform from which they could gain employment in the sector and make a positive impact for nature within the farming community. Four of the six trainees have gone on to secure jobs in agriculture.

Trainee Henry says: "My time at Vyrnwy has taught me that while it isn't always obvious, there's almost always an overlap between the goals of farmers and the goals of conservationists. And that, with a little compromise from both sides, farming can be done in a nature-friendly way, while the farm still remains a successful business from a production perspective."

The Vibrant Vyrnwy partnership project has involved a diverse range of local and national organisations who have contributed to the project, providing inspiration, expertise and training. These include The Game Changer Project, BTO Shropshire, Mencap Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Arts Connection and the local Men's Shed group, to name just a few. Together, we've built trust within the community and laid the foundations for doing more for nature and people through connections, collaboration and empowerment.


Kirsty Martuccio

Families enjoying an event at Lake Vyrnwy.

Putting communities at the heart of saving nature

The Nature Neighbourhoods initiative is helping community organisations across the UK to create people-powered plans to protect and restore nature on their doorsteps.

In March 2023, the People's Plan for Nature set out recommendations to reverse the UK's worrying declines in nature. Thousands of people contributed and one of the key messages to emerge was that people want to take action for nature in their own communities, and to hold themselves and others to account. As a result, Nature Neighbourhoods was born.

The project is a partnership between the RSPB, the National Trust and WWF, with funding and support from Co-op and the National Lottery Community Fund. Eighteen community organisations (Voluntary Community Social Enterprises) have received £25,000 and on-the-ground support and training to develop and bring to life plans for nature and climate action that centre around their neighbourhood's needs and priorities.

These communities are spread across the UK, with a particular focus on urban neighbourhoods where there are often barriers to accessing nature, along with higher social and economic inequalities.

So far, over 200 people have received in-depth training on a range of key skills, from fundraising and working with young people, to ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of their work. Thanks to support from RSPB and National Trust staff at a fundraising workshop, groups like Hamiltonhill Claypits in Glasgow have gone on to successfully apply for funding for their projects.


Hannah Bardsley

Another collaborative workshop, which focused on local advocacy, brought community groups together with representatives from several councils to learn how best to work with local authorities. This approach is already bearing fruit. In Edinburgh, Granton Community Gardeners have had success in their campaign to get the City Council's procurement rules changed so that community organisations can bid to manage community green spaces.

Meanwhile, in Manchester, the Easy Come, Easy Grow group was formed with the aim of creating more green spaces and to connect people with nature. The group has set up monthly community conversations in their local library, where residents can share ideas about what they'd like to see happening for nature in their neighbourhood. In Birmingham, the Community Environment Trust used learnings from co-design training to develop accessible growing space with community members with mobility restrictions.


Hannah Bardsley


Gary Walsh (rspb-images.com)

Using nature to boost wellbeing

RSPB Nature Prescriptions (NPs) are an innovative way for healthcare professionals to prescribe nature to their patients. Building on success in Scotland, we are now offering NPs in 15 counties in England, allowing thousands more people to experience the health benefits of connecting to nature. Thanks to funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery, we have also been able to launch NPs in urban areas, including Cardiff and Birmingham, and offer more accessible versions of the prescriptions, such as Easy Read and complementary resources for groups.

Our highlights

UK land

Thanks to new land acquisitions and funding, we've made strides towards the Global Biodiversity Framework's goal of ensuring that 30% of UK land is well-managed for nature.

Creating a Pennines paradise for nature at Geltsdale

Following the purchase of the final third of the land at RSPB Geltsdale in Cumbria, we're embarking on a bold new restoration project.

Thanks to the generosity of philanthropic donors, supporters, partners and funders, we have purchased the final piece of formerly leased land at Geltsdale, making it the largest RSPB nature reserve in England. At a cost of £4.5 million, this is one of the most significant land purchases in our history and it will allow us to fully restore and protect the area's moorlands, wetlands and woodlands.

Describing our vision for the site, RSPB Geltsdale Reserve Manager Ian Ryding said: "Our plans are ambitious and, in a nutshell, mean bringing this North Pennines landscape fully back to life. From the bright carpets of wildflowers in the hay meadows to the gentle ripple of restored wetlands teeming with insects and birdlife, this vision is about bringing back the sounds, sights and vitality of England's truly wild Pennines. The pinnacle of success for me would be seeing Golden Eagles soaring across the moorlands of Geltsdale."

As well as providing much-needed habitat for wildlife, our ambitious restoration work will also create a healthier landscape that can better tackle and mitigate against climate change, as RSPB Area Manager David Morris explains:

"This work isn't just about protecting wildlife – it's about creating a more resilient landscape. Restored peatlands will lock away carbon, wetlands will reduce downstream flooding, and vibrant habitats will support species at every level of the food chain, from invertebrates to apex predators."

Our vision for Geltsdale builds on the success of ongoing conservation efforts here. Thanks to our supporters we've already restored areas of blanket bog, created meadows and planted 110,000 native trees. Nature-friendly farming is reaping dividends too, helping to improve biodiversity and boost Curlew numbers.

Our work to naturalise Howgill Beck – the river running through Geltsdale – has even won the prestigious UK River Prize Project-scale Award 2025. Now the river's natural 'wiggles' have been restored, the flow of water has slowed, which has allowed gravel beds to form, supporting fish and invertebrates, which in turn provide food for birds and other wildlife.

During periods of high rainfall, river water can now spill out onto the surrounding floodplain meadows, helping to reduce the chance of flooding downstream and providing vital pools and damp patches for wading birds, like Lapwings and Redshanks, to feed on.

Using the success of these initiatives as a springboard, we have lots of exciting plans for the reserve over the next five years, including:

Revitalising moorlands and peatlands
We will restore peat bogs by raising the water level, allowing them to lock away climate-damaging carbon and creating ideal conditions for *Sphagnum* mosses and rare plants like Bog Rosemary.

Expanding and regenerating woodlands
By planting native tree species, like Aspen and Juniper, and encouraging natural regeneration, we'll help woodlands to flourish, providing habitat for Black Grouse, Cuckoos and other wildlife.

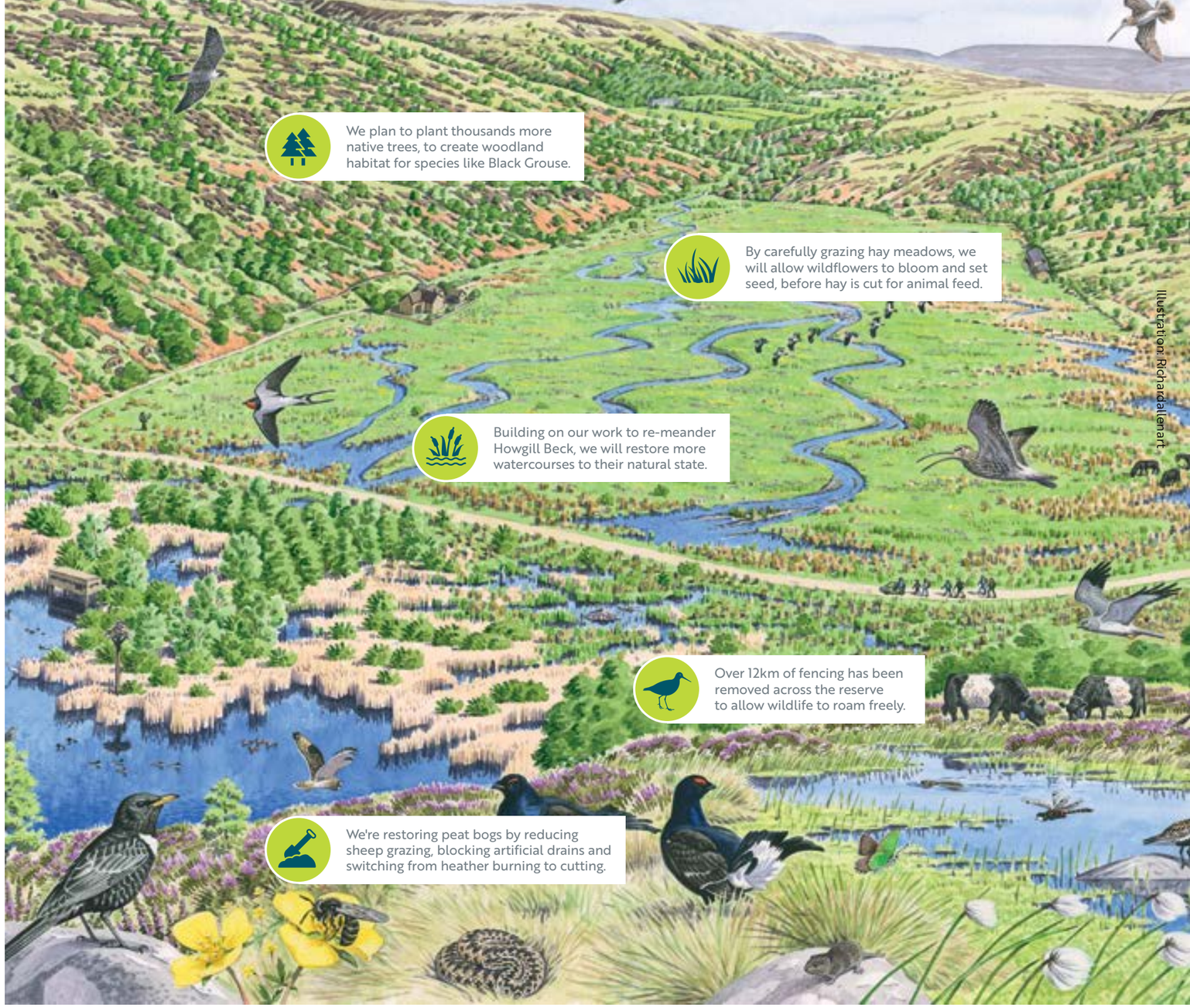


Illustration: Richard Lenart

Work to re-wiggle Howgill Beck – the river runnng through Geltsdale – has won the UK River Prize Project-scale Award 2025

Restoring wetlands
Building on the work carried out at Howgill Beck, we plan to restore the natural meanders of streams and watercourses to slow the flow of water and allow pools and channels to form, supporting wildlife including Otters.

Creating wildflower hay meadows
We will spread cuttings from one of the region's most species-rich meadows on the newly acquired fields. In summer, they will be transformed into a colourful tapestry of blooms, creating a vast buffet for pollinators.

Protecting species
Our conservation efforts will safeguard iconic birds like Hen Harriers, and we hope to welcome species like Golden Eagles and Ospreys in the future.

Fenceless grazing
By using innovative solutions like Nofence technology, which alerts livestock as they approach a virtual boundary, we will create habitats for threatened ground-nesting wading birds, such as Lapwings and Redshanks.

Wallasea gets bigger and better!

Wallasea Island nature reserve, in Essex, is set to expand thanks to a transformative grant from the Ida Davis Family Foundation.

The £2.2 million grant – the largest single grant we have ever received from a trust – allowed us to purchase four fields to the west of the reserve, adding 100 hectares of land.

In one of the fields, we plan to create a six-hectare freshwater lagoon that will offer feeding opportunities for wading and water birds taking a pit stop while on migration, as well as species that spend the winter on our shores, such as Teals and Wigeons. This shallow lagoon will also provide prime habitat for wading birds, like Lapwings and Avocets, to raise their chicks.

Meanwhile, the other three fields will be developed into a mosaic of grassland and scrub, with additional wet areas, to provide extra habitat for birds, including Corn Buntings. Wallasea Island is already a stronghold for this farmland bird, which has declined dramatically across the UK.

Since we acquired the initial land at Wallasea Island in the mid-2000s, the landscape here has been completely transformed. With rising sea levels putting the reclaimed agricultural land at Wallasea at risk, we used 3.2 million tonnes of soil extracted by Crossrail from the creation of the Elizabeth Line in London to raise the eastern part of the reserve above sea level and help create a new area of marsh, mudflats and lagoons.

Spoonbills now sift through the saline lagoons in summer and autumn, Black-tailed Godwits use the mudflats to refuel while on migration and Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls can be seen hunting over the grassland in winter. Nine species are found here in nationally important numbers, while a further four species – the Grey Plover, Knot, Shoveler and Bar-tailed Godwit – are hosted in internationally important numbers.

This place has become such a haven for wildlife that 39,000 wildfowl and waders were recorded here in winter 2024/2025.

We've added 100 hectares of land to our Wallasea Island reserve, creating more space for nature.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Digging up the past: Bronze Age spade unearthed at RSPB Arne Moors

One of the oldest and most complete wooden tools ever discovered in Britain has been uncovered during habitat creation work for RSPB Arne Moors.



Bronze Age spade made of carved wood, c.3,400–3,500 years old, found near RSPB Arne in Dorset. 3D render by Wessex Archaeology

History and archaeology probably aren't the first things that spring to mind when you think about the RSPB. But there's much more to our work than you might imagine.

From prehistoric burial mounds to Second World War pillboxes, RSPB reserves are full of fascinating historic sites that offer an insight into our hidden past.

We have a responsibility to preserve the heritage on our reserves for future generations, and that's why we employ a small team of archaeologists. These archaeologists help our reserves staff to appropriately manage any historic features on the site, and they sometimes collaborate with external archaeologists on larger projects, such as habitat creation schemes.

It was during one of these habitat creation schemes, that an incredibly rare discovery was made.

Discovering hidden history

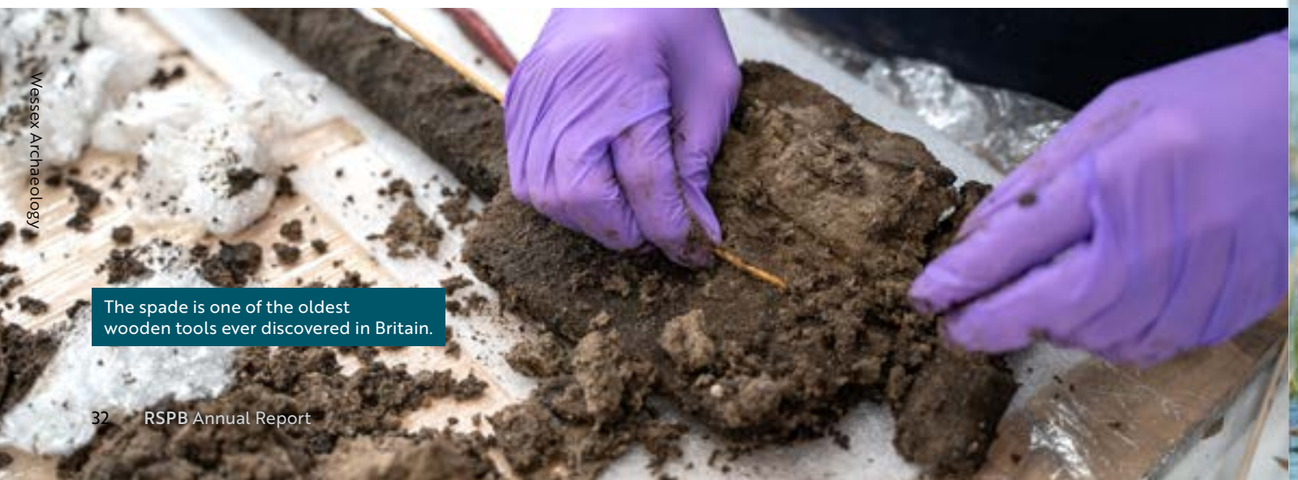
With rising sea levels threatening to destroy important wildlife habitat around Poole Harbour, we're working with our partners the Environment Agency, AtkinsRéalis, Natural England and UK construction company Kier, to transform 150 hectares of land close to our Arne nature reserve into vital wetlands for wildlife.

During excavation work for The Moors at Arne Project, archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology unearthed an extremely rare and almost complete prehistoric wooden spade.

Scientific analysis has revealed that it dates from the middle Bronze Age, between about 1500BC and 1400BC, making it one of the oldest wooden tools ever to be discovered in Britain. It's very rare for organic matter to survive this long in the ground, but the site's waterlogged conditions helped preserve the spade for more than 3,000 years.

Peter Robertson, Site Manager of the RSPB's Dorset nature reserves, said: "It's been amazing to learn about the history of the RSPB land at Arne Moors. The discovery of this incredible wooden spade really brings that history to life as you imagine someone fashioning and using it 3,500 years ago.

We have looked after the site, near to our RSPB Arne nature reserve, for more than 25 years and are excited for the project to help protect bird species including Redshanks, Avocets, Common Terns and Sandwich Terns. Without this work, this unique coastal landscape and its wealth of protected species could be lost in the future."



Wessex Archaeology

The spade is one of the oldest wooden tools ever discovered in Britain.



Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)

New land purchased at West Sedgemoor and Greylake

At West Sedgemoor and Greylake in Somerset, we have acquired 15 hectares of land, at a cost of £150,698. These wet grassland fields will allow us to manage water levels across a wider area of the existing nature reserve. This will benefit breeding Snipe and Curlews at one of their remaining strongholds in southern England, as well as winter visitors like Teals. We will also be helping to deliver a Landscape Recovery Project here, together with our partners, which will support nature-friendly farming alongside peat and floodplain restoration across 4,000 hectares of the wider Somerset Levels and Moors.

Making peatlands squelch again!

Often overlooked and underrated, peatlands are unsung heroes in the fight against the nature and climate emergency, so we're working to restore them across the UK.

At first glance, windswept expanses of peatland can look pretty desolate, but these landscapes are home to a vibrant tapestry of life, from tiny carnivorous sundew plants to majestic Hen Harriers. And beneath their soggy surface, they hide a superpower.

Despite covering just 3% of the Earth's land area, peatlands lock away more than twice the amount of carbon stored in all of the world's forests. As well as the vital role they play in fighting climate change, peatlands also help to protect against flooding, by absorbing and slowing the flow of rainwater, a bit like a giant sponge. Peatlands even help to filter the rainwater, reducing the amount of costly processing needed to get clean water to our taps, saving us money on our water bills.

But in the UK, more than 80% of peatlands are dry and degraded, as a result of drainage, forestry, overgrazing and burning, which means that they can't perform their vital functions and instead of storing carbon they actually emit it.

When it comes to peatlands, wetter is better, so we're carrying out work at a number of sites right across the UK to restore areas of peatland to their squelchy, carbon-storing glory. We've made great progress over the past year, with thousands of hectares of peatland restored and more in the pipeline – a handful of highlights are shown overleaf.

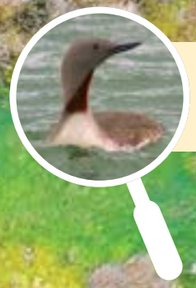


Sphagnum mosses are the building blocks of peat and can hold up to 20 times their weight in water. This helps to protect against flooding and wildfires.

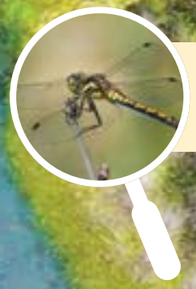


Carnivorous sundew plants thrive on peatlands and ensnare their unsuspecting insect prey with the sticky, sweet droplets on their leaves.

Peat accumulates incredibly slowly, at a rate of about 1mm per year. This means that the deep peat in places like Forsinard Flows has taken thousands of years to form.



Curlews, Golden Plovers, Red-throated Divers and Hen Harriers are just some of the birds that breed on peatlands.



In summer, dragonflies perform spectacular aerial manoeuvres over bog pools as they dart and swerve in pursuit of their prey.

When at their healthy, **squelchy** best, peatlands can store a huge amount of carbon, helping in the fight against climate change.

Alex Falkingham (rspb-images.com)



Mossy milestone reached at Dove Stone

In 2024, we reached an important milestone in our peatland restoration work at RSPB Dove Stone, with the millionth *Sphagnum* moss plug planted by our fantastic team of dedicated volunteers, who have given an incredible 45,000 hours of their time to the project. *Sphagnum* plants are the building blocks of peatlands, so reaching this milestone is an incredible step forward in restoring healthy peat bog at the reserve.

Volunteers gave

45,000

hours of their time planting

1,000,000

***Sphagnum moss* plugs**

Ambitious restoration programme launched in Northern Ireland

As part of RSPB NI's peatland restoration programme, we've launched the Lowland Raised Bog Recovery Programme to restore raised bogs in the Bann Valley, South Lough Neagh and East Fermanagh. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and DAERA (The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) this ambitious initiative will create a pipeline of fully costed restoration projects to attract further investment and create new green jobs.



Lake Vyrnwy restoration wins national award

Our peatland restoration work at Lake Vyrnwy, in partnership with Hafren Dyfrdwy, won the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2024 Award for Best Practice Large-scale Practical Nature Conservation Project. In five years, we've rewetted more than 1,000 hectares of degraded peatland by blocking more than 200km of gullies and drainage ditches with over 40,000 peat dams.

Toasting a new peatland partnership in Scotland

It is estimated that more than 80% of Scotland's peatlands are degraded in some way and RSPB Scotland is leading efforts to restore these vital ecosystems. Over the past year, we've restored more than 500 hectares of peatland across our nature reserves, including at Abernethy and Loch Gruinart. At Airds Moss, drinks company Suntory Global Spirits have generously provided £435,000 of funding to help us restore 175 hectares of land we acquired in 2022 from a neighbouring sheep farm. This will benefit a range of wildlife, including Curlews and other breeding wading birds.

Turn to page 73, to read about another exciting development in our work to restore peatlands in Scotland.

£435,000

of funding from Suntory Global Spirits to help restore

175

hectares
of peatland





An Omazing boost for peatlands!

Our peatland restoration work has received an incredible £4.9 million funding boost, thanks to a record-breaking partnership with Omaze.

Since 2020, the Omaze community has raised more than £85 million for UK charities, through the famous Million Pound House Draws, and in 2024 it was the RSPB's turn to benefit.

This time, the house on offer was a stunning coastal property in Cornwall. Together with Omaze, we delivered a promotional campaign, supported by our ambassador Deborah Meaden, which not only increased entries into the Draw, but also allowed us to spread the word about the importance of peatlands to new audiences.

Through the generosity of everyone who entered the Draw, we were able to raise a staggering £4.9 million for our peatland work. This was the most money ever raised for a charity in Omaze history, so we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in the Draw!

How nature will benefit

All of the money raised from the Omaze campaign will fund the protection and restoration of precious peatlands across the UK. This includes supporting the people and infrastructure that enable the work, and also widening our impact through matching and maximising other funding sources.

In year one (2024–25) alone, the Omaze funding, alongside funding from other partners*, has supported four incredible peatland projects in Scotland, among other peatland projects.

One of these projects is Phase 1 of the restoration work at Bile Buidhe, an area of peatland at RSPB Abernethy in the Cairngorms National Park, which is home to some of the UK's most threatened wildlife, including Scottish Wildcats, Red Squirrels and Capercaillie.

Bile Buidhe is a remote site which sits 700m above sea level and can be covered in snow for up to five months of the year. It takes the RSPB team almost two hours just to reach it, by 4x4 and on foot, making restoration a difficult task.

But we're taking on the challenge to slow the flow of water here, to allow peat to form and help bog plants re-establish, reducing further erosion. This work will benefit many nationally important peatland species, such as the Golden Plover and Dunlin. It's also important for the local community, helping to attract visitors, create volunteering opportunities and provide jobs for the local workforce.

> "We're going to be able to do so much more than we ever dreamed of. This is going to make a big, big difference to the work we can do on our important peatlands."
>
> **Deborah Meaden**
> RSPB Ambassador

*Additional funding partners include the Cairngorms National Park Authority through Cairngorms Peatland ACTION, Co-op and the Scottish Government's Peatland ACTION Fund delivered in partnership with NatureScot.

Our highlights

Seas

Seabirds are the most threatened group of birds in the world, so we work in the UK and globally to tackle the threats they face, from bycatch to marine developments.

Influencing offshore wind deployment in a nature positive way

Renewable energy is essential to avoid the dire impacts of climate change for people and nature.

The political changes in the UK in 2024 increased the urgency to develop offshore wind infrastructure at scale and pace. However this increases the risks of poorly planned infrastructure in the marine environment.

For seabirds already facing multiple threats, such as unsustainable fishing, invasive non-native species, and climate change, the expansion of offshore wind turbines at an unprecedented scale could have a drastic impact at a population level.

The RSPB continues to actively support and promote renewable technology deployment, however it's vital that the rapid expansion of these technologies is done in harmony with nature. With recent research demonstrating the continued decline of breeding seabirds in the UK, following decades of human pressure, the need for a 'nature positive' approach is clearer than ever. You can find out more about this approach at **naturepositive.org**.



Mike Lane (rspb-images.com)

Kittiwakes are vulnerable to wind developments.

We are now less than five years away from 2030, when the UK government has pledged to meet several energy, climate and nature targets. To set us on a course for success, we must embed nature at the forefront of decision-making and accelerate the deployment of renewables in a nature-sensitive way.

Currently, although 38% of the UK's seas are 'protected' on paper, in reality these Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) provide little actual protection for seabirds – most sites are designated to protect seabed habitats and few have effective management in place to prevent damaging activity. Although the protected area network protects breeding areas on land for seabirds, very few sites outside of Scotland exist to protect their feeding areas. As a result of these gaps in the protected area network, wind farms have been built in areas of crucial importance for seabirds, resulting in the need to compensate for impacts, rather than avoiding them in the first place.

Developing an effective protected area network would not only protect important areas for seabirds from future development, it would also reduce the need for complex compensation packages, reduce consent time and support the acceleration of offshore wind deployment. In addition, by delivering effective management of the wider protected area network, we would ensure our seas were in better condition and more resilient to future impacts, both from increasing development and a changing climate.

To help facilitate this, we have created a seabird data layer to visually demonstrate key areas of importance for seabirds across a UK map. This was invaluable in portraying the challenge ahead to The Crown Estate (TCE), as it clearly showed that even if all MPAs were avoided when constructing infrastructure there would still be a significant problem for Kittiwakes, who largely forage outside of these protected areas.

This led to us holding a workshop with TCE to get key areas for seabirds on the map and direct offshore wind leasing away from these highly sensitive areas. Influencing this work is a significant part for our policy work, as it will underpin decisions on how the UK Government will manage our seas.

Driving the development of Seabird Conservation Strategies

We've been working hard to influence the Seabird Conservation Strategies being developed by governments across the UK.

The four countries of the UK have each been in the process of developing their own Seabird Conservation Strategy for a number of years, with the aim of not only halting declines, but driving recovery. Over the past year we've successfully influenced the development of these strategies to ensure they include comprehensive policies and practical actions to help seabirds recover.

In Scotland, 4,500 RSPB supporters added their voices to our campaign calling on the Scottish Government to implement a strong, well-resourced and effective Scottish Seabird Conservation Action Plan, ensuring our recommendations were heard loud and clear.

We also ran a campaign in response to the public consultation on the Welsh Seabird Conservation Strategy, with hundreds of supporters showing their support for seabirds by signing the e-action. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland we have responded to the first consultation on their draft strategy.

In England, 2024 saw the publication of the England Seabird Conservation and Recovery Pathway, which is a significant step in the right direction, but it remains to be seen if it will be funded to deliver the scale of change required.

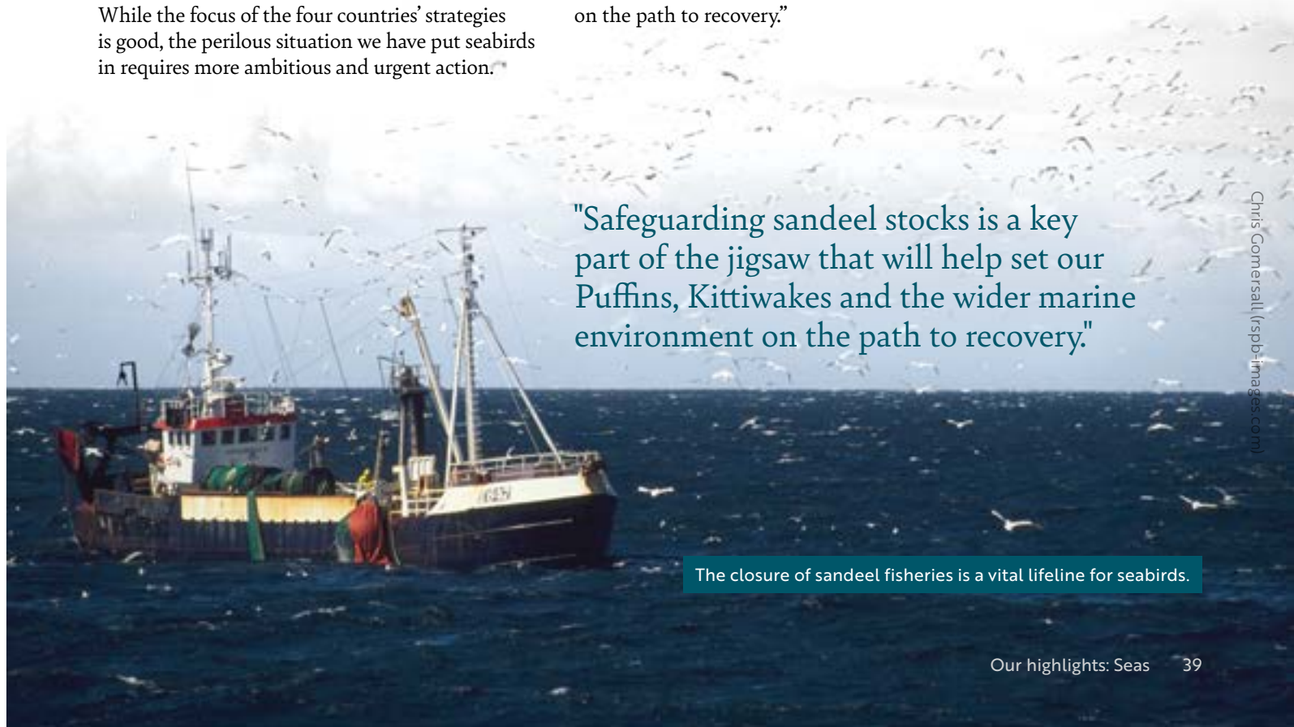
While the focus of the four countries' strategies is good, the perilous situation we have put seabirds in requires more ambitious and urgent action.

The past few years of avian flu have taken their toll and no one can know what the future holds. What is clear is that the threats seabirds face are not going away and we must continue to campaign for the protections they so desperately need – something brought into sharp focus when, in April 2024, the EU challenged the recently announced closure of sandeel fisheries in the English North Sea and Scottish waters.

Following this challenge, we continued to push for this lifeline for seabirds to be maintained and in May 2025 we were thrilled to hear that the challenge had been dismissed by the International Arbitration Panel. Beccy Speight, RSPB Chief Executive, said:

"We are absolutely delighted the panel has found the ecological case for the closure of industrial sandeel fishing is sound. Also, that UK Governments are within their rights to restrict sandeel fishing in UK waters to protect this valuable food source for declining seabirds.

"We now expect the UK Government and the EU to move forward and make this closure permanent. Safeguarding sandeel stocks is a key part of the jigsaw that will help set our Puffins, Kittiwakes and the wider marine environment on the path to recovery."



"Safeguarding sandeel stocks is a key part of the jigsaw that will help set our Puffins, Kittiwakes and the wider marine environment on the path to recovery."

Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)

The closure of sandeel fisheries is a vital lifeline for seabirds.



Brydon Thomason (rspb-images.com)

The Albatross Task Force has helped to save the lives of albatrosses in some of the world's deadliest fisheries.

Celebrating 20 years of the Albatross Task Force

2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Albatross Task Force (ATF), a project led by the RSPB, alongside BirdLife International partners, to help save the lives of albatrosses at sea.

Life on the open seas is tough, but albatrosses are used to towering waves and howling winds. The main problems they face come when they encounter humans while out fishing. Albatrosses mainly feed on fish and squid at the surface of the water, but bait on long fishing lines and discarded fish around boats is pretty tempting too.

When they try to grab an easy meal, many become caught on baited hooks and drown, while others are fatally injured when they collide with the cables used to tow nets. This 'bycatch' is the main reason that, in 2004, 19 out of 21 albatross species were at risk of extinction.

So in 2004, we joined forces with BirdLife International to assemble the Albatross Task Force: the world's first international team of bycatch mitigation experts who work directly with fishers and governments to research, develop and implement simple and effective ways to save albatrosses at sea.

Over the past 20 years, ATF teams have worked with more than 20 industrial and small-scale fisheries across eight countries to develop mitigation measures.

These include colourful streamers, which scare birds away from trawl cables, and hookpods, which prevent birds from becoming hooked and drowned.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of the ATF team and the fishers they work with, we've seen some staggering results. Where bycatch mitigation methods are used, in the South African trawl fleet there has been a 99% reduction in albatross bycatch, while in the Namibian longline fishery seabird deaths are down by 98%.

The ATF's efforts have helped to save tens of thousands of seabirds every year. Many albatross populations are still in dramatic decline, but some species are showing a strong recovery and are no longer threatened with extinction.

Mitigation measures have been included in fishing regulations in all but one of the countries where the ATF has been operating, so we are now turning our focus towards improving monitoring and compliance with the regulations.

Prestigious RSPB Medal awarded to Dr Euan Dunn MBE

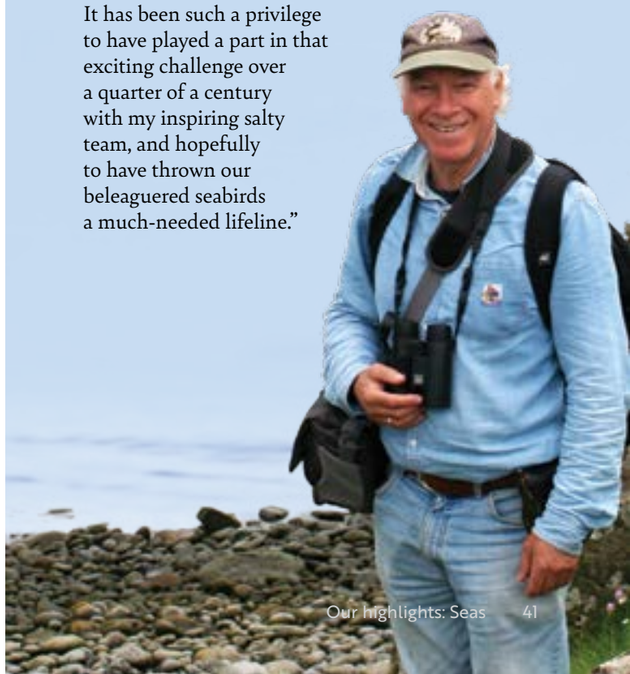
Retired RSPB conservationist Dr Euan Dunn received the RSPB's most prestigious award at the 2024 AGM, in recognition of his phenomenal contribution to marine conservation.

Euan joined the RSPB as a Marine Policy Officer in 1994 before eventually becoming Principal Marine Adviser, responsible for policy development and advocacy on both a national and international level.

Crucially, Euan played a significant role in the UK and Scottish Government's decision to close sandeel fisheries in the English waters of the North Sea and all Scottish waters in 2024. This was a historic moment that Euan set in motion in 1996 after attending a groundbreaking meeting in Norway where fisheries scientists concluded that Danish-led North Sea sandeel fishing was unsustainable.

Euan received an MBE in 2007 in recognition of his services to marine conservation, including helping to establish BirdLife International's 'Save the Albatross' campaign, showing what an important role he has played in seabird protection.

Reflecting on receiving the award, Euan said: "It was a wonderful surprise and pleasure to be honoured in this way. More than anything I am proud of how the RSPB has embraced the restoration of our marine environment and its wildlife, from the North Sea's Puffins to the Southern Ocean's albatrosses. It has been such a privilege to have played a part in that exciting challenge over a quarter of a century with my inspiring salty team, and hopefully to have thrown our beleaguered seabirds a much-needed lifeline."



Our highlights

Global land

We work alongside partners to deliver high-impact conservation projects in some of the most important places for nature across the globe, while helping to improve the livelihoods of local people.

Green shoots of recovery in the Forest of Hope

We're working alongside local people to restore one of the last remaining lowland rainforests in Indonesia.

Sumatra's Hutan Harapan rainforest – which means 'Forest of Hope' in Indonesian – is part of the Sundaland biodiversity hotspot, one of the most ecologically rich and threatened places in the world.

Here, more than 1,300 tree species create a lush green canopy, with some reaching 40 metres up into the sky. Long-tailed Macaques swing through the treetops in search of food, Sun Bears hunt for honey in the branches and Agile Gibbons provide a soundtrack of loud whooping calls.



Olivia Rondonuwu

Dartyo, a local farmer, points out a Resak seedling.

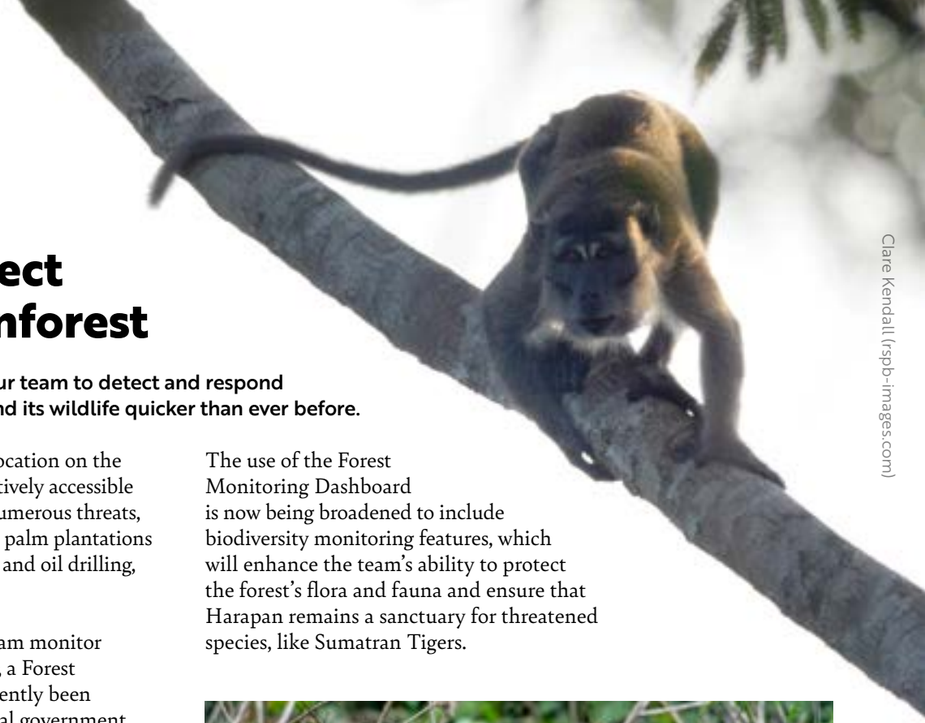
Harapan is a sanctuary for some of the world's most threatened wildlife, including Critically Endangered Sumatran Elephants and Tigers, as well as pangolins and Helmeted Hornbills.

In the late 2000s, the RSPB, along with BirdLife International and national partner Burung Indonesia, received a permit from the Government of Indonesia to turn this former logging concession into an ecosystem restoration concession. Since then, we've been working together to protect and restore Hutan Harapan, which stretches for more than 98,000 hectares – an area similar in size to Greater London.

Part of this work involves collecting seedlings of threatened native trees that characterise lowland rainforests, including trees from the Dipterocarpaceae family. Thirty-six different Dipterocarpaceae species have been recorded in the forest, including the Resak tree, and several feature on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. These seedlings are then nurtured, cultivated and replanted in areas which have been degraded by forest fires, or occupied by invasive species and illegal encroachment.

In the vast, dense jungle of Harapan, locating these seedlings can be a huge challenge, and so the involvement of the indigenous Batin Sembilan people, and other local communities, is vital. Their deep knowledge of the forest can help project staff to find target species far quicker than they could alone – in fact, one local farmer was able to point them to a Resak tree right outside his house! By working together, we can continue to protect and restore this precious forest for the wildlife and people that rely on it.

This project to enrich the forest at Hutan Harapan with Dipterocarpaceae species is supported by the Franklinia Foundation. Support for the project has been extended until 2027.



Clare Kendall (rspb-images.com)

Using technology to help protect Harapan rainforest

New technology is helping our team to detect and respond to threats to the rainforest and its wildlife quicker than ever before.

Harapan rainforest's lowland location on the island of Sumatra makes it relatively accessible to people. As a result, it faces numerous threats, including encroachment for oil palm plantations and settlements, illegal logging and oil drilling, poaching, and forest fires.

To help the Hutan Harapan team monitor this vast forest more efficiently, a Forest Monitoring Dashboard has recently been developed, which utilises official government alerts and freely accessible satellite imagery to verify information.

Telegram, the messaging and social media platform, has also been integrated into the system to enable quicker alerts to reach more members of the team.

The dashboard can alert Harapan's Forest Protection Team of any land clearance or tree loss within the concession area up to two days faster than before. It also detects forest fires an hour earlier. This means that the team can respond more quickly and effectively to threats.

The use of the Forest Monitoring Dashboard is now being broadened to include biodiversity monitoring features, which will enhance the team's ability to protect the forest's flora and fauna and ensure that Harapan remains a sanctuary for threatened species, like Sumatran Tigers.



Ernie Janes (rspb-images.com)

Our work in Harapan is helping to protect rare Sumatran Tigers.



Olivia Rondonuwu

This Storm's Stork in its nest is the first to be recorded in Sumatra since 1989.

Sumatran stork surprise!

During a bird survey in Harapan rainforest, the team discovered a Storm's Stork nest, complete with a juvenile. These birds are the **world's rarest storks** and the sighting marked the first known scientific record of a Storm's Stork nest in Sumatra since 1989, underscoring the importance of protecting this important rainforest.

Saving nature through people power in Gola

Together with our partners, we've launched new initiatives in the Gola Rainforest, to help protect the forest and its wildlife by improving the livelihoods of local people.

The Greater Gola Landscape is a vast 350,000-hectare expanse of lowland tropical rainforest that straddles the border of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Home to over 330 bird species, including the White-necked Picathartes, as well as endangered mammals like Pygmy Hippos and Forest Elephants, this special place is internationally important both for its incredible biodiversity and the millions of tonnes of carbon it stores.

Despite its biological richness, the communities living near the forest are some of the poorest in the world and often have little choice but to exploit the natural resources it offers, through damaging activities like timber extraction, mining and unsustainable hunting. That's why working with local communities to develop sustainable sources of income is vital to safeguard the future of the forest and its wildlife.

Thanks to support from the Ecological Restoration Fund, we're working with The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) to introduce a range of initiatives to allow local people to diversify their income.

In Lofa County, in north-west Liberia, SCNL has helped 1,400 farmers to cultivate cocoa. Unlike many crops, which require clear-cutting of the forest, cocoa loves shade and will happily grow beneath taller forest trees.

In order to help improve the quality of cocoa beans produced and allow farmers to secure a higher price at market, the project team have provided training and specialised equipment, including solar dryers, fermentation boxes and moisture meters. A nursery has also been set up, employing eight local people who tend to 100,000 cocoa seedlings that will be used to supply farmers.

Although forest-friendly, shade-grown cocoa is an important source of revenue for many people, after the harvest season is over it can be difficult for farmers to make ends meet, particularly as the global price of cocoa can fluctuate. So, the project team has also helped to train 100 farmers in beekeeping, to allow them to produce honey, another alternative source of income that does not require forest clearance.



Nick Williams (RSPB)

Samuka J Konneh with some of his cocoa crop.



Nick Williams (RSPB)

Rebecca S Borlay, Community Mobilisation Officer at SCNL, helps tend to thousands of cocoa seedlings to supply local farmers.

Across the border in Sierra Leone, we're working with not-for-profit company Gola Rainforest Conservation Limited by Guarantee on the Cocoa Sweet Spot project, which is funded by Jersey Overseas Aid. This project supports 128 farmers to trial new agroforestry approaches designed to combine cocoa and forest trees with other economic crops such as pineapples, bananas, plantains, kola nuts and coffee. This 'mixed cropping' can help to create a more sustainable income for farmers and therefore reduce the pressure on forest resources.

For Mariama Tarrawally, one of the farmers involved in the project, the opportunities provided by the additional income are clear: "the money will be beneficial to us, we will put it in savings for our children's welfare. I would invest in trading to get money for my children's schooling".

> "I have taken them on like my own sisters. If there is any benefit from the farm we will share it, if they have any benefit they will share with me."

Another aspect of the project is to build partnerships between vulnerable community members and the participating farmers. So far, 640 vulnerable members of these communities – including people who have been widowed or have particular health conditions – have been paired with farmers. They work together to cultivate crops, sharing resources and any additional produce between them, as Mariama explains:

"I have taken them on like my own sisters. If there is any benefit from the farm we will share it, if they have any benefit they will share with me."

Our partnerships to promote forest-friendly cocoa production in Sierra Leone have already supported more than 2,500 farmers and resulted in the export of over 130 tonnes of cocoa beans to international markets. Once scaled up, this new project has the potential to support another 3,000 cocoa farmers and their families in generating a more secure and sustainable income.

You can support this important work by treating yourself to our forest-friendly Gola Rainforest chocolate bars, truffles and drinking chocolate – available to buy from RSPB shops, catalogues and online at **rspb.shop.org.uk**



"The Earthshot Prize is a prestigious accolade that recognises just what can be achieved when governments and civil society organisations come together at the scale needed to create lasting positive impacts for nature, climate and people."

Katie-jo Luxton
RSPB Global Conservation Director

Saiga-saving project wins the Earthshot Prize

The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was named the winner of the Protect and Restore Nature category of His Royal Highness Prince William's Earthshot Prize 2024.

The RSPB co-founded the initiative back in 2005, alongside the Government of Kazakhstan, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, and other partners, with the aim of preventing the extinction of the Saiga Antelope. These ancient antelope would once have roamed alongside Sabre-toothed Tigers and Woolly Mammoths, but by the early 2000s their population was on the brink of collapse, because of habitat loss, poaching and disease.

As a result of research, anti-poaching and smuggling efforts, public education and the establishment of protected areas, Saiga numbers have rocketed from fewer than 40,000 to 2.8 million in 2024.

Thanks to the £1 million prize, we'll be able to scale up our work to help species that live alongside the Saiga, including Steppe Eagles, Sociable Lapwings, Kulans (wild ass) and Przewalski's Horses, across a 75-million hectare area – that's roughly the size of Turkey!

Shutterstock

Our highlights

UK Overseas Territories

We work to protect and restore nature on land and at sea in the UK's Overseas Territories, which are home to a staggering 94% of the UK's unique species.

Pitcairn Islands restoration planning takes a step forward

Fact-finding expeditions to the Pitcairn Islands are paving the way for a potential rat eradication programme to protect threatened seabirds.

The Pitcairn Islands, comprising Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno, are some of the most remote islands on the planet, situated more than 5,000km from the nearest land. Together, these islands are home to more than 95 species found nowhere else on Earth. Over 95% of the world's Henderson and Murphy's Petrels breed on the islands, alongside significant populations of other petrels and seabirds.

Unfortunately, these birds are under threat from invasive, non-native rats, which reached the islands with Polynesian settlers. Since the rats arrived, at least five bird species have gone extinct, and others are facing the same fate.

Evidence from fieldwork on Henderson has shown that 95% of petrel chicks are killed within just a week of hatching – that's more than 25,000 chicks a year. Since petrels lay a single egg per breeding season, this level of predation is simply unsustainable. Seabird numbers on Henderson have dropped from an estimated 5 million pairs before rats arrived, to just 40,000 pairs today.

In 2011, the RSPB led a rat eradication attempt on Henderson, but despite removing more than 99% of the island's rats, the few remaining individuals quickly multiplied. We have always committed to returning to Henderson to fully eradicate rats and at the request of the Pitcairn Government and community we started planning in 2018 for a renewed eradication attempt on both Pitcairn and Henderson.

Thanks to funding from the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, together with UK International Development and Darwin Plus funding from the UK Government, we were able to visit Pitcairn and Henderson in 2023 to gather information and carry out preliminary bait trials. Then, from June to August 2024, another expedition allowed us to answer outstanding questions to advance our eradication planning. The lessons we've learned will be invaluable in decision-making and planning for a potential eradication attempt in future, to restore Pitcairn and Henderson to their former glory.

95%
of the world's Henderson Petrels breed on the Pitcairn Islands



RSPB (rspb-images.com)

On Henderson Island, rats kill 95% of petrel chicks within a week of hatching.



Amy Webster

St Helena's cloud forest provides most of the island's water through mist capture.

Protecting St Helena's cloud forest

Work to protect and restore St Helena's precious cloud forest for wildlife and people continues.

St Helena, a UK Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic, is home to a unique cloud forest of global importance. With over 250 unique species of plants and invertebrates found in just 16 hectares, the forest is one of the most critical wildlife sites by area on the planet.

Not only that, the unique trees, ferns and other plants in the cloud forest are biologically designed to capture mist, and this mist capture provides the majority of the island's water. As a result, the cloud forest is vital for St Helena's water security, particularly in the face of climate change, which is predicted to increase the chance of droughts on this already drought-prone island.

250+
unique species of plants and invertebrates, are found on St Helena

Although the cloud forest is protected within the Peaks National Park, it is still under threat as a result of fragmentation and the impacts of invasive species. Restoring it is therefore important not just for its unique biodiversity, but also for the community's long-term water security.



Roger S Key

Blushing Snails are found nowhere else on Earth.

Thanks to funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), we're working through the St Helena Cloud Forest Project to remove invasive plant species, rejuvenate and restore areas of endemic cloud forest, connect isolated sections, and create newareas of habitat. This work is delivered in partnership with the St Helena Government, the St Helena National Trust and Connect Saint Helena (the island's water utility company), with additional support from international partners.

Through the project we have:

- Increased the area of cloud forest in active restoration by 14%.
- Planted over 40,000 plants.
- Discovered five spider species that are completely new to science.
- Collected pioneering mist, rainfall and soil moisture data which, in time, we expect to demonstrate the impact of cloud forest restoration for water security.
- Helped every child on the island to understand the global importance of the cloud forest for wildlife and their water supply, through our outreach work.

Trees take time to grow and the full fruits of our labour will take time to be realised. The greatest threat we are currently facing is that of emerging tree diseases, including *Phytophthora*. With so few native trees left, and no more anywhere else in the world, every single one matters. We are constantly adapting to new information and striving to find solutions.

Going forward, the FCDO has agreed a further £340,000 funding for 2025/26 through its Overseas Territories Climate Security Programme as a bridging grant until further funds are secured.



J Jeffcoate

Sister Islands Rock Iguanas are only found on Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.

Saving Critically Endangered iguanas in the Caribbean

Sister Islands Rock Iguana numbers are on the rise thanks to a partnership project to control feral cats.

Known as the Sister Islands, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, in the UK Overseas Territory of the Cayman Islands, are home to an incredible array of species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. One such species is the Critically Endangered Sister Islands Rock Iguana.

Unfortunately, iguanas are one of the most threatened groups of reptiles on the planet, and they face many threats including loss of habitat, vehicle collisions and predation by invasive non-native species, such as feral cats. On the Sister Islands, native species like these rock iguanas evolved in the absence of mammalian predators, so when cats were brought to the islands, the iguanas had no defences against them. Although fully grown adults are safe from predation, cats will kill and eat hatchlings and sub-adults, and as a result, they have had a devastating impact on the iguana population – which reached a low of about 2,000 individuals in 2022 on Little Cayman.

3,500

Rock Iguanas were counted in 2025, surpassing the highest population estimate from 2014, when surveys first began



To help these endangered iguanas recover, a feral cat control programme is underway on Little Cayman, led by the Cayman Islands Government Department of Environment, in partnership with the National Trust of the Cayman Islands and the RSPB, with assistance from the Department of Agriculture and funding from Darwin Plus.

The Little Cayman community, local animal welfare groups and the partnership have also rallied together to register all pet cats on the island, ensuring they are microchipped, vaccinated and neutered. This will reduce the chance of people's pets bolstering the remaining feral cat population and ensure they can be identified during feral cat control operations.



David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

Brown Boobies are also benefiting from the removal of cats and rats.

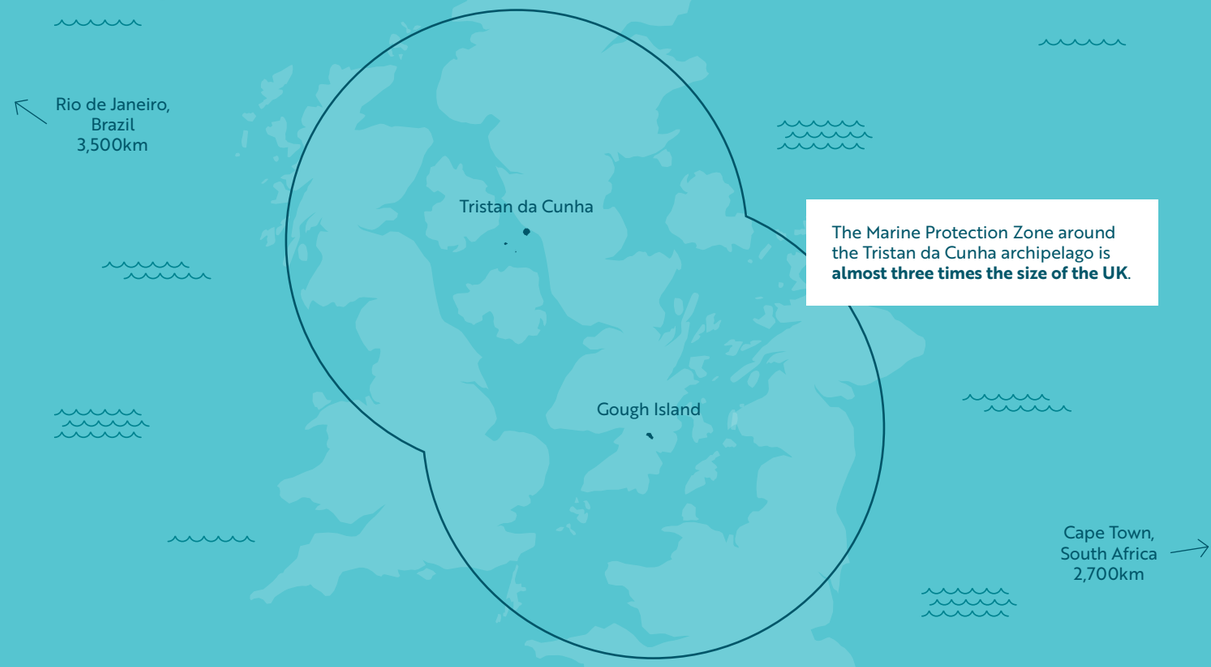
Following two years of control work on Little Cayman, we have already seen an incredible rise in the proportion of hatchling iguanas in the population. In 2020, before control work began, hatchlings made up about 4.5% of the population, whereas in 2023, a year after control work began, this jumped to 26%, with a further 8.2% increase in 2025. The proportion of sub-adults in the population has also increased by about 17%. Overall, the iguana population has risen to around 3,500 individuals in 2025, surpassing the highest population estimate from 2014, when population monitoring began.

Meanwhile on Cayman Brac, feral cat and rat control has reaped similar success for ground-nesting Brown Booby birds, which are vulnerable to disturbance and predation from these invasive mammals. Here, nesting success was at a low of 12.5%, but increased to 77.8% in the first breeding season after control operations began in 2023.

Tristan Marine Protection Zone wins prestigious award

Tristan da Cunha's Marine Protection Zone has won the Gold Blue Park Award at the 2024 Our Ocean conference, in recognition of the community's outstanding commitment to marine conservation.





The Marine Protection Zone around the Tristan da Cunha archipelago is **almost three times the size of the UK**.

Located over 2,000km from the nearest land, it takes longer to sail to the Tristan da Cunha archipelago than it took Apollo 11 to reach the Moon! The waters that surround this remote UK Overseas Territory are some of the richest in the world. Tens of millions of seabirds soar above the waves, penguins and seals cram onto the beaches, and sharks and whales feed offshore.

Recognising this precious marine heritage, the people of Tristan came together to campaign for greater protection for their islands and the surrounding ocean. Thanks to their hard work, ambition and persistence, supported by the RSPB and other partners, a Marine Protection Zone (MPZ) was designated in 2021, **protecting an area almost three times the size of the UK**.

No mining, drilling or any other harmful activity can take place here, and only limited sustainable fishing by the local community is allowed. It's what's known as a 'no take' zone and it's the largest of its kind in the Atlantic.

Following the MPZ's designation, the Atlantic Guardians project began, with the aim of building a strong foundation for this vast protected area. Funded by the Blue Nature Alliance, and implemented by the RSPB and Tristan da Cunha Government, the initiative focuses on scientific research, capacity building, community engagement and global outreach.

Janine Lavarello, Marine Protection Zone Officer employed by the project, has travelled to the UK to receive training to support her role, including learning how to track seabirds with a team from the RSPB's Centre for Conservation Science. Her new skills are helping her to protect and study the islands' wildlife, by supporting Tristan's Conservation Department with work such as tagging sharks and monitoring cetaceans using acoustic equipment.

In 2024, Tristan's MPZ was awarded a Gold Blue Park Award at the Our Ocean conference in recognition of the work of the Tristan community, supported through Atlantic Guardians and other partnership work.

Celebrating this important award, Janine reflected: "We are thrilled that this award recognises our hard work over the last few years. We are committed to maintaining these high standards to ensure Tristan's waters are protected now, and for future generations."

Our highlights

Food and farming

Much of the UK's wildlife depends on farmland, so we're pushing for better funding for nature-friendly farming, and working with farmers to develop and share ways to help nature thrive.

New research shows solar farms can benefit nature

Research by the RSPB and Cambridge University shows how solar farms could help to boost bird numbers while delivering clean energy.

The UK is committed to reaching net zero by 2050, which means moving away from fossil fuels towards clean energy, such as solar and wind. Many solar farms are built on agricultural land, where farmland wildlife is already struggling, so scientists from the RSPB and the University of Cambridge set about determining what impact solar farms could have on nature.

This research found that – hectare for hectare – solar farms in The Fens that had been managed with nature in mind and contained a mix of habitats, such as hedgerows, were home to nearly three times as many birds as nearby intensively managed arable farmland. They supported a greater variety of species, including threatened birds such as Corn Buntings, too. Solar farms with a mix of habitats also performed better compared to those that were intensively managed, with sheep grazing or grass cutting.

These results suggest that nature-friendly management of solar farms could provide a significant boost for birds. RSPB Conservation Scientist and lead author of the study, Dr Joshua Copping, said: "With lots of demands on UK land, finding ways and space to reverse the long-term declines in a range of farmland birds is challenging. Species such as the Corn Bunting, Linnet and Yellowhammer have seen their populations dwindle and finding ways to help them is critical for their long-term survival.

"The results of this study suggest that solar farms managed well for nature could make an important contribution and could provide relief from the effects of agricultural intensification on these species and other wildlife in the surrounding landscape."

While these results offer hope that wildlife can thrive alongside solar farms, it's important that any new solar farms are not located in areas of ecological risk, on nature-protected sites and at other sites that are important for rare and declining species. These continue to be vital refuges for wildlife and restoring them is crucial for recovering nature and meeting the UK Government's legally binding nature recovery targets in England. It's also important that solar farms are not sited on highly productive farmland, which could adversely impact food production.



Dr Joshua Copping

When managed in a nature-friendly way, solar farms can help provide habitat for wildlife.

Bees are buzzzzzing at pesticide ban

After years of campaigning by the RSPB and other environmental organisations, the UK Government has upheld a ban on the emergency use of bee-killing pesticides in England.

The use of neonicotinoid pesticides was banned across the UK and Europe in 2018 after scientists confirmed they are extremely toxic to pollinators, such as bees. A single teaspoon of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam is enough to kill 1.25 billion bees, yet despite the ban on its use, the Government has repeatedly granted permission for farmers to apply the pesticide on sugar beet crops.

Along with other environmental organisations, we have been calling for a total ban to be enforced and alternative nature-friendly measures to be used instead, so we were delighted that in January 2025 the Government rejected the application for the pesticide's use this year.

It's a vital step in efforts to protect UK wildlife and the move comes after continued campaigns by the RSPB and others, including a sector-wide effort from The Pesticide Collaboration, of which we are a lead partner.

RSPB Director of Policy and Advocacy, Kevin Austin explains: "The Government made the only sensible choice and upheld the ban on the use of neonicotinoids, refusing the application for use on sugar beet in England. The science is clear that this bee-killing pesticide has no place in our countryside if we are to reverse nature's decline and secure our future food security.

"It is now absolutely vital that farmers are properly supported to access viable nature-friendly alternatives; our ability to produce food depends on nature, including pollinators, and we cannot leave our precious wildlife in freefall any longer."

"It is now absolutely vital that farmers are properly supported to access viable nature-friendly alternatives."

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Over 100,000 people stand up for nature-friendly farming

RSPB supporters stood shoulder to shoulder with farmers ahead of the UK Government's Spending Review to call for the nature-friendly farming budget to be protected.

Since 1970, farmland bird populations have plummeted by 61% in the UK. In many places the once-familiar purr of Turtle Doves, the cheery 'little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese' song of the Yellowhammer, and so many more sounds of the countryside are long gone.

And it's not just wildlife that's struggling – farmers are facing many challenges too. They're on the front line of the climate crisis, with increasingly unpredictable and severe weather, such as floods and scorching heat, piling more pressure onto a community that is already dealing with rising costs and markets that squeeze them from all sides.

At the moment, it's clear that how we produce most of our food isn't working for farmers or for nature. But it doesn't need to be this way. Nature-friendly farming keeps our soils healthy and our water clean, making farming as a business more resilient and profitable. It can reduce the need for insecticides and pesticides, saving farmers money and boosting the numbers of pollinators on which so much of our food relies. It can also reduce carbon emissions and help deal with the impacts of extreme weather caused by climate change. Not to mention the huge difference it can make to farmland wildlife!

Independent research commissioned by the RSPB, National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts suggests that to fully realise these benefits and achieve the UK's climate and nature targets, the agriculture budget needs to increase to £5.9 billion per year.

So, ahead of the UK Government's Autumn Budget in 2024, we launched our farming campaign with an e-petition calling for Chancellor Rachel Reeves to grow England's nature-friendly farming budget.

Initially, the farming budget was maintained, but with the Government under increasing pressure to balance the books ahead of its Comprehensive Spending Review in June 2025, it became clear that the farming budget was in the firing line. Some sources predicted it could be slashed by up to 20%, amounting to £500 million.

This would have been a disaster for nature, so we stepped up our campaign, pushing even harder for investment in nature-friendly farming and raising awareness of the importance of the farming budget through attention-grabbing social media content, as well as widespread media coverage.

The e-petition was also supported and promoted by a wide range of farming organisations and environmental NGOs including the National Trust, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Pasture for Life, Landworkers' Alliance and WWT, helping it to reach a huge audience.

In total, 106,000 people signed the petition and on 20 May, we delivered it to Downing Street. Together, we showed the UK Government that there is a huge groundswell of support for a food and farming system that works both for nature and for people.

Thanks in part to this clear show of support, the Chancellor has committed to spending £2 billion a year on nature-friendly farming, and £400 million to plant trees and restore peatlands over the next three years. This is the biggest ever annual nature-friendly farming budget.
It's a win for nature, for farmers, and for us all – thank you to everyone who added their voice.

Although it was a huge relief to hear that the farming budget would not be cut, we know that for wildlife to truly recover we need to see the budget grow, and for it to be spent efficiently, on high quality nature interventions, so we will continue to hold the Government to account.

To find out more about our farming work and how to play your part, visit: **rspb.org.uk/farming**

Pollinators are worth

£500 million

annually to UK crop production

Every £1 spent on nature-friendly farming delivers

£2 £1 50p 10p

in public benefit



Campaigners outside the Houses of Parliament.


Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Farmers help beleaguered buntings bounce back

Corn Buntings declined by 89% in the UK between 1970 and 2018, but recent monitoring reveals positive signs of recovery in England and Scotland.


David J Slater (rspb-images.com)
426 Corn Bunting territories were recorded in Fife in 2024, up from 372 in 2022.

The distinctive jangling song of the Corn Bunting was once a common sound on farmland across the UK, but like so many other farmland birds their numbers have plummeted. They've disappeared from Northern Ireland and Wales and now breed across a restricted range in England and just a handful of areas in Scotland.

To help bring these beleaguered birds back from the brink, we've been supporting farmers and landowners in eastern Scotland to provide safe nesting and foraging areas, as well as winter food, through a range of measures including growing wild bird seed plots.

Monitoring by Professor Will Cresswell at St Andrew's University recorded 426 Corn Bunting territories in Fife in 2024, up from only 118 in 2015. The monitoring also found new territories in north-east Fife, suggesting that the population in the East Neuk of Fife may now be acting as a source population for other local areas.

This success is also mirrored in south-west England, where our partnership work on the South-west Farmland Bird Initiative is almost certainly behind the 129% rise in Corn Bunting numbers seen in the region from 2012 to 2022.

Alongside Natural England, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, and Cranbourne Chase AONB, we advised and supported farmers to deliver measures that specifically provide the key habitats that Corn Buntings need to thrive, through agri-environment scheme management options.

These positive results are inspiring proof that, by working alongside farmers, we can help improve the fortunes of some of the UK's most threatened farmland birds.

129%

rise from 2012 to 2022 in south-west England

Turtle Doves set to benefit from new partnership

We've teamed up with Tesco to help bring these iconic birds back from the brink, by working with farmers to create vital habitat.

Between 1967 and 2022, Turtle Dove numbers plummeted by 99%, with the birds hard hit by unsustainable hunting in south-west Europe and a lack of suitable food and habitat on their breeding grounds in the UK. As described on page 13, we've been working hard to tackle these threats, and our new partnership with Tesco will provide a welcome boost to these efforts.

We're working together to provide farmers and landowners in East Anglia with dedicated support to create Turtle Dove-friendly habitats that will provide the food and shelter they need to breed successfully.

As well as being a stronghold for Turtle Doves, East Anglia is one of Tesco's key sourcing regions and we're aiming to engage with 300 farmers and landowners, supporting them to create more than 1,800 hectares of wildlife-friendly habitats. And it's not just Turtle Doves that will benefit. Through our Fair to Nature scheme, farmers and landowners will also receive habitat advice to help them support other at-risk farmland birds, such as Lapwings and Stone-curlews, as well as to boost pollinator and insect numbers.

"The UK food industry relies on healthy soils, clean water supplies, and abundant biodiversity, so it's vital we play our part in protecting and restoring nature in our supply chain."

Ashwin Prasad
Tesco Chief Commercial Officer



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Breeding birds are up 161% since we took on Hope Farm.

Happy birthday Hope Farm!

2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the RSPB's purchase of Hope Farm and since then wildlife numbers have soared, showing that nature conservation and food production can go hand-in-hand.

In 2000, with the help of generous donations from our supporters, the RSPB bought Hope Farm, a typical arable farm in Cambridgeshire. With farmland wildlife in serious decline, our aim was to research and demonstrate ways to farm in harmony with nature, while continuing to produce food in a profitable way. By taking on the farm, we wanted to learn more about farming and experience the ups and downs of running a farm business, to help us better understand the challenges that farmers face while producing our food and discover how to overcome them.

During our time managing the farm, we've learnt a huge amount from other wildlife-friendly farmers and together we've shared ideas to identify the best ways to balance running a farm business, growing food for the table and looking after wildlife. And the results have been truly astonishing.

Since we took on the farm, wildlife has not only recovered but flourished. Butterflies are up by 348%, we have 11 times more bumblebees than a nearby control farm and breeding bird numbers have soared by 161%. The number of wintering birds is up by a staggering 1,631% too. Meanwhile, we've been able to maintain farm profits, proving that it's possible to produce food profitably and restore nature at the same time.

Butterfly numbers are up by
348%

11x
more bumblebees than a nearby control farm

The number of wintering birds is up by a staggering
1,631%



Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)

Grasping the nettle for Corncrakes

Corncrakes are one of Northern Ireland's rarest birds, and as a result of habitat loss and agricultural changes, their numbers have crashed. After returning from Africa in spring, they like to hunker down in tall vegetation to breed, and so RSPB staff and volunteers have been collecting nettles from farmland to plant at our nature reserve on Rathlin Island. Thanks to this habitat creation work, the distinctive 'crex-crex' call of the Corncrake is now a familiar sound on the island.

Our highlights

Nature positive economy

We're working with a range of businesses to help them take more action for nature, and to encourage the transition to a nature positive economy.



We're calling for new developments to be designed with nature in mind.

Boosting funding for nature

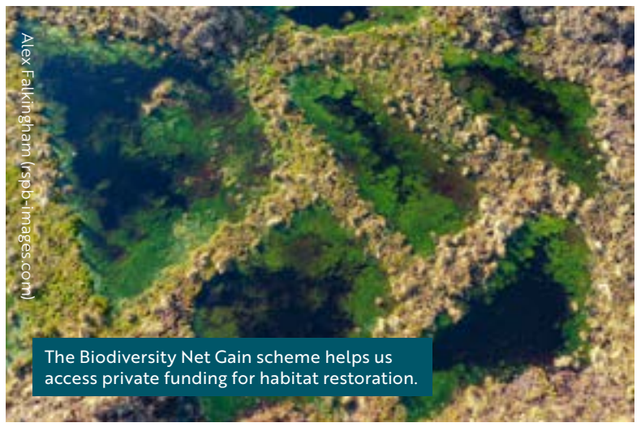
We're tapping into new funding opportunities to allow us to protect and restore more land for nature.

Nature markets are a relatively new and rapidly evolving area of finance, based on the sale and purchase of ecosystem services – that is, the services that nature provides to people, such as clean water and carbon storage. These nature markets create a way of unlocking new funding and finance options for nature restoration and so the RSPB has been actively looking at how best to work in these new markets.

One of the key means to do this in England is through the Biodiversity Net Gain scheme, which was launched by the UK Government in February 2024. In a nutshell, Biodiversity Net Gain means that for certain types of development, developers must enhance biodiversity by at least 10% beyond the pre-development state. It's delivered through the developers either providing nature-friendly features directly within their new developments or paying for others to deliver new places for nature as nearby as possible, for example by improving or extending local nature reserves.

900 hectares

of peatland restored through the Peatland Code by March 2025



The Biodiversity Net Gain scheme helps us access private funding for habitat restoration.

At the RSPB, we are able to help developers achieve Biodiversity Net Gain on their sites by selling a variety of high-quality biodiversity units from our nature reserves across England. Funding generated from selling these units can help us create more habitat and manage more land with nature in mind, ensuring that there is meaningful 'net gain' for nature. Our green pipeline of Biodiversity Net Gain projects represents 145 hectares of potential habitat restoration, with a further 908 hectares in development.

Another aspect of nature markets that the RSPB is working on is the protection and restoration of peatlands, through what is known as the Peatland Code. The Peatland Code is a voluntary certification standard designed to attract private funding for peatland restoration projects in exchange for climate benefits. Put simply, landowners like the RSPB with degraded peatlands can sell carbon units to buyers who are looking to offset their carbon footprint. This money is then used to restore the peatland and allow it to lock away carbon from the atmosphere, helping in the fight against climate change.

Our work in Wales and Scotland has resulted in huge areas of peatland being restored under the Peatland Code. We have 13 registered Peatland Code sites on RSPB land, which aim to restore around 1,100 hectares of peatland, of which we had restored about 900 hectares by March 2025. We forecast that our current suite of Peatland Code-registered projects on RSPB land will deliver approximately 170,000 tCO_2e of emissions reductions over their lifetimes.

Let's put nature at the heart of the planning system

The RSPB's Chief Executive, Beccy Speight, spoke at the Future Homes Conference, setting out our vision for a planning system that works for people and nature.

The Future Homes Conference, held in London in December 2024, brought together housebuilders, planners, local government, energy companies and others from across the industry. Beccy Speight spoke at the event, calling for nature to be placed at the heart of the planning system, at a time when the UK Government is seeking to overhaul planning rules to help deliver on its promise to build 1.5 million new homes by 2029.

The RSPB's partnership with Barratt Redrow, the UK's largest homebuilder, demonstrates that it is possible to build new homes with people and nature in mind. From the flagship nature-friendly Kingsbrook development in Aylesbury (shown above) to the installation of Swift bricks and RSPB-approved show gardens, our collaboration is an important showcase for our advocacy work with the wider house building sector and government, and businesses more widely.

At the conference, Beccy stressed that any new building must happen in the right place and in the right way, to ensure our most important places for wildlife remain protected. Recognising the different demands on land in England – from the wild places we need for nature and people's wellbeing, to agriculture, renewable energy and home building – Beccy stressed that solutions do exist to tackle these complex problems together.

She also warned against pitching the debate as a conflict between environmentalists and developers, saying: "Our planning system should be the vehicle for managing these tensions. A long-term view means we can avert the damaging effects of continued climate change and nature loss, whilst helping our country, businesses, communities and wildlife to flourish. We can and must do both."

Beccy urged the Government to reform the planning system in a way that speeds up the restoration of nature and the rollout of new homes and renewable energy, outlining the RSPB's three key asks:

1

Plan ahead to protect more wild places

We're calling for the UK Government to develop a Spatial Plan, so there's a strategic approach to where we should develop and where we need to protect, helping to minimise harm to nature.

2

Support planning expertise

Funding should be increased to ensure local authorities and agencies, like Natural England, have the resources needed to speed up delivery, but always with nature in mind.

3

Make developments nature-friendly by design

We're urging the UK Government to ensure new housing developments and infrastructure have nature-filled greenspaces and wildlife-friendly features included by design, so communities can experience the proven benefits of nature, and wildlife can find a place to call home.

Our highlights

RSPB capabilities

To meet our ambitions for nature, we need to be the best we can be, with an operating structure and capabilities that help us achieve our strategic objectives.

Changes on our nature reserves

We have been conducting a review of RSPB operations to ensure we can continue to tackle the challenges nature faces in the most effective way possible.

The cost of delivering our work rose to

£165 million

Like any responsible charity, the RSPB is committed to using the generous support of our members and donors in the most effective way to help nature. However, the recent economic climate – marked by inflation and the cost-of-living crisis – has posed significant challenges. Rising energy costs and supplier price increases have raised the cost of delivering our work by an estimated 10% in just two years.

In response, we have undertaken a thorough review of our operations to ensure long-term financial sustainability. This included evaluating how we work, how we procure goods and services, and how our land and reserves contribute to our mission and financial resilience. The focus remains on delivering the greatest impact for nature now and in the future.

Nature reserves account for the largest share of the RSPB's spending, and some operational changes are underway. These include the closure of a small number of shops, updated café offerings, new working practices for staff, and potential reductions in activity on less than 1% of RSPB land. In such cases, we will explore partnerships with community groups, other charities, or local councils to ensure continued stewardship of these places.

While some short-term disruption may occur as changes are implemented, the goal is to strengthen our ability to protect and restore nature across our network. Strategic land acquisitions remain a priority; since 2017, the RSPB has acquired over 8,500 hectares of new land to expand and connect habitats.

The RSPB is continuing to grow the land we conserve, while ensuring every site makes a clear and effective contribution to our mission. The dedication of RSPB staff and volunteers remains central to this effort.

With 135 years of conservation experience, the RSPB continues to lead the UK's efforts to protect wildlife. Going forward, we will concentrate our resources where they can have the greatest impact – boosting numbers of birds and other wildlife, restoring vital habitats, and inspiring more people to care for and take action for nature. This strategic approach will ensure that the RSPB remains a strong and effective force for nature in the years ahead.



Strategic land acquisition and restoration remains a priority.

Together We Fly campaign takes off

Our new campaign aims to inspire hope and action in the face of the ongoing threats to nature, and raise awareness of our work.

The RSPB's brand has been around since 1889, which makes us one of the most recognisable organisations in the charity sector. However, the downside is that the public often misunderstand the work we're doing today, and how and why we're doing it.

Since launching our new brand identity in 2022, we've still got some work to do to shift perceptions and that's why we've launched 'Together We Fly' – an exciting new brand campaign designed to change common misconceptions about the RSPB and inspire more people to act for nature.

Hannah Ranson, the RSPB's Head of Brand and Marketing, explains: "We want to create more emotional connections with our cause and encourage support, action and change. Together We Fly will help us do exactly this, and build on the community spirit we're achieving already with our 1.2 million members. The launch campaign aimed to really drive the message that we're in this together, every action for nature matters, however big or small, and that the RSPB is the nature charity for you, no matter who you are."

To kick off the campaign, adverts ran on TikTok, Instagram and Facebook across the whole of the UK, alongside TV and radio adverts in north-west and south-east England, and billboards in some London train stations. Our aim is that these adverts help us find a place in more people's hearts and minds as they see our hope, passion and action for nature brought to life. Going forward, the message behind 'Together We Fly' will be embedded into all communications.



Enabling more, and more diverse people, to act for nature

We've been taking steps to increase the representation of people of colour at the RSPB, but there's still a long way to go.

At the RSPB, we believe that nature's recovery demands everyone's voices, perspectives and skills. People and communities of colour are often most affected by environmental degradation and yet remain under-represented in conservation efforts.

We are one of 161 organisations in the environment sector to take part in the RACE (Radical Action for the Climate Emergency) Report, and in 2024/25 this showed that the sector is still one of the least diverse in the UK, with ethnic minority representation at only 4.5%. That's far lower than the average of 16% across the UK workforce.

This year, at the RSPB we saw a positive shift: we improved self-identification rates, by promoting a more open and inclusive culture, which saw ethnic minority representation grow from 2.8% to 3.7%. Our staff network for people of colour, Beyond Differences, doubled in membership, strengthening our co-production approach.

However, challenges remain. There are still significantly more people of colour in temporary roles and they are also under-represented in leadership. This is not just a recruitment issue – it reflects deeper disparities in development and career progression across the sector. Addressing this requires significant changes, and we are committed to tackling these barriers head-on.

We know we have much more to do. By building trust, and growing genuine partnerships, we will continue working towards a future where more people – and more diverse people – can take meaningful action for nature.

Our highlights

RSPB greening

We are committed to being a nature positive organisation and ultimately aim to have a net climate cooling impact.

Greening initiatives power ahead

This year, our Greening Programme continued at pace, as we work to embed excellent environmental practice across the charity.

We have updated our Environmental Policy, published our Climate Change Adaptation Report, continued to work on our environmental and carbon monitoring, and implemented a wide variety of sustainability improvements on our nature reserves. We have also improved our climate change response planning, through the LARK programme (see pages 64–65).

Work to embed a full environmental management system (EMS) across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland really pushed ahead in the last 12 months. For the first time, we reached Level 4 of Green Dragon across the whole organisation – this accreditation is awarded to organisations taking steps to manage and reduce their environmental impact. We are now well on our way to achieving Level 5, the award's highest level (equivalent to ISO 14001), in 2025.

The number of members opting to receive the digital magazine doubled this year, from 20,000 to 40,000. Meanwhile, for our print magazine, we switched to using paper with the world's lowest production emissions. It is also lighter, saving around 12% of paper usage per issue. We've also moved to a centralised supply chain and stock management system for our food and beverage operation, allowing us to minimise food waste and simplify the sustainability assurance of suppliers.

In our commercial operations, environmental successes in 2024–25 include 100% Red Tractor certified meat and dairy in cafés, only certified sustainable palm oil in our cafés and retail, and the implementation of our new sustainability objectives. For products sold in our shops and online, we have phased out traditional cotton products in favour of recycled or organic, removed polystyrene filler from some supplier products, and replaced all plastic with paper in our licensed jigsaws. We have also provided clearer recycling information on our delivery labels and now have liner-less labels for customer deliveries, which will save over 2 tonnes of plastic over the next five years. The rebrand of our suet products has removed an estimated 300kg of plastic a year.

Greening initiatives introduced on reserves this year include the first ever electric utility vehicle delivered to Sherwood Forest, upgraded pollution prevention planning, the continued reduction and electrification of our own fleet, and the installation of more electric vehicle (EV) charging points. As we move away from fossil fuel use, there are now more electric off-road vehicles in use for site maintenance work, helping to reduce exhaust emissions. At Corrimony, the EV is used to take visitors on nature safaris and has improved sightings as the quieter EV means less disturbance.

Energy audits have been carried out and efficiency measures implemented at sites including UKHQ, Loch Leven, Aylesbeare Common and Sandwell Valley. Solar panels with battery storage – funded by a grant from Dunbartonshire Council – have also been installed at Loch Lomond, providing power to the new visitor building and toilet block.

Several reserves are switching from petrol-fuelled equipment to electric alternatives. At Loch of Strathbeg, we have replaced several petrol chainsaws and brush cutters with electric models, which reduces fossil fuel consumption and direct emissions. It also leads to a reduction in fume production and lower noise impacts. Electric models also tend to have fewer maintenance requirements and a reduced risk of fuel leaks.

A number of reserves are now using GPS electric livestock collars, which allow staff to control where animals graze without having to use any fencing. This reduces the need for large batteries to power the electric fences, as well as the use of vehicles for livestock management, as staff can control where they graze remotely using a phone app.



40,000 members now receive the digital magazine, helping to reduce paper usage



of the meat and dairy products used in our cafés are Red Tractor certified



of plastic saved per year following the rebrand of our suet products

	2024–25	2023–4	2022–23
Energy consumption (KWh)			
Electricity	3,583,699	3,501,268	3,238,498
Gas, LPG and oil	2,129,914	2,191,675*	2,668,771
Transport fuel – fleet cars	2,619,717	2,823,439*	2,908,171
Reserve machinery	2,090,961	2,162,175*	1,494,818
Woodfuel	929,594	1,202,977*	1,486,401
Renewables (PV and wind)	1,243,233	1,951,628	1,875,527
Total KWh	**12,597,117**	**13,833,161**	**13,672,186**
Emissions (tCO2e)			
SCOPE 1 (S1)			
Gas, LPG and oil for heating	399	464*	527
Fuel for reserve machinery	517	536*	367
Fuel for fleet transport	624	673*	700
Woodfuel for heating	10	12*	14
Fugitive emissions	5		
Total tCO2e (S1)	**1,555**	**1,685***	**1,608**
SCOPE 2 (S2)			
Electricity (location based – LB)	634	708	626
Electricity (market based – MB)	92	80	115
Total tCO2e (S1/2 MB)	**1,647**	**1,765***	**1,723**
Intensity ratio: Total tCO2e/staff (S1/S2 MB)	0.7	0.7	0.7
SCOPE 3 (S3) (relevant categories only)			
1. Purchased goods and services	**20,771**	20,699**	**29,541****
2. Capital goods	**1,399**		
3. Fuel- and energy-related activities			
Transmission and distribution (MB)	8	7	11
Well to Tank (MB)	1,009	1,037*	696
5. Waste generated in operations			
Waste management	6	13*	4
Water supply and treatment	3	4	5
6. Business travel			
Grey fleet – Staff	331	368*	1021
Public transport – Staff	1,070	765*	818
Grey fleet – Volunteer	64	65*	
Public transport – Volunteer	4	3*	
7. Employee commuting			
Commuting – Staff	1,649	1,339	
Teleworking – Staff	784	528	405
8. Upstream leased assets	63	69	
9. Downstream transportation/distribution	296	234	221
10. Processing of sold products	458	610*	697
13. Downstream leased assets	5		
15. Investments	5,599		
Total tCO2e (S3)	**33,520**	**25,740***	**33,419***
Carbon offsets and carbon units tCO2e	0	0	0
Total annual emissions tCO2e (all scopes) LB	35,709	28,134*	35,653*
Total annual emissions tCO2e (all scopes) MB	**35,167**	**27,506***	**35,142***
Intensity ratio: total tCO2e/staff (All scopes) MB***	14.3	11.1*	13.9*

* Adjusted (more accurate) figures due to improved capture and processing of retrospective data as a result of automation.
** Recalculated figures due to switch from Quantis to DEFRA published conversion factors for 'Purchased goods and services'.
*** Volunteer travel excluded from intensity ratio to ensure ratio data boundaries match.

Driving change through LARK

Under the acronym LARK, we have pulled together the key pillars of our climate change response to enable more holistic action planning. LARK (which stands for Land-Adaptation-Reduction-Knowledge) directly links to our Environmental Policy commitments and underpins all the projects that are improving the RSPB's internal response to climate change.

Land

How land is managed affects the climate, both positively and negatively, so it's crucial to understand the impacts of the land management work carried out by the RSPB. Significant habitat restoration and creation projects at various reserves, from Lakenheath Fen in south-east England to Yell in Shetland, are already reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our land. We estimate that our major restoration activities in 2023–24 increased the net climate cooling effect of land that the RSPB manages by around 16,200 tonnes of CO_2 per year (2024–25 figures not yet available).

We have historically only measured the impact of our major land intervention activities. So, in 2024–25 we established an exciting project which will account for the emissions and removal potential from all our land holdings in detail. This will enable us to set targets against our land use change and land management emissions. To that end, we are now working on improving the completeness and consistency of our habitat information. We are translating it into a common format (using the UKHab classification system) to express the latest available insight on the extent of, and changes to, habitats and consequently the greenhouse gas emissions on our reserves. As a result, we will have the habitat information we need to better quantify the aggregate climate consequences of the RSPB's UK-wide land management activities.

We have also started to gather more complete and accurate data on how our extensive use of conservation grazing affects the climate. This year, we have captured information on around 80% of the livestock – owned by us or by others – on our reserves in more detail. In 2024–25, emissions from animals including ponies, cattle, sheep, goats and pigs on our main grazing sites were around 12,490 tonnes of CO_2e. Next year we will have information on the remaining 20%, giving us a complete and accurate assessment of the climate impact of the livestock on RSPB land.

Adaptation

The RSPB's Adaptation Working Group prepared and submitted its Climate Change Adaptation Report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), which described our level of climate change preparedness. The report will help inform the UK's understanding of climate risks and progress in adaptation. The Adaptation Report can be found on the RSPB website at rspb.org.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/approach-to-environmental-impacts

We are developing our internal adaptation programme and embedding adaptation considerations into different areas of the organisation. These include code of practice reviews, our environmental management system (EMS), acquisitions, commercial sourcing, and HR and wellbeing, among others.

On the ground, we are engaging in adaptive management on our reserves. For example, 2024–25 saw construction begin on an Environment Agency-led area of managed realignment at Arne Moors, in response to habitat loss from rising sea levels (see page 32). The area will be breached in 2026, which will create 120 hectares of intertidal habitat and 30 hectares of saline lagoons, and help protect freshwater habitats that grade into heathland and mire.

The RSPB is also engaged with Natural England in its Adaptive Delivery Plan project that aims to make the protected sites network fit for the future in a changing climate.

Reduction

This year saw the RSPB progress the development of our Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Plan. We are developing our 5- and 20-year targets which will better align with the globally recommended reductions needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as outlined in the Paris Agreement. The table on page 63 presents the annual energy use and associated GHG emissions from RSPB business operations in 2024–25.

This year we improved our GHG accounting methodology and captured more data, automating its collection where possible. The introduction of new categories, additional data, and some increases means that we are reporting a rise of 28% in GHG emissions compared to last year. Our Scope 3 emissions have increased by 30%; this was expected as we compiled our first full GHG inventory. If all newly introduced categories are ignored, the difference between the two years is only 2%. Our combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions have reduced by 7%. As we are now able to account for all relevant (non-land) sources of GHG, this 2024–25 footprint will be used as the RSPB's new baseline year moving forward.

Renewable energy generation in 2024–25 was down significantly compared to the previous year, due to a 46% reduction in generation from the wind turbine at The Lodge. This was a result of reduced wind resource during what was the second weakest wind year in the last decade. In addition, the turbine experienced a series of complex faults at the end of 2024.

Our GHG Reduction Plan includes a route map that covers all business emissions and includes actions for rapid and significant reductions in our emissions from building energy use, electricity contracts, travel, reserves equipment, purchasing, and our supply chain. We are also developing ways to ensure that climate impacts are factored into decision-making at all levels, from governance and strategy, and programme and project management, to site operations and reserve management. A summarised version of our targets and plan will be available on our website in 2025.

Knowledge

Our interactive Climate and Environmental Dashboard has been developed over the last 12 months and will be launched to the organisation in 2025. This dashboard has streamlined and automated how we measure and report on our GHG emissions and will enable greater workforce engagement. Moving forward, the dashboard will be key to monitoring our emissions against the targets set as part of our GHG Reduction Plan.

This year, the dashboard helped us to include fugitive emissions from air conditioning, capital goods and downstream leased assets for the first time. The new 'investments' category includes emissions associated with equities and corporate bonds; we don't include cash or government bonds as it is not possible to measure these. Our investment managers report our investments in tCO_2e in the Weighted Average Carbon Intensity (WACI), a point of time assessment at the end of each quarter. We do not include pensions.

This year's extensive employee commuting survey was improved to include homeworking and emissions from homeworking are now calculated using this survey data. This is more accurate and representative than our previous use of contract-based data, which was not always representative of individual working patterns.

Over the past year we have more explicitly recognised that those working within the conservation sector have a high risk of eco-distress. The RSPB is developing interventions to support workforce wellbeing, including workshops with external researchers and experts, online resources, and a peer listening space for people to share their feelings, called the Climate Café. We will evaluate these interventions to improve ongoing support and contribute RSPB knowledge to the wider field of eco-distress.

As well as embedding good environmental practice across our business operations, the RSPB has committed to do the same within our extensive knowledge (science and research) activities this year. We have signed the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. As a concordat signatory, we recognise the need to change how we conduct research and innovation, as well as promote wider solutions. We also agree to take shared action now, and in the future, to reduce and eliminate our own negative environmental impacts and emissions and achieve the transition to sustainable practices. Find out more at: wellcome.org/who-we-are/positions-and-statements/environmental-sustainability-concordat



Wild Haweswater wins global sustainability award

Wild Haweswater, a partnership between the RSPB and landowner United Utilities, has won the Ashden Award for Nature Based Solutions, in recognition of our landscape restoration work. We've been busy re-wiggling Swindale Beck, re-wetting peat bogs, planting thousands of trees and much more in this beautiful part of the Lake District, to benefit wildlife, water and people, and improve resilience to the effects of climate change.

International



5 million
hectares of land protected thanks to RSPB support

69 million
hectare Marine Protection Zone created with the help of the RSPB

Taking action for nature at a global scale

Wildlife doesn't see borders, so we're committed to working globally, wherever nature needs us most.

As one of the world's largest conservation organisations, we operate internationally to play our part in finding solutions to the threats facing wildlife.

International work has long been a cornerstone of what we do and back in 1922 we helped to found BirdLife International, a global partnership of 123 conservation organisations.

Together, we protect some of the most threatened species and habitats in the world, while also helping to tackle the effects of climate change, by working alongside local communities.

The RSPB currently works across 25 countries and 10 UK Overseas Territories, on a huge range of projects.

These include:

- Researching and developing solutions to address the declines of migratory birds.
- Tackling the threat posed by invasive alien species.
- Protecting rainforests from deforestation through projects aimed at improving the livelihoods of local people.
- Preventing the needless deaths of seabirds through bycatch.
- On-the-ground conservation work alongside local partners to help restore habitats and save threatened species.

We also work across the East Atlantic Flyway, a bird migration route from Iceland to South Africa that passes through the UK. In spring and autumn, millions of birds move along this 'super-highway'. Some will take a pitstop in the UK to rest and refuel, while others will stay with us to breed or overwinter.

Many of these birds, including Swifts and Black-tailed Godwits, are in real trouble, with their numbers tumbling.

No amount of work by one organisation in one country can stop these declines – that's why we develop partnerships that mirror the epic journeys these birds make. By working together with our partners along the flyway, we aim to identify, protect and restore some of the most important places for the birds we all share.

As part of this, we're working with Fuglavernd/BirdLife Iceland to restore wetlands that are of international importance for birds using the East Atlantic Flyway, particularly geese and wading birds, such as Redshanks, that spend the winter on our coasts.

Then further south in Senegal, we're helping our BirdLife partner, Nature-Communities-Development, to strengthen their organisation, so they can advocate for protecting sites, such as the wooded areas supporting wintering Turtle Doves from the UK. In Ghana, we are working with Ghana Wildlife Society and rural communities to restore wooded savannah using native trees that provide a sustainable income, as well as habitat for migratory birds.

At the tip of the flyway, in South Africa, we're supporting BirdLife South Africa to restore the Berg River Estuary where important coastal wetland habitat has been lost to erosion.

Our impact

Our work across the globe has helped to save the lives of millions of birds, enabled the protection of about 5 million hectares of vital wildlife habitat, and supported the creation of a 69-million hectare Marine Protection Zone around Tristan da Cunha – the largest in the Atlantic Ocean.

With no let-up in the threats facing nature, there is still so much to do, but thanks to our supporters we're in it for the long-haul.

Our impact

England



Stone Curlew by Mike Lane (rspb-images.com)

Seeing the recovery of species through enduring partnerships shows the importance of collaboration. This year's celebration of 40 years of working with farmers, other landowners and partners, to protect Stone-curlews, is testament to that. A year of highlights has also included our taking over the management of Wiltshire Council's Roundbarrow Farm, which will see us transform a former intensive dairy farm into a sheep- and cattle-grazed chalk grassland farm and woodland, providing a haven for chalkland species.

Michael Copleston
Director, RSPB England

Stone-curlew numbers soar thanks to 40 years of effort

150
pairs in 1985
to an estimated
343
pairs today

This year, we celebrated the 40-year anniversary of our Stone-curlew recovery projects, through which the efforts of farmers, landowners, and RSPB staff and volunteers have supported this bird's remarkable comeback.

With their knobbly knees and yellow-eyed stare, Stone-curlews have to be one of the weirdest looking birds in England – and they're also one of the rarest. They once bred on heathland and downland from Yorkshire to Dorset, but as a result of habitat loss only around 150 pairs remained by 1985, mostly in Wessex and the Norfolk and Suffolk Brecklands.

Something had to be done. So, in 1985, we started the RSPB Wessex Stone-curlew Project, and the RSPB Eastern England Stone-curlew Project, in partnership with Natural England (then English Nature). Since then, we have worked with farmers, landowners and volunteers to monitor the population, protect nests and create safe nesting habitat, with the Stone-curlew population going from strength to strength.

207 farms and landowners now take part in the projects, providing around 305 nesting plots, many of which are monitored by RSPB volunteers. In Wessex, breeding pairs of Stone-curlews have increased from around 30 in 1985 to an estimated 120 pairs today, while in eastern England there are an estimated 223 breeding pairs, up from fewer than 100 in 1985. In addition, RSPB nature reserves now provide a home to about 10% of the breeding population.

The comeback of Stone-curlews highlights that wildlife can begin to recover if the UK Government supports farmers through agri-environment schemes. These schemes have proved crucial in supporting farmers to manage their land for Stone-curlews. As with other farmland birds, their continued recovery remains uncertain, which is why we will continue to push for an increase in investment in nature-friendly farming.

Blooms, bees, butterflies and birds to benefit from new nature reserve

A former dairy farm in Wiltshire is set to be transformed into a haven for wildlife, thanks to a new partnership between the RSPB and Wiltshire Council.

Following a competitive bidding process, we're delighted to be taking over the management of Wiltshire Council's Roundbarrow Farm, east of Salisbury. Over the coming years, we'll be transforming this former intensive dairy farm into a chalk grassland and woodland nature reserve.

By switching to a lower number of sheep and beef cattle, we aim to reduce nutrient run-off into the River Test, helping to protect this important chalk stream from pollution. This extensive management will lock away more carbon and there will be further opportunities for carbon storage via woodland regeneration and planting.

The RSPB's Site Manager for Wiltshire nature reserves, Patrick Cashman, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to put nature back in the countryside. We can now begin the process of creating flower-rich chalk grassland at scale, which in time will attract and support a cornucopia of chalk-loving blooms, bees, butterflies and birds."

"This is a fantastic opportunity to put nature back in the countryside. We can now begin the process of creating flower-rich chalk grassland at scale"

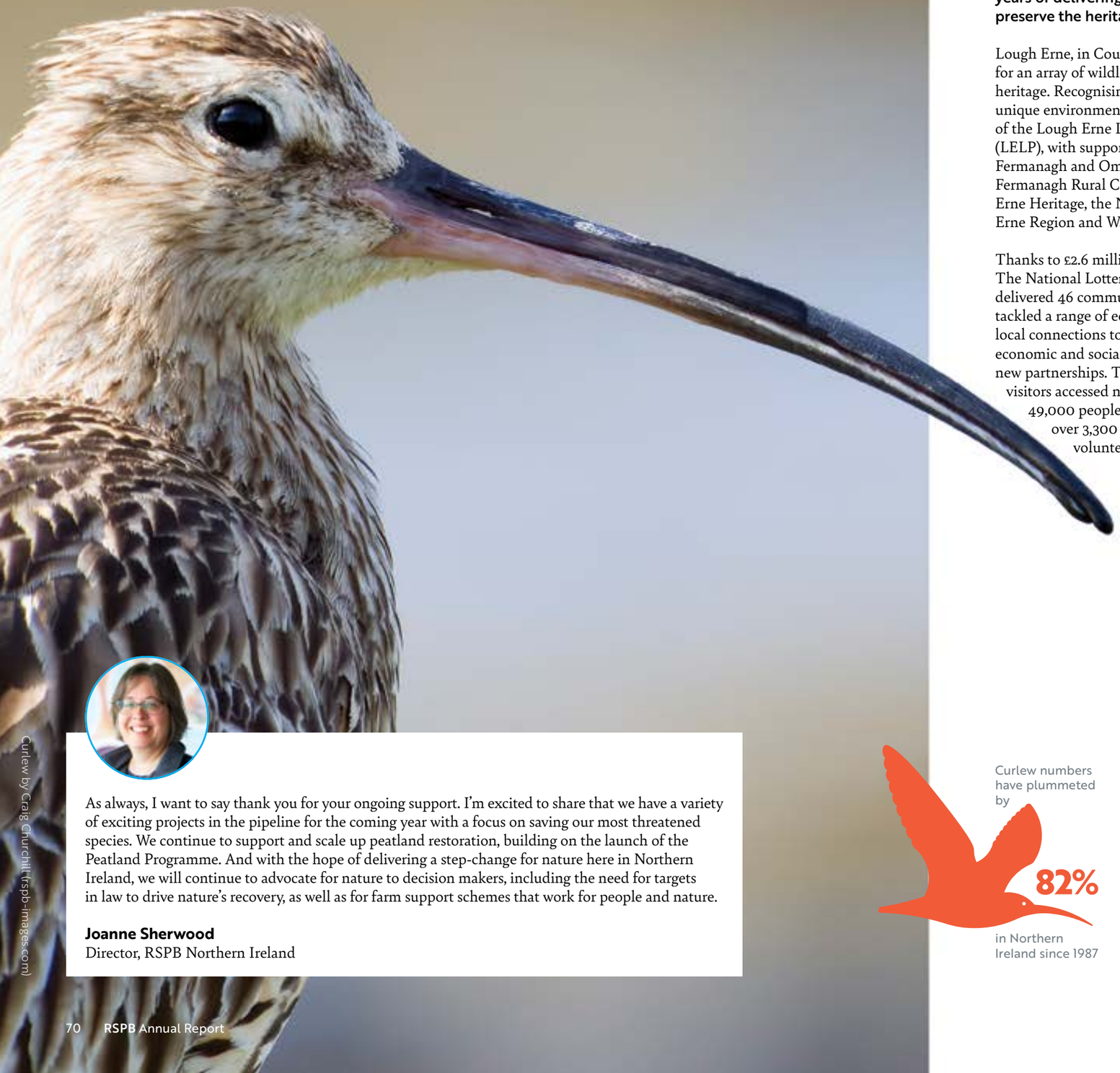


Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)

Chalkhill Blue butterflies are set to benefit from the transformation of Roundbarrow Farm.

Our impact

Northern Ireland



Curlew by Craig Churchill (rspb-images.com)

As always, I want to say thank you for your ongoing support. I'm excited to share that we have a variety of exciting projects in the pipeline for the coming year with a focus on saving our most threatened species. We continue to support and scale up peatland restoration, building on the launch of the Peatland Programme. And with the hope of delivering a step-change for nature here in Northern Ireland, we will continue to advocate for nature to decision makers, including the need for targets in law to drive nature's recovery, as well as for farm support schemes that work for people and nature.

Joanne Sherwood
Director, RSPB Northern Ireland

Celebrating the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership came to a close in December 2024, after six years of delivering projects to promote and preserve the heritage of this special place.

Lough Erne, in County Fermanagh, is a haven for an array of wildlife and has a rich cultural heritage. Recognising the importance of this unique environment, RSPB NI led the creation of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP), with support from partners including Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Fermanagh Rural Community Network, Lough Erne Heritage, the National Trust, Upper Lough Erne Region and Waterways Ireland.

Thanks to £2.6 million of funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, LELP delivered 46 community-based projects that tackled a range of ecological issues, rekindled local connections to heritage, stimulated economic and social growth, and forged valuable new partnerships. Thanks to LELP, 87,000 visitors accessed new nature trails, more than 49,000 people engaged with events, and over 3,300 people got involved with volunteering across the landscape.



Seamus Burns (RSPB)

LELP events have helped children discover nature.

To mark the culmination of LELP, a week-long festival was held in autumn 2024. The event was a platform to celebrate the positive impact of LELP's initiatives on the landscape, nature and local communities, inspiring further involvement in preserving Fermanagh's heritage for future generations.

87,000 visitors
accessed new nature trails

Curlews make a comeback

Once facing local extinction in Northern Ireland, Curlews are now on the road to recovery thanks to the efforts of RSPB NI staff and local farmers.

Curlew numbers have plummeted by **82%** in Northern Ireland since 1987

Curlew numbers have plummeted by 82% in Northern Ireland since 1987. In 2024, the breeding population on the Antrim Plateau jumped from 37 pairs to 52 pairs – a 40% increase in just one year. The number of chicks successfully fledging has risen too. Over the course of the Curlew LIFE project, we've seen 202 chicks fledge, which is an incredible improvement compared to the 116 fledglings recorded between 2011 and 2020.

These brilliant results are thanks to four years of hands-on efforts, such as habitat management, predator control and installing nest protection fences. The successes we've seen give us real hope, and allow us to shift our focus from preventing extinction to managing a recovering population.

On the Lower Lough Erne Islands reserve, a steady 43 breeding pairs of Curlews were recorded again in 2024, however fledging success reached new heights, with 20 fledglings recorded. Our work on Lower Lough Erne's Trasna Island is paying dividends too, with the first breeding Curlews recorded here in living memory, following extensive habitat restoration.

Although the Curlew LIFE project has now come to an end, we will continue our work to maintain this Curlew comeback, with plans in the pipeline for more restoration work on Rabbit Island and Carr Island in Fermanagh, and in the Antrim Hills.

Our impact

Scotland



The RSPB is extraordinary because it does not shrink from embracing the difficult challenges – ones that might take decades to realise. That's why I'm so delighted that 2024 was marked with the highpoint of achieving World Heritage Site status for Forsinard – the culmination of work that RSPB Scotland began in 1995. Achievements like this wouldn't be possible without the incredibly generous support of multiple funders and the steadfast backing of our valued members – thank you for all that you do.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland

The Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest

Saving Scotland's rainforest



Restoring Scotland's rainforest will help threatened species, including Pied Flycatchers.

Richard Bowler (rspb-images.com)

Work has begun on an RSPB project in the west of Scotland that's aiming to restore and protect a large area of rare temperate rainforest.

These beautiful woodlands are home to a huge range of wildlife, including threatened species such as Pied Flycatchers and Chequered Skipper butterflies, and are internationally important for their mosses, liverworts and lichens. Temperate rainforests can only form under very specific conditions, and while they're fast disappearing, west Scotland still hosts some of the biggest and most biodiverse rainforest woodlands in Europe.

One of the biggest threats to Scotland's rainforest is an invasive, non-native plant called *Rhododendron ponticum*. This smothers native plants, and can quickly take over woodlands and other habitats. An RSPB Scotland team on the Morvern peninsula, near Mull, is working to remove this rhododendron from the entire landscape, protecting rainforest woodlands, and allowing them to thrive.

A new tree nursery has also been created by the project using locally collected seeds. You can't plant a rainforest, but young trees from the nursery will be established in areas that are lacking their own seed source. The rainforest biodiversity will slowly spread into these new habitats, making the woodlands more resilient for the future.

The Saving Morvern's Rainforest project has received funding from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF), managed by NatureScot, with additional funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation, and private charitable trusts. It is one of 11 projects that are running as part of the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest, a voluntary partnership of organisations committed to collaborative action for the benefit of Scotland's rainforest.

World Heritage status for the Flow Country

The Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland, which includes RSPB Forsinard Flows, has become the first ever peat bog to be awarded World Heritage Site status.



King Charles III unveiled a plaque at Forsinard Flows.

Angus McKay (rspb-images.com)

Covering some 4,000 square kilometres, the Flow Country is the world's largest swathe of blanket bog. As well as providing habitat for a host of wildlife including Golden Plovers, Greenshanks, Hen Harriers, Water Voles and Otters, it stores more carbon than all the UK's forests combined.

RSPB Forsinard Flows sits at the heart of this landscape and we've been working to restore the peatland here for decades, alongside other members of the Flow Country Partnership, so we were delighted when UNESCO announced that the Flow Country would join the Great Barrier Reef and the Grand Canyon as a recognised World Heritage Site.

To celebrate the announcement, the RSPB's patron King Charles III paid a visit to Forsinard and unveiled a plaque commemorating the area's new status.

Our impact

Wales



Olivia Pargeter

We recently launched two exciting projects with funding from the People's Postcode Lottery. In south Wales, we're working closely with healthcare professionals to encourage people to connect with nature through the RSPB's flagship Nature Prescriptions programme. In north Wales, the Species Volunteer Network will build teams of dedicated volunteers to help deliver Black Grouse, Chough and Curlew recovery projects. It has been a busy year, and I thank you once again for your passion and support.

Alun Prichard
Director, RSPB Cymru

Boosting biosecurity for Wales' seabirds

With the help of Conservation Detection Dog Jinx, we're working to keep Wales' islands predator-free for breeding seabirds.

Many of Wales offshore islands are safe havens for breeding seabirds, thanks to the absence of ground predators. However, if invasive predators like rats reach these islands, the consequences could be catastrophic: seabirds have not evolved to defend themselves against these opportunistic hunters, and as a result rats can quickly wipe out entire breeding colonies by eating eggs, chicks and adult birds.

A single pregnant Brown Rat can produce a colony of 300 rats in just over eight months, so it's vital to stop them reaching islands where seabirds breed and ensure systems are in place to swiftly detect and remove any stowaways.

Through the EU LIFE funded Biosecurity for Life project, followed by the Nature Networks funded Biosecurity for Wales project, we've been safeguarding seabirds by working with island managers, boat owners and communities to prevent predators reaching 13 Welsh islands, from the tern-filled Skerries to Wales' biggest Gannet colony on RSPB Grassholm.

Our work has been assisted by Conservation Detection Dog Jinx (pictured left), who has been specially trained to sniff out signs of rats. Together with handler Greg Morgan, he checks for stowaways on boats and carries out routine checks on Wales' major seabird islands, as well as raising awareness of biosecurity in the local community. Thanks to his super-sensitive nose, Jinx allows us to investigate any signs of predators far quicker than we could without him.

Despite the end of the Biosecurity for Wales project in 2024, additional funding secured in 2025 means we can continue active surveillance of islands with the help of Jinx, while working with key stakeholders to help ensure effective, long-term biosecurity measures are established across Wales.

A single pregnant Brown Rat can produce a colony of 300 rats in just over eight months

Glimmer of hope for icon of the uplands



Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)

We're creating habitat for Black Grouse in north Wales.

Thanks to new project funding, we're working to secure the future of threatened Black Grouse in north Wales.

The sight of male Black Grouse strutting their stuff in the hope of impressing the ladies at leks is truly unforgettable. But it's a sight that's becoming all too rare as, like many upland birds, Black Grouse are in decline.

However, we know that targeted conservation management can boost Black Grouse numbers and so we're working to ensure the bubbling calls of Black Grouse can be heard echoing across the uplands of Wales for generations to come, thanks to funding received from the Nature Networks Fund in 2024, delivered by the Heritage Fund on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Through the project we're delivering sustainable upland management that will not only create vital habitat for Black Grouse and other wildlife, but also provide other benefits, such as carbon storage. Going forward, we will also continue to monitor Black Grouse numbers and work with landowners and stakeholders to create a landscape-scale conservation strategy.

Ein Dylanwad

Cymru



Olivia Pargeter

Yn ddiweddar rydym ni wedi lansio dau brosiect cyffrous gyda chyllid gan Loteri Cod Post y Bobl. Yn ne Cymru, rydym ni'n gweithio'n agos â gweithwyr gofal iechyd proffesiynol i annog pobl i gysylltu â byd natur drwy raglen flaenllaw Presgripsiynau Natur yr RSPB. Yng ngogledd Cymru, bydd y Rhwydwaith Gwirfoddolwyr Rhywogaethau yn creu timau o wirfoddolwyr pwrpasol i gyflawni prosiectau adfer ar gyfer y Grugiar Ddu, y Frân Goesgoch, a'r Gylfinir. Mae hi wedi bod yn flwyddyn brysur, a dyma ddiolch i chi un waith eto am eich brwdfrydedd a'ch cefnogaeth.

Alun Prichard
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

Gwella bioddiogelwch ar gyfer adar y môr yng Nghymru

Gyda chymorth Jinx, ein Ci Canfod Cadwraeth, rydym ni'n cadw ynysodd Cymru yn rhydd o ysglyfaethwyr er mwyn diogelu adar y môr sy'n magu.

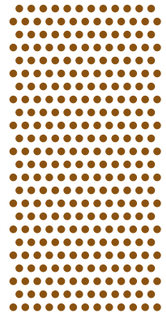
Mae nifer o ynysoedd arfordirol Cymru yn fannau diogel ar gyfer adar y môr sy'n magu, gan eu bod yn rhydd o ysglyfaethwyr ar y ddaear. Ond, petai ysglyfaethwyr goresgynnol fel llygod yn cyrraedd yr ynysoedd hyn, gallai'r canlyniadau fod yn drychinebus: nid yw adar y môr wedi esblygu i allu amddiffyn eu hunain yn erbyn yr helwyr hyn, ac o ganlyniad, gallai llygod gael gwared ar nythfeydd magu cyfan drwy fwyta wyau, adar bach ac adar sy'n oedolion.

Mewn ychydig dros wyth mis, gallai un Llygoden Ffyrnig feichiog greu nythfa o 300 o lygod, felly mae hi'n hollbwysig ein bod yn eu rhwystro nhw rhag cyrraedd yr ynysoedd lle mae adar y môr yn magu a'n bod yn sicrhau bod gennym systemau mewn lle i ganfod a chael gwared ar y creaduriaid sy'n cyrraedd, a hynny'n gyflym.

Mae prosiect Bioddiogelwch LIFE a ariennir gan raglen LIFE yr UE, yn ogystal â phrosiect Bioddiogelwch i Gymru a ariennir gan y Rhaglen Rhwydweithiau Natur wedi ein galluogi ni i ddiogelu adar y môr drwy weithio â rheolwyr yr ynysoedd, perchnogion cychod, a chymunedau i atal ysglyfaethwyr rhag cyrraedd 13 o ynysoedd Cymru, gan gynnwys Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniaid sy'n llawn Môr-wenoliaid ac ynys Gwales sy'n gartref i'r nythfa fwyaf o Huganod yng Nghymru.

Mae Jinx, ein Ci Canfod Cadwraeth wedi ei hyfforddi'n arbennig i ganfod arwyddion o lygod ac mae'n ein helpu gyda'r gwaith. Mae Jinx, a'i dywysydd Greg Morgan, yn sicrhau nad oes dim creaduriaid yn cuddio ar gychod, mae'n chwilota rhai o'r ynysoedd yng Nghymru sy'n gartref i adar y môr sy'n magu, ac mae'n codi ymwybyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd bioddiogelwch yn y gymuned leol. Mae trwyn sensitif Jinx yn ein galluogi ni i ganfod unrhyw arwyddion o ysglyfaethwyr yn gynt.

Daeth y prosiect Bioddiogelwch yng Nghymru i ben yn 2024, ond fe gafwyd cyllid ychwanegol yn 2025 sy'n golygu bod modd i ni barhau i fonitro'r ynysoedd hyn gyda help Jinx wrth weithio â rhanddeiliaid allweddol i sicrhau bod mesurau bioddiogelwch effeithiol a thymor hir yn cael eu sefydlu a'u rhoi ar waith ym mhob rhan o Gymru.



Mewn ychydig dros wyth mis, gallai un llygoden ffyrnig feichiog greu nythfa o 300 o lygod.

Llygedyn o obaith i eicon yr ucheldir

Mae cyllid newydd y prosiect wedi ein galluogi ni i sicrhau dyfodol y Rugiar Ddu yng ngogledd Cymru.



Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)

Rydym ni'n creu cynefin ar gyfer y Rugiar Ddu yng ngogledd Cymru.

Mae gweld gwryw'r Rugiar Ddu yn dangos ei ddoniau er mwyn denu sylw'r menywod yn y man paru yn brofiad bythgofiadwy. Ond, mae'r olygfa honno'n mynd yn brin, ac fel nifer o adar yr ucheldir, mae niferoedd y Rugiar Ddu yn gostwng.

Wedi dweud hyn, rydym ni'n gwybod y gallwn gynyddu'r niferoedd drwy gynnal gwaith rheoli cadwraeth wedi'i dargedu. Felly rydym ni'n gweithio'n galed i sicrhau y bydd cri afieithus y Rugiar Ddu i'w chlywed yn atsain dros ucheldiroedd Cymru am genedlaethau i ddod. Ni fyddai'r gwaith yn bosibl oni bai am gyllid gan y Gronfa Rhwydweithiau Natur yn 2024 a ddarparwyd gan y Gronfa Dreftadaeth ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru.

Mae'r prosiect wedi rhoi cyfle i ni gyflawni gwaith rheoli cynaliadwy ar yr ucheldir i greu cynefin i'r Rugiar Ddu a bywyd gwyllt eraill, yn ogystal â darparu buddion eraill fel storio carbon. Wrth edrych tua'r dyfodol, byddwn ni'n dal ati i fonitro niferoedd y Rugiar Ddu ac yn gweithio gyda thirfeddianwyr a rhanddeiliaid i greu strategaeth gadwraethol ar gyfer y dirwedd.

Looking to the future

Despite the challenging operating environment, over the past three years our achievements toward the delivery of the RSPB's 2030 targets for places, people, policy, species and science have been impressive.

Our annual review of performance in 2023–24 demanded that we deliver bigger, more joined up conservation to drive the pace and scale of change that nature so desperately needs. We used this review to inform our Corporate Plan, which spans the next two years.

Over the next year we will continue to deliver world-class conservation both in the UK and internationally. To do this we will continue to:

- Focus on the opportunities to reshape frameworks and finances to enable the transition to low-carbon, nature-friendly farming and prioritise work that supports farmers to increase the proportion of farmland that is restored and managed sustainably for nature. For example, we will continue to test and trial new approaches demonstrating nature recovery and low carbon farming methods and use our farmed reserves, landscape-scale programmes, and species recovery projects to develop the evidence base.

- Build momentum and action for nature and climate through public campaigning, political advocacy and business engagement. This will be focused on the farming, fishing and energy sectors, and impacts on land and marine management. For example, through campaigning we will demonstrate to politicians and governments in each of the four UK countries the level of public support for well-designed, well-funded land management schemes to support the nature and climate transition.

- Deliver conservation impact at scale through a programme of UK and global landscape-scale partnerships, unlocking major funding to restore species and habitats, enabling communities to act for nature and inspiring hope that change is possible. For example, we will continue our advocacy for more private and public sector funding to be directed into nature, climate and livelihood projects.

- Extend our businesses engagement through a new business engagement strategy and work with new partnerships that enable greater delivery for nature on the ground. For example, we will implement the Valuing Nature Plan across the UK to secure nature-positive economy changes. We aim to establish a framework for businesses to move towards nature positive in key land-use sectors, through reviewing and influencing finance streams to ensure that both public and private funds work for nature.

- Develop research collaborations that help us to understand and provide evidence-based solutions to the nature and climate emergency. There is a key role for the RSPB and the Cambridge Conservation Initiative to ensure that the latest evidence and best practice is shared across this sector.

- Make change and evolution part of our DNA through people engagement and policy opportunities, to ensure we remain relevant to the increasingly uncertain world and manage risks as they arise. For example, we will defend the Habitats Regulations and make the case for essential improvements to site protection laws.

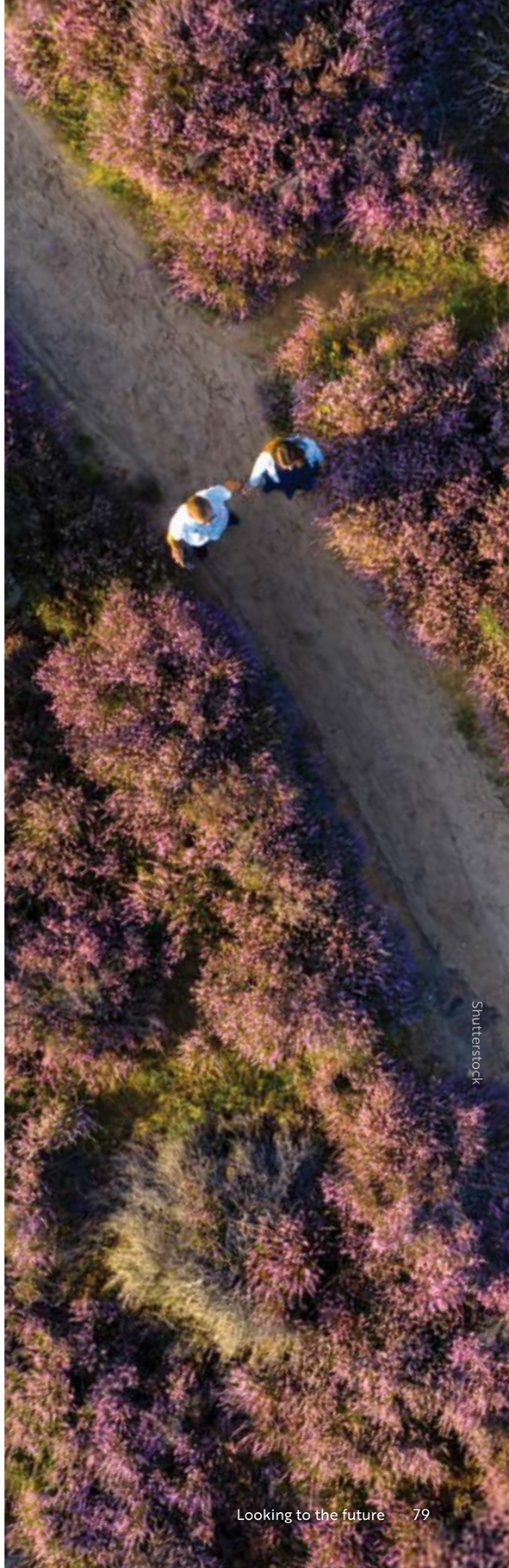
- Build capacity in our international partners, supporting them to lead and grow sustainably, working closely with the BirdLife Global Team to have global impact. For example, we will continue to provide on-the-job and specialist training for our programme implementation partners, in particular financial management, governance, planning and fundraising.

- Support the UK to deliver its contribution towards Global Biodiversity Framework targets through science, policy, species recovery and the restoration of land for nature and climate at a landscape scale. For example, we will adapt our advocacy strategies against a changing political environment.

The RSPB will continue to deliver impactful conservation projects wherever we work. To enable that, a significant focus of our plan is to ensure that we are set up to deliver our strategy sustainably through driving income growth, cost savings, and making continuous improvements to our ways of working.

We declared at the outset of the 2030 strategy that we would measure our progress each year and conduct a fuller review at the midpoint. So, we are conducting a mid-term strategy review to take stock of our achievements and challenges, and identify where our future opportunities lie to set our direction for the remaining five years of the strategy. We are asking ourselves, are the visionary outcomes we identified at the start of the 2030 strategy still right to achieve what nature needs?

This mid-term review is helping us prioritise our efforts and be clear on the contribution that the RSPB makes to deliver to the visionary outcomes for the next five years. We will share the conclusions of this review in the 2025–26 Annual Report.


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Thank you and acknowledgements

We'd like to say a big thank you to all our members, volunteers, supporters, partners, donors and funders. We're constantly striving to do more for nature and couldn't achieve what we do without you.

President and Vice Presidents

Our President, Vice Presidents and Ambassadors all generously give their time and support freely to help make a positive difference to the natural world. Thank you to them all. You can read more about our new Ambassadors on page 23.

President
Dr Amir Khan

Vice Presidents
- Dr Elizabeth Andrews MBE DL
- Sir David Attenborough OM GCMG CHCVO CBE
- Nick Baker
- Dr Mike Clarke
- Kevin Cox
- Adrian Darby OBE
- Ian Darling FRICS OBE
- Kate Humble
- Miranda Krestovnikoff
- Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS
- The Earl of Lindsay
- Sir John Lister-Kaye Bt OBE
- Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
- Bill Oddie OBE
- Professor Steve Ormerod FCIEEM FLSW
- Chris Packham CBE
- Sir Graham Wynne CBE
- Baroness Young of Old Scone

Ambassadors
- Sam Bentley
- Rachel Bigsby
- Steve Brown
- Mya-Rose Craig
- David Domoney
- Indy Kiemel Greene
- Lucy Hodson
- Megan McCubbin
- Deborah Meaden
- Ollie Olanipekun
- Nadeem Perera
- Dave Sexton
- Samuel West

Members and supporters

It would be impossible to deliver the successful projects highlighted in this report, and have the impact that we do, without the backing of our loyal members and supporters. Working together we can deliver outstanding conservation work at scale. We can connect more people to nature, bring species back from the brink of extinction, manage land and influence the policies that protect nature.

Members continue to support our mission to save nature by donating, giving their time and talents through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns, and by bringing RSPB projects to life out in the community. Our unified voice is crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and are fundamental to our work today. Without their help we simply couldn't achieve what we do. Our amazing volunteers are highly valued and offer their support across the full range of the RSPB's activities, from practical conservation and project management to meeting and greeting visitors at reserves.

All the members of the RSPB Council are volunteers too. Volunteers enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experience, energy and insight.

The RSPB has more than 13,000 volunteers who undertake 18,000 roles across the RSPB and make up 83% of our workforce by head count.

Thank you to every single one of our volunteers – your gift of time has a phenomenal impact.

Community groups

We have a network of community groups across the UK for both young people and adults alike – our Wildlife Explorer groups and our Local Groups.

These groups form a thriving, engaged and valued network that delivers impactful work in communities to save nature. Run by some of the RSPB's most loyal and passionate volunteers, our groups allow the RSPB to have an active presence across the UK.

Local Groups are an integral part of the organisation and members contribute their skills, time and energy to act for nature. Our Wildlife Explorer groups inspire and empower hundreds of young people across the UK to become advocates for nature, both now and in the future. We are very grateful to the many volunteers inspiring young people.

Celebrities and influencers

Thank you to the following people who have supported our work and helped raise the profile of the RSPB:
- Jack Baddams
- Bill Bailey
- Mya Bambrick
- Bonner Black
- Hannah Bourne-Taylor
- Carl Bovis
- Henry Day
- Mike Dilger
- George Hassall aka Green Fingered George
- Aneeshwar Kunchala
- Sam Lee
- David Lindo aka The Urban Birder
- Kate MacRae
- April Mayne
- Dara McAnulty
- David Oakes
- Sophie Pavelle
- Tyler Smith
- Matt Spracklen aka Rock 'n Roll Birder
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Lira Valencia
- Cooper Wallace aka Seagull Boy
- Iolo Williams
- Hamza Yassin

Youth Council

Our Youth Council freely support the RSPB and ensure the views of young people are represented in our work and future plans. They are:
- Alfie
- Chelsea
- Cori
- Freddie
- Gruffudd
- Indy
- Jamie
- Katie
- Leona
- Lisa
- Rhys
- Sennen
- Tash
- Thomas

Legacies

Gifts left to us in Wills make a lasting and vital difference to our work protecting nature. While we cannot thank every generous legator, we'd like to mention the following people:
- Ms Dori Lilian Andrew
- Dr Antony Robin Atherton
- Ms Barbara Anne Baines
- Mr Barry Boyle
- Mr Philip Charles Butt
- Ms Joan Olive Carter
- Ms Patricia Rest Collison
- Mr John Raymond Cooke
- Mr Brian William Curtis
- Mr Jonathan Mark Gregory
- Mrs Christina Barbara Hibberd
- Mrs Betty Gromett-Hough
- Miss Vivien Helen Johnson
- Mrs Joyce Kendrick
- Mr Michael Alec Littlejohn
- Mr Peter John Lomax
- Ms Margaret Ellen McPherson
- Mr Ian Mead & Mrs Julie Mead
- Miss J Monk
- Mrs Muriel Moore
- Mrs Heather Beatrice Richardson
- Mr Lindsay Mackwood Rowland
- Miss Jean Sainsbury
- Mr Timothy Charles Salisbury
- Mr Roy Schama & Mrs Patricia Wendy Schama
- Mrs Rosemary Violet Simmons
- Mr Alan Benjamin Sky
- Mrs Elizabeth Stewart
- Miss Paula Ann Thompson
- Mrs Joyce Annetta Villiers
- Mr John Christopher Woodward

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We'd like to give a special mention to the Ida Davis Family Foundation and their transformational grant for purchasing 100 hectares of land in Essex. This has allowed the RSPB to complete our vision for Wallasea Island nature reserve, a vast new coastal wetland protecting communities and wildlife on the East Coast.

We'd also like to extend special thanks to Jersey Overseas Aid, partnering with the RSPB, Gola Rainforest Conservation Ltd and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) on a pioneering programme in Sierra Leone to blend cocoa farming with fruit, medicinal and indigenous trees to boost agroforestry livelihoods.

This year the Philanthropy Team ran its most successful appeal ever, raising over £1.6 million to help acquire the final third of our stunning Geltsdale reserve in the North Pennines. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of the generous individuals who responded to our call to secure the future of our only freehold reserve in the English uplands. Thanks to them we can safeguard the transformative restoration that has already been achieved there and see Geltsdale, and the charismatic species that call it home, flourish in the future.

We are grateful for the support received and would particularly like to acknowledge the following:
- Aberdeen Group Charitable Foundation
- Mr Robert Adkins
- Mr Alan Alderson and Ms Sandra Allen
- Paul M. Angell Family Foundation
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Lars Atkin
- The Joan Grace Bailey Charitable Trust
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Caroline and William Barnes
- The Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation
- Mr D Benham
- The Bentley Family Trust
- The Big Give Trust
- BirdLife International
- Mr Gordon Blaikie
- Blue Nature Alliance
- Braham Trust
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- The Brown Source Trust
- CAF America
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- The Cairngorms Trust
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Chabot Family Fund
- Chalk Cliff Trust
- Charities Trust
- Mark and Mo Constantine
- Donna and Kevin Cox
- Joy Croot
- The Crown Estate (through the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme)
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Czech Society for Ornithology
- Ida Davis Family Foundation
- Ms E Desmond
- The Earthshot Prize
- Ecological Restoration Fund

- John Ellerman Foundation
- Mrs Lynne Ellis
- Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme (ELSP)*
- Environmental Resources Management (ERM) Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- The European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA)
- The Ernest Cook Trust
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- The Finborough Foundation
- Ms Nic French
- Mr Royston Furley
- Mr Paul Gadd
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- Global Environment Facility (GEF) Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR)
- Helen Gordon
- Dr John Gowenlock
- Richard Hale
- The Daphne Hamilton Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- The Helvellyn Foundation
- Henocq Law Trust
- The Corton Hill Trust
- The Reginald & Ena Hill Foundation
- Nicholas Hooper
- The Reta Lila Howard Foundation
- HSBC Bank Trust/HSBC Trust Company (UK) Limited
- The Icthius Trust
- Jersey Overseas Aid
- Chiew Yuan Keng and Richard E Hale
- Mr Richard Kerr
- The Betty Lawes Foundation
- Robert and Elizabeth Lee
- Mr Peter Leppert
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- The Lizandy Charitable Trust
- Ludlow Trust Co Ltd
- Lund Trust
- The Makin Family Trust
- Julia Maynard
- The Elizabeth C F McGregor-Dziniak Charitable Trust for Animals
- Gil and Julie McVean
- Mentor Mon Cyf
- Mr Mark Mills
- Ian Morrison
- Natural Encounters Conservation Fund
- The Nature Hubs Fund
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- Newby Trust
- NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation
- Nicola and Simon Oliver
- The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- PB Coffey & Family Charitable Trust
- Peacock Charitable Trust
- The Penchant Foundation
- Mr Michael Percival
- The Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
- The Planeterra Foundation
- The Players of People's Postcode Lottery
- Anne Reece
- The Reed Foundation
- Graham and Maureen Reid
- Roger and Evelyn Richardson
- Robin Rigg Community Fund
- The Rufford Foundation
- The Ryde Family
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- Derek and Clare Stevens Trust
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust and The Swire Charitable Trust
- Talbot Trust
- The TD Paton Trust
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Gillian Tucker
- Mr K and Mrs C Turner
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Cambridge Centre for Landscape Regeneration
- University of Glasgow
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Rosemary Warburg
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- J & J R Wilson Trust
- The Woodland Trust
- World Wildlife Fund
- Mr & Mrs Wrigley
- The Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust

* The Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme is a partnership between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Arcadia, a charitable foundation that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

We would also like to acknowledge supporters who wish to remain anonymous, and have generously contributed towards our important work.

Landfill Communities Fund and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund

We are grateful for funding and support from the following organisations through the Landfill Communities Fund and the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund:

- Biffa Award Partnerships Fund
- FCC Communities Foundation Ltd
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Fund
- SUEZ Communities Fund – Scotland
- Teesside Environmental Trust

Business supporters

The RSPB enjoys successful partnerships with business supporters to our mutual benefit. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Aldermore Bank plc
- Anglian Water
- The Ardmore
- Baringa Partners LLP
- Barratt Redrow plc
- Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited
- Broadshore Offshore Wind Farm Ltd
- Buchan Offshore Wind Limited
- Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm Limited
- Campion Wind Limited
- The Carbon Trust
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Co-op
- The Co-operative Bank
- The Cotswold Outdoor Group
- DPDgroup UK
- Econergy Renewable Energy Ltd
- Edinburgh International Conference Centre Ltd
- Elements Green Limited
- Ella's Kitchen
- The Famous Grouse
- GreenPower
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP
- holidaycottages.co.uk
- Hurtigruten Ltd
- The James Hutton Institute
- HX Group Ltd
- *i*dverde UK
- Lancashire County Council
- Lightrock Power
- Lush Ltd
- Marks & Spencer
- MarramWind Limited
- Marshalls plc
- Medway Council
- Morven Offshore Wind Limited
- Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm Limited
- Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Ltd
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- Northumbrian Water Group
- Omaze UK Ltd
- Openreach Ltd
- Ørsted Wind Power A/S
- Ossian Offshore Wind Limited
- P. Keenan Quarries
- Portsmouth Water Ltd
- PwC
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Russell & Co
- RWE Renewables
- ScotRail
- Scottish Power Renewables
- Scottish Water
- Scotch Whisky Association
- Seagreen Wind Energy Ltd
- Severn Trent Water Ltd
- Southern Water Ltd
- SSE Renewables
- SSEN Transmission
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Stromar Offshore Wind Farm Ltd
- Suntory Global Spirits
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Tesco
- Thistle Wind Partners Limited (Ayre)
- Thistle Wind Partners Limited (Bowdun)
- Turcan Connell
- UBS Optimus Foundation Singapore Ltd
- United Utilities Group Plc
- VisitScotland
- Weird Fish Limited

"Volunteers, members, supporters and donors – thank you so much for adding your voice to ours. Together, we fly."

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

National Lottery Heritage Fund

The RSPB is indebted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for their generous and ongoing support of the Orkney Native Wildlife Project, helping to safeguard the internationally important native wildlife of Orkney.

Also for the funding provided for projects across all four UK countries, including the unique opportunity to extend our reserve at Ynys-hir and supporting the restoration of seabird colonies on Rathlin Ireland.

We would also like to thank NLHF for their exceptional administration of the Welsh Government-funded Nature Networks Fund which is supporting The Curlew's Call project – Sustaining our Uplands for Nature and People in Wales – as well as Black Grouse conservation work in north Wales.

We extend our sincere thanks to NLHF for their support through the Government's Species Survival Fund in England, developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies, and delivered in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

National Lottery Community Fund

We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) in the successful delivery of the Nature Neighbourhoods project; a partnership between the National Trust, RSPB and WWF. Funding from NLCF, together with the Co-op, is supporting 18 communities across the UK to stand up for nature in their neighbourhoods.

Also, for NLCF's support of Sporting Nature, a partnership with Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association and Northern Ireland Water which inspires action for climate and sustainability across sports clubs in Northern Ireland, and for supporting volunteering and engagement activities at Lake Vyrnwy through the Vibrant Vyrnwy project.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

We would like to thank Defra for their ongoing support through the Environmental Land Management Scheme – Landscape Recovery Round 1 and Round 2.

People's Postcode Lottery

We are incredibly grateful for the support provided by players of People's Postcode Lottery, who are funding a range of projects across the UK. They are supporting a mix of urban and rural initiatives, which benefit a variety of species, but all share the common goal of connecting communities to their local nature and greenspaces.

The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund

We are also very grateful to the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, which is helping to address the climate and biodiversity crises across Scotland, through a range of rural and urban projects. RSPB Scotland has benefited from both the competitive fund, managed by NatureScot, and direct funding to local authorities through the Edinburgh Process.

Orkney Native Wildlife Project appeal

We are incredibly grateful to our individual philanthropic supporters for their generous donations towards the Orkney Native Wildlife Project appeal, which raised over £200,000 towards our important work to save our native seabirds.

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

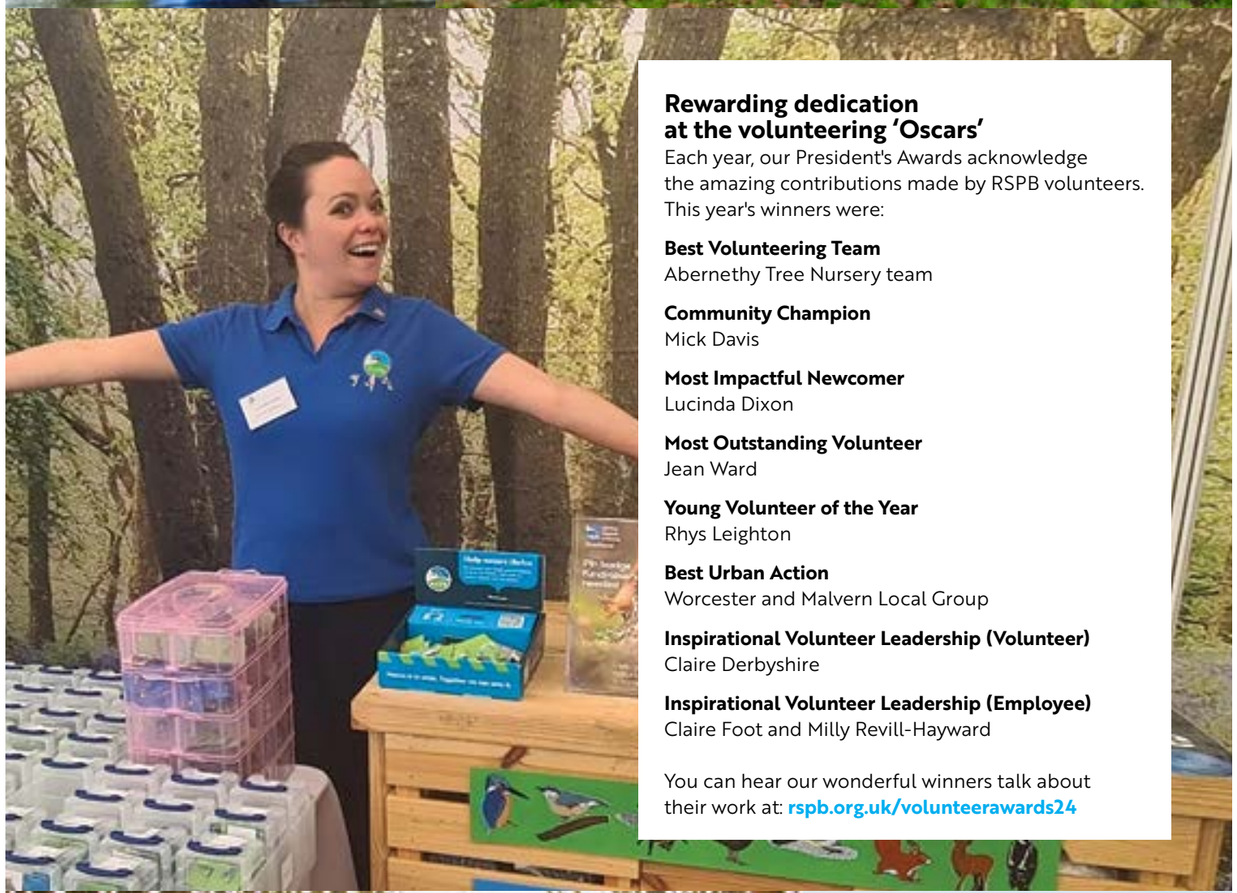
We are grateful for co-operation and support from organisations of many kinds, and would especially like to thank the following:

- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Peatland ACTION funding provided by the Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Ceredigion Nature Partnership
- Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
- Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Darwin Plus – funded by the UK Government
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) – Animal & Plant Health Agency
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA)
- Dorset Council
- Environment Agency
- Eryri National Park Authority
- European Commission – Communities For Climate (C4C)
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – ProBio
- Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Forest Research
- Heriot-Watt University
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- Investment Ready Nature Scotland – delivered through collaboration from NatureScot, Esmée Fairbairn and the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Jersey Overseas Aid Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (KfW, Credit Institute for Reconstruction), Germany
- Loch Lomond and the Trossochs National Park
- The Marine Fund Scotland 2024–2025
- Monmouthshire County Council
- National Grid
- National Highways England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP)
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural England – Conservation and Enhancement Scheme
- Natural England – Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme
- Natural England – Species Conservation Strategy
- Natural England – Species Recovery Programme Capital Grants Scheme
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Flood Management Programme Grant from the Environment Agency
- Natural Resources Wales/ Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- NatureScot
- Nature Networks Programme – delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government
- North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Northern Pennines National Landscape
- Office for Environmental Protection
- Powys County Council
- Renfrewshire Council (Sustainable Communities Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund)
- Rialtas Na hÉireann/ Government of Ireland – Shared Island Initiative
- Ribble Valley Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Forestry – Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)
- Scottish Government's Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund distributed by tsiMoray and Money4Moray
- Scottish Government Marine Directorate
- The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot
- Scottish Government Offshore Wind Directorate
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- South Downs National Park Authority
- The Suffolk and Essex Coasts and Heath's National Landscape
- Suffolk County Council on behalf of Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Tees Valley Combined Authority
- The United Nations Environment Programme/Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED)
- The Welsh Government
- The Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA in partnership with Powys Nature Partnership and Powys County Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council Place Based Investment Programme – Community Grants

Together we fly







Rewarding dedication at the volunteering 'Oscars'

Each year, our President's Awards acknowledge the amazing contributions made by RSPB volunteers. This year's winners were:

Best Volunteering Team
Abernethy Tree Nursery team

Community Champion
Mick Davis

Most Impactful Newcomer
Lucinda Dixon

Most Outstanding Volunteer
Jean Ward

Young Volunteer of the Year
Rhys Leighton

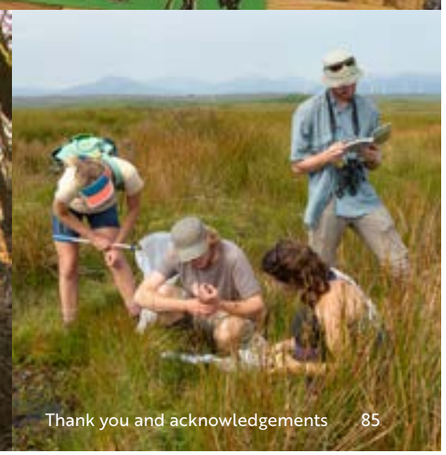
Best Urban Action
Worcester and Malvern Local Group

Inspirational Volunteer Leadership (Volunteer)
Claire Derbyshire

Inspirational Volunteer Leadership (Employee)
Claire Foot and Milly Revill-Hayward

You can hear our wonderful winners talk about their work at: **rspb.org.uk/volunteerawards24**





Governance

The RSPB has a clear and effective governance structure which demonstrates how we're run – from how we make decisions to how we achieve our objectives.

The RSPB's governing body is the RSPB Council, composed of 12 members.

Good governance is fundamental to a charity's success. It enables and supports a charity's compliance with the law and relevant regulations. It also promotes a culture in which everything works towards fulfilling the charity's vision. Elements of governance include the charity's purpose, its leadership, how it ensures integrity, equality, diversity and inclusion, its approach to decision making, risk and control, how it ensures its effectiveness and its measures to promote suitable openness and accountability.

Governing body

The RSPB's overall governing body is the RSPB Council. In line with our most recent governance review, this is now composed of 12 Council members (Trustees). The RSPB Council has overall responsibility for the conduct of the RSPB. It also ensures that the RSPB operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, statutes, byelaws and the law. It is supported by several committees that all have specific roles, defined by their formal terms of reference.

Each committee meets several times a year. The honorary positions of President and Vice President, and our Ambassadors, are not Council members and are not involved in making or influencing Council decisions.

Leadership and effectiveness

The RSPB Council operates and makes decisions collectively, working as a team, with a balance of skills, knowledge and experience, in order to be as effective as possible.

Every year, the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity our Trustees bring to the Council are reviewed alongside the effectiveness of the Council. Trustee and committee vacancies are advertised on the RSPB website, online and sometimes through specialist search agencies. The appointment process is rigorous and is managed by the Council's Nominations and People Committee.

Information is provided about the RSPB and Trustees' duties to people who express an interest in being a Trustee, before there is formal confirmation of a willingness to serve and a process of interview and due diligence to match the regulatory requirements for charity trustees. Trustees are nominated on the recommendation of Council and elected by members at the AGM.

New Trustees receive a briefing pack outlining their role, duties and accountabilities, with information about the RSPB and its policies, structure and work. We hold induction sessions for each new Trustee, to support them with understanding their roles and responsibilities and the RSPB's strategy and operations. Trustees are also offered opportunities to learn more about the RSPB's work, such as individual meetings with staff, visits to nature reserves and training on important work areas.

Trustees, nominated trustees, and senior staff complete a register showing their interests and related party transactions. This is updated each year, and whenever any changes occur.

As part of the induction, continuing training and annual appraisal for all Trustees, staff and volunteers, information is provided on:

- Our codes of conduct – the values, rules and principles that we expect our staff, volunteers and Trustees to follow.
- Our ethical principles – how we want to engage with the world.
- Our brand – how we want our supporters, stakeholders and the wider public to think about us.
- Our values and behaviours – how we work and relate to each other.

Day-to-day management is delegated to an executive board of six people, headed by the Chief Executive.



RSPB Council members from left to right: Judith Annett, Jim Lowther, Patrick Butcher, Jane Reeves, Professor William Sutherland, Susanna Dinnage, Catherine Dugmore, Sir Andrew Cahn, John Mason, Robert Cubbage and Kerry ten Kate.

RSPB Council

Sir Andrew Cahn
Chair of Council
- Nominations and People Committee (Chair)
- Finance Committee

Dr Ben Caldecott*
- Commercial and Partnership Committee

John Mason
- Scotland Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Audit and Risk Committee

Patrick Butcher
Co-opted member
- Finance Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Nominations and People Committee

Jane Reeves
- England Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Professor William Sutherland
- Conservation Advisory Committee

Robert Cubbage
Treasurer
- Finance Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Judith Annett
- Northern Ireland Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Conservation Advisory Committee

Kerry ten Kate
- Conservation Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Catherine Dugmore
- Audit and Risk Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Susanna Dinnage
- Communications and Engagement Committee (Chair)
- Scotland Advisory Committee

Jim Lowther
- Finance Committee

Council members who resigned or retired during 2024/25 are:
Kevin Cox (Chair of Council), Dr Vicki Nash, Veronica Pickering, Jim Sloane, Keith Jones and Lord John Randall.
We thank them for their huge contributions to the RSPB.
* Not pictured above.

Supporting Committees
Council is supported by the following committees:

Scrutiny and stewardship
- **Finance Committee**:
  assures the integrity of financial plans, reporting and controls. Six members (of whom four are Council members).
- **Audit and Risk Committee**:
  provides scrutiny of the adequacy of the governance, risk and associated control framework, giving assurance that those arrangements are effective and comprehensive. Six members (of whom four are Council members).
- **Nominations and People Committee**:
  develops and maintains procedures for making recommendations on appointments to Council, to ensure a diverse membership and range of skills. Reviews succession plans for current members of Council, and seeks assurance of the good stewardship of the RSPB workforce. Six members (of whom all are Council members).

Support and advice
- **Conservation Advisory Committee:**
  provides independent insight, advice and guidance on conservation strategy approaches, policy and programmes, and advises Board and Council on positioning, risks and opportunities related to specific projects or policy issues.
- **Communications and Engagement Advisory Committee:**
  provides advice to Board and Council on matters pertaining to the RSPB's communications, campaigning and engagement with stakeholders across all relevant channels.
- **Commercial and Partnerships Advisory Committee:**
  provides advice to Board and Council on matters pertaining to commercial and partnership opportunities and activity.
- **Country Advisory Committees** in each UK nation provide insight on the views and interests of stakeholders relevant to the current and future strategy and the work of the RSPB in the country. The committees advise and assist the country staff in the promotion of interest in the work of the Society, including membership and fundraising opportunities, and help develop and influence the policy agenda of the Society.
- In all cases, membership is eight members (two of whom are members of Council), plus up to four guests invited to support areas of strategic focus.

Youth Council members participate as members of advisory committees.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities
The Trustees are responsible for overseeing that adequate accounts are kept that show and detail the RSPB's transactions. It is a requirement that the accounts are available and make the charity's financial position clear at any time. The Trustees also ensure that financial statements comply with reporting and legal regulations, and meet the charity's constitution, as set out in the Charter and Statutes.

Charity law in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland requires Trustees to prepare financial statements each financial year. These must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the group, and of the income and expenditure of the group for that period. They are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, and financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, known as FRS102.

When preparing these statements, the Trustees must:
- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Follow the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates.
- State whether they have followed applicable accounting standards, subject to any exceptions which are disclosed and explained.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the RSPB's assets, and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Oversight of remuneration
All RSPB staff, including the Chief Executive and Executive Board, are covered by the same remuneration policy. This is based on externally benchmarked salary bands. This policy is approved by the RSPB Council and is subject to review.

The salary of the Chief Executive is overseen by the Nominations and People Committee. The performance of the Chief Executive is subject to a formal appraisal process against previously agreed measures, and this is discussed at an annual appraisal meeting. Recommendations for pay progression are made in line with the RSPB's pay policy for staff.

The Chief Executive works with the Nominations and People Committee to oversee the salaries of the Executive Board, in line with the same policy.


Andy Stokes

Executive Board members from left to right: Katie-jo Luxton, Andrew Cook, Beccy Speight, Russell Powell, Emma Marsh, James Robinson

Executive Board

The Executive Board is responsible for the management of the RSPB, headed by the Chief Executive. It consists of Executive Directors who report to the Chief Executive and attend Council meetings, including the Executive Director of Operations; Global Conservation; Digital Technology and Communications; Income and Conservation Investment; and Finance, Governance and Strategy. The Executive Board tends to meet jointly with other senior leaders at the RSPB, in particular the directors of each of the four countries of the UK. The purpose of the Executive Board is to deliver the RSPB's mission through proposing and delivering its strategy and through the careful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us.

"I became the RSPB's Chief Executive in August 2019. My role is to lead the organisation, build relationships with key partners, represent our views externally and work with the Council and Executive Board to develop our forward direction and ensure we deliver that plan. I believe I am in the best possible place to make a real difference for birds, the natural world and people in the context of the nature and climate crisis. I feel fortunate to work with a great team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters to do just that."

Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

"I have been Chief Operating Officer since August 2023. I work with country teams to implement the RSPB's strategy across the UK, lead organisational improvement and oversee the ways we support and motivate our staff and volunteers to meet our ambitions. My previous roles in the organisation include Country Director for RSPB Northern Ireland, Head of Nature Policy, and Regional Director for Eastern England."

James Robinson
Chief Operating Officer

"I joined the RSPB in May 2024. I work with colleagues across the RSPB to bring in funding and resources to deliver our strategy and help close the funding gap for nature more widely. This includes engaging and growing the RSPB's membership; partnering with businesses to support our work and transition to a nature positive economy; running our commercial operations; and deploying conservation investment to achieve landscape-scale nature restoration."

Andrew Cook
Executive Director, Income and Conservation Investment

"I lead the RSPB's mission to save species, protect habitats and restore landscapes. My team includes our core conservation specialisms in science, ecology, policy, species recovery and advisory. I also lead our International programme of work – working in the UK Overseas Territories and selected countries, and collaborating with the BirdLife International partnership on the East Atlantic Flyway and Marine programme. I've worked for the RSPB for over 25 years in a range of different roles and I've held my current position since November 2021."

Katie-jo Luxton
Executive Director, Global Conservation

"I lead the RSPB's communications, campaigns, engagement and technology teams to enable the RSPB to effectively deliver our conservation strategy. Award-winning initiatives such as Urgent Conversation, Save Our Wild Isles as well as the incredible #BirdoftheWeek TikTok have transformed our ability to make the biggest possible difference for nature and people. I've worked for the RSPB for almost 10 years, my previous roles have been Regional Director for the Midlands and Director, RSPB England. I have been in my current role since August 2022."

Emma Marsh
Executive Director, Digital Technology and Communications

"I joined the RSPB in February 2023, from the National Trust. I lead on ensuring the RSPB is financially sustainable, well-governed and is on course to meet the aims laid out in its strategy. As Europe's largest nature conservation charity, we're very grateful for the support we receive. We want to spend every penny in a way that helps further our cause. We do this by working with colleagues and external partners to ensure we achieve good value for the money we spend. We do so in a controlled way and so that we are aligned to our strategy."

Russell Powell
Executive Director, Finance, Governance and Strategy

Integrity

The RSPB's Council has ultimate responsibility for the charity's funds and assets, as well as our reputation. Each Council member must adhere to a Code of Conduct and endorse the RSPB's five Ethical Principles. These principles are based on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) ethical principles for the charity sector and incorporate the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

1. **Beneficiaries first**:
   the interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do (page 90).
2. **Environment**:
   nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature (page 90).
3. **Integrity**:
   we should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct (page 91).
4. **Openness and accountability**:
   we create a culture where our supporters, staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds (page91).
5. **Right to be safe**:
   every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect, and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (page 91).

1. Beneficiaries first

To ensure we have the greatest impact for nature, we:

- Carry out our work to provide the greatest impact for people and nature with integrity, regardless of whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB's reputation, leadership or operation.
- Encourage trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate, and by listening and responding to our beneficiaries. This facilitates engagement and communication.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with our beneficiaries in mind.
- Work with organisations and individuals whose goals and values are consistent with our work, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

2. Environment

Our conservation work has a huge impact for nature. We preserve and restore natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact, we're working to reduce the footprint of all our operations, through our systems and policies (see pages 64–67).
For environmental management we:

- Take a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (UN Compact principle 7).
- Promote greater environmental responsibility (principle 8).
- Encourage the development of environmentally friendly technologies (principle 9).

3. Integrity principle

To uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct, we:

- Ensure the appropriate systems are in place to ensure decisions are well-considered and free from any conflict of interest. This includes our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks (see page 96).
- Ensure our resources are managed in a responsible way, and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for. This includes policies and procedures to combat bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion. We also ensure the systems and processes are in place to enable our expenditure to be audited, meaning that money, funding and grants can be tracked from receipt to expenditure.
- We work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).
- Anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies are built into our procurement policies.

4. Openness and accountability

We try to create a culture where RSPB supporters, staff, volunteers, institutional partners and the public can see and understand how we work, how we deal with issues, and how we spend our funds.

Through the *RSPB Magazine,* our website (rspb.org.uk) and wider communications, we strive to keep you informed of and involved in our projects and activities. This means we operate in an open and transparent way within our legal and regulatory requirements. We want to share information about how we work and ensure it can be accessed easily.

5. Right to be safe

Every person who volunteers, works for, or is in contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect, and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (UN Compact principles 1 and 2). This means we:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power, including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities. See also page 92.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of concerns about abuse or any kind of inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands their expectations, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don't feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour (UN Compact principle 5).

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

A full statement of the steps we take to prevent slavery and human trafficking taking place in our business and supply chains can be found at rspb.org.uk/slavery-act (UN Compact principle 4).



Swift Mapper reaches a milestone

In 2024, we were thrilled to reach a total of **100,000** records submitted to Swift Mapper. These records help us understand where swift colonies and nest sites need to be protected across the UK and find the best places for new nesting sites to be created.

Chris Knights (rspb-images.com)

Inclusion

At the RSPB, we believe our ambition to save nature must involve everyone. We are committed to tackling barriers that prevent all people, including our supporters, volunteers, members and employees, from being able to act for nature.

While our inclusion work covers a number of intersections to break down barriers faced by marginalised people to working and enjoying nature, one of our big priorities has been focused on disability and access.

We know that in relation to accessibility, disabled people are at significantly higher risk of social isolation, which leads to high rates of poor mental health and exclusion from participating in the things they care about. Nature helps people feel well and creates opportunities to connect with other people who share that passion.

We need to act to remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing our nature reserves so that they can get involved in the important work of addressing the nature crisis. We've already had successes, two of which have been:

- the introduction of access maps, which are being created for reserves as part of our brand redesign. These maps equip our visitors with high-quality, consistent information in advance of their trip, to help them plan their visit.
- providing training for our workforce to give them more confidence in how they welcome visitors of all abilities.

However, we recognise that we need to do more. In 2023–24 we identified low levels of confidence in our workforce in their ability to welcome neurodivergent visitors, those with sensory disabilities, and people with access needs linked to old age. We also know our own workforce need easy and equitable access to reasonable adjustments to how they work. In looking at how we face into these challenges we will ensure we seek external expertise to inform our journey.

We will design and trial interventions to address gaps in our confidence to improve the experiences of disabled people who want to join us. We will continue to review our recruitment and management practices to make them more inclusive. And by working in partnership with organisations like RNIB and Sense, we're taking the steps we need to open our wonderful spaces to all and enable more people to act for nature.

For more information about our progress towards achieving race equity see page 61.



Sight loss awareness training

We joined forces with the RNIB to provide sight loss awareness training to staff and volunteers at our Belfast Window on Wildlife nature reserve. As part of this ongoing partnership, the training participants had the opportunity to gain an insight into the daily challenges of living with sight loss and how to create a more inclusive and accessible environment for all.

Caring for our supporters

Volunteers

At the RSPB, we believe that volunteering is one of the most powerful ways people support our mission to save nature. Every hour, every skill, every smile shared by our volunteers helps make a real difference – we simply couldn't do what we do without them.

That's why we're committed to making sure every volunteer feels valued, supported, and part of the RSPB family. We want everyone who volunteers with us to have such a positive experience that they'd happily recommend it to a friend – and many already do!

From day one, every volunteer has a named RSPB contact – someone they can turn to with questions, ideas, or just for a chat. We also run a yearly, confidential volunteer survey to hear directly from our volunteers about what's working well and where we can do better. All volunteers are subject to a Code of Conduct that sets out the behaviours expected from all of us to maintain the trust and confidence of our supporters, partners, and the general public.

We offer our volunteers a wide range of support, including:

- Reimbursed travel expenses.
- Relevant training to help volunteers feel confident in their role.
- Access to wellbeing and resilience resources.
- Careers advice and coaching for those volunteering as a stepping stone to a career in conservation.
- Annual volunteer-specific 'thank you' events, such as barbecues and dawn chorus walks.
- Long service awards and our annual President's Awards to celebrate outstanding contributions.
- A 'thank you' card, which entitles volunteers to discounts in our cafés and shops, as a small token of our appreciation for their work.

Volunteering with the RSPB is more than just giving your time and talents – it's about joining a community that cares deeply about nature and about each other. And we're striving to make sure our volunteers feel that every step of the way.

Members

We also provide services to our members and supporters, responding to more than 225,000 enquiries each year and sustaining our relationships with around two million members, supporters and volunteers. Members receive a quarterly magazine, and we send email newsletters to our supporters, including the fortnightly Notes on Nature email which reaches 1.2 million readers, and our regular campaigning newsletter, which is sent to 70,000 people. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the RSPB website was viewed by 4.5 million users, who looked at more than 18 million pages.

Safeguarding

We want everyone to enjoy their involvement with the RSPB, and know that we must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable people, and all who encounter our organisation, through:

- Our Safeguarding Policy, which is kept under review to ensure it is meeting the needs of the organisation.
- Safeguarding training for our workforce (including our volunteers) which is continually revised and updated.
- A comprehensive Speak-up Policy to protect our workforce.
- Our Whistleblowing Policy and independent helpline which is supported by an anonymous reporting capability.
- Our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Bespoke lone traveller training delivered via expert partners to those that work internationally, equipping them to operate in high-risk environments appropriately.
- Membership of external safeguarding groups to ensure we are doing the right things in the right way.

We take steps to ensure our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and government guidance, and complies with regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. And to ensure that these steps are robust, we report regularly on safeguarding issues to our Trustees.

You can see our Safeguarding Policy at **rspb.org.uk/safeguarding**

How we generate funds to save nature

We're grateful to receive most of our funds from individuals. This comes in a range of different ways, such as appeals, raffles, lotteries, community fundraising, legacies and membership.

We work hard to build long-lasting relationships with grant funders, trusts and corporate organisations. Much of our conservation work also generates vital income, which further supports our work to save nature. This includes funds raised through land and farming, and the sale of our research to other organisations.

Our loyal RSPB shop customers help fund our work through the purchase of bird food products, binoculars and telescopes, and educational materials. RSPB members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do, and our work to save nature is only possible thanks to their ongoing support.

Protecting and restoring habitats, saving species and helping end the nature and climate emergency is the key motivation behind our work. We're dedicated to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world. Our commitments to our members and supporters are:

- We always look to improve how we work, and we welcome your feedback.
- We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds, other wildlife, and the places they call home.
- We endeavour to always show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature.
- We also share the latest news of what we're achieving thanks to you, and give you control over how you hear from us, whilst managing the cost of doing so.

To achieve our objective to save nature, we carry out fundraising activities. We do this with RSPB staff, volunteers and the help of carefully selected professional fundraisers and commercial participators. Professional fundraisers are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers who act as agents in raising funds on behalf of the RSPB. Commercial participators are usually businesses who encourage the sale of their goods or services on the basis that the RSPB will receive funding as a result. In all cases, we have contractual arrangements with these fundraising partners that set the standards and obligations that our fundraising activities must meet.

We regularly monitor the quality of all telephone marketing calls and conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with our face-to-face fundraisers. We ask all new members for feedback to understand their experience of joining us, and this also identifies any areas for improvement. Our Local Group network also takes part in fundraising activities. We give group committee members full training and guidance in how to fundraise with the public as part of a group activity.

As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances. RSPB staff complete mandatory training including safeguarding and fundraising compliance. Our face-to-face fundraisers have full training in talking about the RSPB's cause in a transparent and straightforward way to the members of the public they meet. The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and the Data and Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out of receiving fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that supporters have the best possible experience in our fundraising efforts. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB's promise to our supporters.

The RSPB complies with the Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's guides and code. RSPB members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted, with the opportunity to change these at any time.

We endeavour to provide an exemplary service, to be transparent about our communication aims and to provide appropriate opportunities for engagement. Like others, we do not always get this right. We provide our complaints policy on our website and this clearly explains how a complaint can be made. Each complaint is fully addressed and improvements are made to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 we received 336 complaints about our fundraising activities communicated by phone, post, email, SMS, face-to-face, and via TV or radio.

Professional advisers

Bankers
Lloyds Bank PLC
249 Silbury Boulevard
Secklow Gate West
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire MK9 1NA

Co-operative Bank PLC
4th Floor
9 Prescot Street
London E1 8BE

Investment adviser
Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Independent auditors
Crowe U.K. LLP
Chartered Accountants &
Registered Auditors
55 Ludgate Hill
London EC4M 7JW

Insurance broker
Griffiths & Armour Limited
12 Princes Parade
Princes Dock
Liverpool L3 1BG

Pension actuary
Mercer Limited
1 Whitehall Quay
Whitehall Road
Leeds LS1 4HR

Pension administrator
Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Legal advisers
Withers LLP
16 Old Bailey
London EC4M 7EG

Hewitsons LLP
Shakespeare House
42 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8EP

Turcan Connell
Princes Exchange
1 Earl Grey Street
Edinburgh EH3 9EE



Good news for Critically Endangered Pine Hoverflies

After another year of successful captive breeding by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, 4,000 Pine Hoverfly larvae were released into three sites in Strathspey in spring 2024. Seven hundred larvae were retained for captive breeding and by autumn there were more than 15,000 larvae. The majority will be released as adults when they emerge in spring and early summer 2025.

Decision making, risk and control

We strive for decision-making processes that are rigorous and efficient, incorporate effective delegation, and are informed by assessments of risk and control.

Decision making
RSPB Council delegates authority for most activities to the Chief Executive and to the employees. There's a detailed schedule of delegation, and systems and policies are in place to monitor these delegations.

Risk
The Trustees are accountable for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity, working with the Board. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner, considering all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Risk registers, assurance mapping and internal audit provide comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- delivery of our strategy and projects, with a particular focus on environmental impact;
- our environmental footprint and credentials;
- our reputation;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters and visitors, and, in particular, to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;
- our compliance with relevant law and regulation;
- management of our financial, physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data and technological assets;
- retaining and building know-how delivering good governance and embodying a positive, inclusive and ethical organisational culture;
- protecting and growing our income.

Our risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council via its Audit and Risk Committee every quarter, and in greater depth once each year. Following the most recent review in April 2025, the Trustees confirmed that they are satisfied with such arrangements and identified several strategic risks for the year ahead that represent, by their nature, both opportunity and challenge. The RSPB will work to limit the negative impact on the delivery of our charitable objectives and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite.

Control
The RSPB has a clear framework for monitoring its impact, progress and approach to risk management. Risk registers cover the full range of financial and non-financial risks, and we operate the 'three lines' model for risk control and monitoring. This separates execution from control policies and from audit, and maps and rates the control framework. Council approves a plan for internal audits, and a full review of external audit service provision is undertaken periodically with the active involvement of suitably experienced Trustees. The Audit and Risk Committee meets in private with external auditors once a year.



A huge win for migrant birds

The Portuguese Prime Minister has officially ruled out plans to build an airport on the Tagus Estuary near Lisbon, following a campaign by environmental organisations including the RSPB. The estuary is one of Europe's most important wetlands and a haven for thousands of migratory birds, including Black-tailed Godwits that breed in the UK.

Kevin Sawford (rspb-images.com)

Risk description	Risk response
Environmental challenges	
The global climate and biodiversity crisis is an existential threat to the future of life on this planet; yet the political response, globally and domestically, doesn't match the scale of action required. Nature recovery continues to be insufficiently prioritised in public debate and funding.	The RSPB's strategy, mission and purpose focus on tackling these issues. We will continue to address nature and climate as a single interlinked emergency, raising awareness of the importance of nature in tackling climate change, and promoting and delivering nature-based solutions for both mitigation and adaptation.
Many people are disconnected from nature and are unaware that it's in crisis, while those who are aware often feel powerless or unclear about how they can take action. In some cases, relationships between people, nature and the climate lead to a real or perceived conflict between people's needs and nature's needs.	We carry out activities to help people connect with and take action for nature in lots of ways, including via our reserves network, events, education programmes, online activities, and wide-scale engagement activities, such as Big Garden Birdwatch and Wild Isles. We will help and empower our supporters to act for nature in their own lives, including through active participation in representative forums.
The urgent need to decarbonise our energy systems, mitigate climate impacts, and stimulate economic growth in 'green sectors', is leading to a huge increase in proposals for offshore and onshore renewables and the expansion of intensive forestry. There is a risk that nature becomes collateral damage in this transition.	We focus our efforts on advocating for a strategic spatial approach to siting new renewables and forestry away from protected sites and important places for birds (including for foraging seabirds at sea). We work to ensure that sensitive areas are mapped and considered during decision making, and advocate for mitigation and compensation measures for species and habitats where necessary.
A lack of commitment to long-term funding for farming in the UK may accelerate the loss of nature-friendly farming, with negative knock-on consequences for biodiversity.	We work alongside farmers and campaign with them for the nature-friendly farming budget to be maintained and increased. We advocate for effective schemes in all four UK countries, highlighting evidence from schemes that have helped nature recover.
Constraints in our BirdLife partners, especially because of emerging major reductions in overseas aid programmes, reduce our ability to achieve our objectives for global land, species and marine programmes.	We will assess partner needs and, where practical and affordable, create integrated, tailored technical and financial assistance plans.
The ever-increasing need for investment in conservation data management and curation, along with increasing demand, puts pressure on corporate reporting, conservation management decisions and income generation activities.	We have made a significant investment to address data gaps in our habitat mapping, which will support both income generation and the development of a first inventory baseline for carbon accounting. We will pilot digital platforms to drive greater workforce capability and compliance in following key processes for managing our conservation data and information.
Risks to our income and sustainability	
A continued reduction in the public's disposable income and competition for funding amongst charities means that existing and emerging sources of income are subject to significant volatility in the current economic climate, particularly income from membership.	New income opportunities are continuously explored, with all new arrangements subject to review by our Ethical Gifts Board, and major changes reviewed by our Trustees.
Following a period of considerable inflationary pressure, we may continue to experience greater uncertainty in the economic operating environment, resulting in adverse financial conditions that could increase operating costs.	Board and Trustees routinely monitor the operating environment for changes while regularly reviewing long-term financial projections. These are updated when the operating environment significantly changes.
Internal factors (technology, cyber security, people and culture)	
The number and scale of the organisation's technology priorities overwhelm our capacity to deliver strategic priority systems to time, cost and quality, whilst also preventing the maintenance, upgrade or replacement of multiple existing core systems.	All technology requests will be assessed and prioritised to form a roadmap for the delivery of technology priorities, with clarity given when requests cannot be actioned. We will focus on simplifying and modernising core platforms within our cost base, and will carefully manage and prioritise any decisions to adopt new technology and retire outdated technology in tandem.
If our data and information governance is not managed adequately, we will not be able to make the most of the opportunities emerging technologies present. If we do not continue to prioritise our cyber security then we would become open to attack.	Information governance and data will be fully coordinated and managed under one approach, to ensure our data is fit for purpose to allow us to adopt the full benefits of AI. We will continue to prioritise cyber security, both from external attacks and internal systems, and continue to implement Information Security training for all staff.

Financial review

The RSPB's financial reserves exist to ensure we can cover the costs of running the organisation in case of loss of income, or an emergency. Following Covid, we deliberately chose to spend some of the financial reserves we had built up over the pandemic, and complete projects that had been put on hold.

But, as we approached the end of spending those additional financial reserves, we found ourselves facing huge inflationary pressures on our running costs. We also continue to see global economic uncertainty: primarily through the threats, consequences, and escalation of events stemming from international tensions, conflicts, and political instability, which are continuing to have a knock-on effect on the global economy.

Like all organisations, in every sector, the uncertain financial and external context has meant rapidly rising running costs. The cost of goods and services has continued to rise, and the National Insurance threshold change announced in the budget in October 2024 on its own means we now need to find over £2.0 million extra in our budget every year. This is impacting the whole charity sector, not just the RSPB.

The external volatility looks here to stay, and we must continue with careful financial management to maintain our financial sustainability for the future. We remain financially resilient, and are within our policy reserves range.

The support and commitment of our members and supporters remains strong and gives us a sound financial base to meet the challenges ahead in our mission to save nature.

Summary

This year has seen excellent growth in income, up £25.1 million (14.8%) to a record £195.0 million. Charitable expenditure increased by £8.8 million (7.1%) and together with the costs of raising funds remaining flat and unrealised investment gains of £0.6 million, this led to a surplus for the year (before the actuarial gain in respect of the pension scheme) of £18.8 million.

There are two important considerations in how the £18.8 million surplus is spent. Firstly, there has been an increase in restricted funds during the year, including the very successful Omaze deal that raised £4.9 million to be spent on peatlands. This is recognised in-year as income and so contributes to the in-year surplus but is to be spent down in future years. Secondly, income has been received that significantly contributes to the cost of acquisitions at Geltsdale and Wallasea (see pages 28–29 and 30–31), the costs for which are capitalised and shown in fixed assets.

We finished the year with free financial reserves of £40.3 million, which represents 12 weeks' total expenditure cover and is at the middle of the range set by Council. We will continue to plan prudently and manage our reserves in the light of the current economic outlook, and be able to respond by taking tough decisions when required to ensure our financial stability. Total financial reserves increased by £29.9 million, being net income of £18.8 million and an actuarial gain in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of £11.1 million. Cash and investments increased by £6.4 million to £59.3 million, which ensures that we have a good level of liquidity on which to run the organisation.

The £17.4 million decrease in the Pension Scheme liability reflects the RSPB's annual contribution to the deficit of £7.5 million, together with updates to the valuation assumptions used to calculate the liability. The main changes being a reduction in the scheme liability of £27.9 million, partially offset by a decrease in the value of scheme assets of £10.5 million. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed in 2017 and changes to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the pension trustees. The annual deficit payment for 2024–25 was £7.5 million.



Total income has increased by

£25.1 million

Income

Overall, total income increased by £25.1 million (14.8%) to £195.0 million which highlights the tremendous support we receive from our members and supporters.

Membership subscriptions and donations increased by £2.5 million to £56.5 million. £1.2 million was due to higher retention income, reflecting the strong retention rate of 90.6%, and an increased uptake of Gift Aid, whilst donations increased by £1.4 million. Total members at the end of the year increased to 1.16 million. RSPB membership is key to the RSPB's success, financial and otherwise. It has always been central to who we are, it provides unrestricted income and gives us the mandate we need to generate change in the world and save nature.

Legacy income had a record-breaking year, increasing by £6.6 million to £49.1 million. Legacies notified but not yet recognised also rose by £1.0 million over the year to £38.4 million. This reflects the trust our supporters have that we will use this income to invest in conservation for the benefit of future generations.

Grants, corporates and trusts income at £50.0 million was also a new high and £16.1 million better than last year. There were increases across all three income streams, with grants up £7.6 million, corporates up £4.9 million and trusts up £3.6 million. This has been used to support a wide range of large-scale projects, both in the UK and internationally, including the Orkney Native Wildlife project (£1.7 million), Rathlin Island restoration (£1.6 million), peatland restoration in Scotland (£1.2 million) and the African-Eurasian Flyway Project (£1.0 million).

Income from commercial activities increased by £0.8 million to £35.8 million. A £1.5 million increase in commercial conservation activities, largely consultancy and advice, was offset by a £1.2 million reduction in our commercial trading activities.

The cost of raising these funds was on a par with the prior year, at £42.7 million, and demonstrates the amount of work that has been put into managing costs while facing into the wider economic challenges that all organisations are facing.

We manage

222

nature reserves

covering

158,651

hectares

providing a home for

18,700

species

Expenditure for managing nature reserves came to

£57.8 million

Charitable expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities increased by £8.8 million (7.1%) to £134.1 million. £4.4 million of this relates directly to increased expenditure on major conservation projects for which we resourced our teams, but we also saw impacts from higher global prices.

Expenditure on managing our nature reserves was £4.6 million higher than last year, at £57.8 million.

Research, policy and advisory expenditure at £49.7 million was £3.6 million higher, showing additional project and operational expenditure, for projects and salary costs despite a staff reduction of 2%.

We work to educate and inspire support, whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders and partners or through political support. Over the past year we have worked together to protect some of the most important places for nature locally and globally. We have recovered and restored habitats. We have helped species climb up the recovery curve. We maintained a high level of spend in this area at £21.7 million, £0.5 million higher than last year.

Supporter care expenditure was £0.2 million higher than last year, at £4.9 million.

Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. They consider a sustained fall in income of 10–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of 8 to 16 weeks' worth of expenditure. Free financial reserves at 31 March 2025 were £40.3 million representing 12 weeks' total expenditure, a reduction of one week's cover against the previous year.

The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories (see note 21 on page 126):

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2025 were £293.4 million, which is made up of:
  - Tangible and intangible fixed assets of £240.7 million
  - Cash and investments of £59.3 million
  - Working capital and long-term liabilities of £5.2 million
  - Pension liability of £11.8 million
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied, at the discretion of the Trustees, to any of the RSPB's charitable purposes, at 31 March 2025 were £96.8 million, made up of:
  - General funds of £46.8 million, including £6.5 million of tangible and intangible fixed assets, and £40.3 million of free financial reserves, held as £20.3 million of investments and £20 million working capital and long-term liabilities
  - Designated funds of £61.8 million represented by nature reserves owned by the RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
  - Pension reserve liability of £11.8 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2025 were £196.3 million, made up of:
  - Nature reserves of £170.8 million
  - Other tangible assets of £1.6 million
  - Investments of £18.1 million.
  - Working capital and long-term liabilities of £5.8 million.
- Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2025 endowment funds were £0.2 million.

Investment policy and powers

The RSPB's investment powers are as set out in the Charter and Statutes and are wider than those contained in the Trustees Investment Act 2000.

Approach

The RSPB's primary investment objective is to maintain the real value of its investments. However, as a proportion of the financial reserves are likely to be held in the longer term, it is appropriate to invest conservatively a proportion of the funds to generate income and/or real growth. Investment properties arising from legacies are managed by the RSPB until disposal.

Responsible investment

In managing our investments, we follow the principles of socially responsible investing. These principles are to:

- invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.
- use influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.
- avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuels and had <0.1% exposure during the year under review.

Performance

The Trustees rely upon specialist advice for fund selection and allocation. Investment performance is compared to an independent benchmark and the target for investment returns is to outperform this composite benchmark by at least 1% per annum over a rolling three-year period.

Over the 3 years to 31 March 2025, investments returned 3.3% against a benchmark of 5.9%. Under performance was due primarily to the exclusion of oil and gas stocks from the portfolio during 2022 and not being invested in the Magnificent 7 US tech stocks during 2024. Both of these areas contributed to a high benchmark over the 3 year period. However, absolute performance was positive over each year. We continue to hold a proportion of our cash holdings in investment grade bonds, designed to increase the returns from our cash holdings without exposing them to the level of volatility associated with equity investment funds.



We invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.



We use our influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.



We **avoid** investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.



Membership gives us the mandate we need to generate change in the world and save nature

Fundraising activity

Investment in fundraising activity has continued to grow, which has helped secure a £25.1 million increase in voluntary income over the year. £14.6 million of this is restricted, including £4.9 million from the partnership with Omaze, £2.2 million from the Ida Davies family foundation and £7.1 million additional grant funds. £10.5 million is unrestricted, largely £6.6 million additional legacy income. We will continue to invest to help drive further income growth in 2025-26.

Grant making

The RSPB makes grants each year to important partners and organisations, at Trustees' discretion, on a project basis where such projects meet the RSPB's charitable objectives and contribute towards strategic outcomes. In making awards, consideration is given to the most effective and efficient use of resources.

Relationship with subsidiaries

The RSPB group includes a number of subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 22 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension

The pension liability in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, that was closed to future accrual in 2017, has remained at a similar level to last year. The factors affecting this movement are largely outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity to changes in discount and inflation rates.
The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the pension scheme. In addition to closing the defined benefit scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the Pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work but closes the deficit over a reasonable period. The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees.

The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1 April 2024 and resulted in annual employer contributions of £6.0 million per annum with effect from 1 April 2024 for 3 years and £7.51 million for 10 months from 1 April 2028. This level of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit in just under 4 years. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation, which will reflect the funding position as at 1 April 2027. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the Pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the Pension Fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £69.4 million.

Outlook for the future

Last year, 2024–25, was a good year for income, and we should take a moment to celebrate the achievements for nature, habitats and species. A good year for income is a good year for wildlife.

This is thanks to a high level of income, allowing us to progress projects, land purchases and habitat restoration, all of which we are incredibly grateful for.

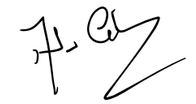
However, when this income is restricted, it allows us to progress projects or initiatives, such as the purchase of the final third of the land at Geltsdale in Cumbria, but doesn't cover the cost of running the organisation or most of our staff costs.
We must, therefore, focus on building unrestricted income to meet our increased costs in these areas.

Membership and your support remain key here. So, over the next three years, we will seek to grow our overall number of members to reinforce our income and mandate to operate.

We will continue to monitor our costs, utilising reserves in line with our reserves policy, whilst implementing continuous improvements and embedding the outcomes, to prioritise our efforts and be clear on the contribution that the RSPB makes to deliver its strategic outcomes for nature.

Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for your continued support of the RSPB.



Signed on behalf of Council

Sir Andrew Cahn,
Chair of Council
20 August 2025

Independent Auditor's report

to the Trustees of the RSPB

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees
As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 91, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud
Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts

and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

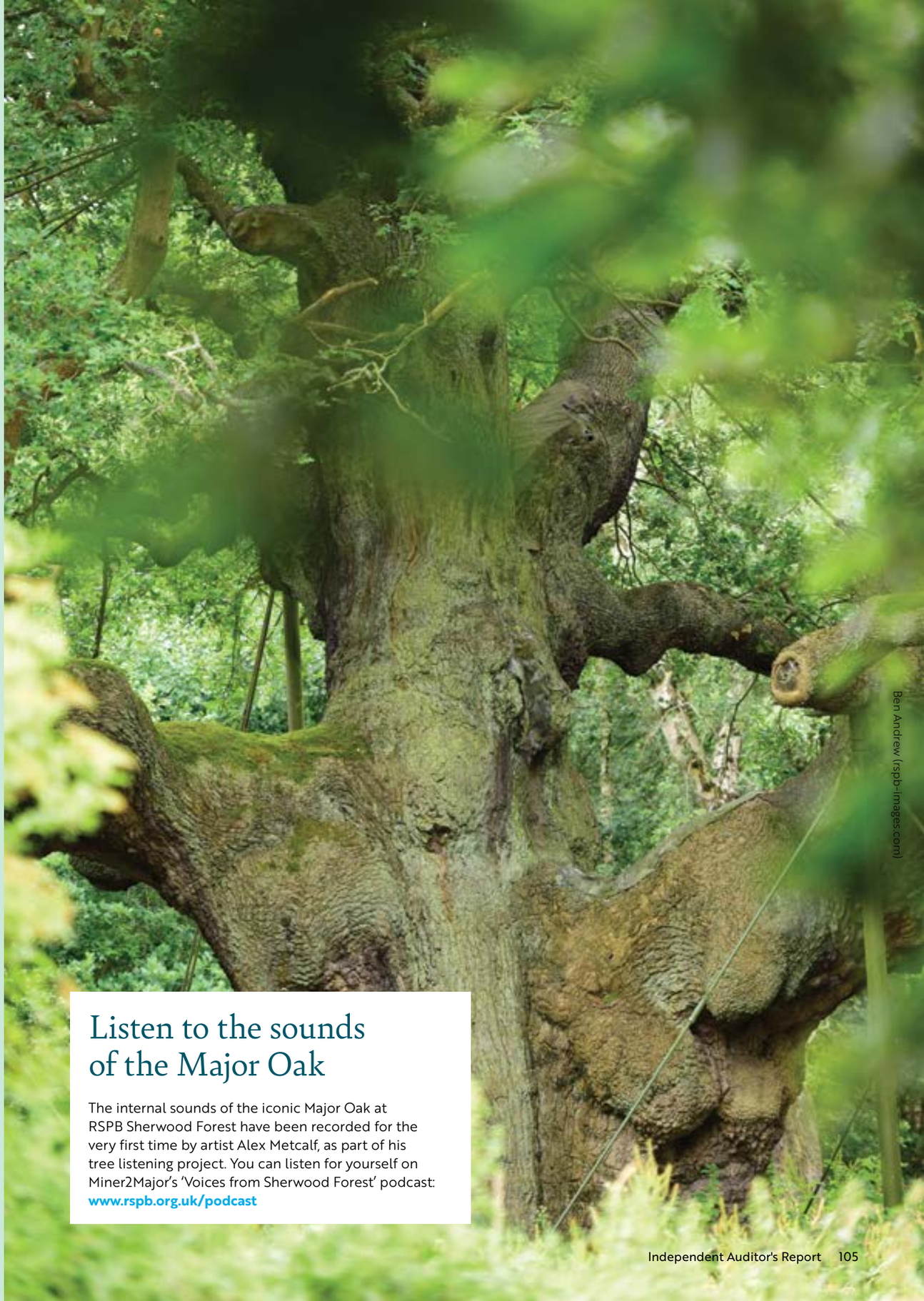
Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

21 August 2025

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity under regulation 10(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations by virtue of its eligibility under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.



Listen to the sounds of the Major Oak

The internal sounds of the iconic Major Oak at RSPB Sherwood Forest have been recorded for the very first time by artist Alex Metcalf, as part of his tree listening project. You can listen for yourself on Miner2Major's 'Voices from Sherwood Forest' podcast: **www.rspb.org.uk/podcast**

Consolidated statement of financial activities
for the year ended 31 March 2025

Income and expenditure	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**2025 Total £'000**	2024 Total £'000
Income and endowments						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	50,348	6,126	-	**56,474**	54,005
Legacies	4	43,204	5,893	-	**49,097**	42,541
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	4,925	45,055	-	**49,980**	33,911
Total voluntary income		98,477	57,074		**155,551**	130,457
Total income from commercial activities	6	35,810	-	-	**35,810**	35,039
Investment income and interest	7	1,728	-	-	**1,728**	1,717
Charitable activities						
Land and farming income		799	-	-	**799**	1,619
Events and media sales		889	-	-	**889**	646
Total income from charitable activities		1,688	-	-	**1,688**	2,265
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	187	-	-	**187**	399
Total income		**137,890**	**57,074**	**-**	**194,964**	**169,877**
Expenditure on						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial activities	8	27,534	-	-	**27,534**	28,261
Costs of generating voluntary income	8	14,963	-	-	**14,963**	14,319
Investment management costs	8	172	-	-	**172**	134
Total cost of raising funds		42,669	-	-	**42,669**	42,714
Net resources available for charitable activities		**95,221**	**57,074**	**-**	**152,295**	127,163
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves	8	31,473	26,365	-	**57,838**	53,242
Research, policy and advisory	8	33,787	15,918	-	**49,705**	46,154
Education and inspiring support	8	21,474	213	-	**21,687**	21,184
Supporter care	8	4,892	-	-	**4,892**	4,700
Total expenditure on charitable activities		91,626	42,496	-	**134,122**	125,280
Total expenditure		**134,295**	**42,496**	-	**176,791**	**167,994**
Net gain on investments		622	-	-	**622**	2,857
Net income		**4,217**	**14,578**	-	**18,795**	4,740
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme		11,130	-	-	**11,130**	(11,588)
Net movement in funds		15,347	14,578	-	**29,925**	(6,848)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		81,504	181,718	244	**263,466**	270,314
Total funds carried forward		**96,851**	**196,296**	**244**	**293,391**	**263,466**

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 25.
Notes 1 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets
as at 31 March 2025

	Note	**2025 Consolidated total £'000**	2024 Consolidated total £'000	**2025 Charity £'000**	2024 Charity £'000
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	**232,515**	224,137	**231,592**	223,214
Other tangible assets	12	**6,698**	7,389	**6,698**	7,389
Intangible assets	12a	**1,465**	1,317	**1,465**	1,317
Investments	13	**38,681**	40,940	**38,681**	40,940
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	**-**	-	**3,801**	3,801
		279,359	273,783	**282,237**	276,661
Current assets					
Stock		**4,605**	5,152	**222**	222
Debtors	14	**26,564**	26,462	**30,075**	29,045
Short-term cash		**20,636**	12,013	**14,920**	7,581
		51,805	43,627	**45,217**	36,848
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	**(22,241)**	(20,852)	**(18,904)**	(17,325)
Net current assets		**29,564**	22,775	**26,313**	19,523
Total assets less current liabilities		**308,923**	296,558	**308,550**	296,184
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	**(3,775)**	(3,940)	**(3,775)**	(3,940)
Net assets excluding pension liability		**305,148**	292,618	**304,775**	292,244
Pension scheme liability	24	**(11,757)**	(29,152)	**(11,757)**	(29,152)
Net assets including pension liability		**293,391**	263,466	**293,018**	263,092
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		**46,847**	48,890	**46,474**	48,516
Designated funds		**61,761**	61,766	**61,761**	61,766
Pension reserve	24	**(11,757)**	(29,152)	**(11,757)**	(29,152)
		96,851	81,504	**96,478**	81,130
Restricted funds		**196,296**	181,718	**196,296**	181,718
Endowment funds		**244**	244	**244**	244
Total funds	20 & 21	**293,391**	**263,466**	**293,018**	**263,092**

Notes 1 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 20 August 2025 and signed on behalf of Council by:

Andrew Cahn
Chair of Council

Robert Cubbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

For the year ended 31 March 2025	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	**152,295**	127,163
Less total expenditure on charitable activities	**(134,122)**	(125,280)
Net incoming resources before gains/(losses)	**18,173**	1,883
Gains/(losses) on investments and pension scheme	**11,752**	(8,731)
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	**29,925**	(6,848)
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	**8,379**	563
Other tangible assets	**(692)**	(269)
Intangible assets	**148**	1,317
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	**(1,669)**	(12)
Movement on pension scheme	**17,395**	(5,074)
	23,561	(3,475)
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	**6,364**	(3,373)
Cash and investments available at start of year	**52,953**	56,326
Cash and investments available at end of year	**59,317**	**52,953**

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2025	Note	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	23	**19,849**	900
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		**1,728**	1,717
Additions to nature reserves		**(11,485)**	(3,745)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		**(3,573)**	(3,641)
Additions to intangible fixed assets		**(617)**	(1,581)
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		**232**	491
Purchase of investments		**(4,864)**	(29)
Proceeds from disposal of investments		**7,597**	3,500
Net cash used for investing activities		**(10,982)**	(3,288)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Bank loan		**(219)**	(237)
Net cash used for financing activities		**(219)**	(237)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		**8,648**	(2,625)
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		**12,493**	15,118
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**21,141**	12,493
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents			
Cash in hand		**20,636**	12,013
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		**505**	480
Cash and cash equivalents		**21,141**	**12,493**



Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)

Reedbed runways help Cranes take flight

Cranes prefer to nest in shallow water in reedbeds, but due to their huge wingspans, they need clear areas to land and take off from. Reeds rapidly colonise in areas of shallow water, so the team at Lakenheath Fen cut 'runway' strips in the reeds, allowing the Cranes to land safely near their nests. In 2024, three chicks fledged from the reserve and we look forward to more success in the future.

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter and a charity registered in England and Wales (number 207076) and in Scotland (number SC037654). The address of the registered office is The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.

2) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, and the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn.

The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity's financial statements.

None of the subsidiary directors received any remuneration or emoluments in respect of their services to those subsidiaries. Where directors are officers/employees of the RSPB they will receive remuneration only from the RSPB.

The RSPB's commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiaries, RSPB Sales Limited and RSPB Nature Regen Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB.

RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB's charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

RSPB Nature Regen Limited was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2023 (registration number 14776951). The principal activities are the sale of ecosystem and land management services.

March Farmers (Washland) Limited, a company limited by shares (registration number 01039814). This entity is a wholly-owned subsidiary acquired in 2008 to secure the leasehold interest in land adjacent to the Nene Washes reserve in Cambridgeshire. Through the March Farmers Habitat Restoration project, the former arable land is being restored to floodplain grazing marsh.

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity was being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leased land on the Haweswater Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise. The entity ceased to trade on 30 September 2024 and the business was transferred to the RSPB.

RSPB Oronsay, a Scottish Limited Partnership of which the RSPB is the General Partner. This entity was established in 1996 to carry out the business of farming and nature conservation on the island of Oronsay.

RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and a non-profit company limited by shares, registered in the Cayman Islands (registration number 304647). This entity was established in 2015 to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment through the acquisition of land to create or extend nature reserves in the Cayman Islands.

The RSPB holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The RSPB holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity and as such is potentially exempt from taxation on its income and gains to the extent that they are applied to its charitable purposes. There was no tax charge during the year. The subsidiaries donate, under Gift Aid, all distributable profits to the Charity each year.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are related to:

Retirement benefit liabilities – as disclosed in note 24, the RSPB has a Defined Benefit Scheme. Year-end recognition of the liabilities under this scheme and the valuation of assets to fund these liabilities require a number of significant assumptions to be made including key financial market indicators such as inflation, discount rate, expectations on future salary growth and asset returns. These assumptions are agreed by the scheme actuary and RSPB management. For each 0.1% change in the discount rate, the carrying amount of pension obligations would change by an estimated £3.7 million.

Income recognition of legacies – legacies are recognised on the settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier. Management have accrued a portion of the legacy pipeline on a basis consistent with prior years which equates to legacy receipts in the month after year-end.

Grant income recognition – where a grant contains performance related conditions, income is recognised in line with achievement of those conditions. Management use total expenditure incurred to deliver the performance conditions at the end of each reporting period as a reasonable basis.

Donated assets – the value of donated land and buildings recognised within fixed assets is based on external surveyor valuations. This includes specific reports and also use of market valuations by internal surveyors.

Funds

Unrestricted funds

General funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 21.

Restricted funds

Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 21.

Endowment funds

Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 21.

Capital expenditure

Purchased assets, individually exceeding £2,500 at cost, are included on the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS102 'Property, Plant and Equipment' (note 12). Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised in the year of acquisition and depreciation is charged annually. During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, selected nature reserves were restated to their fair value (note 12).

Depreciation

Nature reserves, either owned as freehold land or held as leasehold land where the lease is held in perpetuity, are considered to have an indefinite useful life and are not depreciated.

Other fixed assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their anticipated useful lives as follows:

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:	
Buildings	50 years
Reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves – leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset
Intangible fixed assets	6 to 10 years

Going concern

We continue to see global economic uncertainty: primarily through the threats, consequences, and escalation of events stemming from international tensions, conflicts, and political instability, which are continuing to have a knock-on effect on the global economy. Trustees review and respond to financial projections that detail the potential financial impacts of this economic environment on the RSPB. They also undertake scenario planning to assess the potential short, medium, and longer-term financial implications of other risks and opportunities.

Looking forward to 2025–2026 we plan to utilise financial reserves to support the organisation and to invest in strategic priorities, whilst remaining within the 8–16 weeks cover policy range.

The financial outcome for 2024–2025 saw an operating net income of £18.8 million, £6.4 million of which increased our cash and investments holdings to £59.3 million. Much of this increase relates to restricted funds and we have seen a further £1.7 million reduction in free financial reserves, now at £40.3 million. We will continue to spend funds to support our strategic aims, utilising reserves in line with our reserves policy to do this. Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Investments

The investments in the subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost less provision for impairment.

All other investments are stated at fair value with gains and losses being recognised within income and expenditure. Properties included in investments are those assigned under legacy bequests, awaiting disposal at a future date, and are stated at their fair value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. Investment cash is held for investment purposes only. It is the intention of the Trustees that fixed asset investments will not be drawn upon within the following year.

Stocks

Stocks, which include livestock and products for resale, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Financial instruments

The RSPB has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

Income

Income is included in the SOFA when the RSPB is entitled to the income, the receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. If these conditions are not met then the income is deferred.

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:

1. Membership income is treated as a donation and is accounted for when received.
2. Legacies are accounted for based on settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier.
3. Grants, including government grants, received in advance of the associated work being carried out are deferred only when the donor has imposed preconditions on the expenditure of resources (see Note 17).
4. Donated services are recognised at the value of the gift to the Charity which is the amount the Charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market. They are included in the SOFA and balance sheet as appropriate.

Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Costs incurred that relate to multiple purposes are analysed and allocated to the appropriate categories in line with the joint cost allocation principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102).

1. Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
2. Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
3. Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
4. Research, policy and advisory includes the costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.
5. Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
6. Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
7. Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.
8. The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
   - ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
   - the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions

The Defined Benefit Scheme was closed on 31 March 2017 and replaced with a Defined Contribution Scheme.

The Defined Benefit Scheme amount charged in resources expended is the net of the interest cost and interest income on assets. Re-measurements are recognised immediately in Other recognised gains and losses.

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

With regard to the Defined Contribution Scheme, the amounts charged in resources expended are the employer contributions in the year. The employer contribution rate matches the employee rate up to a maximum of 7%.

Redundancy and termination payments

Redundancy and termination liabilities are recognised when the obligation to transfer economic benefits has arisen. The value of this liability represents the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the obligation(s) at the reporting date.

Operating leases

Operating lease rentals are charged and credited to the SOFA on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end, in accordance with FRS102. Any gains or losses arising on translations are reported as part of the transaction within the SOFA and are not material; they are therefore not disclosed separately.

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Membership subscriptions	**47,152**	46,048
Donations	**9,322**	7,957
	56,474	54,005

4) Legacies

The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £38,373,838 (2024: £37,387,871).

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Grants	**35,866**	28,271
Corporates	**6,136**	1,263
Trusts	**7,978**	4,377
	49,980	33,911
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations		
Services	**42**	63
Goods	**-**	17
	42	80

Major grants received during the year include the following:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	**11,787**	8,604
Scottish Natural Heritage*	**2,558**	1,587
Natural England*	**2,175**	1,965
Scottish Government*	**1,215**	1,209
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	**1,017**	1,367
Environment Agency*	**791**	118
Landfill Communities Fund	**768**	241
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	**101**	262
Forestry Commission*	**2**	8
	20,414	15,361
International		
European Union	**2,069**	3,960
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund	**3,944**	2,948
Climate Action Fund Round 3	**402**	223
Local Councils and other	**9,037**	5,779
	35,866	28,271

*Government grants used to fund conservation projects and recognised in the accounts. There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies relating to the government grants or other forms of government assistance from which the charity has directly benefited recognised in the accounts.

Income from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation of £340,429 (2024: £192,796) is included within Grants, corporates and trusts and includes support for the following projects: Natur am Byth, Species on the Edge; Tir Canol; LELP Fermanagh; Pesticide Collaboration; Nature North: Thriving Northern Coasts & Estuaries; Accelerating Lowland Raised Bog Recovery in Northern Ireland; Curlew.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**23,111**	18,806
Research, policy and advisory	**10,840**	8,175
Education and inspiring support	**1,245**	1,129
	35,196	28,110
Acquisition of nature reserves	**670**	161
	35,866	28,271

6) Commercial activities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trading		
Retail, mail order and trade	**18,125**	19,514
Catering	**5,121**	4,886
Events	**538**	544
	23,784	24,944
Conservation		
Consultancy and advice	**6,211**	4,976
Land and farming income	**1,681**	1,392
	7,892	6,368
Fundraising		
Commercial	**2,650**	2,065
Lottery	**1,007**	951
	3,657	3,016
Publications, films and education		
Advertising	**335**	569
Promotional sales	**142**	142
	477	711
Total	**35,810**	**35,039**



Giving Sand Martins a home

Artificial Sand Martin nest banks created by the RSPB Worcester and Malvern Local Group, with help from the Canal and Rivers Trust, have been a huge hit, with 180 chicks successfully fledging in 2024.

7) Investment income and interest

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	**262**	150
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**1,466**	1,567
	1,728	1,717
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	**187**	399

8) Total expenditure

Cost of raising funds	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	**2025 Total £'000**	2024 Total £'000
Costs of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	10,116	937	**11,053**	10,814
Grants, corporates and trusts	1,878	370	**2,248**	1,844
Legacies	1,515	147	**1,662**	1,661
Total cost of generating voluntary income	13,509	1,454	**14,963**	14,319
Costs of commercial activities	26,550	984	**27,534**	28,261
Investment management costs	172	-	**172**	134
Total cost of raising funds	40,231	2,438	**42,669**	42,714
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	55,565	2,273	**57,838**	53,242
Research, policy and advisory	44,653	5,052	**49,705**	46,154
Education and inspiring support	19,381	2,306	**21,687**	21,184
Supporter care	4,842	50	**4,892**	4,700
Total expenditure on charitable activities	124,441	9,681	**134,122**	125,280
Total expenditure	**164,672**	**12,119**	**176,791**	**167,994**

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £6,895,336 with support costs of £472,674 (2024: £7,632,914; £510,858). Grants were awarded to 74 organisations (2024: 92); no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available on **rspb.org.uk/grant-funding**

Future commitments:
Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £7,053,238 (2024: £5,000,076). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2025 for payments in future years.

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance and IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management and other £'000	Governance £'000	**2025 Total £'000**	2024 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	404	641	732	552	109	**2,438**	2,293
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	376	598	682	515	102	**2,273**	2,136
Research, policy and advisory	836	1,329	1,517	1,143	227	**5,052**	4,634
Education and inspiring support	382	606	692	522	104	**2,306**	2,157
Supporter care	8	13	15	11	3	**50**	71
Total charitable expenditure	1,602	2,546	2,906	2,191	436	**9,681**	8,998
Total support costs	**2,006**	**3,187**	**3,638**	**2,743**	**545**	**12,119**	**11,291**

Support costs are included in the expenditure reported in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities and have been allocated on the basis of salary percentage. The cost allocation includes an element of judgement and the RSPB has had to consider the cost benefit of detailed calculations and record keeping.

Governance costs include audit, legal advice for Trustees and the costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements, such as Trustees' meetings.

10) Audit fees

The total audit fees were:	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Statutory audit		
Charity	**62**	59
RSPB Sales Limited	**37**	36
RSPB Nature Regen Limited	**5**	5
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**5**	4
Farming for Nature	**-**	4
Total audit fees	**109**	108

During the year there were £30,210 fees (2024: £9,270) for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.



Sporting Nature project kicks off

RSPB NI is working alongside Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and NI Water through the National Lottery-funded Sporting Nature project. Together we're working with GAA clubs and their communities to take action for wildlife.

Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,486 (2024: 2,517).

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Average staff numbers by activity:		
Generating incoming resources	**628**	594
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**733**	779
Research, policy and advisory	**797**	815
Education and inspiring support	**288**	286
Supporter care	**40**	43
	2,486	2,517

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2025 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Remuneration	**77,130**	73,242
National Insurance	**6,796**	6,372
Pension contributions	**4,547**	4,354
	88,473	83,968

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on page 89.

11) Staff costs (continued)

The total salary of all higher paid employees earning in excess of £60,000, including Directors, are shown in bands of £10,000 below.

			2025 No.	2024 No.
£60,001	–	£70,000	**54**	26
£70,001	–	£80,000	**15**	5
£80,001	–	£90,000	**10**	12
£90,001	–	£100,000	**-**	2
£100,001	–	£110,000	**1**	1
£110,001	–	£120,000	**3**	-
£120,001	–	£130,000	**-**	1
£130,001	–	£140,000	**1**	-
£160,001	–	£170,000	**-**	1
£170,001	–	£180,000	**1**	-
			85	48

Under the RSPB's pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 83 (2024: 48) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme rules. The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £12,467 (2024: £11,760).

Redundancy and termination payments of £638,228 (2024: £218,475) were made in the year.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the six (2024: 8) Directors were £895,698 (2024: £848,970), of which £212,169 (2024: £200,069) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £30,660 (2024: £28,372).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 14 (2024: 15) Trustees on Council business amounted to £8,139 (2024: £15,558).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £15,876 (2024: £17,640).



Ancient shrimp reintroduced to RSPB Mersehead

Together with staff from the NatureScot-backed Species on the Edge project, the team at RSPB Mersehead reintroduced Tadpole Shrimp eggs in summer 2024. Adults have successfully emerged, making the reserve one of just three sites in the UK where these tiny creatures, which date back to the Triassic Period, can be found.

Craig Macadam

12) Tangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves			Other tangible assets			Total
	Freehold land	Leasehold land	Buildings	Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Cost							
At 1 April 2024	184,112	1,732	72,425	3,662	4,676	33,611	**300,218**
Additions	8,146	-	3,339	-	145	3,428	**15,058**
Disposals	(1)	(22)	(91)	-	(497)	(1,973)	**(2,584)**
At 31 March 2025	192,257	1,710	75,673	3,662	4,324	35,066	**312,692**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2024	-	608	33,525	2,648	4,064	27,847	**68,692**
Charge for the year	-	18	3,077	87	327	3,817	**7,326**
Disposals	-	(22)	(81)	-	(488)	(1,948)	**(2,539)**
At 31 March 2025	-	604	36,521	2,735	3,903	29,716	**73,479**
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2025	**192,257**	**1,106**	**39,152**	**927**	**421**	**5,350**	**239,213**
At 31 March 2024	184,112	1,124	38,900	1,014	612	5,764	**231,526**

Net book amount	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Nature reserves		
Freehold land	**192,257**	184,112
Leasehold land	**1,106**	1,124
Buildings	**39,152**	38,900
	232,515	224,136
Other tangible assets		
Other properties	**927**	1,014
Motor vehicles	**421**	612
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	**5,350**	5,764
	6,698	7,390
Total tangible fixed assets	**239,213**	**231,526**

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds leasehold land of £550,000 (2024: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds freehold land of £373,000 (2024: £373,000).

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value of £69,370,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

In 2016, land with an historic cost of £42,401,000 was revalued at £97,779,000. This £55,378,000 increase in value was reflected in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

12a) Intangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Website £'000	**Total £'000**
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	1,581	**1,581**
Additions	617	**617**
Disposals	-	**-**
At 31 March 2025	2,198	**2,198**
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	264	**264**
Charge for the year	469	**469**
Disposals	-	**-**
At 31 March 2025	733	**733**
Net book amount		
At 31 March 2025	**1,465**	**1,465**
At 31 March 2024	1,317	**1,317**

Intangible fixed assets relate to the costs to develop internal software including the RSPB website.

13) Investments – charity and consolidated

Investments at fair value	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Investment cash	**505**	480
Equities, bonds and other stocks		
Equities	**13,059**	12,696
Corporate bonds	**21,689**	24,622
Government bonds	**1,623**	1,586
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**6**	6
	36,377	38,910
Investment properties within the UK	**1,799**	1,550
	38,681	40,940

Equities, Corporate Bonds and Government Bonds are held in unit trusts
Investment properties are revalued every five years by professional external valuers. They were last revalued at 31 March 2021, based on their fair value at that date. Trustees have considered the valuations in the intervening years and they do not consider that there has been a significant change in value between the valuation date and the balance sheet date.
The amount includes property assigned under legacy bequests and donated property.

Movement during the year	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Fair value at 1 April	**40,940**	41,664
Fees	**(184)**	(134)
Additions	**4,860**	22
Dividends reinvested	**4**	7
Disposals	**(7,597)**	(3,500)
Net gain on revaluation at 31 March	**633**	2,857
Movement in investment cash	**25**	24
Fair value at 31 March	**38,681**	40,940
Historical cost as at 31 March	**30,686**	30,363

13) Investments – charity and consolidated (continued)

The Charity investments in its wholly owned subsidiaries are held at cost and represent the aggregate amount of the subsidiaries' assets, liabilities and funds. The subsidiary investments are:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	**3,250**	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**551**	551
	3,801	3,801

14) Debtors – charity and consolidated

	2025 Consolidated £'000	2024 Consolidated £'000	**2025 Charity £'000**	2024 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	**8,209**	5,576	**4,422**	3,302
Other debtors	**2,869**	3,872	**2,869**	3,813
Legacies	**4,663**	3,181	**4,663**	3,181
Prepayments and accrued income	**10,823**	13,833	**10,559**	13,213
Amounts due from subsidiaries	**-**	-	**7,562**	5,581
	26,564	26,462	**30,075**	29,090

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year	**2025 Consolidated £'000**	2024 Consolidated £'000	**2025 Charity £'000**	2024 Charity £'000
Trade creditors	**4,334**	4,136	**3,929**	3,795
Other creditors	**3,937**	5,269	**3,937**	5,268
Deferred income (see note 17)	**7,463**	6,493	**4,951**	3,739
Accruals	**6,356**	4,735	**5,936**	4,303
Bank loans	**151**	219	**151**	219
	22,241	20,852	**18,904**	17,324

Amounts falling due in more than one year	**2025 Consolidated £'000**	2024 Consolidated £'000	**2025 Charity £'000**	2024 Charity £'000
Deferred income – lease premium	**711**	725	**711**	725
Bank loans	**3,064**	3,215	**3,064**	3,215
	3,775	3,940	**3,775**	3,940

On 31 March 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Triodos Bank. The loan was for £0.7 million (fixed rate 4.097%) and was used to finance a range of sustainable energy projects across our nature reserves. The capital and interest will be repaid over a 20-year period using the ongoing energy savings together with income from electricity generation.

On 6 December 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds Bank. This loan was for £0.5 million (fixed rate 2.506%) and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl Bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan was repaid in full as at December 2024 using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council.

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated (continued)

On 25 April 2022 the RSPB entered into a loan facility with Triodos Bank. A loan of £2.8 million (fixed rate 5.240%) was drawn down on 21 June 2022 and used to fund the development of four modular cafés on our reserves at Conwy, the Dee Estuary, Frampton Marsh and The Lodge. The capital and interest will be repaid over 20 years using profits from the café operations.

There are two loans with funders, associated with grants received: £125,000 (3.0 % interest) with the People's Postcode Lottery repayable over seven years to 2029; £46,000 (0.0 % interest) with the Welsh Government repayable over five years to 2027.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2025 not provided for in the accounts were £2,359,824 (2024: £77,811).

17) Deferred income – charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April	**725**	740
Amount released to income	**-**	-
Amounts due within one year	**(14)**	(15)
Balance at 31 March	**711**	725
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April	**6,493**	6,457
Amount released to income	**(5,493)**	(5,457)
Amounts due within one year	**6,449**	5,478
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	**14**	15
Balance at 31 March	**7,463**	6,493
Deferred income: balance at 31 March	**8,174**	**7,218**

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £725,000 (2024: £740,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £6,449,000 (2024: £5,478,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £4,937,000 (2024: £3,770,000) and commercial trading £2,512,000 (2024: £2,708,000).



Dormice set up home at Leighton Moss

Hazel Dormice were recorded at Leighton Moss for the first time in 2024. These little rodents have colonised the reserve naturally, following their reintroduction at the neighbouring Hawes Water/ Gait Barrows Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Mark Sisson (rspb-images.com)

18) Operating leases – commitments and contracted income

Commitments: properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods.
The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Less than 1 year	1,561	62	**1,623**	2,158
2 – 5 years	2,536	-	**2,536**	2,752
Over 5 years	6,242	-	**6,242**	6,456
	10,339	62	**10,401**	11,366

Lease payments of £2,534,164 (2024: £2,448,684) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Less than 1 year	**755**	930
2 – 5 years	**1,349**	976
Over 5 years	**3,521**	2,612
	5,625	4,518

Lease income of £801,190 (2024: £1,142,674) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

The Trustees have given indemnities to executors under the standard terms for legacies received; they believe the chance of significant claims arising as a result of these to be negligible.

20) Statements of funds – charity and consolidated

The purpose for which funds are held can be analysed as follows:

	Total funds 1 April 2024 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2025 £'000**
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	48,890	137,890	(133,050)	622	(7,505)	**46,847**
Designated land fund	61,766	-	-	-	(5)	**61,761**
Pension liability	(29,152)	-	(1,245)	11,130	7,510	**(11,757)**
Total unrestricted funds	81,504	137,890	(134, 295)	11,752	-	**96,851**
Restricted funds						
Nature reserves	168,395	5,996	-	-	-	**174,391**
Other tangible assets	1,854	887	(1,134)	-	-	**1,607**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	3,101	32,837	(25,231)	-	-	**10,707**
Research, policy and advisory	8,197	17,176	(15,918)	-	-	**9,455**
Education and inspiring support	171	178	(213)	-	-	**136**
Total restricted funds	181,718	57,074	(42,496)	-	-	**196,296**
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	**263,466**	**194,964**	**(176,791)**	**11,752**	**-**	**293,391**

20) Statements of funds – charity and consolidated (continued)

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £5,000 from the Designated Land Fund to the General Fund. A transfer of £7,510,000 from the General Fund to the Pension Liability Fund represents a pension deficit recovery payment in line with the triennial valuation as at 1 April 2021, see note 25.

Inter-company reconciliation

	RSPB Charity 2025 £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd 2025 £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd 2025 £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd 2025 £'000	RSPB Nature Regen Ltd 2025 £'000	Elimination 2025 £'000	**RSPB Consolidated 2025 £'000**
Income	168,902	137	35,116	5	642	(9,838)	**194,964**
Expenditure	(150,729)	(122)	(26,156)	(5)	(504)	725	**(176,791)**
Other recognised gains	11,752	-	-	-	-	-	**11,752**
Profit/(loss)	29,925	15	8,960	-	138	(9,113)	**29,925**
Gift aided	-	(15)	(8,960)	-	(138)	9,113	**-**
Net movement in funds	29,925	-	-	-	-	-	**29,925**
Net Assets at 31 March 2024	263,093	551	3,250	373	-	(3,801)	**263,466**
Net Assets at 31 March 2025	293,018	551	3,250	373	-	(3,801)	**293,391**

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2025, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and surplus were £305,711, £423,891 and £18,865 respectively (2024: £295,489, £438,878 and £66,569).

The Charity holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2025, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and drawdown were £6,184, £481,133 and £26,266 respectively (2024: £10,451, £404,064 and £42,599 surplus).

The results of both interests have not been consolidated into the core financial statements; to do so would not materially alter them.

During the year ended 31 March 2025, the Charity paid £114,732 (2024: £318,047) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan and £1,426,390 (2024: £1,364,840) to Gola Rainforest Conservation LG.

Unrestricted funds include free and general funds that are not designated for particular purposes.

Designated funds comprise the Land Fund which represents land and buildings purchased using unrestricted funds including the investment in March Farmers (Washland) Limited.

Restricted funds comprise:

- The Nature Reserves Fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £3,637,280 (2024: £6,024,695) held for future acquisitions.
- The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £11,006,523 (2024: £6,994,423) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds are comprised of permanent endowments.

21) Analysis of net assets between funds

The Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in a suitable form to enable them to be applied in accordance with any restrictions imposed, as set out below:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2025**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Asset type					
Nature reserves	-	61,761	170,754	-	**232,515**
Other tangible assets	5,091	-	1,607	-	**6,698**
Intangible assets	1,465	-	-	-	**1,465**
Investments	20,338	-	18,099	244	**38,681**
Current assets	40,307	-	11,498	-	**51,805**
Current liabilities	(17,290)	-	(4,951)	-	**(22,241)**
Long-term liabilities	(3,064)	-	(711)	-	**(3,775)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	46,847	61,761	196,296	244	**305,148**
Pension liability	(11,757)	-	-	-	**(11,757)**
Net assets	**35,090**	**61,761**	**196,296**	**244**	**293,391**

Free reserves which are available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees are held as investments or working capital:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2025**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Net assets excluding pension liability	46,847	61,761	196,296	244	**305,148**
Less: Operating assets					
Nature reserves	-	(61,761)	(170,754)	-	**(232,515)**
Other tangible assets	(5,091)	-	(1,607)	-	**(6,698)**
Intangible assets	(1,465)	-	-	-	**(1,465)**
Available reserves	40,291	-	23,935	244	**64,470**
Less: Restricted and endowment	-	-	(23,935)	(244)	**(24,179)**
Free reserves	**40,291**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**40,291**

22) Connected charities and related party transactions

The RSPB is one of the global partners in BirdLife International (registered charity number 1042125), an umbrella organisation for entities with similar objectives throughout the world. Further information about this organisation can be obtained by writing to BirdLife International at The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ.

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd £'000	RSPB Nature Regen Ltd £'000
Balance at 1 April 2024	141	4,995	-	143
Gift Aid paid	(30)	(6,138)	-	(40)
Gift Aid due	15	8,960	-	138
Grants received	-	-	(5)	-
Other inter-company transactions	20	(478)	5	(165)
Balance at 31 March 2025	**146**	**7,339**	**-**	**76**

23) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net income for the year	**18,795**	4,740
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	**7,795**	7,264
Gains on investments	**(449)**	(2,723)
Interest and dividends received	**(1,728)**	(1,717)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	**(187)**	(399)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	**547**	(225)
Increase in debtors	**(102)**	(827)
Increase in creditors	**1,443**	1,301
	26,114	7,414
Movement in pension scheme	**(6,265)**	(6,514)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**19,849**	**900**



Recording the sounds of the forest

In Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest, we're deploying new technology funded by Foundation Prince Albert II de Monaco, to help build a picture of the animals that live here. Audio recorder units capture the sounds of the forest, and the sound files can then be analysed using AI-driven software to identify individual species' calls and songs. You can listen to a Gola soundscape at: **youtu.be/hRAWJ_SSrQQ**

Michael Duff (rspb-images.com)

24) Pensions

The defined benefit scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the pension fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1 April 2024 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £6.0 million per annum with effect from 1 April 2025 for three years and £7.51 million for 10 months from 1 April 2028. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a period of 3 years 10 months. As part of the valuation, the Society's contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 16 June 2025.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	**200,589**	197,757
Interest expense	**9,662**	9,526
Remeasurements	**(30,745)**	(1)
Benefits paid	**(6,824)**	(6,693)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	**172,682**	200,589

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	**172,682**	200,589
Fair value of scheme assets	**(160,925)**	(171,437)
Net defined benefit liability	**11,757**	**29,152**

Changes in scheme assets:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	**171,437**	173,679
Interest income	**8,417**	8,530
Remeasurements	**(19,615)**	(11,589)
Employer contribution	**7,510**	7,510
Benefits paid	**(6,824)**	(6,693)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	**160,925**	**171,437**

24) Pensions (continued)

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Interest expense	**9,662**	9,526
Interest income	**(8,417)**	(8,530)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	**1,245**	996
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	**(11,130)**	11,588
Total (income)/cost related to defined benefit plan recognised in SOFA	**(9,885)**	**12,584**

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets:

	2025	2024
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	**40.6%**	37.3%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	**47.1%**	52.7%
Property	**7.7%**	7.9%
Cash	**4.6%**	2.1%

Actual return on the scheme assets during the year	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year	**(11,198)**	(3,059)

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2025	2024
Discount rate	**5.90%**	4.90%
Rate of increase in salaries	**1 April 2025: 2.0% (3.5%)**	1 April 2025: 3.0% (4.5%)
	3.0% p.a. thereafter	3.5% p.a. thereafter
	% in brackets include a further allowance for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term	
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 07 pension	**1.90%**	1.90%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment:		
Pre April 09 (CPI max 5.0%)	**2.80%**	2.80%
Post April 09 (CPI max 2.5%)	**2.50%**	2.50%
RPI inflation	**3.10%**	3.10%
CPI inflation	**2.80%**	2.80%

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations:

	2025 Years	2024 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – male	**21.8**	22.2
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – male	**23.1**	23.6
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – female	**24.0**	24.2
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – female	**25.5**	25.8

25) Comparative statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

Income and expenditure	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2024 Total £'000
Income and endowments				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	50,762	3,243	-	**54,005**
Legacies	36,567	5,974	-	**42,541**
Grants, corporates and trusts	649	33,262	-	**33,911**
Total voluntary income	87,978	42,479	-	**130,457**
Commercial trading	35,039	-	-	**35,039**
Investment income and interest	1,717	-	-	**1,717**
Charitable activities				
Land and farming income	1,619	-	-	**1,619**
Events and media sales	646	-	-	**646**
Total income from charitable activities	2,265	-	-	**2,265**
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	399	-	-	**399**
Total income	**127,398**	**42,479**	**-**	**169,877**
Expenditure on				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	28,261	-	-	**28,261**
Costs of generating voluntary income	14,319	-	-	**14,319**
Investment management costs	134	-	-	**134**
Total cost of raising funds	42,714	-	-	**42,714**
Net resources available for charitable activities	84,684	42,479	-	**127,163**
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	30.262	22,980	-	**53,242**
Research, policy and advisory	33,303	12,851	-	**46,154**
Education and inspiring support	20,936	248	-	**21,184**
Supporter care	4,700	-	-	**4,700**
Total expenditure on charitable activities	89,201	36,079	-	**125,280**
Total expenditure	**131,915**	**36,079**	-	**167,994**
Net (losses)/gains on investments	2,857	-	-	**2,857**
Net income/(expenditure)	(1,660)	6,400	-	**4,740**
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme	(11,588)	-	-	**(11,588)**
Net movement in funds	(13,248)	6,400	-	**(6,848)**
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	94,752	175,318	244	**270,314**
Total funds carried forward	**81,504**	**181,718**	**244**	**263,466**

25) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds – charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2024

Consolidated	Total funds 1 April 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Total funds 31 March 2024 £'000
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	54,991	127,398	(130,919)	2,857	(5,437)	**48,890**
Designated land fund	63,839	-	-	-	(2,073)	**61,766**
Pension liability	(24,078)	-	(996)	(11,588)	7,510	**(29,152)**
Total unrestricted funds	**94,752**	**127,398**	**(131,915)**	**(8,731)**	**-**	**81,504**
Restricted funds						
Nature reserves	165,000	3,395	-	-	-	**168,395**
Other tangible assets	1,996	1,017	(1,159)	-	-	**1,854**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	2,116	22,806	(21,821)	-	-	**3,101**
Research, policy and advisory	6,135	14,913	(12,851)	-	-	**8,197**
Education and inspiring support	71	348	(248)	-	-	**171**
Total restricted funds	**175,318**	**42,479**	**(36,079)**			**181,718**
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	**270,314**	**169,877**	**(167,994)**	**(8,731)**	**-**	**263,466**

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds General £'000	Unrestricted funds Designated £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	Total funds 31 March 2024 £'000
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	61,766	162,370	-	**224,136**
Other tangible assets	5,536	-	1,854	-	**7,390**
Intangible assets	1,317	-	-		**1,317**
Investments	28,042	-	12,654	244	**40,940**
Current assets	31,614	-	12,013	-	**43,627**
Current liabilities	(14,404)	-	(6,448)	-	**(20,852)**
Long-term liabilities	(3,215)	-	(725)	-	**(3,940)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	48,890	61,766	181,718	244	**292,618**
Pension liability	(29,152)	-	-	-	**(29,152)**
Net (liabilities)/assets	**19,738**	**61,766**	**181,718**	**244**	**263,466**

Success for Spoonbills

Once a common sight in Eastern England, Spoonbills disappeared from our shores as a result of hunting and wetland drainage. But they're making a comeback! 2024 saw Spoonbills breeding in Cambridgeshire for the first time in 400 years, at RSPB Ouse Washes, where three pairs successfully fledged eight chicks. Spoonbills are doing well on other RSPB reserves too, such as Fairburn Ings, where they have bred successfully for eight consecutive years since their arrival in 2017.



Paul Sawer (rspb-images.com)

Gary Walsh

Go a bit further for nature

Thank you for reading this year's Annual Report. We hope you enjoyed discovering the successes we have achieved together over the past year and feel inspired by the many ways in which your support is helping to protect and restore nature.

There's much to celebrate. But to reverse nature's decline and create a world where wildlife and all people thrive, we still have far more to do.

If you're able to go a bit further for nature by making a donation towards our work, please visit: **rspb.org.uk/donate**

Thank you.

Contact us

To find out more about the RSPB, please contact us at our UK headquarters or the relevant country headquarters. We welcome your questions and comments.

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Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

rspb.org.uk

Protecting habitats, saving species and helping to end the nature and climate emergency.

Stay connected

Keep up to date with the latest thinking, news, events, and information from the RSPB in your local community.

Natures_Voice TheRSPB RSPB RSPB RSPB

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The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England & Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654
7034-332-24-25

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

England & Wales - Charity number 207076

Accounts

2023-24

Annual report

A shared world where wildlife,
wild places and all people thrive.



The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of us all. We won't stop until we realise a shared world, where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

Anil Kunchala (rspb-images.com)

RSPB supporter Aneeshwar Kunchala. Childhood experiences can nurture a lifelong love of nature and wildlife.

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Trigger warning: these pages include photographs of spiders.

The front cover of this report is designed by the illustrator Charlie Davis. It celebrates the closure of sandeel fisheries in English waters of the North Sea and Scottish waters after decades of campaigning by the RSPB and others. Find out more on page 14 and discover more of Charlie's work at charliedavisillustration.com.

Welcome

Last autumn, the RSPB led a group of over 60 research and conservation organisations to compile the latest *State of Nature* report. The findings were stark: because of human activity the UK now has less than half of its biodiversity remaining. The evidence from the last 50 years shows that the intensive way in which we manage our land for farming and the continuing effects of climate change are the two biggest drivers of nature loss.

These sobering findings are at the heart of the RSPB's mission. It's this that drives our work for nature recovery. Big wins take time and are frustratingly rare, but they are increasingly important.

The recent decisions by the UK and Scottish Governments to close sandeel fisheries in the English waters of the North Sea and all Scottish waters was one such win. The importance of sandeels and the detrimental effect commercial fishing was having on our seabirds was recognised by the RSPB and others years ago. We have been working for more than three decades to achieve this goal but we never gave up hope. This couldn't have come at a more important time, as the latest seabird census data released at the end of 2023 confirmed the perilous state many of these species are in.

Another huge win for nature was the passing of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn Act, marking a significant moment in the history of land management in Scotland. This legislation will provide a meaningful deterrent to those who continue to break the law and kill Scotland's birds of prey. It also gives increased powers to investigate wildlife crimes. With Scotland now leading the way, we will continue to focus south of the border to seek similar legislation in England.

I have been lucky enough to visit several of the RSPB's sites across the UK again this year. On Orkney I learned about the crucial work our team is doing to remove introduced Stoats and restore these marvellous islands for ground-nesting birds. A similar undertaking for ferrets is also underway in Northern Ireland on the island of Rathlin. These projects, both at home and increasingly in the UK's Overseas Territories, are critical for the globally important seabird populations of which the UK is custodian.

As my time as Chair of RSPB Council comes to an end, I am immensely proud of the progress that's been made. I remain deeply concerned at the scale of the climate and nature emergency but I know that, with your help and support, the RSPB will work tirelessly to deliver the positive change we all want to see.

Thank you for standing with us. For caring passionately about living in a world where people and nature thrive. We couldn't do it without you.



Kevin Cox
Chair



Rosie Dutton (rspb-images.com)

Beccy Speight and Kevin Cox, with RSPB President Dr Amir Khan.

The year 2025 will be a pivotal year for nature. With a new UK Government in place dealing with many competing issues, they will need to be persuaded of the urgent need to address the nature and climate crisis at sufficient scale both at home and abroad.

As a society we know we need to change and adapt to build resilience. Increasingly we are seeing the impacts of a warming world in our own lives through issues such as food price rises and increasing flood risk and this is set to only worsen over time.

Because of this climate and nature interplay, agricultural policy reform remains of critical strategic importance to us in the UK. Farming accounts for some 70% of our land in the UK and the flooded fields of this past winter show how it is at the forefront of the impacts of climate change. Farmers are understandably extremely worried about a future with wetter, stormier, more unpredictable weather. The governments of the UK must ensure that there is enough funding available in agri-environment schemes to support farmers to make the changes that are required to help tackle the nature and climate emergency, and to ensure a sustainable future for farmers and food production as well as the natural world.

At the RSPB we also need to change and adapt. We are now halfway through our corporate strategy which will take us to 2030. Our vision is for a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive. For us to play our part we too must continue to adjust the way we work, shifting how we operate to respond to a changing world and making sure we lay the foundations for a sustainable future.

Climate change and the loss of nature, can feel so utterly overwhelming when viewed in its entirety. But there is definitely hope. The heartening thing is we know how to turn things around. Last year's *State of Nature* report not only showed the full extent of this loss, but it also pointed to a way forward. A way for us to restore what has been lost and build a better world for all of us. Our decision makers must act on these solutions and the promises made on the global stage. That's what it will take for us to breathe clean air, swim in clean rivers, and enjoy green spaces with abundant, thriving wildlife.



Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

About the RSPB

Our purpose
To advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature.
We carry out conservation work that you can see from space, built from the ground up.
We believe that the planet is facing a nature and climate emergency and that we have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

Our vision
A shared world where wildlife, wild places, and all people thrive. We believe we're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species and has the right to flourish. We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which these depend are interconnected. We recognise that the health and resilience of individuals, our society and the economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems.

How we deliver public benefits
We believe that in delivering public benefit, we are effective because we bring the breadth of our capabilities to bear on the complex challenges facing species and ecosystems. The RSPB's strategy sets out how we meet those challenges to make a difference over the current decade. Find out more in the sections 'Our highlights,' 'Our impact' and 'Forward look'.

Royal charter
The RSPB is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter, originally granted in 1904. Together with the Statutes, it provides the RSPB's operating rules and guidelines.

Objects of the RSPB
The objects of the RSPB as set out in its Royal Charter are to:
(1) promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively by:
- conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend;
- protecting, restoring and recreating habitats. This includes raising public understanding and awareness of, and providing information on, such matters.

(2) advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment.

Governance
The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, following the Charity Governance Code. How we apply the Code is described throughout this report, in particular on pages 88-101. By setting and reviewing strategic objectives, the RSPB's Trustees test, refine and account for the performance and delivery of the organisation and plan for new challenges as they emerge. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities.



A royal visit to the RSPB UK headquarters in Sandy in 1970.

His Majesty, The King
We are honoured to have His Majesty, The King, as our new Royal patron.

His Majesty, The King has announced his patronage of the RSPB following a review of Royal patronages conducted by the Royal Household after His Majesty's accession to the throne.

Welcoming the announcement RSPB Chief Executive Beccy Speight said: "The King has long been an advocate for conservation and the need to protect and restore our natural world both here at home and across the globe.

So, we are immensely honoured that His Majesty has chosen the RSPB to be among his Royal patronages. We look forward to the support of His Majesty in promoting the need to protect and restore both our wildlife and wild spaces."

RSPB Chair of Council Kevin Cox added: "His Majesty has been a consistent, active and inspiring champion for action to address climate change and care for our natural world over many decades. We are very honoured that the King will continue the legacy of the late Queen in her support for the RSPB."

What we do

We are determined to realise a world where wildlife thrives.

What we do
We work locally in the UK and around the world protecting habitats, saving species and addressing the nature and climate emergency. We do this through five main work areas: **science, species, places, people** and **policy.** We're proud that we can apply our broad capabilities to the many complex challenges facing species and ecosystems to make a positive difference.

Science
We ground our work in a thorough understanding of the natural world. We identify the most important problems, using natural and social sciences to discover their possible causes and potential solutions.

Species
Survival of species and biodiversity are the ultimate signs of whether conservation is working and ecosystems are thriving. That's why we protect species from direct threats, such as loss of habitat, and indirect threats, like loss of food sources.

Places
Nature needs other nature. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and joined up protected areas on land and at sea in the UK and around the world. We help people and nature coexist in harmony, ensuring that where people are living, nature can thrive.

People
A thriving natural world is essential for our species and is only possible if people feel connected to and understand nature. We inspire, educate and support people young and old from every possible background to act. The more of us who get involved, the bigger, more diverse and more powerful our support for nature will be.

Policy
To stop nature's downward spiral and to build a world where wildlife can thrive, governments must have the right ambition. Ambition that is underpinned by action, which must be framed by targets, law, monitoring and enforcement.

How we do it
We bring people together who love birds and other wildlife, and who want to do something to restore the health and diversity of the natural world. We must also enable more people to take positive action for nature. **We act, we influence, we collaborate**, and **we empower**.

We act
The natural world and the global climate are in crisis. But our evidence-based conservation work shows that birds and other wildlife will thrive if they're given a chance. We're intensifying our efforts to give nature more opportunities to recover, every single day, delivering conservation across land- and sea-scapes, protecting and restoring habitats and saving birds and other wildlife from extinction. We won't stop while the threat to nature persists.

We influence
We use our voice to help people understand the threats facing nature, and the solutions to save it. From individuals to businesses and governments, we encourage everyone to play a positive role for nature, and help change the world for the better.

We collaborate
We are one of the few conservation organisations that has the capacity and the expertise to make a difference on a truly global scale. When we partner with other organisations, businesses, governments and individuals, we increase the impact we have. And by working together, we will deliver results for birds, nature and the climate at an even greater scale.

We empower
The closer people feel to nature, the more likely they are to defend and restore it. We bring people together, across countryside and cities, in person and online. From experienced naturalists to fledgling enthusiasts, we help everyone connect, champion and take action for nature. By supporting local conservation groups, projects and initiatives, we encourage everyone to get involved.



Together, we can save nature.

Tom Mason (rspb-images.com)

Our strategy

In 2021, we launched our new strategy to 2030, to ensure the RSPB is making the biggest impact possible for nature.

Our vision for a world richer in nature
We believe that all species have a right to exist, and that nature is fundamental to human health and wellbeing. We have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations, so we want to create a world where...

...wildlife is abundant and diverse in our towns and countryside

...we have a resilient, stable economy that values nature

...all people are living well in harmony with nature

...birds and other wildlife have made a comeback

...nature continues to be restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people

...we benefit from a stable climate, and clean air and water.

Our six strategic shifts
We have identified six main areas where, by stepping up our efforts, we can increase our impact.

1. Delivering conservation at greater scale, through deeper collaborations.
2. Enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.
3. Being a bolder and more influential campaigning organisation.
4. Becoming more relevant to the world we're trying to change.
5. Diversifying our income and opening up finance opportunities.
6. Making the RSPB the best it can be.



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Greater Thames Youth Action Panel pond dipping at RSPB Rainham Marshes.

10 outcomes for nature's recovery

These are the changes we believe we all need to make happen to put nature on the road to recovery by 2030.

People engagement
More, and more diverse, people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.

UK land
At least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.

Species recovery
The future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), the East Atlantic migration route and in other selected areas around the world.

Seas
Threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.

Global land
A network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic Flyway, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high-impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.

UK Overseas Territories
The conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UKOTs will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.

Food and farming
The majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy (where the carbon emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the carbon removed from it), as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.

Nature positive economy
The frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.

RSPB capabilities
The RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will reflect the strategic need.

RSPB greening
Not only will the RSPB be a nature positive organisation, we will progress towards delivering a net climate cooling impact, having both reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced net emission removals and reductions through our land management activities.

What we do between now and 2030 is vital. We have set clear measures against these outcomes, which we use to keep ourselves focused and to track the impact of our contribution. The following stories on pages **18 to 65** demonstrate how our contribution is helping work toward achieving these outcomes.

RSPB medal winners

Celebrating champions for nature



Alastair Fothergill, Beccy Speight, Dr Amanda Slevin and Dr Amir Khan.

Wildlife filmmaker Alastair Fothergill and Climate Coalition Northern Ireland have both been honoured with the RSPB's most prestigious award, the RSPB Medal.

The award is given in recognition of outstanding contribution to nature conservation. Alastair Fothergill is a name synonymous with wildlife filming. In 2023, he led the production of the BBC's *Wild Isles*, reaching an audience of more than 10 million viewers. The series, which was co-produced by the RSPB, WWF-UK and the Open University, highlighted the beauty of the natural world while delivering the stark truth that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.

Alastair was also involved in the creation of a suite of complementary films, bringing the nature crisis to businesses, finance leaders, farmers and fishers, all aimed at inspiring action.

Climate Coalition Northern Ireland has also been recognised for its successful campaigning to deliver historic climate legislation in Northern Ireland. The network of organisations and individuals represents over 300,000 people across Northern Ireland, and their collective efforts resulted in the passing of the ambitious Climate Change Act for Northern Ireland in 2022. Climate Coalition Northern Ireland member Dr Amanda Slevin collected the award on behalf of the group.

> "This medal is a timely reminder of what is possible when we work in partnership for a better future for all species who share our planet.

Dr Amanda Slevin, Director of the Centre for Sustainability, Equality and Climate Action at Queen's University Belfast and member of Climate Coalition Northern Ireland

Presidents and Ambassadors inspiring change

It's been a busy year for our President Dr Amir Khan and Ambassadors as they have generously given their time, skills and expertise to support the RSPB.

The RSPB's President and Ambassadors are passionate advocates for nature who generously give their time freely to help raise the profile of the RSPB and its work using their professional skills, enthusiasm and supporter bases.

Action for nature

Our Ambassadors spread our messages to millions of people and their support of our campaigns can be pivotal to their success. A key campaigning moment that Ambassadors supported was the Retained EU Law Bill (REUL Bill) campaign. Both Dr Amir Khan and Ambassador Deborah Meaden created videos to rally their followers to contact their MPs and ask them to protect laws that safeguard our precious natural habitats. Although the Bill passed, there were some helpful changes as a result of the campaign.

Another important campaigning moment was the Restore Nature Now rally, organised by RSPB Vice President Chris Packham in September 2023. The RSPB stood with more than 40 other conservation groups to call on all politicians to take action for nature. RSPB Ambassador Samuel West gave a compelling speech, and the rally was supported by other RSPB Ambassadors and many RSPB members and supporters. Building on this, we came together again with our members, supporters and the public for another Restore Nature Now rally in June 2024.

Big Garden Birdwatch

Our Ambassadors threw their support behind Big Garden Birdwatch 2024, helping to promote the event. Social media posts from our Ambassadors and influencers reached up to 2.5 million followers. They also created a series of bird ID videos which received over half a million views on Instagram. Other highlights included an interview with Ambassador Indy Kiemel Greene on BBC Newsround and an iNews piece in which Dr Amir Khan discussed the benefits of birdwatching and the need for policy changes to protect wildlife. More than 610,000 people took part in Big Garden Birdwatch 2024.

A huge thank you to our President and Ambassadors.

Find out more here:
rspb.org.uk/president-and-ambassadors



Promoting Big Garden Birdwatch

People power

A year of successful campaigning

Continuing the RSPB's long history of successful campaigning, we were delighted to celebrate a number of significant wins for nature. Our first campaign success was over 100 years ago when our founders – a group of fearless women – spearheaded a campaign to stop a fashion for feathers. In 2024, we were delighted to celebrate another milestone campaign win, that offers a lifeline to seabirds.

Hope for threatened seabirds

In January 2024, Puffins, Kittiwakes, Razorbills and other threatened seabirds were thrown a lifeline, after decades of campaigning finally saw the UK and Scottish Governments close sandeel fisheries in the English waters of the North Sea and all Scottish waters.

The change in policy comes after more than 25 years of campaigning by the RSPB and others, which called out the practice as one of the key contributors to seabird decline. Many seabirds, including Puffins, rely on sandeels to feed their chicks. But climate change and overfishing have vastly depleted sandeel populations, having a devastating knock-on effect on seabirds.

In 2023, the UK Government ran a public consultation to close sandeel fishing in the English waters of the North Sea. More than 33,000 people from across the UK added their voice to our campaign and responded to the consultation. Over 10,000 RSPB supporters also responded to a similar consultation from the Scottish Government. Both consultations found overwhelmingly in favour of action to end sandeel fishing.

There's no doubt that this groundswell of support has been instrumental in putting a stop to sandeel fisheries. A huge thank you to everyone who joined with us to save our seabirds.

Although the European Union is challenging this curb on sandeel fishing, it has also been heralded as the single greatest action taken to support our most vulnerable seabirds. With the latest census finding almost half of the UK's breeding seabirds in decline, it is a vital step in the long journey to recovery.

> "This lifeline will help to secure vital food sources for these amazing birds. Whilst many other factors continue to affect our seabird populations, including the impacts of climate change, and bycatch from fishing, we have renewed hope that sandeels will increase, and help to save our beloved Puffins and other seabirds.

Dave O'Hara, Senior Site Manager, RSPB Bempton Cliffs

33,000+

people from across the UK added their voice to our campaign to end sandeel fishing

Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)

The ban on sandeel fishing is a lifeline for seabirds including Puffins.



Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

Hen Harriers will benefit from new legal protections in Scotland.

Landmark win against bird of prey persecution in Scotland

In March, the Scottish Parliament passed a raft of measures set to herald the end of persecution of birds of prey in the country and improve the condition of upland habitats.

The Wildlife Management and Muirburn Act aims to put a stop to the illegal persecution of birds of prey, such as Golden Eagles and Hen Harriers, through the stronger regulation of grouse shooting. The Act also bans the use of snares and tightens regulations for the use of other types of wildlife traps, and gives greater investigating powers to the Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in relation to wildlife crime.

Furthermore, a new system of licences will also be introduced for muirburn — the practice of burning vegetation, usually for sporting and farming purposes. Burning on peat is particularly problematic. The UK's peat uplands are globally rare ecosystems, with the potential to lock away significant amounts of carbon, a natural solution in our efforts to tackle climate change. But burning, often for agriculture or game bird management, can cause major damage to these unique habitats.

The new legislation follows decades of campaigning, with the RSPB at the forefront of those calling for urgent change, and it is hoped that the new laws could herald the end of the persecution of birds of prey in Scotland, as well as improve the conditions of upland habitats.

> "We hope that the new licences for grouse shooting will finally provide a meaningful deterrent that will eradicate bird of prey persecution.
>
> **Andrew Midgley**, RSPB Senior Land Use Policy Officer

The need to protect England's hedgerows

2024 also saw the launch of our campaign to safeguard hedgerows in England. These form a 500,000km natural network of habitats for birds and other wildlife, including 130 priority species listed in the England Biodiversity Action Plan, such as Yellowhammers, Linnets and Bullfinches.

Healthy hedgerows can also help mitigate against climate change, as they lock up and store carbon. They can also act as natural barriers, soaking up rainwater and preventing flooding. Plus hedgerows can provide shelter and natural medicine for livestock, and have been proven to reduce windspeed which protects crops.

On 31 December 2023, the regulations that protect England's hedgerows officially ended and without new legally binding rules, England's hedgerows and their wildlife were at risk. But thanks to the efforts of individuals and organisations across the country, including 10,000 supporters who took action as part of the RSPB's campaign, these protections were swiftly reinstated. England's hedgerows on agricultural land are again protected from cutting during nesting season from March to August each year, and will be surrounded by pesticide and cultivation free green strips to provide a home for small mammals and insects.

Thanks to everyone who helped demand the reinstatement of these regulations.

For every £1 invested in UK hedgerow planting



£3.92 would be delivered back in benefits to the wider economy when planted in the right place



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Hedgerows provide vital habitat for wildlife.

Our highlights

People engagement

We're determined to engage more, and more diverse, people to take meaningful action for nature, and have mobilised thousands to take action for nature in the UK and beyond.



RSPB TikTok has engaged new audiences.

Mobilising new audiences with TikTok and more

It's our ambition to enable more people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with wildlife and wild places, and to make our natural world as accessible as possible. So we're pleased to report that our youth revolution has gathered pace through a number of key actions.

Young people are less likely to visit our nature reserves than other age groups and we know that cost is one of the main barriers. In November we gave young people aged 16 to 24 free access to our nature reserves where there is a charge. By removing entry charges, we hope more young people will come to explore these wonderfully wild places and connect with the great outdoors in new ways.

The scheme is a two-year pilot, but we see this as our first step towards encouraging more young people to connect and take action for nature. In the future, we're planning to create new opportunities for young people to get first-hand experiences of nature in an inspiring and mindful way.

We have also been engaging with more young people on social media. This year, we launched 'Bird of the Week' on TikTok. This brought in more than 18,000 new followers from just one post alone, and over 99,000 followers since. Showcasing species in a fun way fosters connection and this is vital if young people are going to safeguard nature in the future. Take a look on TikTok **@rspb**.

+18,000

new followers from one post

+99,000

new followers since 'Bird of the Week'



Sennen Powell

Young people from across the UK came together for nature.

First ever youth-led summit

In February, we joined forces with the British Trust for Ornithology and WWF-UK to support the Youth in Nature Summit.

This weekend-long event was designed and organised by an incredible group of 15–24-year-olds, including RSPB Youth Council members Lisa, Katie, Indy, Freddie and Sennen. Participants enjoyed guest speakers, workshops, networking opportunities and more. Demand for the event was huge, with tickets selling out in less than 36 hours.

Over the two days, more than 250 young people came together at the David Attenborough Building in Cambridge to share their experiences and ideas. The attendees heard from multiple speakers who offered up advice on taking action for nature as a young person. RSPB Ambassador and wildlife presenter, Megan McCubbin, talked about her journey into conservation and discussed what 'activism' really means. Richard Benwell, the CEO of Wildlife and Countryside Link, led a talk focused on his top tips for influencing and getting your voice heard for young attendees. Youth in Nature Summit participants also heard from Ajay Tegala, a wildlife ranger and TV presenter, the RSPB, Butterfly Conservation, Flora & Fauna, the British Trust for Ornithology, WWF-UK and others.

The summit also empowered young people to build their skills and confidence to take action for nature. Reflecting on the event, Youth Council member Lisa said: "Thanks to everyone who was involved and supported us, to the amazing speakers that inspired us all. It was great to have the space to meet with so many interesting and motivated people. I hope we can continue to collaborate in the environmental sector to fight for the future of our planet."



Alicia_Hayden

Workshops helped young people develop their skills.

RSPB youth groups celebrate 80 years

In 2023 we were delighted to celebrate the 80th anniversary of RSPB youth groups. All across the UK, youth groups marked the momentous milestone with a range of activities from cake-baking to nest box making.

The RSPB's first youth group was the Junior Bird Recorder's Club which began in 1943. This offered young people aged 14 to 17 a chance to enjoy birdwatching in their local area, with membership costing one shilling (12p) a year. As times have changed, the youth groups too have evolved. In 1965, the RSPB launched the Young Ornithologists Club (YOC), together with a magazine *Birdlife* aimed at younger readers. In 1995 RSPB Phoenix was launched for teenagers and in 2000 YOC was renamed Wildlife Explorers. Today the RSPB has three youth magazines tailored for different ages (5–8, 8–12 and 13–18), and a network of volunteer-led youth groups, all with the aim of inspiring children to engage with, enjoy nature and take action for nature.

The importance of the RSPB's youth groups to nurture young nature champions cannot be overstated. Like many RSPB members, staff, volunteers and supporters, RSPB Local Groups Development Officer Richard Bashford believes his passion for nature and career in conservation was sparked by his time as a youth member. Richard explains: "The YOC and my interest in nature were the gateway to some valuable work and life experiences. I am so pleased that RSPB youth groups are celebrating 80 years this year. I look around the RSPB and other conservation organisations, I speak to many passionate people about nature, only to find many of them started out in the YOC too. I am a firm believer that RSPB Youth Groups have a vital role to play to ensure children have the connection to nature I had as a child and still have today."

> "I joined because I am really passionate about nature and wildlife.
>
> **Iona**, aged 7 ¾

> "My hope for wildlife is that all endangered and critically endangered species flourish again in the UK.
>
> **Thomas**, aged 13



RSPB (rspb-images.com)

From the archives: RSPB youth group members campaigning in 1989.



Mel Coath (RSPB)

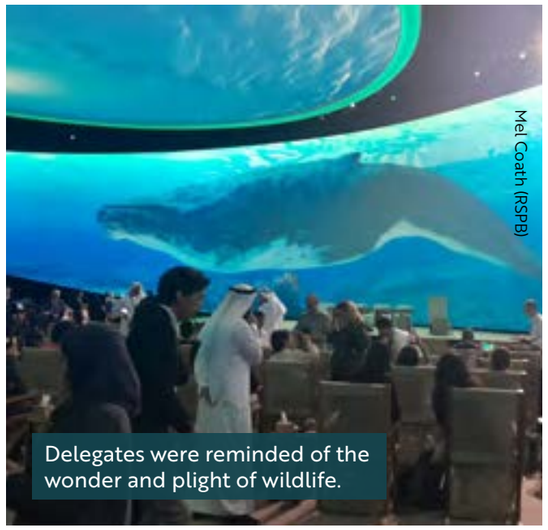
The RSPB's Melanie Coath (second from right) argued the case for nature at COP28.

Standing up for nature at COP28

The UN's climate change conference, COP28, took place in December 2023 in Dubai. Crucially COP28 looked at progress towards the targets to keep the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees by 2030 – the Paris Agreement that parties signed up to in 2015.

Climate change is one of the key drivers behind biodiversity loss so it is vital that we tackle it to stop wildlife extinctions. The RSPB's Head of Global Policy Melanie Coath and Senior Policy Officer Alex Mackaness attended COP28, alongside representatives from BirdLife International partners – the global partnership of national conservation organisations of which the RSPB is the UK partner. As an accredited observer, we were there to hold governments to account, working to ensure the best outcomes for nature. Our activity at COP28 focused on sharing our recommendations to negotiators from countries around the world, to support them in achieving ambitious outcomes, including for the role nature can play in tackling climate change.

After two weeks of intense negotiations, leaders finally agreed to transition away from fossil fuels. Although this falls far short of the scale and pace of change that we and many experts say is needed to meet the Paris Agreement, outside of this deal, we celebrated some significant progress for nature. Never before has there been anything like the high-level commitments to action to tackling the nature and climate crises in tandem from world leaders, ministers and country representatives. These included aligning action on countries' climate and biodiversity commitments, a new momentum for commitments to protect 30% of land by 2030, and new pledges and finance for nature's conservation.



Mel Coath (RSPB)

Delegates were reminded of the wonder and plight of wildlife.

David J Slater (rspb-images.com)



Internationally important populations of Gannets breed around the UK.

Saving our Wild Isles

The BBC TV series *Wild Isles* has continued to inspire audiences, while the award-winning campaign to Save Our Wild Isles has enabled and encouraged thousands of people to take action for nature in the UK.

In spring 2023, more than 10 million viewers tuned into *Wild Isles*, the stunning BBC series we co-produced with Silverback Films, WWF-UK and the Open University. Presented by Sir David Attenborough, the series highlighted the beauty of our natural world, but also delivered a stark message: the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and we must act now to help it recover.

Having raised awareness through the TV series, we worked in partnership with WWF-UK and the National Trust to deliver the Save Our Wild Isles campaign to mobilise a diverse mass movement for nature, engaging individuals, businesses, partners and community groups to make the call for change. Here is a snapshot of what we've achieved so far:

Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund
The award-winning Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund is a partnership between WWF-UK, the RSPB and Aviva, with Aviva giving £1 million to help community groups take action for nature locally. Through the Crowdfunder match funding mechanism, this was upped to £2.5 million going to communities, supporting 250 projects in total. These include a group in Manchester helping refugees and local people to build stronger roots to their local environment, farmers in Wales planting trees, a community garden in Northern Ireland, and a group in the Shetland Isles saving marine wildlife by tackling discarded or lost fishing nets.

The People's Plan for Nature
The People's Plan for Nature sets out a vision for the future of nature and the actions we must all take to protect and renew it. Since creating the plan, the People's Assembly for Nature participants have continued to advocate for it in various ways including attending parliament to speak to Peers for the Planet, meeting senior civil servants at the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, and appearing on TV, radio and podcasts.

Along with other organisations, we published our own response to the People's Plan for Nature. We support the actions in the Plan – particularly the core theme of putting nature at the heart of decision-making. Areas where we are committing to review or to change what we do include doing more to champion a 'just transition' when it comes to building a better future for nature, supporting more community mobilisation to protect nature locally, and developing panels of diverse citizens to work with us on advocacy and campaigns.

peoplesplanfornature.org

Nature Neighbourhoods
The People's Plan for Nature showed us that people want to take action for nature in their communities, and to hold themselves and others to account. Nature Neighbourhoods is a direct response to this call. With funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and Co-op, we're working with the National Trust and WWF-UK to help 18 voluntary and community partners across the UK to mobilise their communities and lead positive change for nature and people through the creation of Nature Neighbourhood Plans.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)



Red Squirrels featured in the Woodland episode of *Wild Isles.*

The #SchoolsForNature campaign
Our Schools For Nature campaign, championed by Megan McCubbin, encouraged and supported schools to share what they had learned about the wildlife in their school grounds and showcase school action to help local wildlife. The celebration was supported with a Save our Wild Isles certificate signed by David Attenborough. In 2023, over 150,000 pupils were involved across all four countries of the UK. Alongside WWF, WWT and the Woodland Trust, we will be repeating the campaign in 2024.

Wild Weekender (28 April – 1 May 2023)
Save Our Wild Isles and the RSPB's Nature on Your Doorstep initiative (sponsored by Barratt Developments) joined forces to encourage people to help nature in their local area. We brought the UK together for the Wild Weekender to help people sow, grow, and create habitats for local wildlife. A total of 26,000 people joined events, including a web livestream with advice and demonstrations from experts on how to create thriving habitats locally.

Saving Our Wild Isles film
As an accompaniment to the TV series *Wild Isles,* we produced a documentary *Saving Our Wild Isles* in partnership with WWF-UK, the National Trust and Silverback Films. The film shows how people are rising to the challenge to save UK nature, including efforts to restore seagrass meadows in North Wales and nature-friendly farming in Suffolk and the Yorkshire Dales. The film is on BBC iPlayer and in the months following its launch it was viewed almost three-quarters of a million times. Community screening guides have also been created to enable people to use the film to bring their community together and make an impact for nature in their local area.

Young Voices for Nature
Launched in summer 2023, Young Voices for Nature saw over 200 young people take part in the project which aimed to capture the stories of young people from all backgrounds and empower them with key skills in filmmaking, storytelling, and taking action for nature. The result was an inspiring 20-minute film, *Our Beautiful Wild,* which looks at what nature means for young people and how we can restore nature around us. Young people have also organised their own film screening events to spread the message out into their own communities. Watch here: www.saveourwildisles.org.uk/community/young-voices-for-nature

An award-winning campaign
The Save Our Wild Isles partnership was awarded the Inspiring Communicator Awards Innovation Award 2023, while the campaign won The Drum Social Purpose Award for Best Integrated Campaign (Not for Profit) 2023.

You can find out more about how the Save Our Wild Isles campaign is working with businesses on page 55.

www.saveourwildisles.org.uk

£2.5 million
raised to help community groups take action for nature locally, including £1 million from the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund.

10+ million
people tuned in to the TV series *Wild Isles*

200+ young people
from across the UK engaged through Youth Voices for Nature to create an inspiring film, *Our Beautiful Wild*

Our highlights

UK land

We are working to make sure that more UK land is well-managed for nature. This year saw a number of initiatives and acquisitions that will bring about significant change.

Boost for RSPB Bempton Cliffs

Bempton Cliffs, on the Yorkshire coast, is home to one of the UK's top wildlife spectacles, when around half a million seabirds gather between March and August to raise a family on the towering chalk cliffs that overlook the North Sea.

Thanks to the generous support of a number of philanthropic donors and The Banister Charitable Trust, we have been able to purchase an additional seven hectares of land. The £306,072 acquisition is the first land purchase at Bempton for over 30 years.

The area purchased was an intensively farmed arable field and we are working to transform it into a more diverse mosaic of meadow and scrub. Already we have been pleased to see birds including Yellowhammers, Tree Sparrows, Linnets, Skylarks and Corn Buntings feeding there.

We have also identified more than 30 types of flowering plants, including important seed-rich arable plants such as plantains, chickweed and Redshank.

A small area with low wildlife value may be used at some stage in the future as additional grassland overflow parking as it is easily accessible to the road. An option for overflow parking for peak visitor periods is vitally important to the running of this popular nature reserve.

30

types of flowering plants found, including plantains, chickweed and Redshank



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Around half a million seabirds nest on RSPB Bempton Cliffs every year.

Tir Canol drives positive change for people and wildlife

A series of initiatives aimed at ensuring a more sustainable future has been launched through the Tir Canol project in mid Wales, thanks to funding and support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Woodland Trust.

The initiatives will see local communities, landowners, farmers and conservationists come together to co-design plans for flood management, crop trials and habitat restoration, as well as a series of artistic initiatives involving local artists and traditional crafts.

The project spans an area of mid Wales largely between the rivers Dyfi in the north and Rheidol in the south, and includes RSPB Ynys-hir. The area falls within the Dyfi Biosphere Reserve area, an area recognised by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation for the diversity of its natural beauty, heritage and wildlife.

Tir Canol aims to find a way for local communities to work together to turn around declines in biodiversity and to collaboratively improve the area for people and nature. Ultimately the project could benefit populations of native wildlife such as Pine Martens and Horseshoe Bats, with the restoration and expansion of globally important habitats such as montane scrub, blanket bog, grasslands, coastal saltmarsh and living reefs.

Project partners include RSPB Cymru, the Woodland Trust, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Tir Coed, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru, Aber Food Surplus, Ecodyfi, Cambrian Mountains Initiative, Coetir Anian and Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Conservation Area.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Tir Canol will benefit wildlife including rare Pine Martens.

New nature reserve opened in Northern Ireland

In 2023 we were delighted to open Montiaghs Moss in County Antrim to visitors. This is a stunning nature reserve with species such as rare Marsh Fritillary butterflies, Irish Damselflies, Green Hairstreak butterflies and Cuckoos.

Opened in May 2023, Montiaghs Moss is an area of lowland peatland that provides a mosaic of habitats including peat bog, pools, grassland, trees and hedgerows. Conservation work has been carried out and a new 500 metre boardwalk added to enable visitors to enjoy the reserve's special wildlife.

One of the most important species is the Marsh Fritillary butterfly and we have worked closely with Butterfly Conservation, carrying out major work to try and support this vulnerable population. This has included scrub removal, rush cutting, use of cattle and ponies for grazing and the introduction of Hebridean Sheep.

Owned by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Montiaghs Moss nature reserve is managed by RSPB NI. Funding to transform the site came from the Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB) project, which was supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body. This project was led by RSPB NI in partnership with RSPB Scotland, Birdwatch Ireland, Butterfly Conservation, Moors for the Future and NI Water.

> "The conservation work has been successful thanks to the funding received from CABB and the continued support of local farmers, stakeholders, NIEA, volunteers and the local community, who have helped to manage the site and protect habitats for the wildlife that call the site home.

Cathryn Cochrane, Warden of RSPB Lough Neagh – Montiaghs Moss and Lough Beg

Brian Morrison (rspb-images.com)

The new boardwalk at RSPB Montiaghs Moss nature reserve.

Our highlights

Species recovery

We're working throughout the UK and globally to halt species declines and secure the future for many threatened birds and other animals.

Milestone for vulture conservation

In South Asia, there was good news for vultures. The final cohort of Nepal's captive White-rumped Vultures was released into the wild, marking a remarkable recovery in Nepal for a bird which was almost wiped out.

The introduction of the drug Diclofenac, used to treat cattle, since the 1990s saw tens of millions of White-rumped, Slender-billed and Long-billed Vultures disappear in a matter of 10 years, with White-rumped Vultures losing 99.9% of their population. Vultures are natural scavengers and died after consuming dead cattle treated with the drug. However, after 20 years of collaboration with Bird Conservation Nepal, the last 10 captive-reared White-rumped Vultures were released from the breeding centre. The birds were satellite tagged and released into the world's first Diclofenac-free 'Vulture Safe Zone'. Surveys indicate that wild populations of White-rumped and Slender-billed Vultures are slowly but steadily recovering in Nepal.

Meanwhile in India, where populations have stabilised, two more drugs that are toxic to vultures were banned. This is the first drug ban in India since Diclofenac in 2006 and a positive step forward for vulture conservation.



Alamy

A remarkable recovery for White-rumped Vultures in Nepal.

Update on the impact of avian flu

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI or bird flu) has been confirmed as one of the biggest immediate conservation threats faced by multiple seabirds.

A study, led by the RSPB in collaboration with the British Trust for Ornithology, the statutory nature conservation bodies, and other conservation organisations, revealed a highly concerning picture of widespread and extensive declines. Nine of the 13 species included in the report showed decreases of over 10% since the Seabirds Count census (between 2015 and 2021). For Gannets, Great Skuas and Roseate Terns, these declines are largely attributable to HPAI and for Sandwich and Common Terns, HPAI is the likely cause.

This study comes after the latest Seabirds Count census described on page 40. We are continuing to monitor the situation, as well as working to tackle the many threats facing seabirds including climate change, marine development and unsustainable fishing to help increase the birds' resilience.



Species recovery

Steve Round (rspb-images.com)

Huge numbers of Knots and other birds winter at RSPB Wallasea Island.

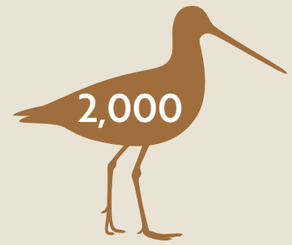
Record bird numbers at RSPB Wallasea Island

December 2023 saw the highest ever number of waterbirds at RSPB Wallasea Island in Essex. A total of 38,000 birds, including Teals, Shovelers and Wigeons, were recorded during the monthly Wetland Bird Survey, beating a previous record of 32,770 from January 2020.

The survey also recorded the highest ever numbers of some individual species, including 700 Avocets and over 2,000 Black-tailed Godwits. These fantastic results are thanks to the creation of over 650 hectares of lagoons, mudflats, saltmarsh and coastal grassland, between 2015 and 2018, which are now fulfilling their promise of supporting thousands of feeding and roosting waterbirds.

This habitat creation was part of the Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project that saw three million tonnes of soil, from the Crossrail scheme in London (the excavation of a railway tunnel from East to West London for the Elizabeth Line), being used to raise land levels before the sea wall was breached in July 2015.

The habitats at Wallasea have been carefully designed with the aim of providing valuable habitat for wildlife both now and in future decades, as the climate continues to warm and sea levels continue to rise. The areas of intertidal habitat created also help compensate for previous losses of this type of habitat. This landmark conservation and engineering project remains one of the largest of its type in Europe.



Black-tailed Godwits, the highest number recorded

"It highlights the power of people coming together to help nature, so we'd like to say a huge thank you to our wonderful surveyors who help us count the birds each year.

Rachel Fancy, RSPB Site Manager for Wallasea Island

The State of Nature

More than 60 wildlife charities and conservation bodies collaborated to produce the landmark UK State of Nature report. Coordinated by the RSPB on behalf of the many organisations involved, this latest stocktake of UK nature reveals a number of worrying declines.

State of Nature 2023 documents the shocking declines in the abundance and distribution of wildlife across the UK. The report found that almost 1,500 species are now threatened with extinction from Great Britain. A total of 281 are at risk of extinction from the island of Ireland. Many of the most important habitats for wildlife are in poor condition and species are vanishing from places where they used to be seen.

However, the report also shows that we have a good understanding of what's driving change and that many of our conservation actions are having a positive impact. But it will take all of us working together to halt and reverse the decline in nature. As well as targeted conservation work to improve species status, we need to increase nature-friendly methods of farming, forestry and fishing. We also need to strengthen ecosystem restoration, and expand and manage protected areas. These areas cover just 11% of UK land and most are not currently in a favourable condition for nature. Of course, these efforts must be balanced with ensuring that people's needs for food, energy and access to nature are met. But unless we act now, all nature, including us, will feel the effects.

State of Nature uses the latest and best data from biological monitoring and recording schemes, collated by the incredible work of thousands of skilled people, most of whom are volunteers, to provide a benchmark for the status of our wildlife. More information, as well as country-level data can be found here: stateofnature.org.uk

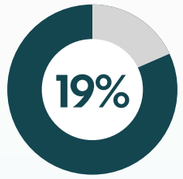
A huge thank you to everyone involved.



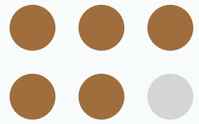
Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

RSPB Project Officer Emma Witcutt monitors a Little Tern colony in Norfolk.

Key findings



Across the UK species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970



Nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction from Great Britain

151
of 10,008

species assessed have already become extinct since 1500



Across Great Britain over half of flowering plant species are found in fewer places than they were in 1970



decrease

in UK distributions of pest control species



18% decrease in UK distributions of pollinator species

of 6,557 species assessed across UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are threatened with global extinction

13%
decrease

in UK distributions of 4,979 invertebrate species on average since 1970

drop in the abundance of 13 UK seabird species since 1986; that figure is a worrying 49% for 11 seabird species in Scotland

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Water Voles return to the Lake District

Over the last century, Water Voles have disappeared from 94% of our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands, with habitat loss, pollution and the spread of invasive, non-native American Mink to blame. However this year saw the return of Water Voles to Wild Haweswater in Cumbria as a result of a partnership project between Eden Rivers Trust, The Environment Agency and the Cumbria Connect programme. Led by the RSPB, Cumbria Connect seeks to restore 33,000 ha of upland landscape through a partnership with United Utilities, Lowther Estates and Natural England.

> “We are thrilled to witness the Water Voles’ return to Wild Haweswater, a testament to 12 years of dedicated landscape recovery in collaboration.

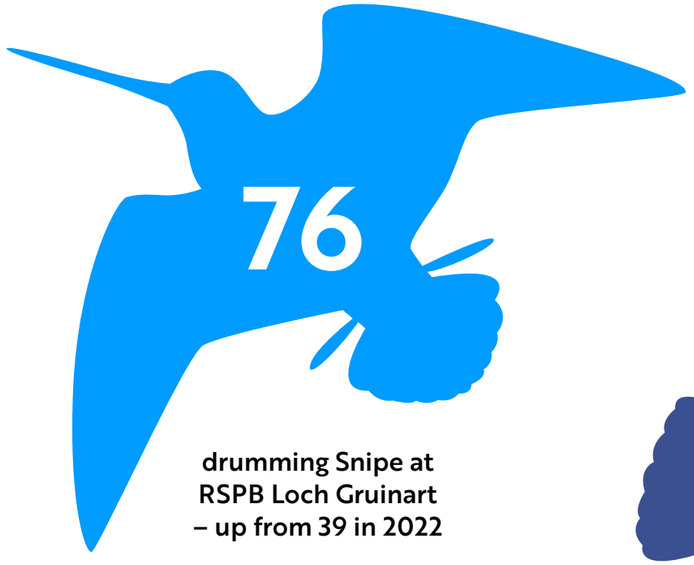
David Morris,
RSPB Area Manager for Cumbria

Counting success

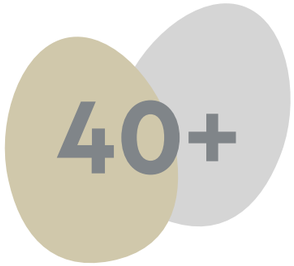
We care for more than 200 nature reserves across the UK, with many of them providing habitats for rare and special wildlife. Here is just a selection of how our work has had an impact on our nature reserves and beyond:



of Pied Flycatchers at RSPB Coombes Valley following habitat improvement



drumming Snipe at RSPB Loch Gruinart – up from 39 in 2022



Little Tern chicks fledged at Chesil Beach in Dorset – up from three in 2021



of Curlews at RSPB Lower Lough Erne Islands Reserve



churring Nightjars recorded at RSPB Broadwater Warren – up from 11 in 2022



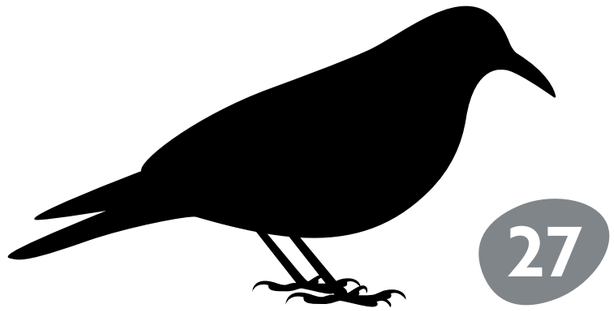
Wildcats were released into the Cairngorms thanks to Cairngorms Connect



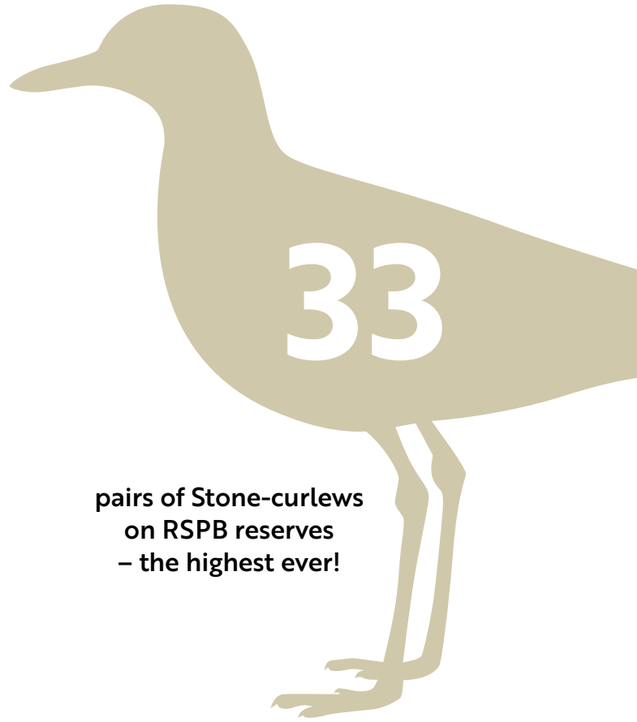
One Golden Eagle chick fledged on the Isle of Hoy – the first time these birds have bred there successfully in more than 40 years



indigenous seedlings planted in the Taita Hills in Kenya to help restore 44 hectares of forest



Chough chicks fledged at RSPB South Stack



pairs of Stone-curlews on RSPB reserves – the highest ever!

Our highlights

Seas

We're working in the UK and globally to tackle threats to seabirds including from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species.

Fishing in deeper waters could help prevent seabird deaths

Globally, hundreds of thousands of seabirds are accidentally caught as 'bycatch' in fishing nets and drown every year. A research paper published in October 2023 describes a change in fishing techniques that could help.

To try to solve the problem of seabird deaths through bycatch, we have worked with BirdLife partners in several countries for many years. In 2022, we began a trial in the Icelandic Lumpfish fishery, with support from the Marine Stewardship Council's Ocean Stewardship Fund. This used a specially adapted buoy that we hoped would repel birds from diving near fishing nets. Reporting on the trial, Birdlife's Bycatch Programme Manager Yann Rouxel, RSPB Conservation Scientist Steffen Oppel and colleagues explain that the use of the buoys didn't reduce the bycatch of seabirds. However, while analysing the data, the RSPB team discovered that most of the seabirds were actually caught in relatively shallow waters. Fishers who set the nets in deeper waters generally returned with few or no birds caught.

The RSPB team then simulated what would happen if they fished in slightly deeper waters. By carefully reallocating some of the fishing effort from shallower to deeper waters, they found that the fish catch could be maintained, but the bycatch could be virtually eliminated if the fishery was restricted to waters from 50m and deeper. This simple measure could reduce the annual death toll of the Icelandic Lumpfish fishery from over 8,000 seabirds every year to almost no seabird bycatch at all. This measure would be particularly helpful for Iceland's Black Guillemot population which is currently classified as Endangered.

More research is required to fully understand the impact of the measure on fishing sustainability and on other marine wildlife. However, it seems hopeful that a relatively simple management measure could reduce bycatch and allow seabirds to fish without the risk of being caught in nets in the Icelandic Lumpfish fishery.

Deeper fishing in the Icelandic Lumpfish fishery could reduce bycatch from as many as

8,000

seabirds every year to almost

0



Modified fishing gear could dramatically reduce bycatch.

Patricio Ortiz

Trial shows benefits of modified nets in Chilean fishery

The Albatross Task Force, led by BirdLife International and the RSPB, is an international team of experts on a mission to reduce seabird bycatch by 80% in some of the world's deadliest fisheries.

Between 2021 and 2023, the Albatross Task Force has been working to reduce Pink-footed Shearwater bycatch in Chilean purse seine fisheries, with the support of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This fishery, which is comprised of around 500 artisanal vessels fishing for anchovies and sardines, operates along the Humboldt Current. This is one of the most productive marine ecosystems in the world, with Chilean waters also home to numerous seabirds. However, this often leads to deadly interactions.

Between 2015 and 2017, over 1,500 Pink-footed Shearwaters – locally listed as Endangered and globally Vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature – were reported killed each year in this fishery. To solve this problem, Albatross Task Force Chile and the BirdLife International Marine Programme (hosted by the RSPB) collaborated with the fishing industry and local net makers, to develop a more 'seabird friendly' modified version of the purse seine gear, the types of nets typically used. These modified nets are known as MPS (modified purse seine).

In 2023, the modified nets were put to the test, through at-sea trials within the Chilean purse seine fishery. The results are promising, suggesting that modified nets could reduce seabird bycatch risks by 74%, and reduce the risk of mortality in birds caught in bycatch by up to 80%. So far, just a fraction of the purse seine fleet in Chile is equipped with MPS (around 1%), but we hope to secure more funding to further support the artisanal fleet to transition towards more sustainable practices.

Seabirds Count shows action helps recovery

A comprehensive census on the health of Britain and Ireland's breeding seabird species published in November 2023, found that almost half of the seabirds that commonly breed here have declined. However, it also highlighted successes where conservation actions have led to rises in seabird numbers.

Since the late 1990s, almost one in four (24%) Puffins have been lost (at sites with comparable survey methods) and almost half (49%) of Common Gulls. Arctic Skuas, which breed in the north of Scotland, have declined by 66%. The reasons for the declines vary but the main ones are: a lack of food caused by climate change and overfishing; poorly sited marine industry development; predation by invasive rodents and mammals; and disease. It is also important to note that these figures relate to the period before the spread of avian flu. Many seabirds have since been severely affected by this disease, as described on page 30. However, there is also good news. Some species such as Guillemots, Great Cormorants and Sandwich Terns seem to have stable populations overall. And some species have increased, often thanks to conservation actions. One of our rarest seabirds, the Roseate Tern, has increased by 152% because of work to protect good breeding sites, reduce predation and limit human disturbance. Manx Shearwater numbers have also risen in places such as the island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel, Ramsey off the Welsh coast and the Isles of Scilly. The removal of rats, which eat seabird eggs and young, has been key to this turnaround (see page 41).

Seabirds Count was the biggest survey of breeding seabirds in Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles for almost 20 years, and involved more than a thousand volunteers and professional surveyors visiting nearly 15,000 breeding sites between 2015 and 2021. The census was led by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee with input from other partner organisations, including the RSPB.

jncc.gov.uk/seabirdscount



Almost 1 in 4 Puffins



Almost half of Common Gulls



Two thirds of Arctic Skuas have been lost

Nine-decade high for seabirds on Lundy

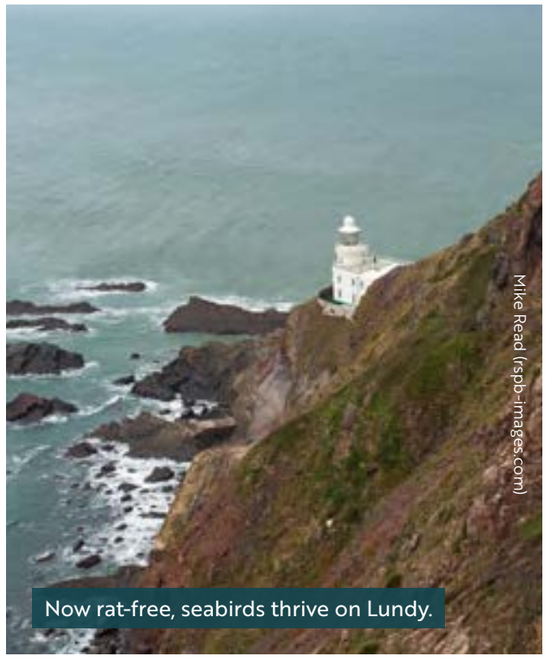
The 2023 breeding season saw more seabirds nesting on Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel than at any time since the 1930s, with more than 40,000 birds breeding there.

Around 25,000 Manx Shearwaters – 90% of England's breeding population – as well as 1,335 Puffins and 161 pairs of Storm Petrels nested on Lundy. It's a remarkable turnaround. A survey back in 2000 showed a very different story, with just over 7,000 birds. Puffins were close to local extinction, with only 13 birds, and there were no Storm Petrels.

In 2002, the RSPB, Natural England, the Landmark Trust and the National Trust joined forces to bring the seabirds back to Lundy. Evidence showed that rats, introduced accidentally by ships visiting the island or from shipwrecks, were the biggest threat to seabirds. Manx Shearwaters and Puffins, for example, nest on the ground, making their chicks easy prey for rats.

After a programme of careful conservation work, the island was finally declared completely rat-free in 2004. Since then, the project team has worked hard to stop rats from returning to Lundy on boats, and regular monitoring is also undertaken to see how the seabirds are faring.

The turnaround in the seabirds' fortunes shows the importance of biosecurity measures to protect seabird breeding grounds from invasive, non-native species. Biosecurity measures are in place at a number of other islands around the UK, including Skomer, Skokholm and Ramsey, as well as on other Special Protection Area islands. However wider improvements are needed, and biosecurity must become an integral part of the conservation management of all seabird islands.



Mike Read (rspb-images.com)

Now rat-free, seabirds thrive on Lundy.



Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)

90% of England's Manx Shearwater population nest on Lundy Island.

Our highlights

Global land

Working with local partners, we're delivering high impact conservation along the East Atlantic migration route and other key locations to help conserve wildlife and support livelihoods.

Dense forest favoured by gibbons

Researchers working in the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra have found a higher concentration of endangered Agile Gibbons (*Hylobates agilis*) living in high, dense forest, potentially indicating that this is their preferred habitat.

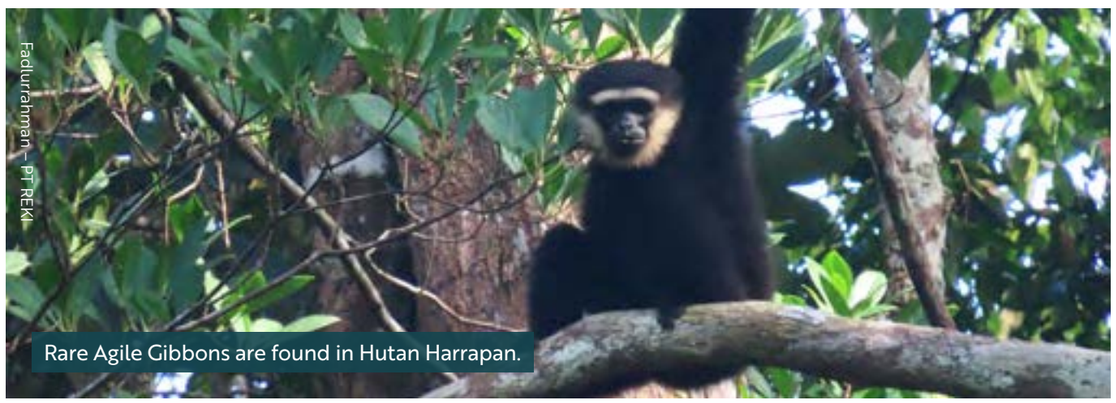
The RSPB has been working with BirdLife International and local partners since 2002 to protect Hutan Harapan, almost 100,000 hectares of lowland rainforest on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, an area that is home to critically endangered species including Sumatran Tigers and Helmeted Hornbills. However the area is threatened by deforestation.

The gibbons, which are known as Owa in Indonesian and Ungko in the local language, are endangered, with habitat loss a key reason behind their decline. As well as revealing the animals' preference for high, dense forest, the research identified 28 species of tree in the Harapan forest that provide food for the gibbons. Seven of the trees are 'pioneer trees' and as such are crucial for forest regeneration.

Agile Gibbons are known for their 'great calls', or singing bouts when pairs of males and females call out to defend their territory. The research found that calling was highest in Harapan in the early morning.

28

species of tree provide food for gibbons



Fadlurrahman – PT REKI

Rare Agile Gibbons are found in Hutan Harrapan.



Michael Duff (rspb-images.com)

Mallo Samah farming cocoa in the Golahun Community, Gola Rainforest.

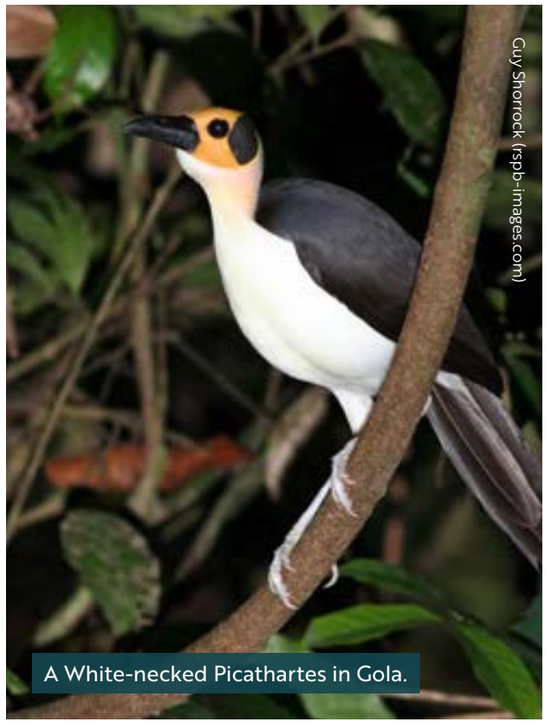
Finding cocoa's sweet spot as new project launches

A new agroforestry project in the Gola landscape of Sierra Leone was launched in February 2024, with the aim of improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers, protecting the region's wildlife and ensuring carbon benefits.

Gola Rainforest National Park is part of a internationally important biodiversity hotspot and home to many globally threatened species, including charismatic birds like the White-necked Picathartes and mammals such as Diana Monkeys. The region's farmers are also some of the poorest in the world. Most people living in the villages on the edge of the forest are subsistence farmers. Although cocoa is a vital crop, farmers are susceptible to fluctuating market prices.

Funded by Jersey Overseas Aid, this new agroforestry project will support local cocoa farmers to increase their food security and develop additional income streams that complement existing cocoa production in the region. Once successfully scaled up, this project has the potential to support 3,000 cocoa farmers and their families in generating more secure and sustainable income. It is also hoped that, by improving livelihoods, there could be a reduction in deforestation in the national park's buffer zone, where some forest is still occasionally cleared to grow crops.

The aim is to establish sustainable approaches to agroforestry that effectively balance the needs of people, nature and the climate. The RSPB has been working with partners in the region for over a decade and in 2015 Gola Rainforest Conservation was founded as a partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, the RSPB and the people of the seven Gola Chiefdoms.



Guy Shorrock (rspb-images.com)

A White-necked Picathartes in Gola.



David J Slater (rspb-images.com)

The Greenland breeding population of Barnacle Geese migrate to Scotland and the west of Ireland for winter.

£3 million partnership to benefit African-Eurasian Flyway

The RSPB and Birdlife International have begun work on a £3 million partnership with the Ecological Restoration Fund to help protect landscapes and billions of birds along the African-Eurasian Flyway.

Stretching from the Arctic to southern Africa, the African-Eurasian Flyway is one of four great global pathways used by hundreds of millions of migratory birds every year, many of which stop off in the UK, such as Barnacle Geese, Dunlins and Wigeons.

All along the flyway, threats such as habitat destruction and degradation, illegal hunting and climate change threaten the future of some of the flyway's most important sites and the birds that rely on them. However the £3 million from the Ecological Restoration Fund will enable the protection of biodiversity hotspots and the rejuvenation of degraded landscapes, increasing efforts in key countries such as Iceland, Ghana and South Africa, and in important landscapes such as the East Coast Wetlands in England and the Gola Rainforest straddling the Liberia and Sierra Leone border. The fund will also benefit migratory songbirds, who move between Europe and West Africa in their billions twice a year.

The fund will be used to tackle threats including habitat destruction and degradation, illegal hunting and climate change, and to foster cultural, social and economic opportunities for local communities.

Welcoming the news, RSPB Executive Director Global Conservation Katie-jo Luxton said: "We are very excited by this new international programme which will see people from many different countries working together to share knowledge and support action for nature and climate at scale. Our birds know no borders, so it's imperative that we collaborate to find solutions to the challenges they face."

Supporting Senegal's future ornithologists

Senegal in West Africa is globally important for migrating birds thanks to its vast estuaries and savannahs. However with very few ornithologists in the country, there is a need to build capacity and nurture more expertise.

The last year saw a major milestone with the first intake of students on a new Master's course in ornithology. The first cohort of students have since completed their first year of studies and a new intake has joined them. Coordinated by the RSPB and supported by the AG Leventis Foundation and Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN), this course is training the next generation of French-speaking ornithologists in the region. Importantly the course will equip the students with field-based ornithological skills.

This project is running alongside our ongoing capacity-building work with the Senegalese BirdLife partner Nature-Communautés-Développement, work supported by the Darwin Initiative. The goal is that by 2030, Nature-Communautés-Développement will be a strong, financially stable, well-governed and locally-led organisation with significant public support, and delivering effective conservation work to the benefit of migratory and non-migratory wildlife.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Senegal hosts thousands of migratory waterbirds in winter, including Black-tailed Godwits.

Our highlights

UK Overseas Territories

Our ambition is to improve the conservation of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.

Cloud forest project boosting wildlife and water security

St Helena, a UK Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic Ocean, is one of the most important sites for wildlife on British soil. The island's fragments of cloud forest total just 16 hectares, scattered across the Peaks National Park, yet this habitat is also the main source of fresh water, with the native plants of the cloud forest capturing water from mist. Ongoing research suggests mist capture contributes an incredible 60% of the island's fresh water.

Invasive plant species are a constant threat to St Helena's cloud forest habitat. They out-compete the island's native plants causing degradation and fragmentation of habitat. They also cause more rapid run off, as opposed to the peaty soils associated with the native habitat which retain water for longer. Thanks to funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the St Helena Cloud Forest Project is working to remove invasive plant species from key water catchment areas, rejuvenate and restore areas of endemic cloud forest, connect fragmented sections, and create new areas of habitat. This work is being led by project partners the St Helena Government, St Helena National Trust and local water utility company Connect Saint Helena. As St Helena is a volcanic island, the project has also involved geophysical surveys to look at the amount and sources of water available, different types of water flow, and water loss.

Our work to restore St Helena's cloud forest has the potential to provide a more sustainable cost-effective solution to water security, in the longer-term, than alternative solutions such as dams, additional reservoirs or desalination. The project is also crucial to protecting and restoring the island's cloud forest habitats and the wildlife that's found there. As well as providing increased water security, the project will benefit local people through education and eco-tourism. Find out more here: bit.ly/cloud-forest-project



Capricorn Studios/SHCFP

Area of St Helena showing Cloud Forest on the left and invasive species on the right.



Peter Ryan

Major milestone in efforts to save the Critically Endangered Wilkins' Bunting.

Critically Endangered Wilkins' Bunting given new hope

2024 marked the end of a three-year Darwin Plus and John Ellerman Foundation funded project in Tristan da Cunha, where we have been working to save a Critically Endangered bird species, the Wilkins' Bunting.

Tristan da Cunha is a remote group of islands in the South Atlantic Ocean situated over 2,000km to the south of St Helena. Much like Darwin's famed finches of the Galapagos, birds across the islands of Tristan da Cunha have similarly evolved into separate species with distinct niches. The Wilkins' Bunting is only found on Nightingale Island and has evolved to specialise on the fruits of Tristan's only native tree, *Phylica arborea*, using its large, powerful bill to crack the fruits open to get to the seeds inside.

However, the accidental introduction of an invasive scale insect has devastated the Phylica trees that the birds depend on. The insects infest the Phylica trees and by secreting honeydew, they encourage the growth of a sooty mould which can completely smother and kill the trees. In 2019 two major storms hit the island. With the trees already weakened by the insects, an estimated 80% of the island's forest was lost during these weather events.

Wilkins' Buntings are Critically Endangered, so to prevent the first global bird extinction on British soil for over 60 years it was necessary to intervene. In 2020 we began work to find a suitable biocontrol agent to tackle the insects. We have now established a tiny wasp species on the islands and the Phylica trees are starting to recover. Tree numbers have also been bolstered by the establishment of a Phylica nursery, providing healthy trees to reforest the islands. In February 2024, a survey estimated there to be 60 to 90 breeding pairs of Wilkins' Buntings. While the birds remain at risk, thanks to this project and ongoing monitoring their future is now looking much brighter.



Natasha Glass

Horticulturists Kelly Swain and Natasha Glass.



Shayla Ellick

St Helena is home to hundreds of species that exist nowhere else on earth.

New spider species found on St Helena

New species of wolf and pirate spiders have been found on the remote isle of St Helena.

Thanks to research through the St Helena Cloud Forest Project funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, with support from the RSPB and the Species Recovery Trust, scientists are learning more about St Helena's unique wildlife.

Lying 2,000km off the coast of West Africa, St Helena's remote island location means that it is home to hundreds of species that exist nowhere else on earth. A research group led by British arachnologist Danni Sherwood discovered three new species while studying the spiders of the island.

The first of the new species is the Mt Vesey Waterfall Wolf Spider (*Hogna veseyensis*), a remarkable species which is only known to live under water-logged rocks and the rock face of the Mt Vesey Waterfall, within the Peaks National Park. It probably has one of the smallest known ranges of any invertebrate in the world.

The second new species is the Mole Spider (*Molearachne sanctaehelenae*). This spider is also a wolf spider, but unlike almost all other species, it makes many underground tunnels and mounds on the ground of its semi-desert home and has very small eyes. The final new species is the Daryl Wolf Spider (*Dolocosa joshuai*), which occurs only on Horse Point and Prosperous Bay Plain, the arid parts of the island. This new species was named after Daryl Joshua, a young conservationist working for the St Helena National Trust.

The researchers also recorded two species of pirate spiders, so named for their habit of raiding other spiders' webs. Although first discovered in the 1960s, the spiders were deemed invasive and of the same species. The new research shows that they are in fact two separate species and endemic to St Helena. The two species have been named *Ero lizae* and *Ero natashae* after St Helena National Trust invertebrate conservationists Liza Fowler and Natasha Stevens in recognition of their years of work protecting the island's wildlife.
sthelenatourism.com/st-helenas-cloud-forest-project



Liza Fowler

A new species, the Mt Vesey Waterfall Wolf Spider.



Gavin Ellick

Conservationists Perry Leo and Liza Fowler carrying out research.



LizFowler

Mt Vesey waterfall where access can be difficult.

Our highlights

Food and farming

With farmland birds declining by 59% since 1970, we're determined that more agricultural land should contribute positively to nature's recovery, supporting people and wildlife.

New hope for Turtle Doves

Globally threatened, Turtle Doves have been hit hard by changes in UK farming practices, as well as unsustainable hunting in south-west Europe. But work on their breeding grounds in the UK and their migratory route means the future is looking brighter for these beautiful birds.

Operation Turtle Dove is a UK initiative which aims to improve breeding habitat and food availability for the birds here. A partnership between the RSPB, Natural England, Pensthorpe Conservation Trust and Fair to Nature, it has led to the creation of 620 foraging and supplementary feeding sites for Turtle Doves in 2023. Record numbers of farmers, land managers and volunteers have got involved, including over 260 farm holdings – covering over 68,500 hectares – plus a further 107 land managers and an army of dedicated volunteers.

Meanwhile, Turtle Dove hunting in France, Spain and Portugal was again banned in 2023, following on from bans in 2021 and 2022. All UK breeding Turtle Doves migrate via these countries. Each year of the ban is estimated to have saved the lives of one million birds from the western European population. The decision is part of an Adaptive Harvest Management mechanism adopted by the European Commission.

Mike Shurmer, Head of Species for RSPB England explains: "We are hopeful that these efforts on the breeding grounds, alongside effective conservation at scale across the whole of the Turtle Dove migration flyway, will have helped us to turn a corner for this bird. Ten years ago, the prospects for Turtle Doves looked bleak. But, through collaboration, focus, and persistence we have developed and implemented the evidence base, changing this completely."

operationturtledove.org

1,000,000

Turtle Doves saved each year thanks to hunting bans

Supporting nature-friendly farming

We continue to advance our advocacy work at pace, demanding government subsidies that support farmers to carry out their business in a nature-friendly way. That way, farming and nature both come out on top. We know that our advocacy work can achieve fantastic results. Just recently, our campaign on hedgerows was successful in securing important legislation to protect these vital habitats in England (see page 17).



"It's amazing to hear about birds returning to breed in parts of southern and eastern England after the hard work and dedication of so many land managers and communities.

Rebecca Pringle, Senior Ornithology Specialist, Natural England

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Farmers, land managers and volunteers are working to help Turtle Doves.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Conservation efforts have seen a 204% increase in Oystercatchers.

Work with farmers boosts wader numbers in Orkney

Wading birds, including Lapwings, Curlews and Oystercatchers, are facing large declines in their breeding populations across the UK. In Orkney they are faring better than in many places but are still under threat.

RSPB Scotland is working with landowners to improve habitat for the birds and boost their breeding success. In one site in Rousay in Orkney, the RSPB is working with the landowner and local farmer. Measures include livestock fencing, targeted grazing and the creation of new wetland features, such as scrapes or shallow pools.

In previously unmanaged areas cattle have been introduced. Through grazing, the cows create areas of shorter and longer vegetation, providing places for wading birds to feed and nest. The longer 'tussocks' are particularly important as these provide nesting habitat as well as cover from predators. Additionally, invertebrates are attracted to the cow pats, increasing biodiversity and proving feeding opportunities for the wading birds. Farmer Stuart Sailor said: "We can see the cattle actually improving the land here. I like this win-win situation. We get the grazing and they actually improve the land."

In just one year the work has shown real results. There were 12 breeding pairs of Lapwings compared with none prior to the work, and a similar increase in breeding Curlew numbers. Redshanks and Snipe have also moved into the site and there has been a 204% increase in breeding pairs of Oystercatchers.

The Northern Island Landscape project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Nature Restoration Fund. It brings together Orkney Islands Council, NatureScot and Highlands and Islands Enterprise as well as local community groups.

A Guide to Nature Positive Dairy Farming

RSPB NI, the Dairy Council for Northern Ireland and its member organisations Dale Farm, Lakeland Dairies and Leprino Foods, alongside the Nature Friendly Farming Network have worked in collaboration to produce *A Guide to Nature Positive Dairy Farming*.

With a network of over 3,000 farms, the dairy sector commands a substantial portion of Northern Ireland's agricultural land, providing a unique opportunity to champion nature-friendly initiatives. *A Guide to Nature Positive Dairy Farming* provides a comprehensive roadmap towards nature-friendly farming practices within the dairy industry.

RSPB NI worked with the dairy sector to undertake a series of farming workshops and testing on five representative dairy farms to outline a comprehensive menu of practical measures which can be taken to support nature positive farming.

Welcoming the work, Ian Stevenson, Chief Executive of the Dairy Council Northern Ireland said: "The Dairy Council has been working with RSPB NI over the last year, to develop these guidelines for farmers. By identifying what farmers are already doing, a series of practical measures have been developed, to allow farmers to enhance biodiversity on their land, creating positives for both the farm and the environment, which is the bottom line at the end of the day."

Dr Jonathan Bell, RSPB NI Head of Land and Sea Policy added: "This work has been well-received by the dairy industry and farmers, who want to take steps towards managing their farms better for nature. The project has helped identify what is possible, even on our most intensively farmed land; a set of practical actions all dairy farms can take to help turn the tide on nature's decline. We believe, with the right policy tools and financial support, the dairy industry can become leaders in Nature Positive practices."

bit.ly/nature-positive-dairy-farming



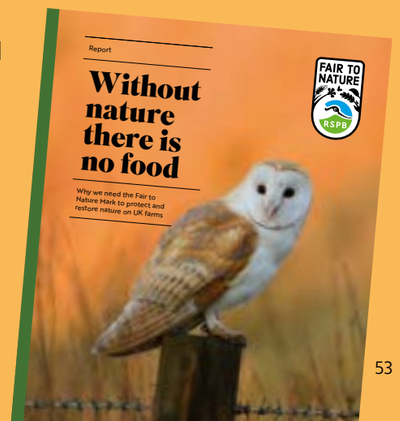
Gethin Davies

The new report will support nature positive dairy farming.

Without nature, there is no food

The new *Without Nature, There is No Food* report from RSPB Fair to Nature, published in January 2024, shows how nature underpins food and farming, and how the RSPB Fair to Nature certification can help people help nature when buying food. Products certified as Fair to Nature contain ingredients sourced from farms that meet a rigorous set of criteria, including managing 10% of their land for nature, by providing good quality wildlife habitat.

bit.ly/nature-food-report



Our highlights

Nature positive economy

We're working with businesses to help them take more action for nature, and to encourage the transition to a nature positive economy.

Leading the way for a nature positive economy

We have continued to step up our policy and advocacy work on ensuring the transition to a nature positive and net zero economy.

We have engaged more visibly around key economic events, such as the UK Government's Spending Review and the Budget, setting out how we need a detailed and well-resourced plan for government investment in nature and the fiscal rules that facilitate it.

Increased private sector investment in nature is also critical and we have fed into work and consultations being led by the British Standards Institute, including representation on their Advisory Group for standards on biodiversity. There has also been positive progress with the launch of the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures. The taskforce is a market-led and government supported initiative that provides organisations with a disclosure framework to act on their nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities, and we are leading work reviewing the underlying biodiversity metrics.

The Business Conservation Advice team continues to partner directly with businesses to help them on their nature positive journey. These include leading organisations such as *i*dverde, Lightrock Power, Openreach, The Royal & Ancient, CEMEX and Barratt Homes. In partnership with these organisations, we have hit a new milestone of over 10,000 hectares of land now well-managed for nature.

Over 10,000

hectares of land now well-managed for nature thanks to the RSPB's Business Conservation Advice team



Adrian Thomas (rspb-images.com)

Our partnership with Barratt Homes is helping to create wildlife-friendly spaces on new developments.



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

A discussion sparked by *The Business of Nature*.

Save Our Wild Isles brings businesses on board

As part of the Save Our Wild Isles campaign, we collaborated with WWF-UK and the National Trust, along with Silverback films, to create four films to inform, educate and inspire the business audience.

These are: *Banking on a Wilder Tomorrow* for the finance sector, *Hungry for Change* on food and farming, *Catch-22* on the marine environment, and *The Business of Nature*, about how all businesses need to work together for nature. The films featured business leaders including Deborah Meaden, Dame Sharon White from the John Lewis Group, and Bevis Watts, CEO of Triodos Bank. Since launching the films, we have:

- Received 300 requests for Save Our Wild Isles business films screenings from a wide range of companies, including PepsiCo, PwC, the Crown Estate and Tesco
- Provided support and speakers for over 100 screenings
- Engaged with 45,000 people at our events
- Reached 30,000 views on YouTube.

Two of the films have won awards: *Hungry for Change* won the Greener Living Short Film award at the Global Sustainability Film Awards 2023 and *The Business of Nature* won Silver in the longform category at the Smiley Charity Film Awards 2023. The films were also a finalist for the Nature and Biodiversity Project category at the 2023 edie Awards, run by the edie network for sustainable business.

The response from the business community has been overwhelmingly positive, leading to new partnerships and opening new opportunities to talk to businesses and attend conferences, both as the RSPB and as partners with WWF and National Trust. We have also taken the films to some of the biggest sustainability conferences in the UK, including Business Green Net Zero and Blue Earth Summit.

To show the Save Our Wild Isles businesses films at your workplace, visit: www.saveourwildisles.org.uk/business/host-a-screening

> "Farmers can't solve these big problems alone. Big businesses like ours can drive systemic change that benefits our business as well as individual farmers.
>
> **PepsiCo Employee**

Co-op and the RSPB join forces for peatland

In 2023 Co-op and the RSPB joined forces in a three-year strategic partnership to protect UK peatland, starting with a £1m investment from the sales of compostable carrier bags in its stores. Co-op's initial investment is supporting the ongoing restoration and long-term management of areas of internationally important, RSPB-owned upland peatland in Scotland and Wales, equivalent in size to around 400 football pitches.

The UK's peat uplands are globally rare ecosystems, and when healthy are able to lock away significant amounts of carbon, a natural solution in our efforts to tackle climate change. As well as restoring and maintaining healthy peatland, the Co-op-supported projects will deliver additional environmental benefits. These include the protection of natural habitats for wildlife, and potentially improving water quality and reducing flood risk by regulating water flow. Find out more at **rspb.org.uk/corporate-partnerships/co-op**

"Our pioneering partnership with the RSPB will play a part in helping to avoid carbon emissions through repairing vital peatlands to increase carbon stores and support our work to prioritise action where we are able to make the most impact.

Joe Hulme,
Senior Climate Change Manager, Co-op

Phil James (rspb-images.com)

Our highlights

RSPB capabilities

To meet our ambitions for nature, we need to be the best we can be, with an operating structure and capabilities that help us achieve our strategic objectives.

Safeguarding training course wins award

The RSPB's Safeguarding eLearning module has won the Bronze Award in the Excellence in Learning Design – Non-Profit/ Charity category at the prestigious Learning Technologies Awards.

The Safeguarding Level 1 training is for all paid employees as well as certain volunteer roles, and is designed to ensure the welfare of vulnerable people and others who encounter the RSPB.

The Learning Technologies Award Judging Panel described the Safeguarding eLearning as: "A highly effective compliance module that has delivered on its intended aim – to raise issues around safeguarding". They added: "This module shows how good learning design can overcome the constraints of a tight budget and limited production tools. Hopefully this well-deserved Bronze award will encourage the team to go from strength to strength".

Protecting all people from harm is a top priority for the RSPB, and good safeguarding practices underpinned by award-winning safeguarding training allows us to enable more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.

> "This module shows how good learning design can overcome the constraints of a tight budget and limited production tools.

Bronze Award in the Excellence in Learning Design



Six new members join the RSPB Youth Council

The RSPB Youth Council is an active group of young people, aged 16 to 24, with a strong passion for nature. Last year, we recruited six new members following an inclusive process which saw 145 applicants. The Council now includes 15 members, with young people from all four countries of the UK and with a wide range of skills, experiences and interests.

Council members have also been given a greater representation in RSPB decision-making. As well as having regular meetings with RSPB Chief Executive Beccy Speight and Chair Kevin Cox, members sit on a number of RSPB Advisory Committees, including Communications and Engagement, Conservation, and Commercial and Partnerships.

The increased involvement of the Youth Council is bringing huge benefits. As well as playing a key role in the Wild Isles Young Voices for Nature film, *Our Beautiful Wild* (see page 25), the Council's ongoing work is helping to guide strategy, drive projects and widen the RSPB's appeal to new and younger audiences.

> "Being a part of the RSPB committees has been a fantastic experience for the Youth Council, allowing us to have a say within important discussions. As a member of the conservation advisory committee, I have learnt more about the RSPB's global projects and have felt valued as a youth representative.

Alfie Davis, Youth Council member


Youth Council member Sennen Powell speaks at a campaign to Restore Nature Now.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Working towards greater ethnic diversity

As part of our ongoing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work, we are continuing our journey towards building an RSPB where everyone can thrive.

To achieve our vision of creating a world richer in nature, we know we need more people, and more diverse people, to act. Yet, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are significantly under-represented in the UK conservation workforce, disproportionately affected by climate change, and often not involved in conversations around responses to the nature and climate emergency.

In February 2023, The RACE (Radical Action for the Climate Emergency) Report, was published. This is an external report led by a diverse partnership to encourage UK environmental charities and their funders to tackle the ongoing lack of racial diversity in the sector. We have been voluntarily involved since the start of the initiative in 2022.

At the RSPB, ethnic minority representation of our paid workforce currently stands at 2.8%. This is significantly below the average of 6% amongst 137 environment organisations participating in the RACE Report, and we are determined to change this. We also recognise from the report that people of colour may feel isolated and less able to be themselves at work.

We are committed to bringing about positive change and to tackle these issues we are focusing on:

- Education and action: rolling out race equity learning opportunities across the organisation so that our people have access to tools, skills and knowledge.
- Support and wellbeing: improving access for people to raise concerns; strengthening our health and wellbeing support.
- Development and progression: removing barriers that prevent equity of career progression for our employees of colour.
- Sharing knowledge and understanding: capturing, sharing and embedding examples of best practice across our organisation and the wider sector.

We have also set up a dedicated taskforce to help us move further and faster towards removing the barriers within the RSPB that produce racial disparities.

As our Chief Executive Beccy Speight explains: "We know there is still much more we need to do, and we are implementing the interventions needed to widen opportunities for people of colour to access and have a meaningful say and part in the future of conservation. We are determined to get this right because it will take all of us to turn the tide for nature."

> "We know there is still much more we need to do, and we are implementing the interventions needed to widen opportunities for people of colour to access and have a meaningful say and part in the future of conservation.
>
> **Beccy Speight**, Chief Executive



Andy Purcell (rspb-images.com)

We need more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.

Our highlights

RSPB greening

We are working to ensure that the RSPB is a nature positive organisation and moving towards having a net climate cooling impact.

This year, we initiated an overarching Greening Programme, updated our Environmental Policy, improved our environmental and carbon monitoring, and developed a holistic climate response model, LARK.

We have continued to make great progress through our Environmental Management System (Green Dragon) certification, which is awarded to organisations taking steps to reduce their environmental impact. We have reached Level 3 in Scotland, Wales, North and East England, Northern Ireland and UKHQ. We have also committed to embed our Environmental Management System sooner than our previous ambition date and are aiming to be fully accredited to Level 5 by 2025/26.

Green Dragon recognises effective environmental management

Greening initiatives

We have introduced a digital version of *The RSPB Magazine*, cutting paper use, reducing waste and third-party emissions. We reduced plastic use by switching to paperboard membership cards from a polyester blend, adopted a cup recycling scheme for our Food and Beverage offerings and worked with 'Too Good to Go' to reduce food waste. We have developed more partnerships with suppliers sharing RSPB sustainability and ethical values, including plastic-free packaging that is recyclable, compostable or reusable.

We have also improved the sustainability of products sold in our shops, including removing plastic packaging from RSPB greetings cards, selling our first second-life plastic bird feeder, reducing packaging used by our key suppliers, adopting clear information on packaging recycling on our optics and accessories range, and launching vegan suet cakes with a lower carbon and land use impact.

Greening initiatives introduced on reserves include battery operated power tools, renewable oil for chainsaws, replacing lights with LEDs, donating old furniture and stationery to others, installing more EV charging points and repairing hides with old pallets.

RSPB Greenhouse gas emissions 2023/24

	2023-24	**2022-23**	2021-22	2020-21
Energy consumption (KWh)				
Electricity	**3,501,268**	3,238,498	2,920,504	2,505,424
Gas, LPG and oil	**2,463,952**	2,668,771	2,248,614	2,275,943
Transport fuel – fleet cars	**2,907,211**	2,908,171	2,783,174	1,145,835
Reserves' machinery	**1,695,502**	1,494,818	1,183,152	1,644,261
Other – woodfuel	**1,166,624**	1,486,401	505,645	451,070
Other – renewables (PV and wind)	**1,951,628**	*1,875,527	753,280	1,126,845
Total KWh	**13,686,185**	**13,672,186**	**10,394,369**	**9,149,378**
Emissions (tCO_2e)				
SCOPE 1 (S1)				
Combustion of gas, LPG and oil for heating	**463**	527	454	493
Combustion of fuel for machinery on reserves	**421**	367	451	275
Combustion of fuel for fleet transport	**693**	700	631	
Combustion of woodfuel for heating	**11**	14	8	7
Total tCO_2e (S1)	**1,588**	**1,608**	**1,544**	**775**
SCOPE 2 (S2)				
Purchase of electricity (location based, LB)	**708**	626	643	584
Purchase of electricity (market based, MB)	**80**	115	232	186
Total tCO_2e (S1/2 MB)	**1,668**	**1,723**	**1,776**	**961**
Intensity ratio: Total tCO_2e/staff (S1/S2 MB)	**0.7**	0.7	0.8	0.5
SCOPE 3 (S3)				
1. Purchased goods and services				
**Contractors on reserves		604	598	
Other goods and services	**72,105**	77,751		
3. Fuel- and energy-related activities				
Transmission and distribution (market based)	**7**	11	21	
Well to tank (market based)	**1,029**	696	84	
5. Waste generated in operations				
Waste management	**19**	4	7	
Water supply and treatment	**4**	5	2	
6. Business travel				
Grey fleet - Staff	**616**	1021	261	120
Public transport - Staff	**729**	818	562	1149
Grey fleet - Volunteer	**121**			
Public transport - Volunteer	**3**			
7. Employee commuting				
Emissions for commuting - Staff	**1,339**			
Emissions for teleworking - Staff	**528**	405		
8. Upstream leased assets	**69**			
9. Downstream transportation/distribution	**234**	221	372	
10. Processing of sold products	**479**	697	711	682
Total tCO_2e (S3)	**77,281**	**82,233**	2,618	1,951
Carbon offsets and carbon units tCO_2e	**0**	0	0	0
Total annual emissions tCO_2e (all scopes) LB	**79,577**	**84,467**	**4805**	**3310**
Total annual emissions tCO_2e (all scopes) MB	**78,949**	**83,956**	**4394**	**2912**
***Intensity ratio: total tCO2e/staff (All scopes) MB	**31.8**	33.2	1.9	1.4

* Adjusted figure
** Included now in 'Other goods and services' category
*** Volunteer travel excluded from ratio to ensure data boundaries match (if included the metric remains at 31.8t). Metric will be based on workforce FTE (staff and volunteers) from 2024/25.

LARK

The RSPB's response to climate change

Land Our biogenic GHG emissions and removals	Carbon flux from habitats	Investments/carbon credits	Owned/non-owned livestock
Adaptation Dealing with unavoidable climate change	Ecology/site management	Premises/infrastructure	Human/business
Reduction Our non-biogenic GHG emissions	Operations/travel	Premises/infrastructure	Supply chain/commercial
Knowledge Enabling RSPB's response to climate change	Evidencing	Learning	Managing	Monitoring	Reporting

Driving change through LARK
Under the memorable acronym – LARK – we have pulled together the key pillars of our climate change response, which the new Greening Programme manages. LARK, representing Land, Adaptation, Reduction, Knowledge, directly links to our recent Environmental Policy commitments and will underpin new targets being developed as part of our path to Net Zero.

Land
How land is managed affects the climate, both positively and negatively. Land management for nature often benefits the climate too, for example through nature-based climate solutions. Significant habitat restoration and creation projects at various nature reserves, from Lake Vyrnwy to Yell, are already reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our land. We estimate that our major restoration activities in 2022-23 alone increased the net climate cooling effect of land that we manage by around 14,300 tonnes of CO_2e per year.

Adaptation
The Greening Programme has established an adaptation working group to coordinate a more holistic RSPB adaptation response (across reserve management, infrastructure and operations). The Group will prepare a report for submission to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) by end of 2024 describing our level of climate change preparedness, which will help inform the next national Climate Change Risk Assessment. The RSPB undertakes on-the-ground adaptive management on our nature reserves. For example, at Wallasea in the last year, we raised the height of bird nesting islands in one of the main lagoons. This enables water levels to be kept higher at the start of the breeding season, thereby making it easier to prevent the lagoon from drying out too quicky and salinities from rising too high during periods of exceptionally dry weather in spring, which we have been experiencing more frequently in recent years.

Reduction
We have started the development of an ambitious GHG (greenhouse gas) reduction plan, to provide a clear path for the RSPB to reach a net zero emissions position. This plan will cover every aspect of our operations from strategy, governance and leadership to energy use and travel, purchasing and suppliers. The plan will be operating by early 2025, with continuous adaptive management to ensure we stay on track. We will be transparent and open in publishing the plan and our progress towards targets.

Knowledge
The table on page 63 'RSPB Greenhouse gas emissions 2023/24' presents the annual energy use and associated carbon emissions from RSPB business operations. We have improved data quantity and quality across many categories (eg by expanding the sources of energy data for sites). It includes additional categories (eg commuting and volunteer travel) compared with previous years, and this reflects our move towards a full inventory of emissions. This will be available for next year's Annual Report where we will also report progress and present further case studies against all the pillars of LARK.

Despite bringing in more GHG categories, our reported Scope 1 and 2 emissions have reduced by 3% since last year, and our Scope 3 and 'All Scopes' emissions both reduced by 6%. Comparing this year to our existing 2020/21 baseline is unhelpful due to data quality and completeness and the impact of covid on that year. Our baseline year is currently being reviewed. Notably, since last year, emissions from RSPB staff business travel have reduced by 27% due to an overall reduction in business mileage, along with clear shifts from petrol or diesel to hybrid and electric vehicles, and from air travel to rail and/or ferry usage.



Reedbed restoration is a core part of our habitat management for wetland species.

Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Our impact

England

David J Slater (rspb-images.com)

Black-winged Stilt



Hosting BBC Springwatch and Winterwatch at our wonderful Arne reserve was a fantastic opportunity to inspire millions of viewers with the wonders of nature at peak times when the reserve teems with wildlife. Our nature reserves offer a rich variety of habitats across the country, and it has been hugely encouraging to see so many species breeding and thriving across our sites this year.

Michael Copleston
Director, RSPB England

Record number of Black-winged Stilts fledged on RSPB England nature reserves

A total of 13 Black-winged Stilt chicks fledged from RSPB nature reserves in 2023. This is the equal highest number of stilts ever fledged in Britain, a number also reached in 2017.

Severe drought in south west Europe, exacerbated by the unsustainable use of water for agriculture in some areas, saw a larger than usual movement of waterbirds into Britain, including Black-winged Stilts, Purple Herons, Night Herons and Great Reed Warblers. Many arrived on RSPB nature reserves, including a number of Black-winged Stilts that nested. As is typical with stilts, the birds moved about a lot between sites. In total there were nine nesting attempts, probably involving eight different pairs. Four of these fledged a total of 13 chicks. Two pairs at Frampton Marsh fledged two and four young, one pair out of three at Worth Marsh fledged four young, and one pair at Edderthorpe Flash fledged three young. We are aware of only two other nesting pairs in the UK in 2023, neither of which were successful.

Thank you to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for supporting our work to support Black-Winged Stilts and other wetland birds.

The BBC's flagship nature programme returned to RSPB Arne

Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan and the team headed to RSPB Arne nature reserve in Dorset for Springwatch 2023 and again for Springwatch 2024.

Located on the banks of Poole Harbour, RSPB Arne is a spectacular place to visit, with its habitats of heathland, woodland, freshwater wetlands and mudflats that are home to a huge amount of wildlife, including all six of the UK's native reptiles. Special wildlife highlighted during the programmes included Nightjars, Hen Harriers, Spoonbills and Avocets. A White-tailed Eagle also made an appearance, flying over the BBC's production village.

Local volunteers and residents were able to enjoy a special insight into the show thanks to a community event. RSPB volunteer Pam Bowyer-Davis enjoyed the experience: "It was lovely to hear from the whole BBC team, including the people behind the scenes who make it happen. I also enjoyed getting selfies with all the presenters!"

Another RSPB volunteer Denise Exon delighted in meeting one of her heroes: "I was out volunteering when I bumped into Chris Packham and had an impromptu chat about wildlife. It doesn't get much better!"



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

RSPB Arne hosted the BBC's 'Watches'.

Our impact

Northern Ireland

Cinematic Sky

Sand art at Portrush.



Thank you for your ongoing support during a roller-coaster year, from the first ever NI peatland restoration registered under the Peatland Code and saving seabirds by eradicating invasive species from Rathlin, to poisoned White-tailed Eagles in the Antrim Hills and avian flu at Belfast Window on Wildlife. And with the return of the Stormont Assembly, we are more determined than ever to secure the legal and policy changes needed to secure nature's recovery.

Joanne Sherwood
Director, RSPB Northern Ireland



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Rathlin has the largest population of breeding Guillemots in the UK and Ireland.

LIFE Raft for Rathlin gathers pace

The seabirds of Rathlin Island are one step closer to a more secure future thanks to the ongoing LIFE Raft project.

Rathlin Island is home to Northern Ireland's largest seabird colony, with Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills and others breeding there every year. Yet non-native invasive Ferrets and Brown Rats are driving declines in many seabirds. Puffin numbers, for example, have dropped by 74% since 1999.

Led by the RSPB and the Rathlin Development Community Association, the multi-partner project aims to eradicate Ferrets and Rats from the island and decrease the likelihood of their return. This attempt to eradicate Feral Ferrets is a world first. It will also be one of the largest islands in the world to be cleared of Rats without the use of helicopters and one of the most populous islands to be restored.

Since October 2023 over 600 Ferret traps have been activated. At just five months in, the team estimated that there were only a few Ferrets left. Intensive monitoring is now underway: detection dogs, trail cameras, even drones are part of the search effort. The team are also starting to focus on Rats. This means making thousands of bait stations, removing tonnes of Rat harbourage, and recruiting over 20 staff and residential volunteers. The project is set to run until 2027, by which time it is hoped that all Ferrets and Rats will have been removed.

LIFE Raft is funded by EU Life, National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Rathlin Development and Community Association, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the RSPB and generous individual donors.

Plight of Puffin highlighted by sand art

A stunning sand art installation shone a light on the fragility of Northern Ireland's seabirds. Together with local artists UV Arts and the community, RSPB NI created the piece of work on the East Strand of Portrush beach as part of November's Swell Festival.

The event brought the community together to highlight how Puffins are at risk of being lost from our shores, with RSPB volunteers and staff on hand to urge people to work together so that nature doesn't disappear.

UV Arts described the events as one of their highlights of 2023 and one of the most poignant projects they worked on.

> "We want to raise awareness. The artwork created simply washes away, taken by the sea – we can't let this happen to our local wildlife.

Our impact

Scotland



Peter Cairns (rspb-images.com)

Osprey

Your unwavering support for decades of our campaigning work secured an amazing win with the passing of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn Bill. This landmark legislation will hopefully herald an end to raptor persecution and massively benefit upland habitats. We are also incredibly grateful for the generous support of our appeal to meet the challenges of the Cannich Wildfire which ripped through our Corrimony Reserve, which will fund woodland restoration.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland

Safeguarding Orkney's unique and rare wildlife

The Orkney Native Wildlife Project is an ambitious partnership seeking to safeguard the archipelago's native birds and animals.

Orkney is an incredibly rich haven for nature and home to nationally and internationally important populations of wildlife. This includes many species of ground-nesting birds, 15% of the UK's Hen Harriers, around 6% of our breeding seabirds, waders including Curlews, Lapwings and Oystercatchers, and the Orkney Vole, a distinct sub-species found nowhere else in the world. However invasive non-native Stoats threaten these populations.

Set up in 2019, the Orkney Native Wildlife Project seeks to protect Orkney's unique wildlife through the largest Stoat eradication in an inhabited landscape anywhere in the world. Thanks to a network of over 8,000 lethal humane trap boxes, Europe's first Stoat detection dogs, a team of professional trappers, and the support of local volunteers, the project has removed over 6,000 Stoats from Orkney since 2019.

The ultimate ambitions are to return Orkney's islands to their natural Stoat-free status and ensure a biosecure future for the area by preventing any future colonisation.

The Orkney Native Wildlife Project is a partnership between RSPB Scotland, NatureScot and Orkney Islands Council, with generous support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the EU's LIFE programme and the Nature Restoration Fund.

orkneynativewildlife.org.uk

Supporters rally to restore Corrimony after wildfires

Birds are back breeding in our Corrimony nature reserve, marking a remarkable recovery following devastating wildfires the previous year.

In May 2023, a catastrophic wildfire began in the Highlands near Cannich to the southwest of Inverness spreading to Corrimony. Set in stunning moorland and Caledonian forest, the nature reserve is a treasure trove of iconic species including Black Grouse, Scottish Crossbills, Crested Tits and soaring Golden Eagles.

However the fire destroyed great swathes of precious habitat, undoing 20 years of careful woodland restoration. This was despite staff from Corrimony and nearby nature reserves, fire crews, helicopter teams, neighbouring landowners and others working round the clock to extinguish the blaze. The fire also destroyed a vital deer fence, enabling the animals access to the nature reserve, where they began to graze on any surviving saplings.

Following an appeal for help, RSPB members, supporters and philanthropists sprang into action. Thanks to their generous gifts of over £200,000, as well as support from Barratt Homes and Trees for Life, we have been able to set about restoring the habitat. Over the past year we have re-erected the deer fencing and in early spring 2024, we began planting saplings to replace those destroyed. We have also purchased specialist fire management equipment to ensure that we are able to respond quickly both on our own and neighbouring lands should a wildfire occur again. Climate change and hotter drier summers mean that such incidents are sadly likely to be more frequent across the Highlands in coming years.

Our impact

Wales

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Pied Flycatcher



Over the next year, we'll launch exciting projects and partnerships that will help inspire and empower our supporters while also tackling the nature and climate crisis. We have ambitious targets to reverse the decline of some of our most endangered species and habitats, from the Black Grouse of the north east to restoring damaged peatlands of mid Wales. We'll also be campaigning for a Sustainable Farming Scheme that works for both people and nature.

Alun Prichard
Director, RSPB Cymru

Natur am Byth! to recover wildlife in Wales

Choughs, Curlews, Water Voles and many more species are set to benefit from Natur am Byth, a flagship Green Recovery project for Wales.

Natur am Byth is a large-scale species recovery programme, led by Natural Resources Wales, with RSPB Cymru and a further eight other nature charities also contributing to the project. Over the next four years, the project will aim to halt the extinction of 42 species in Wales and reverse the decline of a further 25 through habitat restoration.

RSPB Cymru are leading on the Pen Llŷn ac Ynys Môn project within the wider Natur am Byth programme. Both the Llŷn Peninsula and island of Anglesey (Ynys Môn) have an impressive suite of habitats and wildlife. RSPB South Stack on Ynys Môn, for example, supports rare Choughs, Adders and Spatulate Fleawort, a plant found nowhere else. Working with land managers, local communities and volunteers, we'll raise awareness of and improve the habitat for 17 target species in the target areas.

Our efforts will be focused mainly on coastal heath, sand dunes and fens, and we will deliver species recovery through habitat management, monitoring, collaboration with local land managers and training events.

Thanks to players of the National Lottery, over £4.1m from the Heritage Fund was awarded to the partnership in June 2023.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Curlews will benefit from Natur am Byth!

Restoring the Celtic rainforest

Wales is home to a number of ancient woodlands known as the Celtic rainforests. Thanks to the relatively mild and wet climate and clean air, these temperate rainforests provide habitat for a vast array of rare wildlife, from lichens and mosses to Dormice and Pied Flycatchers.

These are truly special places but are thought to be more threatened globally than the more famous tropical rainforests. In many areas, invasive plants such as *Rhododendron ponticum* have taken over, out competing native plants.

Funded by the EU-LIFE fund and the Welsh Government, we're working as part of the Celtic Rainforests Wales project to protect rainforests across Wales, including our nature reserves along the Mawddach Estuary and Gwenffrwd Dinas. Here, we are trying to get the rainforests back in top condition in several ways, including removing non-native invasive plants, thinning trees and introducing conservation grazing.

Ein Llwyddiannau

Cymru

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Mwsogl



Dros y flwyddyn nesaf, byddwn ni'n lansio prosiectau a phartneriaethau cyffrous a fydd yn helpu i ysbrydoli a grymuso ein cefnogwyr ar yr un pryd â mynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng natur a hinsawdd. Mae gennym dargedau uchelgeisiol i wrthdroi dirywiad rhai o'n rhywogaethau a'n cynefinoedd sydd mewn perygl, gan gynnwys Grugair Ddu y gogledd-ddwyrain ac adfer mawndiroedd sydd wedi'u difrodi yng nghanolbarth Cymru. Byddwn ni hefyd yn ymgyrchu dros Gynllun Ffermio Cynaliadwy sy'n gweithio i bobl ac i fyd natur.

Alun Prichard
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

Natur am Byth! i adfer bywyd gwyllt yng Nghymru

Bydd Brain Coesgoch, Gylfinirod, Llygod y Dŵr a llawer mwy o rywogaethau yn elwa o Natur am Byth, sef prosiect blaenllaw Adferiad Gwyrdd ar gyfer Cymru.

Rhaglen adfer rhywogaethau ar raddfa fawr yw Natur am Byth, ac mae'n cael ei harwain gan Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru. Mae RSPB Cymru ac wyth elusen arall yn cyfrannu at y prosiect hefyd. Dros y pedair blynedd nesaf, bydd y prosiect yn ceisio atal difodiant 42 o rywogaethau yng Nghymru, ac yn ceisio gwrthdroi'r dirywiad o 25 o rywogaethau eraill drwy adfer cynefinoedd.

Mae RSPB Cymru yn arwain y prosiect ym Mhen Llŷn ac Ynys Môn o fewn y rhaglen ehangach Natur am Byth. Mae gan Ben Llŷn ac Ynys Môn gyfres drawiadol o gynefinoedd a bywyd gwyllt. Er enghraifft, mae RSPB Ynys Lawd ar Ynys Môn yn cynnal Brain Coesgoch a Gwiberod prin, a Chweinllys Ysbodolaidd, sy'n blanhigyn nad oes modd ei weld yn unman arall. Gan weithio gyda rheolwyr tir, cymunedau lleol a gwirfoddolwyr, byddwn ni'n gwella ac yn codi ymwybyddiaeth o'r cynefin ar gyfer 17 o rywogaethau targed yn yr ardaloedd targed.

Bydd ein hymdrechion yn canolbwyntio'n bennaf ar rostir arfordirol, twyni tywod a ffeniau, a byddwn ni'n adfer rhywogaethau drwy reoli cynefinoedd, monitro, cydweithio â rheolwyr tir lleol a chynnal digwyddiadau hyfforddi.

Diolch i chwaraewyr y Loteri Genedlaethol, dyfarnwyd mwy na £4.1m o'r Gronfa Dreftadaeth i'r bartneriaeth ym mis Mehefin 2023.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Bydd Gylfinirod yn elwa o Natur am Byth!

Adfer y goedwig law Celtaidd

Mae Cymru'n gartref i sawl coetir hynafol, a elwir yn goedwigoedd glaw Celtaidd. Diolch i'r hinsawdd gymharol fwyn a gwlyb a'r aer glân, mae'r coedwigoedd glaw tymherus hyn yn darparu cynefin ar gyfer amrywiaeth eang o fywyd gwyllt prin, gan gynnwys cennau, mwsoglau, Pathewod a Gwybedogion Brith.

Mae'r rhain yn lleoedd gwirioneddol arbennig, ond y gred yw eu bod dan fwy o fygythiad yn fyd-eang na'r coedwigoedd glaw trofannol enwog. Mewn sawl ardal, mae planhigion ymledol fel *Rhododendron ponticum* yn trechu planhigion cynhenid.

Rydym yn cael ein hariannu gan gronfa EU-LIFE a Llywodraeth Cymru, ac rydym yn gweithio fel rhan o brosiect Coedwigoedd Glaw Celtaidd Cymru i ddiogelu coedwigoedd glaw ledled Cymru, gan gynnwys ein gwarchodfeydd natur ar hyd Aber Mawddach a Gwenffrwd Dinas. Yma, rydym yn ceisio cael y coedwigoedd glaw yn ôl i'w cyflwr gorau mewn sawl ffordd, gan gynnwys cael gwared ar blanhigion ymledol, teneuo coed a chyflwyno'r broses o bori er lles cadwraeth.

Forward look



Phil Cutt (rspb-images.com)

A cover crop of Borage in England.

Our strategy demands that we deliver bigger, more joined up conservation to drive the pace and scale of change that nature so desperately needs.

Despite the many challenges, we will continue to deliver world class conservation both in the UK and internationally to deliver our strategic outcomes and our strategic shifts.

The global and domestic financial situation continues to put huge pressure on our organisation, and we are working harder than ever to ride the tide of economic uncertainty. Politically, there are many uncertainties internationally and closer to home. In the UK, the wider operating environment continues to be challenging and will be dominated by the 2024 general election and its outcome. Environmentally there's potential for UK farming policies to bring about seismic changes. Meanwhile, marine environments face increased pressure as policymakers look to increase renewable energy and onshore grid developments.

This report describes how progress towards our 2030 strategy has delivered impact for nature in 2023–2024. We will continue to drive positive change through our priorities for 2024–2025.

We conducted a full review of our Outcome measures (page 11). This concluded that we continue to be successful in moving forward in our conservation goals. The review also highlighted that to achieve the scale of impact needed, we must focus on driving systemic change to benefit nature. As an organisation we will continue to work efficiently and effectively to deliver our strategic outcomes. Our areas of focus for the next 12 months are outlined here. The specific actions to achieve these goals are outlined in our detailed Corporate Plan.

We will maximise our impact for nature by:

- Focusing on the opportunities to reshape frameworks and finances to enable and support the transition to low-carbon, nature-friendly farming in the UK.
- Building support amongst the public for nature-friendly farming and to use this support to put pressure on decision-makers to change the financial and policy frameworks. We will do this through powerful partnership campaigning and advocacy.
- Delivering conservation impact at scale through our growing programme of UK and global landscape-scale partnerships, unlocking major funding to restore species and habitats, enabling communities to act for nature and inspiring hope that change is possible.
- Extending our business engagement opportunities, with new partnerships that enable greater delivery for nature on the ground. Supporting the development of high standards in new nature markets, scaling up our work in Conservation Investment, and supporting systemic change towards measurable Nature Positive practices in the private sector.
- Building agility into our People Engagement and our Policy work to respond quickly to the outside world.
- Mobilising more, and more diverse, people to act for nature, keeping nature in the public eye as an issue of concern.
- Continuing to build capacity in our international partners, supporting them to lead and grow sustainably, working closely with Birdlife International and raising further the profile of our international work.
- Supporting the UK to deliver its contribution towards the Global Biodiversity Framework targets, through a range of science, policy, species recovery and the restoration of land for nature and climate at landscape scale. We will continue to develop powerful research collaborations that help supply evidence-based solutions to the climate and nature emergency.

Delivering our strategy sustainably

To achieve all this, we act as an organisation that is high in energy, ethical impact, sustainability and inclusivity. This will enable us to build on income opportunities, deliver cost savings and ensure our resources are focused on where they are most needed. Put simply, we want to continue to maximize the impact we have for every pound we spend on our conservation work.

To do this, we will:

- Act with focus – putting our efforts and resources where they have the greatest impact.
- Act with efficiency – working together even more effectively to deliver our work.
- Grow our income even faster – accessing new and developing opportunities to transform how we fund our work.
- Prioritise our ambitions to drive equity, diversity and inclusion through all that we do.
- Stay true to our shared values of courage, collaboration, clarity and connection to continue to be a world class conservation charity.

Thank you and acknowledgements

We wish to thank all our members, volunteers, partners, supporters, donors and funders. None of what we do would be possible without you. Thank you!



A huge thank you to all our members and supporters.

President and Vice Presidents
Thank you to our President, Vice Presidents and Ambassadors who give their time freely to support the RSPB. (Read more about our Ambassadors on page 13.)

President
Dr Amir Khan

Vice Presidents
- Dr Elizabeth Andrews MBE DL
- Sir David Attenborough OM GCMG CHCVO CBE
- Nick Baker
- Dr Mike Clarke
- Adrian Darby OBE
- Ian Darling FRICS OBE
- Kate Humble
- Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS
- The Earl of Lindsay
- Sir John Lister-Kaye Bt OBE
- Miranda Krestovnikoff
- Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
- Bill Oddie OBE
- Professor Steve Ormerod FCIEEM FLSW
- Chris Packham CBE
- Julian Pettifer OBE
- Sir Graham Wynne CBE
- Baroness Young of Old Scone

Members and supporters
We are always grateful for the incredible loyalty shown by our members and supporters and we wouldn't have been able to deliver the successful projects that are showcased in this Annual Report without them. Nature is in crisis but with their help we are able to demonstrate just what can be achieved when we join together to deliver outstanding conservation work at scale. Together we are connecting more people to nature, bringing species back from the brink of extinction, managing land and influencing the policies that protect nature.

Members continue to support our mission to save nature by donating, giving their time and talents through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns, and by bringing RSPB projects to life on the ground through RSPB local groups. Giving time, money, voice and actions are all greatly appreciated and crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Volunteers
Volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889, and they're still fundamental to our work today. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to donating their professional expertise, from barristers, project managers and surveyors to running the RSPB as members of our Council. In addition, more than half a million people take part in citizen science projects each year, such as Big Garden Birdwatch.

Volunteers enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives in their own communities, whilst demonstrating passion and commitment to our mission. Our ability to speak out for nature depends upon the support of our volunteers and the donation of their time and talents. They are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB.

We have around 13,500 volunteers, who make up 83% of our workforce. The activities of every single one of our volunteers is crucial for our work and the RSPB – thank you.

Community groups
We have a network of community groups across the UK for both young people and adults alike – our Wildlife Explorer groups and our Local Groups.

These groups form a thriving, active, engaged and valued network that delivers impactful work in communities to save nature. Run by some of the RSPB's most loyal and passionate volunteers, our groups allow the RSPB to have an active presence across the UK. Local Groups are an integral part of the organisation and members contribute their skills, time and energy to act for nature.

Our volunteer-led Wildlife Explorer groups inspire and empower hundreds of young people across the UK to become advocates for nature, both now and in the future, and enable them to share their passion with others to grow a movement of people taking action for nature. This year marked the 80th anniversary of our youth groups (see page 20) and we are grateful to the many volunteers inspiring young people to engage with and advocate for nature.

Legacies
Money left to us in legacies makes a vital contribution to our work to save nature every year. Whilst it's impossible to thank every single one of our legators, we'd like to mention the following people:
- Mr Jack Alfred Bailey and Mrs Audrey Jean Bailey
- Mrs Elizabeth Bailey-Marsden
- Mrs Barbara Joan Blake
- Mr John Scott Burdon
- Mrs Eugenie Mary Dorothy Bustard
- Mr Kevin Peter Cornforth
- Dr Barbara Ashley Croft
- Miss Barbara Clair Davis
- Mr James John Dunbar
- Mr Kenneth Harrison
- Mr Philip Robert Hastie
- Mrs Elsie Elizabeth Hughes
- Mr David Joy
- Mr Geoffrey Malcolm Lapworth
- Mrs Maureen Lees
- Mrs Joyce Enid Luck
- Miss Maureen Barbara Masland
- Mrs Margaret Letitia Matthews
- Ms Margaret Felicity Portlock
- Edith Randall
- Mr Brian Alan Reader

- Ms Maureen Rowe
- Mrs Patricia Schofield
- Miss Freda Shipley
- Mr Peter Sidney
- Mr Stephen William Sims
- Mr Roy Sidney Skelton
- Mrs Sylvia Noreen St John
- Dr James Denis Summers-Smith
- Mrs Nina Watkins
- Mrs Sheila Cameron Whitlock
- Miss Margaret Ruth Temple Wigan
- Mr Derrick Desmond Wilby

Charitable trusts,non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We'd like to give a special mention to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, for their thoughtful and generous support of the RSPB and all its partners on large-scale projects across the UK, including the Pesticide Collaboration, Natur am Byth, Nature North, Lowland Peatland Bog Recovery, Tir Canol and Species on the Edge.

We'd also like to extend special thanks to two other landscape-scale restoration partners: the Wyss Foundation, for their support of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative in western Kazakhstan, recently named a UN World Restoration Flagship project; and the Ecological Restoration Fund, partnering with the RSPB and BirdLife International to restore and protect key habitats along the African-Eurasian Flyway.

Once again, our individual philanthropic supporters have been extremely generous, making donations towards a wide range of projects, from surveying bryophytes in Wales to large-scale habitat management at Haweswater, Cumbria. The Bempton land acquisition was the Philanthropy Team's flagship appeal this year, raising over £250k, as detailed on page 26.

Sincere thanks to new donors Christine and Geoffrey Grimes, who decided to make a significant gift to enable us to replace Lower Hide at our Leighton Moss reserve. And a special mention to the Trustees of the Icthius Trust who are long-term supporters of the work of the RSPB. We are very grateful for their faith and commitment.

We are grateful for the support received and would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Mrs Betty Albon
- Mr Alan Alderson and Ms Sandra Allen
- Dr Roger Allport
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Lars Atkin
- Dr Sheila Harri-Augstein and her husband The Late Dr Joachim Augstein
- Miss Jane Bailey
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Caroline and William Barnes
- Robert Barr's Charitable Trust
- Mr D Benham
- The Bentley Family Trust
- The Big Give Trust
- BirdLife International
- Blue Nature Alliance
- Mr Jim Boswell
- The Miel de Botton Charitable Trust
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Brown Forbes Memorial Fund
- The Brown Source Trust
- CAF America
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- The Cairngorms Trust
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Chabot Family Fund
- The Chapman Charitable Trust
- Charities Trust
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust Ltd
- Conservation International (CI)
- The Ernest Cook Trust
- Drs John and Hinke Couchman
- The Crown Estate (through the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme)
- Ida Davis Family Foundation
- Ms E Desmond
- Dunn Family Charitable Trust
- Arthur Ronald Dyer Charitable Trust
- Ecological Restoration Fund
- The Pamela Edmundson Connolly Charitable Trust
- Mrs Lynne Ellis
- John Ellerman Foundation
- Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme (ELSP)*
- Environmental Resources Management (ERM) Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- The Finborough Foundation
- Fondation Segŕe
- Ms Nic French
- Mr Royston Furley
- The Gannochy Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- The A B Grace Trust
- Grant Charitable Trust
- Green Action Trust
- Mr Charles Glanville
- Global Environment Facility (GEF) Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR)
- The Golden Bottle Trust
- Dr John Gowenlock
- Geoffrey and Christine Grime
- The William Haddon Charitable Trust
- Richard Hale
- The Daphne Hamilton Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- The Helvellyn Foundation
- Henocq Law Trust
- Jonathan and Florence Heyhoe
- Highlands and Islands Environment Fund (HIEF)
- The Corton Hill Trust
- HSBC Bank Trust / HSBC Trust Company (UK) Limited
- The Icthius Trust
- Marie Jarvie in memory of Steve Chastell
- Jersey Overseas Aid
- Richard Johnson, deceased
- Kusuma Trust
- Peter A Lawrence (Betty and Nancy Liebert Trusts)
- Robert and Elizabeth Lee
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- Lincoln Local Group
- The Linder Foundation
- The Linley Shaw Foundation
- Ludlow Trust Co Ltd
- Helen Lumley
- Irene Anne MacDonald Charitable Trust
- Stephen and Carolyn Martin
- Julia Maynard
- Robert McCracken KC
- The Elizabeth C F McGregor-Dziniak Charitable Trust for Animals
- Gil and Julie McVean
- Mentor Mon Cyf
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Mr Mark Mills
- Ian Morrison
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Natural History Museum
- The National Trust
- The Natural Trust
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- NHS Lothians Charity
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Ms Barbara Palmer
- Partnerships for Forests Programme - UK FCDO
- Peacock Charitable Trust
- The Penchant Foundation
- Mr Michael Percival
- The Planeterra Foundation
- The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery
- Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
- Miss Marjorie Purser Charitable Trust
- Q Charitable Trust
- Robin Rigg Windfarm Community Fund
- The Maurice Henry Roe Charitable Trust
- Helen Roll Charity
- The Rufford Foundation
- The Ryde Family
- Seacology
- Shetland Islands Council's Coastal Communities Fund
- Scottish Environment Link
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature

- South Georgia Heritage Trust
- Derek and Clare Stevens Trust
- Sustainable Fishery Partnership
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust and The Swire Charitable Trust
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Gillian Tucker
- Mr K and Mrs C Turner
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Cambridge Centre for Landscape Regeneration
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Rosemary Warburg
- Susanna Watson
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- The Wildlife Trusts
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- J & J R Wilson Trust
- The Woodland Trust
- World Wildlife Fund
- Sophia Elizabeth Wrightson, deceased
- Wyss Foundation
- The John Young Charitable Settlement

*The Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme is a partnership between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Arcadia, a charitable foundation that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

We would also like to acknowledge supporters who wish to remain anonymous, who have generously contributed towards our work.

Celebrities and influencers
We'd like to thank the following people for supporting our campaigns, events and projects, and for helping to raise the profile of the RSPB:
- Jack Baddams
- Bill Bailey
- Mya Bambrick
- Sam Bentley
- Leif Bersweden
- Hannah Bourne-Taylor
- Carl Bovis
- JJ Chalmers
- Dr Mya-Rose Craig
- Mike Dilger
- George Hassall
- Aneeshwar Kunchala
- David Lindo
- Kate MacRae
- April Mayne
- Dara McAnulty
- Jim Moir
- Stephen Moss
- David Oakes
- Lev Parikian
- Sophie Pavelle
- Nancy Sorrell
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Iolo Williams
- Hamza Yassin

Youth Council
- Alfie
- Emily
- Freddie
- Indy
- Jannis
- Kabir
- Katie
- Lisa
- Luke
- Natasha
- Sennen
- Thomas

Landfill Communities Fund and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund
We are grateful for funding support from the following organisations through the Landfill Communities Fund and the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund:
- Alpha Resource Management Ltd
- Enovert Community Trust
- FCC Communities Foundation Ltd
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Fund
- Teesside Environmental Trust

Business supporters
The RSPB enjoys successful partnerships with business supporters to our mutual benefit. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following:
- ADM
- The Ardmore
- Baillie Gifford
- Baringa Partners LLP
- Barratt Developments Plc
- Beam Suntory UK Ltd
- Bellrock Group
- Broadshore Wind
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Co-op
- The Co-operative Bank
- Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Need and Snow+Rock
- Dogger Bank Wind Farm
- DPDgroup UK
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
- Ecotalk
- Ecotricity
- Edinburgh International Conference Centre Ltd
- Elemis
- Ella's Kitchen
- The Famous Grouse
- Fieldfisher LLP
- GreenPower
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP
- holidaycottages.co.uk
- Hurtigruten Group Ltd
- The James Hutton Institute
- idverde UK
- Kingfisher Plc
- The LEGO Group
- Lightrock Power
- Lush Ltd
- Marks & Spencer
- Marshalls plc
- Morgan Sindall Group Plc
- Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Ltd
- Norfolk Coast Partnership
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- Northumbrian Water Group
- Ørsted Wind Power A/S
- Parkdean Resorts
- Planet Wild
- PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited
- The Pure Edit Ltd
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Russell & Co
- ScotRail
- Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Ltd
- ScottishPower
- Scottish Power Renewables
- Scottish Water
- Seagreen Wind Energy Ltd
- Severn Trent Boost for Biodiversity Fund
- Severn Trent Water Ltd
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- SMS Corporate Services Limited
- Southern Water
- South Western Railway
- SSE Renewables
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Triodos Bank UK
- Turcan Connell
- UBS Optimus Foundation Singapore Ltd
- United Utilities Plc
- Weird Fish Ltd
- Wessex Water Services Ltd
- Whitbread Group PLC
- Yorkshire Water

National Lottery Heritage Fund
The RSPB is indebted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for their support through their exceptional administration of Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. We are also very appreciative of their extended and generous support for the Orkney Native Wildlife Project, helping to safeguard the unique and internationally important native wildlife of Orkney; the Giving Nature a Home in the Dearne Valley project; and the funding provided for projects across all four UK countries.

National Lottery Community Fund
In 2024, thanks to a large grant award from the National Lottery Community Fund, the RSPB began leading a partnership project called Nature Neighbourhoods. Connecting communities across the whole of the UK to take action on the burgeoning nature and climate crisis, the project will enable and upskill more community leaders and help them to mobilise their communities and lead positive change through the creation of Nature Neighbourhood Plans. Funding from The National Lottery Community Fund truly showcases how communities can work together with the RSPB to benefit both nature and people.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Special thanks to Defra for their support through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF), providing over £5 million in funds to support projects in England. GRCF allowed the RSPB to deliver projects restoring nature and wildlife, introducing new nature-based solutions on our project sites and connecting even more people with nature. We also would like to thank Defra for their support through the Environmental Land Management Scheme – Landscape Recovery.

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies
We are grateful for co-operation and support from organisations of many kinds, and would especially like to thank the following:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Peatland ACTION funding provided by the Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
- The Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) - The G7 Environmental Legacy Fund
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA)
- Environment Agency
- EU Protected Areas Management Support (PAPFor)
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – Thematic Programme for environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy (ENRTP)
- European Regional Development Fund managed by NatureScot
- Falkirk Council
- Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
- Fife Council
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Friends of South Georgia Island
- Glasgow City Council
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- Investment Ready Nature Scotland - Delivered through collaboration from NatureScot, Esmée Fairbairn and the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- IUCN Species Survival Commission
- Jersey Overseas Aid Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (KfW, Credit Institute for Reconstruction), Germany
- Loch Lomond and the Trossochs National Park
- National Grid
- National Highways England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- NLHF Nature Networks on behalf of the Welsh Government
- NLHF – The Queens Jubilee New to Nature Fund, supported by Groundwork UK
- National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP)
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural England - Species Recovery Programme Capital Grants Scheme
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- NatureScot
- NatureScot – Better Places Fund (BPF)
- NatureScot – Peatland ACTION Fund
- North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Office for Environmental Protection
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Government and VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)
- The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot
- Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- Stirling Council
- The Suffolk and Essex Coasts and Heath's National Landscape
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustrans Scotland
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up via Ceredigion County Council
- The United Nations Environment Programme/Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED)
- The Welsh Government
- The Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA in partnership with Powys Nature Partnership and Powys County Council



Volunteers on the rise in NI
RSPB Northern Ireland welcomed more than 500 volunteers last year, an increase of 15% from last year. Volunteers play a vital role at the RSPB and we could not achieve what we do without them. Thank you!
See pages 78-79 for more.

Cathryn Cochrane



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

A huge thank you to you, our many members, supporters and volunteers.

Without you, we could not do what we do.

Governance

The RSPB has a clear and effective governance structure.

Governing body
The RSPB's overall governing body is the RSPB Council. This is composed of up to 18 Council members (Trustees), and following the most recent governance review Council has accepted a recommendation to operate with 12 members. The RSPB Council has overall responsibility for the conduct of the RSPB. It also ensures that the RSPB operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, statutes, byelaws and the law. It is supported by several committees that all have specific roles, defined by their formal terms of reference.

Each committee meets several times a year, and other subcommittees are established from time to time. The honorary positions of President and Vice President, and our Ambassadors, are not Council members and are not involved in making or influencing Council decisions.

Leadership and effectiveness
The RSPB Council works as a team, with a balance of skills, knowledge and experience, in order to be as effective as possible, in alignment with the Charity Governance Code.

Every year, the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity our Trustees bring to the Council are reviewed alongside the effectiveness of the Council. Trustee and committee vacancies are advertised on the RSPB website, online and through specialist search agencies. The appointment process is rigorous and is managed by the Council's Nominations and People Committee.

Information is provided about the RSPB and Trustees' duties to people who express an interest in being a Trustee, before there is formal confirmation of a willingness to serve. Trustees are elected on the recommendations of the Nominations and People Committee, and Council, and voted for by members at the AGM. Once elected, Trustees receive a briefing pack outlining their role, duties and accountabilities, with information about the RSPB and its policies, structure and work. We hold induction sessions for each new Trustee, to support them with understanding their roles and responsibilities and the RSPB's strategy and operations. Trustees are also offered opportunities to learn more about the RSPB's work, such as individual meetings with staff, visits to nature reserves and training on important work areas.

Trustees, nominated trustees and senior staff complete a register showing their interests and related party transactions. This is updated each year, and whenever any changes occur. Terms of office for each member of Council are published on the RSPB website.

As part of the induction, continuing training and annual appraisal for all Trustees, staff and volunteers, information is provided on:

- Our codes of conduct – the values, rules and principles that we expect our staff, volunteers and Trustees to follow.
- Our ethical principles – how we want to engage with the world.
- Our brand – how we want our supporters, stakeholders and the wider public to think about us.
- Our values and behaviours – how we work and relate to each other.

RSPB council



Kevin Cox
Council Chair
- Finance
- Nominations and People
- Communications and Engagement



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer and Finance Chair
- Audit and Risk
- Nominations and People



Kerry ten Kate
Conservation Advisory Chair
- Nominations and People
- Commercial and Partnerships



Jim Sloane
Commercial and Partnerships Chair
- Finance
- Audit and Risk
- Nominations and People



John Mason
Audit and Risk Chair
- Committee for Scotland



Dr Vicki Nash
Committee for Scotland Chair
- Nominations and People



Judith Annett
Committee for Northern Ireland Chair
- Conservation Advisory



Keith Jones
Committee for Wales Chair
- Committee for Northern Ireland



Dr Ben Caldecott
- Commercial and Partnerships



Jim Lowther
- Audit and Risk
- Finance



Professor William Sutherland
- Conservation Advisory
- Committee for Wales



Veronica Pickering DL
- Committee for England



Lord John Randall



Linda Grant



Ghazala Koosar
Committee for England Chair

Kevin Cox is stepping down as Chair at the RSPB AGM in October 2024. Linda Grant stepped down in October 2023 and Ghazala Koosar stepped down in February 2024. We thank them for their huge contributions to the RSPB. For further information on the structure and operation of Council, please see rspb.org.uk/council

Supporting Committees

Following the implementation of the latest governance review, Council is supported by the following committees:

Scrutiny and stewardship

- **Finance Committee:** assures the integrity of financial plans, reporting and controls.
  - Six members (of whom four are Council members).
- **Audit and Risk Committee:** provides scrutiny of the adequacy of the governance, risk and associated control framework, giving assurance that those arrangements are effective and comprehensive.
  - Six members (of whom four are Council members).
- **Nominations and People Committee:** develops and maintains procedures for making recommendations on appointments to Council, to ensure a diverse membership and range of skills and review succession plans for current members of Council, and seeking assurance of the good stewardship of the RSPB workforce.
  - Six members (of whom all are Council members).

Support and advice

- **Conservation Advisory Committee** provides independent insight, advice and guidance on conservation strategy, approaches, policy and programmes, and advises Board and Council on positioning, risks and opportunities related to specific projects or policy issues.
- **Communications and Engagement Advisory Committee** provides advice to Board and Council on matters pertaining to the RSPB's communications, campaigning and engagement with stakeholders across all relevant channels.
- **Commercial and Partnerships Advisory Committee** provides advice to Board and Council on matters pertaining to commercial and partnership opportunities and activity.
- **Country Advisory Committees** in each UK nation provide insight on the views and interests of stakeholders relevant to the current and future strategy and the work of the RSPB in the country. The committees advise and assist the country staff in the promotion of interest in the work of the Society, including membership and fundraising opportunities, and help develop the influence and the policy agenda of the Society.
  - In all cases, membership is eight members (two of whom are members of Council), plus up to four guests invited to support areas of strategic focus.
  - Youth Council members participate as members of advisory committees.



Wild Dundee
People across Dundee have connected with nature through the Wild Dundee project. As well as events highlighting the city's wildlife (pictured), the project included nature-focused workshops with drugs and alcohol rehabilitation groups, and a partnership with students at Abertay University to create an Osprey migration video game.

Hope Busák

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounts. These should show and explain the RSPB's transactions and be able to disclose the charity's financial position at any time. These should also ensure the financial statements comply with reporting and legal regulations, and meet the charity's constitution, as set out in the Charter and Statutes.

Charity law in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland requires Trustees to prepare financial statements each financial year. These must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the group, and of the income and expenditure of the group for that period. They are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, and financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, known as FRS102.

When preparing these statements, the Trustees must:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Follow the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates.
- State whether they have followed applicable accounting standards, subject to any exceptions which are disclosed and explained.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the RSPB's assets, and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Oversight of remuneration

All RSPB staff, including the Chief Executive and Executive Board, are covered by the same remuneration policy. This is based on externally benchmarked salary bands. This policy is approved by the RSPB Council and is subject to review.

The salary of the Chief Executive is overseen by the Nominations and People Committee, which is chaired by the Chair of Council. The performance of the Chief Executive is subject to a formal appraisal process against previously agreed measures, and this is discussed at an annual appraisal meeting. Recommendations for pay progression are made in line with the RSPB's pay policy for staff.

The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing the salaries of the Executive Board, in line with the same policy.



Left to right: Russell Powell, Rebecca Munro, Katie-jo Luxton, Beccy Speight, Emma Marsh, James Robinson.

Executive Board

The Board is responsible for the management of the RSPB, headed by the Chief Executive. Executive directors of operations; global conservation; digital technology and communications; income and conservation investment; and finance, governance and strategy sit on the board.

“
I became the RSPB’s Chief Executive in August 2019. My role is to lead the organisation, build relationships with key partners, represent our views externally and work with the Council and Executive Board to develop our forward direction and ensure we deliver that plan. I believe I am in the best possible place to make a real difference for birds, the natural world and people in the context of the nature and climate crisis. I feel fortunate to work with a great team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters to do just that.

Beccy Speight, Chief Executive

“
I have been Chief Operating Officer since August 2023. I work with country teams to implement the RSPB’s strategy across the UK, lead organisational improvement, and oversee the ways we support and motivate our staff and volunteers to meet our ambitions. My previous roles in the organisation include Country Director for RSPB Northern Ireland, Head of Nature Policy, and Regional Director for Eastern England.

James Robinson, Chief Operating Officer

“
I lead the RSPB’s mission to save species, protect habitats and restore landscapes to help end the nature and climate crisis, and I’ve held my current position since November 2021. Prior to this, I was Director of RSPB Cymru for 12 years, leading the delivery of the RSPB’s strategy for Wales.

Katie-jo Luxton, Executive Director, Global Conservation

“
I work with colleagues across the RSPB to bring in funding and resources to deliver our strategy and help close the funding gap for nature more widely. This includes engaging and growing the RSPB’s membership; partnering with businesses to support our work and transition to a nature positive economy; running our commercial operations; and deploying conservation investment to achieve landscape-scale nature restoration.

Rebecca Munro, Executive Director, Income and Conservation Investment

“
I became the Executive Director for Digital Technology and Communications in August 2022. I’m focused on ensuring the RSPB makes the biggest possible difference for nature and people across those functions. I joined the RSPB in 2016 as Regional Director in the Midlands, and from 2019 as the Director for RSPB England.

Emma Marsh, Executive Director, Digital Technology and Communications

“
I joined the RSPB in February 2023, from the National Trust. I lead on ensuring the RSPB is financially sustainable, well-governed and is on course to meet the aims laid out in its strategy. As Europe’s largest nature conservation charity, we’re very grateful for the support we receive. We want to spend every penny in a way that helps further our cause. We do this by working with colleagues and external partners to ensure we achieve good value for the money we spend. We do so in a controlled way and so that we are aligned to our strategy.

Russell Powell, Executive Director, Finance, Governance and Strategy

Please note that Rebecca Munro stepped down from the position of Executive Director, Income and Conservation Investment, in December 2023 with Jo Coker taking over as Interim Executive Director. Shaun Thomas stepped down in October 2023, with James Robinson replacing him. In May 2024, Andrew Cook took up the role of Executive Director, Income and Conservation Investment.

Integrity

The RSPB's Council has ultimate responsibility for the charity's funds and assets, as well as our reputation. Each Council member must adhere to a Code of Conduct, and endorse the RSPB's five Ethical Principles. These are based on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) ethical principles for the charity sector, and incorporate the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

1. **Beneficiaries first:** the interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do (page 94).
2. **Environment:** nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature (page 94).
3. **Integrity:** we should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct (page 95).
4. **Openness and accountability:** we create a culture where our supporters, staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds (page 95).
5. **Right to be safe:** every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (page 95).

I. Beneficiaries first

To ensure we have the greatest impact for nature, we:

- Carry out our work to provide the greatest impact for people and nature with integrity, regardless of whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB's reputation, leadership or operation.
- Encourage trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate, and by listening and responding to our beneficiaries. This facilitates engagement and communication.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with our beneficiaries in mind.
- Work with organisations and individuals whose goals and values are consistent with our work, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

II. Environment

Our conservation work has a huge impact for nature. We preserve and restore natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact, we're working to reduce the footprint of all our operations, through our systems and policies (see pages 62-65). For environmental management we:

- Take a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (UN Compact principle 7).
- Promote greater environmental responsibility (principle 8).
- Encourage the development of environmentally friendly technologies (principle 9).

III. Integrity principle

To uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct, we:

- Ensure the appropriate systems are in place to ensure decisions are well-considered and free from any conflict of interest. This includes our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks (see page 96).
- Ensure our resources are managed in a responsible way, and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for. This includes policies and procedures to combat bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion. We also ensure the systems and processes are in place to enable our expenditure to be audited, meaning that money, funding and grants can be tracked from receipt to expenditure.
- We work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).

Anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies are built into our procurement policies.

IV. Openness and accountability

We try to create a culture where RSPB supporters, staff, volunteers, institutional partners and the public can see and understand how we work, how we deal with issues, and how we spend our funds.

Through the RSPB Magazine, our website (rspb.org.uk) and wider communications, we strive to keep you informed and involved about our projects and activities. This means we operate in an open and transparent way within our legal and regulatory requirements. We want to share information about how we work and ensure it can be accessed easily.

V. Right to be safe

Every person who volunteers, works, or is in contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (UN Compact principles 1 and 2). This means we:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power, including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities. See also page 98.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of concerns about abuse of any kind of inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands their expectations, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don't feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour (UN Compact principle 5).

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

A full statement of the steps we take to prevent slavery and human trafficking taking place in our business and supply chains can be found at rspb.org.uk/slavery-act (UN Compact principle 4).

Decision making, risk and control

We strive for decision-making processes that are rigorous and efficient, incorporate effective delegation, and are informed by assessments of risk and control.

Decision making

RSPB Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive and to the employees for certain activities. There's a detailed schedule of delegation, and systems and policies are in place to monitor these delegations.

Risk

The Trustees are accountable for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity, working with the Executive Board. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner, considering all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Risk registers, risk mapping and internal audit provide comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- delivery of our strategy and projects, with a particular focus on environmental impact;
- our environmental footprint and credentials;
- our reputation;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters and visitors, and, in particular, to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;
- our compliance with relevant law and regulation;
- management of our financial, physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data and technological assets;
- retaining and building know-how delivering good governance and embodying a positive, inclusive and ethical organisational culture;
- protecting and growing our income.

Our risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council via its Audit and Risk Committee every quarter, and in greater depth by Council once each year. Following the most recent review in April 2024, the Trustees confirmed that they are satisfied with such arrangements and identified several strategic risks for the year ahead that represent, by their nature, both opportunity and challenge. The RSPB will work to limit the negative impact on the delivery of our charitable objectives and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite.

Control

The RSPB has a clear framework for monitoring its impact, progress and approach to risk management. Risk registers cover the full range of financial and non-financial risks and we operate the 'three lines' model for risk control and monitoring. This separates execution from control policies and from audit, and maps and rates the control framework. Council approves a plan for internal audits, and a full review of external audit service provision is undertaken periodically with the active involvement of suitably experienced Trustees. The Audit and Risk Committee meets in private with external auditors once a year.

Risk description	Risk response
Environmental challenges	
In the climate and nature crisis, the threats to nature continue to grow, yet attention is overshadowed by the climate emergency.	We are focused on addressing the nature and climate emergencies and raising awareness of the role of nature in the climate crisis.
Some people are disconnected from nature and unaware that it's in crisis, or aware but not motivated to take action. In some cases relationships between people, nature and climate lead to a real or perceived conflict between people and nature.	We undertake activities to help people connect with nature, including education, reserves events, wide-scale communications and engagement activities, such as Big Garden Birdwatch and the collaboration with the Natural History Museum in 2024.
The RSPB supports renewable energy that is delivered with a nature positive approach. If growth in renewables, particularly wind energy, and updates to onshore grid infrastructure, happen without effective strategic mitigation and compensation, this could cause significant harm to birds, other species and habitats. Given limited resources, we might not engage with some potentially damaging projects.	Renew efforts to get UK governments to take a strategic approach to siting and mitigation, through revised sectoral marine plans and better spatial planning on land to avoid most sensitive sites. Continue engagement with individual projects and the offshore wind sector in particular. Further develop and urgently advocate for rapid delivery of positive measures to improve resilience of species and habitats.
Failure to influence public and political views on food and farming resulting in damaging land management practices and a reduction in funding available for nature-friendly farming in some UK countries.	We advocate for environmentally sensitive farming through our policy influencing work and campaigns. We engage with other organisations working in this area locally and UK-wide. We will continue to deliver advocacy and communications in partnership to champion the importance of nature for food security.
Technology and cybersecurity	
The cost and complexity of the technological infrastructure that the RSPB work depends on will continue to increase. We contend with requirements to upgrade or replace older systems, issues of connectivity in remote areas, and protecting from cyberattack.	Our approach will be prioritised based on risk and strategic need. Increased costs will be managed by onboarding new technology as legacy tech is retired, while focusing on simplification of our technology estate. The cybersecurity will continue to be upgraded.
Income	
Continued reduction in disposable income and competition for funding means that existing sources of income are subject to significant volatility. New income sources have their own volatility and include an increase in restricted funding. New opportunities also bring potential reputational risk as well as benefits.	The RSPB Council pays close attention to the RSPB income strategy, bearing in mind the policy on financial reserves. New income opportunities are continuously explored, with all new arrangements subject to review by our Ethical Gifts Board, and major changes reviewed by Trustees.
Costs	
Higher core costs resulting from inflationary pressure increases the cost of meeting core obligations significantly.	Management is placing an increased focus on the management of the core cost base, cost control and procurement.
Wellbeing	
Workforce wellbeing, which is monitored through various channels including formal surveys. Ongoing cultural change is required to support staff, many of whom are hybrid working.	Developing additional tools and support to enable line managers to ensure good working relationships, creative collaboration opportunities and wellbeing in the workplace.

Inclusion

Our commitment to inclusion
Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) underpins the work we do to save nature. We're continuing our work to ensure that the RSPB is an organisation where everyone can thrive, as well as to break down barriers faced by different communities when accessing nature.

Accessibility on nature reserves
To improve accessibility for visitors and our workforce, we have completed a successful trial of accessibility changes at several of our nature reserves. These will help inform our approach to access. The trial included testing of:

- Standardised and high-quality information available in advance and on arrival to inform decisions about how people with access needs can enjoy our spaces.
- Staff training to increase confidence in welcoming visitors with a wide range of access needs.
- Resources including photo and video guides, communication cards, sensory trails and targeted events, which are designed to make more people feel welcome and included at our reserves.

As part of a redesign of our reserve maps, we've also developed an access version which will be produced for all our larger reserves. This version includes marking features such as gradients, steps, and potential barriers like stiles or cattle grids that may affect people with access needs. Trail descriptions will be factual rather than subjective to allow visitors to make up their own minds about how they explore the nature reserve.

Inclusive working practices
For our workforce we piloted and subsequently started the roll-out of training and resources to make the way we communicate work effectively for everyone.

In March 2024, we launched the RSPB's new Reasonable Adjustment Information Hub, including a Reasonable Adjustment Passport and Neurodiversity Guidance and resources to support line managers. This work aims to ensure that everyone in our workforce can thrive by removing barriers or disadvantages in the workplace.

The passport complements our inclusive recruitment work to drive a wider diversity of talent in our recruitment processes, by making sure the recruitment journey is as accessible, inclusive and attractive as possible.

This year, we also refreshed our foundational EDI materials to support colleagues to create more inclusive working practices at the RSPB. This includes creating a greater understanding of how EDI supports our mission and ability to meet our strategic aim of enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.

Caring for our supporters

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889 and they are still fundamental to our work today. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to providing highly specialist skills, raising funds and running the RSPB as members of Council. Last year, we welcomed over 3,000 new volunteers to the RSPB. In total our volunteers donated over one million hours of time. Many take on more than one role and nearly 90% would recommend volunteering with us to a friend or family member. In addition, more than 610,000 people took part in the RSPB's citizen science project, Big Garden Birdwatch 2024, recording 9.7 million birds.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends on the support of our volunteers. As described above, their activities are crucial to our work and the RSPB seeks volunteer involvement wherever appropriate. Volunteers are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB. They enhance our work by bringing valuable talents, skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. Volunteers also champion the cause and often provide friendly challenge and new perspectives while showing passion and commitment to our mission.

We also provide services to our members and supporters, responding to more than 225,000 enquiries each year and sustaining our relationships with around two million members, supporters and volunteers. Members receive a quarterly magazine, and we send email newsletters to our supporters, including the fortnightly Notes on Nature email which reaches 1.2 million readers, and our regular campaigning newsletter, which is sent to 70,000 people. Between April 2023 and March 2024, our website was viewed by 6.7 million users who looked at more than 24 million pages.

Safeguarding

We want everyone to enjoy their involvement with the RSPB, and know that we must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable people, and anyone who encounters our organisation, through:

- Our Safeguarding Policy, which is kept under review to ensure it is meeting the needs of the organisation.
- Safeguarding training for our workforce (including our volunteers) which is currently being revised and updated.
- A comprehensive Speak-up Policy to protect our workforce.
- Our Whistle-blowing Policy and independent helpline which is supported by an anonymous reporting capability.
- Our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Anti-harassment training delivered to our workforce by an expert partner.
- Bespoke lone traveller training delivered via expert partners to those that work internationally, equipping them to operate in high-risk environments appropriately.
- Membership of external safeguarding groups to ensure we are doing the right things in the right way.

We take steps to ensure our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. And to ensure that these steps are robust, we report regularly on safeguarding issues to our Trustees. See our Safeguarding Policy at rspb.org.uk/safeguarding

How we generate funds to save nature

We're grateful to receive most of our funds from individuals. This comes in a range of different ways, such as appeals, raffles, lotteries, community fundraising, legacies and membership.

We work hard to build long-lasting relationships with grant funders, trusts and corporate organisations. Much of our conservation work also generates vital income, which further supports our work to save nature. This includes funds raised through land and farming, and the sale of our research to other organisations.

Our loyal RSPB shop customers help fund our work through the purchase of bird food products, binoculars and telescopes, and educational materials. RSPB members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do, and our work to save nature is only possible thanks to their ongoing support.

Protecting and restoring habitats, saving species and helping end the nature and climate emergency is the key motivation behind our work. We're dedicated to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world.

Our commitments to our members and supporters are:

- We always look to improve how we work and welcome your feedback.
- We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds, other wildlife, and the places they call home.
- We endeavour to always show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature.
- We also share the latest news of what we're achieving thanks to you, and give you control over how you hear from us, whilst managing the cost of doing so.

To achieve our objective to save nature, we carry out fundraising activities. We do this with RSPB staff, volunteers and the help of carefully selected professional fundraisers and commercial participators. Professional fundraisers are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers who act as agents in raising funds on behalf of the RSPB. Commercial participators are usually businesses who encourage the sale of their goods or services on the basis that the RSPB will receive funding as a result. In all cases, we have contractual arrangements with these fundraising partners that set the standards and obligations that our fundraising activities must meet.

We regularly monitor the quality of all telephone marketing calls and conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with our face-to-face fundraisers. We ask all new members for feedback to understand their experience of joining us, and this also identifies any areas for improvement. Our Local Group network also takes part in fundraising activities. We give group committee members full training and guidance in how to fundraise with the public as part of a group activity.

As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances. RSPB staff complete mandatory training including safeguarding and fundraising compliance. Our face-to-face fundraisers have full training in talking about the RSPB cause in a transparent and straightforward way to the members of the public they meet. The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and the Data and Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out of receiving fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that supporters have the best possible experience in our fundraising efforts. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB's promise to our supporters.

The RSPB complies with the Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's guides and code. RSPB members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted, with the opportunity to change these at any time.

We endeavour to provide an exemplary service, to be transparent about our communication aims and to provide appropriate opportunities for engagement. Like others, we do not always get this right. We provide our complaints policy on our website and this clearly explains how a complaint can be made. Each complaint is fully addressed and improvements are made to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service. Last year we received 172 complaints about our fundraising activities communicated by phone, post, email, SMS, face-to-face, and via TV or radio.



Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

Award-winning nature reserves
RSPB Loch Leven (pictured) received the Inclusive Tourism Award at the Central and East Scotland Thistle Awards 2023. Meanwhile, RSPB Minsmere was named winner of the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism award at the East of England Tourism Awards 2023.

Financial review 2023–24

We have continued a planned spend down of our financial reserves to bring them in line with levels set by Council, which has enabled increased spend on a number of large conservation projects. To support this, we have increased staff numbers by 4.6% to provide the capacity for this higher level of work. However, we have also seen the impacts of global economic uncertainty, primarily through high inflation rates on our cost base, but also the cost of living crisis. We continue to actively monitor our financial position to ensure reserves remain within Council policy.

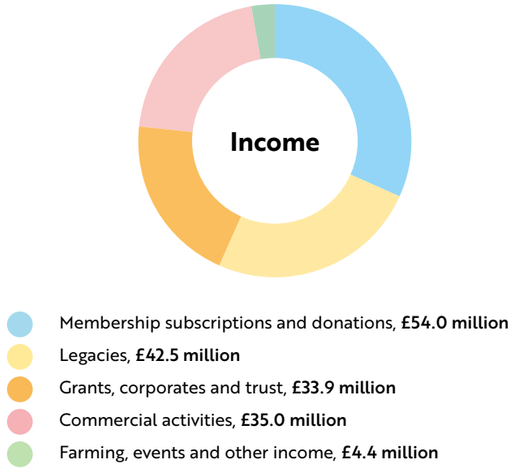
The support and commitment of our members and supporters remains strong and gives a sound financial base to meet the ongoing challenges of the nature and climate emergency both in the UK and internationally.

We remain financially resilient and in a good position to navigate the current economic outlook.

Summary
Another year of income growth, up £5.2 million (3.1%) to a record £169.9 million. Charitable expenditure increased by £4.7 million (3.9%) and together with costs of raising funds falling by £1.5 million and unrealised investment gains of £2.9 million, led to a surplus for the year (before the actuarial loss in respect of the pension scheme) of £4.7 million. We finished the year with free financial reserves of £42.0 million which represents 13 weeks' expenditure cover and is within the range set by Council. We will continue to plan prudently as we manage our reserves in the light of the current economic outlook, mindful of the range set by Council.

Total financial reserves decreased by £6.8 million, being Net Income of £4.7 million and an actuarial loss in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of £11.6 million. Cash and investments decreased by £3.4 million to £53.0 million but leaving a good level of liquidity as we continue in a period of uncertain economic times.

The £5.1 million increase in the Pension Scheme liability reflects the annual updates to the valuation assumptions used to calculate the liability, with the main changes being a reduction in the value of scheme assets caused by an increase in gilt yields. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed in 2017 and changes to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the pension trustees. The latest triennial valuation reflects the funding position as at 1st April 2021 and resulted in annual payments of £7.5 million. The next valuation as at 1st April 2024 is due later this year.



Income
Overall, total income increased by £5.2 million (3.1%) to £169.9 million which, in the context of the current operating environment, highlights the tremendous support we receive from our members and supporters.

Membership subscriptions and donations increased by £1.0 million to £54.0 million driven by a £0.9 million increase in donations, particularly pleasing following last year's fall. New member income increased by £0.3 million offset by a similar decrease in retention income and gift aid. Membership retention rates, however, increased to 90.5%. Total members at the end of the year showed a slight increase and remained at 1.15 million. RSPB membership is a key part of our income diversity and enables us to speak with confidence and authority when we undertake our advocacy work.

Legacy income decreased by £1.7 million to £42.5 million from record breaking levels in 2022–23. However, legacies notified but not yet recognised have risen by £6.7 million over the year. This reflects the trust our supporters have that we will use this income to invest in large scale conservation projects for the benefit of future generations.

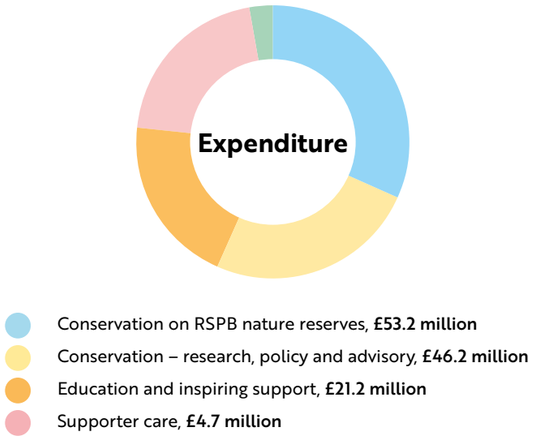
Grants, corporates and trusts income at £33.9 million remained at 2022-23 levels. An increase in grant income of £1.9m was offset by £1.9m lower corporates and trusts income. This has been used to support a wide range of large-scale projects both in the UK and internationally, including Rathlin Island Restoration (£1.4m), Orkney Native Wildlife (£1.3m), Lake Vyrnwy (£1.1m), Cairngorms Connect (£0.9m), Curlews in Crisis (£0.9m) and St Helena Cloud Forests (£0.8m).

Income from commercial activities increased by £4.4 million (14.5%) to £35.0 million. This was driven by a £2 million increase in conservation consultancy and advice, whilst food and beverage and retail sales at our reserves increased by £1.7 million. Two new cafes opened at the Lodge and Dee Estuary, joining those opened last year at Conwy and Frampton Marsh.

The cost of raising funds fell by £1.5 million to £42.7 million. Prior year spend included £3.4 million cost initiatives targeting future income growth, particularly the Wild Isles programme, brand and commercial.

Income from commercial activities has increased by

£4.4 million



Expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities increased by £4.7 million (3.9%) to £125.3 million. £4.2 million relates directly to increased expenditure on our major conservation projects for which we resourced our teams accordingly but also saw impacts from higher global prices.

Managing nature reserves expenditure at £53.2 million was £3.8 million higher than last year. We manage 222 nature reserves, covering 158,651 hectares and providing a home to over 18,700 species of which more than 3,500 are of conservation concern. This increase reflects an increase in major conservation expenditure and in the teams to deliver that.

Research, policy, and advisory expenditure at £46.2 million was £1.8 million higher, showing additional project and operational expenditure both at home and internationally, including those already mentioned, Life on the Edge and the African-Eurasian flyway projects.

The work we undertake to educate and inspire support, whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders, political support, or our partners, is designed to bring about a shared world where wildlife, wild places and people thrive. We maintained a high level of spend in this area at £21.2 million, though £1.6 million lower than last year as resources were directed to conservation projects.

Supporter care expenditure was £0.6 million higher than last year at £4.7 million.

Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. They consider a sustained fall in income of 10–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of 8 to 16 weeks' worth of expenditure. Free financial reserves at 31st March 2024 were £42.0 million representing 13 weeks' future expenditure, within the policy range. Income levels reflect a continued underlying resilience of the income we receive from our members and supporters, despite the cost of living crisis. We have seen impacts from high global inflation rates and although rates are now falling, costs have risen and remain at a higher level. Our financial projections reflect these factors and we anticipate free financial reserves staying within the policy range. This level of reserves gives us the financial resilience that will help us navigate through economic uncertainties. Trustees continue to monitor levels closely.

The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories:

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2024 were £263.5 million which is made up of:
  - Tangible and intangible fixed assets of £232.8 million
  - Cash and investments of £53.0 million
  - Working capital of £6.9 million
  - Pension liability of £29.2 million
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied, at the discretion of the trustees, to any of the RSPB's charitable purposes, at 31 March 2024 were £81.5 million, made up of:
  - General funds of £48.9 million including £6.9 million of tangible and intangible fixed assets, £28.0 million of investments and £14.0 million working capital.
  - Designated funds of £61.8 million represented by nature reserves owned by RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
  - Pension reserve liability of £29.2 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2024 were £181.7 million, made up of:
  - Nature reserves of £162.4 million
  - Other tangible assets of £1.8 million
  - Investments of £12.7 million.
  - Working capital of £4.8 million.
  - Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2024 endowment funds were £0.2 million.

Investment policy and powers

The RSPB's investment powers are as set out in the Charter and Statutes and are wider than those contained in the Trustees Investment Act 2000.

Approach

The RSPB's primary investment objective is to maintain the real value of its investments. However, as a proportion of the financial reserves are likely to be held in the longer term, it is appropriate to invest conservatively a proportion of the funds to generate income and/or real growth.

Investment properties arising from legacies are managed by the RSPB until disposal.

Responsible investment

In managing our investments, we follow the principles of socially responsible investing. These principles are to:

- invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.
- use influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.
- avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuel and had <0.1% exposure during the year under review.

Performance

The Trustees rely upon specialist advice for fund selection and allocation. Investment performance is compared to an independent benchmark and the target for investment returns is to outperform this composite benchmark by at least 1% per annum over a rolling three-year period.

We continue to hold a proportion of our cash holdings in investment grade bonds to increase the returns from our cash holdings without exposing them to the level of volatility associated with equity investment funds.

Relationship with subsidiaries
The RSPB group includes a number of subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 23 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension
The Pension liability in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, that was closed to future accrual in 2017, has increased by £5.1 million. The factors affecting this movement are largely outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity to changes in discount and inflation rates. The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the pension scheme. In addition to closing the defined benefit scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the Pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work but closes the deficit over a reasonable period. The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the pension trustees.

The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1st April 2021 and resulted in annual employer contributions of £7.5 million per annum. This level of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit in just over 8 years. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation, which will reflect the funding position as at 1st April 2024. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the Pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the Pension Fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £61.5 million.

Outlook for the future
We have been through several years of challenges unprecedented in modern day history, from a global pandemic to a war in Ukraine, which continues to have major economic impacts.

Last year's outlook highlighted the commitment and generosity of our members and supporters, and we have seen that again this year. With this continued support and our solid financial position, we are confident that we can navigate through the current economic headwinds and continue to act for a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

The financial outcome for 2023/24 was a planned deficit and we resourced our teams to deliver that work, but also impacted by higher global prices. We have a cautious plan for 2024/25 including a range of scenarios to assess the financial impact of the current economic situation, so it is reasonable to expect the RSPB to have adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.



Signed on behalf of Council

Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair

28 August 2024

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Colin Campbell (rspb-images.com)

Wildflowers save bumblebee season
Rare Great Yellow Bumblebees were helped by wildflowers planted by the community of the Isle of Tiree in Scotland. Although prolonged dry weather in early 2023 caused existing flowers to wither away, the new patches survived, providing a vital lifeline for the bees.

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the RSPB

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:
- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:
- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees
As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 91, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at:
frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud
Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report
This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

30 August 2024

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity under regulation 10(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations by virtue of its eligibility under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

Income and expenditure	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**2024 Total £'000**	2023 Total As restated £'000
Income and endowments						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	50,762	3,243	-	**54,005**	53,044
Legacies	4	36,567	5,974	-	**42,541**	44,214
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	649	33,262	-	**33,911**	33,957
Total voluntary income		87,978	42,479	-	**130,457**	131,215
Total income from commercial activities	6	35,039	-	-	**35,039**	30,591
Investment income and interest	7	1,717	-	-	**1,717**	1,109
Charitable activities						
Land and farming income		1,619	-	-	**1,619**	964
Events and media sales		646	-	-	**646**	687
Total income from charitable activities		2,265	-	-	**2,265**	1,651
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	399	-	-	**399**	136
Total income		**127,398**	**42,479**	**-**	**169,877**	**164,702**
Expenditure on						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial activities	8	28,261	-	-	**28,261**	27,763
Costs of generating voluntary income	8	14,319	-	-	**14,319**	16,268
Investment management costs	8	134	-	-	**134**	167
Total cost of raising funds		42,714	-	-	**42,714**	44,198
Net resources available for charitable activities		**84,684**	**42,479**	**-**	**127,163**	**120,504**
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves	8	30,262	22,980	-	**53,242**	49,417
Research, policy and advisory	8	33,303	12,851	-	**46,154**	44,325
Education and inspiring support	8	20,936	248	-	**21,184**	22,818
Supporter care	8	4,700	-	-	**4,700**	4,059
Total expenditure on charitable activities		89,201	36,079	-	**125,280**	120,619
Total expenditure		**131,915**	**36,079**	-	**167,994**	**164,817**
Net gain/(loss) on investments		2,857	-	-	**2,857**	(1,368)
Net income/(expenditure)		**(1,660)**	**6,400**	**-**	**4,740**	**(1,483)**
Actuarial losses on pension scheme		(11,588)	-	-	**(11,588)**	(7,072)
Net movement in funds		(13,248)	6,400	-	**(6,848)**	(8,555)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		94,752	175,318	244	**270,314**	278,869
Total funds carried forward		**81,504**	**181,718**	**244**	**263,466**	**270,314**

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 25.
Notes 1 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets as at 31 March 2024

	Note	**2024 Consolidated total £'000**	2023 Consolidated total £'000	**2024 Charity £'000**	2023 Charity £'000
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	**224,137**	223,573	**223,214**	222,634
Other tangible assets	12	**7,389**	7,659	**7,389**	7,659
Intangible assets	12a	**1,317**	-	**1,317**	-
Investments	13	**40,940**	41,664	**40,940**	41,664
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	**-**	-	**3,801**	3,801
		273,783	272,896	**276,661**	275,758
Current assets					
Stock		**5,152**	4,927	**222**	223
Debtors	14	**26,462**	25,635	**29,045**	27,855
Short-term cash		**12,013**	14,662	**7,581**	10,764
		43,627	45,224	**36,848**	38,842
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	**(20,852)**	(19,534)	**(17,325)**	(16,403)
Net current assets		**22,775**	**25,690**	**19,523**	**22,439**
Total assets less current liabilities		**296,558**	298,586	**296,184**	298,197
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	**(3,940)**	(4,194)	**(3,940)**	(4,194)
Net assets excluding pension liability		**292,618**	**294,392**	**292,244**	**294,003**
Pension scheme liability	24	**(29,152)**	(24,078)	**(29,152)**	(24,078)
Net assets including pension liability		**263,466**	**270,314**	**263,092**	**269,925**
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		**48,890**	54,991	**48,516**	54,602
Designated funds		**61,766**	63,839	**61,766**	63,839
Pension reserve	24	**(29,152)**	(24,078)	**(29,152)**	(24,078)
		81,504	94,752	**81,130**	94,363
Restricted funds		**181,718**	175,318	**181,718**	175,318
Endowment funds		**244**	244	**244**	244
Total funds	20 & 21	**263,466**	**270,314**	**263,092**	**269,925**

Notes 1 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 28 August 2024 and signed on behalf of Council by:



Kevin Cox
Chair



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

For the year ended 31 March 2024	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	**127,163**	120,504
Less total expenditure on charitable activities	**(125,280)**	(120,619)
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before gains/(losses)	**1,883**	(115)
Losses on investments and pension scheme	**(8,731)**	(8,440)
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	**(6,848)**	(8,555)
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	**563**	7,766
Other tangible assets	**(269)**	1,386
Intangible assets	**1,317**	-
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	**(12)**	(5,411)
Movement on pension scheme	**(5,074)**	(127)
	(3,475)	3,614
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	**(3,373)**	(12,169)
Cash and investments available at start of year	**56,326**	68,495
Cash and investments available at end of year	**52,953**	**56,326**

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2024	Note	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	23	**900**	1,184
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		**1,717**	1,109
Additions to nature reserves		**(3,745)**	(10,562)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		**(3,641)**	(5,163)
Additions to intangible fixed assets		**(1,581)**	-
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		**491**	188
Purchase of investments		**(29)**	(22)
Proceeds from disposal of investments		**3,500**	3,000
Net cash used for investing activities		**(3,288)**	(11,450)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Bank loan		**(237)**	2,589
Net cash provided by financing activities		**(237)**	2,589
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		**(2,625)**	(7,677)
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		**15,118**	22,795
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**12,493**	15,118
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents:			
Cash in hand		**12,013**	14,662
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		**480**	456
Cash and cash equivalents		**12,493**	**15,118**



Paul Sawer (rspb-images.com)

Record year for Ringed Plover partnership
A total of 25 Ringed Plover chicks fledged from beaches at Heacham and Snettisham in 2023, a fourfold increase since 2021. This follows conservation efforts led by the RSPB. Plovers in Peril launched in 2021, in partnership with Wild Ken Hill and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter and a charity registered in England and Wales (number 207076) and in Scotland (number SC037654). The address of the registered office is The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.

2) Accounting policies
Basis of preparation
The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, and the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn.
The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity's financial statements.

None of the subsidiary directors received any remuneration or emoluments in respect of their services to those subsidiaries. Where directors are officers/employees of the RSPB they will receive remuneration only from the RSPB.

The RSPB's commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiaries, RSPB Sales Limited and RSPB Nature Regen Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB.

RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB's charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

RSPB Nature Regen Limited was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2023 (registration number 14776951). The principal activities are the sale of ecosystem and land management services.

March Farmers (Washland) Limited, a company limited by shares (registration number 01039814). This entity is a wholly-owned subsidiary acquired in 2008 to secure the leasehold interest in land adjacent to the Nene Washes reserve in Cambridgeshire. Through the March Farmers Habitat Restoration project, the former arable land is being restored to floodplain grazing marsh.

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity is being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leases land on the Haweswater Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise.

RSPB Oronsay, a Scottish Limited Partnership of which the RSPB is the General Partner. This entity was established in 1996 to carry out the business of farming and nature conservation on the island of Oronsay.

RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and a non-profit company limited by shares, registered in the Cayman Islands (registration number 304647). This entity was established in 2015 to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment through the acquisition of land to create or extend nature reserves in the Cayman Islands.

The RSPB holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The RSPB holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity and as such is potentially exempt from taxation on its income and gains to the extent that they are applied to its charitable purposes. There was no tax charge during the year. The subsidiaries donate, under Gift Aid, all distributable profits to the Charity each year.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty
In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are related to:

- Retirement benefit liabilities – as disclosed in note 24, the RSPB has a Defined Benefit Scheme. Year-end recognition of the liabilities under this scheme and the valuation of assets to fund these liabilities require a number of significant assumptions to be made including key financial market indicators such as inflation, discount rate, expectations on future salary growth and asset returns. These assumptions are agreed by the scheme actuary and RSPB management. For each 0.1% change in the discount rate, the carrying amount of pension obligations would change by an estimated £3.7 million.
- Income recognition of legacies – legacies are recognised on the settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier. Management have accrued a portion of the legacy pipeline on a basis consistent with prior years which equates to legacy receipts in the month after year-end.
- Grant income recognition – where a grant contains performance related conditions, income is recognised in line with achievement of those conditions. Management use total expenditure incurred to deliver the performance conditions at the end of each reporting period as a reasonable basis.
- Donated assets – the value of donated land and buildings recognised within fixed assets is based on external surveyor valuations. This includes specific reports and also use of market valuations by internal surveyors.

Funds

Unrestricted funds

General funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 21.

Restricted funds

Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 21.

Endowment funds

Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 21.

Capital expenditure

Purchased assets, individually exceeding £2,500 at cost, are included on the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS102 'Property, Plant and Equipment' (note 12). Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised in the year of acquisition and depreciation is charged annually. During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, selected nature reserves were restated to their fair value (note 12).

Depreciation

Nature reserves, either owned as freehold land or held as leasehold land where the lease is held in perpetuity, are considered to have an indefinite useful life and are not depreciated.

Other fixed assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their anticipated useful lives as follows:

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:

Buildings	50 years
Reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves – leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset
Intangible fixed assets	6 to 10 years

Going concern

We have felt the financial impact of global economic factors, particularly high inflation rates on our cost base plus the related cost of living crisis. Although there has been a welcome return of rates to 2021 levels, costs are now generally higher. Bank of England projections for the medium term at time of writing showing inflation remaining between 2-3% across 2024 and being at low levels in 2025. But with interest rates still above 5% and reducing at a much slower rate, unemployment rising and economic growth forecast to be low, the overall trading environment is likely to continue to be challenging.

Trustees review and respond to financial projections that detail the potential financial impacts of this economic environment on the RSPB, as well as undertaking scenario planning to assess the potential short, medium, and longer-term financial implications of other risks and opportunities.

Looking forward to 2024–2025 we plan to utilise financial reserves to support the organisation and to invest in strategic priorities, whilst remaining within the 8 – 16 weeks cover policy range.

The financial outcome for 2023–2024 saw us continuing to spend on our strategic aims, utilising reserves to do this. Our closing free financial reserves reduced to £42.0 million and cash and investments were £53.0 million. Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Investments

The investments in the subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost less provision for impairment.

All other investments are stated at fair value with gains and losses being recognised within income and expenditure. Properties included in investments are those assigned under legacy bequests, awaiting disposal at a future date, and are stated at their fair value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. Investment cash is held for investment purposes only. It is the intention of the Trustees that fixed asset investments will not be drawn upon within the following year.

Stocks

Stocks, which include livestock and products for resale, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Financial instruments

The RSPB has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

Income
Income is included in the SOFA when the RSPB is entitled to the income, the receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. If these conditions are not met then the income is deferred.

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:

i) Membership income is treated as a donation and is accounted for when received.
ii) Legacies are accounted for based on settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier.
iii) Grants, including government grants, received in advance of the associated work being carried out are deferred only when the donor has imposed preconditions on the expenditure of resources (see Note 17).
iv) Donated services are recognised at the value of the gift to the Charity which is the amount the Charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market. They are included in the SOFA and balance sheet as appropriate.

Expenditure
All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Costs incurred that relate to multiple purposes are analysed and allocated to the appropriate categories in line with the joint cost allocation principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102).

i) Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
ii) Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
iii) Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
iv) Research, policy and advisory includes the costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.
v) Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
vi) Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
vii) Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.
viii) The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
- ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
- the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions
The Defined Benefit Scheme was closed on 31 March 2017 and replaced with a Defined Contribution Scheme.

The Defined Benefit Scheme amount charged in resources expended is the net of the interest cost and interest income on assets. Re-measurements are recognised immediately in Other recognised gains and losses.

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

With regard to the Defined Contribution Scheme, the amounts charged in resources expended are the employer contributions in the year. The employer contribution rate matches the employee rate up to a maximum of 7%.

Redundancy and termination payments
Redundancy and termination liabilities are recognised when the obligation to transfer economic benefits has arisen. The value of this liability represents the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the obligation(s) at the reporting date.

Operating leases
Operating lease rentals are charged and credited to the SOFA on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

Foreign currency
Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end, in accordance with FRS102. Any gains or losses arising on translations are reported as part of the transaction within the SOFA and are not material; they are therefore not disclosed separately.


Sam Turley (rspb-images.com)

A new tagging project featuring Clive the Bar-tailed Godwit captured hearts and minds, achieving an 11.2% engagement rate on Facebook and 49,000 impressions on X (formerly Twitter). The project will provide valuable data on Bar-tailed Godwit migration, and is already shedding new light on the importance of England's east coast wetlands for migratory birds.

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Membership subscriptions	**46,048**	46,023
Donations	**7,957**	7,021
	54,005	53,044

4) Legacies

The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £37,387,871 (2023: £31,671,600).

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Grants	**28,271**	26,384
Corporates	**1,263**	3,137
Trusts	**4,377**	4,436
	33,911	33,957
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations:		
Services	**63**	204
Goods	**17**	24
	80	228

Income recognised in the trading subsidiary companies is now reported in the SOFA under 'total income from commercial activities'. This has resulted in income moving from 'Corporates' in 2023

Major grants received during the year include the following:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	**8,604**	7,022
Natural England*	**1,965**	1,683
Scottish Natural Heritage*	**1,587**	1,498
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	**1,367**	1,301
Scottish Government*	**1,209**	922
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	**262**	535
Landfill Communities Fund	**241**	666
Environment Agency*	**118**	1,022
Forestry Commission*	**8**	9
	15,361	14,658
International		
European Union	**3,960**	2,236
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund	**2,948**	4,340
Climate Action Fund Round 3	**223**	-
Local Councils and Other	**5,779**	5,150
	28,271	26,384

*Government grants used to fund conservation projects and recognised in the accounts. There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies relating to the government grants or other forms of government assistance from which the charity has directly benefited recognised in the accounts.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**18,806**	17,579
Research, policy and advisory	**8,175**	7,285
Education and inspiring support	**1,129**	1,324
	28,110	26,188
Acquisition of nature reserves	**161**	196
	28,271	26,384

6) Commercial activities

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Trading		
Retail, mail order and trade	**19,514**	18,728
Catering	**4,886**	3,500
Events	**544**	519
	24,944	22,747
Conservation		
Consultancy and advice	**4,976**	2,972
Land and farming income	**1,392**	1,642
	6,368	4,614
Fundraising		
Commercial	**2,065**	1,693
Lottery	**951**	893
	3,016	2,586
Publications, films and education		
Advertising	**569**	572
Promotional Sales	**142**	72
	711	644
Total	**35,039**	**30,591**

Income recognised in the trading subsidiary companies is now reported in the SOFA under 'total income from commercial activities'. This has resulted in income moving from the following lines in 2023:

- Fees and grants for services
- Land and farming income
- Events and media sales

7) Investment income and interest

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	**150**	251
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**1,567**	858
	1,717	1,109
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	**399**	136

8) Total expenditure

Cost of raising funds:	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	**2024 Total £'000**	2023 Total £'000
Costs of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	9,820	994	**10,814**	11,342
Grants, corporates and trusts	1,564	280	**1,844**	2,915
Legacies	1,545	116	**1,661**	2,011
Total cost of generating voluntary income	12,929	1,390	**14,319**	16,268
Costs of commercial activities	27,358	903	**28,261**	27,763
Investment management costs	134	-	**134**	167
Total cost of raising funds	40,421	2,293	**42,714**	44,198
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	51,106	2,136	**53,242**	49,417
Research, policy and advisory	41,520	4,634	**46,154**	44,325
Education and inspiring support	19,027	2,157	**21,184**	22,818
Supporter care	4,629	71	**4,700**	4,059
Total expenditure on charitable activities	116,282	8,998	**125,280**	120,619
Total expenditure	**156,703**	**11,291**	**167,994**	**164,817**

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £7,632,914 with support costs of £510,858 (2023: £6,626,907; £369,142). Grants were awarded to 92 (2023: 84) organisations; no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available on rspb.org.uk/grant-funding

Future commitments:
Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £5,000,076 (2023: £2,656,608). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2024 for payments in future years.

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance and IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management and other £'000	Governance £'000	**2024 Total £'000**	2023 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	407	631	690	432	133	**2,293**	1,909
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	379	588	643	402	124	**2,136**	1,750
Research, policy and advisory	822	1,275	1,396	872	269	**4,634**	3,667
Education and inspiring support	382	593	651	406	125	**2,157**	1,857
Supporter care	13	20	21	13	4	**71**	-
Total Charitable expenditure	1,596	2,476	2,711	1,693	522	**8,998**	7,274
Total support costs	**2,003**	**3,107**	**3,401**	**2,125**	**655**	**11,291**	**9,183**

Support costs are included in the expenditure reported in the Consolidated statement of financial activities and have been allocated on the basis of salary percentage. The cost allocation includes an element of judgement and the RSPB has had to consider the cost benefit of detailed calculations and record keeping.

Governance costs include audit, legal advice for Trustees and the costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements, such as Trustees' meetings.

10) Audit fees

The total audit fees were:	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Statutory audit:		
Charity	**59**	53
RSPB Sales Limited	**36**	32
RSPB Nature Regen Limited	**5**	-
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**4**	4
Farming for Nature	**4**	3
	108	92

During the year there were £9,270 (2023: £6,320) fees for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.



Girlguiding London and SE England

Working with Girlguiding for nature
Our partnership with Girlguiding regions has continued to inspire girls to do more in and for nature. Girlguiding events in London, funded by the Kusuma Trust saw over 200 girls from Girlguiding London and South East Region take part in Wildlife Discovery events, while Girlguiding North West England have awarded over 1,100 nature-related badges to their members.

11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,517 (2023: 2,406).

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Average staff numbers by activity:		
Generating incoming resources	**594**	580
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**779**	716
Research, policy and advisory	**815**	776
Education and inspiring support	**286**	289
Supporter care	**43**	45
	2,517	2,406

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2024 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Remuneration	**73,242**	65,296
National Insurance	**6,372**	5,772
Pension contributions	**4,354**	3,818
	83,968	74,886

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on pages 92–93.

11) Staff costs (continued)

The total salary of all higher paid employees earning in excess of £60,000, including Directors, are shown in bands of £10,000 below.

			2024 No.	2023 No.
£60,001	–	£70,000	**26**	23
£70,001	–	£80,000	**5**	10
£80,001	–	£90,000	**12**	1
£90,001	–	£100,000	**2**	-
£100,001	–	£110,000	**1**	2
£110,001	–	£120,000	**-**	1
£120,001	–	£130,000	**1**	-
£160,001	–	£170,000	**1**	1
			48	38

Under the RSPB's pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 48 (2023: 38) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme rules. The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £11,760 (2023: £11,418).

Redundancy and termination payments of £218,475 (2023: £197,353) were made in the year, of which £6,847 was paid post year-end.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the 8 (2023: 7) Directors were £848,970 (2023: £788,373) of which, £200,069 (2023: £195,445) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £28,372 (2023: £24,918).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 15 (2023: 15) Trustees on Council business amounted to £15,558 (2023: £7,283).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £17,640 (2023: £16,800).



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

A good year for Black-necked Grebes
RSPB St Aidan's was home to 18 breeding pairs of rare Black-necked Grebes in 2023, up from 17 in 2021. Meanwhile, Black-necked Grebes bred for a fifth successive year at RSPB Bowers Marsh in Essex, increasing from two to four pairs.

12) Tangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves			Other tangible assets			**Total**
	Freehold land	Leasehold land	Buildings	Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Cost							
At 1 April 2023	183,438	1,730	69,758	3,662	4,658	31,269	**294,515**
Diminution	(325)	-	-	-	-	-	**(325)**
Additions	999	2	2,744	-	425	3,216	**7,386**
Disposals	-	-	(77)	-	(407)	(874)	**(1,358)**
At 31 March 2024	184,112	1,732	72,425	3,662	4,676	33,611	**300,218**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2023	-	590	30,763	2,563	4,101	25,266	**63,283**
Charge for the year	-	18	2,813	85	370	3,389	**6,675**
Disposals	-	-	(51)	-	(407)	(808)	**(1,266)**
At 31 March 2024	-	608	33,525	2,648	4,064	27,847	**68,692**
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2024	**184,112**	**1,124**	**38,900**	**1,014**	**612**	**5,764**	**231,526**
At 31 March 2023	183,438	1,140	38,995	1,099	557	6,003	**231,232**

Net book amount:	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Nature reserves:		
Freehold land	**184,112**	183,438
Leasehold land	**1,124**	1,140
Buildings	**38,900**	38,995
	224,136	223,573
Other tangible assets:		
Other properties	**1,014**	1,099
Motor vehicles	**612**	557
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	**5,764**	6,003
	7,390	7,659
Total tangible fixed assets	**231,526**	**231,232**

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds Leasehold land of £550,000 (2023: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds Freehold land of £373,000 (2023: £389,000).

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value just below £61,500,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

In 2016, land with an historic cost of £42,401,000 was revalued at £97,779,000. This £55,378,000 increase in value was reflected in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

12a) Intangible fixed assets - charity and consolidated

	Website £'000	**Total £'000**
Cost		
At 1 April 2023	-	**-**
Additions	1,581	**1,581**
Disposals	-	**-**
At 31 March 2024	1,581	**1,581**
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	-	**-**
Charge for the year	264	**264**
Disposals	-	**-**
At 31 March 2024	264	**264**
Net book amount:		
At 31 March 2024	**1,317**	**1,317**
At 31 March 2023	-	**-**

Intangible fixed assets relate to the costs to develop internal software including the RSPB website.

13) Investments – charity and consolidated

Investments at fair value:	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Investment cash	**480**	456
Equities, bonds and other stocks:		
Equities	**12,696**	10,664
Corporate bonds	**24,622**	27,411
Government bonds	**1,586**	1,576
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**6**	7
	38,910	39,658
Investment properties within the UK	**1,550**	1,550
	40,940	41,664

Equities, Corporate bonds and Government bonds are held in unit trusts.

Investment properties are revalued every five years by professional external valuers. They were last revalued at 31 March 2021, based on their fair value at that date. Trustees have considered the valuations in the intervening years and they do not consider that there has been a significant change in value between the valuation date and the balance sheet date. The amount includes property assigned under legacy bequests and donated property.

Movement during the year:	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Fair value at 1 April	**41,664**	55,451
Fees	**(134)**	(146)
Additions	**22**	17
Dividends reinvested	**7**	5
Disposals	**(3,500)**	(3,000)
Net (loss)/gain on revaluation at 31 March	**2,857**	(1,368)
Movement in investment cash	**24**	(9,295)
Fair value at 31 March	**40,940**	41,664
Historical cost as at 31 March	**30,363**	33,840

13) Investments – charity and consolidated (continued)

The Charity investments in its wholly owned subsidiaries are held at cost and represent the aggregate amount of the subsidiaries' assets, liabilities and funds. The subsidiary investments are:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	**3,250**	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**551**	551
	3,801	3,801

14) Debtors – charity and consolidated

Amount falling due within one year	**2024 Consolidated £'000**	2023 Consolidated £'000	**2024 Charity £'000**	2023 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	**5,576**	7,076	**3,302**	4,947
Other debtors	**3,872**	3,909	**3,813**	3,907
Legacies	**3,181**	2,893	**3,181**	2,893
Prepayments and accrued income	**13,833**	11,757	**13,213**	11,102
Amounts due from subsidiaries	**-**	-	**5,581**	5,006
	26,462	25,635	**29,090**	27,855

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year	**2024 Consolidated £'000**	2023 Consolidated £'000	**2024 Charity £'000**	2023 Charity £'000
Trade creditors	**4,136**	5,400	**3,795**	4,837
Other creditors	**5,269**	827	**5,268**	827
Deferred income (see note 17)	**6,493**	6,457	**3,739**	4,607
Accruals	**4,735**	6,633	**4,303**	5,915
Bank loans	**219**	217	**219**	217
	20,852	19,534	**17,324**	16,403

Amounts falling due in more than one year	**2024 Consolidated £'000**	2023 Consolidated £'000	**2024 Charity £'000**	2023 Charity £'000
Deferred income – lease premium	**725**	740	**725**	740
Bank loans	**3,215**	3,454	**3,215**	3,454
	3,940	4,194	**3,940**	4,194

On 31 March 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Triodos Bank. The loan was for £0.7 million (fixed rate 4.097%) and was used to finance a range of sustainable energy projects across our nature reserves. The capital and interest will be repaid over a 20-year period using the ongoing energy savings together with income from electricity generation.

On 6 December 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds bank. This loan was for £0.5 million (fixed rate 2.506%) and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl Bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan will be repaid using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council over the five-year loan period.

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated (continued)

On 25 April 2022 the RSPB entered into a loan facility with Triodos Bank. A loan of £2.8 million (fixed rate 5.240%) was drawn down on 21 June 2022 and used to fund the development of four modular cafés on our reserves at Conwy, the Dee Estuary, Frampton Marsh and The Lodge. The capital and interest will be repaid over 20 years using profits from the café operations.

There are two loans with funders, associated with grants received: £125 thousand (3.0 % interest) with the People's Postcode Lottery repayable over 7 years to 2029; £46 thousand (0.0 % interest) with the Welsh Government repayable over 5 years to 2027.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2024 not provided for in the accounts were £77,811 (2023: £325,620).

17) Deferred income – charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April	**740**	754
Amount released to income	**-**	-
Amounts due within one year	**(15)**	(14)
Balance at 31 March	**725**	740
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April	**6,457**	5,313
Amount released to income	**(5,457)**	(5,313)
Amounts due within one year	**5,478**	6,443
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	**15**	14
Balance at 31 March	**6,493**	6,457
Deferred income: balance at 31 March	**7,218**	**7,197**

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £740,000 (2023: £754,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £5,478,000 (2023: £6,443,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £3,770,000 (2023: £4,593,000) and commercial trading £2,708,000 (2023: £1,850,000).



Bella Lack and James Miller

New podcast sets out solutions
Here's The Plan is a new youth-led environmental podcast, hosted by activists Bella Lack and James Miller and funded by the RSPB. The 10-part series explores 10 solutions to tackle the climate and nature emergency, through interviews with top changemakers including politicians and activists.

18) Operating leases – commitments and contracted income

Commitments: Properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods.
The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Less than 1 year	2,103	55	**2,158**	2,029
2 – 5 years	2,752	-	**2,752**	3,482
Over 5 years	6,456	-	**6,456**	6,856
	11,311	55	**11,366**	12,367

Lease payments of £2,448,684 (2023: £2,531,204) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income: Land and properties are leased out by the RSPB for defined periods.
The full income of these over the lease period is shown below:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Less than 1 year	**930**	1,029
2 – 5 years	**976**	509
Over 5 years	**2,612**	2,449
	4,518	3,987

Lease income of £1,142,674 (2023: £1,054,467) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

The Trustees have given indemnities to executors under the standard terms for legacies received; they believe the chance of significant claims arising as a result of these to be negligible.

20) Statements of funds – Charity and consolidated

The purpose for which funds are held can be analysed as follows:

	Total funds 1 April 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2024 £'000**
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	54,991	127,398	(130,919)	2,857	(5,437)	**48,890**
Designated land fund	63,839	-	-	-	(2,073)	**61,766**
Pension liability	(24,078)	-	(996)	(11,588)	7,510	**(29,152)**
Total unrestricted funds	94,752	127,398	(131, 915)	(8,731)	-	**81,504**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	165,000	3,395	-	-	-	**168,395**
Other tangible assets	1,996	1,017	(1,159)	-	-	**1,854**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	2,116	22,806	(21,821)	-	-	**3,101**
Research, policy and advisory	6,135	14,913	(12,851)	-	-	**8,197**
Education and inspiring support	71	348	(248)	-	-	**171**
Total restricted funds	175,318	42,479	(36,079)	-	-	**181,718**
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	**270,314**	**169,877**	**(167,994)**	**(8,731)**	**-**	**263,466**

20) Statements of funds – Charity and consolidated (continued)

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £2,073,000 from the Designated land fund to the General fund. A transfer of £7,510,000 from the General fund to the Pension liability fund represents a pension deficit recovery payment in line with the triennial valuation as at 1st April 2021, see note 25.

Inter-company reconciliation

	RSPB Charity 2024 £'000	Farming for Nature 2024 £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd 2024 £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd 2024 £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd 2024 £'000	RSPB Nature Regen Ltd 2024 £'000	Elimination 2024 £'000	**RSPB Consolidated 2024 £'000**
Income	141,604	219	159	34,511	(5)	455	(7,066)	**169,877**
Expenditure	(139,705)	(81)	(129)	(28,373)	(11)	(415)	720	**(167,994)**
Other recognised gains	(8,731)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(8,731)**
Profit/(loss)	(6,832)	138	30	6,138	(16)	40	(6,346)	**(6,848)**
Gift aided	-	(138)	(30)	(6,138)	-	(40)	6,346	**-**
Net movement in funds	(6,832)	-	-	-	(16)	-	-	**(6,848)**
Net Assets at 31 March 2023	269,925	-	551	3,250	389	-	(3,801)	**270,314**
Net Assets at 31 March 2024	263,093	-	551	3,250	373	-	(3,801)	**263,466**

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2024, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and surplus were £295,489, £438,878 and £66,569 respectively (2023: £295,096, £538,603 and £89,458).

The Charity holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2024, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and surplus were £10,451, £404,064 and £42,599 respectively (2023: £6,949, £375,704 and £30,462 deficit).

The results of both interests have not been consolidated into the core financial statements; to do so would not materially alter them.

During the year ended 31 March 2024, the Charity paid £318,047 (2023: £518,000) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan and £1,364,840 (2023: £1,598,671) to Gola Rainforest Conservation LG.

Unrestricted funds include free and general funds that are not designated for particular purposes.

Designated funds comprise the Land Fund which represents land and buildings purchased using unrestricted funds including the investment in March Farmers (Washland) Limited.

Restricted funds comprise:
- The Nature reserves fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £6,024,695 (2023: £5,265,418) held for future acquisitions.
- The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £6,994,423 (2023: £4,969,109) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds are comprised of permanent endowments.

21) Analysis of net assets between funds

The Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in a suitable form to enable them to be applied in accordance with any restrictions imposed, as set out below:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2024**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	61,766	162,370	-	**224,136**
Other tangible assets	5,536	-	1,854	-	**7,390**
Intangible assets	1,317	-	-	-	**1,317**
Investments	28,042	-	12,654	244	**40,940**
Current assets	31,614	-	12,013	-	**43,627**
Current liabilities	(14,404)	-	(6,448)	-	**(20,852)**
Long-term liabilities	(3,215)	-	(725)	-	**(3,940)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	48,890	61,766	181,718	244	**292,618**
Pension liability	(29,152)	-	-	-	**(29,152)**
Net assets	**19,738**	**61,766**	**181,718**	**244**	**263,466**

Free reserves which are available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees are held as investments or working capital:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2024**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Net assets excluding pension liability	48,890	61,766	181,718	244	**292,618**
Less: Operating assets					
Nature reserves	-	(61,766)	(162,370)	-	**(224,136)**
Other tangible assets	(5,536)	-	(1,854)	-	**(7,390)**
Intangible assets	(1,317)	-	-	-	**(1,317)**
Available reserves	42,037	-	17,494	244	**59,775**
Less: Restricted and endowment	-	-	(17,494)	(244)	**(17,738)**
Free reserves	**42,037**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**42,037**

22) Connected charities and related party transactions

The RSPB is one of the global partners in BirdLife International (registered charity number 1042125), an umbrella organisation for entities with similar objectives throughout the world. Further information about this organisation can be obtained by writing to BirdLife International at The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ.

Farming for Nature: on 29th July 2024 Farming For Nature Ltd's accounting reference date was extended to 30th September 2024, with the intention to close the company and transfer all the assets and liabilities to the Charity. This was agreed by the Directors of Farming for Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	Farming for Nature £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd £'000	RSPB Nature Regen Ltd £'000
Balance at 1 April 2023	340	144	4,522	-	-
Gift aid paid	(185)	(39)	(3,655)	-	-
Gift aid due	138	30	6,138	-	40
Grants received	-	-	-	(5)	-
Other inter-company transactions	10	6	(2,010)	5	103
Balance at 31 March 2024	**303**	**141**	**4,995**	**-**	**143**

23) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	**4,740**	(1,483)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	**7,264**	6,521
(Gains)/losses on investments	**(2,723)**	1,514
Interest and dividends received	**(1,717)**	(1,109)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	**(399)**	(136)
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	**(225)**	148
Increase in debtors	**(827)**	(1,716)
Increase in creditors	**1,301**	4,390
	7,414	8,129
Movement in pension scheme	**(6,514)**	(6,945)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**900**	**1,184**



Troops rally to restore peat bog
Soldiers from the British Army joined forces with the RSPB to restore a peat bog pool at Wild Haweswater in the Lake District. When healthy, peat bogs act as huge carbon sinks, a vital tool in efforts to tackle the climate and nature emergency.

Annabel Rushton

24) Pensions

The defined benefit scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the pension fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1st April 2021 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £7.5 million per annum with effect from 1st April 2022. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a period of 8 years 4 months. As part of the valuation the Society's contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 14 March 2022. The Charity is aware of the Virgin Media v NTL Pension Trustees II Limited Court of Appeal judgement which may give rise to adjustments to the RSPB defined benefit scheme. At present the legal process is incomplete and therefore we are unable to quantify any potential liabilities.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	**197,757**	269,428
Interest expense	**9,526**	7,452
Remeasurements	**(1)**	(72,567)
Benefits paid	**(6,693)**	(6,556)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	**200,589**	**197,757**

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	**200,589**	197,757
Fair value of scheme assets	**(171,437)**	(173,679)
Net defined benefit liability	**29,152**	**24,078**

Changes in scheme assets:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	**173,679**	245,477
Interest income	**8,530**	6,887
Remeasurements	**(11,589)**	(79,639)
Employer contribution	**7,510**	7,510
Benefits paid	**(6,693)**	(6,556)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	**171,437**	**173,679**



Black Grouse lek good at Geltsdale
A total of 39 lekking Black Grouse were recorded at RSPB Geltsdale, up from 17 in 2022. These Red-listed birds are found in upland areas of Britain. In spring, the birds gather in leks where the males compete for the females.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

24) Pensions (continued)

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Interest expense	**9,526**	7,452
Interest income	**(8,530)**	(6,887)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	**996**	565
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	**11,588**	7,072
Total cost related to defined benefit plans recognized in SOFA	**12,584**	**7,637**

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets:

	2024	2023
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	**37.3%**	40.2%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	**52.7%**	49.6%
Property	**7.9%**	8.9%
Cash	**2.1%**	1.3%

Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**(3,059)**	(72,752)

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2024	2023
Discount rate	**4.90%**	4.90%
Rate of increase in salaries	**1 April 2024: 4.0% (5.6%)**	1 April 2024: 3.0% (5.2%)
	1 April 2025: 3.0% (4.5%)	1 April 2025: 3.0% (3.4%)
	3.50% p.a. thereafter	2.80% p.a. thereafter
	% in brackets include a further allowance for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term	
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 07 pension	**1.90%**	1.80%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment:		
Pre April 09 (CPI max 5.0%)	**2.80%**	2.80%
Post April 09 (CPI max 2.5%)	**2.50%**	2.50%
RPI inflation	**3.10%**	3.20%
CPI inflation	**2.80%**	2.80%

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations:

	2024 Years	2023 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – male	**22.2**	22.5
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – male	**23.6**	23.9
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – female	**24.2**	24.3
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – female	**25.8**	25.9

25) Comparative statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

Income and expenditure	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**2023 Total £'000**
Income and endowments				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	50,770	2,274	-	**53,044**
Legacies	38,517	5,697	-	**44,214**
Grants, corporates and trusts	2,204	31,753	-	**33,957**
Total voluntary income	91,491	39,724	-	**131,215**
Commercial trading	23,693	-	-	**23,693**
Investment income and interest	1,109	-	-	**1,109**
Charitable activities				
Land and farming income	964	-	-	**964**
Events and media sales	687	-	-	**687**
Total income from charitable activities	1,651	-	-	**1,651**
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	136	-	-	**136**
Total income	**124,978**	**39,724**	**-**	**164,702**
Expenditure on				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	27,763	-	-	**27,763**
Costs of generating voluntary income	16,268	-	-	**16,268**
Investment management costs	167	-	-	**167**
Total cost of raising funds	44,198	-	-	**44,198**
Net resources available for charitable activities	**80,780**	**39,724**	**-**	**120,504**
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	32,657	16,760	-	**49,417**
Research, policy and advisory	27,486	16,839	-	**44,325**
Education and inspiring support	22,678	140	-	**22,818**
Supporter care	4,059	-	-	**4,059**
Total expenditure on charitable activities	86,880	33,739	-	**120,619**
Total expenditure	**131,078**	**33,739**	-	**164,817**
Net (losses)/gains on investments	(1,368)	-	-	**(1,368)**
Net income/(expenditure)	(7,468)	5,985	-	**(1,483)**
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme	(7,072)	-	-	**(7,072)**
Net movement in funds	(14,540)	5,985	-	**(8,555)**
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	109,292	169,333	244	**278,869**
Total funds carried forward	**94,752**	**175,318**	**244**	**270,314**

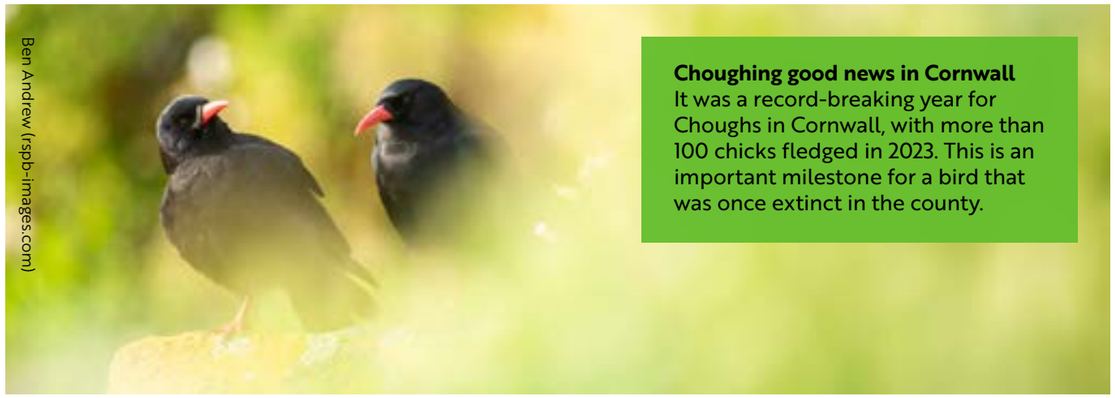
25) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds – charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2023

Consolidated	Total funds 1 April 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2023 £'000**
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	73,115	124,978	(130,513)	(1,368)	(11,221)	**54,991**
Designated land fund	60,128	-	-	-	3,711	**63,839**
Pension liability	(23,951)	-	(565)	(7,072)	7,510	**(24,078)**
Total unrestricted funds	**109,292**	**124,978**	**(131,078)**	**(8,440)**	**-**	**94,752**
Restricted funds						
Nature reserves	160,822	4,178	-	-	-	**165,000**
Other tangible assets	1,574	1,541	(1,119)	-	-	**1,996**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,329	16,428	(15,641)	-	-	**2,116**
Research, policy and advisory	5,462	17,512	(16,839)	-	-	**6,135**
Education and inspiring support	146	65	(140)	-	-	**71**
Total restricted funds	**169,333**	**39,724**	**(33,739)**	**-**	**-**	**175,318**
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	**278,869**	**164,702**	**(164,817)**	**(8,440)**	**-**	**270,314**

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted funds General £'000	Designated £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2023 £'000**
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	63,839	159,734	-	**223,573**
Other tangible assets	5,663	-	1,996	-	**7,659**
Investments	39,573	-	1,847	244	**41,664**
Current assets	27,766	-	17,458	-	**45,224**
Current liabilities	(13,817)	-	(5,717)	-	**(19,534)**
Long-term liabilities	(4,194)	-	-	-	**(4,194)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	54,991	63,839	175,318	244	**294,392**
Pension liability	(24,078)	-	-	-	**(24,078)**
Net (liabilities)/assets	**30,913**	**63,839**	**175,318**	**244**	**270,314**



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Choughing good news in Cornwall
It was a record-breaking year for Choughs in Cornwall, with more than 100 chicks fledged in 2023. This is an important milestone for a bird that was once extinct in the county.



Shutterstock

Time spent in nature is time well spent.

Driving positive change for nature

As we reflect on what's been achieved for nature in the past year, there is much to celebrate.

Thank you for reading this year's Annual Report. We hope that you found it an engaging and inspiring read. While much has been achieved thanks to the support of our many members, supporters, funders, partners and volunteers, there remains far more to do.

The *State of Nature 2023* report warned: "The UK, like most other countries worldwide, has seen a significant loss of its plants, animals and fungi. The data from State of Nature cover, at most, 50 years but this follows on from centuries of habitat loss, development and persecution. As a result, the UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth."

The challenge facing us all is to act with pace and at scale to tackle the climate and nature emergency. We need to restore stability to our planet, halt the declines of birds and other wildlife, restore biodiversity and create the healthy functioning ecosystems that we all need to survive.

This report shows that change is possible.

We have shown that when we act together for nature, we can bring back wildlife and transform spaces into thriving places for wildlife. Never have we had a better understanding of the state of nature and what we need to do to turn round the declines. We have the solutions and we won't give up. Together, we'll continue to work tirelessly to create a world where wildlife and all people thrive.

Contacts

To find out more about the RSPB, please contact us at our UK headquarters or via the relevant country headquarters. We welcome your questions and comments.

England
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Edinburgh Park
Edinburgh EH12 9DH
Tel: 0131 317 4100

UK HQ
The RSPB
The Lodge
Sandy
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL
Tel: 01767 680551

Northern Ireland
RSPB Northern Ireland HQ
Belvoir Park Forest
Belfast BT8 7QT
Tel: 028 9049 1547

Cymru
RSPB Cymru HQ
Castlebridge 3
5–19 Cowbridge Road East
Cardiff CF11 9AB
Tel: 029 2035 3000

To find your nearest office, see: rspb.org.uk/contactus



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Memorial owl at RSPB The Lodge.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Go a bit further for nature
We hope you feel inspired by reading this report. Nature is in crisis, but thanks to your support we are able to save it. When you make a donation, you are helping to save rare species, look after iconic landscapes and speak up for nature at a time when it really needs us. If you can help, please visit: rspb.org.uk/donate.

Protecting habitats, saving species and helping to end the nature and climate emergency.

Nature is in crisis.
Together we can save it.

Stay connected

Keep up to date with the latest thinking, news, events, and information from the RSPB in your local community.

Natures_Voice TheRSPB RSPB RSPB RSPB

Head Office

RSPB The Lodge
Potton Road, Sandy SG19 2DL

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England & Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654
3160-1052-23-24

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

England & Wales - Charity number 207076

Accounts

2022–2023

Annual report

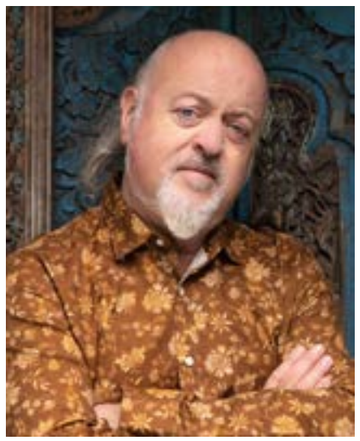
Together, we're creating a world where wildlife and people can thrive



RSPB (rspb-images.com)

A year of saving nature

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The front cover of this report is a playful yet emotive sketch of a Puffin by RSPB supporter and comedian Bill Bailey. See page 35 for more information about a consultation to ban industrial sandeel fishing, and how RSPB supporters backed a ban, which could offer a lifeline for seabirds. Our thanks go to Bill Bailey for his continued support.

Welcome

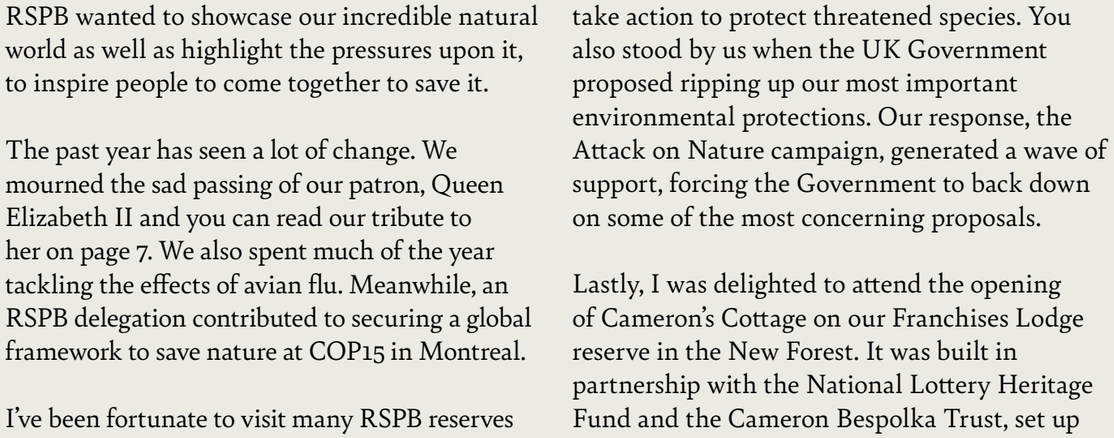
Earlier this year, I'm sure that like myself you watched in awe as the BBC series *Wild Isles*, brought some of the very best of UK nature into our homes. As co-producers of the series, the RSPB wanted to showcase our incredible natural world as well as highlight the pressures upon it, to inspire people to come together to save it.

The past year has seen a lot of change. We mourned the sad passing of our patron, Queen Elizabeth II and you can read our tribute to her on page 7. We also spent much of the year tackling the effects of avian flu. Meanwhile, an RSPB delegation contributed to securing a global framework to save nature at COP15 in Montreal.

I've been fortunate to visit many RSPB reserves across the UK over the past year, including our latest acquisition, Glencripesdale, on the Morvern Peninsula. Here I discovered how we are working at scale to protect, restore and connect Scotland's remaining rainforest habitat. Purchases like this are only possible thanks to the generosity of members and benefactors, who support us to deliver conservation at greater scale.

The cost of living crisis has impacted all of us but it's your ongoing support that allows us to continue our vital work. When it became clear just how devastating the impact of avian flu was on wild bird populations, we launched an emergency appeal. Your generous support enabled us to conduct new research and develop our policy, calling on the UK governments to take action to protect threatened species. You also stood by us when the UK Government proposed ripping up our most important environmental protections. Our response, the Attack on Nature campaign, generated a wave of support, forcing the Government to back down on some of the most concerning proposals.

Lastly, I was delighted to attend the opening of Cameron's Cottage on our Franchises Lodge reserve in the New Forest. It was built in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Cameron Bespolka Trust, set up in memory of a 16-year-old naturalist who sadly died in 2013. It allows young people to connect with nature in unique surroundings. These are troubling times, but that day gave me hope that the young generation cares deeply about our natural world and will work towards a better future for nature and humanity.



Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair



Rosie Dutton (RSPB)

Kevin Cox and Beccy Speight with RSPB President Dr Amir Khan at RSPB Old Moor nature reserve.

The scale of the climate and nature crisis is what makes collaboration essential and following our Attack on Nature campaign and *Wild Isles*, conservation NGOs have arguably never been more united. This breathtaking TV series reached 7.7 million viewers in the first week alone, and our campaign with partners to Save our Wild Isles (SOWI) continues on the back of it.

Wild Isles gave us joy but also served as a reminder of the work we have to do. We will continue to be louder, bolder and bring more people into the fold. From colleagues, partners and volunteers to our incredible supporters, people are the very heart of the RSPB, and our new President and Ambassadors have a crucial role to play. Our President Dr Amir Khan is already making a difference, bringing new ideas, engaging new audiences and bringing his knowledge of the value of nature for human health and communities.

Through the People's Plan for Nature (see page 18), citizens across the UK told us what's needed to protect and restore nature. If we are to succeed, we must do more of this. Listening. Acting. Amplifying. And heading into the political party conference season with this platform alongside a new joint *State of Nature* report gives me hope. With partners and collaborators, we will be advocating tirelessly for nature to be included in all manifestos.

Marine, and food and farming, remain key areas for our policy engagement. There have been encouraging recent signs with Defra's consultation to ban industrial sandeel fishing, which more than 32,000 people responded to, and we now await the final government outcome.

Last year's avian flu outbreak, which devastated the populations of so many globally important seabird colonies, has been a chilling reminder of the need to build resilience in our seabird populations. The disease remains with us and so we must secure food sources, and beyond that work with the governments of the UK on issues such as offshore wind and over-fishing to create the right conditions for long-term seabird recovery. Meanwhile, through nature-friendly farming projects, we continue to demonstrate how we can produce food alongside a thriving natural world.

Gaining a broader spectrum of support is essential. The risks to businesses from nature loss are ever increasing, and with more than 220 SOWI business screenings of sector-specific films booked to date, we are starting to cut through. Some businesses are already taking action: our new collaboration with Co-op, to restore peatland, and our work around finding new sources of conservation finance are both great examples.

"From colleagues, partners and volunteers to our incredible supporters, people are the very heart of the RSPB."

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

Finally, RSPB Arne shone during BBC *Springwatch*, and the spectacular reserve is set to host *Winterwatch* too, later this year. Being from Dorset, I'm especially proud that we are able to showcase the amazing biodiversity there. We will continue to engage all our stakeholders on ways to support nature, and encourage meaningful action when and where it matters the most.

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

About the RSPB

Our purpose
To advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature.
We carry out conservation work that you can see from space, built from the ground up.
We believe that the planet is facing a nature and climate emergency and that we have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

Our vision
A shared world where wildlife, wild places, and all people thrive. We believe we're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species and has the right to flourish. We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which these depend are interconnected. We recognise that the health and resilience of individuals, our society and the economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems.
We believe that we have the greatest impact when our strategy is informed both by our understanding of the state of species and ecosystems and our core beliefs.

How we deliver public benefit
We believe that in delivering public benefit, we are effective because we bring the breadth of our capabilities to bear on the complex challenges facing species and ecosystems.
The RSPB's strategy sets out how we meet those challenges to make a difference.
Find out more in the sections 'Our highlights,' 'Our impact' and 'Forward look'.

Royal charter
The RSPB is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter, originally granted in 1904. Together with the Statutes, it provides the RSPB's operating rules and guidelines.

Objects of the RSPB
The objects of the RSPB as set out in its Royal Charter are to:

1. promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively by:
   (a) conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend;
   (b) protecting, restoring and recreating habitats. This includes raising public understanding and awareness of, and providing information on, such matters.

2. advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment.

Governance
The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, and we use the Charity Governance Code. How we apply the Code is described throughout this report, in particular on pages 75–87. By setting and reviewing strategic objectives, the RSPB's Trustees test, refine and account for the performance and delivery of the organisation and plan for new challenges as they emerge.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities.



Mark Sisson (rspb-images.com)

Remembering our patron, The Queen

21 April 1926 – 8 September 2022

We were deeply saddened by the death of our patron, Her Majesty The Queen, who showed unwavering support for the RSPB.

Her role as our patron reflected her dedication to championing charitable causes and the unstinting devotion to public duty she demonstrated throughout her long reign.

Her Majesty frequently displayed a keen interest in wildlife and an awareness of environmental and conservation issues. In a speech to launch the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, she reflected on the scale of the nature and climate emergency and voiced her hope that by "working side by side, we have the ability to solve the most insurmountable problems and triumph over the greatest of adversities".

We offer our sincere thanks for her unwavering support for our cause. Many RSPB supporters also shared heartfelt messages on our dedication page, which you can view at **rspb.dedicationpage.org**

What we do

What we do

We work locally in the UK and around the world protecting habitats, saving species and addressing the nature and climate emergency. We do this through five main work areas: **science, species, places, people** and **policy**. We're proud that we can apply our broad capabilities to the many complex challenges facing species and ecosystems to make a positive difference.

Science

We ground our work in a thorough understanding of the natural world. We identify the most important problems, using natural and social sciences to discover their possible causes and potential solutions.

Species

Survival of species and biodiversity are the ultimate signs of whether conservation is working and ecosystems are thriving. That's why we protect species from direct threats, such as loss of habitat, and indirect threats, like loss of food sources.

Places

Nature needs other nature. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and joined up protected areas on land and at sea in the UK and around the world. We help people and nature coexist in harmony, ensuring that where people are living, nature can thrive.

People

A thriving natural world is essential for our species and is only possible if people feel connected to and understand nature. We inspire, educate and support people young and old from every possible background to act. The more of us who get involved, the bigger, more diverse and more powerful our support for nature will be.

Policy

To stop nature's downward spiral and to build a world where wildlife can thrive, governments must have the right ambition. Ambition that is underpinned by action, which must be framed by targets, law, monitoring and enforcement.



naturepl.com

As part of a partnership project the RSPB helped to send 30 young Red Kites to Spain in 2022, to boost the dwindling population there. This comes more than 30 years after Spanish birds were used to help re-establish Red Kites in the UK.

How we do it

We bring people together who love birds and other wildlife, and who want to do something to restore the health and diversity of the natural world. We must also enable more people to take positive action for nature. **We act**, **we influence**, **we collaborate**, and **we empower**.

We act

The natural world and the global climate are in crisis. But our evidence-based conservation work shows that birds and other wildlife will thrive if they're given a chance. We're intensifying our efforts to give nature more opportunities to recover, every single day, delivering conservation across land- and sea-scapes, protecting and restoring habitats and saving birds and other wildlife from extinction. We won't stop while the threat to nature persists.

We influence

We use our voice to help people understand the threats facing nature, and the solutions to save it. From individuals to businesses and governments, we encourage everyone to play a positive role for nature, and help change the world for the better.

We collaborate

We are one of the few conservation organisations that has the capacity and the expertise to make a difference on a truly global scale. When we partner with organisations, businesses, governments and individuals, we increase the impact we have. And by working together, we will deliver results for birds, nature and the climate at an even greater scale.

We empower

The closer people feel to nature, the more likely they are to defend it. We bring people together – across countryside and cities, in person and online. From experienced naturalists to fledgling enthusiasts, we help everyone connect, champion and take action for nature. By supporting local conservation groups, projects and initiatives, we encourage everyone to get involved.



Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

In 2022 we launched our online Community Actions for Nature hub, packed with ideas, advice and inspiration to help communities make wildlife welcome in their neighbourhood. Find out more at **rspb.org.uk/natureinyourcommunity**

Our strategy

In 2021, we launched our new strategy to 2030, to ensure the RSPB is making the biggest impact possible for nature.

Our vision for a world richer in nature

We believe that all species have a right to exist, and that nature is fundamental to human health and wellbeing. We have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations, so we want to create a world where...

...wildlife is abundant and diverse in our towns and countryside

...we have a resilient, stable economy that values nature

...all people are living well in harmony with nature

...birds and other wildlife have made a comeback

...nature continues to be restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people

...we benefit from a stable climate, and clean air and water.

Our six strategic shifts

We have identified six main areas where, by stepping up our efforts, we can increase our impact.

1. Delivering conservation at greater scale, through deeper collaborations.
2. Enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.
3. Being a bolder and more influential campaigning organisation.
4. Becoming more relevant to the world we're trying to change.
5. Diversifying our income and opening up finance opportunities.
6. Making the RSPB the best it can be.



Kevin Sawford (rspb-images.com)

It was a bumper year for Bitterns across the UK with 228 booming males recorded, including 121 on land cared for by the RSPB. Bitterns also bred successfully for the first time at RSPB Saltholme in Teeside – their most northerly breeding record in the UK since their re-colonisation in the early 20th century.

What we aim to achieve by 2030

People engagement

More, and more diverse, people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.

UK land

At least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature-positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.

Species recovery

The future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), the East Atlantic migration route and in other selected areas around the world.

Seas

Threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.

Global Land

A network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic migration route, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.

UK Overseas Territories

The conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UKOTs will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.

Food and farming

The majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy (where the carbon emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the carbon removed from it), as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.

RSPB greening

Not only will the RSPB be a nature-positive organisation, we will have progressed towards a net climate cooling impact, having both reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions and reduced emissions and enhanced removals through our land management activities.

Nature-positive economy

The frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.

RSPB capabilities

The RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will reflect the strategic need.

This decade will be vital for the future of our planet and our contribution has never been needed more. We have set clear measures against these outcomes, which we will use to track our progress. The following stories on pages 12 to 63 demonstrate how we are working towards meeting these outcomes.

Meet our new President and first-ever Ambassadors

At our AGM in October 2022, we were delighted to see Dr Amir Khan elected as our new President. Miranda Krestovnikoff became a Vice President, following nine years in the role of President – we'd like to thank Miranda for her dedication and passion for our mission. We also announced our first-ever Ambassadors to support our cause.



RSPB President Dr Amir Khan

Dr Amir Khan is an NHS doctor, best-selling author and resident doctor on ITV's *Good Morning Britain* and *Lorraine*. He is also an incredible advocate and campaigner for nature.

The RSPB's new President inspires his hundreds of thousands of followers on social media with daily videos and photos from his wildlife garden and local green spaces. He has contributed to *Gardeners' World* magazine and his garden has been featured on the programme.

On his appointment, Dr Khan said: "I'm honoured to have been invited to become the RSPB's President. I really wasn't expecting to be offered such an incredible position at an organisation I've respected for many years. Now I'm looking forward to being part of our mission to save nature in this critical decade."

Amir has been a fantastic supporter of the RSPB, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the pressures of his demanding job, he frequently shares tips and posts on social media of the importance of caring for nature. And he also regularly discusses the importance of nature for our mental and physical health. As a doctor, he speaks with expertise on why access to nature and green spaces are so beneficial to us.

He has supported numerous RSPB campaigns and events that you can read about in this report, including Save Our Wild Isles, the People's Plan for Nature and the Urgent Conversation during COP15. He also co-presented this year's Big Garden Birdwatch Live alongside Vice President Chris Packham.

He is incredibly passionate about birds of prey and has spoken out about the persecution of these majestic birds, especially around his home county. He has also enjoyed visiting RSPB reserves including Bempton Cliffs, where he watched the spectacular seabirds as well as the important work by staff and volunteers.

Amir is passionate about taking action to tackle the nature and climate emergency, while encouraging more and more people, of diverse backgrounds, to stand and speak up for nature, before it's too late. As a devoted uncle and godfather, he wants to ensure that the wildlife he treasures is still here for future generations to enjoy.

Our Ambassadors

Welcome to our Ambassadors who are helping us to create a better future for nature and people:



David Domoney
David has been the resident gardening expert on ITV's flagship show *This Morning* for over a decade. He said: "I believe in the great work the RSPB does and am always happy to support, such as on the Big Garden Birdwatch."



Deborah Meaden
Deborah is a business leader, investor, TV personality and writer, well-known for her appearances on the BBC's *Dragon's Den*. She said: "We have an opportunity right now to change the way we live and to let nature repair at least some of the damage we have already done."



Indy Kiemel Greene
Indy is a young naturalist who regularly volunteers at our Sherwood Forest reserve. He said: "The environment is everything we fundamentally rely on...it has also provided an invaluable solace for so many people at the times we needed it most."



Lucy 'Lapwing' Hodson
Lucy is a self-described nature nerd, naturalist and lover of all things wild, who has appeared on BBC *Winterwatch*. She said: "For me, nature is everything. It's the biggest source of fascination, wonder, joy and love that I know."



Megan McCubbin
Megan is a zoologist, author and wildlife TV presenter. She said: "We share our planet with so many incredible species, but we often forget that we are part of that fragilely interconnected system too."



Nadeem Perera
Nadeem is a wildlife TV presenter, researcher and co-founder of Flock Together. He said: "The natural world is the only world that exists and the idea that we need to reconnect with it is an illusion. We were never separate from it. Nature is us and we are nature."



Ollie Olanipekun
Ollie is co-founder of Flock Together and founder of social impact creative agency, Futurimpose. He said: "To attract a much-needed new audience to the conservation space we need to bring innovation and excitement."



Samuel West
Samuel is an actor and theatre director, and has been a keen birder for 20 years. He said: "Our two young daughters love nature, and watching birds in particular. But the world they'll inherit is in trouble. Biodiversity isn't just a nice thing to have, it's essential for the survival of humanity and the planet."



Steve Brown
Steve is a broadcaster, Paralympian, public speaker, mentor and coach, and a regular correspondent for BBC *Countryfile*. He said: "The RSPB has always had a place in my life. I can remember my dad taking me across their reserves as a young boy, bird book and binoculars in hand. I'll never forget my excitement as I ticked off what I'd seen."

To find out more about our President and Ambassadors, visit **rspb.org.uk/president-and-ambassadors**

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

Saving our Wild Isles

In March 2023, more than three years of hard work culminated in the premiere of *Wild Isles* – the stunning BBC natural history series we co-produced with Silverback Films, alongside WWF and the Open University. Presented by Sir David Attenborough, it showcased UK wildlife like never before.

From Golden Eagles soaring through our skies, to Puffins battling Black-headed Gulls to feed their chicks, the series revealed fascinating behaviour in extraordinary detail and shone a spotlight on the incredible range of habitats and species on our doorstep.

As well as highlighting the beauty of our natural world, the series also delivered a stark message: the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and we must act now to help it recover.

The RSPB was involved in *Wild Isles* from its inception, helping to finance the series alongside WWF, the Open University and the BBC. Over the following years we supported its production every step of the way, from filming, to scientific advice, to publicity and finally using the series to inspire action for nature at scale.

Having seen what the 'David Attenborough effect' has done in the past to boost the profile of issues such as plastic pollution, we recognised early on that a landmark TV series presented by Sir David Attenborough would have the power to shape the public conversation about our most threatened wildlife like little else.

Our strategy was simple – work with our partners, including the BBC, to make the series as successful as possible. Then, use that success as a jumping off point to drive the change we need through the Save Our Wild Isles campaign, for which the National Trust joined us as partners alongside WWF.

An epic undertaking

Filming for the series took place over three years using the best camera teams in the world and we were intimately involved throughout. For example, our site team hosted a camera crew at RSPB Loch Gruinart on Islay for several months to secure footage of White-tailed Eagles hunting Barnacle Geese. Many iconic scenes would not have been captured without the support of our experts.

The TV series, with our support, was a huge success. It was among the most watched factual series on UK television in recent years. Media and social media were abuzz both in the lead up and during the transmission of the series, with discussions about the species and places filmed, and the work being done to save them for future generations.

Driving change

The reason for our investment was not just to create a wonderful spectacle, but to drive the change our natural world so badly needs. In joining together with WWF and the National Trust we created:

- *Saving Our Wild Isles* – an additional documentary voiced by Sir David, shown exclusively on BBC iPlayer. From nature-friendly farmers to communities taking action in their neighbourhoods, it showcases inspiring and hopeful conservation work, which we must urgently scale up if we are to turn the nature crisis around. It has become one of the most watched factual shows on iPlayer.

- Four films aimed at a business audience. Featuring the likes of Deborah Meaden and the CEOs of Tesco, Barratt Developments, Natwest and others, they showcase the changes needed to integrate nature into business decision making. These films will be touring the boardrooms of major UK businesses over the coming years.

- A £1 million community fund inspired by the TV series, delivered alongside WWF and Aviva, giving community groups the crucial funding boost needed to take action for nature and play their part in saving our wild isles.

The early data we are receiving suggests the TV series has inspired an increased love of UK nature and awareness of its plight. In the words of Sir David, now the baton passes to all of us to be the first generation to leave these wild isles in a better state than we inherited them.

To find out more about the campaign, including the £1 million Aviva Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund, visit **saveourwildisles.org.uk**

10 million+

viewers tuned in to watch *Wild Isles*

£1 million

fund for communities taking action for nature

250

business leaders attended our Save Our Wild Isles business launch event



"Showcasing the UK's spectacular places and wonderful wildlife gave us a powerful platform to build the broadest and most diverse movement for nature there's ever been."

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

"The truth is, every one of us, no matter who we are, or where we live, can and must play a part in restoring nature. It's easy to feel overwhelmed or powerless by the scale of the issues facing our planet, but we have the solutions."

Sir David Attenborough

Alamy

People's Plan for Nature

The crisis facing nature affects each and every one of us and we believe that everyone should have a say in how to solve it. So we joined forces with WWF and the National Trust to give thousands of people from across the UK an open platform to share their views.

The result is The People's Plan for Nature – a plan created by the people, for the people, that sets out a vision for the future of nature and the actions we must all take to protect and renew it.

The People's Plan was developed through a fully independent, impartial and inclusive process, split into two phases. The first phase, which began in autumn 2022, was a National Conversation: an open call to the public about why our nature is so special and what we can do to protect it, which received nearly 30,000 responses from the public.

This fed into the second phase, when 103 people from all walks of life were recruited to form the People's Assembly for Nature. This group met for four weekends over four months to hear from world-leading experts, review evidence and collaboratively create a plan for nature's recovery.

The People's Plan calls for no more harm to nature, supported by stronger enforcement of existing nature protection legislation across land and sea. It calls for clear targets to be set to increase biodiversity. It also calls for the creation of a permanent assembly on nature and has a specific call about ensuring our transition to a future where nature is protected and renewed is a fair one.

Professor Nathalie Seddon of the University of Oxford, one of the Assembly's academic leads, says: "The People's Plan for Nature is a roadmap to help us get from where we are now, living in a highly degraded country, to where we need to be – empowered and living as part of flourishing landscapes, seascapes and cities. Healthier, happier and re-connected with nature.

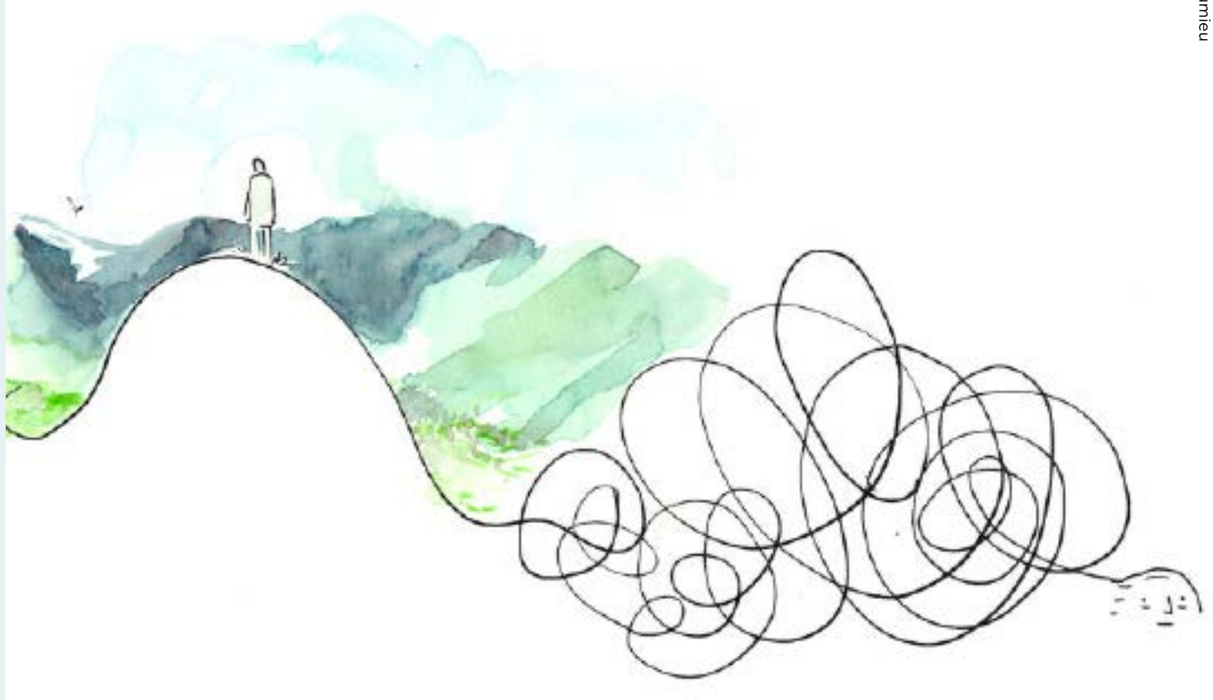


people took part in the People's Assembly for Nature

"The experience left me feeling hopeful for the future of UK nature, as well as for nature in general; there's a good chance that if we get things right here, other places will be inspired to do the same."

We know that decision makers sit up and take notice when enough people call for action on a single issue – that's why we're asking everyone to show their support for the People's Plan and prove just how many people stand behind it. Together, we can make this a turning point for nature.

To read the People's Plan and add your voice in support, visit **peoplesplanfornature.org**



Graham Roumieu

This illustration by Graham Roumieu was commissioned as part of the People's Plan for Nature, to bring to life some of the key thoughts and ideas that were shared by the public during the National Conversation.



Jemima Stubbs (Involve)

"Being part of the People's Assembly was a really cool and unique experience. We had the rare opportunity to engage in discussions with people from all across the UK, who we might otherwise never even have come across, let alone spoken to, which was really interesting and special. By the end, we all came together and the resulting camaraderie created a really hopeful space."

Fawad, member of the People's Assembly for Nature

Attack on Nature

In September 2022, the UK Government of the time announced a raft of measures that amounted to a bonfire of environmental protections. In response, we launched our Attack on Nature campaign.

Our initial tweet signalling our dismay at the Government's plans received more than 15 million impressions and began trending on Twitter, with retweets from a number of celebrities, including Stephen Fry, Chris Packham and Sue Perkins. Our leadership prompted many other organisations, including the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts, to stand with us and the campaign gained huge media interest and coverage.

We continued to keep up the pressure and the campaign gathered momentum, with an amazing 100,000 people answering our call to email their MP.

Our rapid response and clear, evocative messaging, combined with the passion of our supporters, came together to make Attack on Nature one of our most impactful campaigns to date, forcing a climbdown from the UK Government over some of the most worrying aspects of their proposals including Investment Zones, and the scrapping of nature-friendly farming schemes.

As well as achieving its aim to avert a potentially catastrophic watering-down of nature protections, the Attack on Nature campaign has helped to shift people's perceptions of the RSPB and allowed us to take a big step forward in demonstrating that we are a bold and influential campaigning organisation – a key shift outlined in our new strategy.

Although membership recruitment was not a part of the campaign, our approach clearly resonated with the public, because we saw a 645% uplift in new members joining us at that time.

Nature isn't out of the woods yet, but we have demonstrated that by mobilising our supporters, together we can hold governments to account and we will continue to use this bold approach whenever nature needs us.

To find out more about our Attack on Nature campaign, visit **rspb.org.uk/attack-on-nature-so-far**

COP15: a huge win for nature

A new global framework to save nature was agreed at the COP15 conference in Montreal in December 2022.

Nature underpins all our lives and so for people to thrive, nature must thrive too. But across the globe, habitats and wildlife are being lost at an unprecedented rate, with more than a million species currently facing extinction. Yet it's not too late to turn things around, if countries come together to take action for nature.

That's why, ahead of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) we launched the Urgent Conversation campaign, alongside more than 30 conservation charities, including the Woodland Trust and Wildlife Trusts.

The campaign urged the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, to use this once-in-a-decade opportunity to champion a global deal to reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and 35,000 people signed our petition in support.

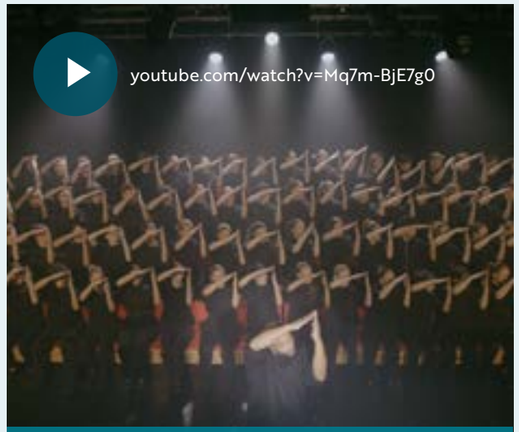
To raise awareness of the campaign we teamed up with renowned choreographer Sadeck Waff and a group of 80 students who performed a 'human murmuration'. At the time, Sadeck said: "Our world leaders should follow the example of birds, and these dancers at COP15, and co-operate to create something beautiful – a plan for the future of nature."

The murmuration film was viewed 190,000 times and generated media coverage with a reach of over 47 million – including featuring on Channel 4 News and in The Guardian. All this support and engagement was communicated to the Prime Minister and ensured the UK delegation went to COP15 knowing how much nature matters to people.

In the run-up to the conference, we also released our report *A world richer in nature,* which set out clear recommendations for how the UK Government and devolved administrations can translate global promises into a decade of positive action for nature.

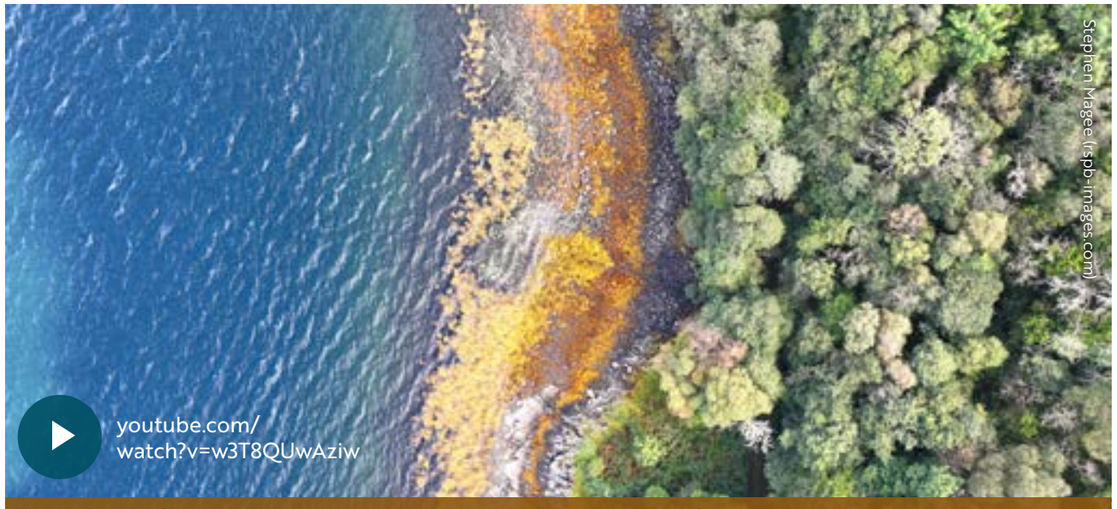
After intense negotiations at COP15, countries agreed a new global plan for nature – the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Whilst not perfect, the plan is a commitment to take urgent action to halt extinctions, recover populations, and protect and restore ecosystems by the end of the decade.

It's a landmark moment. But we know from experience that governments often sign up to targets, make promises and then fall short on action. We cannot let that happen again and so over the coming years we will be working hard to hold the UK Government to account and ensure it follows through on its promises.



The beautiful human murmuration – follow the link on the photo to watch it.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: UK LAND



The rainforest at Glencripesdale nature reserve reaches down to the shore of Loch Sunart.

New rainforest reserve purchased at Glencripesdale

In July 2022, we took on the stewardship of Glencripesdale nature reserve in the Western Highlands, as part of a landscape-scale plan to protect, restore and connect Scotland's remaining rainforest habitat.

Scotland's temperate rainforests aren't as well known as their tropical counterparts, but they're just as special. They support a huge range of wildlife, and when in good condition a single hectare of rainforest can contain as many as 200 species of lichens and 200 species of mosses and liverworts.

However, much of Scotland's rainforest has been lost, and what remains is often fragmented and in poor condition, as a result of invasive non-native species, like Rhododendron, and overgrazing by deer.

With the aim of restoring a healthy network of temperate rainforest in Scotland, we purchased Glencripesdale for £754,000. The purchase of this 614-hectare site was only possible thanks to The Banister Charitable Trust, the Carman Family Foundation and gifts left to us in wills – we are very grateful to everyone involved.

In the coming years, we will be working with the local community and landowners to eradicate Rhododendron and find opportunities to expand and connect rainforest habitat around the Morvern peninsula.

A big boost for Little Terns

Through the LIFE on the Edge project, we've been protecting and creating coastal wetland habitats at Horsey Island in Essex for Little Terns and other ground-nesting birds.

Thanks to its offshore location, Horsey Island is relatively free of disturbance and as a result it hosts the most important Little Tern colony in Essex. However, over time the beach here has gradually flattened out, making it increasingly at risk from flooding at high tides, particularly during the breeding season when Little Terns have vulnerable eggs and chicks.

To combat this, we added 79,336 tonnes of sand and shingle to the site, using material from harbour improvement works in Harwich, Essex. Harwich Haven Authority contributed £700,000 to the recharge project, with additional funding from the EU Life+ project and the Environment Agency. This created a series of islands slightly offshore, which in time will join with the existing coastline at Horsey Island to create new habitat for Little Terns.

In 2022, 14 Little Tern nests were found on the newly created habitat, plus a further eight on the existing bank. That's an increase of five nests and 11 fledged chicks compared to 2021. See more information at: **projectlote.life**

79,336
tonnes of sand and shingle were used to create new nesting habitat

14
pairs of Little Terns nested on the new habitat



Little Terns are already nesting on the newly created habitat.

RSPB investigation leads to gamekeeper's conviction

Thanks to footage captured by the RSPB's Investigations Team, a Wiltshire gamekeeper was brought to justice in June 2022, for dumping the bodies of dead birds of prey in a well.

Following a tip-off in August 2020, investigations officers installed a covert camera on land used for Pheasant shooting, which captured footage of Archie Watson disposing of a dead Buzzard. Later, a camera was lowered into the well, revealing a mass of raptor corpses.

"At this point we had enough evidence to contact the police" explains Investigations Officer Jack Ashton-Booth. After being lowered into the well, police officers retrieved the decomposing bodies of a number of birds, which were later confirmed to include at least four Red Kites, 11 Buzzards and one large gull – making it the largest number of dead birds of prey ever discovered in England.

After his arrest, Mr Watson pleaded guilty to illegally possessing the dead birds and was given a 12-month community order (180 hours of unpaid work) and was told to pay £393 costs.

Sadly, this case is just one of a worrying number of raptor persecution incidents recorded every year, most in connection with land managed for gamebird shooting. "For something as dignified as a bird of prey to end up in a subterranean mass grave is a sign of something deeply wrong" says Jack. "We urgently need greater regulation to keep our birds of prey safe and soaring in our skies, where they belong."

A transformation for nature

Together with our partner, Hanson UK, we've passed the 20-year milestone in our 30-year project to transform a working quarry into a vast wetland nature reserve at Ouse Fen in Cambridgeshire.

So far, we've created new wetland habitat across an area the size of 418 football pitches and this simply wouldn't have been possible without our amazing volunteers, who have helped to plant 130,000 reeds – by hand!

In 2022, eight Konik ponies joined our team, and their grazing has helped to establish areas of diverse grassland, as well as new freshwater habitats around the reedbed margins. We also opened an extra access route to give visitors even more opportunities to explore and get close to nature.

Ouse Fen is already home to a huge array of wildlife including Bearded Tits, Cranes, Water Voles and Otters. And we're delighted to report that the resonant booms of 12 male Bitterns were heard echoing across the reserve during the most recent peak in 2021. That's more than the entire UK population of Bitterns in 1997, when just 11 booming males remained.

Protecting and enhancing the Lough Erne landscape

As lead partner of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP) we're working with six other organisations to help enhance and protect the natural, cultural and built heritage of the area.

LELP brings together a range of stakeholders from within the rural community of Lough Erne, working with and facilitating partnerships between central and local government, environmental and charitable organisations, community groups, farmers, educational institutions and members of the public.

Since 2018 we have supported the delivery of 43 projects across the landscape, focusing on engaging people with their heritage, landscape and cultural traditions. These partnership projects have involved taking action to protect the unique landscape and biodiversity of the area, delivering conservation projects for key species and improving people's access to nature and the built heritage of Lough Erne. Through education and engagement programmes with groups of all ages we aim to help people connect with their heritage, and in turn create a deep and lasting personal commitment to its protection.

With support from our main funder, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have now been granted a project extension to December 2024. Over the next year we will be working towards agreeing a lasting legacy to drive sustainable management of the landscape for the communities of Lough Erne.



Ashley Robinson (RSPB NI)

School children getting their hands dirty at a community archaeological dig as part of a LELP project.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: SPECIES RECOVERY

Celebrating success for Curlews

Curlews are one of the UK's most iconic birds – but they're in trouble. Their numbers fell by 49% in the UK between 1995 and 2021 and they are now facing extinction as a breeding bird here.

We're determined not to let that happen and have been working hard, both on our nature reserves and across the wider landscape, to bring Curlews back from the brink.

Spectacular results in Northern Ireland

In 2022, we celebrated a record-breaking breeding season in the Glenwherry area of the Antrim Plateau in Northern Ireland, where a phenomenal 69 Curlew chicks fledged, thanks to our EU LIFE nature project, Curlews in Crisis, co-funded by the European Union. That's up from 28 chicks the previous year, which was itself a record.

The secret to this conservation success has been advising and supporting farmers to restore habitat for Curlews on their land, through the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' Environmental Farming Scheme. As well as habitat management, electric fences were erected around Curlew nests to protect the vulnerable eggs and chicks from predators. And, because predation is known to be one of the major causes of Curlew declines, these fences were combined with targeted predator control to give chicks a fighting chance.

"The number of chicks we have seen fledge this year is unequivocable proof that conservation works", says Conservation Officer Katie Gibb.

Meanwhile, in County Fermanagh, at least another 11 chicks fledged from our Lower Lough Erne reserve, where we've been managing the habitat to make sure it's perfect for Curlews.

Cause for hope in Wales

Over in north Wales, also through the Curlews in Crisis project (known as Cri'r Glyfinir in Welsh), we completed the second year of Curlew conservation at Hiraethog and Ysbyty Ifan. As a result of wetland restoration, nest fencing and predator control we saw a huge improvement in breeding success compared to 2021, with at least 10 chicks fledging.

Conservation meets creativity

Last year also saw the launch of our Curlew Sounds Project – an innovative collaboration with musicians to create an album inspired by Curlews.

Nature-lover Merlyn Driver gathered fellow artists, including David Gray, to record a range of tracks, which were combined with Curlew soundscapes to form a double album called *Simmerdim: Curlew Sounds*. The title track and album went on sale in spring 2022 and so far they've raised nearly £10,000 for our Curlew Recovery Programme. You can buy the album for yourself at **rspb.org.uk/curlewsounds**



Shutterstock

Curlew champion awarded medal

Saving Curlews from extinction is too big a task for the RSPB to tackle alone, so we're committed to working with others to improve their fortunes. In recognition of her tireless efforts to help raise awareness of Curlews, we were delighted to award Mary Colwell the RSPB Medal at our AGM in 2022. Mary walked the length of the UK and Ireland to share the story of Curlew declines and wrote a book chronicling her journey. She continues to speak up for Curlews in the media and led a campaign for a new GCSE in Natural History, which was successful in April 2022.

On receiving the award, Mary said: "It is vital that people are not only enchanted by nature, but also informed. I don't believe we will save nature unless everyone pulls together."

This is a sentiment we share at the RSPB, and we will continue to work alongside partners and supporters across the UK to create a brighter future for Curlews.

Protecting Norfolk's first-ever colony of breeding Bee-eaters

In June 2022, a flock of eight European Bee-eaters set up home in a disused quarry in Norfolk, and with the help of the landowner and the North East Norfolk Bird Club, we created a viewpoint to help people catch a glimpse of these dazzling visitors.

We also installed a nest cam, so that people could watch live footage of the birds' antics from anywhere in the world. From local residents and keen birders to holidaymakers and children, around 15,000 people came to see the Bee-eaters and volunteers were always on hand to share their knowledge.

Volunteer, Josh Fusiara, said: "To be able to help manage and protect breeding Bee-eaters in the UK was amazing and something I will never forget. I loved the fact they were accessible for the public to see, and there was a real sense of community at the viewing site. To stand there and watch Bee-eater chicks fledge was a truly special experience and a tribute to the brilliant work of the whole team."

As well as helping visitors to see the Bee-eaters, we set up a round-the-clock nest protection team to keep the birds safe from predators and egg thieves. And it paid off – by early September, at least three chicks had successfully fledged, and the technicolour family had set off on their migration south.

Bee-eaters usually breed in the southern Mediterranean and north Africa, but their visits to the UK are increasing. "As our planet warms," says Katie-jo Luxton, RSPB Executive Director, Global Conservation "they are being pushed further north. Bee-eaters nesting in the UK is an early warning of what climate change has in store for us all if urgent action isn't taken to curb greenhouse gas emissions."



At least three Bee-eater chicks fledged from the quarry in Norfolk in 2022 and Bee-eaters returned to the site again in 2023.

Good news for rare invertebrates

Invertebrates are often overlooked and undervalued, but they're vital pieces in nature's jigsaw, so we're delighted that three projects to help rare invertebrates on our reserves in Scotland have been showing positive results.

With their striking markings it's not hard to see how Dark Bordered Beauty Moths got their name. These little insects have never been common, but due to habitat loss they're now found at just one site in England and two in Scotland, where their caterpillars rely on the young suckers of Aspen trees for food. We've been managing the Aspens at RSPB Insh Marshes to provide ideal conditions for the moths and they've responded well, with a record-breaking 81 adults recorded in 2022, up from an average of 40 over the previous four years.

Dark Bordered Beauty Moths rarely travel for more than a few hundred metres, and since suitable habitat is quite fragmented and spaced out, they are unlikely to disperse to new areas themselves. That's why we've joined forces with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland to establish a captive-breeding population at the Highland Wildlife Park. In 2022, the number of eggs grew from 35 to over 500, and some of the caterpillars from these eggs will be released in 2023 – a significant step forward in securing a future for this beautiful moth.

We've also been managing suitable habitat – this time dead wood – for another Aspen-loving species, the aptly-named Aspen Hoverfly. Four adults were seen at Invertromie Wood, part of RSPB Insh Marshes, including two females that were laying eggs – a really positive sign.

Pine Hoverflies also had a good year. Staff and volunteers working for the Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms Project found the first adult Pine Hoverflies to be seen in the wild since 2013, including the first recorded Pine Hoverfly at RSPB Abernethy since the 1980s.



A record-breaking 81 adult Dark Bordered Beauty Moths were recorded at Insh Marshes in 2022.



Chris has helped save several vulture species from extinction.

RSPB vulture expert awarded MBE

The RSPB's Chris Bowden has been awarded an MBE for services to vulture conservation. On accepting the MBE, Chris said: "I'm truly flattered to receive this recognition of my efforts for vultures. I've had the huge privilege of working with so many dedicated partners and individuals from across Asia and more widely, together using good science to bring Asian vultures back from the brink of extinction."

Read the full story at: **rspb.org.uk/vulture-expert**

Nature in numbers

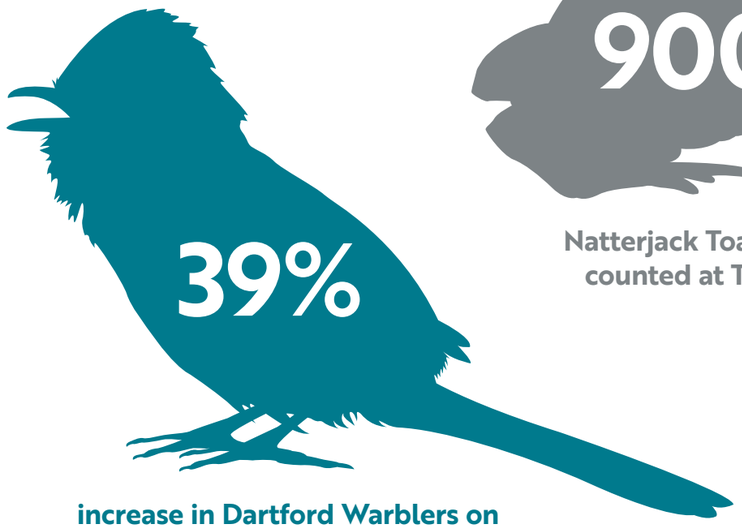
From windswept blanket bogs in the north of Scotland to colourful heathlands in the south of England, we care for 222 nature reserves across the UK, covering an area four times the size of the Isle of Wight. Here is just a selection of the highlights from last year.



6,225
pairs
of Manx Shearwaters on Ramsey Island, up 30% on 2016



25
lekking male Capercaillie at Abernethy, up from 20 last year



39%
increase in Dartford Warblers on RSPB reserves compared to 2021 – the highest level ever



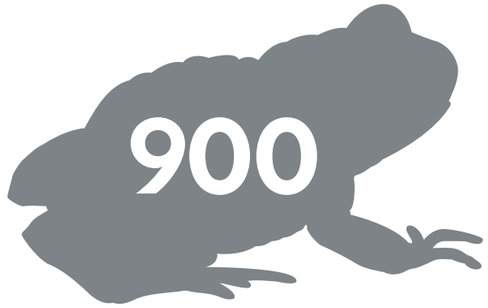
6x
more flowering Least Yellow Water Lilies at Insh Marshes than in 2020

RSPB nature reserves are home to more than

18,700
species



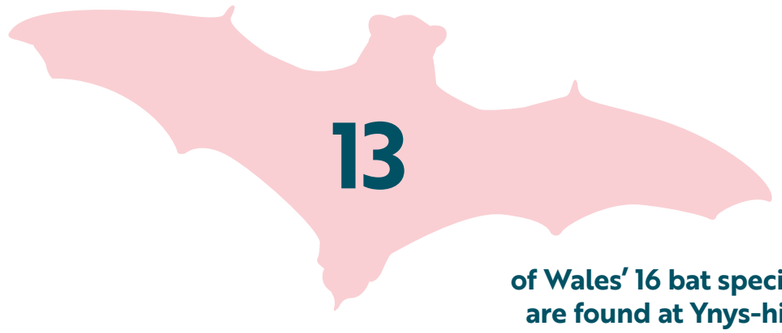
50
male Irish Damselflies were recorded at Montiaghs Moss following pond restoration



900
Natterjack Toadlets were counted at The Lodge



2
juvenile Smooth Snakes were found at Aylesbeare Common, confirming that the UK's rarest reptiles are breeding here



13
of Wales' 16 bat species are found at Ynys-hir

Avian flu update

The impact that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (known as avian flu) has had on wild bird populations since winter 2021/22 is unprecedented.

Tens of thousands of birds have died and extensive losses at some colonies of long-lived, slow-breeding birds could send populations of some species into decline. More than 16,000 Svalbard Barnacle Geese – a third of the world's population – were lost during the winter of 2021/22 on their Solway feeding grounds in Scotland and Great Skuas on the Scottish islands were also decimated. Scotland hosts 60% of the world's Great Skuas and in summer 2022 we lost 1,400 at Foula alone, which is 4% of the global population. Mortality has also been high in Northern Gannets and terns, with the UK's only breeding colony of Roseate Terns, at our Coquet Island nature reserve, badly hit. In total, almost 70 wild bird species have tested positive for the virus in the UK.

Avian flu isn't new, but the scale of the impact and the precarious situation that our globally important seabirds are already in, made the current outbreak especially concerning. This particular strain of the virus arose in poultry in East Asia and spread into wild birds in the early 2000s, but the current form is more deadly, and we do not know how it will progress.

In December 2021, we launched our emergency avian flu appeal, which raised £477,000 by the end of the 2022–23 financial year. Thanks to this generous support, we have been able to employ two people to work on bird flu advocacy. They are focusing on developing policy and calling on the UK governments to take action to protect wild birds from avian flu and the other threats they face, such as overfishing. We have also recruited a new senior conservation scientist and will be conducting research on the seabirds most affected by avian flu, so that we can better understand the impact of this devastating virus and how best to respond to it.



These two photographs of Coquet Island – taken two weeks apart – show the devastating impact of avian flu on the tern colony.

Shutterstock

"We have lost more than half of our Roseate Terns, resulting in the lowest productivity on Coquet Island since 1985. Watching our beloved birds dying without being able to help them was very difficult, and seeing an entire Roseate Tern family dead is something I will never forget."

Ibrahim Alfarwi,
Warden at RSPB Coquet Island off the Northumberland coast

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: SEAS

Bird superhighway shortlisted for UNESCO World Heritage Site status

What do Machu Picchu, Mount Etna and the Great Barrier Reef have in common? They're all UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the UK's east coast wetlands are one step closer to joining them, after being added to the UK's Tentative List of potential World Heritage sites.

The RSPB initiated the application for World Heritage status in 2022, with the backing of a number of partners including the National Trust. The proposed site stretches from the mudflats of the River Thames to the reedbeds of the Humber Estuary, incorporating many RSPB reserves, including Wallasea Island in Essex and Minsmere in Suffolk.

These wetlands form a key part of the East Atlantic Flyway, a 'superhighway' used by millions of migratory birds every year, and provide vital places for birds to rest and refuel. And it's not just birds that benefit from this globally-important area – from flood defence and carbon capture, to tourism, the wetlands offer a huge range of other benefits for society.

Michael Copleston, RSPB England Director, said: "We are absolutely thrilled that the global importance of England's east coast has been recognised by government. These diverse places provide an essential refuge for over 155 bird species, as well as world-leading examples of how we can manage our coastlines in the face of a changing climate. We're at the beginning of a thorough process but we're looking forward to working with local communities and other partners to build a strong case for UNESCO over the coming years."



David J Slater (rspb-images.com)

A range of species use the east coast as a refuge during huge migration journeys, including Wigeons.

Ban on sandeel fishing could offer lifeline for seabirds

For decades the RSPB has been calling for a ban on industrial sandeel fishing in UK waters. These fish might be small, but they provide a vital source of food for many seabirds that are globally threatened with extinction, including Kittiwakes and Puffins.

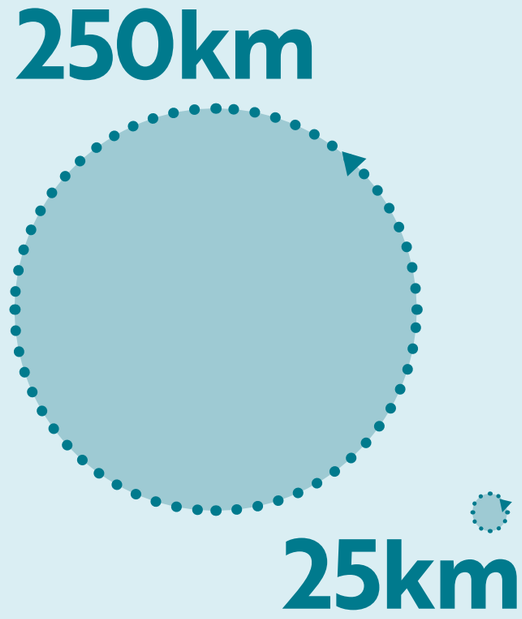
Yet hundreds of thousands of tonnes of sandeels are taken from the North Sea every year by EU fishing vessels, to be turned into fishmeal and oil to feed farmed animals. Sandeels are also under threat from warming seas and as a result of these combined pressures they are in increasingly short supply. This is bad news for seabird species such as Kittiwakes, Puffins and terns, which rely on sandeels to feed themselves and their chicks during the breeding season.

Although none of the UK governments support industrial sandeel fishing, they all need to ban it to actually stop it. In April 2022, there was a positive step forward when bottom towed fishing gear was banned in four Marine Protected Areas. This was welcomed, but it only halted a relatively small proportion of sandeel fishing, so we were delighted when, in March 2023, Defra launched a consultation proposing a complete ban on trawling for sandeels in English waters in the North Sea. In response the RSPB set up an e-action for people to show their support.



Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)

Puffins rely on sandeels to feed to their chicks.



Some Puffins now have to make round trips, ten times further to find sandeels.

More than 32,000 people backed a ban and called for action. We've since had confirmation that the Scottish Government will consult on full prohibition of sandeel fishing in Scottish waters. With overwhelming support from the public, other NGOs (including our partners in BirdLife) and stakeholders, we are hopeful a ban can be introduced before the 2024 fishing season.

Powering Healthy Seas report published

Offshore wind has a vital role in the fight against climate change and the UK's transition to renewable, locally produced energy. However, to meet government targets, far more offshore wind developments will be required and this could pose a serious risk for marine wildlife.

That's why, with support from our partner, the European Climate Foundation, the RSPB has published a new report – *Powering Healthy Seas* – which makes recommendations for how the UK can shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy while protecting the natural world. It highlights the need for more robust evidence to help inform where and how we create new developments and calls for a more strategic approach to the planning of wind farms.

The UK has lost more than two million seabirds since 1986, and those that remain face an unprecedented barrage of threats, including avian flu and overfishing. Therefore, it's vital that wind farms are sensitively planned to minimise the risks to vulnerable species, such as disturbance, displacement and collisions.

To find out more about our recommendations, read the report at **rspb.org.uk/powering_healthy_seas**



Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)

It's vital that wind farms are sensitively planned, to minimise the risks to wildlife.

Counting albatrosses – from space!

Many species of albatross are in serious decline, so it's vital we keep track of their numbers. The best time to do this is when they're on land raising their young. But as many albatrosses nest on remote islands it can be difficult and expensive to reach them and potentially disruptive for the birds themselves. So we teamed up with the British Antarctic Survey to spot and count albatrosses from space, using the latest super high-resolution satellite images.

Although the pilot project focused solely on Wandering Albatrosses on South Georgia, counting the birds was a mammoth task, so we put out a call for eagled-eyed volunteers to help. More than 600 people got involved, from 73 different countries, reviewing 82,880 images between them! This part of the project has now ended, but in the future our hope is to form a flock of 'albatross detectives' so that together we can complete the world's first worldwide albatross census.



Richard Bowler (rspb-images.com)

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: GLOBAL LAND

Carbon credits funding rainforest protection in Gola

In 2014 we began generating income from the sale of certified carbon credits to protect Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone. Sales of these carbon credits have gone from strength to strength and now provide finance for other areas across Sierra Leone too.

Like many tropical forests, Gola is under threat from deforestation. This not only destroys habitat for wildlife and reduces the ability of the forest to perform vital ecosystem services, it also exacerbates climate change. However, despite the vital role the rainforest plays in supporting wildlife and people, securing sufficient funding to ensure its protection was a challenge, because of competing demands on limited government funds.

400,000 tonnes

of carbon emissions saved every year thanks to the Gola REDD+ project

The Gola Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) project solves this problem by allowing companies and individuals to buy carbon credits – essentially creating a value for the carbon stored in the forest. This not only ensures that carbon remains locked away, it also finances our work to protect the forest from illegal activities, such as deforestation and poaching, helping to safeguard rare wildlife, including Pygmy Hippos, Western Chimpanzees and Forest Elephants.

Local people benefit from Gola REDD+ too, through sustainable livelihood projects, including Farmer Field Schools, where training is provided to help local farmers to increase their crop yields and income without expanding their farm into the rainforest.


Alamy

The REDD+ project helps protect Western Chimpanzees.

Celebrating 100 years of BirdLife International

2022 marked the 100th anniversary of the creation of BirdLife International, a partnership of over 115 conservation organisations working together to protect birds and habitats on every continent.

The RSPB is the UK member of the BirdLife family and we're also the largest organisation in the network, supporting many other partners and helping them to thrive and grow.

Our honorary secretary, Frank Lemon, was there back in 1922 when a group of conservationists met in London with a vision to join forces and protect birds around the world. They knew that wildlife pays no attention to borders and that sharing local knowledge could play a vital part in saving nature. United by their passion, they founded what we now know as BirdLife International.

From those humble beginnings, BirdLife has grown into the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations and is critical for the success of the RSPB's strategy. Over the years we've achieved some fantastic successes together, none more so than our work in Kazakhstan, described below.


ASalemgareyev

RSPB project wins UN award

In December 2022, the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was announced as one of only 10 UN World Restoration Flagship projects, as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. We co-founded the project in 2005, alongside the Government of Kazakhstan, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, and other partners. Since then, we've been working to protect Saiga Antelopes and other globally important wildlife across a vast area of steppe grassland, wetlands and deserts. As a result, Saiga numbers have rocketed from fewer than 40,000 to 1.32 million and more than 5 million hectares of state protected areas have been established.

Say cheese! Tigers caught on camera in Harapan

We're using hidden cameras to survey Critically Endangered Sumatran Tigers in Hutan Harapan rainforest in Sumatra.

Hutan Harapan rainforest is one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet, but tracking elusive wildlife through dense undergrowth across almost 100,000 hectares is incredibly challenging. As a result, reliable population estimates for many of Harapan's species, including Sumatran Tigers, are lacking.

To address this, we set up camera traps in the hope of capturing images of tigers, which can be individually identified by their unique stripe patterns. So far, three tigers have been caught on camera, in three different locations. We've also recorded other signs of tigers, such as scratch marks and droppings, in 13 survey areas. This is great news and following additional surveys in 2023 we hope to have a much clearer idea of how many of these rare creatures live in Hutan Harapan.

Sadly, the tigers' forest home is under threat from a proposed coal road, which would pass through the southern part of Hutan Harapan. This road would destroy and fragment habitats, releasing climate-warming carbon from the trees and soil, and also increase access to the area, making it easier for illegal poachers and loggers to reach the protected forest.

The indigenous communities that live in and rely on the rainforest will be affected too. Construction of the coal road will disrupt their way of life and could lead to displacement and a violation of their human rights.

We're determined to protect the forest, and its wildlife and people, so alongside our partners, we're urging the construction company to change the route of the road to minimise its impact.



Camera traps are helping us to discover how many Sumatran Tigers live in Hutan Harapan rainforest.



70,000 tree saplings were grown in community tree nurseries before being planted out into degraded habitat.

Forest restoration progressing in Kenya's Taita Hills

Work to restore fragmented cloud forest in Kenya's Taita Hills made good progress over the past year.

So far, 70,000 indigenous tree seedlings have been grown by local people in nine community tree nurseries, before being planted out across 42 hectares of degraded habitat, to help boost natural regeneration.

As well as producing seedlings for this forest regeneration work, these nurseries are also being used to grow commercially valuable crop trees, such as Macadamia and Avocado.

It's hoped that these trees will not only help to improve the income and livelihoods of local people, but also act as connecting corridors between forest fragments, allowing wildlife to move more freely.

The Taita Hills are home to more than 28 unique plant and animal species, including the Taita Thrush, which appears to be responding well to the habitat restoration, with numbers increasing in some areas.

The RSPB's partnership work to restore the cloud forest has been made possible thanks to a £148,000 Darwin grant in 2022/2023.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS:
UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

Saving iguanas in the Caribbean

Our partnership work to protect endangered iguanas in the Caribbean received a welcome boost last year.

Important new national biosecurity regulations in Turks and Caicos and alien species regulations in the Cayman Islands were introduced, which aim to minimise the impact of invasive non-native species on wildlife.

This is great news for Critically Endangered Turks and Caicos Rock Iguanas and the Cayman Islands' Sister Islands Rock Iguanas, whose populations have plummeted largely due to introduced predators, such as feral cats, which kill and eat them. Invasive Green Iguanas are also a problem, as they spread disease, compete with the native iguanas and increase the risk of genetic extinction by hybridising with them. These new regulations will strengthen our existing partnership work on the islands to reduce the spread of invasive species through biosecurity and control measures.

Unsustainable development also threatens the islands' wildlife and so in 2019 we purchased 10 acres of dry forest next to the Salina Reserve on Grand Cayman, to help our partners with their efforts to save endangered species, like the Blue Iguana. Thanks to generous funding, including £150,000 from the John Ellerman Foundation and £32,433 from the Quick Response Fund for Nature, we were able to expand the reserve in 2022, by purchasing another 10 acres of forest. This habitat will provide a safe haven for Blue Iguanas, as well as threatened endemic plants.



New biosecurity regulations will help to protect Turks and Caicos Rock Iguanas from non-native invasive species.

RSPB employee receives British Empire Medal

In 2023 we received the wonderful news that the RSPB's Andy Schofield had been awarded a British Empire Medal in the King's New Year Honours list, in recognition of his work for the wildlife and people of the UK Overseas Territory (UKOT) of Tristan da Cunha.

Andy has spent thousands of hours on Tristan da Cunha – the most remote inhabited island on earth – working alongside the community to help them progress their conservation aspirations. Most notably he has supported the community for almost a decade to reach their goal of designating an area of ocean that's almost three times the size of the UK as a no-take Marine Protection Zone (MPZ) – the largest in the entire Atlantic Ocean.

The MPZ will safeguard one of the world's most pristine marine environments and protect the wealth of wildlife that lives there, including Critically Endangered albatrosses, Rockhopper Penguins, Blue Sharks and Beaked Whales.

Andy was nominated for the award by the Tristan da Cunha community and the Tristan Government. Trevor Glass, Director of Conservation in Tristan, said: "Andy has built our understanding and gained our trust – allowing us to get the MPZ on its feet and designated. Andy is great with the community, he's always helping others, supporting them with things like training and advice. He's absolutely brilliant and we thank him very much for his work."

On receiving the award, Andy said: "Some of the best, most enjoyable work I've ever done has been working with small communities all over the world and giving them a conservation legacy that even future generations can benefit from. I think listening to and working with communities is the best, most productive way to get things done."



Andy was nominated for the BEM by the Tristan community.

"I am incredibly touched and humbled that the Tristan da Cunha community has put me forward to receive this award. Thank you, Tristan! I will proudly share it with you. You have done all the hard work; I just supported you to reach your goals."

Andy Schofield, BEM

Restoring cloud forest in St Helena

We're working with our partners in the UKOT of St Helena to protect and restore the island's vitally important cloud forest.

The cloud forest is home to many rare species, including the Spiky Yellow Woodlouse, which is unique to St Helena. It also plays a vital role in capturing water from the clouds that cloak St Helena's steep central ridge, providing the majority of the island's fresh water supply. This important habitat is fragmented and now covers just 16 hectares (ha), compared to 600 ha before humans began living on the island.

To restore the forest, we're clearing areas of invasive species and growing plants that can be used to create new areas of cloud forest.

With our partners, we've established a world-class propagation facility and so far we've grown more than 63,000 plants – exceeding our target of 60,500. We've also planted more than 33,000 plants from 17 different species into wild restoration sites and living gene banks.

We're already seeing wildlife benefit from the creation of new corridors of habitat between existing patches of cloud forest – in 2022, the Spiky Yellow Woodlouse was seen using habitat corridors that were created just four years ago as part of a previous project.



Liza Fowlwer (RSPB)

Spiky Yellow Woodlice, which are unique to St Helena, have been seen using areas of newly-created cloud forest habitat.

Bumper breeding season for seabirds on Gough Island

In 2022 – for the first time in 20 years – no Tristan Albatross chicks were killed by invasive non-native mice on Gough Island in the South Atlantic. As a result, breeding success reached an incredible 75%, up from an average of 32%. Results were similarly impressive for Atlantic Petrels whose breeding success doubled to 62%, and for Grey Petrels which saw chick productivity rise from 30% to 75%.

These phenomenal results are down to a reduction in the number of mice following our eradication attempt in 2021. Although we weren't successful in completely removing mice from the island, this year has given us a glimpse of what a future without mice could look like for seabirds – and makes us even more determined to return to Gough and remove the mice forever.

Alamy

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: FOOD AND FARMING

Fair to Nature scheme gets bigger and better

In November 2022, we relaunched and expanded our Fair to Nature food and farming certification scheme in a bid to help tackle biodiversity loss across the UK countryside.

The Fair to Nature standard has been relaunched and is now available for any UK farmer including arable, horticulture and livestock farmers, and wine producers.

Certified farmers make at least 10% of their land available for a range of wildlife habitats, reduce their use of chemicals and care for their soils in more sustainable ways. These measures have been proven to reverse declines in farmland wildlife and farmers reap the benefits too: more pollinators for their crops, improvements in soil quality and savings on chemicals.

The relaunch was supported by a campaign to encourage food brands and supermarkets to buy from certified farms.

A new, eye-catching logo was also unveiled, which will be displayed on the packaging of certified products, helping consumers to identify food that has been produced in a nature-friendly way – much like the now-familiar Fairtrade logo.

Mark Varney, the RSPB's Head of Fair to Nature said: "The scheme has already achieved incredible results. At RSPB Hope Farm we have seen a 226% increase in breeding birds, a 213% increase in farmland butterflies and up to 19 times more bees than on typical farms."



Laurie Campbell (rspb-images.com)

NI farmers win wildlife-friendly farming award

For more than a decade, brothers James and David Bonnar have been working to make their farm on Northern Ireland's Antrim Plateau as wildlife-friendly as possible, creating habitat for threatened species including Hen Harriers and Curlews. In recognition of their dedication we nominated them for the Nature Friendly Farmer of the Year Award 2022 – and they won! A fantastic achievement that is richly deserved.

The future of farming

The future of farming should be nature-friendly: that's the consensus reached by a group of farmers and environmental organisations, including the RSPB.

This consensus rests on an understanding that: a healthy natural environment is key for food security, farming is central to combating the nature and climate emergency, and diversity – of nature, farming systems, animals, crops, and people – will enable farming to be resilient.

The group agreed that the way we currently produce food is unhealthy for ourselves and the planet. We must transform this so we have a healthy diet, farming works alongside nature, and farmers receive a fair wage. Everyone benefits from good-quality wildlife habitats on farms. They reduce the need for pesticides and boost the numbers of pollinators.

The consensus needs governments to commit to environmental and animal welfare standards, and to providing support for farmers to meet these standards.

The group included individual farmers and representatives from the RSPB, the Foundation for Common Land, National Trust, WWF-UK, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Green Alliance, and Food, Farming and Countryside Commission.

You can read *A Consensus on Food, Farming and Nature* at **wcl.org.uk/docs/Food_Farming_Nature_Consensus-2023.pdf**

Pesticides: it's time for a rethink

In our *Pesticides and wildlife* report we made the case for a radical rethink of our reliance on toxic chemicals and called for a new approach that works with nature rather than against it.

Across the world, huge quantities of pesticides are used every single day, from farmers' fields to urban gardens. In 2020 alone, the UK treated 56 million football pitches-worth of land with pesticides and at least 150 different active substances were spread onto farmland.

Despite this widespread usage, we know worryingly little about the real-world impacts of these chemicals, and what we do know is extremely concerning. For example, neonicotinoids affect the ability of honeybees to navigate and the ability of bumblebees to grow and produce queens.

Hundreds of pesticides are used in millions of combinations across our landscapes and there is no system to assess the full spectrum of their environmental impacts. So we'd like to see a more precautionary approach to the use of chemicals, with targets for the reduction of their use.

And the good news is that reducing the use of pesticides needn't have an adverse impact on crop production. In fact, wildlife-friendly farmers have found that working with nature, rather than relying on chemicals, can not only maintain crop yields, but even boost them in some cases.

That's why we're calling on UK governments to support farmers to manage their farms in a wildlife-friendly way. You can read the report at **rspb.org.uk/pesticidesandnature**

With support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we have also teamed up with Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK) and a host of other organisations as part of The Pesticide Collaboration. Together we aim to reduce pesticide-related harms, increase awareness and make sure farmers get the support they need to adopt sustainable non-chemical alternatives. Visit **pesticidecollaboration.org**



Icy Ho (rspb-images.com)

Bees and other insects play a vital role in pollinating our crops, but they're at risk from toxic chemicals.

Paul Sawer (rspb-images.com)

Let's make farming nature positive

In the UK we've lost almost half our farmland wildlife since 1970 and intensive agriculture is a key contributor to climate change. But it doesn't have to be that way.

In our *Nature Positive Farming* report, we set out our vision for a future where farms not only produce the food we need, but provide homes for wildlife and help to tackle the climate crisis too.

There's a long way to go, but the solutions outlined in the report are within our reach. We want to work with farmers, government, businesses and the public to inspire action that will turn the fortunes of nature around. Together, we can ensure that by 2030 the majority of UK land is being managed so that it is helping nature to recover and is supporting our net-zero targets, as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.

To read the report including our key recommendations and case studies, visit **rspb.org.uk/nature-positive-farming**

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: GREENING

Improving our environmental performance

We improved our environmental performance in a number of ways this year.

Our directly measured greenhouse gas emissions are slightly lower than the last full normal operating year before Covid, despite catching up on the backlog of work. More operational areas of the RSPB have been accredited to Level 2 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard for the first time. Our overall system and our HQ functions attained Level 3, and our Wales operations retained this. This demonstrates an increased awareness of our significant environmental impacts and our local plans to tackle them.

Over the past year we have improved the insulation and efficiency of a number of our buildings and have begun a review of our travel and transport. A change in the working pattern of many of our staff has led to fewer in-person gatherings and when business travel is needed our new revised hierarchy of options encourages those that are least impactful. In addition, our trading and publication operations have reduced paper use and cut waste, and we have begun measuring the greenhouse gas flux through land management projects on key sites.

Thanks to our Green Dragon champions network, awareness of our environmental ambitions increased within the organisation last year. Over the coming year, we will improve our data collection and accuracy, and our environmental sustainability programme will begin. This will include a carbon management plan and further improvements to our accreditation.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMY

Making business nature positive

The business sector is responsible for a significant proportion of the damage caused to the natural world. But by becoming nature positive, businesses can become part of the solution to restore nature.

At the RSPB we've set ourselves up to succeed in driving the transition to a nature-positive economy by developing and strengthening the RSPB's Policy and Advocacy Teams and linking them into income generation through conservation investment.

Following the Dasgupta Review we have been making the case for more public and private funding for nature, and the development of local nature-positive economies. In addition, we have responded to key initiatives such as the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures. Working with external partners, we have also developed the Nature Positive Business Pledge to help businesses to reduce their impact on nature.

The path to a nature-positive economy means changing how we do business in all areas of society, from the finance and policy sectors, to individual consumers. Through our Landscape Recovery pilots we are working with partners to deliver large-scale habitat restoration, as well as a range of public benefits, including carbon sequestration. Our other business partnerships include working with Whitbread in England, Hafren Dyfrdwy in Wales, Beam Suntory in Scotland and Northern Ireland Water.

New reserve cafés opened

We're hoping to encourage more visitors to discover our nature reserves, and boost income for our work, with four new cafés.

Three of the cafés – at Conwy, Frampton Marsh and The Lodge – are already open and the other one – at the Dee Estuary – is due to open soon. Instead of using core RSPB funds to finance the cafés, we secured a £2.8 million loan from Triodos Bank UK and worked with Finance Earth to ensure they would be profitable enough to repay the loan.

The cafés are bespoke modular structures that were built off site to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Our hope is that, by providing places to enjoy delicious food and drink, we will entice people who would perhaps not have considered visiting an RSPB reserve to experience what we – and nature – have to offer.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: CAPABILITIES



Sensory walks at Sherwood Forest

As part of a collaboration with the Royal National Institute of Blind People we ran several walks to allow blind and partially sighted people to enjoy the sounds, smells and textures of our Sherwood Forest nature reserve in Nottinghamshire. We also hosted a tour of the reserve for a group of deaf and hard of hearing visitors, with a British Sign Language interpreter accompanying them. These events have been such a success that more are planned for the future.

Updating our brand identity

To succeed in our mission we need to keep inspiring people to join us and take action for nature, so in June 2022 we refreshed our brand to better reflect our work to protect habitats, save species and help end the nature and climate emergency.

We commissioned brand consultancy ASHA & Co to update our positioning, visual identity and tone of voice, taking into account feedback from a range of key stakeholders, including partners, colleagues, members and supporters.

This refresh included creating a new people-led call to action: 'Nature is in crisis. Together we can save it.' We also updated our logo. The avocet remains the star feature, but we've introduced new colours to represent the land, sky and sea, which reflects our ambition to protect all of nature. Switching to a round, rather than square, logo makes it better suited to digital platforms.

Going forward, our new look will gradually begin to appear in more places, but the branding refresh will not be fully complete for another few years. That's because we're aiming to reduce costs and waste by only replacing items as and when necessary.

Our eye-catching new logo.

New website launching soon

Once we'd refreshed our brand, we couldn't ignore our website, so we've been hard at work improving our online offer.

Having reviewed our current website, we spoke to real-world users and it became clear that our website no longer meets our needs or the needs of our audiences. So, we set about completely rebuilding the website, to bring our huge portfolio of knowledge and resources into the modern era and make it easier for people to discover nature and take action to save it.

Keep an eye out for our new structure and intuitive layout, fresh imagery and videos, plus new and updated content. The new website will also offer the personalised experience that web users expect and enjoy.

Together, we hope these improvements will lead to better awareness and greater engagement with our mission and will help us to appeal to more diverse audiences with content that is relevant to them.

"Our new website will provide the ideal platform for us to engage and inspire our supporters."

Luke Surry
Chief Digital Technology Officer

A youth manifesto for change

Last year the RSPB Youth Council met in the Cairngorms to discuss their plans for the future. Council member Emily explains more.

"We came up with the idea to create a document which we could use not only to show people what we're about, but also something which keeps us grounded and motivated.

"Since our meeting in the Cairngorms, we have been working hard to create our manifesto, which tells the story of who we are, what we care about and how we aim to create change. It's the foundation from which we hope to achieve amazing things and bring a new youthful energy to the RSPB. We hope that our manifesto will inspire change; encourage more engagement across all generations; give us more agency so that we can make an impact at the RSPB and elsewhere; and place the Youth Council on the map."

To read the youth manifesto, visit **rspb.org.uk/youthcouncil**



Some members of our inspiring Youth Council in the Cairngorms.

Our impact: England

Less Cater



Connecting with the natural world is great for our health and this was the inspiration for our Nature Prescriptions partnership with the NHS that launched in England this year. Big partnerships are a key part of our work – a great example has been highlighting the importance of our east coast wetlands for millions of birds, which resulted in a nomination for potential UNESCO World Heritage Site status (see page 34).

Michael Copleston
Director, RSPB England

Using the power of nature to boost health and wellbeing

Following on from successful pilot projects in Scotland, we launched RSPB Nature Prescriptions in England in 2023.

Research clearly shows that nature has the power to boost our health, happiness and wellbeing, which is why we created Nature Prescriptions – an innovative way for healthcare professionals to prescribe nature as part of a patient's treatment plan. These Nature Prescriptions are supported by a leaflet and calendar of activity suggestions to inspire and encourage people to connect with nature.

Trials of Nature Prescriptions in Scotland have been really encouraging, with 74% of patients saying that they benefited from their prescription.

Building on this success, we are now working with partners to deliver Nature Prescriptions in England, starting in the High Peak area of Derbyshire. In Scotland prescriptions were offered by GPs, but in England many different healthcare professionals, including Social Prescribing Link Workers, will be delivering Nature Prescriptions. We hope this will allow us to reach more people so that they can experience the benefits of nature for themselves.

"Being connected with nature calms me and makes me feel grounded. It gives me perspective and lifts my heart. Thank you so much for this inspired service. It's absolutely brilliant!"

Nature Prescriptions patient

Celebrating 50 years of Titchwell Marsh

Since we purchased Titchwell Marsh back in 1973 a huge amount has changed at this dynamic coastal reserve. We've realigned and strengthened the sea defences that surround the freshwater marsh and reedbed, to protect them from coastal erosion and rising sea levels, and created a new area of tidal saltmarsh, which acts as a natural buffer for the freshwater habitats beyond.

Over the past 50 years Titchwell has grown to become one of our most popular nature reserves and a key tourist attraction on the North Norfolk Coast. Tens of thousands of people visit every year to discover the huge range of species at Titchwell, and to celebrate our 50th anniversary we've been running special guided walks to help visitors spot 50 different species in a single day. From Avocets and Bitterns, to Marsh Harriers and Bearded Tits, there's so much to see whether you're a seasoned birdwatcher or a beginner.

As we look ahead to the next 50 years at Titchwell, we'll be focusing our work on further protecting and enhancing the freshwater marsh and reedbed habitats and making the reserve an even better place for visitors to experience nature.

Rare dragonfly discovered at Minsmere

A regular visitor, Les Cater, discovered Suffolk's first ever Scarlet Darter Dragonfly at RSPB Minsmere in July 2022. It's the first new dragonfly species to be recorded on an RSPB nature reserve since 2015 and brings our tally up to 50 species of these colourful insects, proving that our work to create and manage wetland habitat is paying dividends for wildlife. At the time, Les didn't realise quite how significant his discovery was: "I saw and photographed what I thought was a Red-veined Darter. It was only after posting it on social media two days later, many people messaged me on Twitter and phoned me to say, Les, that is a very rare Scarlet Darter. The rest is history!"

Our impact: Northern Ireland

Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)



With no Stormont Assembly sitting, this has been a difficult year politically, but it hasn't stopped us saving nature. We successfully concluded the Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB) project and we opened Montiaghs Moss nature reserve. Curlews had incredible breeding seasons at Glenwherry and Fermanagh. And with our partners, we've made Nature Recovery Networks a reality.

Joanne Sherwood
Director, RSPB Northern Ireland

Bringing nature back to Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is famed for its stunning landscapes, but the reality is that it's the twelfth most nature-depleted country in the world.

That's why we've joined forces with the National Trust, Woodland Trust and Ulster Wildlife to form the Northern Ireland Landscape Partnership and create Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs). These networks are about repairing, creating and connecting spaces where wildlife can live, feed, breed and move across the landscape. Our approach is large scale and collaborative, involving everyone from local landowners and farmers, to people taking action for nature in their gardens.

The first stage in creating NRNs was to complete a set of national habitat maps for Northern Ireland. These helped us to identify the best sites for wildlife, and work out how to restore them and join them up.

Eventually, we want to see Nature Recovery Networks embedded in law, across governments and all decision-making, as a key tool in helping to mitigate the nature and climate emergency.

Nature Recovery Networks are funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the DAERA Environmental Challenge Fund.

Birds and butterflies given a boost

2023 marked the end of Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB), a successful six-year partnership project to save habitats for birds, butterflies and plants across Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland.

Peatland restoration work carried out across the Ox Mountains near Sligo, Muirkirk in Ayrshire, and the Garron Plateau in Antrim has helped to lock away 4.5 tonnes of carbon, while drain blocking on the Antrim Plateau has allowed sphagnum mosses and other species to recolonise, helping to improve water quality and prevent flooding.

In addition, thanks to the project, 900 pairs of breeding wading birds now have safe places to feed and breed in Lough Erne, Donegal, and Gruinart on Islay.

Butterflies, have benefited too. As a result of the management of 170 hectares of land across Montiaghs Moss, Pettigoe Plateau and County Leitrim rare Marsh Fritillary Butterflies are now thriving and laying their eggs on newly-created habitat.

CABB was supported by the EU's INTERREG VA programme, with match funding by DAERA in NI. The project was carried out in partnership with RSPB Scotland, Birdwatch Ireland, Butterfly Conservation, Moors for the Future and Northern Ireland Water.

Step out on Rathlin

Visitors to Rathlin Island can now enjoy the new Craigmacagan Walking Trail. Just 15 minutes' walk from the harbour, it offers breathtaking views of the Antrim Coast and across to the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland, as well as the opportunity to watch a host of seabirds, including Razorbills, Shags and Guillemots. This 2.1 km trail was funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' Environment Fund Challenge Competition.

Our impact: Scotland

Jack Perks (rspb-images.com)

Beavers were released in the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.



We're so grateful for your ongoing support – especially for our appeal to meet the challenges of avian flu. It was fantastic to relocate a family of Beavers to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and we hope to see similar projects in the future. We also expanded our peatland restoration programme, undertaking habitat restoration and conservation at a landscape scale.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland

Brilliant Beavers at the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park

We're very excited to report that RSPB Scotland was involved in an important project to move a family of Beavers to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. They were moved from an area where they were causing some disruption, to an area where they will bring a huge amount of benefits.

A vet at Five Sisters Zoo checked the Beavers over thoroughly to ensure they were healthy before they could be released.

Beavers are known as 'nature's engineers'. Through their everyday actions of coppicing trees and shrubs and damming small water courses, they create diverse wetlands. In turn, these benefit Otters, Water Voles and various birds. Their actions also reduce downstream flooding, as the water courses they create hold water and release it very slowly, reducing siltation. Wetlands help to trap carbon too, which is important for mitigating the effects of climate change.

Following their introduction, we're monitoring the Beavers closely, to see how they fare. We hope their arrival will mark the start of Beaver populations expanding further in Scotland.

This translocation was made possible with support from NatureScot.

We're making Curlews feel at home at Airds Moss

Our Airds Moss nature reserve in East Ayrshire consists of around 1,000 hectares of blanket bog and grassland. Blanket bog is an incredible habitat, and vital for many species, particularly Curlews.

The combination of a grant and a number of legacy gifts meant we were able extend the reserve in 2023. This extra land will be a real boost for Curlews, which need a wide area and a large mixture of habitats to thrive. Thanks to the new land, we will have the space to create a suitable 'Curlew mosaic' of moorland, marginal upland, rough grassland and 'in-bye' (farmland next to moorland).

We've also been busy planning new wetland habitats, ranging from bog pools to wet grassland. As well as providing the perfect habitat for wading birds, these features are also designed to be resilient against increasingly hot summers, helping to ensure they don't dry up during critical chick feeding periods.

This work won't just benefit Curlews – it will also improve Airds Moss for Hen Harriers, Short-eared Owls and other species too.

The majority of the Airds Moss Special Area of Conservation comes under the ownership of the RSPB. This land purchase cost £318,374.



iStock

Curlews are set to benefit from new habitat at Airds Moss.

Our impact: Wales

Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)



Almost 90% of the land in Wales' is farmed, so how we farm has a huge impact on our wildlife. That's why we've been campaigning for a new farming policy that will work for both farmers and nature. The new Agriculture (Wales) Bill last year was a big step in the right direction. Now, our efforts focus on ensuring the new Bill benefits wildlife as much as possible.

Alun Prichard
Director, RSPB Cymru

Lake Vyrnwy becomes an even bigger wildlife haven

Lake Vyrnwy, in Powys, mid-Wales, is set to become an even more important place for nature. In November 2022, we added another piece of land from Natural Resources Wales to our lease holding at the site, bringing the area we manage to just over 2,000 hectares. The new area, which is made up of forested deep peat, is known as Bryn Fawnog.

With the help of local contractors, we plan to restore this land back to healthy blanket bog, which is vital in the fight against climate change, as it locks carbon into the land rather than releasing it into the atmosphere. It also helps to alleviate flooding, by absorbing excess water and then releasing it gradually. Blanket bog provides a home for an array of wildlife too, including Merlins and Hen Harriers, as well as sphagnum mosses and colourful, carnivorous sundew plants.

Combined, the bogs at Lake Vyrnwy are estimated to contain enough peat to fill Cardiff's Principality Stadium from pitch to rooftop more than 22 times, storing carbon equivalent to nearly half of Wales' annual carbon footprint.

Lake Vyrnwy is one of the most important wildlife sites in Wales and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

First-ever Agriculture Bill for Wales

In Wales, farming has an enormous role to play in looking after nature and helping to mitigate the nature and climate emergency.

But up until now, the policy for subsidising farmers has come at a great environmental cost: for example, 12% of Welsh greenhouse gas emissions come from farming practices, and unsustainable farming is the main driver for loss of wildlife on land. With the launch of the first Agriculture Bill for Wales, we campaigned hard for a Bill that worked with nature in mind, which would benefit both people and wildlife.

The first Welsh Agriculture Bill was laid before the Senedd by the Welsh Government in September 2022. This contains a number of proposals, including: support for farmers to produce goods and food in a sustainable manner and help to mitigate climate change, help to maintain and enhance ecosystems, and to conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources to promote public access and engagement.

We're particularly pleased with the plans for using public money to pay for public goods that we all benefit from, such as nature restoration and carbon storage. Farming unions, too, have given the Bill a positive welcome.

The Bill also includes a requirement for farmers to manage 10% of their land for nature. This was a result of our advocacy work.

Wales' second Gannet colony

We're proud to say that a second Gannet colony was recorded in Wales on Ynys Badrig, off the coast of Anglesey in 2022. A total of 21 occupied nests were recorded following monitoring by staff and students from Bangor University's School of Ocean Sciences, with support from local residents, RSPB Cymru, Natural Resources Wales and Swansea University. The first confirmed count of Gannet nests in Wales was on Grassholm Island in 1883. A number of Gannets are on the island again in 2023, and we hope that a permanent breeding colony will become established in the years to come.

Ein heffaith: Cymru

Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)



Mae bron i 90% o dir Cymru yn cael ei ffermio, felly mae'r ffordd rydyn ni'n ffermio yn cael effaith enfawr ar ein bywyd gwyllt. Dyna pam rydyn ni wedi bod yn ymgyrchu dros bolisi ffermio newydd a fydd yn gweithio i ffermwyr ac i fyd natur. Roedd y Bil Amaethyddiaeth (Cymru) newydd y llynedd yn gam mawr i'r cyfeiriad iawn. Nawr, rydyn ni'n canolbwyntio ein hymdrechion ar sicrhau bod y Bil newydd yn rhoi cymaint o fudd â phosibl i fywyd gwyllt.

Alun Prichard
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

Hafan bywyd gwyllt Llyn Efyrnwy yn ehangu

Mae Llyn Efyrnwy, ym Mhowys ar fin dod yn leoliad pwysicach fyth i fyd natur. Ym mis Tachwedd 2022, fe wnaethom ni ychwanegu darn arall o dir gan Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru at ein prydles ar y safle, sy'n ehangu'r ardal rydyn ni'n ei rheoli i 2,000 a mwy o hectarau. Bryn Fawnog yw enw'r ardal newydd, sy'n cynnwys mawn dwfn wedi'i goedwigo.

Gyda chymorth contractwyr lleol, rydyn ni'n bwriadu troi'r tir hwn yn ôl i fod yn orgors iach. Mae hyn yn hanfodol i'r frwydr yn erbyn newid hinsawdd, gan fod yr orgors yn cloi carbon yn y tir yn hytrach na'i ryddhau i'r atmosffer. Mae hefyd yn helpu i liniaru llifogydd drwy amsugno dŵr gormodol ac yna'n ei ryddhau'n raddol. Mae gorgorsydd hefyd yn gartref i amrywiaeth o fywyd gwyllt, gan gynnwys y Cudyll Bach a'r Boda Tinwyn, yn ogystal â mwsoglau Migwyn a phlanhigion gwlithlys cigysol lliwgar.

Gyda'i gilydd, amcangyfrifir bod y corsydd yn Llyn Efyrnwy yn cynnwys digon o fawn i lenwi Stadiwm Principality Caerdydd o'r cae i'r to dros 22 gwaith, ac yn storio carbon sy'n cyfateb i bron i hanner ôl troed carbon blynyddol Cymru.

Llyn Efyrnwy yw un o'r safleoedd bywyd gwyllt pwysicaf yng Nghymru ac mae wedi'i ddynodi'n Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig, yn Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig, ac yn Warchodfa Natur Genedlaethol.

Bil Amaethyddiaeth cyntaf Cymru

Yng Nghymru, mae gan ffermio rôl enfawr i'w chwarae o ran gofalu am fyd natur a helpu i liniaru'r argyfwng hinsawdd a natur.

Ond hyd yma, mae'r polisi cymhorthdal i ffermwyr wedi costio'n ddrud i'r amgylchedd: er enghraifft, daw 12% o allyriadau nwyon tŷ gwydr Cymru o arferion ffermio, a ffermio anghynaladwy yw'r prif sbardun ar gyfer colli bywyd gwyllt ar y tir. Wrth lansio Bil Amaethyddiaeth cyntaf Cymru, buom yn ymgyrchu'n galed dros Fil a oedd yn gweithio gyda golwg ar fyd natur, ac a fyddai o fudd i bobl ac i fywyd gwyllt.

Cafodd Bil Amaethyddiaeth cyntaf Cymru ei osod gerbron y Senedd gan Lywodraeth Cymru ym mis Medi 2022. Mae ynddo nifer o gynigion, gan gynnwys: cefnogaeth i ffermwyr i gynhyrchu nwyddau a bwyd mewn ffordd gynaliadwy ac i helpu i liniaru newid yn yr hinsawdd, helpu i gynnal a gwella ecosystemau, ac i warchod a gwella cefn gwlad ac adnoddau diwylliannol i hyrwyddo mynediad i'r cyhoedd ac ymgysylltu.

Rydyn ni'n arbennig o falch o'r cynlluniau i ddefnyddio arian cyhoeddus i dalu am nwyddau cyhoeddus rydyn ni i gyd yn elwa ohonyn nhw, fel adfer byd natur a storio carbon. Mae undebau'r ffermwyr hefyd wedi rhoi croeso cadarnhaol i'r Bil.

Mae'r Bil hefyd yn cynnwys gofyniad i ffermwyr reoli 10% o'u tir ar gyfer natur. Roedd hyn o ganlyniad i waith eiriolaeth gennym ni.

Ail nythfa o Huganod yng Nghymru

Rydyn ni'n falch o ddweud bod ail nythfa o Huganod wedi cael ei gofnodi yng Nghymru ar Ynys Badrig, oddi ar arfordir Ynys Môn yn 2022. Yn dilyn gwaith monitro gan staff a myfyrwyr o Ysgol Gwyddorau Eigion Prifysgol Bangor, gyda chefnogaeth gan drigolion lleol, RSPB Cymru, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru a Phrifysgol Abertawe, cofnodwyd bod 21 o nythod yn cael eu defnyddio. Y cyfrif cyntaf o nythod Huganod i gael ei gadarnhau yng Nghymru oedd ar Ynys Gwales yn 1883. Mae sawl Hugan ar yr ynys unwaith yn rhagor yn 2023, a gobeithio y bydd nythfa fridio barhaol yn cael ei sefydlu yn y blynyddoedd i ddod.

Forward look

2020 to 2030 is the make-or-break decade for the nature and climate emergency. We have the potential to turn things around, but it's in a challenging environment. The political agenda is dominated by global and domestic economic forecasts, inflation and rapid rises in the cost of living, particularly associated with war in Ukraine and the effects of climate change.

The new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) agreed in December 2022 sets a clear mission to reduce and halt biodiversity loss by 2030. Whilst no international framework is perfect, this gives a sufficient foundation for change. It's vital we continue to hold our governments to account, building the urgent call to action and focusing on implementation. We're confident our strategy set in 2021 is still the right one: focusing on scaling up action at a landscape scale and in partnership; mobilising more support for nature from a more diverse range of people; and increasing the influence we have on governments.

Although the climate emergency is now an established part of the political and business agendas, recognition of the extent to which the climate and nature crises are intertwined is not. We need to fix both if we are to fix either. However, the international and domestic response is still inadequate, and the Westminster political environment is uncertain. The union of the UK looks increasingly fragile, and differing political narratives result in divergence in national policies. We have much to do to hold decision-makers to account, and keep the focus on urgent action for the environment and wildlife.

Internationally, rapid inflation in the context of low incomes also looks set to result in political instability. This will be a challenge to our policy work, but means that agriculture and energy security will be all the more relevant. We have much to contribute in these areas, for example in ensuring that the transition to renewable energy, including offshore wind farms, is sensitively planned to minimise the risks to vulnerable wildlife and habitats.

The persistent outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the UK and Northern Europe seems likely to continue. This moves avian influenza from a welfare issue to a conservation concern for the first time. It is particularly relevant for seabirds, which are already under threat due to marine development and overfishing.

We need to adapt and develop to rise to these challenges, and the pace and scale of change needed. Our continued focus on the development of conservation finance; our work on equality, diversity and inclusion; and strengthening our operations, including our reserves, our digital and built estate, and the wellbeing of our workforce, remain high priorities.

The successes that we have seen in 2022–2023 show the impact of our 2030 strategy. Our priorities for 2023–2024 are to drive the change required across public, political and private sectors that are key to success by 2030.

Our top priorities for the year ahead are:

- Increasing the amount of large-scale collaborative projects we are engaged with, across the UK countries and globally, both on land and at sea.
- Raising the profile of nature as part of the nature and climate crisis. We will also highlight our proposals for how to address the crisis, through:
  - raising the profile of our marine work
  - advocating for energy development that works in harmony with nature
  - responding to the impact of avian flu.
- Continuing to embrace new and different ways of working as the organisation emerges from the effects of Covid-19.
- Influencing and communicating about food and farming policy and legislation. This will be particularly important in the coming year, given the current pressures on food and energy security.
- Enabling the use of equity finance and other new frameworks and income sources that will allow us to drive habitat restoration at scale.



Thank you and acknowledgements

The RSPB's work to save nature is only possible thanks to the support we receive from our members, volunteers, partners, supporters, donors and funders – thank you for all that you do.

Vice Presidents

- Dr Elizabeth Andrews MBE DL
- Sir David Attenborough OM GCMG CH CVO CBE
- Nick Baker
- Dr Mike Clarke
- Adrian Darby OBE
- Ian Darling FRICS OBE
- Kate Humble
- Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS
- The Earl of Lindsay
- Sir John Lister-Kaye Bt OBE
- Miranda Krestovnikoff
- Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
- Bill Oddie OBE
- Professor Steve Ormerod FCIEEM FLSW
- Chris Packham CBE
- Julian Pettifer OBE
- Sir Graham Wynne CBE
- Baroness Young of Old Scone

Thank you to our President, Vice Presidents and Ambassadors who give their time freely to support the RSPB. Read more on pages 12–13.

Members and supporters

The support and loyalty of our members and supporters is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting our ambitious conservation targets, connecting more people to nature, bringing species back from the brink of extinction and protecting land for nature would not be possible without your enormous contribution.

Members help in many ways, and they are all crucial to our mission: by donating, giving their time through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns, and by bringing RSPB projects to life on the ground through Local Groups. We would also like to thank our wider group of supporters who also contribute generously with their time, money, voice and action. It is greatly appreciated and crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889, and they're still fundamental to our work today. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to support for office and retail activities, to running the RSPB as members of our Council. In addition, more than half a million people take part in citizen science projects such as Big Garden Birdwatch.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends upon the support of our volunteers and the donation of their time and talents. They are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB.

Volunteers enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives, whilst demonstrating passion and commitment to our mission.

We have around 11,900 volunteers, who make up 83% of our workforce. The activities of every single one of our volunteers is crucial for our work and the RSPB – thank you.

Community groups

We have a network of community groups across the UK for both young people and adults alike – our Wildlife Explorer groups and Local Groups. These groups form a thriving, active, engaged and valued network that delivers impactful work in communities to save nature. Run by some of the RSPB's most loyal and passionate volunteers, our groups allow the RSPB to have an active presence across the UK. Local Groups are an integral part of the organisation and members contribute their skills, time and energy to act for nature.

Our volunteer-led Wildlife Explorer groups inspire and empower hundreds of young people across the UK to become advocates for nature, both now and in the future, and enable them to share their passion with others to grow a movement of people taking action for nature.

Legacies

Money left to us in legacies makes a vital contribution to our work to save nature every year. Whilst it's impossible to thank every single one of our legators, we'd like to mention the following people:

- Mrs Marcia Bale
- Mrs Pauline Mary Berrisford-Hill
- Mr Gordon Harold Blacklock
- Mr Peter Blood
- Mrs Ann Elizabeth Collins
- Mrs Janet Cuff
- Mr Terence Clive Evans
- Mr David Fisher
- Ms Amanda Jane Geel
- Mrs Elizabeth Florence Gough
- Mr Paul Roderick Mahoney
- Mrs Ann Patricia Moore
- Miss Margaret Moyes
- Mr David Pennels
- Mr Alan Arthur Preston
- Mr Kenneth Rosson and Mrs Patricia Rosson
- Mrs Susan Margaret Shaw
- Mr Roland George Smith

Philanthropic supporters

We'd like to give a special mention to The Banister Charitable Trust, who have provided the RSPB with significant grants over twenty years for purchasing land and restoring habitats for wildlife across our reserves in the UK.

We'd also like to thank the Endangered Landscapes Programme who have supported us and our partners to create a beacon for restoration and conservation practice in the Cairngorms Connect Partnership landscape. This is generously funded by Arcadia, a charitable fund that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We are grateful for the support received and would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Adlard Family Charitable Trust
- Mr Alan Alderson and Ms Sandra Allen
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- BARI The Bird and Recreation Initiative
- Caroline and William Barnes
- Mr D Benham
- The Bentley Family Trust
- The Big Give Trust
- BirdLife International

- Blue Nature Alliance
- Ms Davidia Bradbury
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Brown Forbes Memorial Fund
- The Brown Source Trust
- Mr P Burley
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Cameron Bespolka Trust
- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Chabot Family Fund
- The Chalk Cliff Trust
- Charities Trust
- The Clapp Family Charitable Trust
- Conservation International (CI)
- The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust
- Drs John and Hinke Couchman
- Ms V Coy
- Craignish Trust
- Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF)
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) – Czech Partner of BirdLife International
- The David Family Foundation
- Julia Davies of We Have The Power (wehavethepower.org)
- Ida Davis Family Foundation
- Ms E Desmond
- The Violet Helen Dixon Charitable Trust
- Mrs Joan and Mr Dick Duley
- John Ellerman Foundation
- Mrs Lynne Ellis
- Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP)*
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- The Finborough Foundation
- Fondation Segré
- The Gannochy Trust
- The Generation Foundation
- Mr James William Gibson
- Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- Mr Charles Glanville
- Global Environment Facility (GEF) Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR)
- Dr John Gowenluck
- Peter and Diana Gulland
- The Hamer Charitable Trust
- The Daphne Hamilton Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- Henocq Law Trust
- Jonathan and Florence Heyhoe
- Ms S Hidderley
- Highlands and Islands Environment Fund (HIEF)
- The Corton Hill Trust
- Nicholas Hooper
- HSBC Bank Trust
- Jersey Overseas Aid
- The Gladys Jones Charitable Trust
- Kusuma Trust
- The Stefan and May Frances Kwasniewski Charitable Trust
- Peter A Lawrence (Betty & Nancy Liebert Trusts)
- Mr Robert and Mrs Elizabeth Lee
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- The Linder Foundation
- The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
- The Makin Family Trust
- Paul and Sandra Marsh in memory of their son Tim
- Julia Maynard
- Robert McCracken KC
- Mentor Mon Cyf
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Mr Mark Mills
- The Thomas Moffitt Clark Charitable Trust
- Mr I Morrison
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Geographic Society
- National Museums Northern Ireland
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- The Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF)
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Peacock Charitable Trust
- The Penchant Foundation
- Mr Michael Percival
- Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
- The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery


Robert Simmons

Kevin, Pook, Thomas, Black Magic, Roger and Podkin the Dartmoor ponies have been helping with heathland restoration at The Lodge in Bedfordshire by munching Bramble, scrub and Birch saplings. They also trample Bracken and deposit lots of manure! This creates good conditions for wildlife including Nightjars.

- Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
- Mr and Mrs J A Pye's Charitable Settlement
- Q Charitable Trust
- Quick Response Fund for Nature (QRFN)
- The Maurice Henry Roe Charitable Trust
- Helen Roll Charity
- The Rufford Foundation
- The Ryde Family
- Mrs R Scott
- Seacology
- Mr P W Shaw
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- South Georgia Heritage Trust
- Sustainable Fishery Partnership
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust and The Swire Charitable Trust
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Mr R and Mrs S Thirkell-White
- Truell Conservation Foundation
- Mr K and Mrs C Turner
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Reading
- Mrs F Vogel
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Rosemary Warburg
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- J & J R Wilson Trust
- World Bank / Liberia Forest Sector Programme (LFSP)
- World Wildlife Fund
- Wyss Foundation

*The Endangered Landscapes Programme is a partnership between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Arcadia, a charitable foundation that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

We would also like to acknowledge supporters who wish to remain anonymous, who have generously contributed towards our work.

Celebrity and influencer supporters

We'd like to thank the following people for supporting our campaigns, events and projects over the past year. They're fantastic advocates for nature.

- Bill Bailey
- Mya Bambrick
- Sam Bentley
- Hannah Bourne-Taylor
- Carl Bovis
- Gillian Burke

- JJ Chalmers
- Mya-Rose Craig
- Lizzie Daly
- Mike Dilger
- George Hassall
- Aneeshwar Kunchala
- David Lindo
- Kate MacRae
- Dara McAnulty
- Jim Moir
- Stephen Moss
- David Oakes
- Dermot O'Leary
- Lev Parikian
- Sophie Pavelle
- Ben Porter
- Iwan Rheon
- Nancy Sorrell
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Arlene Stuart
- Iolo Williams
- Hamza Yassin

Youth Council

- Alfie
- Emily
- Freddie
- Indy
- Jannis
- Kabir
- Katie
- Lisa
- Luke
- Natasha
- Sennen
- Thomas

Landfill Communities Fund

We are grateful for funding support from the following organisations through the Landfill Communities Fund and the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund:

- Biffa Award
- Clackmannanshire & Stirling Environmental Trust
- EB Scotland Ltd
- Enovert Community Trust
- FCC Communities Foundation Ltd
- GrantScape
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Valencia Communities Fund

Business supporters

The RSPB enjoys successful partnerships with business supporters to our mutual benefit. We would particularly like to acknowledge:

- Adobe Employee Community Fund
- Affinity Water Limited
- Amalgamated Construction Ltd trading as AmcoGiffen
- Appleby (Cayman) Ltd
- The Ardmore
- Baillie Gifford
- Barratt Developments Plc
- Beam Suntory UK Ltd
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Confor
- The Co-operative Bank
- DPDgroup UK
- Ecotalk
- Ecotricity
- Edinburgh International Conference Centre Ltd
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- The Famous Grouse
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP
- holidaycottages.co.uk
- Hurtigruten Group Ltd
- idverde UK
- P Keenan Quarries
- Kingfisher Plc
- The LEGO Group
- Lightrock Power
- Lush Ltd
- Marine Stewardship Council
- Marks & Spencer
- Marshalls plc
- JP Morgan Chase & Co
- Morgan Sindall Group Plc
- Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Ltd
- Norfolk Coast Partnership
- Northumbrian Water Group
- Parkdean Resorts
- Portsmouth Water Ltd
- The PWC Foundation
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Reed Smith LLP
- RWE Renewables UK
- ScotRail
- Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Ltd
- ScottishPower
- Scottish Water
- Severn Trent Boost for Biodiversity Fund
- Severn Trent Water
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- Southern Water
- South Western Railway
- SSE Renewables
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Triodos Bank UK
- Turcan Connell
- UBS Optimus Foundation Singapore Ltd
- United Utilities Plc
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd
- Wessex Water Services Ltd
- Whitbread Group PLC
- Withers LLP
- Yorkshire Water

National Lottery Heritage Fund

From coast to coast and dale to downs, the National Lottery Heritage Fund has funded nature conservation projects that allow our wildlife to flourish by protecting habitats through restoration and empowering local communities. The RSPB is also indebted to NLHF for their support through their exceptional administration of Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. We are very appreciative of their support, provided through: the Nature Networks programme for the Lake Vyrnwy Peatland Restoration project on behalf of the Welsh Government; their ongoing support of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership; and the funding provided for projects across all four UK countries.

National Lottery Community Fund

Thanks to grants from the National Lottery Communities Fund, whether people live in busy cities or in remote countryside locations, we can bring them together to celebrate their cultural and natural heritage, and showcase how communities can work together to benefit both nature and people.



Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

Special thanks to Defra for their support through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF), providing more than £5 million in funds to support projects in England. GRCF allowed the RSPB to deliver projects restoring nature and wildlife, introduce new nature-based solutions on our project sites and connect even more people with nature. We would also like to thank Defra for their support through the Environmental Land Management Scheme – Landscape Recovery round one pilot.

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

We are grateful for co-operation and support from organisations of many kinds, and would especially like to thank the following:

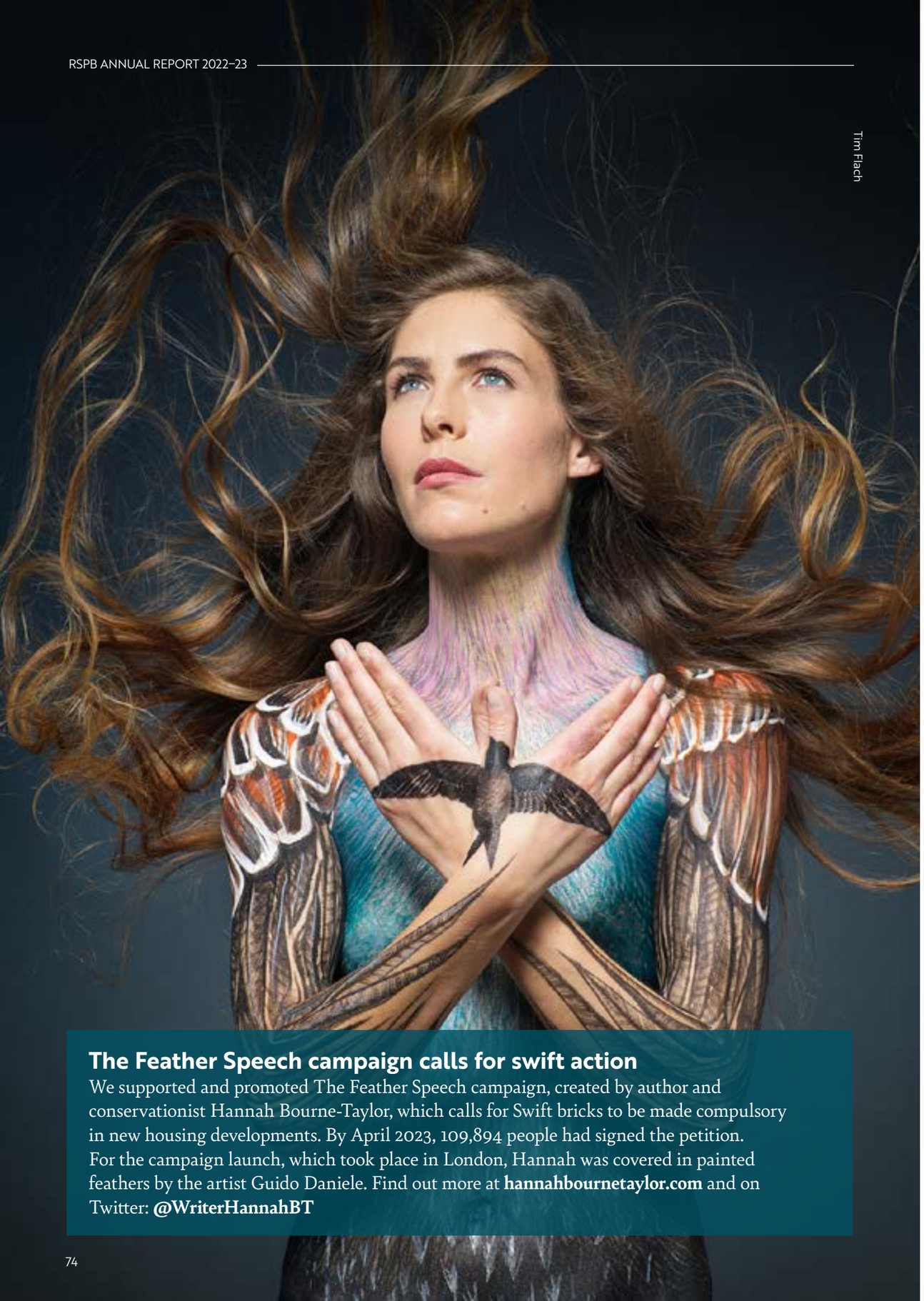
- Bird Aware Solent
- Cairngorms National Park Authority – Peatland ACTION Fund
- Clackmannanshire Council
- The Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, Environmental Challenge Competition
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environmental Farming Scheme
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, In Year Capital Strand
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, Strategic Strand
- Dorset Council
- Environment Agency – Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund
- EU Protected Areas Management Support (PAPFor)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – PAPFor (Programme d'Appui la Preservation des ecosystemes Forestiers en Afrique de l'Ouest)
- European Commission – Thematic Programme for environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy (ENRTP)
- The European Regional Development Fund (INTERREG VA) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- European Regional Development Fund managed by NatureScot
- Falkirk Council
- Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz)
- Fife Council
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Glasgow City Council
- Haryana state Govt: MoEFCC, India
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- IREC – Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (CSIC–UCLM–JCCM)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW, Credit Institute for Reconstruction), Germany
- Marine Scotland
- Monmouthshire County Council
- National Grid
- National Highways England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- NatureScot
- NatureScot – Better Places Fund (BPF)
- NatureScot – Peatland ACTION Fund
- Partnerships for Forests Programme – UK FCDO
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Alliance for Geoscience, Environment and Society
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Government and VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)
- The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot (please note that funding was received for multiple RSPB Scotland projects this year)
- Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- Snowdonia National Park
- Stirling Council
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustrans Scotland
- The United Nations Environment Programme/Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED)
- Visit Wales
- West Bengal state Govt. MoEFCC, India

Thank you



We've cleared more than 8,300 hectares of ancient woodland of invasive, non-native Rhododendrons in Wales, through the Celtic Rainforest LIFE project.

Kevin Sawford (rspb-images.com)



Tim Flach

The Feather Speech campaign calls for swift action
We supported and promoted The Feather Speech campaign, created by author and conservationist Hannah Bourne-Taylor, which calls for Swift bricks to be made compulsory in new housing developments. By April 2023, 109,894 people had signed the petition. For the campaign launch, which took place in London, Hannah was covered in painted feathers by the artist Guido Daniele. Find out more at **hannahbournetaylor.com** and on Twitter: **@WriterHannahBT**

Governing body, leadership and effectiveness

Governing body

The RSPB's overall governing body is the RSPB Council. This is composed of up to 18 Council members (Trustees). The RSPB Council has overall responsibility for the conduct of the RSPB. It also ensures that the RSPB operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, statutes, byelaws and the law. It is supported by several committees that all have specific roles, defined by their formal terms of reference.

Each committee meets several times a year, and other subcommittees are established from time to time. The honorary positions of President and Vice President, and our Ambassadors, are not Council members and are not involved in making or influencing Council decisions.

Leadership and effectiveness

The RSPB Council works as a team, with a balance of skills, experience and knowledge, in order to be as effective as possible. We check our ways of working to ensure we align with the Charity Governance Code.

Every year, the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity our Trustees bring to the Council are reviewed alongside the effectiveness of the Council. Trustee vacancies are advertised on the RSPB website, in the *RSPB Magazine* and through specialist search agencies. The appointment process is rigorous and is managed by the Council's Nominations Committee.

We give information about the RSPB and Trustees' duties to people who express an interest in being a Trustee, before there is formal confirmation of a willingness to serve. Once elected to Council, Trustees receive a briefing pack outlining their role, duties and accountabilities, with information about the RSPB and its policies, structure and work. We hold induction sessions for each new Trustee, which take a strategic look at their roles and responsibilities and the RSPB's strategy and operations. Trustees are also offered opportunities to learn more about the RSPB's work, such as individual meetings with staff, visits to nature reserves and training on important work areas. Each year, we hold a weekend event in an area of natural importance with a focus on the species and habitat work undertaken there. We also hold similar events for Country Advisory Committees.

Trustees and senior staff complete a register showing their interests and related party transactions. This is updated each year, and whenever any changes occur.

As part of the induction, continuing training and annual appraisal for all Trustees, staff and volunteers, we provide information about:

- Our codes of conduct – the values, rules and principles that we expect our staff, volunteers and Trustees to follow.
- Our ethical principles – how we want to engage with the world.
- Our brand – how we want our supporters, stakeholders and the wider public to think about us.
- Our values and behaviours – how we work and relate to each other.

RSPB Council



Kevin Cox
Council Chair
- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer and Finance, Audit and Risk Chair
- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Kerry ten Kate
Conservation Committee Chair
- Nominations



Linda Grant
Fundraising and Communications Chair
- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations



Ghazala Koosar
Committee for England Chair



Dr Vicki Nash
Committee for Scotland Chair
- Finance, Audit and Risk



Prof Sir Adrian Webb
Committee for Wales Chair



Judith Annett
Committee for Northern Ireland Chair



Dr Ben Caldecott



John Bullock
- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Jim Lowther



Prof William Sutherland



Jim Sloane
- Finance, Audit and Risk



Veronica Pickering DL



Lord John Randall



John Mason
- Finance, Audit and Risk

All Council members sit on both the Conservation and Fundraising and Communications Committees.
For further information on the structure and operation of Council, please see **rspb.org.uk/council**
For more information on the RSPB's remuneration policy, see page 79.



Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounts. These should show and explain the RSPB's transactions and be able to disclose the charity's financial position at any time. These should also ensure the financial statements comply with reporting and legal regulations, and meet the charity's constitution, set out in the Charter and Statutes.

Charity law in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland requires Trustees to prepare financial statements each financial year. These must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the group, and of the income and expenditure of the group for that period. They are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, and financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, known as FRS102.

When preparing these statements, the Trustees must:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Follow the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates.
- State whether they have followed applicable accounting standards, subject to any exceptions which are disclosed and explained.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

They're also responsible for safeguarding the RSPB's assets, and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Management board



Left to right: Beccy Speight, Russell Powell, Rebecca Munro, Katie-jo Luxton, Emma Marsh, Shaun Thomas

I became the RSPB's Chief Executive in August 2019. My role is to lead the organisation, build relationships with key partners, represent our views externally and work with the Council and Executive Board to develop our forward direction and ensure we deliver that plan. I believe I am in the best possible place to make a real difference for birds, the natural world and people in the context of the nature and climate crisis. I feel fortunate to work with a great team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters to do just that.

Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

I became the Executive Director for Digital Technology and Communications in August 2022. I'm focused on ensuring the RSPB makes the biggest possible difference for nature and people across those functions. I joined the RSPB in 2016 as Regional Director in the Midlands, and from 2019 as the Director for RSPB England.

Emma Marsh
Executive Director,
Digital Technology and Communications

I lead the RSPB's mission to save species, protect habitats and restore landscapes to help end the nature and climate crisis, and I've held my current position since November 2021. Prior to this, I was Director of RSPB Cymru for 12 years, leading the delivery of the RSPB's strategy for Wales.

Katie-jo Luxton
Executive Director, Global Conservation

I joined the RSPB in February 2023, from the National Trust. I lead on ensuring the RSPB is financially sustainable, well-governed and is on course to meet the aims laid out in its strategy. As Europe's largest nature conservation charity, we're very grateful for the support we receive. We want to spend every penny in a way that helps further our cause. We do this by working with colleagues and external partners to ensure we achieve good value for the money we spend, we do so in a controlled way, and that we are aligned to our strategy.

Russell Powell
Executive Director,
Finance, Governance and Strategy

I work with colleagues across the RSPB to bring in funding and resources to deliver our strategy and help close the funding gap for nature more widely. This includes engaging and growing the RSPB's membership; partnering with businesses to support our work and transition to a nature-positive economy; running our commercial operations; and deploying conservation investment to achieve landscape-scale nature restoration.

Rebecca Munro
Executive Director,
Income and Conservation Investment

I work with the country teams to implement our programmes across the UK. I'm also responsible for the functions leading on organisational change, and the employment and engagement of our 14,000 staff and volunteers.

I spent the early part of my career focusing on strategic and corporate management. I then managed operational teams in English Nature and Natural England, before joining the RSPB.

Shaun Thomas
Chief Operating Officer

Please note: Shaun Thomas retired from his role as Chief Operating Officer in July 2023. Dr James Robinson is taking on this role in autumn 2023. Russell Hollinshead also retired as Executive Director Finance Governance and Strategy in 2022. Russell Powell was appointed to this role.

Oversight of remuneration

All RSPB staff, including the Chief Executive and Executive Board, are covered by the same remuneration policy. This is based on externally-benchmarked salary bands. This policy is approved by the RSPB Council and is subject to review.

To ensure transparency, the salary of the Chief Executive is overseen by a committee composed of the Treasurer, and the Chairs of Conservation and Fundraising and Communications. This is chaired by the Chair of Council.

The performance of the Chief Executive is subject to a formal appraisal process against previously agreed measures, and this is discussed at an annual appraisal meeting. Recommendations for pay progression are made in line with the RSPB's pay policy for staff.

The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing the salaries of the Executive Board, in line with the same policy.

Integrity

The RSPB's Council has ultimate responsibility for the charity's funds and assets, as well as our reputation. Each Council member must adhere to a Code of Conduct, and endorse the RSPB's five Ethical Principles. These are based on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) ethical principles for the charity sector, and incorporate the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

1. **Beneficiaries first:** the interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do (page 80).
2. **Environment:** nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature (page 80).
3. **Integrity:** we should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct (page 80).
4. **Openness and accountability:** we create a culture where our supporters, staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds (page 81).
5. **Right to be safe:** every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (page 81).

I. Beneficiaries first

To ensure we have the greatest impact for nature, we:

- Carry out our work to provide the greatest impact for people and nature with integrity, regardless of whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB's reputation, leadership or operation.
- Encourage trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate, and by listening and responding to our beneficiaries. This facilitates engagement and communication.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with our beneficiaries in mind.
- Work with organisations and individuals whose goals and values are consistent with our work, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

II. Environment

Our conservation work has a huge impact for nature. We preserve and restore natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact, we're working to reduce the footprint of all our operations, through our systems and policies (see page 50). For environmental management we:

- Take a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (UN Compact principle 7).
- Promote greater environmental responsibility (principle 8).
- Encourage the development of environmentally-friendly technologies (principle 9).

III. Integrity principle

To uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct, we:

- Ensure the appropriate systems are in place to ensure decisions are well-considered and free from any conflict of interest. This includes our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks (see page 82).
- Ensure our resources are managed in a responsible way, and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for. This includes policies and procedures to combat bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion. We also ensure the systems and processes are in place to enable our expenditure to be audited, meaning that money, funding and grants can be tracked from receipt to expenditure.
- We work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).

Anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies are built into our procurement policies.

IV. Openness and accountability

We try to create a culture where RSPB supporters, staff, volunteers, institutional partners and the public can see and understand how we work, how we deal with issues, and how we spend our funds.

Through the *RSPB Magazine*, our website (rspb.org.uk) and wider communications, we strive to keep you informed and involved about our projects and activities. This means we operate in an open and transparent way within our legal and regulatory requirements. We want to share information about how we work, and ensure it can be accessed easily.

V. Right to be safe

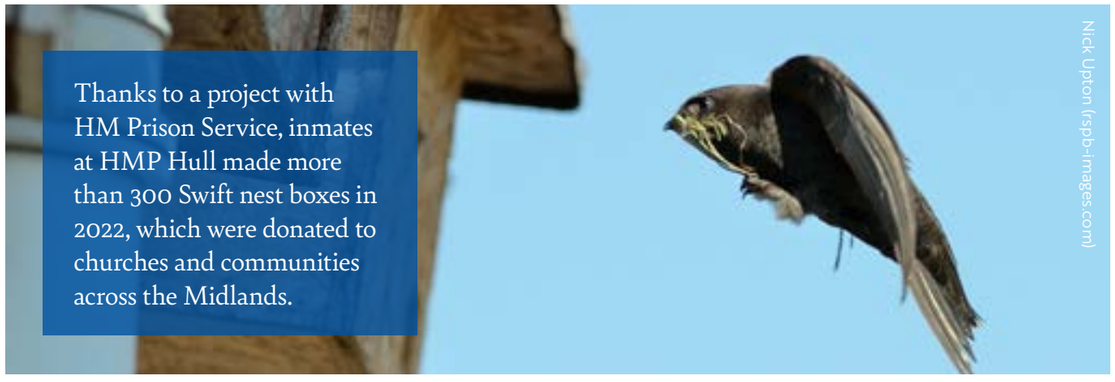
Every person who volunteers, works, or is in contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (UN Compact principles 1 and 2).

This means we:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power, including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities. See also page 84.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of concerns about abuse of any kind of inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands their expectations, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don't feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour (UN Compact principle 5).

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

A full statement of the steps we take to prevent slavery and human trafficking taking place in our business and supply chains can be found at **rspb.org.uk/help/modern-slavery-and-the-rspb** (UN Compact principle 4).



Thanks to a project with HM Prison Service, inmates at HMP Hull made more than 300 Swift nest boxes in 2022, which were donated to churches and communities across the Midlands.

Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)

Decision making, risk and control

We strive for decision-making processes that are rigorous and efficient, incorporate effective delegation, and are informed by assessments of risk and control.

Decision making

RSPB Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive and to the employees for certain activities. There's a detailed schedule of delegation, and systems and policies are in place to monitor these delegations. Major strategic, financial and policy decisions are reserved to Council on advice from its committees.

Risk

The Trustees are accountable for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity, working with the Executive Board. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work: managing large areas of land, much of it visited by many people, entails risk and demands constant attention. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and to charity regulation, Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner. They consider all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Regular reporting provides comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- work on strategy and projects, with a focus on environmental impact;
- reputation, including our environmental credentials;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters, and visitors, and to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;
- compliance with law and regulation;
- management of our financial, physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data and technological assets;
- retaining and building knowledge, delivering good governance and embodying a positive, inclusive and ethical organisational culture;
- protecting and growing sources of income.

The risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council every quarter, and in greater depth once a year. At the full review in April 2023, the Trustees confirmed they are satisfied with such arrangements. They identified a number of risks for the year ahead to focus on that represent both opportunities and challenges. The RSPB will work to limit any possible negative impact on delivering our charitable objects and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite.

Control

The RSPB has a clear framework for monitoring its impact, progress and approach to risk management. Risk registers cover the full range of financial and non-financial risks and we operate the 'three lines' model for risk control and monitoring. This separates execution from control policies and from audit, and maps and rates the control framework. Council approves a plan for internal audits, and a full review of external audit service provision is undertaken periodically with the active involvement of suitably experienced Trustees. The Finance, Audit and Risk committee meets in private with the external auditor once each year.

Risk description	Risk response
Environmental challenges	
The climate and biodiversity crisis. The threats to nature continue to grow, yet attention is dominated by the climate emergency.	The RSPB's strategy, mission and purpose focus on addressing these issues. We will continue to address the nature and climate emergencies, raise awareness of the role of nature in the climate crisis, and find solutions to both.
People are disconnected from nature and unaware that it's in crisis.	We undertake activities to help people connect with nature, including education, reserves events, online activities and wide-scale engagement activities, such as Big Garden Birdwatch and *Wild Isles*.
Failure to influence public and political views on food and farming resulting in damaging land management practices.	We advocate for environmentally sensitive farming through our policies and campaigns. We build greater knowledge of other organisations working in this area so we can engage with them locally and UK-wide.
Technology	
The cost and complexity of the technological infrastructure that RSPB work is dependant upon will continue to increase. We contend with requirements to upgrade/replace older systems, issues of connectivity in remote areas, future proofing and protecting from cyber attack.	Increased costs will be managed by onboarding new technology only as legacy tech is retired. The RSPB sourcing strategy will also mitigate risk and cyber security will continue to be upgraded.
Income	
We are aware of challenging declines in disposable income and competition for funding. Existing sources of income are subject to significant volatility in the current economic climate. New income sources have their own volatility and include restricted funding. New opportunities also bring reputational risk from new partners and a focus is required to make connections with the right partners.	The RSPB Council pays close attention to the RSPB income strategy, bearing in mind the policy on financial reserves. New income opportunities are being explored, with all new arrangements subject to review by our Ethical Gifts board, and major changes reviewed by Trustees.
Costs	
A significant rise in core costs and limited availability of goods and services. The cost of meeting core obligations significantly increases as a result of sustained high inflation.	Management is placing an increased focus on cost control and procurement, with regular review by Trustees.
Wellbeing	
Work pressures and volumes have a big impact on wellbeing, as does remuneration. Workforce wellbeing is reported through various channels including the RSPB Staff Association and formal surveys. Ongoing cultural change is required to support staff as they are recruited from a wider range of locations across the UK.	Developing additional tools and support to enable line managers to ensure good working relationships and wellbeing in the workplace. We have changed working locations. The infrastructure, style of working and working patterns now need to change to match.

Our commitment to inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) underpins the work we do to save nature, and it is embedded in our strategy and its six strategic shifts. We're continuing our journey towards building an organisation where everyone can thrive, recognising and breaking down the barriers that different communities face to access nature and have a say on how to save it.

This year we have proudly reiterated our dedication to our EDI work through updating our EDI commitment statement, publicly setting out our belief that our movement must be inclusive for everyone. It details our achievements and direction, and spells out our commitment towards creating a truly inclusive, anti-racist organisation, because only together can we create a world richer in nature. Read it here: **rspb.org.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion**

Over the past year we've delivered our internal Why EDI Matters campaign: creating an understanding in our workforce of why EDI is so crucial to our mission to save nature. We've introduced a shared language of definitions of what inclusion means to us. This has supported us in growing curiosity, courage and confidence around EDI topics within our workforce, building a strong foundation for our continued journey.

We've recruited a Senior Accessibility Specialist who has identified areas of priority around accessibility. Internally we're reviewing how we communicate to better support our staff and volunteers, and externally we've started the process of improving accessibility on our reserves, including the information we provide on facilities and access.

We're continuing to reform our recruitment practices, by reviewing our current framework, and exploring and trialling new processes for inclusive recruitment. To encourage more high-quality candidates from a greater diversity of backgrounds we have also been trialling actions such as holding open briefings for potential candidates and providing additional specialist support and advice to hiring managers on best practice.



Adrian Thomas (rspb-images.com)

EDI underpins the work we do to save nature.

Caring for our supporters

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889 and they are still fundamental to our work today. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to providing highly specialist skills, raising funds and running the RSPB as members of Council. This year saw the launch of Assemble, a new Volunteer Management System to help us recruit, manage and retain our volunteers.

In addition, more than 540,000 people took part in the RSPB's citizen science project, the Big Garden Birdwatch, recording over 9 million birds.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends on the support of our volunteers. Their activities are crucial to our work and the RSPB seeks volunteer involvement wherever appropriate.

Our approach to volunteering aims to reflect the esteem in which we hold our volunteers. They are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB. They enhance our work by bringing valuable talents, skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. Volunteers also champion the cause and often provide friendly challenge and new perspectives whilst showing passion and commitment to our mission.

More widely, we provide services to our members and supporters, and respond to more than 225,000 enquiries each year. We sustain our relationships with around two million individuals including members, supporters and volunteers. We send our members a magazine to keep them involved with our work. Our website was viewed by more than 8 million users last year who looked at more than 28 million pages.

Safeguarding

We want everyone to enjoy their involvement with the RSPB, and know that we must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable people, and anyone who encounters our organisation, through:

- Our Safeguarding Policy, which is kept under review to ensure it is meeting the needs of the organisation.
- Safeguarding training for our workforce (including our volunteers) which is currently being revised and updated.
- A comprehensive Speak-up Policy to protect our workforce.
- Our Whistleblowing Policy and independent helpline which is supported by an anonymous reporting capability.
- Our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Anti-harassment training delivered to our workforce by an expert partner.
- Bespoke lone traveller training delivered via expert partners to those that work internationally, equipping them to operate in high-risk environments appropriately.
- Membership of external safeguarding groups to ensure we are doing the right things in the right way.

We take steps to ensure our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. And to ensure that these steps are robust, we report regularly on safeguarding issues to our Trustees. See our Safeguarding Policy at **rspb.org.uk/safeguarding**

How we generate funds to save nature

We're grateful to receive most of our funds from individuals. This comes in a range of different ways, such as appeals, raffles, lotteries, community fundraising and membership.

We work hard to build long-lasting relationships with grant funders, trusts and corporate organisations. Much of our conservation work also generates vital income, which further supports our work to save nature. This includes funds raised through land and farming, and the sale of our research to other organisations.

Our loyal RSPB shop customers help fund our work through the purchase of bird food products, binoculars and telescopes, and educational materials. RSPB members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do, and our work to save nature is only possible thanks to their ongoing support.

Protecting and restoring habitats, saving species and helping end the nature and climate emergency is the key motivation behind our work. We're dedicated to our promise to our supporters, and to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world. We always look to improve how we work and welcome your feedback. We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds, other wildlife, and the places they call home. We endeavour to always show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature. We also share the latest news of what we're achieving thanks to you, and give you control over how you hear from us, whilst managing the cost of doing so.

To achieve our objective to save nature, we carry out fundraising activities. We do this with RSPB staff, volunteers and the help of carefully selected professional fundraisers and commercial participators. Professional fundraisers are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers who act as agents in raising funds on behalf of the RSPB. Commercial participators are usually businesses who encourage the sale of their goods or services on the basis that the RSPB will receive funding as a result. In all cases, we have contractual arrangements with these fundraising partners that set the standards and obligations that our fundraising activities must meet.

We regularly monitor the quality of all telephone marketing calls and conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with our face-to-face fundraisers. We ask all new members for feedback to understand their experience of joining us, and this also identifies any areas for improvement. Our Local Group network also takes part in fundraising activities. We give group committee members full training and guidance in how to fundraise with the public as part of group activity.

As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances. RSPB staff complete mandatory training including safeguarding and fundraising compliance. Our face-to-face fundraisers have full training in talking about the RSPB cause in a transparent and straightforward way to the members of the public they meet. The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and the Data and Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out of receiving fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that supporters have the best possible experience in our fundraising efforts. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB's promise to our supporters.

The RSPB complies with the Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's guides and code. RSPB members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted, with the opportunity to change these at any time. Whilst we endeavour to provide an exemplary service, we do not always get it right. The RSPB believes in reporting non-compliance proactively and we are pleased to highlight that we did not receive any reports of instances of non-compliance in this period. Our website outlines our complaints policy for the public and clearly explains how an individual can complain.

Last year we received 242 complaints about our fundraising by phone, post, email, SMS or face-to-face. We investigated each complaint fully and made improvements to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service.



Thanks to our fantastic volunteers, we're making great progress in removing scrub from the dunes at RSPB Culbin Sands in Moray. This is helping to restore the balance of habitats on the shingle bar, benefiting specialist dune species like the Small Blue Butterfly.

David Kjaer (rspb-images.com)

RSPB greenhouse gas report

The RSPB has utilised the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) methodology voluntarily for the last two years. This year, as we develop our approach to land-based (biogenic) emissions alongside our business (non-biogenic) emissions, we will be utilising the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and we will continue to do so moving forward. We have slightly altered the categorisation of previous results to align with this. There is a minor difference (20t) in last year's reported emissions due to adjustments. As is the norm for other organisations, the inclusion of additional Scope 3 categories means a rise in reported emissions. Capturing data from some parts of the RSPB that had not been included, and improvements in data monitoring and accuracy, have also affected our emissions.

Additional Scope 3 data has been added retrospectively to 2020–21 for comparative purposes, however much of the data for the current baseline year was not available due to Covid-19. Covid affected data gathering in 2019–20 and 2020–21 as a result of staff not being on site and/or contractor data gaps. Therefore using 2020–21 as our baseline is atypical and will be reviewed as part of the Carbon Reduction Plan. We will publish a full GHG inventory by 2024–25.

In 2023–24 we will establish a new Greening Programme Board with a dedicated programme manager and a Lead Carbon Data Analyst. Other work will include:

- rationalising our fleet and introducing more electric vehicles;
- optimising existing renewables;
- rolling out our Environmental Management System;
- embedding staff training;
- improving the sustainability of the products we sell;
- gathering bespoke emissions data from suppliers.

Our Carbon Reduction Plan will set out reduction trajectories and associated actions to achieve our 2030, and longer-term, targets. These targets will be reviewed annually as data collection and associated accuracy improves. We will also report on GHG removals/reduction from our land-based activities to 2030 and beyond. The plan will cover a wide range of themes from decision making and project management to specific impact areas, such as business travel and energy use.



We are committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and in 2016 a wind turbine was installed at our headquarters.

RSPB greenhouse gas emissions

	2022–23	2021–22	**2020–21**
Energy consumption (KWh)			
Electricity	3,238,198	2,920,504	**2,505,424**
Gas, LPG and oil	2,668,771	2,248,614	**2,275,943**
Transport fuel – fleet cars	2,908,171	2,783,174	**1,145,835**
Reserves' machinery	1,494,818	1,183,152	**1,644,261**
Other – woodfuel	1,486,401	505,645	**451,070**
Other – renewables (PV and wind)	2,241,337	753,280	**1,126,845**
Total KWh	**14,037,696**	**10,394,369**	**9,149,378**
Emissions (tCO_2e)			
SCOPE 1 (S1)			
Combustion of gas, LPG and oil for heating	527	454	**493**
Combustion of fuel for machinery on reserves	367	451	**275**
Combustion of fuel for fleet transport	700	631	**(incl above)**
Combustion of woodfuel for heating	14	8	**7**
Total tCO_2e (S1)	**1,608**	**1,544**	**775**
SCOPE 2 (S2)			
Purchase of electricity (location based)	626	643	**584**
Purchase of electricity (market based)	115	232	**186**
Total tCO_2e (S1/2 market based)	**1,723**	**1,776**	**961**
Intensity ratio: total tCO_2e / staff (S1/S2 market based)	0.7	0.8	**0.5**
SCOPE 3 (S3)			
1 Purchased goods and services			
Contractors on reserves	604	598	
Other goods and services	77,751		
3 Fuel- and energy-related activities			
Transmission and distribution (market based)	11	21	
Well to tank (market based)	696	84	
5. Waste generated in operations			
Waste management	4	7	
Water supply and treatment	5	2	
6. Business travel			
Grey fleet	1,021	261	**120**
Public transport	818	562	**1,149**
7. Employee commuting			
Emissions for teleworking	405		
9. Downstream transportation/distribution	221	372	
10. Processing of sold products	697	711	**682**
Total tCO_2e (S3)	**82,233**	2,618	**1,951**
Carbon offsets and carbon units tCO_2e	0	0	0
Total annual emissions tCO_2e (all scopes) location based	84,467	4,805	3310
Total annual emissions tCO_2e (all scopes) market based	**83,956**	**4,394**	**2,912**
Intensity ratio: total tCO_2e / staff (all scopes) market based	33.2	1.9	1.4

Financial review 2022–23

This is the first full year post Covid-19 restrictions that we have been able to begin spending down the high level of financial reserves that had been built up over that period and we saw a planned drawdown to continue tackling the backlog of work. To support there was a 7.8% increase in staff numbers to provide the capacity for this higher work level. However, we are mindful of the economic climate, which has changed significantly during the year, with the war in Ukraine, high rates of inflation and the cost of living crisis having an impact both our cost base and on our income. We continue to benchmark staff salaries to the sector and review our pay structure in line with the market, which means that we have seen a 4.7% rise in average costs in year.

The support and commitment of our members and supporters remains strong and gives a sound financial base to meet the ongoing challenges of the nature and climate emergency, both in the UK and internationally.

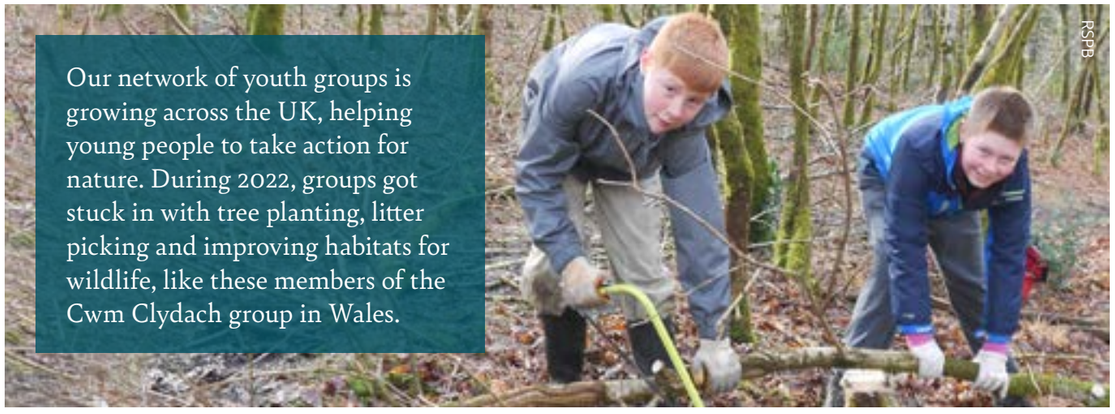
We remain financially resilient and in a good position to navigate the current economic outlook.

Summary

Income levels have risen this year to a record £164.7 million, an increase of £7.0 million (4.4%) and charitable expenditure has increased by £14.4 million (13.5%), giving a drawdown for the year (before the actuarial loss in respect of the pension scheme) of £1.5 million. We finished the year with free financial reserves of £49.3 million which represents 24 weeks expenditure cover, still above the 16 weeks upper limit set by Council, but a significant reduction on last year's 37 weeks. This reflects the planned drawdown to catch up with our backlog of work, and we will continue to plan prudently as we manage our reserves in light of the current economic outlook, mindful of the range set by Council.

Total financial reserves decreased by £8.6 million, being Net Expenditure of £1.5 million and an actuarial loss in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of £7.1 million. Cash and investments decreased by £12.2 million to £56.3 million but leaving a good level of liquidity as we continue in a period of uncertain economic times.

The £0.1 million increase in the Pension Scheme liability reflects the annual updates to the valuation assumptions used to calculate the liability. The main changes were a 2.1% increase in the discount rate mainly offset by a reduction in the value of scheme assets caused by an increase in gilt yields. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed in 2017 and changes



Our network of youth groups is growing across the UK, helping young people to take action for nature. During 2022, groups got stuck in with tree planting, litter picking and improving habitats for wildlife, like these members of the Cwm Clydach group in Wales.

to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees. The latest triennial valuation reflects the funding position as at 1 April 2021 and resulted in annual payments of £7.5 million. The next valuation is due on 1 April 2024.

Income

Overall, total income increased by £7.0 million (4.4%) to £164.7 million which, in the context of the current operating environment, highlights the tremendous support we receive from our members and supporters. A particular highlight is the £3.2 million (7.8%) increase in legacy income to our highest recorded level of £44.2 million. This is another record year for legacy income received and reflects the trust our supporters have that we will use this income to invest in large-scale conservation projects for the benefit of future generations.

Income received from corporates and trusts more than doubled to £9.3 million, more than offsetting the £1.3 million fall in grant income.

Membership subscriptions were broadly in line with last year at £46 million: new member income dropped by £0.9 million, but retention income increased by £0.6 million as retention rates remained high at 89.7%. Total members at the end of the year showed a slight drop to 1.14 million, from 1.15 million last year. RSPB membership is a key part of our income diversity and enables us to speak with confidence and authority when we undertake our advocacy work.

The impacts of the tough economic climate were felt with a drop of £0.7 million in donations and £1.1 million in mail order retail sales.

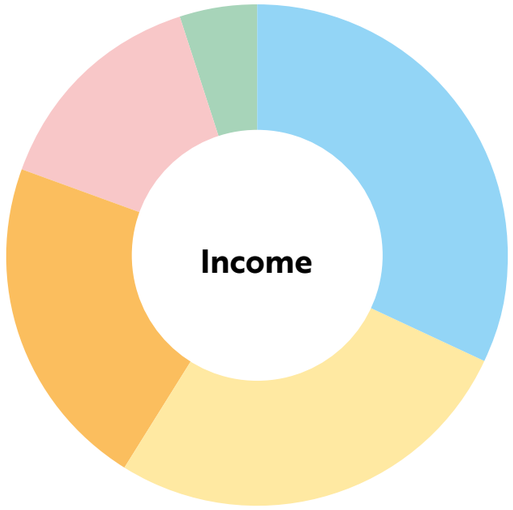
Grants, corporates and trusts income increased by £3.9 million (12.2%) to £35.7 million. Corporates and trusts accounted for £5.2 million, with a £1.3 million reduction in grant income. This has been used to support a wide range of large-scale projects both in the UK and internationally, including A Greener Thames (£1.5 million), Orkney Native Wildlife (£1.1 million), St Helena Cloud Forests (£0.9 million) and Curlews in Crisis (£0.8 million).

Commercial trading income at £23.7 million was £1.2 million lower than the previous year. Catering and retail income at our reserves increased by £0.5 million, helped by two new modular catering cafés at Conwy and Frampton Marsh. However, mail order and trade income fell by £1.3 million and lottery and advertising income was also £0.4 million lower, which is assumed to reflect impacts of the cost of living crisis on people's spending power.

Fees and grants for services income increased by £0.5 million, to £3.0 million, reflecting increased advisory income for a range of projects, including seabird tracking and land use and agri-environment schemes.

Events and media income was £0.6 million higher than last year at £1.3 million, as we saw further increases from the events programme on our reserves.

The cost of raising funds increased by £7.3 million to £44.2 million. Inflationary impacts have increased commercial product costs by £1.1 million putting pressure on margins. £3.4 million of cost initiatives to target future income growth have been absorbed in year, particularly around the *Wild Isl*es programme, brand, commercial and a major legacy promotion. Staff numbers have increased by 7.8% during the year.



- Membership subscriptions and donations, **£53.0 million**
- Legacies, **£44.2 million**
- Grants, corporates and trust, **£35.7 million**
- Commercial trading, **£23.7 million**
- Farming, events and other income, **£8.1 million**

Expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities increased by £14.4 million (13.5%) to £120.6 million. This represents a full year of resourcing our teams to tackle the backlog of delayed work. High global levels of inflation also impacted costs in general.

Managing nature reserves expenditure at £49.4 million was £2.8 million higher than last year. We manage 222 nature reserves, covering 159,000 hectares and providing a home to over 18,700 species. This increase reflects an increase in major conservation expenditure.

Research, policy and advisory expenditure at £44.3 million was £6.8 million higher, showing additional project and operational expenditure both in the UK and internationally. This includes those already mentioned, as well as the Black-tailed Godwit LIFE and East Caicos Wilderness projects.

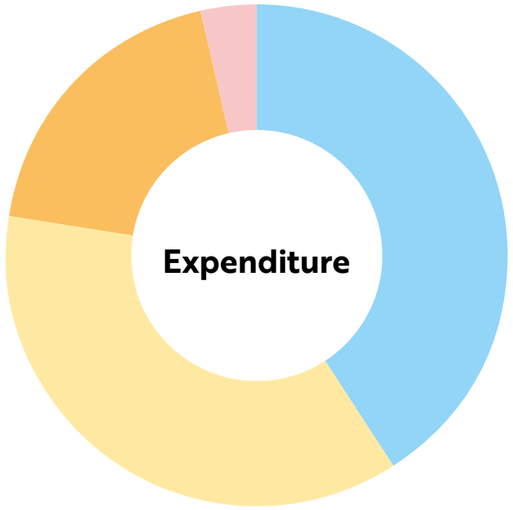
The work we undertake to educate and inspire support – whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders, partners or politicians – is designed to bring about a shared world where wildlife, wild places and people thrive. We increased spend in this area by £4.4 million to £22.8 million. Supporter care expenditure was £0.4 million higher than last year at £4.1 million.

Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. They consider a sustained fall in income of 10–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of eight to 16 weeks' worth of expenditure.

Free financial reserves at 31 March 2023 were £49.3 million, representing 24 weeks' future expenditure. Although the level of reserves remains higher than the policy range, it has reduced by £19.1 million over the year. This reflects a continued underlying resilience of the income we receive from our members and supporters, despite some impact from the cost of living crisis, and the planned increase in the level of expenditure on Covid-19 delayed projects. We have also been impacted by higher costs as inflation rates have risen around the globe.

Our financial projections reflect these factors and we anticipate free financial reserves returning to the policy range in the next year or two. This higher level of financial reserves gives a greater



- Conservation on RSPB nature reserves, **£49.4 million**
- Conservation – research, policy and advisory, **£44.3 million**
- Education and inspiring support, **£22.8million**
- Supporter care, **£4.1 million**

level of financial resilience that will help us navigate through a period of continued economic and political upheaval, with Trustees monitoring levels closely.

The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories:

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2023 were £270.3 million which is made up of:
  - Tangible fixed assets of £231.2 million.
  - Cash and investments of £56.3 million.
  - Working capital of £6.9 million.
  - Pension liability of £24.1 million.
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees, to any of the RSPB's charitable purposes, at 31 March 2023 were £94.8 million, made up of:
  - General funds of £55.0 million including £5.7 million of tangible fixed assets, £39.6 million of investments and £9.7 million working capital.
  - Designated funds of £63.8 million represented by nature reserves owned by the RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
  - Pension reserve liability of £24.1 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2023 were £175.3 million, made up of:
  - Nature reserves of £159.7 million.
  - Other tangible assets of £2.0 million.
  - Investments of £1.8 million.
  - Working capital of £11.8 million.
- Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2023 endowment funds were £0.2 million.

Investment policy and powers

The RSPB's investment powers are as set out in the Charter and Statutes and are wider than those contained in the Trustees Investment Act 2000.

Approach

The RSPB's primary investment objective is to maintain the real value of its investments. However, as a proportion of the financial reserves are likely to be held in the longer term, it is appropriate to invest conservatively a proportion of the funds to generate income and/or real growth.

Investment properties arising from legacies are managed by the RSPB until disposal.

Responsible investment

In managing our investments, we follow the principles of socially responsible investing. These principles are to:

- invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.
- use influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.
- avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuels and had no exposure during the year under review.

Performance

The Trustees rely upon specialist advice for fund selection and allocation. Investment performance is compared to an independent benchmark and the target for investment returns is to outperform this composite benchmark by at least 1% per annum over a rolling three-year period.

We continue to hold a proportion of our cash holdings in investment grade bonds. The change is designed to increase the returns from our cash holdings without exposing them to the level of volatility associated with equity investment funds.

Relationship with subsidiaries

The RSPB group includes a number of subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 23 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension

The pension liability in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme, that was closed to future accrual in 2017, has remained at a similar level to last year. The factors affecting this movement are largely outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity to changes in discount and inflation rates. The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the Pension Scheme. In addition to closing the Defined Benefit Scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the Pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work but closes the deficit over a reasonable period. The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees.

The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1 April 2021 and resulted in annual employer contributions of £7.5 million per annum. This level of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit in just over eight years. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation, which will reflect the funding position as at 1 April 2024. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the Pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the Pension Fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £61.5 million.

Outlook for the future

We have been through several years of challenges unprecedented in modern day history, from a global pandemic to a war in Ukraine, which continues to have major economic and political impacts.

Last year's Outlook highlighted the commitment and generosity of our members and supporters, and we have seen that again this year. With this continued support and our solid financial position, we are confident that we can navigate through the current economic headwinds and continue to act for a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

The financial outcome for 2022/23 was a planned deficit and we resourced our teams to deliver that work, but this was also impacted by higher global prices. We have a cautious plan for 2023/24 including a range of scenarios to assess the financial impact of the current economic situation, so it is reasonable to expect the RSPB to have adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.



Signed on behalf of Council

Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair

30 August 2023



In 2022 and 2023 we purchased 25.4 hectares of wet grassland around our Greylake reserve in Somerset, for £218,000. This land will provide additional nesting and feeding habitat for breeding waders, including Lapwings (pictured) and Redshanks.

Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the RSPB

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 77, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: **frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities** This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards.

After a pandemic-induced hiatus, 2022 marked the return of face-to-face events for our Legacy team. We were delighted to welcome legacy supporters back to our reserves across the UK, to show them first-hand the impact that gifts in Wills can have for nature. To find out more, please call 01767 669700 or email legacy.team@rspb.org.uk



David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

31 August 2023

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity under regulation 10(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations by virtue of its eligibility under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**2023 Total £'000**	2022 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	50,770	2,274	-	**53,044**	54,033
Legacies	4	38,517	5,697	-	**44,214**	41,027
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	3,897	31,753	-	**35,650**	31,777
Total voluntary income		**93,184**	**39,724**	**-**	**132,908**	**126,837**
Commercial trading	6	23,693	-	-	**23,693**	24,847
Investment income and interest	7	1,109	-	-	**1,109**	125
Charitable activities						
Fees and grants for services		2,972	-	-	**2,972**	2,434
Land and farming income		2,606	-	-	**2,606**	2,653
Events and media sales		1,278	-	-	**1,278**	672
Total income from charitable activities		6,856	-	-	**6,856**	5,759
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	136	-	-	**136**	131
Total income		124,978	39,724	-	**164,702**	157,699
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial trading	8	27,763	-	-	**27,763**	24,630
Costs of generating voluntary income	8	16,268	-	-	**16,268**	12,061
Investment management costs	8	167	-	-	**167**	163
Total cost of raising funds		44,198	-	-	**44,198**	36,854
Net resources available for charitable activities		**80,780**	**39,724**	**-**	**120,504**	**120,845**
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves	8	32,657	16,760	-	**49,417**	46,570
Research, policy and advisory	8	27,486	16,839	-	**44,325**	37,570
Education and inspiring support	8	22,678	140	-	**22,818**	18,424
Supporter care	8	4,059	-	-	**4,059**	3,694
Total expenditure on charitable activities		86,880	33,739	-	**120,619**	106,258
Total expenditure		**131,078**	**33,739**	**-**	**164,817**	**143,112**
Net (loss)/gain on investments		(1,368)	-	-	**(1,368)**	427
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**(7,468)**	**5,985**	**-**	**(1,483)**	**15,014**
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme		(7,072)	-	-	**(7,072)**	27,655
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(14,540)	5,985	-	**(8,555)**	42,669
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		109,292	169,333	244	**278,869**	236,200
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**94,752**	**175,318**	**244**	**270,314**	**278,869**

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 26.

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets as at 31 March 2023

	Note	**2023 Consolidated total £'000**	2022 Consolidated total £'000	**2023 Charity £'000**	2022 Charity £'000
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	**223,573**	215,807	**222,634**	215,120
Other tangible assets	12	**7,659**	6,273	**7,659**	6,273
Investments	13	**41,664**	55,451	**41,664**	55,451
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	**-**	-	**3,801**	3,801
		272,896	277,531	**275,758**	280,645
Current assets					
Stock		**4,927**	5,075	**223**	-
Debtors	14	**25,635**	23,919	**27,855**	28,051
Short-term cash		**14,662**	13,044	**10,764**	9,111
		45,224	42,038	**38,842**	37,162
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	**(19,534)**	(15,067)	**(16,403)**	(13,442)
Net current assets		**25,690**	26,971	**22,439**	23,720
Total assets less current liabilities		**298,586**	304,502	**298,197**	304,365
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	**(4,194)**	(1,682)	**(4,194)**	(1,682)
Net assets excluding pension liability		**294,392**	302,820	**294,003**	302,683
Pension scheme liability	25	**(24,078)**	(23,951)	**(24,078)**	(23,951)
Net assets including pension liability		**270,314**	278,869	**269,925**	278,732
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		**54,991**	73,115	**54,602**	72,978
Designated funds		**63,839**	60,128	**63,839**	60,128
Pension reserve	25	**(24,078)**	(23,951)	**(24,078)**	(23,951)
		94,752	109,292	**94,363**	109,155
Restricted funds		**175,318**	169,333	**175,318**	169,333
Endowment funds		**244**	244	**244**	244
	21 & 22	**270,314**	278,869	**269,925**	278,732

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 30 August 2023 and signed on behalf of Council by:



Kevin Cox
Chair



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

For the year ended 31 March 2023	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	**120,504**	120,845
Less total expenditure on charitable activities	**(120,619)**	(106,258)
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before gains/(losses)	**(115)**	14,587
(Losses)/gains on investments and pension scheme	**(8,440)**	28,082
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	**(8,555)**	42,669
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	**7,766**	4,587
Other tangible assets	**1,386**	1,428
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	**(5,411)**	732
Movement on pension scheme	**(127)**	33,393
	3,614	40,140
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	**(12,169)**	2,529
Cash and investments available at start of year	**68,495**	65,966
Cash and investments available at end of year	**56,326**	68,495

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2023	Note	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	24	**1,184**	13,361
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		**1,109**	125
Additions to nature reserves		**(10,562)**	(7,090)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		**(5,163)**	(4,381)
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		**188**	188
Purchase of investments		**(22)**	(30,022)
Proceeds from disposal of investments		**3,000**	-
Net cash used for investing activities		**(11,450)**	(41,180)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Bank loan		**2,589**	(1)
Net cash provided by financing activities		**2,589**	(1)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		**(7,677)**	(27,820)
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		**22,795**	50,615
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**15,118**	22,795
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents:			
Cash in hand		**14,662**	13,044
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		**456**	9,751
Cash and cash equivalents		**15,118**	22,795

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter and a charity registered in England and Wales (number 207076) and in Scotland (number SC037654). The address of the registered office is The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.

2) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn. The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity's financial statements.

None of the subsidiary directors received any remuneration or emoluments in respect of their services to those subsidiaries. Where directors are officers/employees of the RSPB they will receive remuneration only from the RSPB.

The RSPB's commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiary, RSPB Sales Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB. RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB's charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

March Farmers (Washland) Limited, a company limited by shares (registration number 01039814). This entity is a wholly-owned subsidiary acquired in 2008 to secure the leasehold interest in land adjacent to the Nene Washes reserve in Cambridgeshire. Through the March Farmers Habitat Restoration project, the former arable land is being restored to floodplain grazing marsh.

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity is being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leases land on the Haweswater Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise.

RSPB Oronsay, a Scottish Limited Partnership of which the RSPB is the General Partner. This entity was established in 1996 to carry out the business of farming and nature conservation on the island of Oronsay.

RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and a non-profit company limited by shares, registered in the Cayman Islands (registration number 304647). This entity was established in 2015 to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment through the acquisition of land to create or extend nature reserves in the Cayman Islands.

The RSPB holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The RSPB holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity and as such is potentially exempt from taxation on its income and gains to the extent that they are applied to its charitable purposes. There was no tax charge during the year. The subsidiaries donate, under Gift Aid, all distributable profits to the Charity each year.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are related to:

- Retirement benefit liabilities – as disclosed in note 25, the RSPB has a Defined Benefit Scheme. Year-end recognition of the liabilities under this scheme and the valuation of assets to fund these liabilities require a number of significant assumptions to be made including key financial market indicators such as inflation, discount rate, expectations on future salary growth and asset returns. These assumptions are agreed by the scheme actuary and RSPB management. For each 0.1% change in the discount rate, the carrying amount of pension obligations would change by an estimated £3.7 million.
- Income recognition of legacies – legacies are recognised on the settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier. Management have accrued a portion of the legacy pipeline on a basis consistent with prior years which equates to legacy receipts in the month after year-end.
- Grant income recognition – where a grant contains performance related conditions, income is recognised in line with achievement of those conditions. Management use total expenditure incurred to deliver the performance conditions at the end of each reporting period as a reasonable basis.
- Donated assets – the value of donated land and buildings recognised within fixed assets is based on external surveyor valuations. This includes specific reports and also use of market valuations by internal surveyors.

Funds

Unrestricted funds:
General funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 22.

Restricted funds:
Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Endowment funds:
Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Capital expenditure

Purchased assets, individually exceeding £2,500 at cost, are included on the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS102 'Property, Plant and Equipment' (note 12). Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised in the year of acquisition and depreciation is charged annually. During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, selected nature reserves were restated to their fair value (note 12).

Depreciation

Nature reserves, either owned as freehold land or held as leasehold land where the lease is held in perpetuity, are considered to have an indefinite useful life and are not depreciated.

Other fixed assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their anticipated useful lives as follows:

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:

Buildings	50 years
Reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves – leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset

Going concern

At the centre of this year's going concern assessment are the ongoing economic challenges presented by high inflation, interest rates and the continuing war in Ukraine.

We have felt the financial impact of these challenges and expect the economic environment to be challenging for the foreseeable future, with Bank of England projections for the medium term at time of writing showing inflation reducing across 2024 and being at low levels in 2025. But with interest rates reducing at a much slower rate, unemployment rising and economic growth forecast to be low, the overall trading environment is likely to continue to be challenging.

Trustees review and respond to financial projections that detail the potential financial impacts of this economic environment on the RSPB, as well as undertaking scenario planning to assess the potential short, medium, and longer-term financial implications of other risks and opportunities.

Looking forward to 2023–2024 we plan to utilise financial reserves to support the organisation and to invest in strategic priorities. However, Trustees remain cautious as the macroeconomic landscape is uncertain and as such are comfortable holding

financial reserves above policy range in the short to medium term.

The financial outcome for 2022–2023 saw us catch up on delayed work, utilising reserves to do this. Our closing free financial reserves reduced to £49.3 million and cash and investments were £56.3 million. Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Investments

The investments in the subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost less provision for impairment.

All other investments are stated at fair value with gains and losses being recognised within income and expenditure. Properties included in investments are those assigned under legacy bequests, awaiting disposal at a future date, and are stated at their fair value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. Investment cash is held for investment purposes only. It is the intention of the Trustees that fixed asset investments will not be drawn upon within the following year.

Stocks

Stocks, which include livestock and products for resale, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Financial instruments

The RSPB has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors (see note 20).

Income

Income is included in the SOFA when the RSPB is entitled to the income, the receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. If these conditions are not met then the income is deferred.

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:

i.) Membership income is treated as a donation and is accounted for when received.
ii.) Legacies are accounted for based on settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier.
iii.) Grants, including government grants, received in advance of the associated work being carried out are deferred only when the donor has imposed preconditions on the expenditure of resources (see Note 17).
iv.) Donated services are recognised at the value of the gift to the Charity which is the amount the Charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market. They are included in the SOFA and balance sheet as appropriate.

Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Costs incurred that relate to multiple purposes are analysed and allocated to the appropriate categories in line with the joint cost allocation principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102).

i.) Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
ii.) Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
iii.) Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
iv.) Research, policy and advisory includes the costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.
v.) Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
vi.) Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
vii.) Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.
viii.) The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
- ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
- the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions

The Defined Benefit Scheme was closed on 31 March 2017 and replaced with a Defined Contribution Scheme.

The Defined Benefit Scheme amount charged in resources expended is the net of the interest cost and interest income on assets. Re-measurements are recognised immediately in Other recognised gains and losses.

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

With regard to the Defined Contribution Scheme, the amounts charged in resources expended are the employer contributions in the year. The employer contribution rate matches the employee rate up to a maximum of 7%.

Redundancy and termination payments

Redundancy and termination liabilities are recognised when the obligation to transfer economic benefits has arisen. The value of this liability represents the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the obligation(s) at the reporting date.

Operating leases

Operating lease rentals are charged and credited to the SOFA on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end, in accordance with FRS102. Any gains or losses arising on translations are reported as part of the transaction within the SOFA and are not material; they are therefore not disclosed separately.

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Membership subscriptions	**46,023**	46,265
Donations	**7,022**	7,768
	53,044	54,033

4) Legacies

The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £31,671,600 (2022: £30,555,258).

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Grants	**26,384**	27,699
Corporates	**4,830**	1,711
Trusts	**4,436**	2,367
	35,650	31,777
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations:		
Services	**204**	176
Goods	**24**	17
	228	193

Major grants received during the year include the following:	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	**7,022**	8,766
Natural England*	**1,683**	860
Scottish Natural Heritage*	**1,498**	1,559
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	**1,301**	1,252
Environment Agency*	**1,022**	170
Scottish Government*	**922**	897
Landfill Communities Fund	**666**	380
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	**535**	642
Forestry Commission*	**9**	4
UK Government – Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)	**-**	82
	14,658	14,612
International		
European Union	**2,236**	2,599
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund	**4,340**	5,161
Local Councils and Other	**5,150**	5,327
	26,384	27,699

*Government grants used to fund conservation projects and recognised in the accounts. There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies relating to the government grants or other forms of government assistance from which the charity has directly benefited recognised in the accounts.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**17,579**	19,187
Research, policy and advisory	**7,285**	7,823
Education and inspiring support	**1,324**	672
Commercial trading	**-**	17
	26,188	27,699
Acquisition of nature reserves	**196**	-
	26,384	27,699

6) Commercial trading

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Retail, mail order and trade	**18,728**	19,857
Catering	**3,500**	3,177
Lottery	**893**	1,056
Advertising	**572**	757
	23,693	24,847

7) Investment income and interest

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	**251**	48
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**858**	77
	1,109	125
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	**136**	131



8) Total expenditure

Cost of raising funds:	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	**2023 Total £'000**	2022 Total £'000
Costs of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	10,489	853	**11,342**	8,602
Grants, corporates and trusts	2,681	234	**2,915**	1,803
Legacies	1,928	83	**2,011**	1,656
Total cost of generating voluntary income	15,098	1,170	**16,268**	12,061
Commercial trading	27,024	739	**27,763**	24,630
Investment management costs	167	-	**167**	163
Total cost of raising funds	42,289	1,909	**44,198**	36,854
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	47,667	1,750	**49,417**	46,570
Research, policy and advisory	40,658	3,667	**44,325**	37,570
Education and inspiring support	20,961	1,857	**22,818**	18,424
Supporter care	4,059	-	**4,059**	3,694
	113,345	7,274	**120,619**	106,258
	155,634	9,183	**164,817**	143,112

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £6,626,907 with support costs of £369,142 (2022: £4,604,159; £256,406). Grants were awarded to 84 (2022: 96) organisations; no individual grant made was material in value and no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available at **rspb.org.uk/grant-funding**

Future commitments:
Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £2,656,608 (2022: £1,331,735). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2023 for payments in future years.

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance and IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management and other	Governance £'000	**2022 Total £'000**	2022 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	364	599	568	294	84	**1,909**	1,572
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	334	549	521	269	77	**1,750**	1,516
Research, policy and advisory	699	1,151	1,092	564	161	**3,667**	3,169
Education and inspiring support	354	582	553	286	82	**1,857**	1,698
Supporter care	-	-	-	-	-	**-**	15
Total Charitable expenditure	1,387	2,282	2,166	1,119	320	**7,274**	6,398
Total support costs	1,751	2,881	2,734	1,413	404	**9,183**	7,970

Support costs are included in the expenditure reported in the Consolidated statement of financial activities and have been allocated on the basis of salary percentage. The cost allocation includes an element of judgement and the RSPB has had to consider the cost benefit of detailed calculations and record keeping.

Governance costs include audit, legal advice for Trustees and the costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements, such as Trustees' meetings.

10) Audit fees

The total audit fees were:	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Statutory audit:		
Charity	**53**	44
RSPB Sales Limited	**32**	27
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**4**	3
Farming for Nature	**3**	3
	92	77

During the year there were £6,320 (2022: £2,670) fees for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.


Rosie Dutton (rspb-images.com)

In recognition of their work to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff, the RSPBeWell team was awarded the Great British Workplace Wellbeing Award for Best Mental Wellbeing Initiative.

11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,406 (2022: 2,231).

Average staff numbers by activity:	**2023 No.**	2022 No.
Generating incoming resources	**580**	542
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**716**	663
Research, policy and advisory	**776**	717
Education and inspiring support	**289**	273
Supporter care	**45**	36
	2,406	2,231

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2023 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Remuneration	**65,296**	58,058
National Insurance	**5,772**	4,830
Pension contributions	**3,818**	3,430
	74,886	66,318

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on pages 76–79.

11) Staff costs (continued)

The total salary of all higher paid employees earning in excess of £60,000, including Directors, are shown in bands of £10,000 below.

			2023 No.	2022 No.
£60,001	–	£70,000	**23**	10
£70,001	–	£80,000	**10**	9
£80,001	–	£90,000	**1**	2
£90,001	–	£100,000	**-**	3
£100,001	–	£110,000	**2**	-
£110,001	–	£120,000	**1**	-
£150,001	–	£160,000	**-**	1
£160,001	–	£170,000	**1**	-
			38	25

Under the RSPB's pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 38 (2022: 24) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme rules. The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £11,418 (2022: £11,139).

Redundancy and termination payments of £197,353 (2022: £50,149) were made in the year, of which £7,857 was paid post year-end.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the 7 (2022: 6) Directors were £788,373 (2022: £690,869) of which, £195,445 (2022: £189,473) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £24,918 (2022: £6,345).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 15 (2022: 12) Trustees on Council business amounted to £7,283 (2022: £739).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £16,800 (2022: £14,000).



12) Tangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves			Other tangible assets			Total
	Freehold land	Leasehold land	Buildings	Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Cost							
At 1 April 2022	178,634	1,729	64,001	3,662	4,958	27,033	**280,017**
Additions	4,804	1	5,757	-	358	4,805	**15,725**
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(658)	(569)	**(1,227)**
At 31 March 2023	183,438	1,730	69,758	3,662	4,658	31,269	**294,515**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2022	-	571	27,986	2,478	4,403	22,499	**57,937**
Charge for the year	-	19	2,777	85	323	3,317	**6,521**
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(625)	(550)	**(1,175)**
At 31 March 2023	-	590	30,763	2,563	4,101	25,266	**63,283**
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2023	183,438	1,140	38,995	1,099	557	6,003	**231,232**
At 31 March 2022	178,634	1,158	36,015	1,184	555	4,534	**222,080**

Net book amount:	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Nature reserves:		
Freehold land	**183,438**	178,634
Leasehold land	**1,140**	1,158
Buildings	**38,995**	36,015
	223,573	215,807
Other tangible assets:		
Other properties	**1,099**	1,184
Motor vehicles	**557**	555
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	**6,003**	4,534
	7,659	6,273
	231,232	222,080

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds Leasehold land of £550,000 (2022: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds Freehold land of £389,000 (2022: £137,000).

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value just below £61,500,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, land with a historic cost of £42,401,000 was revalued at £97,779,000. This £55,378,000 increase in value was reflected in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

13) Investments – charity and consolidated

Investments at fair value:	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Investment cash	**456**	9,751
Equities, bonds and other stocks:		
Equities	**10,664**	11,446
Corporate bonds	**27,411**	30,952
Government bonds	**1,576**	1,745
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**7**	7
	39,658	44,150
Investment properties within the UK	**1,550**	1,550
	41,664	55,451

Equities, Corporate bonds and Government bonds are held in unit trusts.

Investment properties are revalued every five years by professional external valuers. They were last revalued at 31 March 2021, based on their fair value at that date. Trustees have considered the valuations in the intervening years and they do not consider that there has been a significant change in value between the valuation date and the balance sheet date. The amount includes property assigned under legacy bequests and donated property.

Movement during the year:	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Fair value at 1 April	**55,451**	52,096
Fees	**(146)**	(100)
Additions	**17**	30,018
Dividends reinvested	**5**	4
Disposals	**(3,000)**	-
Net (loss)/gain on revaluation at 31 March	**(1,368)**	427
Movement in investment cash	**(9,295)**	(26,994)
Fair value at 31 March	**41,664**	55,451
Historical cost as at 31 March	**33,840**	46,134

The Charity investments in its wholly owned subsidiaries are held at cost and represent the aggregate amount of the subsidiaries' assets, liabilities and funds. The subsidiary investments are:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	**3,250**	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**551**	551
	3,801	3,801



14) Debtors – charity and consolidated

	2023 Consolidated £'000	2022 Consolidated £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	**7,076**	5,614	**4,947**	4,306
Other debtors	**3,909**	4,294	**3,907**	4,246
Legacies	**2,893**	3,499	**2,893**	3,499
Prepayments and accrued income	**11,757**	10,512	**11,102**	9,796
Amounts due from subsidiaries	**-**	-	**5,006**	6,204
	25,635	23,919	**27,855**	28,051

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year	2023 Consolidated £'000	2022 Consolidated £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Trade creditors	**5,400**	3,844	**4,837**	3,666
Other creditors	**827**	48	**827**	46
Deferred income (see note 17)	**6,457**	5,313	**4,607**	4,412
Accruals	**6,633**	5,708	**5,915**	5,164
Bank loans	**217**	154	**217**	154
	19,534	15,067	**16,403**	13,442

Amounts falling due in more than one year	2023 Consolidated £'000	2022 Consolidated £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Deferred income – lease premium	**740**	754	**740**	754
Bank loans	**3,454**	928	**3,454**	928
	4,194	1,682	**4,194**	1,682

On 31 March 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Triodos Bank. The loan was for £0.7 million (fixed rate 4.097%) and was used to finance a range of sustainable energy projects across our nature reserves. The capital and interest will be repaid over a 20-year period using the ongoing energy savings together with income from electricity generation.

On 6 December 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds bank. This loan was for £0.5 million (fixed rate 2.506%) and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl Bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan will be repaid using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council over the five-year loan period.

On 25 April 2022 the RSPB entered into a loan facility with Triodos Bank. A loan of £2.8 million (fixed rate 5.240%) was drawn down on 21 June 2022 and used to fund the development of four modular cafés on our reserves at Conwy, the Dee Estuary, Frampton Marsh and The Lodge. The capital and interest will be repaid over 20 years using profits from the café operations.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2023 not provided for in the accounts were £325,620 (2022: £256,367).

17) Deferred income – charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April	**754**	768
Amount released to income	**-**	-
Amounts due within one year	**(14)**	(14)
Balance at 31 March	**740**	754
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April	**5,313**	3,863
Amount released to income	**(5,313)**	(3,863)
Amounts due within one year	**6,443**	5,299
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	**14**	14
Balance at 31 March	**6,457**	5,313
Deferred income: balance at 31 March	**7,197**	6,067

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £754,000 (2022: £768,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £6,443,000 (2022: £5,299,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £4,593,000 (2022: £4,398,000) and commercial trading £1,850,000 (2022: £901,000).

18) Operating leases – commitments and contracted income

Commitments: Properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods. The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Less than 1 year	1,975	54	**2,029**	2,082
2 – 5 years	3,482	-	**3,482**	4,159
Over 5 years	6,856	-	**6,856**	7,662
	12,313	54	**12,367**	13,903

Lease payments of £2,531,204 (2022: £2,406,351) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income: Land and properties are leased out by the RSPB for defined periods. The full income of these over the lease period is shown below:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Less than 1 year	**1,029**	1,041
2 – 5 years	**509**	486
Over 5 years	**2,449**	2,517
	3,987	4,044

Lease income of £1,054,467 (2022: £1,053,551) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

The Trustees have given indemnities to executors under the standard terms for legacies received; they believe the chance of significant claims arising as a result of these to be negligible.

20) Financial instruments

	Fair Value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	Total financial instruments £'000	Non-financial instruments £'000	**2023 Total £'000**	2022 Total £'000
Assets						
Tangible assets	-	-	-	231,232	**231,232**	222,080
Investments	41,664	-	41,664	-	**41,664**	55,451
Stock	-	-	-	4,927	**4,927**	5,075
Debtors		23,351	23,351	2,284	**25,635**	23,919
Cash at bank and in hand	-	14,662	14,662	-	**14,662**	13,044
Liabilities						
Creditors due within one year	-	(13,077)	(13,077)	(6,457)	**(19,534)**	(15,067)
Creditors due after one year	(3,454)	-	(3,454)	(740)	**(4,194)**	(1,682)
	38,210	24,936	63,146	231,246	**294,392**	302,820

The income, expenditure and net gains and losses recognised in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities are shown below:

	Fair Value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	**2023 Total £'000**	2022 Total £'000
Investment income	858	251	**1,109**	125
Investment management costs	(167)	-	**(167)**	(163)
Net gains on investments	(1,368)	-	**(1,368)**	427
	(677)	251	**(426)**	389

21) Statements of funds – Charity and consolidated

The purpose for which funds are held can be analysed as follows:

	Total funds 1 April 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2023 £'000**
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	73,115	124,978	(130,513)	(1,368)	(11,221)	**54,991**
Designated land fund	60,128	-	-	-	3,711	**63,839**
Pension liability	(23,951)	-	(565)	(7,072)	7,510	**(24,078)**
Total unrestricted funds	109,292	124,978	(131,078)	(8,440)	-	**94,752**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	160,822	4,178	-	-	-	**165,000**
Other tangible assets	1,574	1,541	(1,119)	-	-	**1,996**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,329	16,428	(15,641)	-	-	**2,116**
Research, policy and advisory	5,462	17,512	(16,839)	-	-	**6,135**
Education and inspiring support	146	65	(140)	-	-	**71**
Total restricted funds	169,333	39,724	(33,739)	-	-	**175,318**
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	278,869	164,702	(164,817)	(8,440)	-	**270,314**

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £3,711,000 from the General Fund to the Designated Land Fund. A transfer of £7,510,000 from the General Fund to the Pension Liability Fund represents a pension deficit recovery payment in line with the triennial valuation as at 1 April 2021, see note 25.

21) Statements of funds – Charity and consolidated (continued)

Inter-company reconciliation

	RSPB Charity 2023 £'000	Farming for Nature 2023 £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd 2023 £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd 2023 £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd 2023 £'000	Elimination 2023 £'000	**RSPB Consolidated 2023 £'000**
Income	137,440	269	163	30,527	260	(3,957)	**164,702**
Expenditure	(137,807)	(84)	(124)	(26,872)	(8)	78	**(164,817)**
Other recognised gains	(8,440)	-	-	-	-	-	**(8,440)**
Profit/(loss)	(8,807)	185	39	3,655	252	(3,879)	**(8,555)**
Gift aided	-	(185)	(39)	(3,655)	-	3,879	**-**
Net movement in funds	(8,807)	-	-	-	252	-	**(8,555)**
Net Assets at 31 March 2022	278,732	-	551	3,250	137	(3,801)	**278,869**
Net Assets at 31 March 2023	269,925	-	551	3,250	389	(3,801)	**270,314**

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2023, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and surplus were £295,096, £538,603 and £89,458 respectively (2022: £174,347, £429,706 and £3,446).

The Charity holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2023, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and deficit were £6,949, £375,704 and £30,462 respectively (2022: £6,350 net liabilities, £383,897 and £13,207).

The results of both interests have not been consolidated into the core financial statements; to do so would not materially alter them.

During the year ended 31 March 2023, the Charity paid £518,000 (2022: £178,000) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan.

Unrestricted funds include free and general funds that are not designated for particular purposes.

Designated funds comprise the Land Fund which represents land and buildings purchased using unrestricted funds including the investment in March Farmers (Washland) Limited.

Restricted funds comprise:

- The Nature Reserves Fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £5,265,418 (2022: £5,178,605) held for future acquisitions.
- The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £4,969,109 (2022: £4,591,820) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds are comprised of permanent endowments.

22) Analysis of net assets between funds

The Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in a suitable form to enable them to be applied in accordance with any restrictions imposed, as set out below:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2023**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	63,839	159,734	-	**223,573**
Other tangible assets	5,663	-	1,996	-	**7,659**
Investments	39,573	-	1,847	244	**41,664**
Current assets	27,766	-	17,458	-	**45,224**
Current liabilities	(13,817)	-	(5,717)	-	**(19,534)**
Long-term liabilities	(4,194)	-	-	-	**(4,194)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	54,991	63,839	175,318	244	**294,392**
Pension liability	(24,078)	-	-	-	**(24,078)**
Net assets	30,913	63,839	175,318	244	**270,314**

Free reserves which are available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees are held as investments or working capital:

		Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2023**
		General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Net assets excluding pension liability		54,991	63,839	175,318	244	**294,392**
Less:	Operating assets					
	Nature reserves	-	(63,839)	(159,734)	-	**(223,573)**
	Other tangible assets	(5,663)	-	(1,996)	-	**(7,659)**
Available reserves		49,328	-	13,588	244	**63,160**
Less:	Restricted and endowment	-	-	(13,588)	(244)	**(13,832)**
Free reserves		49,328	-	-	-	**49,328**

23) Connected charities and related party transactions

The RSPB is one of the global partners in BirdLife International (registered charity number 1042125), an umbrella organisation for entities with similar objectives throughout the world. Further information about this organisation can be obtained by writing to BirdLife International at The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ.

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	Farming for Nature £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited £'000
Balance at 1 April 2022	306	155	5,743	-
Gift aid paid	(157)	(52)	(6,521)	-
Gift aid due	185	39	3,655	-
Grants received	-	-	-	78
Other inter-company transactions	6	2	1,645	(78)
Balance at 31 March 2023	340	144	4,522	-

24) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net (expenditure)/ income for the year	**(1,483)**	15,014
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	**6,521**	5,399
Losses/(gains) on investments	**1,514**	(327)
Interest and dividends received	**(1,109)**	(125)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	**(136)**	(131)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	**148**	(616)
Increase in debtors	**(1,716)**	(2,088)
Increase in creditors	**4,390**	1,973
	8,129	19,099
Movement in pension scheme	**(6,945)**	(5,738)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**1,184**	13,361



The population of Grey Seals breeding on RSPB Ramsey Island, off the coast of Pembrokeshire, is the largest in south-west Britain. In 2022, 397 pups were recorded on the island's beaches – the third highest number on record.

Jules Cox (rspb-images.com)

25) Pensions

The Defined Benefit Scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the Scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the Pension Fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1 April 2021 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £7.5 million per annum with effect from 1 April 2022. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a period of eight years and four months. As part of the valuation the Society's contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 14 March 2022.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	**269,428**	299,951
Interest expense	**7,452**	6,240
Remeasurements	**(72,567)**	(31,134)
Benefits paid	**(6,556)**	(5,629)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	**197,757**	269,428

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	**197,757**	269,428
Fair value of scheme assets	**(173,679)**	(245,477)
Net defined benefit liability	**24,078**	23,951

Changes in scheme assets:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	**245,477**	242,607
Interest income	**6,887**	5,108
Remeasurements	**(79,639)**	(3,479)
Employer contribution	**7,510**	6,870
Benefits paid	**(6,556)**	(5,629)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	**173,679**	245,477

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Interest expense	**7,452**	6,240
Interest income	**(6,887)**	(5,108)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	**565**	1,132
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	**7,072**	(27,655)
Total cost related to defined benefit plans recognized in SOFA	**7,637**	(26,523)

25) Pensions (continued)

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets:

	2023	2022
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	**40.2%**	53.5%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	**49.6%**	36.8%
Property	**8.9%**	7.7%
Cash	**1.3%**	2.0%

Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**(72,752)**	1,629

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2023	2022
Discount rate	**4.90%**	2.10%
Rate of increase in salaries	**1 April 2023: 3.0% (7.0%)**	1 April 2023: 2.5% (2.8%)
	1 April 2024: 3.0% (5.2%)	1 April 2024: 2.0% (2.7%)
	1 April 2025: 3.0% (3.4%)	1 April 2025: 2.0% (2.6%)
	2.80% p.a. thereafter % in brackets include a further allowance for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term	3.25% p.a. thereafter
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 07 pension	**1.80%**	2.00%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment:		
Pre April 09 (CPI max 5.0%)	**2.80%**	3.30%
Post April 09 (CPI max 2.5%)	**2.50%**	2.50%
RPI inflation	**3.20%**	3.8% non-pensioner/ 3.6% pensioner
CPI inflation	**2.80%**	Deduction of 1% on RPI to 2030, 0% thereafter

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations:

	2023 Years	2022 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – male	**22.5**	22.8
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – male	**23.9**	24.2
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – female	**24.3**	24.5
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – female	**25.9**	26.7

26) Comparative statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2022

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2022 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	50,051	3,982	-	**54,033**
Legacies	36,812	4,215	-	**41,027**
Grants, corporates and trusts	2,595	29,201	(19)	**31,777**
Total voluntary income	**89,458**	**37,398**	**(19)**	**126,837**
Commercial trading	24,847	-	-	**24,847**
Investment income and interest	125	-	-	**125**
Charitable activities				
Fees and grants for services	2,434	-	-	**2,434**
Land and farming income	2,653	-	-	**2,653**
Events and media sales	672	-	-	**672**
Total income from charitable activities	5,759	-	-	**5,759**
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	131	-	-	**131**
Total income	**120,320**	**37,398**	**(19)**	**157,699**
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	24,630	-	-	**24,630**
Costs of generating voluntary income	12,061	-	-	**12,061**
Investment management costs	163	-	-	**163**
Total cost of raising funds	36,854	-	-	**36,854**
Net resources available for charitable activities	**83,466**	**37,398**	**(19)**	**120,845**
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	31,674	14,896	-	**46,570**
Research, policy and advisory	20,330	17,240	-	**37,570**
Education and inspiring support	18,372	52	-	**18,424**
Supporter care	3,694	-	-	**3,694**
Total expenditure on charitable activities	74,070	32,188	-	**106,258**
Total expenditure	**110,924**	**32,188**	**-**	**143,112**
Net gains/(losses) on investments	427	-	-	**427**
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	**9,823**	**5,210**	**(19)**	**15,014**
Actuarial (losses)/gains on pension scheme	27,655	-	-	**27,655**
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	37,478	5,210	(19)	**42,669**
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	71,814	164,123	263	**236,200**
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	**109,292**	**169,333**	**244**	**278,869**

26) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds – charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2022

Consolidated	Total funds 1 April 2021 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Total funds 31 March 2022 £'000
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	68,173	120,320	(109,792)	427	(6,013)	**73,115**
Designated land fund	60,985	-	-	-	(857)	**60,128**
Pension liability	(57,344)	-	(1,132)	27,655	6,870	**(23,951)**
Total unrestricted funds	71,814	120,320	(110,924)	28,082	-	**109,292**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	156,415	4,407	-	-	-	**160,822**
Other tangible assets	1,465	1,283	(1,174)	-	-	**1,574**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,050	14,001	(13,722)	-	-	**1,329**
Research, policy and advisory	5,059	17,643	(17,240)	-	-	**5,462**
Education and inspiring support	134	64	(52)	-	-	**146**
Total restricted funds	164,123	37,398	(32,188)	-	-	**169,333**
Endowment funds	263	(19)	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	**236,200**	**157,699**	**(143,112)**	**28,082**	**-**	**278,869**

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2022
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	60,128	155,643	-	**215,771**
Other tangible assets	4,735	-	1,574	-	**6,309**
Investments	52,376	-	2,831	244	**55,451**
Current assets	27,440	-	14,598	-	**42,038**
Current liabilities	(9,754)	-	(5,313)	-	**(15,067)**
Long-term liabilities	(1,682)	-	-	-	**(1,682)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	73,115	60,128	169,333	244	**302,820**
Pension liability	(23,951)	-	-	-	**(23,951)**
Net (liabilities)/assets	49,164	60,128	169,333	244	**278,869**

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At RSPB Valley Wetlands on Anglesey, reedbed management designed to create breeding habitat for fish is paying off. Recent electrofishing surveys revealed excellent numbers of fish, which are vital food for Bitterns, Otters and other wildlife.

Alamy

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To find your nearest office, see: **rspb.org.uk/contactus**

Bill Bailey's cover artwork has been turned into a beautiful mug. You can get your hands on one at **shopping.rspb.org.uk/rspb-bill-bailey-puffin-mug**



Thank you.
Your support helps us to create a world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

If you'd like to donate to support the RSPB's work for wildlife, visit **rspb.org.uk/join-and-donate/donate**

Simon Roy (rspb-images.com)

Protecting habitats, saving species and helping to end the nature and climate emergency.

Nature is in crisis.
Together we can save it.

Stay connected

Keep up to date with the latest thinking, news, events, and information from the RSPB in your local community.

@Natures_Voice @TheRSPB @rspb

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ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

England & Wales - Charity number 207076

Accounts

2021–22

Annual report

A year of saving nature



Nature is in crisis. Together we can save it.

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The front cover of this report is designed by the illustrator Noma Bar.
It is inspired by the RSPB's founder, Emily Williamson. For more details, see pages 16–17.



Lottie van Grieken (rspb-images.com))

Campaigning has always been a key part of the RSPB's work.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

RSPB Chair, Kevin Cox, and Chief Executive, Beccy Speight, reflect on an eventful year and look ahead to a critical time for nature

One of the many setbacks of the Covid-19 pandemic was the postponement of COP26, but in November 2021, along with others from the RSPB, I was in Glasgow, helping to ensure that nature was not forgotten, especially its key role in tackling the climate crisis.

As the largest conservation charity in the UK, we will continue to stand up for nature and ensure that the promises made at COP26 and elsewhere turn into real action. In Glasgow, one area of focus was the role of peatlands as a nature-based solution that mitigates the impact of climate change as well as supporting precious wildlife.

Over the last year, I have visited some of our most vital peatland habitats, including Dove Stone in the Peak District. As well as sequestering large amounts of carbon, these habitats are home to red-listed birds like the curlew and dunlin. Our site teams continue to work across all four countries of the UK in collaboration with landowners and partners to ensure our peatlands are thriving. And we continue to call for a long-overdue ban on the extraction and sale of peat.

Across the UK in 2021–22, there have been some incredible successes for wildlife, with some inspiring recovery stories, including bitterns and cranes both having record-breaking years: two incredible comeback examples that we have played a lead role in. But of course, we still see the immediate threats to nature, with emblematic birds like swifts and house martins added to the Red List. We continue to work with local communities to support these. Let's hope that the greenfinch, another newly red-listed species, can recover, with signs of an uplift in the results from this year's Big Garden Birdwatch.

Sadly our 2020 Birdcrime report recorded a 30 year high of incidents of raptor persecution. There have been some horrifying cases which our dedicated investigations team have played a leading role in uncovering. Last year also saw the completion of our ambitious mission to protect endangered birds on Gough Island. While we were not totally successful in eradicating invasive mice, we have given the Tristan albatross and MacGillivray's prion a fighting chance.

Thank you all, for playing a fundamental role in our mission. Your support enables us to achieve many things, such as helping us to acquire more land for nature. We were overwhelmed by your generosity in supporting our appeal to purchase a vital extension to RSPB Otmoor, benefiting both wildlife and people.

Members, supporters and volunteers are the lifeblood of the RSPB. As we move forward through this crucial decade for nature, we will need you every step of the way.



Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair



Paul Sawer (rspb-images.com)

Many of us turned to nature during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Over the last few years, like me, you may have turned to nature for solace and reassurance. We've been reminded how special but fragile our natural world is as we face into our nature and climate emergency.

As the world changes, so must the RSPB. You may have noticed our logo has evolved and we're building on over 130 years of experience to become a bolder, more influential voice for nature. With this decade being critical for our planet, you can read in the following pages how our strategy to 2030 ensures our impact for a world richer in nature, from back gardens to nature reserves and wider land and sea scapes.

In England, the ambitious East Coast Wetlands Programme, stretching from the Humber to the Thames, will support priority migratory and coastal birds, while responding to climate change impacts, such as coastal erosion. In Scotland, more peatland restoration will bolster these valuable habitats and vital carbon stores at scale.

In Northern Ireland, we will work to protect the unique environment of Rathlin Island from invasive predators, and with partners we'll embark on the largest ever Welsh conservation and engagement programme, as part of Natur am Byth.

Several international conservation priorities continue, including in UK Overseas Territories, such as supporting Tristan da Cunha's Atlantic Guardians community project and restoring the cloud forest in St Helena, home to a vast number of endemic species.

The recent invasion of Ukraine has direct impacts in the UK. The growth in demand for renewable energy, particularly offshore wind, is welcome but must be delivered in a nature positive way. This war will also affect global food supplies and we must work with UK farmers to restore nature alongside sustainable food production to secure our long-term food security.

The RSPB and our incredible supporters will continue to be the voice for nature, influencing policy from the global COP15 to domestic government agendas, including a strong response to the recovery of seabird populations from highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Our vision for the future is ambitious and challenging, but it must be. Only by working together as an ecosystem of supporters, members, volunteers, staff and partnerships can we take a bird's eye view of the emergency we are facing, from the big picture of systemic change to individual species. Crucially, we must have both resilience and hope, that with your support and more and more diverse people engaging with us, our natural world can yet recover and thrive.



Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

About the RSPB

Nature is in crisis. Together we can save it.

Our purpose

To advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature. We carry out conservation work that you can see from space, built from the ground up. We believe that the planet is facing a nature and climate emergency and that we have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

Our vision

A shared world where wildlife, wild places, and all people thrive. We believe we're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species and has the right to flourish. We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which these depend are interconnected. We recognise that the health and resilience of individuals, our society and the economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems. We believe that we have the greatest impact when our strategy is informed both by our understanding of the state of species and ecosystems and our core beliefs.

How we deliver

We believe that in delivering public benefit, we are effective because we bring the breadth of our capabilities to bear on the complex challenges facing species and ecosystems.

The RSPB's strategy sets out how we meet those challenges to make a difference over the current decade. By setting and reviewing strategic objectives, the RSPB's Trustees test, refine and account for the performance and delivery of the organisation and plan for new challenges as they emerge. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities described in the sections 'Our highlights,' 'Our impact' and 'Forward look'.

Royal charter

The RSPB is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter, originally granted in 1904. Together with the Statutes, it provides the RSPB's operating rules and guidelines.

Patron

Her Majesty the Queen.

Governance

The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, and we use the Charity Governance Code. How we apply the Code is described throughout this report, in particular on pages 61–73.

Objects of the RSPB

The objects of the RSPB as set out in its Royal Charter are to:

(1) promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively by:

(a) conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend;

(b) protecting, restoring and recreating habitats. This includes raising public understanding and awareness of, and providing information on, such matters.

(2) advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment.


Tom McSherry (rspb-images.com)

We advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature.


Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)


Paul Turner (rspb-images.com)

We fulfil our purpose through five main work areas: science, species, places, people and policy.


Catherine Bullen (rspb-images.com)

What we do

The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species. It has the right to flourish. We won't stop until we realise a shared world: one where wildlife, wild places, and people thrive.

What we do

We work locally in the UK and around the world protecting habitats, saving species, and addressing the nature and climate emergency. We do this through five main work areas: **science, species, places, people** and **policy**. We're proud that we can apply our broad capabilities to the many complex challenges facing species and ecosystems to make a positive difference.

Science

We ground our work in a thorough understanding of the natural world. We identify the most important problems, using natural and social sciences to discover their possible causes and potential solutions.

Species

Survival of species and biodiversity are the ultimate signs of whether conservation is working and ecosystems are thriving. That's why we protect species from direct threats, such as loss of habitat, and indirect threats, like loss of food sources.

Places

Nature needs other nature. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and joined up protected areas on land and at sea in the UK and around the world. We help people and nature coexist in harmony, ensuring that where people are living, nature can thrive.

People

A thriving natural world is essential for our species and is only possible if people feel connected to and understand nature. We inspire, educate and support people young and old from every possible background to act. The more of us who get involved, the bigger, more diverse and more powerful our support for nature will be.

Policy

To stop nature's downward spiral and to build a world where wildlife can thrive, governments must have the right ambition. Ambition that is underpinned by action, which must be framed by targets, law, monitoring and enforcement.

How we do it

We bring people together who love birds and other wildlife, and who want to do something to restore the health and diversity of the natural world. We must also enable more people to take positive action for nature. **We act**, **we influence**, **we collaborate**, and **we empower**.

We act

The natural world and the global climate are in crisis. But our evidence-based conservation work shows that birds and other wildlife will thrive if they're given a chance. We're intensifying our efforts to give nature more opportunities to recover, every single day, delivering conservation across land and seascapes, protecting and restoring habitats and saving birds and other wildlife from extinction. We won't stop while the threat to nature persists.

We influence

We use our voice to help people understand the threats facing nature, and the solutions to save it. From individuals to businesses and governments, we encourage everyone to play a positive role for nature, and help change the world for the better.

We collaborate

We are one of the few conservation organisations that has the capacity and the expertise to make a difference on a truly global scale. When we partner with organisations, businesses, governments and individuals, we increase the impact we have. And by working together, we will deliver results for birds, nature and the climate at an even greater scale.

We empower

The closer people feel to nature, the more likely they are to defend it. We bring people together – across countryside and cities, in person and online. From experienced naturalists to fledgling enthusiasts, we help everyone connect, champion and take action for nature. By supporting local conservation groups, projects and initiatives, we encourage everyone to get involved.



Aidan McCormick (rspb-images.com)



Kate Lawrence (rspb-images.com)



Tom Mason (rspb-images.com)

Our strategy

In 2021, we launched our new strategy to 2030, to ensure the RSPB is making the biggest impact possible for nature.

Our vision for a world richer in nature

We believe that all species have a right to exist, and that nature is fundamental to human health and wellbeing. We have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations, so we want to create a world where...

...wildlife is abundant and diverse in our towns and countryside

...we have a resilient, stable economy that values nature

...all people are living well in harmony with nature

...birds and other wildlife have made a comeback

...nature continues to be restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people

...we benefit from a stable climate, and clean air and water.

Our six strategic shifts

We have identified six main areas where, by stepping up our efforts, we can increase our impact.

1. Delivering conservation at greater scale, through deeper collaborations.
2. Enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.
3. Being a bolder and more influential campaigning organisation.
4. Becoming more relevant to the world we're trying to change.
5. Diversifying our income and opening up finance opportunities.
6. Making the RSPB the best it can be.



David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

Our vision is for a world where wildlife is abundant and diverse in our towns and countryside.

What we aim to achieve by 2030

UK land
At least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature-positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.

Global land
A network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic migration route, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.

Seas
Threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.

UK Overseas Territories
The conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UK's Overseas Territories (UKOTs) will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.

Species recovery
The future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UKOTs, the East Atlantic migration route and in other selected areas around the world.

Food and farming
The majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy (where the carbon emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the carbon removed from it), as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.

Nature-positive economy
The frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.

RSPB greening
Not only will the RSPB be a nature-positive organisation, we will remain a climate-positive organisation, having made further progress both to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions and enhance net emissions reductions through our land management activities.

People engagement
More, and more diverse, people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.

RSPB capabilities
The RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will reflect the strategic need.

This decade will be vital for the future of our planet and our contribution has never been needed more. We have set clear measures against each of these outcomes, which we will use to track our progress.

Our highlights: people

A thriving natural world is only possible if people feel connected to and understand nature. We inspire, educate and support people young and old and from every background, to act. The more of us who get involved, the bigger, more diverse and more powerful our support for nature will be.

Nurturing nature on your doorstep

We launched Nature on Your Doorstep in May 2021. The aim is to get everyone taking action for nature in their outdoor spaces, whether that's a sizeable garden, a window box or a community space. In addition, there are incredible wellbeing benefits associated with getting out in nature and feeling a connection to it.

Put together, UK gardens and other public outdoor spaces are almost three times the combined size of our nature reserves – so everyone can do their bit.

Our team of expert volunteers is on hand, to give help and advice. The volunteers work together and grow, develop and moderate the online community that enables people to share inspiration, ideas and advice.

Since we launched Nature on Your Doorstep, more than half a million people have visited the web activities and content, and over 20,000 people have signed up to our new monthly newsletter. More than 1,500 people have also joined our new Facebook group, and we've had over 178,763 visits to our web community and blogs.

We have over 40 inspirational wildlife gardening activities to choose from to help you create homes and food for wildlife. These include how to build a bug hotel, grow wildlife-friendly flowers, and put up a nestbox.

Nature on Your Doorstep is sponsored by Barratt Developments Plc. Together, we're getting gardens and outdoor spaces blooming and buzzing with life.

For more details, visit: rspb.org.uk/natureonyourdoorstep





Robin Robin lands on RSPB nature reserves

Robins are the UK's favourite bird, and in November 2021 a character called Robin Robin flew into RSPB reserves, where young people could be found flapping like robins and singing songs about worms. They were taking part in themed adventure trails, created as part of a partnership with Netflix and Aardman, who created *Robin Robin*, a half-hour musical animation launched at the end of 2021.

Netflix briefly rebranded as 'Nestflix' for a Twitter takeover, which saw 1.4 million people view a live feeder camera at our Arne nature reserve in Dorset. The film was even nominated for an Oscar for Best Animated Short Film. Find out more at: rspb.org.uk/robinrobin

Half a million tune in for Big Garden Birdwatch LIVE

Big Garden Birdwatch, where we encourage you to watch the birds in your garden for an hour and report what you've seen, has been running since 1979. Big Garden Birdwatch LIVE – a livestream throughout the Birdwatch weekend – was back for the second year in 2022. More than half a million people viewed the livestream over the Birdwatch weekend, so it's clear that the concept works even when the UK is not in lockdown.

Compared to 2021, the 2022 Big Garden Birdwatch LIVE was more ambitious, with live cameras from Chris Packham's garden, plus our Arne, Nagshead, Saltholme and Loch Garten nature reserves. It also featured special guests Deborah Meaden, Dr Amir Khan and Alison Steadman, and a range of youth voices including 'Green-Fingered George', a young wildlife gardening enthusiast, and Mya Bambrick, an 18-year-old wildlife photographer and blogger. Over the Birdwatch weekend, we recorded 35 bird species across all of our cameras.

The RSPB presenter contingent broadcast from a supporter's garden in Sampford Brett, Somerset. The specialist team spent five days there to bring the live action to our viewers, and we're pleased to report the whole village got behind the event.

Big Garden Birdwatch LIVE is a great way to really engage with our audience, in real time. Outside of the digital arena, reserves also ran beginner birdwatcher events, to lead people towards Big Garden Birdwatch.

Big Garden Birdwatch took place from 28 to 30 January 2022, and an incredible 697,735 people took part. For more details, visit: rspb.org.uk/birdwatch




RSPB (rspb-images.com)

Roy Dennis (right) led ground-breaking work to bring ospreys and white-tailed eagles back to the UK.

RSPB Medal for white-tailed eagle saviour

Roy Dennis MBE has received the RSPB's most prestigious award, the RSPB Medal. He's the man known for bringing ospreys and white-tailed eagles back to the UK.

Alongside his mentor George Waterston, they pioneered the first trial reintroduction of white-tailed eagles on Rum. This paved the way for more translocations that continue to this day.

He was the RSPB's Highland Officer between 1970 and 1990, when he was responsible for Loch Garten, protecting nesting ospreys and golden eagles.

Roy said:

"In my middle years at the RSPB, we faced tough battles... but I always refused to give up.

Now I'm encouraged to see great steps forward in ecological restoration, but at this time of global crisis, it's for the young to lead the way and be the ones who refuse to give up."

Oldest-known white-tailed eagle on Winterwatch

White-tailed eagles are the UK's largest bird of prey. They became extinct in the UK due to changes in land use, and persecution, and the last UK-bred bird was shot in Shetland in 1918. But thanks to people like Roy Dennis, that's no longer the case. The RSPB became involved in reintroductions in the mid-1970s. The first reintroduced white-tailed eagles, including one named Blondie, bred in 1983, successfully fledging their first chick in 1985.

This is Skye (pictured), who featured on the BBC2 series Winterwatch as the UK's oldest-known white-tailed eagle. He's paired with Frisa, the offspring of Blondie, who fledged in 1992.


Iain Erskine

Skye is the UK's oldest-known white-tailed eagle.

Embedding inclusion at the RSPB

We're continuing our journey to become a more inclusive and diverse organisation. We've recruited an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team to lead the programme, embedding EDI into every part of the organisation, alongside our staff EDI Champions. We're implementing the recommendations outlined by our 2021 report from Full Colour – specialists in diversity and inclusion. We're working with staff, volunteers, and communities to give the greatest impact.

Over the last year our affinity groups, formed around a shared interest, and our EDI Champions have been active across the RSPB to raise awareness, support colleagues, and share knowledge. For example, Starlings, our LGBTQIA+ network, attended Birmingham Pride to celebrate and show visibility, and gave three talks for all staff to mark Pride, LGBT+ History Month and Trans Day of Visibility.

Meanwhile, members of our neurodiversity affinity groups have raised awareness on how to better support and engage neurodivergent people through talks and workshops.

"Together we can make the RSPB a place where everyone's an ally, where everyone's encouraged to be themselves, and can love who they love without fear of exclusion or discrimination."

– Starlings, the RSPB's LGBTQIA+ network

"Research shows nature benefits people with ADHD and autistic people. I have ADHD, and as a kid I felt much better when I was in nature – growing up in the wilds of Kent ignited my passion and inspired me to work for the RSPB."

– Simon Stennett, West Country Area Manager

Colleagues from across the UK have advanced our work on inclusive access to our reserves and events. In Wales, the Give Nature a Home project in Cardiff has worked closely with EDI specialist Diverse Cymru to create more inclusive values, including sharing accessibility information for events and a commitment to use Plain English and Cymraeg Clir in their communications.


Yvonne Hunt (RSPB)

Inspiring a generation with Girlguiding Anglia

Building on our partnership with Girlguiding London and the South East Region, the RSPB and Girlguiding Anglia formed an exciting new partnership in 2022, launched at our Minsmere reserve in Suffolk. It aims to inspire a love of nature in young Girlguiding members. The partnership makes it easy for leaders to run nature-focused sessions, with downloadable activity packs and badges.

Saving nature for 100 years



RSPB (rspb-images.com)

Watch the video

The birthplace of RSPB campaigning

In July 2021, we celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the 1921 Plumage (Prohibition) Act, the RSPB's first successful campaign. It also marked the launch of the Emily Williamson Statue Campaign, with a competition to create a commemorative statue of one of the RSPB's founders, Emily Williamson (pictured left). We are supporting the statue campaign, which is led by their Chair, Andrew Simock, and journalist Tessa Boase.

The four shortlisted statue maquettes toured RSPB nature reserves in summer 2021, including Bempton Cliffs, Minsmere, Loch Leven and Belfast WOW, culminating in the first Emily Williamson Festival in November 2021. The winning statue was decided through public vote, and was designed by artist Eve Shepherd (pictured below).

Her statue, hoped to be unveiled in 2023, will stand at Emily's former home in Fletcher Moss Park, near Manchester, where the RSPB was founded.

Emily Williamson was 36 when she set up the Society for the Protection of Birds, in response to the fashion to adorn women's hats with feathers, which meant that birds such as little egrets and great crested grebes were driven almost to extinction.

She joined forces with Etta Lemon and Eliza Phillips of the Fur, Fin and Feather Folk of Croydon, as well as Winifred Cavendish-Bentinck, Duchess of Portland.

The campaign against 'murderous millinery' was fought on all fronts. RSPB supporters wrote letters to women wearing feathered hats, spoke to shopkeepers that stocked them, and contacted political figures and royalty.

In the period 1891 to 1899, membership expanded from 1,200 to over 20,000. In 1904, the Society for the Protection of Birds was incorporated by Royal Charter. For more information on RSPB campaigns, visit: **rspb.org.uk/campaigning**



Bernadette Delaney

The winning statue design was created by sculptor Eve Shepherd.

Our highlights: policy

To stop nature's downward spiral and to build a world where wildlife can thrive, governments must have the right ambition: ambition that is underpinned by targets, law, monitoring and enforcement.

Campaigning at COP26

Following two years of work, the RSPB attended the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26), held in Glasgow in November 2021. This climate change conference brought together 120 world leaders and 40,000 registered participants.

RSPB staff worked inside COP26 to influence negotiations, raise the profile of nature, and meet MPs. Along with other organisations, our aim was to 'keep 1.5 alive' – to keep the rate of global warming to 1.5 degrees, to mitigate the worst effects of the nature and climate emergency. We ran a daily podcast ('COPCAST') for the duration of the event.

Outside the official spaces, we had a strong presence at mobilisations on the Global Day of Action on Saturday 6 November. Each RSPB contingent was led by a huge avocet puppet, creating a visual spectacle. More than 10,000 people attended the Glasgow event. In Cardiff, RSPB Cymru worked with other environmental organisations and led a 300-strong block amongst the 2,000 marchers, and there were successful events in Belfast and Birmingham too.

At the end of COP26, the response was mixed. The role of nature was more prominent than at any previous COP, which is a key step. Delegates agreed on commitments to halt and reverse deforestation and acknowledged the role of nature in combatting the nature and climate emergency. Almost 200 countries agreed to the pact and just about 'kept the goal of 1.5 alive' but frustratingly since then there has been a lack of follow-up action which casts this target very much into doubt. We need greater urgency, ambition, and support. We must all go further to match the scale of the emergency.

Our work continues to try to mitigate and adapt to the worst of the nature and climate emergency, and ensure that wildlife is not forgotten. Thank you for supporting this work.

10,000
people attended the Global Day of Action in Glasgow



RSPB staff and volunteers on a COP26 march in Cardiff.

#ForPeatsSake

At COP26, we joined the 'Peat Pavilion' run by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). By showing films about the restoration work at our Forsinard Flows nature reserve in Scotland, we aimed to highlight the global significance of peatlands in tackling climate change. As part of this, our **#ForPeatsSake** campaign asked people to pledge to use only peat-free compost: a simple step we can all take.

Peatlands are a large carbon store and are incredible for wildlife. They're a rare ecosystem, home to a wealth of plants, birds, and insects including sphagnum mosses, sundews, golden plovers and curlews. They store three times more carbon than forests.

Peat is widely sold as a garden compost and soil conditioner. 11,594 people pledged **#ForPeatsSake** to keep peat out of their gardens and in the ground, and 6,265 encouraged their elected representative to support a ban on its sale. The Scottish Government has already banned the sale of peat. We want to send a clear signal that these policies are supported by both gardeners and nature lovers across the UK.



11,594 people pledged to keep their gardens peat free.

You helped fight for legally-binding targets for nature

In a world first, the Wildlife and Countryside Link State of Nature campaign, which the RSPB took a lead role in supporting, secured an amendment to the Westminster Environment Act. This means the UK is the first country in the world to have a legally-binding target for the recovery of nature.

Now, England has long-term targets in air quality, biodiversity, water and waste, and a duty to halt declines in species by 2030. We couldn't have achieved this without the 200,000 people who supported the campaign – thank you.

The Environment Act also sets up a new regulatory body for England and Northern Ireland called the Office for Environmental Protection, the OEP.

Now we must ensure the OEP has the strong powers needed to enforce these targets.

England has a binding duty to halt declines in species by 2030



The UK now has legally-binding targets for the recovery of nature.



RSPB InConvenience Stores highlight a future without nature

Our Revive Our World campaign was launched in September 2020, ultimately pushing for legally-binding targets to restore nature by 2030. In summer 2021, it took a rather unexpected incarnation in the form of pop-up shops. These took members of the public on a trip to a dystopian future – where nature has collapsed, birds are all but extinct, and flooding is a permanent fixture – in order to generate support for nature's recovery.

Pop-up shops opened in Cardiff and Edinburgh, as well as in Manchester, where Coronation Street actor David Neilson joined us for the launch.

Each InConvenience Store was packed with products that may become vital if this future becomes reality – sandbags as nature can no longer work as an effective flood defence, bottles of clean air and drinking water, birdsong on vinyl as this is something we may never hear again, and expensive fruit and vegetables, because pollinators no longer exist. The physical stores were also accompanied by an online shop.

Shoppers visiting the InConvenience Store, both in person and online, were encouraged to add their name in support of action to ensure this vision does not become a reality. Every time 15,000 names were added, another product was put in the 'virtual shopping basket'. Real versions of these baskets were handed to the Prime Minister, the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales, and the First and Deputy Ministers of NI, to urge them to put legally-binding targets in place for nature and vote with nature in mind.

More than 110,000 people shared their support online, putting their voices behind the campaign's urgent message.

The InConvenience Store won the Institute of Promotional Marketing Gold Award in their 'experiential, events and staffing' category.

Red kite sculpture shortlisted for award

Revive Our World also flew to Wales. RSPB Cymru commissioned a red kite sculpture which was launched outside Cardiff Castle.

It was shortlisted for an award by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. The sculpture symbolises nature's recovery and was displayed in Cardiff in late April 2021.





UK Youth for Nature create lines in the sand

The RSPB partnered with UK Youth for Nature (UKY4N) to produce a 50m sand sculpture on the South Bay in Scarborough on 23 March 2022.

The sand drawing displayed four key UK species: beaver, curlew, oak and salmon. As it was washed away by the tide, it gave a visual marker of the loss of nature in the UK, and the urgent need to take decisive action to tackle it.

UKY4N is the UK's youth-led network calling on UK politicians to take urgent action to tackle the loss of nature. Co-director Talia Goldman said:

"Our drawing is a loud and clear message to our governments: this year the UN biodiversity conference is a once-in-a-decade chance to set new global nature goals. Take that chance, then act to meet those goals."

The sand drawing was created by the company Sandinyoureye. The RSPB funded the project, and offered logistical, social media and PR support.

Our highlights: science

We ground our work in a thorough understanding of the natural world. We identify the most important problems, using natural and social sciences to discover their possible causes. We can then find solutions to make a positive impact and test them to measure our success.

Greenfinches, swifts and house martins are now at risk

There's bad news for familiar species in the latest *Birds of Conservation Concern* report, an assessment of the status of the UK's 245 regularly occurring bird species. Unfortunately, 70 species are now on the Red List, which highlights species of the 'highest conservation concern' that now need urgent help. The Amber List represents birds of 'moderate concern', and the Green List those of 'least concern'.

The Red List now includes well-known species such as the swift, house martin, greenfinch and Bewick's swan. Swifts and house martins moved from the Amber to the Red List, while greenfinches moved straight from the Green to the Red List. This followed a population crash caused by trichomonosis, a disease which is spread through contaminated food and water. You can help by cleaning your bird feeders weekly and providing fresh water daily. If you see a sick bird in your garden, stop feeding until there is no further evidence of infection.

However, there are some positives. White-tailed eagles have moved from the Red to the Amber List as a result of extensive conservation work, including reintroductions, and increased protection of nest sites. White-tailed eagles became extinct in the UK in the 19th century. The release of birds on the Isle of Rum (1975 and 1985), northwest Scotland (1993 to 1998) and east Scotland (2007 to 2012) brought a change of fortune. The population now stands at 120 breeding pairs.

Birds of Conservation Concern has been published about every six years since 1996, and is compiled by a range of different nature organisations, including the RSPB.


Kevin Sawford (rspb-images.com)

Greenfinches are now on the Red List of Conservation Concern.


Tony Hamblin (rspb-images.com)

House martins have moved from the Amber to the Red List.


Sophie Mott (RSPB)

At Hope Farm, we run a profitable farming business that helps nature at the same time.

Pioneering agroforestry at Hope Farm

At Hope Farm in Knapwell, Cambridgeshire, we're trialling agroforestry to understand the impact this will have on nature. This is part of a farming carbon study initiated with help from The Northwick Trust.

Hope Farm is an arable farm, where we trial ways to farm that benefit both wildlife and the farming business. Agroforestry is the practice of incorporating trees and shrubs into the farming system, and has multiple potential benefits for nature.

A team of more than 30 volunteers helped plant more than 1,000 trees during the winter of 2021, and converted an 11 hectare arable field into an 'alley cropping system'. The volunteers planted trees and shrubs every 24 metres. The 24 metres between each section of trees will still be arable.

They planted a variety of trees, including broadleaves, to provide a shelter belt and windbreak, 13 varieties of apple trees, some of which we hope will produce Hope Farm apple juice in a few years, and three varieties of cobnut. Cobnut is a type of hazel, and we also hope to produce cobnut oil to complement the rapeseed oil we already produce.

The next job is to monitor the effects of agroforestry, by monitoring the wildlife of the area and the amount of carbon captured by the trees, as well as the economic impact of the field on the farming business.

Managing agricultural land for nature is a key area of work in the new RSPB strategy.



trees were planted by volunteers during the winter of 2021

Sophie Mott (RSPB)

Agroforestry in action at Hope Farm.


Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)

The Volunteer Monitoring of Farm Wildlife project helps to connect farmers and volunteers.

Surveying farmland through volunteer power

Farmers and volunteers are connected through the Volunteer Monitoring of Farm Wildlife project. Volunteers undertake farm surveys for a range of species. The results help farmers improve their land management and help us understand how to support them as they boost their wildlife. Volunteers are involved at every level and this year it is being trialled in Cambridgeshire and Wiltshire.


Andrew Parkinson (rspb-images.com)

Seabirds are at risk from being accidentally caught in fishing nets.


Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)

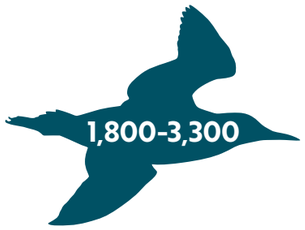
With government help, seabirds may be able to thrive once more.

Tackling seabird bycatch in UK waters

Seabirds are at risk of being accidentally caught on fishing hooks and in nets, as 'bycatch'. The RSPB and BirdLife International have worked through the Albatross Task Force for almost two decades, to reduce the amount of bycatch in places such as South Africa and Argentina. But it happens closer to home, too.

A 2020 report commissioned by Defra estimated that at least ten seabird species are caught in fishing gear in UK waters. Between 2,200–9,100 northern fulmars and 1,800–3,300 guillemots are killed unintentionally by UK vessels each year. Most UK bycatch happens with longlines in northern Scotland, and gillnets in southwest England.

We have proven that there are simple ways to prevent seabird bycatch, for example by fishing at night, when most seabirds don't hunt, and by adding weights to make baited hooks sink faster. That's why we're calling on UK governments to roll out such measures to prevent avoidable seabird deaths. Visit: rspb.org.uk/bycatch



guillemots are being unintentionally killed in the UK each year

How a pair of looming eyes might help us save birds

Each year, around 400,000 birds are accidentally killed in gillnets – walls of nylon netting. We've trialled different ways to mitigate gillnet bycatch, and the latest are the 'looming-eyes buoy', known as the LEB, and predator-shaped kites. They act like a scarecrow, to prevent birds getting close to the nets. Initial trials in Estonia look promising and we're now awaiting the results from trials in Cornwall and Iceland.

Andres Kalamees

Our highlights: species

Survival of species and biodiversity are the ultimate signs of whether conservation is working. That's why we protect species from direct threats, such as loss of habitat, and indirect threats, like loss of food sources.

Bringing species back from the brink

Back from the Brink was an ambitious partnership project, focusing on saving some of our most threatened species from extinction. Running from 2017 to 2022, it focused on 20 key species, and looked to benefit 112 more.

In total, 96 species showed an improvement in their conservation status, with 187 species benefiting overall.

The eight core Back from the Brink partners worked directly with 89 other organisations across England, and 59,000 people directly engaged with the work.

One of the target species was the black-tailed godwit. At the start of the project in 2017, there were 38 pairs. At the end of the project, there were 53. Project staff and volunteers reared 155 birds in captivity away from predators and other risks, and these birds are now surviving, migrating and breeding along with the wild population. Staff and volunteers also maintained 1,000 hectares of wet grassland with breeding wading birds in mind, and installed and upgraded more than 7km of anti-predator fencing, to protect eggs and chicks from foxes and badgers. They organised events in the local area too, and around 1,200 people attended.

The RSPB also led projects to help field crickets, little whirlpool ramshorn snails and willow tits.

Although the Back from the Brink project has now finished, it has laid a strong foundation to enable the target species to recover into the future. The project partners were Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bat Conservation Trust, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation, Plantlife and the RSPB, led by Natural England. There were a number of key funders including National Lottery Heritage Fund. Find out more at: naturebftb.co.uk

187

species benefited from the Back from the Brink project



155 black-tailed godwits were reared in captivity as part of the Back from the Brink project.



Bittern numbers on RSPB reserves are now at their highest levels ever.

2021: a record-breaking year for bitterns and cranes

Both bitterns and cranes had a record-breaking year for numbers in 2021, and it's clear our conservation efforts played a part.

Bitterns, which are members of the heron family, tend to spend their time well-camouflaged in reedbeds. You're more likely to hear them than see them, as the male's booming mating call can be heard up to a mile away.

Sadly, in 1997 only 11 booming males were left in the UK. However, following extensive conservation work, in 2021, a record 228 booming males were heard in the UK (108 of these on RSPB reserves), up from 209 in 2019.

Cranes are also at record highs, after going extinct in the UK 400 years ago. In 1979, a small number of cranes colonised the Norfolk Broads, though the population grew very steadily, with just four pairs nationally in 2000.

The Great Crane Project was formed in 2010, and involved hand-rearing and releasing chicks on the Somerset Moors and Levels. There are now 72 pairs of cranes across the UK, a new record since the 1600s. In 2021, 65 pairs of cranes bred, and raised 40 chicks.

Senior Conservation Scientist Simon Wotton, said: "This shows how quickly nature can bounce back when given the chance."

Thank you for supporting the RSPB, and making conservation success stories like this possible.

The Great Crane Project is a partnership of the RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and Pensthorpe Conservation Trust and was supported by the Viridor Credits Environmental Company through the Landfill Communities Fund.

Crane numbers are now at their highest since the 1600s



Montiagh's Moss at Portmore Lough nature reserve is a key site for the **Irish damselfly**. An MSc study based here showed they prefer pools with open water rather than those full of vegetation.



Irish damselflies prefer open pools.

Using dogs to safeguard seabirds

Seabirds often choose to nest on islands with no land predators, and are particularly vulnerable to introduced animals that don't occur there naturally. 'Biosecurity' refers to the actions we take to protect islands from invasive predators. Conservation detection dogs are used on islands all over the world, as an aid for biosecurity, but are relatively new to the UK.

Greg Morgan is one of two recently-trained conservation detection dog handlers, as part of our Biosecurity for LIFE project, which aims to safeguard the UK's internationally important seabird islands.

"I live and work on the RSPB's Ramsey Island reserve off the coast of Pembrokeshire. Brown rats arrived here via shipwrecks in the 1800s, but were thankfully removed in 2000. We need to maintain effective biosecurity measures to ensure they don't return. Dogs have 300 million scent receptors (humans only have six million), so they're a great addition to our biosecurity toolkit."

"I recently undertook training with Kryus Ltd who specialise in conservation detection dog handler training. Dogs can check for stowaways on boats, and check people's bags. Crucially, they can detect the presence of a target species much more quickly than using the traditional methods."

> "Dogs have 300 million scent receptors (humans only have six million), so they're a great addition to our biosecurity toolkit."
>
> – Greg Morgan, RSPB Ramsey Island site manager

Great steps forward for turtle doves

We're proud to say that 2021–2022 was a momentous year for our work on turtle doves. We saw hunting bans, the delivery of more UK breeding habitat, the first-ever UK turtle dove survey and progress for Operation Turtle Dove.

In 2021, for the first time, no hunting of turtle doves was permitted in France, Spain or Portugal. This saved the lives of more than a million turtle doves in just a single season. The RSPB played a pivotal role in developing the science, species action planning, and international policy work, that led to the hunting ban in 2021, and calls for a sustainable long-term management system.

This will give the western European breeding population of turtle doves much needed breathing space, and provide an ideal opportunity to improve their breeding season habitats: the priority action needed to reverse their declines.

Operation Turtle Dove, with the RSPB as the lead partner, also made good progress, encouraging farmers and landowners in eastern and south-east England to adopt turtle dove-friendly conservation measures. We increased the area of land covered by the project by over 30% in just one year.

We also led the first-ever UK turtle dove survey, giving us an update on how many birds we have (estimated at around 2,100 pairs) and where we should focus our efforts. The survey results are a stark reminder of how many turtle doves the UK has lost since 1970, but with the right approach, and further RSPB science underway, it feels like we have the right tools and a real chance to turn around the fortunes of this much-loved bird.



More than a million turtle doves were saved by a hunting ban.



Sadly, crimes against wild birds continue.

Fighting crimes against wild birds

Wild birds are protected by law, but sadly, crimes against them continue. Our Investigations Team works with other organisations to investigate crimes and bring offenders to justice. They support the authorities by providing advice, expert witness and investigative help on wild bird crime.

One recent investigation, which culminated in January 2022, resulted in a Nottinghamshire gamekeeper receiving 20 weeks' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and a £1,000 fine for killing two buzzards in a trap.

Shortly before New Year 2021, a member of the public contacted us. They'd come across a crow cage trap, with a buzzard caught inside. An RSPB Investigations Officer found the trap, released the buzzard and then installed a remote camera. This then led us to discover evidence of a crime and find out who was responsible.

The footage we retrieved from the remote camera showed a buzzard flying into the trap, and feeding on the bait inside. John Orrey, a gamekeeper on a small pheasant shoot on the land, then entered the trap and beat the buzzard to death. He returned the next day, killing a second buzzard.

Following an investigation, Orrey pleaded guilty to all charges.

RSPB Investigations Officer Tom Grose said: "Installing cameras like these is the best way of catching a culprit and preventing more deaths. The footage is truly shocking, and it's clear that better regulation is needed."

For more details on birdcrime and the RSPB Investigations Team, visit: rspb.org.uk/birdcrime

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Several **glossy ibises** were spotted at our Ouse Fen and Ouse Washes nature reserves in spring 2021.

The birds are from a main breeding colony in southern Spain, and have yet to breed in the UK. We're hoping they may breed here in 2022 – fingers crossed!



Glossy ibises have been spotted in the UK.



Endangered birds receive respite on Gough Island

Islands often have a unique set of wildlife. But invasive species can upset this balance, leading to widespread issues. This is why our island restoration work, to remove invasive species and restore this balance, is a key part of our work.

Gough Island in the South Atlantic is one of the most important places for breeding seabirds in the world. Species including the critically endangered Tristan albatross and the endangered Atlantic petrel breed here every year. These birds are at risk, however, from invasive house mice which have adapted to eat not only seabird eggs and chicks but also grown adults.

In 2020, the RSPB brought together experts and partners from around the world to attempt an eradication of these mice. The Covid-19 pandemic meant the 2020 project had to be postponed, but another attempt was launched in 2021.

The mission went as planned. Over the summer (the winter season on Gough) two hundred tonnes of cereal bait were distributed across the island. The crew then returned to their home countries of South Africa, the UK, New Zealand, Mexico, Australia and the USA.

However, in December 2021, a mouse was spotted on a camera trap. We've now confirmed that a breeding population of house mice is still present on the island. Analysis has confirmed that these survived the baiting operation.

The goal now is to gather as much information as possible about what might have contributed to some mice not eating the bait, to inform a future restoration attempt. Gough Island is an incredibly difficult island on which to operate, so the data we gather will be of great interest to other organisations who are carrying out island restoration projects around the world.

Despite these sightings of mice, early indications suggest the project has given the birds a fighting chance. The endangered MacGillivray's prion is a small seabird that nests underground on Gough, making it easy prey for mice. Between 2017 and 2021 only a single chick survived from 216 monitored nests. Following the restoration project, however, 41 out of 50 monitored prion chicks successfully fledged.

We're still determining next steps in the wake of this major project setback, but there's every hope the restoration has given the breeding seabirds some breathing space to build up their population numbers. We'd like to thank all our funders and supporters for their help with this critical work. For more details, visit: rspb.org.uk/goughisland

82%

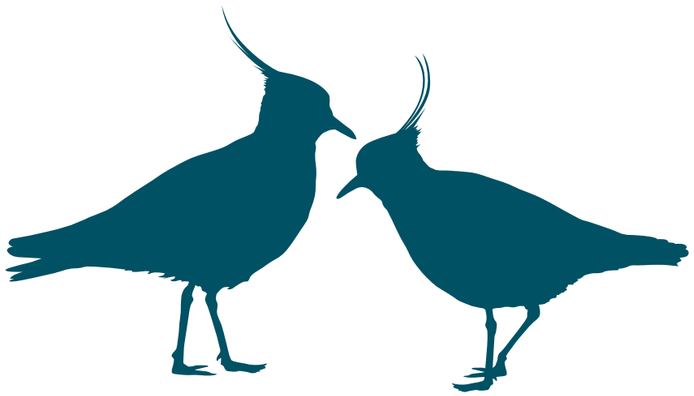
of monitored prion chicks successfully fledged in 2021

Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)

RSPB nature reserves are home to a significant number of threatened wetland birds, including black-necked grebes. At St Aidans nature reserve near Leeds, these increased from ten pairs in 2020 to a record 17 pairs in 2021.

Saving nature on our reserves

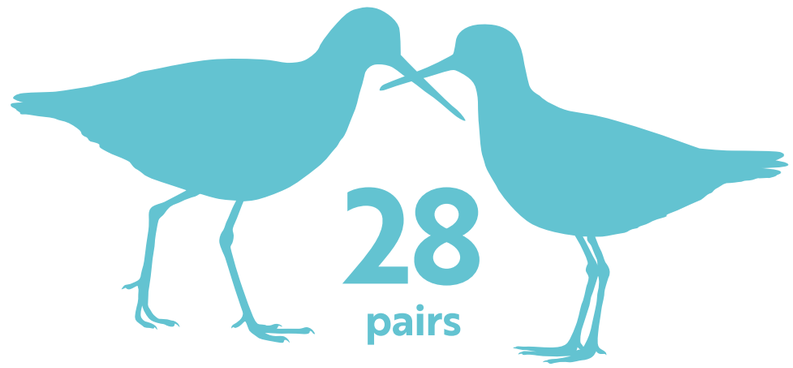
Giving nature space to thrive was the key to a successful season this year. Here are a few highlights from our nature reserves.



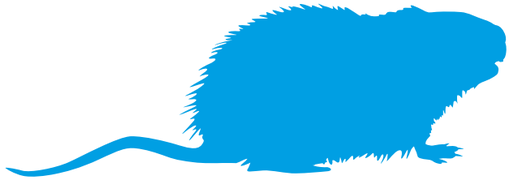
Highest number of breeding lapwings at West Sedgemoor since 1995

159,000

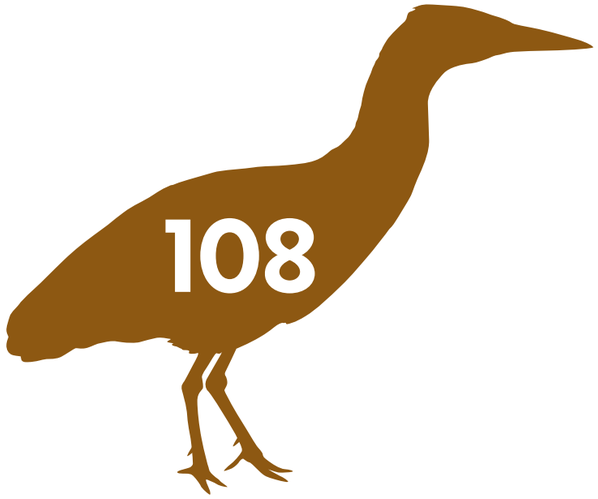
hectares – the area covered by our nature reserves



Of breeding redshanks at Ardnave on Islay – the highest number for 18 years



We recorded water voles at Ynys-hir and St Aidans after several years' absence



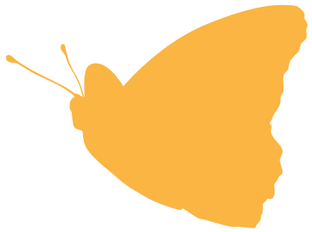
Booming male bitterns were recorded on RSPB nature reserves – the highest levels ever in the UK.



Plants of the declining yellow centaury were counted at Arne



Sandwich terns at Larne Lough increased from 900 pairs in 2020 to 1,113 in 2021



Blean Woods is home to the largest colony of heath fritillary butterflies in the UK



Spoonbills nested at Hodbarrow for the first time, fledging one chick

Our highlights: places

Nature needs other nature. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and joined up protected areas on land and on sea. We help people and nature coexist in harmony, ensuring that where people are living, nature can thrive.

Two RSPB reserves receive international recognition

Only projects that are making a significant contribution to climate change are able to meet the IUCN's Global Standard for nature-based solutions. As announced at COP26 in Glasgow, only five locations in the UK meet these standards – and two are RSPB nature reserves.

The Global Standard is an international assessment process, recognising the most impactful projects that help unlock the power of nature to help mitigate the nature and climate emergency.

Our work at Haweswater in the Lake District and Medmerry in West Sussex are two of the five sites to receive this recognition.

Medmerry was part of a coastal realignment project, designed to protect local communities from flooding, and it's also an incredible wildlife haven with nesting sites for avocets, black-headed gulls, little ringed plovers and oystercatchers.

Haweswater is managed by the RSPB, in partnership with United Utilities and provides a home for a range of wildlife, including red squirrels and pied flycatchers. We're working with neighbouring landowners to restore a mosaic of woodland, peatland and grassland. This will enable the landscape to lock away carbon in its trees and soils, while also reducing flood risk. Site Manager Lee Schofield tells the story of Haweswater in his 2022 book, *Wild Fell*. For more details, visit: rspb.org.uk/haweswaternews


Patrick Neaves

Red squirrels make Haweswater their home.



Haweswater is managed by the RSPB, in partnership with United Utilities.


Richard Bowler (rspb-images.com)

We're helping to create new homes for butterflies in Bromley.

How can we make green spaces better for nature?

The RSPB's partnership with greenspace management contractor *i*dverde helps communities make green spaces even better places for nature. This has now grown to six different partnerships.

An interesting new development is the connection between green spaces and sport. At Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, a huge effort is underway to update all the wildlife survey records at the site, and support the rare striped bombardier beetle in the area. We've also started working with Manchester City Football Club, to ensure that 55 hectares of wildlife habitats in urban areas is managed with nature in mind.

From sport – to prison! We secured a partnership at Wormwood Scrubs, from January 2022. This will focus on community engagement, helping people to connect with nature in the London area.

In Bromley, the partnership has entered its fourth year. A highlight is the 'Brilliant Butterflies' project. Working with Butterfly Conservation, we created new homes for butterflies and insects by restoring and creating chalk grassland in the area. *i*dverde is also working with the NI Housing Executive, working for people and nature on an 85,000 house estate, and in the Midlands, we've recruited 17 new volunteers to work on conservation projects in the region.

How a legacy helped us buy more land for nature

We were able to purchase an area of land called Horse Common, thanks in part to a generous legacy from RSPB supporters Peter and Patricia Shuttlewood.

Peter and Patricia Shuttlewood were passionate about nature and the RSPB. They were Life Fellows, regularly took part in Big Garden Birdwatch, and frequently supported our campaigns. We hope their love of nature will live on, through our work at Horse Common.

Horse Common is a royal woodland, home to wonderful bird species such as wood warblers, hawfinches, spotted flycatchers and firecrests. A former conifer plantation, it's located next to our existing Franchises Lodge reserve in the New Forest. We plan to restore the area to its natural state of mixed woodland and heathland, which will help to create wonderful habitat for wildlife and secure the future of these species.

We're always very grateful to generous people who leave the RSPB a legacy in their Will. It's a lovely way to ensure your passion for nature lives on for future generations. If this is something that interests you, visit: rspb.org.uk/legacy

England

Edwin Kats (rspb-images.com)

Swanscombe is vital for wildlife, such as bearded tits.



England has 85% of the UK population, so connecting people to nature, especially in urban locations, is crucial. We can only help ensure nature's recovery by inspiring more people to act. Sadly, some of our most important places for nature are still under threat. We've worked hard with other organisations and local communities to ensure the best outcomes for nature.

Emma Marsh
Director, RSPB England

Saving Swanscombe

Swanscombe Peninsula, on the banks of the River Thames, is under threat from the proposed London Resort theme park, dubbed 'UK Disneyland'.

The development proposal stands in stark contrast to Natural England's March 2021 notification of the Swanscombe Peninsula as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in recognition of its importance for breeding birds including nightingales, cuckoos, grasshopper warblers, shovelers and pochards, marsh harriers, grey herons and black redstarts. Swanscombe also plays an important role for local people as a green space.

Although the application was withdrawn, due to the site being declared an SSSI and in response to pressure from campaigners, we expect a new application will be submitted. The struggle to save Swanscombe isn't over. If the development is approved, it could lead to one of the largest losses of designated habitat in England, removing the site for people and wildlife.

We believe that protection of habitats like Swanscombe is crucial to achieving the UK's commitment to halting the loss of wildlife. We also believe the London Resort proposal is contrary to the Government's commitment to protect 30% of the UK for wildlife by 2030.

Together with Kent Wildlife Trust, CPRE Kent and local campaign group Save Swanscombe Peninsula, we actively support Buglife's campaign to save Swanscombe and preserve its vital wildlife habitats. That's why we're supporting Buglife's **#SaveSwanscombe** petition. For more information, visit: buglife.org.uk/campaigns/save-swanscombe-marshes/

How Birmingham's young people are connecting to nature

More than 1,800 young people in Birmingham can potentially connect with nature in new and exciting ways, thanks to a grant from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Children from a diverse range of backgrounds could enjoy bug safaris, plant trees and search for signs of spring in a project in partnership with The Prince's Trust, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, community groups and teachers.

In addition, through the funding we also aim to give teachers the training and confidence to give children amazing close-up experiences with nature in their school grounds. We hope this experience will inspire them to love and look after their local green spaces in years to come.

Alongside The Prince's Trust, the funding has also enabled us to give 24 young people the chance to learn practical conservation skills. Aged 16 to 30 and not currently in education, employment or training, we helped them learn practical conservation skills such as how to manage meadows and coppice trees, connect with nature, and show others how to connect, too.

The Government grant totalled £250,000.



Young people connecting with nature at RSPB Sandwell Valley nature reserve.

Asma Faraz (RSPB)

Northern Ireland

Angela Mahon

This South Belfast Wild Wall mural draws attention to the plight of curlews.



We were delighted to showcase our conservation work on key species, with the launch of LIFE Raft on Rathlin Island and Curlew LIFE in Fermanagh and the Antrim Hills, as well as the continued success of CABB (Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity) and LELP (Lough Erne Landscape Partnership). We also welcomed the introduction of a Climate Change Bill in the NI Assembly. Thanks to everyone who made this possible.

Joanne Sherwood
Director, RSPB Northern Ireland



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

In recent years, puffins have declined by more than half on Rathlin Island.

Green light for major Rathlin Island conservation project

A new conservation project will safeguard Rathlin Island's incredible seabirds and wildlife.

Rathlin Island is Northern Ireland's largest seabird colony and is a vital nesting site for threatened species such as puffins and razorbills. Sadly, Rathlin's wildlife is under threat, and puffins have declined by more than half in recent years.

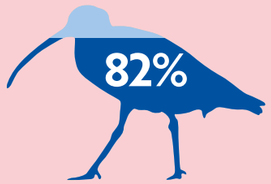
70% of Rathlin's visitors say birds and other wildlife are the main reason for their visit, so by restoring Rathlin's wildlife, it will benefit the local community, visitors, and create around 36 new staff roles.

Part of the plan for Rathlin is an eradication project similar to those undertaken on the Isles of Scilly, the Shiants and most recently on Gough Island in the South Atlantic. We'll use our experience of these areas to protect and promote Rathlin's wildlife for future generations to enjoy, whilst making Rathlin an even better place to live, work and visit.

The project, called Rathlin Acting for Tomorrow (LIFE Raft) has received £4.5 million. The aim is to safeguard Rathlin's internationally important seabird population, and help Rathlin's recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic. For more details, see: rspb.org.uk/rathlinconservation

Belfast's wonderwall

This amazing Wild Wall mural (pictured left) in South Belfast was inspired by the youth environmental group UK Youth for Nature (UKY4N) in partnership with RSPB NI. The artwork was created by the internationally acclaimed street artist, Emic, and features a curlew set against an anonymous figure.



Curlew breeding numbers have fallen by 82% since the mid-1980s

The mural draws attention to the plight of the curlew. Their breeding numbers have fallen by 82% since the mid-1980s, and they're now one of Northern Ireland's most endangered species.

The Wild Wall formed part of a series of nature-inspired murals across the UK to highlight the impacts of climate change on the natural world in the lead up to COP26 and the biodiversity conference COP15.

In this crucial decade, these outstanding artworks will continue to provide a vital reference and backdrop to the government's progress on effective policy and action to tackle the nature and climate emergency.

Scotland

Paul Turner (rspb-images.com)

It's official: connecting to nature is beneficial for our health and wellbeing.



We united our supporters with tens of thousands of activists and marched through the streets of Glasgow during the COP26 summit. Together, we demanded action on nature and climate, which helped close a deal to 'keeping 1.5 alive' – just – and also put nature in the agreement for the first time. Our advocacy also secured a commitment from the Scottish Government for a much-needed £55 million nature restoration fund.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland

Nature: a positive prescription for health and wellbeing

The Covid-19 pandemic showed us the benefits of nature for our health and wellbeing. The Nature Prescriptions pilot, where GPs prescribed nature as part of treatment plans, gave even more support to this idea.

During the trial project, GPs at five Edinburgh practices prescribed nature to nearly 350 patients for a range of different health problems, including mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, and physical health conditions such as obesity and diabetes. The nature prescriptions were supported by a leaflet and calendar of local, seasonal activities.

Some activities included exercising outdoors, but most were intended to create deeper connections with nature, for example tuning into the seasons, listening to birdsong, or playing an active role in helping local wildlife to thrive.

The results were extremely encouraging. Such positive feedback suggests that nature should be part of every healthcare professional's toolkit. We now hope to find funding and partners to support extending the positive reach of Nature Prescriptions.

The Nature Prescriptions project pilot was in partnership with Edinburgh and Lothian Health Foundation. To find out more, visit: rspb.org.uk/natureprescriptions

Nature Prescriptions in numbers

- 87% of patients would continue to use nature to help with their health and wellbeing.
- 60% felt their awareness of nature had increased.
- 91% of prescribing health professionals said they would continue to prescribe it.

Celebrating 10 years of Scotland's nature heroes

In November 2021, the RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards celebrated their 10th anniversary with a live online broadcast, hosted by Arlene Stuart. The evening recognised 62 exceptional people and projects working in nature conservation, and the event was supported by Deborah Meaden, Gordon Buchanan, Chris Packham and Dr Amir Khan.

Our one-off Nature Champions of the Decade Award was decided by a public vote, with 6,500 votes cast online. This special award was won by Sunnyside Primary. Their 'how small ripples bring about tides of change' project inspired campaigns such as **#DrainCampaign** and **#DareToSoar**. These campaigns challenged Government policy to bring about change across many different ecosystems and habitats.

Over 10 years, the Nature of Scotland Awards have raised more than £412,000 in sponsorship and seen 900 applications. With over 1.2 million people seeing our social media posts this year, the profile of the Awards continues to grow. This year the public vote will focus on our new Citizen Science Award. Finalists will be revealed at a reception at the Scottish Parliament in September 2022.

For more details, visit: rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/at-home-and-abroad/scotland/nature-of-scotland-awards/

£412,000
raised by the Nature of Scotland Awards

Wales

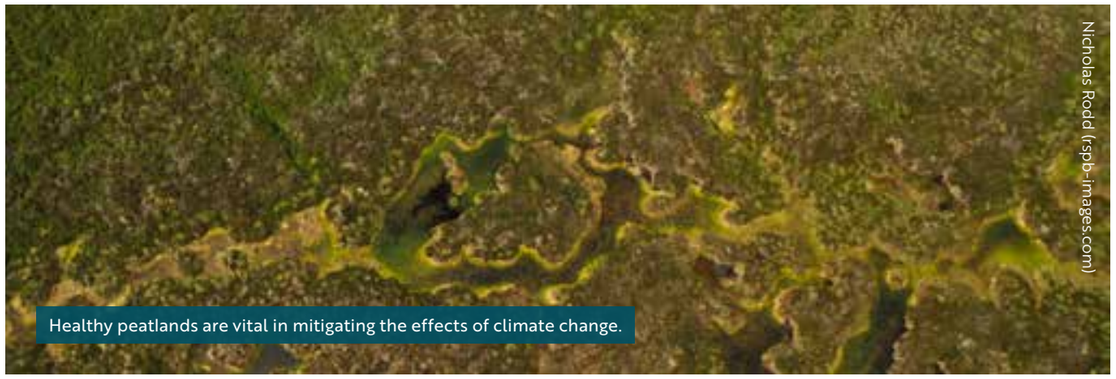
David Norton (rspb-images.com)

In 2021, 2,976 Arctic tern nests were recorded on the Skerries, a group of rocky islets that are owned by Trinity House and managed by RSPB Cymru for conservation purposes.



We have restored habitats and brought back lost species through our peatland restoration work. We have engaged with new audiences through the Revive Our World campaign, and we joined worldwide nature and climate emergency marches. Diolch o galon (thank you) to all of our staff, volunteers and supporters for your tireless efforts over the past 12 months.

Alun Prichard
Director, RSPB Cymru



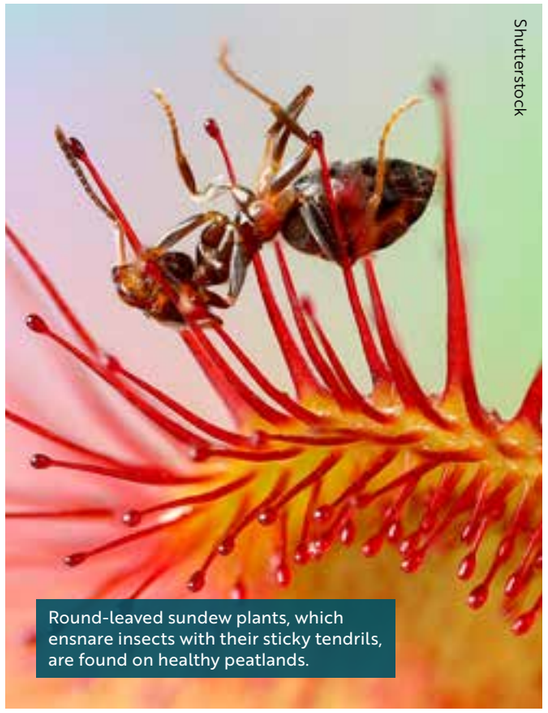
Nicholas Rodd (rspb-images.com)

Healthy peatlands are vital in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Restoring peatlands and tackling climate change

UK peatland has a critical role to play in tackling the nature and climate emergency. Due to the carbon content and carbon-storing potential of peatland, it's an effective nature-based solution to climate change. Healthy peatland also plays a vital role in helping us adapt to the effects of climate change by slowing down and absorbing rainwater as it filters down from the hills, helping to reduce flooding. Peatland restoration also helps protect important wildlife species.

That's why, in partnership with Hafren Dyfrdwy, the Lake Vyrnwy team are pleased to embark on an ambitious programme of peatland restoration in extensive areas of degraded blanket bog, in the uplands around Lake Vyrnwy. We're aiming to create conditions where peat-forming vegetation can thrive, creating a natural habitat that will help tackle the nature and climate emergency.



Shutterstock

Round-leaved sundew plants, which ensnare insects with their sticky tendrils, are found on healthy peatlands.

Many happy re-terns

The Skerries, a group of rocky islets off the coast of Anglesey, were home to an impressive number of terns in 2021.

We counted 2,976 Arctic tern nests, almost 200 more than in 2019, as well as 423 common tern nests, which is the highest number ever recorded on the Skerries.

This was especially welcome news, because in 2020 the terns abandoned the colony after the arrival of two peregrines. Ordinarily, RSPB wardens protect and monitor the terns' nests, but they were unable to do so in 2020 due to Covid-19 lockdowns. When the wardens returned in 2021, so did the terns – proof our intervention has great results for wildlife!

2,976

Arctic tern nests, almost 200 more than in 2019

Cymru

David Norton (rspb-images.com)

Yn 2021, cofnodwyd 2,976 o nythod môr-wenoliaid yr Arctig ar Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniaid, grŵp o ynysoedd creigiog sy'n eiddo i Trinity House ac a reolir gan RSPB Cymru at ddibenion cadwraeth.



Rydym wedi adfer cynefinoedd ac wedi dod â rhywogaethau coll yn ôl drwy ein gwaith i adfer mawndiroedd. Rydym wedi ymgysylltu â chynulleidfaoedd newydd drwy'r ymgyrch Adfywio Ein Byd, ac wedi ymuno â gorymdeithiau byd natur ac argyfwng yr hinsawdd ledled y byd. Diolch o galon i'n holl staff, gwirfoddolwyr a chefnogwyr am eich ymdrechion diflino dros y 12 mis diwethaf.

Alun Prichard
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru



Nicholas Rodd (rspb-images.com)

Mae mawndiroedd yn hanfodol i liniaru effeithiau newid yn yr hinsawdd.

Adfer mawndiroedd a mynd i'r afael â newid yn yr hinsawdd

Mae gan fawndiroedd y DU rôl hollbwysig i'w chwarae o ran mynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng hinsawdd a natur. Oherwydd cynnwys carbon a photensial mawndiroedd i storio carbon, mae'n ateb seiliedig ar natur effeithiol i newid yn yr hinsawdd. Mae mawndiroedd iach hefyd yn chwarae rhan hollbwysig o ran addasu i effeithiau newid yn yr hinsawdd drwy arafu a llyncu llawer iawn o ddŵr glaw wrth iddo lifo i lawr o'r bryniau. Mae adfer mawndiroedd hefyd yn helpu i warchod rhywogaethau bywyd gwyllt pwysig.

Dyma pam, mewn partneriaeth â Hafren Dyfrdwy, mae tîm Llyn Efyrnwy yn falch o gychwyn ar raglen uchelgeisiol o adfer mawndiroedd mewn ardaloedd helaeth o orgorsydd wedi'u diraddio, yn yr ucheldiroedd o amgylch Llyn Efyrnwy. Ein nod yw creu'r amodau lle gall llystyfiant sy'n ffurfio mawn ffynnu, gan greu cynefin naturiol a fydd yn helpu i fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng hinsawdd a byd natur.



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Mae gwlithlys yn blanhigyn cigysol sy'n defnyddio ei dendriliau coch llachar gludiog i ddal pryfed sy'n mynd heibio.

Croeso nôl i fôr-wenoliaid y Moelrhoniaid

Roedd Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniaid, grŵp o ynysoedd creigiog oddi ar arfordir Ynys Môn, yn gartref i nifer sylweddol o fôr-wenoliaid yn 2021.

Fe wnaethom ni gyfrif 2,976 o nythod môr-wenoliaid yr Arctig, bron i 200 yn fwy nag yn 2019, yn ogystal â 423 o nythod môr-wenoliaid cyffredin, sef y nifer uchaf a gofnodwyd erioed ar Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniaid.

Roedd hyn yn newyddion da dros ben oherwydd yn 2020 gadawodd y môr-wenoliaid y nythfa wedi i ddau hebog tramor gyrraedd yno. Fel arfer, mae wardeniaid yr RSPB yn gwarchod ac yn monitro nythod y môr-wenoliaid, ond nid oeddent yn gallu gwneud hynny yn 2020 oherwydd cyfnodau clo Covid-19. Pan ddychwelodd y wardeniaid yn 2021, felly hefyd gwnaeth y môr-wenoliaid – prawf bod ein presenoldeb yno yn arwain at ganlyniadau gwych i fywyd gwyllt!

2,976

2,976 o nythod môr-wenoliaid y Gogledd, bron i 200 yn fwy na 2019

International

Albert Salemgareyev (ACBK)

Saiga antelope on the Kazakh steppe are a conservation success story.

The Saiga saga

Saiga antelope on the Kazakh steppe have increased from 20,000 to 842,000 in five years.

The Kazakh steppe is an expanse of grassland astretching across Kazakhstan in the heart of Central Asia. These ancient grasslands are home to a huge variety of wildlife, including larks, steppe eagles and ground squirrels.

The steppe also hosts the world's largest population of saiga antelope. Historically, these antelopes migrated across the steppe in their millions.

However, decades of uncontrolled poaching, habitat fragmentation and disease destroyed their numbers. By 2005, they were close to extinction.

In 2005, the RSPB co-founded the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative alongside the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, the Kazakh Government, and other international partners. Together we've worked to restore the saiga to their former numbers. We've used satellite tracking to understand saiga movements, increased anti-poaching activity, and established protected areas. As a result, the saiga has made an astonishing comeback - from around 20,000 individuals in 2005 to more than 820,000 in 2021.



Pete Steward

The Taita apalis is one of the rarest birds in the world.

Restoring the cloud forests of Kenya's Taita Hills

Thanks to a three-year Darwin grant, work to restore cloud forest and protect species in Kenya's Taita Hills can continue.

The Taita Hills covers 35,000 hectares in south-eastern Kenya close to the Tsavo West national park. The area was once covered in a dense cloud forest but is now severely fragmented – just 12 areas remain, of between one and 220 hectares. These fragments are vital. They're a Key Biodiversity Area and an Endemic Bird Area.

Our partnership project focuses on increasing the native forest habitat for the 28 plant and animal species unique to the Taita Hills, and in particular two bird species: the Taita apalis and Taita thrush. The Taita apalis is one of the rarest birds in the world, and is critically endangered due to its tiny range and fragmented habitat.

The grant will enable us to protect and expand the surviving fragments of forest and safeguard its unique wildlife. Working with local community forest associations, the project aims to involve community members in forest regeneration whilst improving livelihoods through supporting agroforestry.

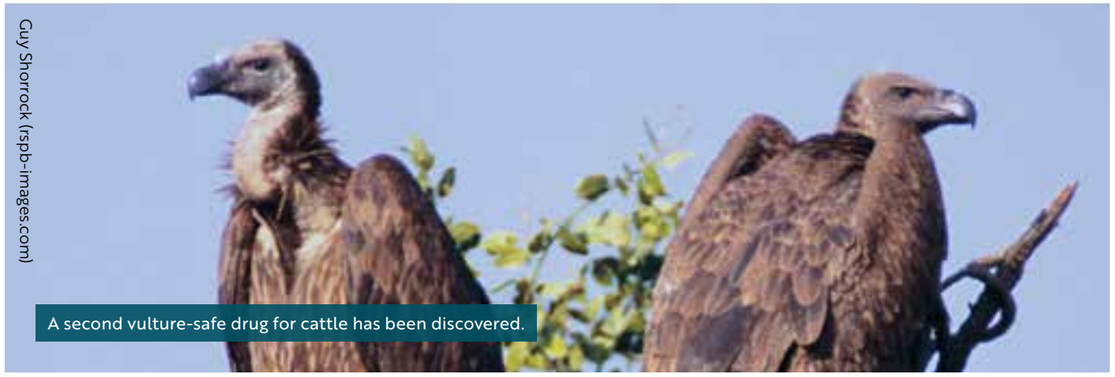
The Covid-19 pandemic delayed the start of implementation, but work is ongoing to protect, restore and expand the forest fragments. Early signs show that Taita thrush numbers have improved thanks to earlier work, though this isn't yet the case for the Taita apalis.

We hope this project will help improve livelihoods in an area where 32% of people live below the poverty line, and scale up forest restoration approaches to enable us to secure additional funding so partners can continue their work here.

Partners on this project are Nature Kenya, BirdLife International, Plants for Life International, Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Dawida Biodiversity Conservation Group (DABICO) and assorted Community Forest Associations.

Helping migratory birds from the Arctic to South Africa

A 'flyway' is a migration highway. The East Atlantic Flyway stretches from the High Arctic to South Africa. It is used by over three billion birds (excluding seabirds and raptors) every year. Alongside other NGOs, we look after migrant birds here as part of BirdLife's East Atlantic Flyway Initiative. The initiative works to understand why some long-distance migrants, such as turtle doves, have declined so steeply over the past three decades. We do this by tracking their movements, and testing practical solutions to halt and reverse these declines. We also work with decision-makers to curtail human activity that threatens these birds and habitats.


Guy Shorrock (rspb-images.com)

A second vulture-safe drug for cattle has been discovered.

Fate of Asian vultures looks more positive

Things have just got a lot better for Asian vultures through our work with SAVE – Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction.

SAVE is a group of 25 partners, including the RSPB, working to secure the futures of vultures across Asia.

In Pithauli, near the Chitwan National Park, Nepal, further captive-reared white-rumped vultures have been successfully released. The next stage is for them to behave like their wild-bred counterparts, and breed successfully. We're pleased to report we reached this milestone when a pair of captive-reared white-rumped vultures fledged a chick in the wild in 2021 – a world first for this species.

Also in Nepal, we're proud to announce that the Gandaki-Lumbini vulture safe zone has been officially declared. We have demonstrated that this huge area is completely free of the veterinary drug diclofenac, which is toxic to vultures when used to treat livestock that form part of the vulture's food supply.

Diclofenac was discovered to be toxic to vultures in 2003, and was responsible for dramatic vulture declines. This meant there was an urgent need to identify safe alternatives for treating cattle. Meloxicam was tested in 2006 and found to be safe.

A further study, published in 2021, led by the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, the Bombay Natural History Society and the RSPB has found a second vulture-safe drug for cattle – tolfenamic acid. This is great news as it offers more options to vets.

However, another similar drug, nimesulide has also been shown to be toxic to vultures, so SAVE is calling for this drug to be withdrawn immediately.

We couldn't carry out this vital international work without you and the support of loyal partners, such as The Rufford Foundation. Thank you.


Nikita Prakash (BNHS)

In Nepal, a pair of captive-reared white-rumped vultures fledged a chick in the wild – the first in the world to do so.


Alamy

Red-footed boobies on the Sister Islands are at risk from invasive species.

Restoring the wildlife of the Sister Islands

The Cayman Islands are a British Overseas Territory in the Caribbean Sea. They consist of Grand Cayman, the largest island, and the Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, whose wildlife is threatened by invasive species.

The Sister Islands are largely undeveloped and are incredible for wildlife. They are home to the Cayman Island's only Ramsar site, a designation for internationally-important wetlands, and Cayman's most internationally-significant wildlife. These include critically endangered rock iguanas, and nationally important seabird colonies, such as one of the largest red-footed booby colonies in the Western Hemisphere. There are also sub-species of parrots and thrushes, found nowhere else on Earth.

Island ecosystems often have unique wildlife in a careful balance, so introduced non-native species can cause widespread issues. Currently, a colony of feral cats is causing havoc with the native species on the islands. In addition, invasive green iguanas are spreading from Grand Cayman.

In July 2021, we started a three-year project aiming to safeguard Cayman's Sister Islands from invasive species. It will focus on strengthening biosecurity measures over the whole territory. Working with local communities, we'll also work to manage the invasive species, and build knowledge so that together we can take action for the valuable wildlife on these islands.

This work is funded by UK Government Darwin Plus funding.

Helping Caribbean wildlife to thrive

2022 marks the end of a three-year project focused on restoring and safeguarding wetlands in the UK Overseas Territories of the Caribbean. Wetlands are crucial to many Caribbean islands, as they act as a flood defence and provide a home for important wildlife.

In Anguilla, our team has restored an Important Bird Area priority wetland with mangrove planting and installed a hurricane-proof hide. Our team have also been working on one of the last wetlands in Providenciales in Turks and Caicos, clearing heavy waste materials and litter. In addition, they have established a system of baseline and bird monitoring, and installed a hide.

In Montserrat, alongside local project partners, we've helped to restore a coastal wetland site, which had become incredibly rare on the island. In Montserrat, the focus was on helping local communities harness their enthusiasm for the area's wildlife.

The work on these islands has been made possible by UK Government Darwin Plus funding.

Forward look

Following the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic over the last two years, we had hoped for a more stable operating environment as we began this financial year. However, the war in Ukraine and associated geo-political considerations around defence, infrastructure, energy and food, coupled with underlying socio-economic conditions in the UK, means it promises to be another turbulent year for delivering our cause. But we begin from a position of clarity in terms of our strategic priorities, flowing from our ten-year strategy to 2030, agreed by Council in March 2021.

2021 was a 'super year' for climate and nature and we hope that 2022 will be too, with the second part of the global Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 still to happen, which should set the global framework required to achieve a 'nature positive' world. The broader geo-political context will have a bearing on the focus of negotiations, with the prospect of some country commitments being moderated to reflect the increasing defence and food/energy security agenda. Domestically, we will focus our advocacy and campaigning on priorities including the formation of a new government and legislative agenda in Northern Ireland, agriculture policy and funding arrangements across the countries of the UK and a green paper on nature in England. In support, we will develop a communications campaign focused on food and farming, ensuring we play an influential role in this vital debate and raise awareness of impacts on and opportunities for nature flowing from government policy and practice.

While Covid-19 continues to influence our ways of working, as for many organisations, we are learning to operate alongside it. Our focus will be on embedding new hybrid ways of working and continuing to be vigilant regarding workforce health and wellbeing. We need to be ready for the possibility that a new Covid variant may emerge, bringing changing government policy and further adjustments to how we operate.

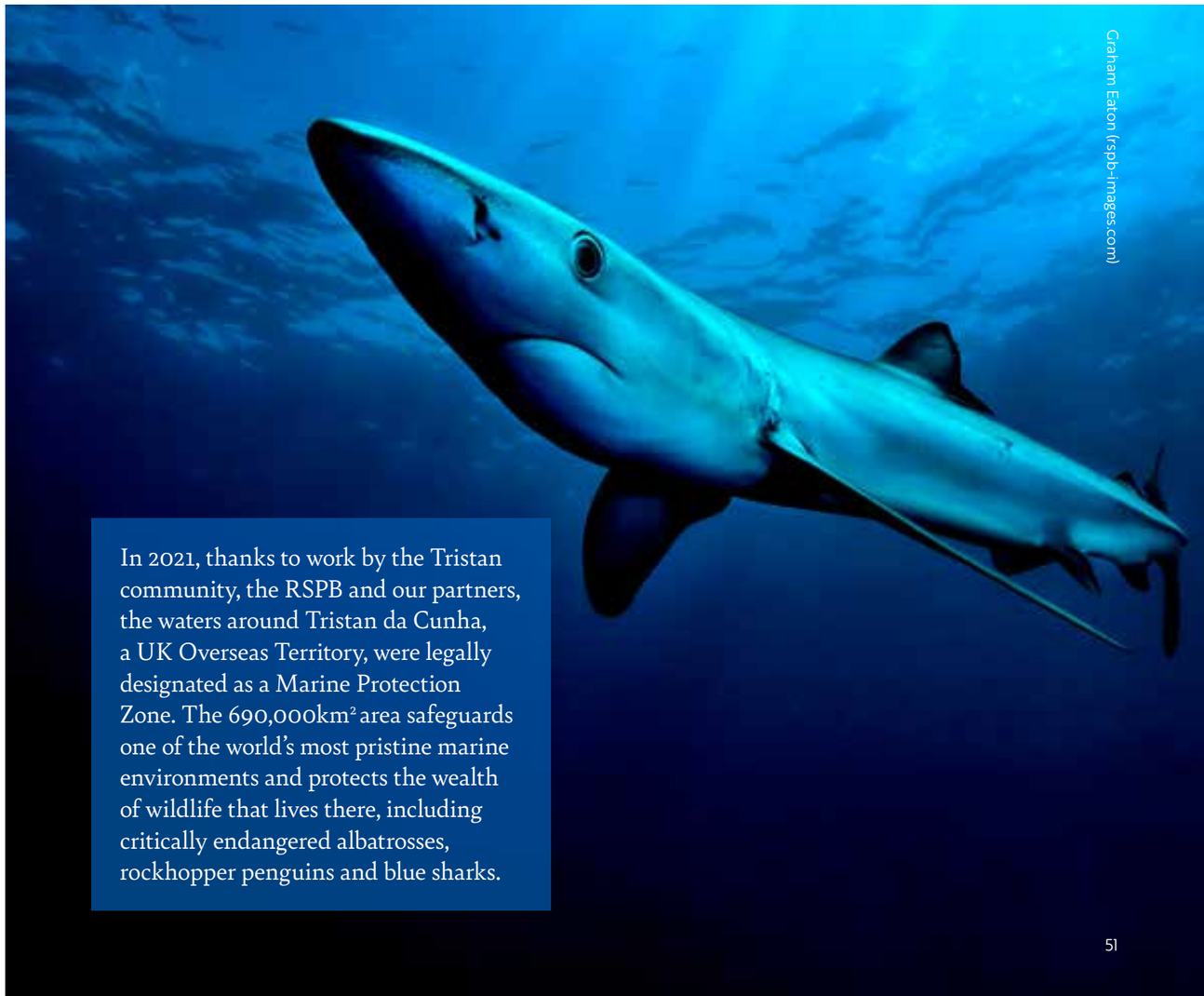
In deciding our priorities for 2022-23, we have considered the principal risks summarised on page 69. The war in Ukraine has introduced, or made more acute, risks to our mission and operations. We face particular challenges in the fields of energy (eg the risk of a rush for renewable power schemes which are not designed or sited to work for a thriving natural world, particularly with regard to offshore wind and seabirds) and food security (eg the risk of prioritising intensive food production at the expense of 'public goods' such as biodiversity and carbon), and the risk of a consequent adjustment of political and public support away from our cause and towards new priorities. When overlain on the existing cost of living challenge, we can also expect ongoing and accelerating cost base pressures and potential impacts on income streams.

Having identified and planned the most important work to do in support of our strategy to 2030, we have selected four priorities as being key to both organisational and mission success in 2022-23:

1. Launching our new brand and driving greater support for our work.
2. Ensuring workforce wellbeing and efficient ways of working as we emerge from Covid.
3. Influencing domestic food and farming policy and legislation, particularly in the light of emerging food security pressures.
4. Enabling the use of conservation finance to drive habitat restoration – particularly of peatland – at scale.

Accessing new conservation financing mechanisms, such as carbon credits and biodiversity net gain, is vital in these first years of our strategy – our ambitions, particularly for large-scale landscape restoration, will simply not be realised without the expansion of these mechanisms. The carbon and biodiversity markets remain immature and we will adopt a prudent approach to choosing between the opportunities in front of us, with a particular focus on funding upland peatland restoration. We will continue to seek to influence the shape of emerging markets and mechanisms through government policy and private sector practice, to ensure high integrity.

We have looked broadly at the resources needed to deliver our strategy to 2030. Importantly, we have also prioritised resources to activities that are key enablers of our strategy, including the development of conservation finance, brand development and our work on equality, diversity and inclusion. We will also increase investment in some key foundations of our charitable operations, including our nature reserve operations, workforce, digital capability, and our built estate. These will remain as high priorities as we respond to opportunities and changes during the year and begin to develop financial plans and investment programmes for subsequent years.



Graham Eaton (rspb-images.com)

In 2021, thanks to work by the Tristan community, the RSPB and our partners, the waters around Tristan da Cunha, a UK Overseas Territory, were legally designated as a Marine Protection Zone. The 690,000km^2 area safeguards one of the world's most pristine marine environments and protects the wealth of wildlife that lives there, including critically endangered albatrosses, rockhopper penguins and blue sharks.

Thank you and acknowledgements

Miranda Krestovnikoff, outgoing RSPB President

The last nine years have flown by, and my time as RSPB President is now drawing to a close. It's been a wonderful journey with some real highlights, none greater than seeing the work of the RSPB expand and reach out to more people.

The work on the ground is tireless and it's always been a treat for me to visit RSPB nature reserves: from Belfast WOW in Northern Ireland, Loch Garten in Scotland, Newport Wetlands in Wales and reserves across England from Bempton Cliffs down to Arne. Each one is unique, and my family and I will continue to enjoy exploring them over the years to come.

I'd like to say a massive 'thank you' to the many wonderful staff and volunteers I've had the pleasure to meet. You're the driving force of this organisation and your work is invaluable. And to the members: without you, the RSPB would be nothing. I've loved getting to know so many of you.

It's been a joy spending time with the winners of the RSPB awards and medals over the years. I've connected with some true legends of conservation, and met conservationists of the future through the Youth Council.

In addition, my family have felt very welcome. My children enjoyed making short films in the garden for Wild Challenge and appearing on BBC Breakfast for Big Garden Birdwatch. This event will continue to be a major part of our wildlife watching calendar. It's been a real inspiration for them to be involved with the RSPB, so much so that my son, Oliver, is hoping to pursue a career in conservation.

"My connection with the RSPB doesn't end here. Along with other previous Presidents, I'll continue to spread the conservation message and celebrate my love for nature in whatever I do."

Miranda Krestovnikoff steps down from her role at the 2022 AGM.



Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)



RSPB

Cameron's Cottage has welcomed its first visitors. They were from Black2Nature, who offer Visible Minority Ethnic people opportunities to spend time in nature.

Vice Presidents

- Dr Elizabeth Andrews MBE DL
- Sir David Attenborough OM GCMG CH CVO CBE
- Mr Nick Baker
- Dr Mike Clarke
- Mr Adrian Darby OBE
- Mr Ian Darling FRICS OBE
- Ms Kate Humble
- Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS
- The Earl of Lindsay
- Sir John Lister-Kaye Bt OBE
- Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
- Mr Bill Oddie OBE
- Professor Steve Ormerod FCIEEM FLSW
- Mr Chris Packham CBE
- Mr Julian Pettifer OBE
- Sir Graham Wynne CBE
- Baroness Young of Old Scone

Thank you to our President and Vice Presidents who give their time freely to support the RSPB.

Philanthropic supporters

Once again, our philanthropic supporters have shown us their passion for nature by generously supporting a range of projects and programmes. We're extremely grateful, and would like to thank two of our longest-standing foundation partners. These are The Rufford Foundation, who have loyally supported key vulture work with annual grants since 2004, and the A. G. Leventis Foundation, which has supported work in Cyprus since 2007.

We'd like to give a special mention to the Cameron Bespolka Trust, who funded Cameron's Cottage in memory of their son, a keen naturalist. Located within our Franchises Lodge nature reserve in the New Forest, the cottage is our first residential retreat. It's designed to make nature more accessible to young people and welcomed its first groups in 2022.

We received an amazingly positive response to the Otmoor land acquisition appeal in September 2021. Thanks to the support of many of our philanthropists, we went ahead with the purchase of the land in February 2022, which we're incredibly grateful for.

We'd like to give particular thanks to Liz Desmond, a committed conservationist and loyal friend of the RSPB, and Julia Maynard, who has generously supported a range of projects over many years. Liz and Julia helped us significantly with the acquisition of the land, and we look forward to keeping them informed of the wonderful work that's happening at the reserve.

Members and supporters

The support and loyalty of our members and supporters is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting our ambitious conservation targets would not be possible without your enormous contribution.

Members help in many ways, and they're all crucial to our mission: by donating, giving their time through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns, and by bringing RSPB projects to life on the ground through local groups. We would also like to thank all of the supporters who

contribute generously through in memoriam gifts, raffles, lotteries, regular gifts, buying from the shop and giving to our appeals, as well as those citizen scientists that take part in Big Garden Birdwatch each year. It is greatly appreciated and crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Legacies

Money left to us in legacies makes a vital impact to our work to save nature every year. Whilst it's impossible to thank every single one of our legators, we'd like to mention the following people:

- Mr Iain Banks
- Miss Beryl Davis
- Mr Jack Firmor
- Mrs Helen Gilliver
- Miss Susan Valerie Haydon
- Miss Olga Margaret Jaques
- Mr Michael William Johnson
- Mr Malcolm Kenneth Macdonald
- Mrs Peggy Florence Macquire
- Mrs Mabel Florence Ann Opie
- Mr Edward Geoffrey Montague Niblett and Mrs Sylvia Anne Niblett
- Mr Peter Shuttlewood
- Miss Ida Turner
- Mr Michael Wolfgang Warburg

Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups continued to work in spite of changing Covid guidelines. Our local groups rose to the challenge and continued to fundraise in and out of lockdown restrictions, raising £147,224 for RSPB conservation projects.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889, and they're still fundamental to our work. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to support for office and retail activities, to running the RSPB as members of Council. In addition, more than half a million people take part in citizen science projects such as Big Garden Birdwatch.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends upon the support of our volunteers. They are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB.

Volunteers enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives, whilst demonstrating passion and commitment to our mission.

We have around 10,500 volunteers, who make up 82% of our workforce. Their activities are crucial for our work and the RSPB: thank you.

Country Advisory Committees

A big thank you to our country advisory committee members for their help and support.

Celebrity and influencer supporters

We'd like to thank the following people for supporting our campaigns, events and projects over the past year. They're fantastic advocates for nature.

- Mya Bambrick
- Carl Bovis
- Steve Brown
- Gordon Buchanan
- Gillian Burke
- Lindsay Chapman
- Mya-Rose Craig
- Lizzie Daly
- Mike Dilger
- David Domoney
- Monty Don
- Indy Kiemel Greene
- George Hassall
- Lucy Hodson
- Kabir Kaul
- Dr Amir Khan
- David Lindo
- Kate MacRae
- Dara McAnulty
- Megan McCubbin
- Deborah Meaden

- Stephen Moss
- David Neilson
- David Oakes
- Ollie Olanipekun
- Lev Parikian
- Nadeem Perera
- Ben Porter
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Arlene Stuart
- Dougie Vipond
- Samuel West
- Iolo Williams
- Hamza Yassin

Youth Council

- Anna
- Chloe
- Emily
- Indy
- Jess
- Jannis
- Kabir
- Katie
- Sennen
- Thomas

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We are grateful for the support received and would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Adlard Family Charitable Trust
- Mr Alan Alderson and Ms Sandra Allen
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- The Atkin Foundation
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Mrs Pauline Barnett
- Barnsley Council
- Mr D Benham
- The Bentley Family Trust
- Jean Berwick
- The Big Give Trust
- BirdLife International
- Mr John Bowden Baker
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Brown Forbes Memorial Fund
- The Brown Source Trust
- CAF America Donor Fund (Charities Aid Foundation)
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Cameron Bespolka Trust
- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Chabot Family Fund
- Charities Trust
- Nigel and Jacqui Clark
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Drs John and Hinke Couchman
- Mrs Barbara Mary Crellin
- Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF)
- Joy Croot
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) – Czech Partner of BirdLife International
- Ida Davis Family Foundation
- Ms E Desmond
- Disney Conservation Fund
- Mrs Joan and Mr Dick Duley
- The Ellem Foundation
- John Ellerman Foundation
- Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP)*
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Guthrie Essame Charitable Trust
- European Climate Foundation
- Clive Fenner (Estate of Late)
- The Finborough Foundation
- Fondation Segré
- Fortune Trust
- Mr Michael Fox
- Friends of South Georgia Island
- The Gannochy Trust
- Mrs Joan Garrett Trust
- Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- Sir David Gilmour and Lady Gilmour
- Mr Charles Glanville
- Mr Richard Hale
- The Daphne Hamilton Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- Henocq Law Trust
- Caroline Agnes Joan Hervey
- Ms S Hidderley
- The Corton Hill Trust
- Horsham District Council
- HSBC Bank Trust
- Angela Humphery
- International Centre for Birds of Prey
- International Eco Fund
- Jam Meadow Trust
- Helena Jefferson

- Mr Henry Kenner
- The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
- Graham and Elma Leisk
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- J E Mackay Will Trust
- The Makin Family Trust
- Julia Maynard
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Mintaka Trust
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- Mr Michael Nightingale
- The Northwick Trust
- Oceans 5, a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Peacock Charitable Trust
- People's Postcode Lottery
- Mr Michael Percival
- Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
- Prince Albert II Foundation Monaco
- Mr and Mrs J A Pye's Charitable Settlement
- Q Charitable Trust
- Quick Release Fund for Nature (QRFN)
- Rainforest Trust
- The Dagny Raymond Charitable Trust
- Rewilding Europe
- Robin Rigg Community Fund
- Mr Uwe Röttgering/Hengst Immobilien GmbH
- The Rufford Foundation
- Mr A and Mrs J Ryde
- ScottishPower Foundation
- The Edward Sharples Charitable Trust
- Shetland Amenity Trust
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The South Georgia Association
- South Georgia Heritage Trust
- Mr Chris Spooner
- The Derek and Clare Stevens Trust
- Mr J Stott
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustainable Fishery Partnership
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust and The Swire Charitable Trust
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Mr Roger and Mrs Janet Thornhill
- Ms Gillian Tucker
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Liverpool
- University of Reading
- University of Sheffield
- A H Vereker Charitable Trust
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Mrs Sue and Mr Jonathan Whitaker
- White Foundation
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Miss M Wigan
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- J & J R Wilson Trust
- J L Wilson Will Trust
- Mr Michael Wright and Mrs Joan Wright
- Wyss Foundation
- The John Young Charitable Settlement

**The Endangered Landscapes Programme is a partnership between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin.*

We would also like to acknowledge supporters who wish to remain anonymous, who have generously contributed towards our conservation work.

Landfill Communities Fund

We are grateful for funding support from the following organisations through the Landfill Communities Fund and the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund:

- Biffa Award
- EB Scotland Ltd
- FCC Communities Foundation
- GrantScape (Caird Peckfield Community Fund)
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Viridor Credits Environmental Company

Business supporters

The RSPB enjoys successful partnerships with business supporters to our mutual benefit. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Aardman
- Affinity Water Limited
- Amalgamated Construction Ltd trading as AmcoGiffen
- Appleby (Cayman) Ltd
- The Ardmore
- Baillie Gifford
- Barratt Developments Plc
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Confor
- The Co-operative Bank
- Ecotalk
- Ecotricity
- EDF Energy Ltd
- Ernst & Young LLP
- The Famous Grouse
- GreenPower
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP
- Highland Park Distillery
- holidaycottages.co.uk
- Hurtigruten Group Ltd
- The James Hutton Institute
- *id*verde UK
- Johnnie Walker
- Lightrock Power
- Lush Ltd
- Mainstream Renewable Power
- Marine Stewardship Council
- Marks & Spencer
- Marshalls plc
- Mills & Reeve LLP
- Mines Restoration Ltd
- Morecrofts LLP
- Mousa Boat (Shetland) Ltd
- Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind
- Netflix
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- Parkdean Resorts
- Portsmouth Water Ltd
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Reed Smith LLP
- SABIC UK Petrochemicals Limited
- ScotRail
- ScottishPower
- ScottishPower Renewables
- Scottish Water
- Severn Trent Water
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- South Western Railways
- SSE
- SSE Renewable Generation (Seagreen Wind Energy Ltd)
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Swarovski Optik
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Ted Conferences
- Triodos Bank UK
- Turcan Connell
- United Utilities Plc
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd
- Withers LLP
- Yorkshire Water

National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) has provided essential support for RSPB projects to restore our natural heritage and to bring nature into people's everyday lives. NLHF's creation of the Heritage Emergency Fund enabled us to keep people connected to nature and boosted the nation's health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The RSPB is also indebted to NLHF for their support through their exceptional administration of Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

Special thanks to Defra for their support through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF), providing over £5 million in funds to support projects in England. GRCF allowed the RSPB to deliver projects restoring nature and wildlife, introducing new nature-based solutions on our project sites and connecting even more people with nature, all throughout the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

We are grateful for co-operation and support from organisations of many kinds, and would especially like to thank those Councils who have provided Covid-19 relief funding. For other non Covid-19 support we'd also like to specifically thank the following:

- Bird Aware Solent
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Cairngorms National Park Authority – Peatland ACTION Fund
- Clackmannanshire Council
- The Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, Environmental Challenge Competition
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environmental Farming Scheme
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, In Year Capital Strand
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, Strategic Strand
- Environment Agency
- Environment Agency – Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund
- EU Protected Areas Management Support (PAP-For)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Commission – BEST
- European Commission – Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA)
- European Commission – Biogeographical Programme Unit, N2000 Platform
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – Programme d'Appui la Preservation des ecosystemes Forestiers (en Afrique de l'Ouest)
- The European Regional Development Fund (INTERREG VA) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- Falkirk Council
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz)
- Fife Council
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Forestry England
- The G7 Legacy Nature Recovery Project
- Glasgow City Council
- Green Action Trust
- Gwynedd Council
- Haryana state Govt: MoEFCC, India
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- IREC – Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (CSIC–UCLM–JCCM)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW, Credit Institute for Reconstruction), Germany
- Marine Scotland
- National Highways England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund
- Natural England – Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural History Museum
- Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- NatureScot
- NatureScot – Peatland ACTION Fund
- Orkney Islands Council
- Partnerships for Forests Programme – UK FCDO
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Sustainable Development Fund
- Powys County Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Government and VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)
- The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot (please note that funding was received for multiple RSPB Scotland projects this year)
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- Snowdonia National Park
- Stirling Council
- Sustrans Scotland
- UK Government – Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)
- The United Nations Environment Programme/ Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- Visit Wales
- Water Environment Grant (EAFRD as part of the RDPE)
- Welsh Government Glastir
- Welsh Government Green Infrastructure
- Welsh Government SMS
- Welsh Government SMS – Supporting Natura 2000 Restoration
- West Bengal state Govt. MoEFCC, India

Thank you



The RSPB's Worcester and Malvern local group has teamed up with Worcester University to study the effects of providing winter food crops for farmland birds. In spring 2021 a hectare of disused playing fields was planted with crops to provide seeds for birds during the 2021–22 winter. There has already been a significant increase in the number of linnets, with 40 on site during the last survey.

Roger Tidman (rspb-images.com)



Ian Rycling (RSPB)

A new method of virtual fencing is being trialled at our Geltsdale nature reserve in Cumbria to help improve habitats, boost biodiversity and prevent birds like black grouse getting tangled up in traditional wire fencing. The system involves cattle wearing special GPS collars, which play an audible melody and, if necessary, emit a mild electric pulse, when the animals approach a virtual boundary. The cows quickly learned where they could roam and black grouse have already moved in to the cattle-grazed areas.

Governing body, leadership and effectiveness

Governing body

The RSPB's overall governing body is the RSPB Council. This is composed of up to 18 Council members (Trustees). The honorary positions of President and Vice President are not Council members and are not involved in making or influencing Council decisions.

Council has overall responsibility for the conduct of the RSPB. It also ensures the RSPB operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, the Statutes, the Bye-laws, and the law.

It is supported by several committees that all have specific roles. Each committee meets several times a year and reports directly to Council. Other subcommittees are established from time to time and report directly to Council.

Leadership

We have developed frameworks to guide and describe how we want to work.

- Our ethical principles describe how we want to engage with the world.
- Our brand values describe how we want our supporters, stakeholders and the wider public to think about us.
- Our cultural values describe how we work and relate to each other.
- Our code of conduct describes how we want our staff and volunteers to behave.
- Our competency framework describes the behaviour we expect from our staff and volunteers when at work.

These frameworks form part of our inductions. They're also included in everyone's annual appraisal, known as the Career Performance and Development Plan (CPDP).

If you wish to become a Trustee, we'll give you information about the RSPB and Trustees' duties, and then we'll formally confirm your willingness to serve. If you're elected to Council, you'll get a briefing pack outlining your role, duties and accountabilities, with information about the RSPB and its policies, structure and work.

Each Trustee completes a register showing their interests and related party transactions. This is updated each year, and whenever any changes occur. We run a series of induction sessions for each new Trustee, which take a strategic look at the roles and responsibilities of Trustees and management. We also offer new Trustees opportunities to learn more about our work. This could be through individual meetings with staff, visits to our nature reserves, and training on important work areas. Each year, we hold a weekend event in an area of natural importance, and focus on the species and habitat work we undertake there. We hold similar events for the Country Advisory Committees.

Board effectiveness

RSPB Council works as a team, with a balance of skills, experience, background and knowledge, in order to be as effective as possible.

We advertise Trustee vacancies on the RSPB website, the members' magazine The *RSPB Magazine* and more broadly, including through specialist search agencies. The appointment process is rigorous, with interviews and Due Diligence checks, and involves input from the Council's Nominations Committee. Every year, we review the skills our Trustees bring to the Council, and review how effective the Council is. We also check our ways of working, to ensure we align with the Charity Governance Code.

RSPB Council



Kevin Cox
Council Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer and Finance, Audit and Risk Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration
- Investment



Kerry ten Kate
Conservation Committee Chair

- Nominations
- Remuneration
- Investment



John Bullock
Fundraising and Communications Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Jennifer Ullman
Committee for England Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk



Dr. Vicki Nash
Committee for Scotland Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk



Prof. Sir Adrian Webb
Committee for Wales Chair



Judith Annett
Committee for Northern Ireland Chair



Helen Browning



Linda Grant



Prof. Rosie Halls

- Nominations



Viscount Chris Mills



Prof. Debbie Pain



Veronica Pickering DL



Lord John Randall



Martin Saunders

- Investment



Matt Taylor

- Investment Chair



John Mason

- Finance, Audit and Risk

All Council members sit on both the Conservation and Fundraising and Communications Committees. Mike Boorman is an independent (non-Trustee) attendee of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

For further information on the structure and operation of Council, please see rspb.org.uk/council
For more information on the RSPB's remuneration policy, see p.65.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounts. These should show and explain the RSPB's transactions, and be able to disclose, at any time, the charity's financial position. These should also ensure the financial statements comply with reporting and legal regulations, and meet the Charity's constitution as set out in the Charter and Statutes.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, and financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, known as FRS102.

Charity law in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland requires Trustees to prepare financial statements each financial year. These must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and the group, and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period.

When preparing these statements, the Trustees must:

- Select suitable accounting policies, and apply them consistently
- Follow the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates
- State whether they have followed applicable accounting standards, subject to any exceptions which are disclosed and explained
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the RSPB's assets, and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Management board



Left to right: Ann, Russell, Beccy, Katie-jo, Rebecca and Shaun.

I became the RSPB's Chief Executive in August 2019. My role as Chief Executive is to lead the organisation, build relationships with key partners, represent our views externally and work with the Council and Executive Board to develop our forward direction and ensure we deliver that plan. I believe I am in the best possible place to make a real difference for birds, the natural world and people in the context of the nature and climate crisis. I feel fortunate to work with a great team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters to do just that.

Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

I am a Chartered Accountant and became Director of Finance and Governance in 2019. I head up the teams that are responsible for the management of financial resources and the assurance, risk and governance frameworks that support the RSPB's operations and decision-making.

Russell Hollinshead
Executive Director, Finance and Governance

I lead the RSPB's mission to save species, protect habitats and restore landscapes to help end the nature and climate emergency, and I've held my current position since November 2021. Prior to this, I was Director of RSPB Cymru for 12 years, leading the delivery of the RSPB strategy in Wales.

Katie-jo Luxton
Executive Director, Global Conservation

I have more than 25-years' experience in the education, public and not-for-profit sectors. I am responsible for the employment and engagement of our 14,000-strong workforce (paid and unpaid), which includes the functions of Volunteering Development, Health Safety and Environment, Internal Communications, Facilities Management and Logistics, Human Resources and Development, Transformation and Safeguarding.

Ann Kiceluk
Executive Director, People

I work with colleagues across the RSPB to inspire mass engagement and action to make the world richer in nature. This includes strengthening our technology infrastructure and reach; connecting children, families and communities to nature; engaging and growing the RSPB's membership; inspiring support for our mission through impactful communications; and fundraising for our work.

Rebecca Munro
Executive Director, Fundraising and Communications

I work with the country teams to deliver the RSPB's programmes in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales. To do this successfully we rely on the support of many others across the Society. I joined the RSPB having spent the early part of my career focusing on strategic and corporate management before moving on to manage operational teams in English Nature and Natural England.

Shaun Thomas
Executive Director, UK Countries

Please note: the management board structure is being reviewed for the period 2022–2023. Ann Kiceluk also resigned from her role as Executive Director, People in April 2022.

Oversight of remuneration

All RSPB staff, including the Chief Executive and Executive Board, are covered by the same remuneration policy. This is based on externally-benchmarked salary bands. This policy is approved by the RSPB Council and subject to review. To ensure transparency, the salary of the Chief Executive is overseen by a committee composed of the Treasurer, and Chairs of Conservation and Communication. This is chaired by the Chair of Council.

The performance of the Chief Executive is subject to a formal appraisal process against previously agreed measures, and this is discussed at an annual appraisal meeting. Any recommendations for pay progression are made in line with the RSPB's pay policy for staff. The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing the salaries of the Executive Board, in line with the same policy.



At Forsinard Flows, a group of young volunteers who called themselves the 'Bog Babes,' aimed to inspire people about the work at the site while normal visitor operations were impacted by Covid. They are dedicated to protecting and restoring the peatland of the Flow Country. Find them on Instagram **@Bog.Babes** or Tiktok **@Bog_Babes**

Integrity

The RSPB's Council and Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the charity's funds and assets, as well as its reputation. Each Council member must adhere to a Code of Conduct, and endorse the RSPB's five Ethical Principles. These are based on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) overarching ethical principles for the charity sector and incorporate the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

I. Beneficiaries first: the interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do. p.66
II. Environment: nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature. p.66
III. Integrity: we should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct. p.66
IV. Openness and accountability: we create a culture where donors and supporters, our workforce of staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the wider public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds. p.67
V. Right to be safe: every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. pp.14, 67

I. Beneficiaries first

To ensure we have the greatest impact for nature, we:

- Carry out our work to provide the greatest impact for people and nature with integrity, regardless or whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB's reputation, leadership or operation.
- Encourage trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate, and by listening and responding to our beneficiaries. This facilitates engagement and communication.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with our beneficiaries in mind.
- Work with organisations and individuals whose goals and values are consistent with our work, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

II. Environment

Our conservation work has a huge impact for nature. We preserve and restore natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact, we're working to reduce the footprint of all our operations, through our systems and policies. For environmental management we:

- Take a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (UN Compact principle 7)
- Promote greater environmental responsibility (principle 8)
- Encourage the development of environmentally-friendly technologies (principle 9)

III. Integrity principle

To uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct, we:

- Ensure appropriate systems are in place to ensure decisions are well-considered and free from any conflict of interest. This includes our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks.
- Ensure our resources are managed in a responsible way, and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for. This includes policies and procedures to combat bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion. We also ensure the systems and processes are in place to enable our expenditure to be audited, meaning that money, funding and grants can be tracked from receipt to expenditure.
- We work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).

To support this, we've developed anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies which are built into our procurement policies.

IV. Openness and accountability

We try to create a culture where RSPB donors and supporters, staff and volunteers, institutional partners and the public can see and understand how we work, how we deal with any problems, and how we spend our funds.

Through the RSPB magazine, our website rspb.org.uk and wider communications, we strive to keep you informed and involved about our projects and activities. This means we operate in an open and transparent way within our legal and regulatory requirements. We want to share information about how we work, and ensure it can be accessed easily.

V. Right to be safe

Every person who volunteers, works, or is in contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (UN Compact principles 1 and 2).

This means we:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities. See also p.71
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse of any kind or inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands their expectations, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don't feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour (UN Compact principle 5).

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

A full statement of the steps taken by the RSPB to prevent slavery and human trafficking from taking place in its business and supply chains can be found on the RSPB's website at: rspb.org.uk/help/modern-slavery-and-the-rspb (UN Compact principle 4).



Volunteers from the Little Tern Project on Chesil Beach won the RSPB President's Award for their amazing work to protect these rare seabirds from disturbance during the pandemic.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Decision making, risk and control

We strive for decision-making processes that are rigorous and efficient, incorporate effective delegation, and are informed by assessments of risk and control.

Decision-making

RSPB Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive and to the employees for certain activities. There's a detailed schedule of delegation in place, re-confirmed annually. We have systems and policies in place to monitor these delegations. Major strategic, financial and policy decisions are reserved to Council and its committees. All have formal terms of reference.

The Trustees are responsible for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work: managing large areas of countryside, much of it visited by many people, entails risk and demands constant attention. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner, considering all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Risk registers, risk mapping and internal audit provide comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- delivery of our strategy and projects, with a focus on environmental impact;
- our reputation, including our environmental credentials;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters, and visitors, and in particular to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;
- our compliance with law and regulation; management of our financial, physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data and technological assets;
- retaining and building know-how, delivering good governance and embodying a positive, inclusive and ethical organizational culture;
- protecting and growing our sources of income.

Our risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council via its Finance, Audit and Risk Committee every quarter and in greater depth by Council once a year. Following the most recent full review in March 2022, the Trustees confirmed they're satisfied with such arrangements and identified a number of strategic risks for the year ahead that represent, by their nature, both opportunity and challenge. The RSPB will work to limit any possible negative impact on the delivery of our charitable objects and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite.

Control

We have a clear framework for monitoring our impact, progress and approach to risk management. We have extensive risk registers that cover the full range of financial and non-financial risks and we operate the 'three lines' model for risk control and monitoring, which separates execution from control policies and from audit; and maps and rates the control framework. Council approves a plan for internal audits, and a full review of external audit service provisions is undertaken periodically with the active involvement of suitably experienced Trustees. Finance, Audit and Risk committee meets in private with the external auditor once each year.

Risk description	Risk response
Environmental challenges	
The threats to nature including declines to wildlife and threats to the places where they live due to climate change continue to grow. However, attention is dominated by the climate emergency.	The RSPB's strategy, mission and purpose focus on addressing these issues. We will continue to address both the nature and climate emergencies, raise awareness of the role of nature in the climate crisis, and find solutions to both.
Loss of long-term environmental data, gathered by state and academic institutions, obscures the scale of the nature and climate emergency, and limits how we can plan our response.	We continue to advocate for effective site condition monitoring. We also continue to promote the value of RSPB Conservation Science in doing this.
The expansion of commercial forestry in the UK, driven by ambitious government tree-planting targets, has a damaging impact on species and habitats.	Work is underway to map sensitive areas, and respond to new applications via our processes in casework. We'll ensure the impact of developments like these, as part of our climate change work, is clear and widely adopted across the RSPB.
Failure to influence public and political views on food and farming leads to narrow land management and farming practices.	We advocate for environmentally-sensitive farming through our policies and campaigns. We build greater knowledge of other organisations working in this area so we can engage with them locally and UK-wide.
The growth in offshore and onshore renewable energy sources such as windfarms has a significant impact on seabird populations.	We will ensure seabird census work is completed, and monitoring is in place so we can lessen any impacts. We also seek funding for projects in this area. Our casework programme in this area remains active.
Political, social and economic challenges	
Financial pressure on both individuals and institutions leads to reduced income, and pressure on the RSPB's programme of delivery and core expenditure.	We continue to grow support from individuals by investing in our brand and fundraising activity. We also advocate for using public money where it provides public goods, such as the provision of beauty, heritage and engagement, as part of the transition for farming payments.
People in the UK continue to feel a disconnection from nature, and are unaware that it is in crisis.	We undertake activities to help people to connect with nature, including education, reserves events, online activities, and the weekly supporters' email, Notes on Nature.
The ability of BirdLife partners to carry out their mission on the ground, in countries where their governments make this difficult to operate, may limit the RSPB's ability carry out some priority conservation projects and programmes.	We continue to support and strengthen our partners in BirdLife International. We monitor country risk where we have active programmes and have developed contingency protocols.
The invasion of Ukraine presents us with some fast-changing risks to our mission and our operations, such as: • Pressure to increase energy and food production through fracking, rush to on- and offshore wind, investment in nuclear power, intensive agriculture, at the cost of biodiversity • Impact on membership donations, commercial income, and inflationary pressures (including energy and materials costs), • Limitations on our active programme of scientific and conservation work with our partners in Kazakhstan and Ukraine, • Interruptions in supply (eg sunflower seeds).	Our response is to strengthen our advocacy work in line with net zero ambitions and more nature-friendly farming, to watch membership and legacy income constantly, review our long-term cost base, implement short term cost reduction measures if required, review our product mix and suppliers where possible, plan for interruption of work in Kazakhstan (unlikely for the time being), and consider opportunities for support for partnership staff wishing to and able to leave their current country of residence.
Internal factors	
The wellbeing of our staff and volunteers has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. It will remain stretched in the foreseeable future. The volume and variety of work has also impacted some groups. The ability of the RSPB's staff and volunteers to adopt high volumes of significant changes may also be reduced.	We are planning our return to the workplace carefully, with a range of improvements to provide a welcoming space. We aim to provide an enhanced office experience, improved work/life balance, and greening benefits. Improved overview of workflows and awareness of interdependencies across the RSPB will improve delivery planning processes, leading to more realistic workloads.
A highly competitive employment market, with high levels of employment for a sustained period, will make it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain excellent employees and volunteers.	We are further developing our pay roadmap and paying greater attention to those roles where market factors are presenting recruitment challenges, and differentials between new and existing staff, where market factors are an issue. Our new 'eRecruitment' tools are improving the experience for applicants. Our new brand strategy should make the RSPB an attractive prospect for future staff and volunteers.
Loss or hacking of data held in key business systems, as a result of increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks.	We have fully reviewed our current cyber security provision, and will develop a costed response plan. We will continue to ensure internal awareness of cyber security, and exchange knowledge and insight with other similar NGOs.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We continue to respond to recommendations outlined by a report from EDI specialists Full Colour and recognise that there is still much to be done to become more inclusive and diverse.

Over the past year we have implemented processes to help with identifying and removing barriers to equality of opportunity. We piloted Open Briefings as part of our recruitment process, a short presentation from hiring managers to talk through the practicalities of the role and cover frequently asked questions or concerns, to break down the barriers people from different and diverse backgrounds may face when applying for roles with us.

We have achieved our KPIs that 30% of our Trustees will be female (with 50% identifying as female) and that 5% of our employees will have a self-declared disability (the 2021 Workforce Survey reported 8% of employees had a self-declared disability). We are continuing to work on embedding those further and to deliver on our other EDI KPIs where we recognise that we still have a way to go. We are further developing the EDI Programme, which will be informed by our route map to greater ethnic diversity and inclusion across the whole organisation (UN Compact principle 6).



Adrian Thomas (rspb-images.com)

RSPB Starlings at a Pride march.

Caring for supporters

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889 and they are still fundamental to our work. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to support for office and retail activities, to running the RSPB as members of Council. This year saw the launch of Assemble, a new Volunteer Management System, to help us recruit, manage and retain our volunteers.

In addition, 697,735 people put time and enthusiasm into the RSPB's citizen science project, the Big Garden Birdwatch. Together, they saw 11,556,046 birds.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends upon the support of our volunteers. The activities of our volunteers are crucial to our work and the RSPB seeks volunteer involvement wherever appropriate.

Our volunteering policy aims to reflect the esteem in which we hold volunteers. Volunteers are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB. They enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experiences and energy as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives whilst demonstrating passion and commitment to our mission.

More widely, we provide services to our members and supporters and respond to more than 225,000 enquiries each year. We sustain our relationships with around two million individuals including members, supporters and volunteers. We send our members a magazine to keep them involved with our work. Our website receives around 9.5 million visits each year.



Paul Turner (rspb-images.com)

Volunteers are at the heart of all we do.

Safeguarding

As an organisation that works with children and vulnerable adults, we acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We're committed to ensuring our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. We have completely reviewed and updated our safeguarding policy, which is found at: rspb.org.uk/safeguarding



Andy Purcell (rspb-images.com)

We're committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

How we generate funds to save nature

We're grateful to receive most of our funds from individuals. This comes in a range of different ways, such as appeals, raffles, lotteries, community fundraising and membership.

We work hard to build long-lasting relationships with grant funders, trusts and corporate organisations. Much of our conservation work also generates vital income, which further supports our work to save nature. This includes funds raised through land and farming, and the sale of our research to other organisations.

Our loyal RSPB shop customers help fund our work through the purchase of bird food products, binoculars and telescopes, and educational materials. RSPB members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do, and our work to save nature is only possible thanks to their ongoing support.

Protecting and restoring habitats, saving species and helping end the nature and climate emergency is the key motivation behind our work. We're dedicated to our promise to our supporters, and to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world. We always look to improve how we work and welcome your feedback. We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds, other wildlife, and the places they call home. We show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature. We also share our latest news of what we're achieving thanks to you, and give you control over how you hear from us, whilst managing the cost of doing so.

To achieve our objective to save nature, we carry out fundraising activities. We do this with RSPB staff, volunteers and the help of carefully selected professional fundraisers and commercial participators. Professional fundraisers are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers who act as agents in raising funds on behalf of the RSPB. Commercial participators are usually businesses who encourage the sale of their goods or services on the basis that the RSPB will receive funding as a result.

In all cases, we have contractual arrangements with these fundraising partners that sets the standards and obligations that our fundraising activities must meet.

We regularly monitor the quality of all telephone marketing calls and conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with our face-to-face fundraisers. We ask all new members for feedback to understand their experience of joining us, and this also identifies any areas for improvement. Our local group network also take part in fundraising activities. We give group committee members full training and guidance in how to fundraise with the public as part of group activity.

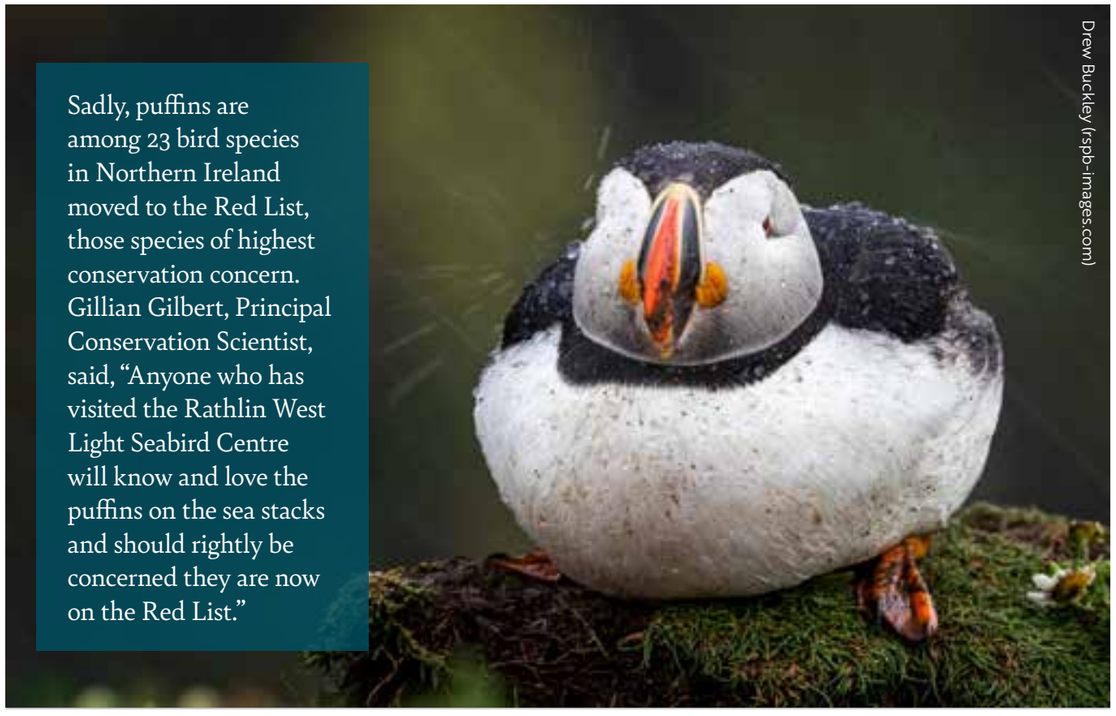
As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances. RSPB staff complete mandatory training including the RSPB's safeguarding training module. Our face-to-face fundraisers have full training in talking about the RSPB cause in a transparent and straightforward way to the members of the public they meet.

The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and the Data and Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out of receiving fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that supporters have the best possible experience in our fundraising eff orts. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB's promise to our supporters.

The RSPB complies with the Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's guides and code. RSPB members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted, with the opportunity to change these at any time.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, our fundraising practices have followed the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice and the guidance within the Chartered Institute of Fundraising published booklet on treating donors fairly. Our face-to-face fundraising team were trained in safe methods of operating to ensure social distancing and contact-free sign up processes when operations re-started, to keep both staff and the public safe. Covid-specific risk assessments were in place and updated regularly in line with the changing restrictions.

Whilst we endeavour to provide an exemplary service, we do not always get it right. The RSPB believes in reporting non-compliance proactively and we are pleased to highlight that we did not receive any reports of instances of non-compliance in this period. Our website outlines our complaints policy for the public and clearly explains how an individual can complain. Last year we received 54 complaints about our fundraising by phone, post, email, SMS or face to face. We investigated each complaint fully, and made improvements to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service.



Sadly, puffins are among 23 bird species in Northern Ireland moved to the Red List, those species of highest conservation concern. Gillian Gilbert, Principal Conservation Scientist, said, "Anyone who has visited the Rathlin West Light Seabird Centre will know and love the puffins on the sea stacks and should rightly be concerned they are now on the Red List."

Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)

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Lloyds Bank PLC
249 Silbury Boulevard
Secklow Gate West
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Buckinghamshire MK9 1NA

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Conservation finance adviser
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Pension actuary
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Pension administrator
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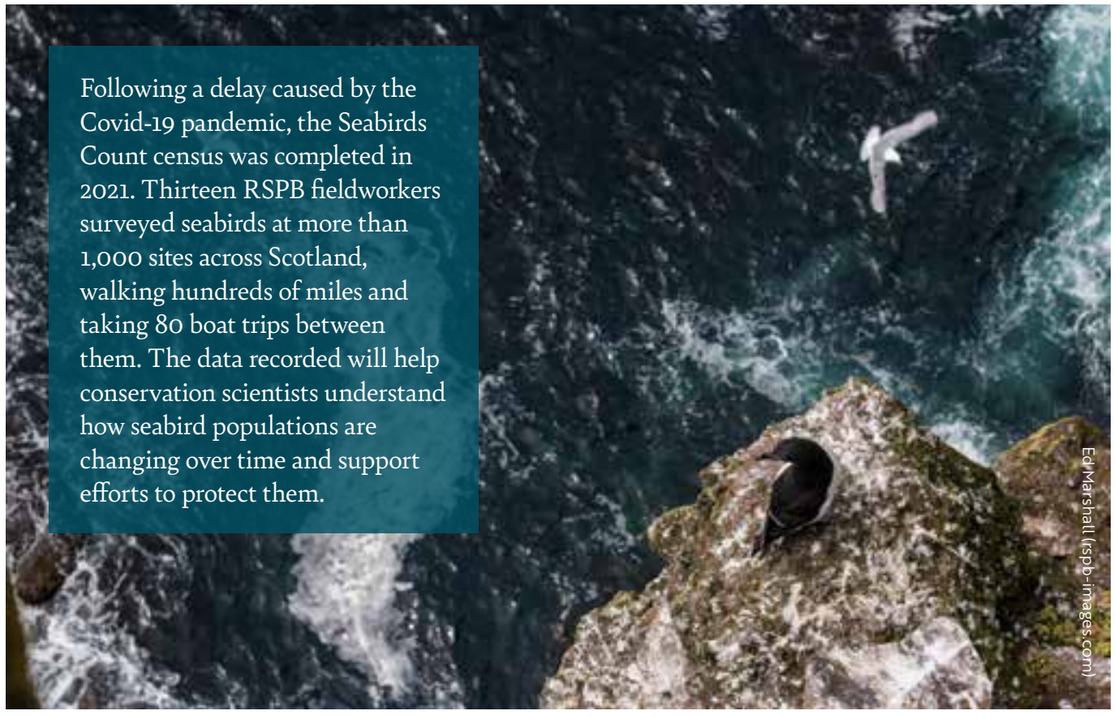
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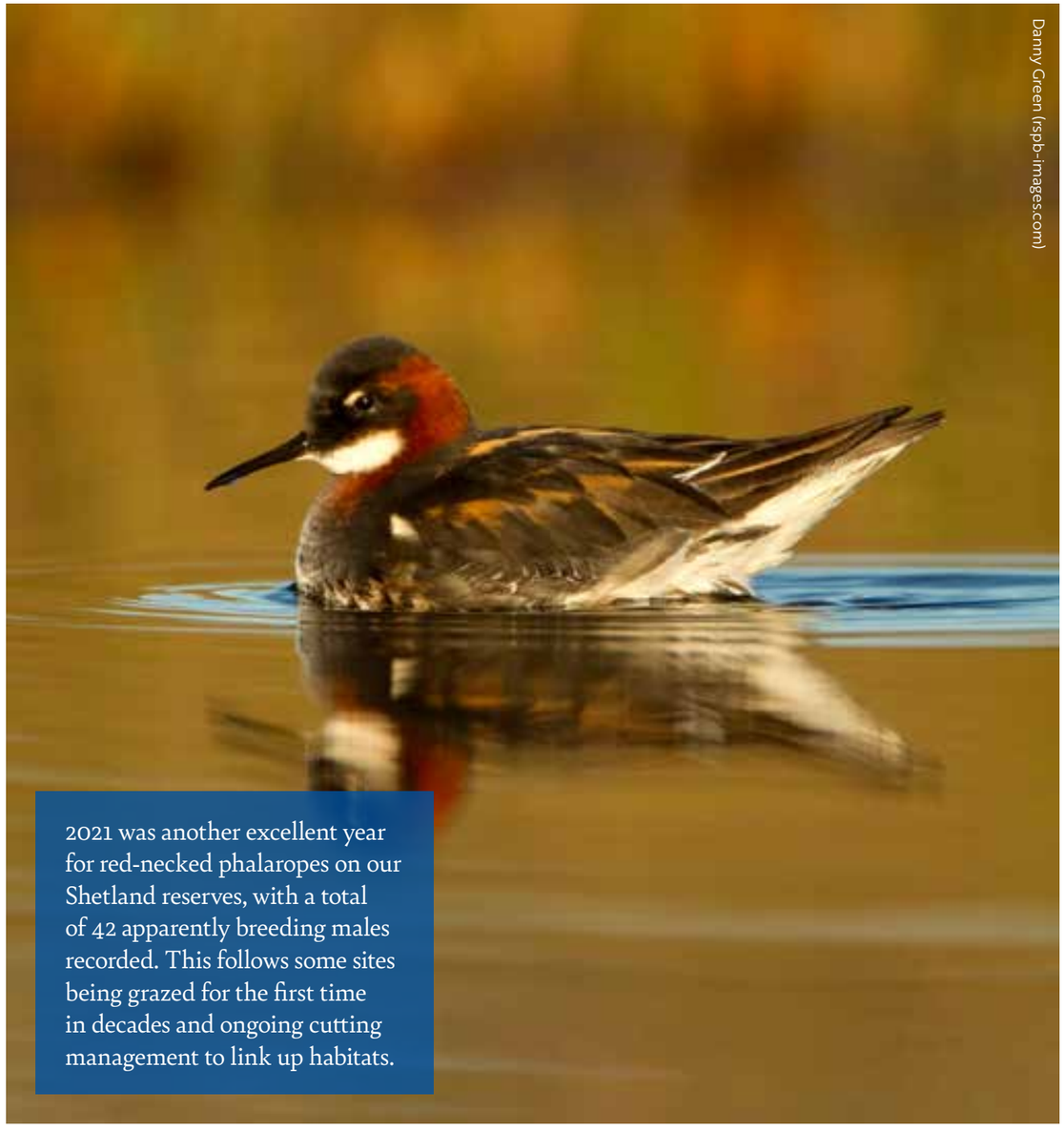


Following a delay caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Seabirds Count census was completed in 2021. Thirteen RSPB fieldworkers surveyed seabirds at more than 1,000 sites across Scotland, walking hundreds of miles and taking 80 boat trips between them. The data recorded will help conservation scientists understand how seabird populations are changing over time and support efforts to protect them.

Ed Marshall (rspb-images.com)

Carbon reporting SECR

The RSPB undertakes a comprehensive analysis of its own carbon impact, both voluntarily for SECR, and to report against its internal carbon objective to reduce our emissions by 50% by 2030-31. As a result of the impact of Covid-19, and changes in key staffing in 2022, our carbon analyses are still underway. Once completed, the SECR report for 2021-22 and annual progress against our ambitious carbon objective will be published on the RSPB website at: rspb.org.uk/secr. This is expected to be in Autumn 2022.



2021 was another excellent year for red-necked phalaropes on our Shetland reserves, with a total of 42 apparently breeding males recorded. This follows some sites being grazed for the first time in decades and ongoing cutting management to link up habitats.

Danny Green (rspb-images.com)

Financial review 2021–22

The further easing of Covid-19 restrictions during the year allowed operations to return to more normal pre-Covid-19 levels. This meant that with the welcome return of all staff from furlough, together with an increasing number of our volunteers, the wide range of income generating activities suspended in 2020–21 were able to recommence and our conservation teams were able to deliver their usual work as well as starting to catch up on work delayed due to Covid-19.

Whilst Covid-19 disrupted our income generating activities, the foundations of our financial strength – the support and commitment of our members and supporters – remained as strong as ever. These strong foundations and a return to business-as-usual mean that we remain financially resilient and in a good position to meet the ongoing challenges of the nature and climate emergency both in the UK and internationally.

Summary

A return to more normal levels of operation saw income increase by £15.3 million (10.8%) and charitable expenditure increase, by £16.6 million (18.6%), giving a surplus for the year (before the actuarial gain in respect of the pension scheme) of £15.0 million. We finished the year with free financial reserves of £68.4 million which represents 37 weeks expenditure cover; significantly ahead of the 16 weeks upper limit set by Council. However, whilst expenditure did increase last year there remains a significant backlog of work and we anticipate drawdowns and a corresponding reduction in free financial reserves over the next few years as we catch up with this backlog with free financial reserves returning to the range set by Council.

Total financial reserves increased by £42.7 million reflecting net income of £15.0m and an actuarial gain in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of £27.7 million. Cash and investments increased by £2.5 million to £68.5 million giving a good level of liquidity as we move into a period of drawdowns to utilise our current high level of financial reserves.

The £27.7m actuarial gain in respect of the Pension Scheme liability reflects the annual updates to the valuation assumptions used to calculate the liability with the main changes being a 0.7% increase in the discount rate and a 0.4% increase in the inflation rate. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed to new entrants in 2017 and changes to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the pension Trustees. The latest triennial valuation reflects the funding position as at 1st April 2021 and resulted in an increase in annual payments to £7.51m.

2021 saw the launch of a new TV advert, voiced by Jim Broadbent, which aimed to boost support for our work through gifts in Wills. You can watch it for yourself at **rspb.org.uk/legacy**



Aardman and Catsnake

Income

Overall, total income increased by £15.3 million (10.8%) to £157.7 million which, in the context of the operating environment over the previous two years, highlights the tremendous support we receive from our members and supporters. The main contributors to this increase in income were a £7.1 million increase in legacy income to £41.0 million and a £3.9 million increase in membership subscriptions and donations to £54.0 million. It is also pleasing to note the bounce back to pre-Covid-19 levels of income for the retail and catering operations.

Membership subscriptions and donations increased by £3.9 million to £54.0 million reflecting the strength of our membership retention rate which rose slightly to 91.7%, and the resumption of our face-to-face membership recruitment operation. It is particularly pleasing to note an increase in the number of adult members to 1.15 million following a small decrease last year. RSPB membership enables us to speak with confidence and authority when we undertake our advocacy work.

Legacy income increased by £7.1 million (20.9%) to £41.0 million. This is the highest level of legacy income received and reflects the trust our supporters have that we will use this income to invest in large scale conservation projects for the benefit of future generations.

Grants, Corporates and Trusts income decreased by £2.0 million (5.9%) to £31.8 million. This reflects the loss of Job Retention Scheme (JRS) income and other support grants from local authorities in relation to Covid-19. Excluding the impact of JRS income, grant income increased by £4.4 million to support a wide range of large-scale projects both in the UK and internationally including Gough Island Restoration (£2.3million), Blean & Seasalter Climate Resilience (£1.1million), Lake Vrynwy Experience (£0.8million), St Helena Cloud Forests (£0.7million) and the Loch Erne Landscape Partnership (£0.5million).

Commercial trading income at £24.8 million was £4.4 million higher than the previous year. With our reserves fully open and able to welcome back visitors, retail and catering income returned to pre-Covid-19 levels. This increase was partly offset by a decrease in Mail Order income although the Mail Order operation continued to operate at above pre-Covid-19 levels.

Fees and grants for services income increased by £1.0 million, to £2.4 million reflecting increased advisory income for a range of projects including seabird tracking and Capercaillie surveys.

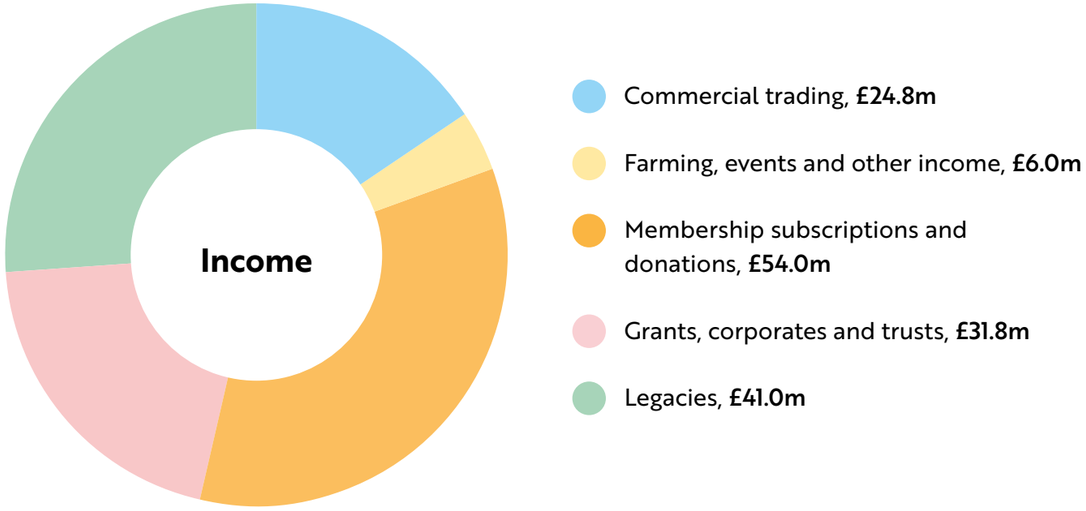
Events and media income was £0.5 million higher than last year at £0.7 million as we saw the return of our events programme on our reserves.

The cost of raising funds increased by £4.9 million to £36.9 million. This was mainly due to the increase in product and fulfilment costs of £3.8 million associated with the growth in our commercial trading operations. The cost of generating voluntary income increased by £1.1 million, reflecting an increase in our face-to-face membership recruitment team and the associated fulfilment costs linked to higher membership recruitment.

Expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities increased by £16.6 million (18.6%) to £106.3 million, as staff returned from furlough enabling normal operations to resume as well as starting to catch up on work delayed by the Covid-19 restrictions.

Managing nature reserves expenditure at £46.6 million was £7.8 million higher than last year. We manage 222 nature reserves, covering 158,651 hectares and providing a home to over 18,500 species of which more than 3,500 are of conservation concern. This increase reflects both an increase in major conservation work following a scaling back of work last year, and an increase in staff numbers following the ending of the staff recruitment freeze instigated as a response to Covid-19.



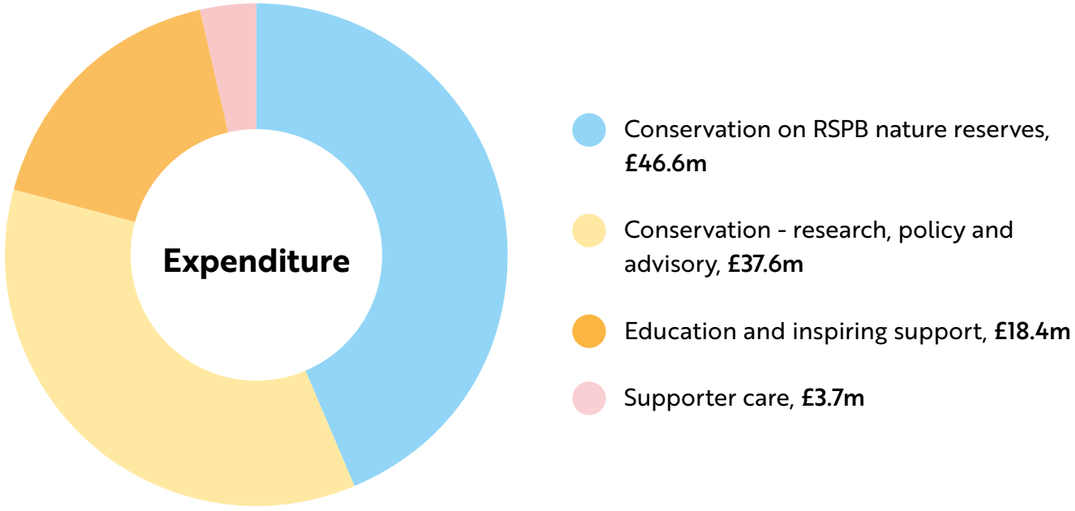
Research, policy, and advisory expenditure at £37.6 million was £7.0 million higher reflecting additional project and operational expenditure for our international work. 2021–22 saw the conclusion of the Gough Island Restoration project which sought to eradicate non-native mice from the island.

The work we undertake to educate and inspire support, whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders, political support, or our partners, is designed to bring about a shared world where wildlife, wild places and people thrive. We increased spend in this area by £1.8 million to £18.4 million.

Supporter care expenditure was in line with last year at £3.7 million.

Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. They consider a sustained fall in income of 10%–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of 8 to 16 weeks' worth of expenditure. Free financial reserves at 31 March 2022 were £68.4 million representing 37 weeks' future expenditure. This unusually high level of reserves reflects both the underlying resilience of the income we receive from our members and supporters and the extent to which expenditure has been constrained as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. With those restrictions now eased an acceleration in expenditure is taking place (charitable expenditure increased by 19% last year) and we anticipate further expenditure growth as we continue to catch up on delayed projects but also as a result of the very high inflationary pressures now at play in the wider economy. Our financial projections reflect this situation and anticipate free financial reserves returning to the Policy range over the next two to three years. This unexpectedly high level of financial reserves gives a greater level of financial resilience that will help us navigate through a period of unprecedented (in recent times) economic and political upheaval.



The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories:

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2022 were £278.9 million which is made up of:
  - Tangible fixed assets of £222.1 million
  - Cash and investments of £68.5 million
  - Working capital of £12.3 million
  - Pension liability of £24.0 million
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied, at the discretion of the Trustees, to any of the RSPB's charitable purposes, at 31 March 2022 were £109.3 million, made up of:
  - General funds of £73.1 million including £4.7 million of tangible fixed assets, £52.4 million of investments and £16.0 million working capital.
  - Designated funds of £60.1 million represented by nature reserves owned by RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
  - Pension reserve liability of £24.0 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2022 were £169.3 million, made up of:
  - Nature reserves of £155.6 million
  - Other tangible assets of £1.6 million
  - Investments of £2.8 million.
  - Working capital of £9.3 million.
- Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2022 endowment funds were £0.2 million.

Investment policy and powers

The RSPB's investment powers are as set out in the Charter and Statutes and are wider than those contained in the Trustees Investment Act 2000.

Approach

The RSPB's primary investment objective is to maintain the real value of its investments. However, as a proportion of the financial reserves are likely to be held in the longer term, it is appropriate to invest conservatively a proportion of the funds to generate income and/or real growth.

Investment properties arising from legacies are managed by the RSPB until disposal.

Responsible investment

In managing our investments, we follow the principles of socially responsible investing. These principles are to:

- invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.
- use influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.
- avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuel. We had no exposure to fossil fuel investments during the year under review.

Performance

The Trustees rely upon specialist advice for fund selection and allocation. Investment performance is compared to an independent benchmark and the target for investment returns is to outperform this composite benchmark by at least 1% per annum over a rolling three-year period.

Following a review by our investment advisers a proportion of our cash holdings were transferred into a fund with the objective of providing longer-term capital growth by investing in investment grade bonds. The change is designed to increase the returns from our cash holdings without exposing them to the level of volatility associated with equity investment funds.

Relationship with subsidiaries

The RSPB group includes several subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 23 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension

The Pension liability in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme that was closed to future accrual in 2017 continues to change significantly from one year to the next. This is largely driven by factors outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity of the pension liability to changes in interest and inflation rates. The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the pension scheme. In addition to closing the defined benefit scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the Pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work but closes the deficit over a reasonable period.

The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the pension Trustees.

The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1st April 2021 and resulted in annual employer contributions of £7.5 million per annum. This level of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit over an 8-year period. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation which will reflect the funding position as at 1st April 2024. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the Pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the Pension Fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £61.5 million.

Outlook for the future

The Covid-19 pandemic presented challenges unprecedented in modern day history and just as we started to emerge from those challenges the invasion of Ukraine presents us with new unprecedented modern day economic and political challenges.

Last year's Outlook highlighted the commitment and generosity of our members and supporters, and we have seen that again this year. With this continued support and our strong financial position, we are confident that we can navigate through the current economic headwinds and continue to act for a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

Given the financial outcome for 2021–22 and a prudent plan for 2022–23 including a range of scenarios to assess the financial impact of the current economic situation, it is reasonable to expect the RSPB to have adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

Signed on behalf of Council,

Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair

23 August 2022



Freshwater habitats and the wildlife that call them home are being devastated by agricultural waste, raw sewage, plastic pollution and chemicals from abandoned mines, according to the Troubled Waters report, commissioned by a partnership of environmental charities including the RSPB and the Rivers Trust. We're calling for UK governments to urgently introduce measures to slash pollution and protect freshwaters for nature and people.

Chris O'Reilly (rspb-images.com)

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the RSPB

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 63, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at:

frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, and the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

25 August 2022

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity under regulation 10(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations by virtue of its eligibility under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.



The future of Essex's most important little tern colony has been protected, thanks to a project to deposit almost 50,000m³ of sand and shingle onto Horsey Island. This has raised the level of the beach there, helping to protect these ground-nesting birds from high tides.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2022

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**2022 Total £'000**	2021 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	50,051	3,982	-	**54,033**	50,163
Legacies	4	36,812	4,215	-	**41,027**	33,931
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	2,595	29,201	(19)	**31,777**	33,769
Total voluntary income		**89,458**	**37,398**	**(19)**	**126,837**	**117,863**
Commercial trading	6	24,847	-	-	**24,847**	20,484
Investment income and interest	7	125	-	-	**125**	81
Charitable activities						
Fees and grants for services		2,434	-	-	**2,434**	1,465
Land and farming income		2,653	-	-	**2,653**	2,131
Events and media sales		672	-	-	**672**	169
Total income from charitable activities		5,759	-	-	**5,759**	3,765
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	131	-	-	**131**	190
Total income		120,320	37,398	(19)	**157,699**	142,383
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial trading		24,630	-	-	**24,630**	20,864
Costs of generating voluntary income		12,061	-	-	**12,061**	10,920
Investment management costs		163	-	-	**163**	208
Total cost of raising funds		36,854	-	-	**36,854**	31,992
Net resources available for charitable activities		**83,466**	**37,398**	**(19)**	**120,845**	**110,391**
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves		31,674	14,896	-	**46,570**	38,803
Research, policy and advisory		20,330	17,240	-	**37,570**	30,600
Education and inspiring support		18,372	52	-	**18,424**	16,597
Supporter care		3,694	-	-	**3,694**	3,626
Total expenditure on charitable activities		74,070	32,188	-	**106,258**	89,626
Total expenditure		**110,924**	**32,188**	**-**	**143,112**	**121,618**
Net gains on investments		427	-	-	**427**	3,539
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**9,823**	**5,210**	**(19)**	**15,014**	**24,304**
Actuarial gains/(losses)on pension scheme		27,655	-	-	**27,655**	(15,550)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		37,478	5,210	(19)	**42,669**	8,754
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		71,814	164,123	263	**236,200**	227,446
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**109,292**	**169,333**	**244**	**278,869**	**236,200**

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 26.

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets as at 31 March 2022

	Note	**2022 Consolidated total £'000**	2021 Consolidated total £'000	**2022 Charity £'000**	2021 Charity £'000
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	**215,807**	211,220	**215,120**	210,533
Other tangible assets	12	**6,273**	4,845	**6,273**	4,845
Investments	13	**55,451**	52,096	**55,451**	52,096
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	**-**	-	**3,801**	3,801
		277,531	268,161	**280,645**	271,275
Current assets					
Stock		**5,075**	4,459	-	-
Debtors	14	**23,919**	21,831	28,051	25,975
Short-term cash		**13,044**	13,870	**9,111**	9,164
		42,038	40,160	**37,162**	35,139
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	**(15,067)**	(13,053)	**(13,442)**	(11,283)
Net current assets		**26,971**	27,107	**23,720**	23,856
Total assets less current liabilities		**304,502**	295,268	**304,365**	295,131
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	**(1,682)**	(1,724)	**(1,682)**	(1,724)
Net assets excluding pension liability		**302,820**	293,544	**302,683**	293,407
Pension scheme liability	25	**(23,951)**	**(57,344)**	**(23,951)**	**(57,344)**
Net assets including pension liability		**278,869**	236,200	**278,732**	236,063
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		**73,115**	68,180	**72,978**	68,043
Designated funds		**60,128**	60,978	**60,128**	60,978
Pension reserve	25	**(23,951)**	(57,344)	**(23,951)**	(57,344)
		109,292	71,814	**109,155**	71,677
Restricted funds		**169,333**	**164,123**	**169,333**	**164,123**
Endowment funds		**244**	**263**	**244**	**263**
	21 & 22	**278,869**	**236,200**	**278,732**	**236,063**

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 23 August 2022 and signed on behalf of Council by:



Kevin Cox
Chair



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

For the year ended 31 March 2022	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	**120,845**	110,391
Less Total expenditure on charitable activities	**(106,258)**	(89,626)
Net incoming resources before gains/(losses)	**14,587**	20,765
Gains/(losses) on investments and pension scheme	**28,082**	(12,011)
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	**42,669**	8,754
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	**4,587**	1,444
Other tangible assets	**1,428**	(843)
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	**732**	(3,871)
Movement on pension scheme	**33,393**	(9,173)
	40,140	(12,443)
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	**2,529**	21,197
Cash and investments available at start of year	**65,966**	44,769
Cash and investments available at end of year	**68,495**	65,966

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2022	Note	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	24	**13,361**	23,085
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		**125**	81
Additions to nature reserves		**(7,090)**	(3,711)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		**(4,381)**	(1,966)
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		**188**	429
Purchase of investments		**(30,022)**	(375)
Net cash used for investing activities		**(41,180)**	(5,542)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Bank loan		**(1)**	(93)
Net cash provided by financing activities		**(1)**	(93)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		**(27,820)**	17,450
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		**50,615**	33,165
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**22,795**	50,615
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents:			
Cash in hand		**13,044**	13,870
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		**9,751**	36,745
Cash and cash equivalents		**22,795**	50,615

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter and a charity registered in England and Wales (number 207076) and in Scotland (number SC037654). The address of the registered office is The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.

2) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn. The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity's financial statements.

None of the subsidiary directors received any remuneration or emoluments in respect of their services to those subsidiaries. Where directors are officers/employees of the RSPB they will receive remuneration only from the RSPB.

The RSPB's commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiary, RSPB Sales Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB. RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB's charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

March Farmers (Washland) Limited, a company limited by shares (registration number 01039814). This entity is a wholly-owned subsidiary acquired in 2008 to secure the leasehold interest in land adjacent to the Nene Washes reserve in Cambridgeshire. Through the March Farmers Habitat Restoration project, the former arable land is being restored to floodplain grazing marsh.

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity is being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leases land on the Haweswater

Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise.

RSPB Oronsay, a Scottish Limited Partnership of which the RSPB is the General Partner. This entity was established in 1996 to carry out the business of farming and nature conservation on the island of Oronsay.

RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and a non-profit company limited by shares, registered in the Cayman Islands (registration number 304647). This entity was established in 2015 to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment through the acquisition of land to create or extend nature reserves in the Cayman Islands.

The RSPB holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The RSPB holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity and as such is potentially exempt from taxation on its income and gains to the extent that they are applied to its charitable purposes. There was no tax charge during the year. The subsidiaries donate, under Gift Aid, all distributable profits to the Charity each year.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates, and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are related to the pension liability.

The Charity recognises its liability to its defined benefit pension scheme which involves a number of estimations as disclosed in note 25.

Funds

Unrestricted funds:
General funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 22.

Restricted funds:
Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Endowment funds:
Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Capital expenditure

Purchased assets, individually exceeding £2,500 at cost, are included on the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS102 'Property, Plant and Equipment' (note 12). Donated assets are included at market value as determined by the Trustees. Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised in the year of acquisition and depreciation is charged annually. During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, selected nature reserves were restated to their fair value (note 12).

Depreciation

Nature reserves, either owned as freehold land or held as leasehold land where the lease is held in perpetuity, are considered to have an indefinite useful life and are not depreciated. Other fixed assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their anticipated useful lives as follows:

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:

Buildings	50 years
Reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves - leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset

Going concern

Central to our assessment of going concern last year was the potential impact of Covid-19 on our income streams. The continued easing of Covid-19 restrictions during the year and the return of staff from furlough meant that we were able to recommence the wide range of income generating activities suspended in 2020/21 and in most cases, income has now returned to or even exceeds pre-Covid-19 levels.

However, just as we emerge from Covid-19, the invasion of Ukraine presents us with new unprecedented modern day economic and political challenges. The financial impact of this new challenge is likely to be significant and we are monitoring the situation closely. Trustees review and respond to financial projections that detail the potential financial impacts of the current situation, as well as undertaking scenario planning to assess the potential short, medium and longer-term financial implications of other risks and opportunities.

Looking forward to 2022–23, we plan to utilise financial reserves to fund work delayed because of Covid-19, as well as investing in our strategic priorities. However, Trustees remain cautious as the macroeconomic landscape is uncertain and are comfortable holding financial reserves above policy range in the short to medium term.

The financial outcome for 2021–22 was robust, closing with free financial reserves of £68.4 million and cash and investments of £68.5 million. Given this result, and a prudent approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Investments
The investments in the subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost less provision for impairment.

All other investments are stated at fair value with gains and losses being recognised within income and expenditure. Properties included in investments are those assigned under legacy bequests, awaiting disposal at a future date, and are stated at their fair value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. Investment cash is held for investment purposes only. It is the intention of the Trustees that fixed asset investments will not be drawn upon within the following year.

Stocks
Stocks, which include livestock and products for resale, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Financial instruments
The RSPB has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors (see note 20).

Income
Income is included in the SOFA when the RSPB is entitled to the income, the receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. If these conditions are not met then the income is deferred.

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:

i.) Membership income is treated as a donation and is accounted for when received.
ii.) Legacies are accounted for based on settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier.
iii.) Grants, including government grants, received in advance of the associated work being carried out are deferred only when the donor has imposed preconditions on the expenditure of resources (see Note 17).
iv.) Donated assets are recognised at the value of the gift to the Charity which is the amount the Charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market. They are included in the SOFA and balance sheet as appropriate.

Expenditure
All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Costs incurred that relate to multiple purposes are analysed and allocated to the appropriate categories in line with the joint cost allocation principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102).

i.) Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
ii.) Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
iii.) Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
iv.) Research, policy and advisory includes the costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.
v.) Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
vi.) Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
vii.) Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.
viii.) The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
- ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
- the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions
The defined benefit scheme was closed on 31 March 2017 and replaced with a defined contribution scheme.

The defined benefit scheme amount charged in resources expended is the net of the interest cost and interest income on assets. Re-measurements are recognised immediately in Other recognised gains and losses.

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

In the view of the Trustees, no assumptions concerning the future or estimation uncertainty affecting assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date are likely to result in a material adjustment to their carrying amounts in the next financial year.

With regard to the defined contribution scheme the amounts charged in resources expended are the employer contributions in the year. The employer contribution rate matches the employee rate up to a maximum of 7%.

Redundancy and settlement payments
Redundancy and settlement liabilities are recognised when the obligation to transfer economic benefits has arisen. The value of this liability represents the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the obligation(s) at the reporting date.

Operating leases
Operating lease rentals are charged and credited to the SOFA on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

Foreign currency
Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end, in accordance with FRS102. Any gains or losses arising on translations are reported as part of the transaction within the SOFA and are not material; they are therefore not disclosed separately.

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Membership subscriptions	**46,265**	44,660
Donations	**7,768**	5,503
	54,033	50,163

4) Legacies

The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £30,555,258 (2021: £24,485,314 as restated).

2021 restated to reflect the value of legacies accrued in income in the year.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Grants	**27,699**	29,418
Corporates	**1,711**	1,406
Trusts	**2,367**	2,945
	31,777	33,769
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations:		
Services	**176**	89
Goods	**17**	17
	193	106

Major grants received during the year include the following:	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	**8,766**	7,271
Scottish Natural Heritage*	**1,559**	1,196
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	**1,252**	1,696
Scottish Government*	**897**	1,213
Natural England*	**860**	407
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	**642**	255
Landfill Communities Fund	**380**	765
Environment Agency*	**170**	990
UK Government - Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)	**82**	6,142
Forestry Commission*	**4**	32
	14,612	19,967
International		
European Union	**2,599**	2,090
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund	**5,161**	3,581
Local Councils and Other	**5,327**	3,780
	27,699	29,418

*Government grants used to fund conservation projects and recognised in the accounts. There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies relating to the government grants or other forms of government assistance from which the charity has directly benefited recognised in the accounts.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**19,187**	21,848
Research, policy and advisory	**7,823**	4,537
Education and inspiring support	**672**	1,391
Commercial trading	**17**	1,055
	27,699	28,831
Acquisition of nature reserves	**-**	587
	27,699	29,418

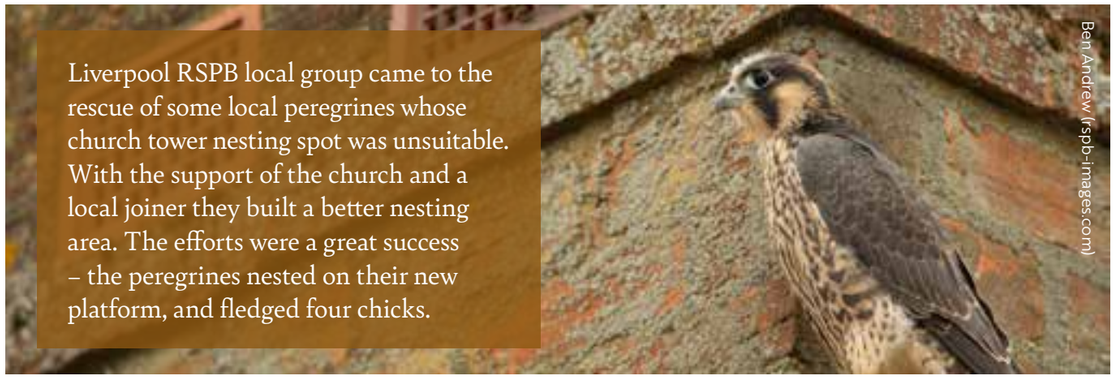
6) Commercial trading

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Retail, mail order and trade	**19,857**	17,859
Catering	**3,177**	548
Lottery	**1,056**	1,321
Advertising	**757**	756
	24,847	20,484

7) Investment income and interest

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	**48**	66
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**77**	15
	125	81
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	**131**	190

Included above is investment income of £nil (2021: £142) which relates to the Hanson Environment Trust. This treatment has been agreed with the donor and the fund is held as an expendable endowment.



Liverpool RSPB local group came to the rescue of some local peregrines whose church tower nesting spot was unsuitable. With the support of the church and a local joiner they built a better nesting area. The efforts were a great success – the peregrines nested on their new platform, and fledged four chicks.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

8) Total expenditure

Cost of raising funds:	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	**2022 Total £'000**	2021 Total £'000
Costs of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	7,855	747	**8,602**	8,125
Grants, corporates and trusts	1,562	241	**1,803**	1,702
Legacies	1,626	30	**1,656**	1,093
Total cost of generating voluntary income	11,043	1,018	**12,061**	10,920
Commercial trading	24,076	554	**24,630**	20,864
Investment management costs	163	-	**163**	208
Total cost of raising funds	35,282	1,572	**36,854**	31,992
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	45,054	1,516	**46,570**	38,803
Research, policy and advisory	34,401	3,169	**37,570**	30,600
Education and inspiring support	16,726	1,698	**18,424**	16,597
Supporter care	3,679	15	**3,694**	3,626
	99,860	6,398	**106,258**	89,626
	135,142	7,970	**143,112**	121,618

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £4,604,159 with support costs of £256,409 (2021: £4,300,072; £266,737). Grants were awarded to 96 (2021: 102) organisations; no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available on rspb.org.uk

Future commitments:
Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £1,331,735 (2021: £783,151). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2022 for payments in future years.

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance & IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management & other	Governance £'000	**2022 Total £'000**	2021 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	286	589	413	216	68	**1,572**	1,606
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	276	568	399	208	65	**1,516**	1,427
Research, policy and advisory	577	1,187	833	435	137	**3,169**	3,157
Education and inspiring support	309	636	446	233	74	**1,698**	1,349
Supporter care	3	5	4	2	1	**15**	5
Total Charitable expenditure	1,165	2,396	1,682	878	277	**6,398**	5,938
Total support costs	1,451	2,985	2,095	1,094	345	**7,970**	7,544

Support costs are included in the expenditure reported in the Consolidated statement of financial activities and have been allocated on the basis of salary percentage. The cost allocation includes an element of judgement and the RSPB has had to consider the cost benefit of detailed calculations and record keeping.

Governance costs include audit, legal advice for Trustees and the costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements, such as Trustees' meetings.

10) Audit fees

The total audit fees were:	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Statutory audit:		
Charity	**44**	42
RSPB Sales Limited	**27**	26
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**3**	3
Farming for Nature	**3**	3
	77	74

During the year there were £2,670 (2021: £1,170) fees for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.



RSPB Scotland

The Edinburgh Swift City project was launched in 2021, and aims to make Edinburgh a go-to place for swifts to nest. The project saw the installation of 180 swift boxes and 93 swift bricks, three Swift Streets, and a youth group created a swift mural with North Edinburgh Arts in the Muirhouse area of the city.

11) Staff costs

Average staff numbers by activity:	2022 No.	2021 No.
Generating incoming resources	**542**	527
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**663**	613
Research, policy and advisory	**717**	674
Education and inspiring support	**273**	251
Supporter care	**36**	36
	2,231	2,101

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2022 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2022 £'000	2021 As restated £'000
Remuneration	**58,058**	52,193
National Insurance	**4,830**	4,317
Pension contributions	**3,430**	3,131
	66,318	59,641

Included within staff costs is a provision for holiday entitlement not taken at year-end: remuneration £2,008,000, national insurance £175,000 and pension contributions £239,000 (2021: £1,565,000, £132,000 and £186,000 respectively). Due to the pandemic, the level of holiday not taken has been considerably higher than normal.

2021 remuneration and pension contributions have been restated by £2,775,000 to reflect employees' salary sacrifice for pension contributions.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on pages 62–65.

11) Staff costs (continued)

The total salary of all higher paid employees earning in excess of £60,000, including Directors, are shown in bands of £10,000 below.

			2022 No.	2021 No.
£60,001	-	£70,000	**10**	5
£70,001	-	£80,000	**9**	10
£80,001	-	£90,000	**2**	-
£90,001	-	£100,000	**3**	4
£150,001	-	£160,000	**1**	1
			25	20

Under the RSPB's pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 24 (2021: 20) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the defined contribution pension scheme rules. The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £11,139 (2021: £10,623).

Redundancy and settlement payments of £50,149 (2021: £122,997) were made in the year.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the 6 (2021: 6) Directors were £690,869 (2021: £717,172) of which, £189,473 (2021: £180,636) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £6,345 (2021: £1,542).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 12 (2021: 6) Trustees on Council business amounted to £739 (2021: £1,749).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £14,000 (2021: £6,435).



12) Tangible fixed assets - charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves			Other tangible assets			Total
	Freehold land	Leasehold land	Buildings	Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Cost							
At 1 April 2021	175,498	1,729	60,144	3,662	4,851	23,604	**269,488**
Additions	3,136	-	3,954	-	427	3,954	**11,471**
Disposals	-	-	(97)	-	(320)	(525)	**(942)**
At 31 March 2022	178,634	1,729	64,001	3,662	4,958	27,033	**280,017**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2021	-	552	25,599	2,393	4,424	20,455	**53,423**
Charge for the year	-	19	2,484	85	299	2,512	**5,399**
Disposals	-	-	(97)	-	(320)	(468)	**(885)**
At 31 March 2022	-	571	27,986	2,478	4,403	22,499	**57,937**
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2022	178,634	1,158	36,015	1,184	555	4,534	**222,080**
At 31 March 2021	175,498	1,177	34,545	1,269	427	3,149	**216,065**

Net book amount:	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Nature reserves:		
Freehold land	**178,634**	175,498
Leasehold land	**1,158**	1,177
Buildings	**36,015**	34,545
	215,807	211,220
Other tangible assets:		
Other properties	**1,184**	1,269
Motor vehicles	**555**	427
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	**4,534**	3,149
	6,273	4,845
	222,080	216,065

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds Leasehold land of £550,000 (2021: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds Freehold land of £137,000 (2021: £137,000).

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value just below £61,500,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

In 2016, land with an historic cost of £42,401,000 was revalued at £97,779,000. This £55,378,000 increase in value was reflected in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

13) Investments - charity and consolidated

Investments at fair value:	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Investment cash	**9,751**	36,745
Equities, bonds and other stocks:		
Equities	**11,446**	10,868
Corporate bonds	**30,952**	1,174
Government bonds	**1,745**	1,753
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**7**	6
	44,150	13,801
Investment properties within the UK	**1,550**	1,550
	55,451	52,096

Equities, Corporate bonds and Government bonds are held in unit trusts.

Investment properties are revalued every five years by professional external valuers. They were last revalued at 31 March 2021, based on their fair value at that date. The amount includes property assigned under legacy bequests and donated property.

Movement during the year:	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Fair value at 1 April 2021	**52,096**	32,833
Disposals	**-**	-
Fees	**(100)**	(166)
Additions	**30,018**	372
Dividends reinvested	**4**	3
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation at 31 March	**427**	3,538
Movement in investment cash	**(26,994)**	15,516
Fair value at 31 March 2022	**55,451**	52,096
Historical cost as at 31 March 2022	**46,134**	43,129

The Charity investments in its wholly owned subsidiaries are held at cost and represent the aggregate amount of the subsidiaries' assets, liabilities and funds. The subsidiary investments are:

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	**3,250**	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**551**	551
	3,801	3,801



RSPB NI brought a dose of nature to living rooms through the webcam project, Curlew LIVE, which focused on Northern Ireland's most endangered species. Located at a curlew nest site in the Antrim Hills, it broadcast live curlew action for two weeks in June 2021.

14) Debtors - charity and consolidated

	2022 Consolidated £'000	2021 Consolidated £'000	2022 Charity £'000	2021 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	**5,614**	3,021	**4,306**	2,006
Other debtors	**4,294**	3,077	**4,246**	3,037
Legacies	**3,499**	2,404	**3,499**	2,404
Prepayments and accrued income	**10,512**	13,329	**9,796**	12,391
Amounts due from subsidiaries	**-**	-	**6,204**	6,137
	23,919	21,831	**28,051**	25,975

15) Creditors - charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year	2022 Consolidated £'000	2021 Consolidated £'000	2022 Charity £'000	2021 Charity £'000
Trade creditors	**3,844**	2,318	**3,666**	1,932
Other creditors	**48**	1,503	**46**	1,503
Deferred income (see note 17)	**5,313**	3,863	**4,412**	2,924
Accruals	**5,708**	5,242	**5,164**	4,797
Bank loans	**154**	127	**154**	127
	15,067	13,053	**13,442**	11,283

Amounts falling due in more than one year	2022 Consolidated £'000	2021 Consolidated £'000	2022 Charity £'000	2021 Charity £'000
Deferred income - lease premium	**754**	768	**754**	768
Bank loans	**928**	956	**928**	956
	1,682	1,724	**1,682**	1,724

On 31st March 2019 RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Triodos Bank. The loan was for £0.7 million and was used to finance a range of sustainable energy projects across our nature reserves. The capital and interest will be repaid over a 20 year period using the ongoing energy savings together with income from electricity generation.

On 6th December 2019 RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds bank. This loan was for £0.5 million and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl Bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan will be repaid using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council over the 5 year loan period.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2022 not provided for in the accounts were £256,367 (2021: £326,170).

17) Deferred Income - charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April 2021	**768**	782
Amount released to income	**0**	0
Amounts due within one year	**(14)**	(14)
Balance at 31 March 2022	**754**	768
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April 2021	**3,863**	932
Amount released to income	**(3,863)**	(932)
Amounts due within one year	**5,299**	3,849
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	**14**	14
Balance at 31 March 2022	**5,313**	3,863
Deferred income: Balance at 31 March 2022	**6,067**	4,631

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £768,000 (2021: £782,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £5,299,000 (2021: £3,849,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £4,398,000 (2021: £2,909,000) and commercial trading £901,000 (2021: £940,000).

18) Operating leases - commitments and contracted income

Commitments: Properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods. The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Less than 1 year	2,019	63	**2,082**	2,301
2 - 5 years	4,159	-	**4,159**	4,954
Over 5 years	7,662	-	**7,662**	8,035
	13,840	63	**13,903**	15,290

Lease payments of £2,406,351 (2021: £2,435,181) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income:	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Less than 1 year	**1,041**	818
2 - 5 years	**486**	640
Over 5 years	**2,517**	2,455
	4,044	3,913

Lease income of £1,053,551 (2021: £972,687) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

The trustees have given indemnities to executors under the standard terms for legacies received; they believe the chance of significant claims arising as a result of these to be negligible.

20) Financial instruments

	Fair Value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	Total financial instruments £'000	Non-financial instruments £'000	**2022 Total £'000**	2021 Total £'000
Assets						
Tangible assets	-	-	-	222,080	**222,080**	216,065
Investments	55,451	-	55,451	-	**55,451**	52,096
Stock	-	-	-	5,075	**5,075**	4,459
Debtors		21,397	21,397	2,522	**23,919**	21,831
Cash at bank and in hand	-	13,044	13,044	-	**13,044**	13,870
Liabilities						
Creditors due within one year	-	(9,754)	(9,754)	(5,313)	**(15,067)**	(13,053)
Creditors due after one year	(928)	-	(928)	(754)	**(1,682)**	(1,724)
	54,523	24,687	79,210	223,610	**302,820**	293,544

The income, expenditure and net gains and losses recognised in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities are shown below:

	Fair Value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	**2022 Total £'000**	2021 Total £'000
Investment income	77	48	**125**	81
Investment management costs	(163)	-	**(163)**	(208)
Net gains on investments	427	-	**427**	3,538
	341	48	**389**	3,411

21) Statements of funds - Charity and consolidated

The purpose for which funds are held can be analysed as follows:

	Total funds 1 April 2021 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2022 £'000**
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	68,173	120,320	(109,792)	427	(6,013)	**73,115**
Designated land fund	60,985	-	-	-	(857)	**60,128**
Pension liability	(57,344)	-	(1,132)	27,655	6,870	**(23,951)**
Total unrestricted funds	71,814	120,320	(110,924)	28,082	-	**109,292**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	156,415	4,407	-	-	-	**160,822**
Other tangible assets	1,465	1,283	(1,174)	-	-	**1,574**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,050	14,001	(13,722)	-	-	**1,329**
Research, policy and advisory	5,059	17,643	(17,240)	-	-	**5,462**
Education and inspiring support	134	64	(52)	-	-	**146**
Total restricted funds	164,123	37,398	(32,188)	-	-	**169,333**
Endowment funds	263	(19)	-	-	-	**244**
Total funds	236,200	157,699	(143,112)	28,082	-	**278,869**

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £857,000 from the Designated land fund to the General fund. A transfer of £6,870,000 from the General fund to the Pension liability fund represents a pension deficit recovery payment in line with the triennial valuation as at 1st April 2018, see note 25.

21) Statements of funds - Charity and consolidated (continued)

	RSPB Charity 2022 £'000	Farming for Nature 2022 £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd 2022 £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd 2022 £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd 2022 £'000	Elimination 2022 £'000	**RSPB Consolidated 2022 £'000**
Income	133,726	297	171	30,231	4	(6,730)	**157,699**
Expenditure	(119,139)	(140)	(119)	(23,710)	(4)	-	**(143,112)**
Other recognised gains	28,082	-	-	-	-	-	**28,082**
Profit/(loss)	42,669	157	52	6,521	-	(6,730)	**42,669**
Gift aided	-	(157)	(52)	(6,521)	-	6,730	**-**
Net movement in funds	42,669	-	-	-	-	-	**42,669**
Net Assets at 31 March 2021	236,063	-	551	3,250	137	(3,801)	**236,200**
Net Assets at 31 March 2022	278,732	-	551	3,250	137	(3,801)	**278,869**

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2022, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and surplus were £174,347, £429,706 and £3,446 respectively (2021: £164,528, £312,408 and £38,706 deficit).

The Charity holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2022, the Charity's share of the net liabilities, income and deficit were £6,350, £383,897 and £13,207 respectively (2021: £7,539 net assets, £344,559 and £12,251 surplus).

The results of both interests have not been consolidated into the core financial statements; to do so would not materially alter them.

During the year ended 31 March 2022, the Charity paid £178,000 (2021: £109,127) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan.

Unrestricted funds include free and general funds that are not designated for particular purposes.

Designated funds comprise the Land Fund which represents land and buildings purchased using unrestricted funds including the investment in March Farmers (Washland) Limited.

Restricted funds comprise:

- The nature reserves fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £5,178,605 (2021: £6,180,209) held for future acquisitions.
- The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £4,591,820 (2021: £4,222,190) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds comprise the following expendable and permanent endowments:

- The Hanson Environment Fund granted an endowment of £1,000,000 in 2002 for the creation and management of Needingworth wetland nature reserve. During the year, £19,027 (2021: £341,115) was expended on the nature reserve, which fully spent the endowment funds granted.
- Two permanent endowments from the estates of Miss J Donnan and Mr and Mrs M Hutt, valued at £233,655 and £10,726 respectively.

22) Analysis of net assets between funds

The Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in a suitable form to enable them to be applied in accordance with any restrictions imposed, as set out below:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2022**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	60,128	155,643	-	**215,771**
Other tangible assets	4,735	-	1,574	-	**6,309**
Investments	52,376	-	2,831	244	**55,451**
Current assets	27,440	-	14,598	-	**42,038**
Current liabilities	(9,754)	-	(5,313)	-	**(15,067)**
Long-term liabilities	(1,682)	-	-	-	**(1,682)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	73,115	60,128	169,333	244	**302,820**
Pension liability	(23,951)	-	-	-	**(23,951)**
Net assets	49,164	60,128	169,333	244	**278,869**

Free reserves which are available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees are held as investments or working capital:

		Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2022**
		General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Net assets excluding pension liability		73,115	60,128	169,333	244	**302,820**
Less:	Operating assets					
	Nature reserves	-	(60,128)	(155,643)	-	**(215,771)**
	Other tangible assets	(4,735)	-	(1,574)	-	**(6,309)**
Available reserves		68,380	-	12,116	244	**80,740**
Less:	Restricted and endowment	-	-	(12,116)	(244)	**(12,360)**
Free reserves		68,380	-	-	-	**68,380**

23) Connected charities and related party transactions

The RSPB is one of the global partners in BirdLife International (registered charity number 1042125), an umbrella organisation for entities with similar objectives throughout the world. Further information about this organisation can be obtained by writing to BirdLife International at The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ.

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	Farming for Nature £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited £'000
Balance at 1 April 2021	854	156	5,127	-
Gift aid paid	(226)	(58)	(4,219)	-
Gift aid due	157	52	6,521	-
Grants received	-	-	-	4
Other Inter-company transactions	(479)	5	(1,686)	(4)
Balance at 31 March 2022	306	155	5,743	-

24) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Net income for the year	**15,014**	24,304
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	**5,399**	4,837
Gains on investments	**(327)**	(3,372)
Interest and dividends received	**(125)**	(81)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	**(131)**	(190)
Increase in stocks	**(616)**	(712)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	**(2,088)**	3,860
Increase in creditors	**1,973**	816
	19,099	29,462
Movement in pension scheme	**(5,738)**	(6,377)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**13,361**	23,085



For the first time in 20 years, curlews and golden plovers have bred on Blaen y Coed, an upland farm in Conwy county. We worked with the tenant farmers and the National Trust to restore the peatland. Now, four breeding pairs of curlews and two breeding pairs of golden plovers have returned to the area.

Richard Brooks (rspb-images.com)

25) Pensions

The defined benefit scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the pension fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1st April 2021 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £7.5 million per annum with effect from 1st April 2022. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a period of 8 years 4 months. As part of the valuation the Society's contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 14 March 2022.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	**299,951**	275,080
Interest expense	**6,240**	6,463
Remeasurements	**(31,134)**	29,958
Benefits paid	**(5,629)**	(11,550)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	**269,428**	299,951

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	**269,428**	299,951
Fair value of scheme assets	**(245,477)**	(242,607)
Net defined benefit liability	**23,951**	57,344

Changes in scheme assets:

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	**242,607**	226,909
Interest income	**5,108**	5,397
Remeasurments	**(3,479)**	14,408
Employer contribution	**6,870**	7,443
Benefits paid	**(5,629)**	(11,550)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	**245,477**	242,607

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Interest expense	**6,240**	6,463
Interest income	**(5,108)**	(5,397)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	**1,132**	1,066
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	**(27,655)**	15,550
Total cost related to defined benefit plans recognized in SOFA	**(26,523)**	16,616

25) Pensions (continued)

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets:

	2022	2021
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	**53.5%**	65.4%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	**36.8%**	27.0%
Property	**7.7%**	6.6%
Cash	**2.0%**	1.0%

Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**1,629**	19,805

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2022	2021
Discount rate	**2.80%**	2.10%
Rate of increase in salaries	**1 April 2022: 2.5% (3.4%)**	1 April 2022: 2.5% (2.8%)
	1 April 2023: 2.0% (2.8%)	1 April 2023: 2.0% (2.6%)
	1 April 2024: 2.0% (2.7%)	1 April 2024: 2.0% (2.7%)
	1 April 2025: 2.0% (2.6%)	1.9% p.a. thereafter
	3.25% p.a. thereafter % in brackets include a further allowance for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term	
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 07 pension	**2.00%**	2.10%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment:		
Pre April 09 (CPI max 5.0%)	**3.30%**	2.70%
Post April 09 (CPI max 2.5%)	**2.50%**	2.50%
RPI inflation	**3.8% non-pensioner/ 3.6% pensioner**	3.30%
CPI inflation	**Deduction of 1% on RPI to 2030, 0% thereafter**	2.70%

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations:

	2022 Years	2021 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) - male	**22.8**	22.6
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) - male	**24.2**	24.5
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) - female	**24.5**	24.7
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) - female	**26.7**	26.7

26) Comparative statements

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2021 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	47,337	2,826	-	**50,163**
Legacies	28,429	5,502	-	**33,931**
Grants, corporates and trusts	17,310	16,800	(341)	**33,769**
Total voluntary income	**93,076**	**25,128**	**(341)**	**117,863**
Commercial trading	20,484	-	-	**20,484**
Investment income and interest	81	-	-	**81**
Charitable activities				
Fees and grants for services	1,465	-	-	**1,465**
Land and farming income	2,131	-	-	**2,131**
Events and media sales	169	-	-	**169**
Total income from charitable activities	3,765	-	-	**3,765**
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	190	-	-	**190**
Total income	117,596	**25,128**	**(341)**	**142,383**
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	20,864	-	-	**20,864**
Costs of generating voluntary income	10,920	-	-	**10,920**
Investment management costs	208	-	-	**208**
Total cost of raising funds	31,992	-	-	**31,992**
Net resources available for charitable activities	**85,604**	**25,128**	**(341)**	**110,391**
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	28,902	9,901	-	**38,803**
Research, policy and advisory	18,438	12,162	-	**30,600**
Education and inspiring support	16,510	87	-	**16,597**
Supporter care	3,626	-	-	**3,626**
Total expenditure on charitable activities	67,476	22,150	-	**89,626**
Total expenditure	**99,468**	**22,150**	**-**	**121,618**
Net gains/(losses) on investments	3,539	-	-	**3,539**
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	**21,667**	**2,978**	**(341)**	**24,304**
Actuarial (losses)/gains on pension scheme	(15,550)	-	-	**(15,550)**
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	6,117	2,978	(341)	**8,754**
Reconciliation of funds	65,697	161,145	604	
Total funds brought forward				**227,446**
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	**71,814**	**164,123**	**263**	**236,200**

26) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds - charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2021

Consolidated	Total funds 1 April 2020 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Total funds 31 March 2021 £'000
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	52,214	117,596	(98,402)	3,539	(6,774)	**68,173**
Designated land fund	61,654	-	-	-	(669)	**60,985**
Pension liability	(48,171)	-	(1,066)	(15,550)	7,443	**(57,344)**
Total unrestricted funds	65,697	117,596	(99,468)	(12,011)	-	**71,814**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	153,318	3,097	-	-	-	**156,415**
Other tangible assets	1,382	570	(487)	-	-	**1,465**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,498	8,966	(9,414)	-	-	**1,050**
Research, policy and advisory	4,784	12,437	(12,162)	-	-	**5,059**
Education and inspiring support	163	58	(87)	-	-	**134**
Total restricted funds	161,145	25,128	(22,150)	-	-	**164,123**
Endowment funds	604	(341)	-	-	-	**263**
Total funds	**227,446**	**142,383**	**(121,618)**	**(12,011)**	**-**	**236,200**

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2021
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	60,985	150,235	-	**211,220**
Other tangible assets	3,380	-	1,465	-	**4,845**
Investments	48,300	-	3,533	263	**52,096**
Current assets	27,407	-	12,753	-	**40,160**
Current liabilities	(9,190)	-	(3,863)	-	**(13,053)**
Long-term liabilities	(1,724)	-	-	-	**(1,724)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	68,173	60,985	164,123	263	**293,544**
Pension liability	(57,344)	-	-	-	**(57,344)**
Net (liabilities)/assets	10,829	60,985	164,123	263	**236,200**



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To find your nearest office, see: **rspb.org.uk/contactus**



The Schools' Wild Challenge programme, which helps teachers build learning about nature into their lessons, has won the 4* category for Wellbeing in the Teach Primary Awards. The awards panel consists of primary school experts and educators. Visit **rspb.org.uk/schoolswildchallenge**

Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Be part of our AGM

Exclusively for RSPB members

Register now

The 131st Annual General Meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be held on Saturday 15 October 2022.

Join us online

We're keeping our AGM virtual this year so that every RSPB member has the chance to take part. Join us on the day for special talks about wildlife, and updates on projects from around the world.

You'll also get:

- Discounts for the RSPB shop
- The chance to ask questions
- Access to a virtual exhibition

Sign up today and get agenda details at: **rspb.org.uk/agm**
For more information please email the Events Team at **nationalevents@rspb.org.uk** or call us on **01767 680551**



Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)

Thank you.
Your support helps us to create a world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

If you'd like to donate to support the RSPB's work for wildlife, visit:
rspb.org.uk/join-and-donate/donate

Protecting habitats, saving species and helping to end the nature and climate emergency.

Nature is in crisis.
Together we can save it.

Stay connected

Keep up to date with the latest thinking, news, events, and information from the RSPB in your local community.

@natures_voice @TheRSPB @rspb_love_nature

Head Office

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The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England & Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654
332-0319-21-22

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

England & Wales - Charity number 207076

Accounts

giving nature a home

Annual Report 2020–2021

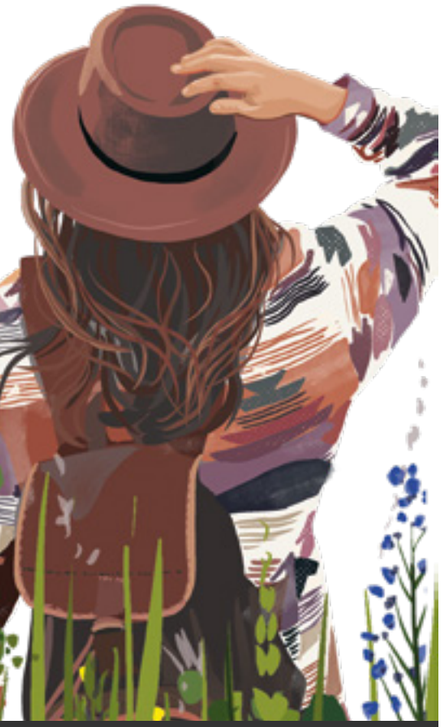


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Registration
The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.

Registered office
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL

Patron
Her Majesty the Queen



When I wrote to you last year, the Covid-19 pandemic had cast a shadow over almost everything we did. A year later, it hasn't gone away, but thanks to our resilience, and our supporters, volunteers and staff, we are still here, fighting for nature's survival. I'm proud that over one million people took part in this year's Big Garden Birdwatch. Not only did this reflect many people's reconnection with nature, it represented one of the few benefits brought by the pandemic: people enjoying nature and taking action to protect it.

As we carefully reopened our reserves, with people's wellbeing, and the safety of wildlife as a priority, it was heartening to see people visiting for the first time. As we go forward, we'll need more people of all ages and backgrounds to help us urgently tackle the nature and climate emergency.

Although the pandemic presented countless hurdles, there were many positive stories across our reserves. Spoonbills nested in Suffolk for the first time in 300 years, while good progress has been made on our Orkney Wildlife Project, safeguarding the island's native wildlife including hen harriers and the endemic Orkney vole. Following a year of redevelopment, RSPB South Stack's new visitor centre was completed, while in Fermanagh, we continued to restore habitat for breeding wading birds through the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership project.

Our delayed mission to save critically-endangered seabirds on Gough Island got underway this summer. Thank you for your support on this epic task to protect these species. Meanwhile, 20 years of hard work alongside the Tristan da Cunha government resulted in almost 700,000 square kilometres of the UK Overseas Territory's waters declared a Marine Protection Zone.

In a very challenging year, we stood firm and continued to work to protect nature, from curlews in Wales to spiky yellow woodlice in St Helena. We couldn't do this without you. Thank you for continuing to stand with us.

2021 marks 100 years since the Plumage (Prohibition) Act was passed into law: a culmination of the campaign by the women who founded the RSPB and knew they had to act to prevent mass bird extinctions caused by the millinery trade. While we celebrate our history, we are at a critical moment in the nature and climate emergency. We must build upon our knowledge and experience to create a world richer in nature.

A crucial decade looms ahead of us, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and the COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. We are working to ensure these gatherings set the right global frameworks for nature restoration and climate action. Translating these frameworks into domestic legislation and using nature to beat the climate crisis – through peatland restoration, and the creation of new intertidal habitats and native woodland – will be crucial.

But to make the biggest possible impact for the planet, we must continue to work at all levels – from the changes required in our world economy and agricultural systems, to large-scale habitat restoration, and the protection of individual threatened species. We must inspire more people to discover nature and protect it. We must continue to speak up as an influential voice through our evidence-based conservation work.

To deliver this huge shift in our relationship with the natural world, we need to unlock more funding and collaborate at a greater scale to continue to save threatened species.

Only through working together can we prevent the greatest threat in our generation and build a world where nature thrives. Our founders showed us that hearts can be swayed, situations changed, and one voice can make a difference.

Together, we can help create a healthier planet. It has never mattered more.

Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair



Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive



About the RSPB

This RSPB is a charity that works to conserve birds and other wildlife, in the UK, the Crown Dependencies and the UK Overseas Territories. The RSPB also works throughout the world in collaboration with BirdLife International and others. Originating in 1889, it is supported by more than a million members.



Emily Williamson and Etta Lemon (pictured) founded the RSPB with Eliza Phillips, to campaign against the use of feathers in fashion.

Royal charter

The RSPB is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter. Our Charter was originally granted in 1904 and, together with the Statutes, it provides the rules and guidelines under which the RSPB operates.

Purpose and public benefit

The objects of the RSPB as set out in its Royal Charter are to:

1) promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively by:

(a) conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend; and

(b) protecting, restoring and recreating habitats. This includes raising public understanding and awareness of, and providing information on, such matters.

2) advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment.

We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which these depend are interconnected – all part of the web of life, or biological diversity. We recognise that the health and resilience of our society and economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems.

We believe that we have the greatest impact when our strategy is informed both by our understanding of the state of species and ecosystems and our core beliefs. These include the planet facing a nature and climate emergency and our moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

We fulfil our purpose through scientific research, direct conservation delivery, public and political advocacy and education.

Headquarters

The headquarters are in Sandy, England with country headquarters in Cardiff (RSPB Cymru), Edinburgh (RSPB Scotland), Belfast (RSPB Northern Ireland) and Birmingham (RSPB England). There is also a network of local offices, and more than 200 nature reserves throughout the United Kingdom.

Governance

The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, and we use the Charity Governance Code. Read more about our governing body and Council on pages 46–48.

Leadership

Effective leadership helps the charity adopt an appropriate strategy for effectively delivering its aims. It also sets the tone for the charity, including its vision, values and reputation.

The Trustees have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's published guidance on the Public Benefit requirement under the Charities Act 2011. The impact we have locally and globally is described in the first part of this report, including a special focus on each of the four countries of the UK and internationally (pages 24–35).

Our strategy

The RSPB's strategy clarifies how it will deliver its charitable purpose. Our Trustees regularly review an assessment of progress against strategic objectives and the general performance of the organisation in a way that enables debate on, and refinement of, strategic priorities. We launched our new strategy in June 2021. This included ten outcomes that we want to achieve by 2030:

- **UK land** - at least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature-positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.
- **Global land** - a network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic Flyway, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.
- **Seas** - threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.
- **UK Overseas Territories** - the conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UK's Overseas Territories (UKOTs) will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well managed by 2030.
- **Species recovery** - the future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UKOTs, the East Atlantic Flyway and in other selected areas around the world.
- **Food and farming** - the majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy, as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.
- **Nature-positive economy** - the frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.
- **RSPB greening** - not only will the RSPB be a nature-positive organisation, we will remain a climate-positive organisation, having made further progress both to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions and enhance net emissions reductions through our land management activities.
- **People engagement** - more, and more diverse people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.
- **RSPB capabilities** - the RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will underpin the strategic need.

Who we are and what we do

Nature and climate are in crisis. We are urgently responding to the nature and climate emergency. Through working with others, we will ensure that, by 2030, we will have more nature than we do now, through improvements in the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations and ecosystems. By 2050, we will have helped established a carbon zero world.



Phil Barnes (rspb-images.com)

Volunteers gave 917,997 hours of their time in 2020.

Our vision

The RSPB's vision is for a world richer in nature, in which all people live well in harmony with nature. Birds and other wildlife have made a comeback. Nature continues to be restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people. Such a world affords future generations a stable climate, clean air and water, abundant and diverse wildlife in towns and the countryside, and a resilient, sustainable economy that values nature.

Our mission

The RSPB's mission is to create a world richer in nature. We use our expertise in birds and nature to provide evidence-based solutions to the nature and climate emergency, helping people live well in harmony with nature. We work with our partners to keep common species common, recover threatened species, protect and restore special places and inspire and enable everyone to act for nature. We are the UK partner of BirdLife International, operating in the four countries of the UK, the Crown Dependencies and UK Overseas Territories. We also work globally, wherever our shared nature goes or the need exists.

Our history

The RSPB was formed to counter the trade in plumes for women's hats, a fashion responsible for the destruction of many thousands of egrets, birds of paradise and other species whose plumes had become fashionable in the late Victorian era. The organisation started life as the Society for the Protection of Birds (SPB), founded by Emily Williamson at her home in Manchester in 1889. The fledgling society was so successful that, having merged with other groups with similar intent, it was granted its Royal Charter in 1904. Then, 100 years ago in 1921, the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act was passed, forbidding plumage from being imported to Britain.

Our approach

Our approach is to act directly for nature, understanding and deploying the solutions it needs; to collaborate with others so we can save nature at scale; to empower people to connect with and act for nature and to influence policies and practice that protect and restore nature. Specifically, we do this through:

- **Science:** we identify and prioritise conservation problems, diagnose their causes, discover solutions, and test how effective these are. Our team empowers people to take part in surveys and monitoring, and we work with partners to tackle the drivers that threaten nature.
- **Species**: we work with our partners to recover populations of the most threatened wildlife, often through bespoke species recovery projects that build on scientific insight.
- **Nature reserves** are at the heart of what we do. They're vital to our conservation work and provide essential wild spaces for everyone to get close to nature. We manage 222 nature reserves, covering 158,751 hectares and providing a home to over 18,500 species of which more than 3,500 are of conservation concern. Our reserves safeguard existing habitats and allow us to recreate those that have been lost. Our conservation work relies on effective partnerships and is underpinned by scientific research. In 2019–2020 we welcomed 1.68 million visitors to our reserves. Accurate figures for 2020–2021 are unavailable due to the effect of Covid-19 on our operations.
- **International conservation:** we work through BirdLife International, the world's largest conservation partnership, to campaign for meaningful global agreements to protect nature. We play a lead role in protecting the East Atlantic Flyway migration route, working on species (many of which split their time between the UK and wintering grounds in Africa) and habitats for which we can make a real difference. We also work where we can create massive impact or model change, such as ridding continents of toxic drugs affecting wildlife or saving marine life from unnecessary killing.
- **Education, families and young people**: we're committed to helping young people develop a greater sense of connection to nature. We do this by supporting hundreds of thousands of young people in experiencing nature every year. Young people are vital in the fight to save nature. We are increasingly helping them play a greater role in this, as both allies and as leaders. We support some inspirational youth networks, and our Youth Council engages with and influences across the breadth of the RSPB's activities.
- **Policy and campaigning:** our policy work covers agriculture, energy, transport, overseas aid, education and the economy, helping create the conditions for success needed to deliver our vision. We defend and promote laws and policies designed to protect wildlife. We help create public pressure for policy change, and support the work of our sector partners.
- **Volunteering:** we couldn't do all we do for nature without our volunteers, all 12,000 of them. In 2019–2020, they gave 917,997 hours of their time to the RSPB. Our volunteers help in many ways: from hands-on species conservation to opening children's eyes to the wonders of wildlife. The opportunities are as diverse as our volunteers themselves, many of whom would recommend the experience to a friend or family member. They are an essential part of our team and a source of energy, enthusiasm, passion, skills and support.



A big thank you to our **1,131,840** members and **12,011** volunteers. We simply couldn't do our work without you.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

63% of people in the UK said watching birds and hearing their song has added to their enjoyment of life during the pandemic. Source: YouGov/RSPB poll.



Kate Lawrence

Getting our Gough Island team safely home during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of them sailed to Ascension Island for 12 days, before they were picked up by the RAF.

Covid-19: the RSPB's response to the pandemic

The RSPB, in common with many organisations, was profoundly affected by Covid-19 in 2020. We will continue to feel the effects of this pandemic in the coming years.

More than half our staff were unable to undertake their work due to Covid guidelines, and were placed on furlough leave. Many office-based staff started to work from home, and many of our volunteers had to stand down from their usual duties. Important conservation work had to be halted and put on hold, and many reserves, shops and cafés closed to the public. This resulted in a significant loss of income.

One of the most public examples of the impact of Covid-19 on our conservation work was the difficult decision to postpone one of our most ambitious and challenging projects yet, the Gough Island regeneration project. This complex operation is the result of many years of planning with partners, and a huge fundraising campaign. Accidentally introduced in the 19th century, invasive house mice kill the island's threatened seabirds including the critically endangered Tristan albatross as well as endangered species such as the Atlantic petrel and MacGillivray's prion. This project should result in a full mouse eradication, enabling the seabirds on Gough to thrive.

Around 2 million chicks and eggs are lost to mice on Gough every year.



We had one team already on Gough and another in Cape Town ready to sail to the island. We were ready to start work, but then Covid-19 put a stop to it and our immediate focus was to get our teams home safely.

Happily, the Gough project is taking place in 2021. We are positive that it's not too late, and we can still reverse the fortunes of these wonderful birds. For the latest news, visit **www.goughisland.com**

Whilst we missed welcoming visitors to our reserves, birds took advantage of the dramatic decrease in visitors to nest on previously busy paths. We took a gradual and phased approach to re-opening, following the latest guidance across the four countries.

The Breakfast Birdwatch was conceived during the first lockdown, in response to people feeling closer to nature than ever before. The idea was similar to Big Garden Birdwatch. Between 8am and 9am daily, we encouraged everyone to watch their garden birds, and then report what they'd seen using **#BreakfastBirdwatch**. Tens of thousands of people took part and shared their stories, creating a virtual community at a time when so many were apart.

Despite the challenges, there were some crucial wins for nature. The Scottish Government committed to protect mountain hares from culling, and announced a proposal to introduce a licence for driven grouse shooting. In Haryana, India, there was a landmark release of eight critically-endangered white-rumped vultures. And for the first time in recorded history, hen harriers established a breeding population on Lewis, following the first recorded breeding attempt in 2015.

2020 has taught us we live in an interconnected world, and the nature and climate emergency affects us all. We teamed up with other BirdLife Partners to help countries in crisis during the pandemic, and we aim to influence global leaders at the forthcoming nature and climate conferences in 2021.

Highlights



Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)

Once again, the house sparrow was the most-seen bird in Big Garden Birdwatch.

Biggest Big Garden Birdwatch ever

We're proud to say that the 2021 Big Garden Birdwatch, which took place between 29 and 31 January 2021, was our biggest ever. More than a million people took part in the mass birdwatch, in which participants watch the birds in their garden or local park for one hour, and then report back on what they've seen. In total, 2021's Big Garden Birdwatchers saw more than 17 million birds.

2021 also saw our first Birdwatch LIVE, with livestreaming for 16 hours over three days. 100,000 people tuned in to view live cameras from four reserves (Loch Garten, Saltholme, Arne and Belfast Window on Wildlife), plus pieces from RSPB staff and BBC Springwatch presenters Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin. There were 280,000 combined views.

The RSPB's Chief Executive, Beccy Speight said: 'We've been blown away by the enthusiasm with which people have taken part in the Birdwatch this year. Lockdowns have brought few benefits, but the last year has either started or reignited a love of nature for many people, right on their doorsteps.'

More than a million people took part in Big Garden Birdwatch.



A YouGov survey of 2,071 adults in the UK revealed that 63% found watching birds and hearing birdsong added to their enjoyment of life since the start of the pandemic.

For the 18th year running, the house sparrow was the UK's most-seen bird, with the blue tit overtaking the starling for second place. Sadly, 16 bird species in the top 20 show declines in average counts, compared to 2020's Birdwatch. Take a look at the results at: **www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch**



Big Schools' Birdwatch celebrates its 20th anniversary



In 2021, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of Big Schools' Birdwatch. Big Schools' Birdwatch runs parallel to the Big Garden Birdwatch. It's a school-based activity encouraging pupils to watch and monitor the birds in their school grounds.

Big Schools' Birdwatch sees tens of thousands of children taking part each year, fostering a love of nature from an early age. The results are combined with the Big Garden Birdwatch, and many schools are loyal to the project, returning every year.

However, Big Schools' Birdwatch in 2021 looked very different, as it coincided with school closures and the majority of pupils learning remotely. Teachers reported that they found Big Schools' Birdwatch a wonderful way to help children continue to feel like one class, even though they were apart.

As part of the 20th anniversary celebrations, we partnered with BBC Teach to create live lessons about the Birdwatch, covering a range of curriculum subjects. It aired in classrooms and homes across the UK on 28 January, with phenomenal success. The BBC recorded well over 100,000 views, smashing their previous record of 28,000.

Big Schools' Birdwatch counts towards a Wild Challenge, our set of activities to help schools engage children with nature, and gain awards. We hope their first Wild Challenge award will form the next step in their journey to get closer to nature.



Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Discovering nature on our school grounds.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Families enjoyed the great outdoors as part of Big Wild Sleepout.

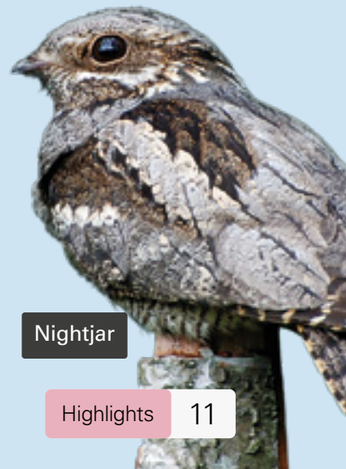
Big Wild Sleepout: the lockdown edition

In late May 2020 we took one of our most popular nature reserves events online. It became Big Wild Sleepout: the lockdown edition – and was a great success.

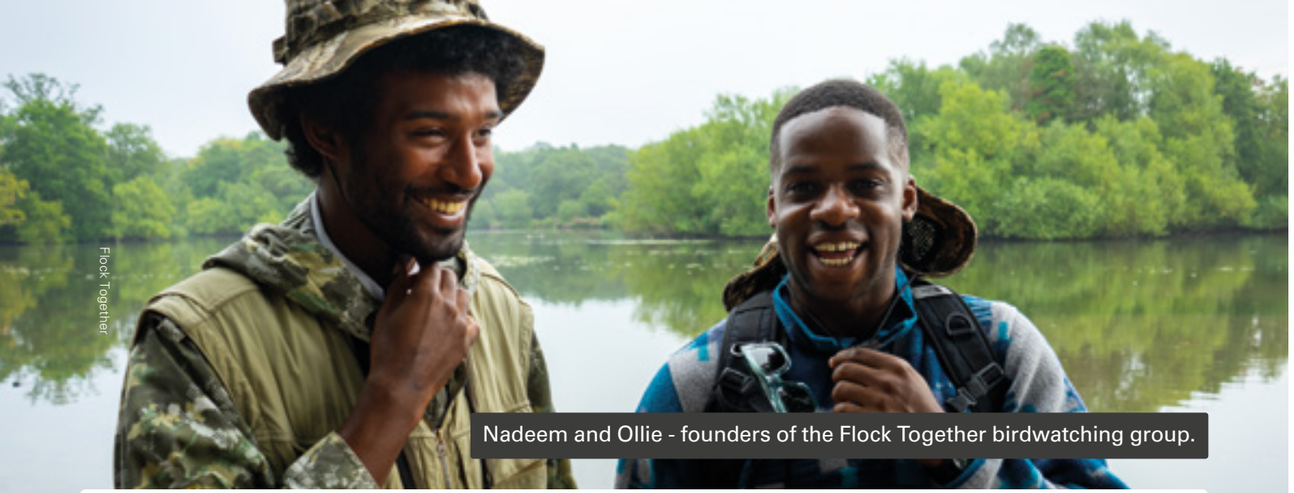
We invited families to join us and camp out in their gardens, and we provided a wide range of nocturnal nature activities. We offered ways to attract moths, bedtime stories, an art lesson, and a tour of RSPB Arne in search of nightjars. All this was done via Facebook livestreams, and videos from across the RSPB.

The response was fantastic. More than 2,000 families responded to our Facebook event, and a Facebook livestream, showing the opening of a moth trap the next morning, attracted 37,000 views.

Here is some of the feedback we received: 'We went out for a dusk walk, spotted roe deer grazing in the wood and meadow... but what a treat to come home to, to join Sam Lee singing old folk songs – joyful! Thank you so much for such a wonderful event.'



Nightjar



Flock Together

Nadeem and Ollie - founders of the Flock Together birdwatching group.

Working towards a more diverse and inclusive RSPB

The RSPB is making some progress on our journey to become more diverse and inclusive. For example, we now have more women in senior leadership positions, and we have a network of over 80 dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champions. They are active across the RSPB raising awareness of EDI issues and helping to identify and overcome barriers to being more equal, diverse and inclusive.

Over the last year, we recognised that to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature, we must become more diverse and inclusive. We must also work with and support more diverse people and communities, and be a more inclusive organisation, supportive of a variety of efforts to connect to and protect nature.

To support this, we set up a new EDI programme and commissioned EDI specialists Full Colour to help us move forward with greater pace and impact. The result was a comprehensive report outlining high level recommendations, which we are responding to.

Alongside this new programme, we are listening to and learning from some wonderful organisations whose purpose it is to bring nature to everyone.

Against the backdrop of the Covid-19 lockdown, Nadeem Perera and Ollie Olanipekun set up Flock Together, a birdwatching group specifically for Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Nadeem and Ollie had both been fascinated by nature from an early age, but found people of colour were not represented in groups or activities connecting people to nature. RSPB member Nadeem says: 'There was an accumulation of pressure on people of colour. It was the height of lockdown and we had the Black Lives Matter protests. We'd been using birding as a coping mechanism, and wanted to share this.' They now have more than 11,000 followers and host monthly walks, and have ambitions to launch the movement worldwide.

Find them on Instagram at:
instagram.com/flocktogether.world



RSPB Old Moor welcomes the BBC Autumnwatch crew

In October and November 2020, RSPB Old Moor nature reserve hosted Gillian Burke to present BBC Autumnwatch. Two million people tuned in each night to watch the show which included a thermal image of one of the site's elusive bitterns! First-time visitors to the reserve increased during the two-week run.



Sara Humphrey

BBC presenter Gillian Burke reported live from Old Moor for Autumnwatch.



Alasdair Robertson

A bit of added puffin-style on display for Covid safety on Coquet Island.



50 years at Coquet

Coquet Island, located 2km off the Northumberland coast, is a seabird sanctuary with the UK's only breeding colony of roseate terns. Site Manager Paul Morrison looks back on 50 years since the first residential wardens started working on the site.

'When the RSPB took on Coquet, 50 years ago, the warden lived in a shed outside the lighthouse, and was dependent on the goodwill of the lighthouse workers for water, shelter, and the toilet. We've come a long way since then and I've been on the team for 37 years now.

'A big breakthrough came in 1990, when the lighthouse was automated, and the warden moved in. It now has solar power, wi-fi, and desalination, so we no longer have to bring water from the mainland. When our solar power was installed, we had a mini party for the team, and a light-switching ceremony. Small things are big things to us!

'The roseate tern colony of 130 pairs is at risk from egg collectors, and needs 24-hour surveillance. We now have CCTV as well as our team on guard. And since 2017, we've installed three wildlife cameras that bring Coquet to the world. Take a look here: **www.rspb.org.uk/coquetcams**

'When we started working on the island, there was one kittiwake pair, 5,000 pairs of puffins, and 18 pairs of roseate terns. It's now an incredible place with 35,000 nesting seabirds, and that includes 250 pairs of kittiwakes, 25,000 pairs of puffins, and 130 pairs of roseate terns. We got there through a combination of hard work from the team, a lack of disturbance due to the island's sanctuary status, and good food sources for the seabirds. Through our ringing activities, we know that more than 50 per cent of the roseate terns were hatched on the island, meaning we're on the way to creating a self-sustaining colony.

'We've also improved the habitat. We have 302 numbered nestboxes for the roseate terns, which we put out into the same places each year, and 'hammocks' for kittiwakes. In the future, I'd love to see the seabird populations growing. It'd be great to see some little terns. We have a lure that plays little tern calls, but they take a long time to set up a new habitat. I also hope Coquet will become a feeder colony in the future.

'As we say on the island, "Just for birds. The birds come first."'

Minsmere's future is in the balance

Iconic RSPB nature reserve Minsmere is under threat from a new nuclear power plant, Sizewell C, proposed by EDF Energy. The RSPB and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, along with supporters across the UK, are protesting against the plans.

We launched an e-action with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust in November 2020. An incredible 104,836 people responded, demonstrating they share our concerns about Sizewell C's impact on nature.

If Sizewell C goes ahead, it will sit on the border of RSPB Minsmere, home to more than 6,000 different types of animals, plants and fungi. It could destroy an area equivalent to 10 football pitches of the protected wildlife site Sizewell Marshes, managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Otters, water voles and marsh harriers will lose their homes.

EDF's plans have been submitted to the planning inspectorate, and the RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust have presented an extensive summary of concerns. The examination has begun, and we'll be presenting the numbers of people who signed the e-action as part of our detailed response. The fight continues. Keep up to date at: **www.rspb.org.uk/loveminsmere**



Otter

Bringing field crickets back from the brink

Field crickets are so rare in the UK that most people have only heard them sing in the background of films and TV shows. By the 1980s there were fewer than 100 left, all at one location. The Back from the Brink project is the latest effort to save them. They're one of the UK's most threatened species. As they are flightless, they have difficulty recovering from local extinctions.

Back from the Brink began in April 2017, aiming to establish a new field cricket colony at our Pulborough Brooks reserve in West Sussex, as well as a second colony at Farnham Heath in Surrey.

One way to boost field cricket populations is through translocation – moving from one site to another. In 2018 and 2019, translocations took place at both sites. But lockdown restrictions in 2020 meant we had to abandon plans for the last round. We were unsure of how our previous attempts had fared.

However, our reserve wardens heard field crickets singing at the release sites in May 2020, during routine fire and livestock checks. We were delighted as it showed the first proof of successful breeding.

With an annual lifecycle, any crickets heard calling this year must be the offspring of those released in previous years. It was only because we couldn't translocate more field crickets that we could confirm the previous translocations are working. For the first time, we can confirm this project a success.

Back from the Brink is a partnership conservation project to save 20 species from extinction. It is mainly funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The partnership project also received significant funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and People's Postcode Lottery, alongside other project partners. Visit: **naturebftb.co.uk/the-projects/field-cricket/**



Field crickets are one of the UK's rarest species.

Alex Hyde



Shutterstock

The UK's overseas land footprint is potentially threatening to the pygmy hippopotamus.

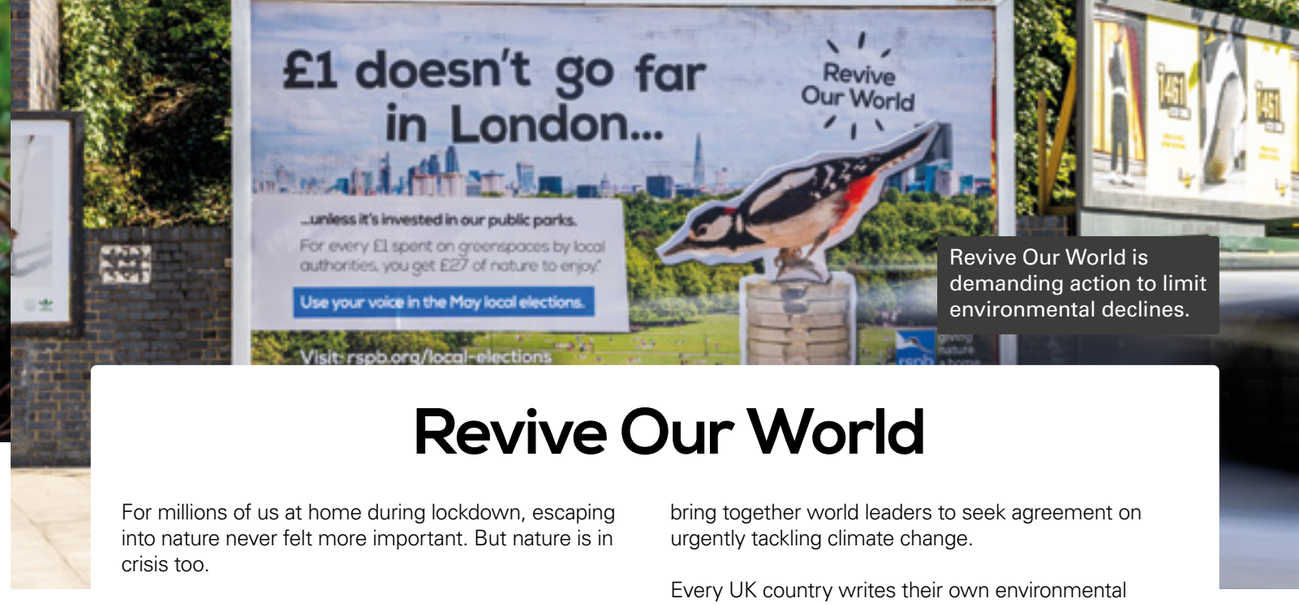
Riskier Business: the global impact of the UK's commodity demand

In 2020, we co-produced a report with WWF called Riskier Business: the UK's Overseas Land Footprint. It shows that the UK's demand for seven products is associated with high levels of deforestation overseas. These products are soy, palm oil, cocoa, beef and leather, pulp and paper, timber and natural rubber.

More than 21 million hectares of land (equivalent to 88% of the total land area of the UK) were used to produce these products for UK consumption between 2016 and 2018. This potentially threatens more than 2,800 species already at risk of extinction, including orangutans in Sumatra and wild cat populations in South America, such as the northern tiger cat. The UK's demand for cocoa alone now accounts for 9% of cocoa's global land footprint. Half those imports come from Côte d'Ivoire, potentially threatening endangered species including the rufous fishing owl and pygmy hippopotamus.

The report shows just how interconnected our food systems are, and the risks they pose if they are not properly regulated. In it we demand a legally-binding global footprint target in the Environment Bill, plus a due diligence obligation requiring UK businesses to prove their supply chains are secure and do not cause undue harm. We are pleased to say this obligation has since made it into the Environment Bill, although much work remains to raise the level of ambition and ensure it is implemented in a satisfactory way.

We call on companies to remove deforestation from their supply chains, and for financial institutions to make sure no lending or investments are associated with illegal activities or the destruction of nature. We urgently need to ensure our supply chains do not cause harm. View the report here: **www.rspb.org.uk/riskybusiness**



Revive Our World is demanding action to limit environmental declines.

Revive Our World

For millions of us at home during lockdown, escaping into nature never felt more important. But nature is in crisis too.

In September 2020, we launched the Revive Our World campaign, to coincide with a UN report showing that the international community had failed to stop environmental decline over the last 10 years. We asked people to join the campaign by signing up to our call for legally binding targets to secure nature's recovery. Nearly 80,000 people did in just a few weeks.

Over the next year world leaders will be negotiating last-resort targets to save nature and address the climate crisis at two global UN summits. The Convention on Biological Diversity will set new targets for global action on nature. Meanwhite, COP26 will bring together world leaders to seek agreement on urgently tackling climate change.

Every UK country writes their own environmental laws. Initially, we focused the campaign on influencing national and local elections in England, Scotland and Wales; and the programmes the new governments, mayors, and local authorities would pursue. In Northern Ireland, our priorities have been to secure targets to save nature in new devolved laws, and a green recovery from the pandemic. Elections follow in early 2022.

The UK countries have the power to lead and set the bar for the rest of the world. Revive Our World will demand action that puts us on the path out of the nature and climate emergency to a more hopeful future. Find out more: **www.rspb.org.uk/reviveourworld**

The UK's lost decade for nature

The United Nations published the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 in autumn 2020, showing how the international community had failed to halt environmental decline over the last ten years.

While it didn't contain country-level breakdowns, the RSPB revealed the UK's true performance in *A Lost Decade for Nature*. A decade ago, the 'Aichi Targets' were hailed as the way to save life on Earth. However, they were not legally binding and our analysis revealed that the UK met just three of the 20 targets.

Whilst the UK Government claims to be making progress, evidence suggests otherwise. According to the *State of Nature* report (2019), 15% of the 8,500 species assessed are threatened with extinction. In addition, the Government claims to be protecting 28% of land and 24% of sea for nature, but this includes National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which are not designated primarily for nature conservation. Land protected and managed for nature could be as low as 5%.

During the past decade, public funding for the environment and nature declined from £641 million (2012–2013) to just £456 million (2017–2018). Funding is vital for creating and protecting important habitat.

Alongside widespread media coverage of our report, RSPB Frampton Marsh hosted Channel 4 News for a 'Lost Decade' special, where Chief Executive Beccy Speight called for legally binding government targets to stop nature's freefall. See the report here: **www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/review-our-world/**





Sarah Havery

The St Helena cloud forest is home to more than 500 unique species.

Helping to restore the St Helena cloud forest

St Helena is a small island of 121 square kilometres (47 square miles), in the middle of the South Atlantic ocean. It is 1,600 kilometres (994 miles) west of Angola, and a UK Overseas Territory. As it's so isolated, it has developed some incredibly fascinating and unique wildlife, with more than 500 unique species – one third of all unique British wildlife. This includes the St Helena plover and the spiky yellow woodlouse.

Cloud forest is a type of forest where there is persistent cloud cover. Moisture from the clouds condenses on to the plant leaves and drips on to the ground. During the dry season, cloud forests can double the amount of rainfall to the land.

St Helena's cloud forest once covered all the high-altitude areas over 600 metres, but it is now reduced to just 16 hectares spread across 120 different fragments within the Peaks National Park. 250 unique species are found solely in these precious remnants, and the Peaks provide the majority of this drought-prone island's water.

We have now secured an agreed plan between all partners in St Helena to restore the fragmented cloud forest. The plan is to re-vegetate the 'Diana's Peak' ridge, create new cloud forest habitat, and diversify the existing habitat. This will enable the remaining fragments to stabilise, with connecting corridors. We expect to double the plant output every year.

In addition, we plan to enhance the experience for visitors, creating access, focal points, and visitor interpretation, enabling visitors to enjoy the forest without causing undue harm.

A third of all unique British wildlife is found on St Helena, including the spiky yellow woodlouse.



Help swifts with our Swift Mapper

Swifts are incredible. They can fly up to 800 km (500 miles) a day on migration, and spend their lives almost enitirely on the wing, and even feed, sleep and mate in flight. Screaming swifts are a sign of summer, but swifts are in trouble, with more than half vanishing over the past 30 years.

To help them, we launched Swift Mapper in May 2020. It's a mapping system and mobile app, where users report where they've seen either nesting swifts or groups of screaming swifts, anywhere in the UK.

This helps us build a picture of where nest sites need to be protected, and where it would be helpful to place new ones.

We launched Swift Mapper with our partners Action For Swifts, Natural Apptitude, Swift Conservation and the Swifts Local Network. For details, go to: **www.swiftmapper.org.uk**



Richard Fforde

Our first look at the refurbished Nature Centre.

Looking to the future at Loch Garten

Loch Garten is part of RSPB Scotland's Abernethy nature reserve, within the Cairngorms National Park. It is where ospreys first returned in the 1950s after a period of extinction in the UK.

When we constructed the Loch Garten Osprey Centre in 1999, it was basically a big wooden box in the forest, with viewing hatches looking towards the osprey nest. We've undertaken a major upgrade and it now provides a brighter, warmer, and bigger space for visitors to view the wildlife. Full height glazing has replaced walls, and glass doors open onto an extended outdoor seating deck, where red squirrels leap across overhead branches and crested tits flit among the ancient Caledonian forest.

We've added new interpretation in the centre and along surrounding trails, to help people understand the wonders of the forest. This includes our 200-year vision to double the forested area, extending up the mountains to the natural tree line. We've also taken the opportunity to rename the centre the Loch Garten Nature Centre, reflecting the range of wildlife here.

The Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund, funded by the European Regional Development Fund and led by NatureScot, is the major funder of this redevelopment. Without the generous gift of a legacy that provided match funding, the work could not have proceeded. We are eternally grateful to the generous people who remember the RSPB in their Will.

Ospreys returned to breed in the 1950s.

More than 13,000 people take part in virtual mass lobby

In 2019, around 12,000 people took part in a mass lobby of Parliament, as part of The Time Is Now campaign. They were all calling for urgent action on the nature and climate emergency. On 30 June 2020, we took to Zoom to continue the fight in a virtual mass lobby, where more than 13,000 people lobbied over 250 MPs.

The virtual mass lobby was organised by The Climate Coalition.

We'd like to thank everyone who joined the virtual mass lobby. Because of you, we were able to show decision-makers that UK citizens want a healthier future, with people, climate and nature at its core.

We received great feedback from MPs and constituents alike, who all felt the event was a positive step in opening up discussions between the public and the Government regarding the future of our environment.

As part of our Revive Our World campaign, we are continuing to support The Time Is Now, which aims to influence the UN global climate summit in November. We are a key member of the coalition and the climate summit is a big priority for Revive Our World. If you would like to support our campaign and take action this year, sign up at: **www.rspb.org.uk/reviveourworld**



Colin Wilkinson (rspb-images.com)

Wildflower margins, as demonstrated at Hope Farm, benefit insects and other wildlife.

20 years of wildlife-friendly farming at Hope Farm

Historically, some farming practices have been devastating for nature, but some farmers are now doing fantastic things to look after wildlife and run a sustainable business. Together with other sustainable farmers, the RSPB's Hope Farm in Cambridgeshire, showcases how farming can actively reverse the decline of nature while remaining a profitable business.

For the past 20 years, the team has worked with farmers, scientists and policy experts, pooling knowledge and offering the land as an experimental zone. They created farmland habitats such as wildflower margins and ponds, diversified crop rotations and reduced cultivations, and in autumn 2018 they phased insecticides out entirely.

The benefits are huge:

- Wintering farmland birds are up 600%
- Butterfly numbers quadrupled, compared with a 10% national decline since 1990
- Bumblebee numbers are 19 times higher than on a nearby control farm.

Throughout all this, the farm has maintained a steady profit.

Georgie Bray, Hope Farm Manager, said: 'UK farmers are being buffeted – Brexit negotiations are reshaping legislation, coronavirus shook up supply chains, and the nature and climate emergencies are making farming more and more unpredictable. The good news is that investing in nature can help. It creates richer soils, as well as a more thriving, diverse landscape that attracts insects to help control pests and disease and makes the farm more resilient to increasingly common extreme weather. Farmers can help revive our world, and I know that by working with and learning from each other we can make that change happen.'



Early birds join in Dawn Chorus Day

International Dawn Chorus Day 2020 was held on Sunday 3 May. Normally, there would have been many events across our nature reserves, so we had a rethink and brought it online, and into people's gardens instead, due to the ongoing government Covid-19 restrictions.

A challenge was that the dawn chorus starts before sunrise. To encourage engagement, we hosted our very own Breakfast Birdwatch, featuring stunning footage and the dawn chorus from our Arne and Loch Garten nature reserves, starting at 5am.

We wanted to get as many people as possible to enjoy their actual dawn chorus from the safety of their home, so we asked people to record their own, and share on our events page and social media channels. This allowed everyone to enjoy it, particularly those without gardens, or with no dawn chorus within earshot. The online event also featured nature presenters Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin sharing their dawn chorus with us. **#DawnChorusDay** was the top trending hashtag on Twitter at 7am that day.

International Dawn Chorus Day turned into a very special one and for the first time it really felt like the whole nation celebrated this natural wonder.

2,400 people attended our online Dawn Chorus Day.





Emily Lomax (rspb-images)

Members of the RSPB Youth Council taken in 2019 at Franchises Lodge.

The future of conservation

Our Youth Council is a panel of 10 fantastic ambassadors who ensure that young people get a voice in our work. Aged 15–17, they influence our projects, speak at events, and get hands-on experience at RSPB conservation camps.

This year, we've taken important steps to make our Youth Council more inclusive, recognising the value diversity of voices can bring. This includes removing the need for Youth Council members to be an RSPB member, so that their financial situation is no longer a potential barrier. For the first time, we advertised on social media, and made the recruitment process online, as previously it was mostly done through members' magazines. We also introduced a judging panel to select Youth Council members, with a wide level of diversity in terms of gender, disability, age, and experience across the four countries of the UK.

In 2020–2021 the Youth Council meetings moved online, and they organised themselves into two working groups, focusing on social media and publications. They now have a regular feature in the teenage members' magazine *Wingbeat*, where they focus on causes and issues they care about. One Youth Council member, Jannis, was invited to join The Climate Coalition's panel on youth perspectives on the climate crisis, with three other young people. They have also given input into the new RSPB strategy, influencing the RSPB's future direction.

Find out more: **www.rspb.org.uk/youthcouncil**

Meet Kabir Kaul, Youth Council member

Kabir is a member of the Youth Council and a fantastic advocate for conservation. Based in London, he is passionate about the city's biodiversity and used lockdown to discover more about his local wild spaces.

He is an advocate of the 'urban jungle', where people and nature have a chance to thrive. He created the first interactive map of the 1,000 nature reserves and wild spaces across London. An experienced blogger and public speaker, he has also appeared on BBC Autumnwatch.

Kabir said, 'Over the past year, I've had some memorable experiences as a Youth Councillor. Opening Hen Harrier Day 2020, co-presenting the Big Garden Birdwatch Live and speaking at the RSPB AGM have helped broaden my knowledge of the country's unique birdlife, and the issues facing it. Being part of the Youth Council has given me the chance to collaborate with like-minded young people too, and share thoughts on the RSPB's initiatives.

'As an advocate for biodiversity in urban areas, I would encourage RSPB members in towns and cities to notice and appreciate the nature around them. Whether it is bats catching insects in a small park at night, or a peregrine falcon flying high above tower blocks, you do not have to go far to see some remarkable wildlife.' Follow Kabir on Twitter: **@KaultheWildUK**



Kabir Kaul

RSPB Conwy nature reserve celebrates 25th anniversary

In 2020, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of RSPB Conwy, a nature reserve special to many people. Paul Martin has been a Conwy volunteer since 2008, and he said: 'My best experience at Conwy was receiving a note from a young chap thanking me for helping him to use his bird book at the hide. I still have the note and it's a moment I will always treasure. Teaching others about nature and seeing their amazement when you show them something new is just priceless.'



Northern wheatear at Conwy during migration.

A year of saving nature

There were many highlights this year, despite the challenges of Covid-19 and the limited recording of breeding birds on nature reserves that was possible. Here's a taster.

One third of UK cranes

are found on RSPB nature reserves.





Cattle egrets

finally bred at Pagham Harbour. Five pairs fledged five young.



Corncrakes

Calling males in Orkney up to 20 in 2020 from 8 in 2017.



Stone-curlews

on RSPB reserves had their best year yet - from 23 pairs in 2019 to 29 pairs in 2020.



Roseate terns

had an incredible year on Coquet Island with 130 pairs, the highest since the 1970s.



Spoonbills

fledged 7 young on RSPB Havergate Island in 2020. It's the first successful nesting in Suffolk in 300 years.



Little terns

breeding at Point of Ayr on the Dee Estuary had a record-breaking year - from 3 pairs in 2019 to 21 pairs in 2020, fledging 28 young.



Avocets

bred at Pulborough Brooks for the first time ever.



Bitterns

fledged a chick at Newport Wetlands: a first for the reserve.

222
nature reserves

158,751
hectares of land

18,500
species




Jeroen Stel (rspb-images.com)

Spoonbill nesting success

Spoonbills are a very rare breeding bird in the UK, so we were thrilled when they fledged seven young on RSPB Havergate Island in 2020, the first time they've successfully nested in Suffolk in more than 300 years.

This success follows the six unsuccessful nesting attempts in 2019 when predators took the eggs and young. The success in 2020 is thanks to the hard work by the reserve team, who provided suitable spoonbill habitat including constructing an underwater anti-predator fence on the reserve over the winter. They also monitored the nest using a drone flying over from the mainland.

Manx shearwater surprise

Our work attaching GPS trackers to Manx shearwaters in Ireland has revealed some surprising results. Compared to their Welsh counterparts, the Irish population of Manx shearwaters regularly travel enormous distances offshore – about five times as far as the expected range for this species.

We're not sure why this is. Some of their journeys are definitely shorter ones, foraging to find food, but as for the longer offshore trips – it remains a mystery. This tracking study showed where and how far seabirds go at sea is very much dependent on where the colonies are located – so we need targeted local studies when developing our conservation plans.

We carried out this work with University College Cork.

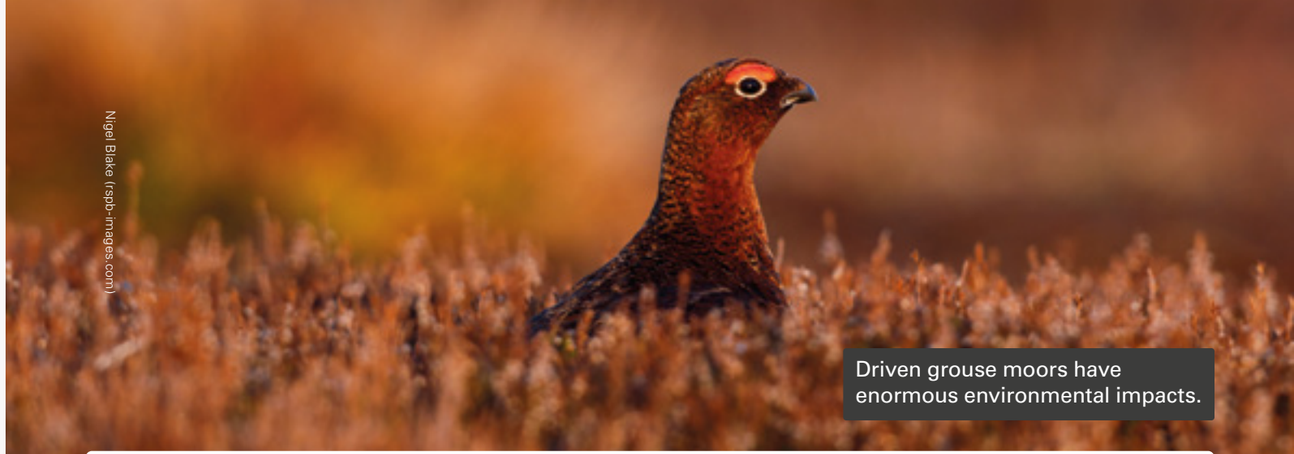

Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)


Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)

Helping curlews recover in Wales

The bubbling call of the curlew was once the sound of Wales, but we're sad to say that there are likely to be fewer than 400 breeding pairs of curlews in the country.

However, we have secured EU LIFE funding for curlew recovery. This will build upon our work in the Blaen y Coed area of Ysbyty Ifan, where we're restoring peatbogs to make them wetter and more attractive to craneflies, which curlews feed on. This four-year project will cover emergency works, community engagement, co-working with key partners, plus monitoring, research and legacy building. Through this, we're hoping to restore the curlew to Wales.


Nigel Blake (rspb-images.com)

Driven grouse moors have enormous environmental impacts.

Gamebird shooting review: a first for the RSPB

In 2020, we carried out a review of gamebird shooting. This came about due to public concern and mounting evidence about the impacts of driven grouse moor management and the release of gamebirds on a large scale.

The impacts of this industry include the ongoing illegal persecution of birds of prey; ecological impact of high numbers of game birds; mass culling of mountain hares; use of lead ammunition; impact of burning peatlands; and medicating wild animals for shooting.

Gamebird shooting is widespread in the UK. It draws strong opinions, but we've always maintained a neutral stance, enshrined in our Royal Charter since 1904. However, this has never stopped us from speaking out when conservation interests are at stake. In recent years there's been growing evidence that the most intensive forms of land management linked to shooting have been causing serious environmental harm. This, along with growing concern among our members, prompted us to carry out a scientific review of the issues. As part of that, in early 2020 we sought the views of our members, staff and volunteers, and countryside, animal welfare, and shooting organisations. All this work led to a change in our policy.

We're seeking tougher enforcement to end the illegal killing of birds of prey.



We're now seeking new laws, backed up by tougher enforcement, to end the illegal killing of birds of prey, end the use of lead ammunition, and end vegetation burning on peatlands. We believe all intensive gamebird shooting should be regulated to reduce the negative environmental impacts. Specifically, for 'driven' grouse shooting, we are proposing the introduction of licenses. We will provide an annual assessment of progress and review our position within the next five years. Failure to deliver effective reform will result in the RSPB calling for a ban on driven grouse shooting. For the release of non-native pheasants and red-legged partridges, we will work with public bodies and the shooting sector to improve the environmental standards of shooting. Ultimately, we believe that further regulation may be necessary to drive up environmental standards. We will call for this within the next year if significant progress is not secured.

Progress has been made in some quarters. The Scottish Government has announced a proposal to introduce licensed grouse shooting measures and to promote legal and environmentally beneficial land management practices associated with this industry. This change came on the back of the 'Werritty Review' of grouse moor management commissioned by the Scottish Government. We want to see a similar review of driven grouse shooting extended to England.

Many shooters are keen to end environmentally damaging activities. They clearly see that intensity of management from some shoots has created an uncertain future for the industry because of growing public concern about the consequences of their actions. We want these people to be allies at the forefront of change and we are ready to work with them to bring it about.

England

David Broadbent (rspb-images.com)

There are inequalities in access to nature between high and low incomes and urban and rural households.



2020–2021 brought unexpected challenges, but also brought everyone closer to nature. We commissioned research, revealing how important nature-rich greenspaces are to us, and how access to them is unequal. We've also continued our push to end burning on deep peat, with Defra announcing a partial ban on protected areas in January.

Emma Marsh
Director, RSPB England



Leila Balin (rspb-images.com)

Access to nature close to home was beneficial during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Recovering together

In March 2020 we entered lockdown. It had some unexpected side effects. People began noticing nature, and sharing their experiences with us. How did time in nature help people cope with lockdown? What role did nature play in building resilience, and supporting our recovery from the pandemic?

In response, our Policy and Advocacy team commissioned research through YouGov in May 2020, which revealed that adults in England:

- see nature as important for health and wellbeing
- think access to nature close to home was beneficial during the Covid-19 crisis
- overwhelmingly support protecting and investing in nature, and increasing accessible natural greenspace as part of our recovery from Covid-19
- strongly oppose Government reducing spending on nature or putting less emphasis on protecting it.

The survey also highlighted inequalities in access to nature: between households with highest and lowest incomes, and between urban and rural households.

When the report – *Recovering Together* – was launched in June 2020, we called on England's metro mayors (elected leaders of the largest urban and metropolitan areas) to put nature at the heart of their recovery strategies. In response, four mayors' offices recorded videos talking about their commitment to a green recovery, and nature featured in many of their recovery strategies.

Recovering Together 2 (the 'Greenspace report')

The implications of Covid-19 for the economy became more apparent as the year continued. Spending initiatives under the slogan 'build, build, build' seemed the antithesis of a green recovery. We saw a risk that nature commitments could be forgotten.

In *Recovering Together 2*, published in December 2020, we set out the vision for a nature-rich future. We argue that projects investing in nature-rich greenspace, green infrastructure and nature-based climate solutions should be prioritised. We call on decision-makers to put these initiatives at the heart of plans to reboot the economy and deliver a green recovery.

Adults in England see nature as important for health and wellbeing



Banning the burn, for peat's sake

Peat is incredible. Composed of partly-decomposed plant matter, it develops over thousands of years. It supports rare species such as the carnivorous sundew, acts as a natural flood protector, and stores huge amounts of carbon. We have long opposed the practice of burning peat bogs.

Our 'ban the burn' campaign has brought the plight of peatlands into the spotlight. Following a promise by Government to end burning on deep peat in 2020, Defra announced a partial ban in January 2021.

Under the new rules, burning vegetation on protected areas of upland peatland (over 40cm deep) will be prevented. Although there are several exemptions, it's encouraging to see.

In a climate crisis, protecting one of our largest carbon stores seems obvious. Burning is still allowed in many areas without protected status, thwarting habitat restoration and releasing carbon. As Director of Global Conservation (at the time) Martin Harper put it: '...the climate does not care whether emissions are from within or outside protected areas.' Our work continues!

Northern Ireland

Photos taken under licence at Portmore Lough by James O'Neill



The RSPB NI team supported each other magnificently over the past year. Through the Revive our World campaign, the public challenged the Northern Ireland Executive, calling for a green recovery to address the nature and climate emergency. On reserve conservation recommenced as restrictions eased and we showcased our work virtually at NI Science Festival and via livecam from Belfast WOW during Big Garden Birdwatch.

Joanne Sherwood
Director, RSPB Northern Ireland

This young curlew hatched from one of the rescued eggs.



RSPB

Trasna Island, Upper Lough Erne, is one of 46 islands managed by RSPB NI in County Fermanagh.

Restoring Trasna Island for curlews, redshanks and lapwings

We've continued our vital work to restore habitat for breeding wading birds in Fermanagh as part of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19.

We acquired Trasna Island in 2016, the 46th island to be managed by the reserve team. However, it has been unmanaged for many years.

Our research uncovered pictures from 1920, which showed it was an open, farmed landscape. This is an ideal habitat for breeding curlews and lapwings. We aimed to restore the island and removed four hectares of trees and scrub from the shoreline, to boost the hopes for these breeding wading birds and to make it look more like the old photographs.

Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity, a major project made possible through the EU interreg programme, enabled us to procure a new cot (boat) for transporting livestock to the islands. Over-wintering of highland cattle on the islands results in a mixed mosaic of grass lengths, creating ideal nesting habitat for curlews and redshanks.

We have also acquired a Soucy Track tractor. The low ground pressure track system allows us to mow soft rush on wet ground.

While large machinery has allowed us to deliver large-scale projects on Trasna and White Island South islands, fine-tuning the habitat for breeding wading birds requires work by hand - using loppers and pruning saws. We used brush cutters to establish areas of short grass for nesting lapwings.

Combining large machinery and hand-held equipment provides an ideal balance, and benefits a variety of species on the RSPB's most westerly nature reserve.

Peatland blaze curlew rescue

Our Portmore Lough nature reserve became a safe place during a rescue mission to save five curlew chicks. Curlews are one of Northern Ireland's most endangered species, which have declined by 82% since 1985. Last summer, Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership staff realised that two clutches of curlew eggs were at risk of being destroyed by peatland fires on the southwest shores of Lough Neagh.

A dozen devastating fires had removed vital nesting habitat for adult curlews, and destroyed essential food supplies for the unhatched ground-nesting chicks.

For the first time ever on the island of Ireland, the Lough Neagh Landscape team worked with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to acquire a licence to remove the fragile eggs from their natural habitat, to maximise their chances of survival.

The eggs were placed in an incubator and, following hatching, transported to our reserve at Portmore Lough, which is managed for curlews and other wading birds. Working with our Partnership colleagues, the chicks were kept secure in a purpose-built pen in a field of rushy pasture, and released as soon as they were able to fly and survive independently.

We hope they will continue to thrive and breed in the Lough Neagh landscape.

Scotland

Sam Ranscombe 2020



Scotland's marine landscape now has more protection.

RSPB Scotland has risen to the challenges of Covid-19. We've reviewed and extended work at the Orkney Native Wildlife Project, continued transformational change at landscape level through Cairngorms Connect, and there is now a Scottish Government commitment to license grouse shooting. Our staff, volunteers and supporters are at the heart of this – thank you.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland



Ian Francis (rspb-images.com)

Short-eared owls are one of the birds we're helping through the Orkney Native Wildlife Project.

Protecting Orkney's native wildlife

In Orkney, stoats are an invasive non-native species. They could pose a very serious threat to the islands' native wildlife, particularly ground-nesting birds like curlews, Arctic terns, hen harriers and short-eared owls, along with the Orkney vole, which is found only in Orkney. Many of these species are important for Orkney's economy through wildlife tourism and for the health and wellbeing of local communities.

The Orkney Native Wildlife Project aims to safeguard the future of Orkney's incredible native wildlife by removing every last stoat from Orkney and putting measures in place to ensure they cannot return. The team also have biosecurity measures (including traps and cameras) in place on inner islands to stop stoats spreading there and returning in future. The team monitor native species with the help of volunteers and citizen scientists, engaging with young people through schools, and working with others to celebrate Orkney's incredible natural heritage.

Despite significant impacts caused by Covid-19 – including a halt of trapping activity and wildlife monitoring during the first lockdown, cancellation of school visits and events, and delays to the arrival of the specially-trained stoat detection dogs – the project has made good progress.

With permission from more than 770 landowners, the trap network is now in place and more than 1,361 stoats have been caught. In addition, Europe's first stoat detection dogs have arrived. Full wildlife monitoring can take place in 2021, and we look forward to the return of events and school visits once safe. Before lockdown over 1,800 primary school pupils had attended special workshops and there are ambitious plans for secondary schools too.

The project is hugely grateful for the ongoing support of communities in Orkney and further afield.

The Orkney Native Wildlife Project is a partnership between RSPB Scotland, NatureScot and Orkney Islands Council with generous funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund and EU LIFE along with NatureScot and the RSPB.

To find out more, visit:
www.orkneynativewildlife.org.uk

Three stoat detection dogs arrived in Orkney in April 2021.



Boosting Scotland's marine wildlife

In December 2020, marine wildlife in Scotland got a boost when 12 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for marine birds were announced by the Scottish Government. The SPAs are the first in Scotland to protect important feeding and wintering areas for marine birds at sea.

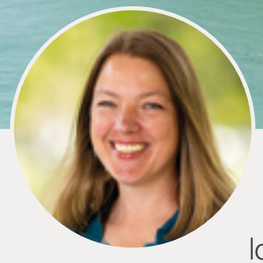
The SPAs will collectively provide protection for 31 species including seabirds, divers, seaducks and grebes. The Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA protects over 20 different species, and in the breeding season over 100,000 seabirds come here to feed. These site classifications are the result of years of research, advocacy, and campaigning. A huge thank you to everyone who helped us champion the sites.

Although these SPAs are a welcome step, more needs to be done. As we continue into the Year of Coasts and Waters, we hope to receive more good news for Scotland's marine birds, starting with the classification of the outstanding Orkney sites and delivery of a Scottish Seabird Conservation Strategy.

Wales

Jake Stephen (rspb-images.com)

The South Stack Lighthouse, viewable from the visitor centre, was built in 1809 to warn ships of the dangerous rocks below.



We harnessed the surge in interest in nature during lockdowns with our social media channels, online educational activities and when possible, we welcomed new audiences to our nature reserves. We reflected this love for nature to our politicians urging a step-change in the response to the climate and nature emergency and a green recovery from Covid-19.

Katie-jo Luxton
Director, RSPB Cymru



RSPB Cymru

South Stack's visitor centre with spectacular views to the Irish Sea.

Opening new visitor facilities at South Stack

A new visitor centre was completed at South Stack in spring 2021, after more than a year of redevelopment.

Improved visitor facilities include a new café seating area which opens onto decking with spectacular views of the Irish Sea. We've also made the site greener, with new roof and wall insulation, double-glazed windows, and the addition of an air-source heat pump and solar panels. A natural water treatment system will also harness the power of nature to clean waste water.

In addition, we have installed beautiful wooden sculptures celebrating the wildlife of South Stack, created by Anglesey sculptor Duncan Kitson, and funded by the Gaynor Cemlyn-Jones Trust. Artwork by pupils from Ysgol Cybi is also on display.

Since 1977, when RSPB Cymru first took the lease for South Stack from Isle of Anglesey County Council, we have managed this amazing coastal habitat for wildlife and visitors alike. We would like to thank everyone who has supported us. It is your generosity and belief in our mission that enables us to continue our work protecting wildlife.

The restoration project was made possible with support from RSPB members, as well as the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-20, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Welsh Government.

Choughs, rare members of the crow family, are seen at South Stack.



Green Recovery Wales festival

RSPB Cymru met the challenge of Covid-19 restrictions head-on in July 2020, with the creation of a new online festival.

Green Recovery Wales was a first for the RSPB. It brought together nine environmental organisations for a four-day event featuring live discussions, webinars, wellbeing sessions and family activities.

The festival considered how Wales can champion a green recovery from Covid-19 whilst leading the way in nature-friendly land management, creating sustainable food systems, and restoring wildlife.

Over 60 discussions and activities were held involving politicians, decision makers and innovators across the environment and farming sectors. First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, launched the festival live in a discussion with RSPB Cymru Director, Katie-jo Luxton, and Director of National Trust Wales, Justin Albert. Other highlights included messages of support from wildlife broadcaster Iolo Williams, a cookery demonstration by BBC chefs Sam and Shauna, storytime with S4C's children's programme Cyw, and a youth panel discussion.

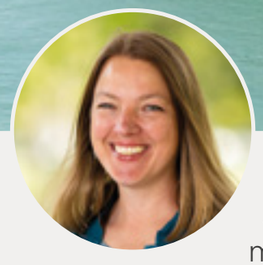
A small team pulled together Green Recovery Wales at short notice, and it was a showcase for agility and innovation in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Over 5,700 people attended from Wales and around the world. The recorded sessions are still available online. You can view them here: **www.greenrecovery.wales**

Cymru

Jake Stephen (rspb-images.com)



Cafodd goleudy Ynys Lawd, i'w weld o'r canolfan ymwelwyr, ei adeiladu yn 1809 er mwyn rhybuddio llongau o'r clogwyni peryg isod.



Aethom ati i fanteisio ar y cynnydd yn niddordeb pobl mewn natur yn ystod y cyfyngiadau symud trwy gyfrwng sianeli cyfryngau cymdeithasol, gweithgareddau addysgol ar-lein a phan oedd hynny'n bosibl, croesawyd cynulleidfaoedd newydd i'n gwarchodfeydd. Cyflëwyd y diddordeb hwn at natur i'n gwleidyddion gan annog newid sylweddol yn yr ymateb i'r argyfwng hinsawdd a natur ac adferiad gwyrdd ar ôl Covid-19.

Katie-jo Luxton
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

RSPB Cymru



Canolfan ymwelwyr Ynys y De gyda golygfeydd godidog i Fôr Iwerddon.

Agor cyfleusterau newydd i ymwelwyr yn Ynys Lawd

Cwblhawyd canolfan ymwelwyr newydd yn Ynys Lawd yng ngwanwyn 2021, ar ôl mwy na blwyddyn o waith ailddatblygu.

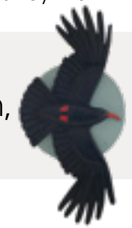
Mae'r cyfleusterau i ymwelwyr wedi gwella ac yn cynnwys caffi newydd sy'n agor allan i ddecin gyda golygfeydd godidog i gyfeiriad Môr Iwerddon. Rydym hefyd wedi gwneud y safle'n wyrddach, gan insiwleiddio'r to a'r waliau newydd, ffenestri gwydr dwbl, ac ychwanegu pwmp gwres ffynhonnell aer a phaneli solar. Bydd system trin dŵr naturiol hefyd yn harneisio pŵer natur i lanhau dŵr gwastraff.

Yn ogystal â hyn, rydym wedi gosod cerfluniau pren hardd sy'n dathlu bywyd gwyllt Ynys Lawd, a grëwyd gan Duncan Kitson, cerflunydd o Ynys Môn, ac a ariannwyd gan Ymddiriedolaeth Gaynor Cemlyn-Jones. Mae gwaith celf gan ddisgyblion o Ysgol Cybi hefyd yn cael ei arddangos.

Ers 1977, pan gymerodd RSPB Cymru y brydles gyntaf ar gyfer Ynys Lawd gan Gyngor Sir Ynys Môn, rydym wedi rheoli'r cynefin arfordirol anhygoel hwn ar gyfer bywyd gwyllt ac ymwelwyr fel ei gilydd. Hoffem ddiolch i bawb sydd wedi ein cefnogi. Eich haelioni a'ch ffydd yn ein cenhadaeth sy'n ein galluogi i barhau â'n gwaith i ddiogelu bywyd gwyllt.

Gwnaed y prosiect adfer yn bosibl gyda chymorth aelodau'r RSPB, yn ogystal â Rhaglen Datblygu Gwledig Cymunedau Gwledig Llywodraeth Cymru 2014-20, a ariannwyd gan Gronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig (EAFRD) a Llywodraeth Cymru.

Mae brain goesgoch, aelodau prin o'r teulu brain, i'w gweld yn Ynys Lawd.



Gwyliau Adferiad Gwyrdd Cymrul

Bu i RSPB Cymru ymateb yn gadarnhaol i her cyfyngiadau Covid-19 yn ym mis Gorffennaf 2020, gan greu gŵyl ar-lein newydd.

Adferiad Gwyrdd Cymru oedd y cyntaf i'r RSPB. Daeth naw sefydliad amgylcheddol at ei gilydd ar gyfer digwyddiad pedwar diwrnod yn cynnwys trafodaethau byw, gweminarau, sesiynau lles a gweithgareddau i'r teulu.

Ystyriodd yr ŵyl sut y gall Cymru hyrwyddo adferiad gwyrdd ar ôl Covid-19 gan arwain y ffordd o ran rheoli tir sy'n ystyriol o natur, creu systemau bwyd cynaliadwy, ac adfer bywyd gwyllt.

Cynhaliwyd dros 60 o drafodaethau a gweithgareddau yn cynnwys gwleidyddion, llunwyr penderfyniadau ac arloeswyr ar draws y sectorau amgylchedd a ffermio. Lansiodd Mark Drakeford, Prif Weinidog Cymru, yr ŵyl gyda thrafodaeth â Chyfarwyddwr RSPB Cymru, Katie-jo Luxton, a Chyfarwyddwr Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol Cymru, Justin Albert. Ymhlith yr uchafbwyntiau eraill roedd negeseuon o gefnogaeth gan y darlledwr bywyd gwyllt Iolo Williams, arddangosiad coginio gan Sam a Shauna, cogyddion ar y BBC, amser stori gyda rhaglen blant S4C Cyw, a thrafodaeth panel ieuenctid.

Trefnwyd Adferiad Gwyrdd Cymru gan dîm bach ar fyr rybudd, ac roedd yn llwyfan i ffyrdd o ymateb yn hyblyg ac arloesol i bandemig Covid-19. Cymerodd dros 5,700 o bobl o Gymru a ledled y byd ran yn y digwyddiad, ac mae'r sesiynau a recordiwyd yn dal i fod ar gael ar-lein. Gallwch eu gweld yma:
www.greenrecovery.wales/cy/

International



Andy Schofield

We're pleased that Tristan da Cunha is now protected for species like the endangered Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross.

Tristan da Cunha is now one of the largest sanctuaries for wildlife

On 13 November 2020, Tristan da Cunha, a UK Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic Ocean, announced one of the world's biggest sanctuaries.

Tristan da Cunha is the most remote inhabited archipelago in the world, 2,400 kilometres (1,491 miles) from the nearest land. It's also a wildlife haven. It's where millions of seabirds come to breed, including the northern rockhopper penguin and the Tristan albatross. It is home to the critically endangered Gough bunting, and the endangered Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross and McGillivray's prion. Beneath the waves, the seas around Tristan da Cunha have the Tristan wrasse, rock shark, blue shark, and beaked whale.

Almost 700,000 square kilometres (270,271 square miles) of its waters are now safe for wildlife as a Marine Protection Zone (MPZ). It has become the largest 'no take' zone in the Atlantic, the fourth largest on Earth. This means that fishing and other associated activities are all banned from the area, which is three times the size of the UK.

The announcement also helps the UK government achieve its ambition to secure protection of 30% of the world's oceans by 2030. The UK has a duty to help the Territories to protect their wildlife and will be responsible for long-term monitoring and enforcement of this vast MPZ.

This announcement is the result of 20 years' work and wouldn't have been possible without the leadership of the Tristan community. Initially, the RSPB worked with the Tristan da Cunha government to lay the conservation groundwork and support Tristan's management of this sustainable lobster fishery, followed by a five-year programme of UK Government Blue Belt support. Then an international coalition of partners supported the final phase.

Tristan da Cunha Chief Islander James Glass said: 'Our life on Tristan da Cunha has always been based around our relationship with the sea, and that continues today. The Tristan community is deeply committed to conservation: on land, we've already declared protected status for more than half our territory. But the sea is our vital resource, for our economy and ultimately for our long-term survival. That's why we're fully protecting 90% of our waters – and we're proud that we can play a key role in preserving the health of the oceans.'

The RSPB and the Government of Tristan da Cunha partnered with National Geographic Pristine Seas, Blue Nature Alliance, Becht Family Charitable Trust, Wyss Foundation, Kaltroco, the UK Government Blue Belt Programme, British Antarctic Survey, and Don Quixote II Foundation.
To discover more about this beautiful marine paradise, visit: **www.rspb.org.uk/tristanmarinezone**



Elena Serra, BirdLife International

RSPB staff with BirdLife Partners across the East Atlantic Flyway.

Giving migratory birds a home from home

A 'flyway' is the flightpath used by birds migrating between their breeding grounds and overwintering areas. Migratory birds face multiple threats, including loss of breeding and wintering habitats, and illegal killing. We focus on the East Atlantic Flyway, which extends from northern Europe to southern Africa.

We launched the East Atlantic Flyway Initiative (EAFI) in late 2015 to coordinate the work of BirdLife Partners in Europe and Africa along this flyway. Now over half the 75 countries have active BirdLife Partners working to protect migratory birds.

At the heart of our collaboration with Nordic partners are winter visitors, including wading birds that breed in the Arctic Circle. In collaboration with neighbouring partners, we are putting together plans for Special Protection Areas for migratory birds in Europe. On the Iberian Peninsula we're supporting SPEA (BirdLife Portugal) to oppose a second commercial airport for Lisbon in the Tagus Estuary.

This internationally-important wetland is a stopover site for migratory species from at least 27 countries, including most of the black-tailed godwits that breed in the UK. In association with our European partners, we're also working to implement the Turtle Dove Action Plan to reverse the fortunes of this iconic bird.

On the southern wintering grounds, we're working with partners in Southern and West Africa to restore and protect natural habitats, to improve prospects for migratory as well as resident birds whilst working with local human communities. For example, in Southern Africa we are working to conserve important landscapes such as the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA), which will benefit birds like the European roller.

We're excited about the future of these collaborations to improve the outlook of birds which migrate annually to and through the UK; securing them a home away from home.

Seabird deaths reduced by 98% in Namibia

The exciting news that seabird deaths in the Namibian demersal (deep sea) longline fishery have been reduced by 98%, or 22,000 birds saved every year, was revealed in a new paper published in Biological Conservation in January 2021.

The Albatross Task Force (ATF) was set up by the RSPB and BirdLife to reduce the numbers of birds accidentally caught in fishing gear, known as 'bycatch'. It demonstrates how simple measures can prevent birds from being killed.

The ATF has been operating in Namibia since 2008. At that time, it was estimated that Namibia's hake trawl and longline fisheries were among the world's deadliest for seabirds.

Fortunately, we know there are simple solutions. In Namibia, the main mitigation measure is to fly 'bird scaring lines' behind the vessels. These are colourful streamers which act as scarecrows, and are off-putting to birds. ATF instructors started by working aboard fishing boats, demonstrating these simple measures to fishers, but then also worked at a policy level, to get these measures enshrined in law.

In 2015, a new law was introduced, meaning that these measures are now mandatory across the fleet.

Samantha Matjila, Namibia ATF team leader with the Nambia Nature Foundation, our local partner, said: 'It's truly wonderful to see bycatch drop by such a huge amount in Namibia. Our waters are crucial for many globally threatened seabirds – to think that our collaborative efforts with all the vessels and the fishery managers have resulted in more than 22,000 birds being saved every year is something special.'



Dr Jakati

Indian vulture advocate wins the RSPB medal

Committed conservationist and Indian vulture advocate Dr Ram Jakati has been awarded the RSPB's most prestigious award, the RSPB Medal.

For more than two decades, Dr Jakati has played a significant role in protecting species from extinction, and helping develop the conservation sector in India – particularly in the field of vulture conservation. He helped set up the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) consortium and is a passionate advocate for vultures.

In the early 2000s, he was instrumental in getting the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) initiative off the ground. He took the brave step of providing state land for the vulture captive care centre, which became the conservation breeding centre, under a long-term legal agreement between Haryana State Government and BNHS. This was the crucial basis for what followed.

In 2003, research showed that the painkiller diclofenac, largely used for livestock, was the principal cause of vulture declines. Dr Jakati helped convince his colleagues in the Indian government, including State and Federal ministers, that action was needed to ban it. He also helped persuade them to set up a network of conservation breeding centres, to ensure vultures did not go extinct before the ban was implemented.

Dr Jakati played an essential part in creating the first Indian national vulture action plan, which oversaw the conversion of the captive care centre to a captive breeding centre. This required more land and resources from Haryana State. He also facilitated the collection of nesting and injured vultures from several Indian states, to give the breeding centre a head start.

Without his efforts, the existing thriving captive vulture population, which has produced hundreds of captive-bred young birds, to release into the wild, would not exist and at least two of the three species of *Gyps* vultures in South Asia could be extinct.

SAVE Programme Manager Chris Bowden says: 'Working with Dr Jakati for 16 years has been a real pleasure. His advice and support have been crucial and I'm delighted that this award goes some way to recognising his important contribution to Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction.'

Releasing vultures into the wild

In October 2020, eight white-rumped vultures were released close to the Pinjore Jatayu breeding centre in North Haryana, India. The centre is managed by the Bombay Natural History Society, and partly funded by the RSPB.

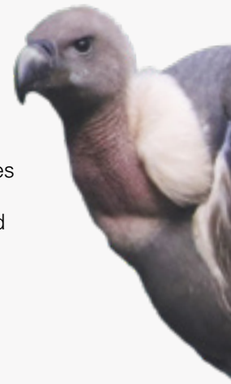
White-rumped vultures are critically endangered, mostly due to feeding on carcasses of livestock treated with the veterinary drug diclofenac. This was banned in India in 2006, but unfortunately is still available.

The eight released vultures were captive-bred, before being released into the wild. The release area has been marked a Vulture Safe Zone, free from diclofenac, but we need to constantly monitor the situation to make sure it remains safe for the birds.

Before release, the birds were fitted with GPS tracking devices. Using GPS tagging devices enables us to track them and also ascertain the cause of death of any dead birds. If the cause of death is down to diclofenac, we know that the area is no longer safe for vultures.

We will continue to monitor the presence of diclofenac in the area to ensure it is safe for further vulture releases, and this includes monitoring the levels of diclofenac sold in pharmacies, sampling cattle carcasses, and monitoring wild birds.

This is a landmark trial in the work to save these vultures from extinction.



Register for our virtual AGM

Exclusively for RSPB members

16 October 2021

The 130th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be held on Saturday 16 October 2021.

Visit **www.rspb.org.uk/agm** to register and see the agenda.

The formal AGM business includes:

- Matters arising from the 2020 minutes
- Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 March 2021 and adoption of the Accounts.
- Election of a new Council member
- Appointment of auditors

Following the success of last year, we're excited to host another RSPB virtual AGM.

Join us to hear a wide range of talks, browse the exhibition, enjoy discounts in the RSPB shop, and engage with our dedicated staff. After running the event online in 2020, we listened to your feedback. Many of you requested the chance to speak to staff and view an exhibition, so we're bringing both to this year's virtual event.

It's easy to join in

Sign up and get agenda details at:
www.rspb.org.uk/agm

Email **agm@rspb.org.uk**
or call the Events Team on **01767 680 551**



Our focus



The RSPB, as all organisations, faces a volatile operating environment in 2021–2022. The UK's Covid-19 vaccination programme is going well, and steps are being taken along the roadmaps set by the different governments of the UK for exiting lockdown. However, there remains the possibility of further local restrictions through the coming year, with knock-on impacts for our operations and income. This is also true for our international projects and programmes. Our strategic plans must therefore be responsive to this reality, while aiming to return as far as possible to business as usual in terms of our conservation and public engagement activity. This includes delivering significant projects extended or carried forward from the previous year. But while planning our recovery from the impact of Covid-19, we must also recognise the exceptional policy and advocacy opportunities for our cause that this coming year brings.

A 'super year' for nature

This year is the delayed 'super year' for conservation. Important global opportunities include: the G7 meeting in Cornwall in June; the conference of parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, expected to take place in October (and April 2022) in China; and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November. Given the state of the planet, every week of inaction is a missed opportunity. Worse, it means that environmental disruption is more likely; the chances of catastrophic climate change increase; the risk of extinctions grows; and the vulnerability to people intensifies. While politicians are rightly focusing on how to vaccinate the world and reboot our economies, they need to retain some political energy and vision to create a very different future to the one that we would face if we carry on with business as usual. The next 12 months are vital in this regard. We will, where possible, roll forward the planning work we did for 2020. But the context of Covid-19 and its impacts on human health, world economies and the growing public appreciation of the climate and nature crisis, provides new opportunities for our advocacy. Realising these opportunities, combined with elections taking place in three of the UK countries, means that we will have an intense agenda for our policy, advocacy, campaigns and communications work throughout the year. In the four countries of the UK, our focus will be on:

- Securing nature protection laws to replace and bolster what was lost when the UK exited the European Union
- Mobilising public support for legal commitments to nature's recovery on land and at sea, through measurable and binding long-term targets
- Driving reform of agricultural support payments.

A year of transition

2021–2022 will be a year of transition as we make good on existing commitments, some extended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and begin new activities in support of our strategy. Early priorities include reviewing resource alignment against new strategic priorities, implementing new organisational decision-making structures and processes, and developing a new strategic performance management framework. Alongside this, we will press ahead with conservation projects on our nature reserves and in priority landscapes, both in the UK and internationally. This will include the Cairngorms, Dorset heaths, Gwent Levels, Lough Erne, and the Gola and Harapan forests in Sierra Leone/Liberia and Indonesia respectively. We hope to complete the eradication phase of the Gough Island restoration programme, and extend the success of the Albatross Task Force programme to key fisheries in Argentina, Chile and Namibia. Our conservation science field programme will re-start following the hiatus of 2020, yielding crucial information on the status of and issues facing threatened birds, along with multiple species recovery projects, including for corncrakes and curlews in the UK.

Covid-19

We have developed a plan for returning the organisation to full strength as the four countries of the UK plan to exit lockdown restrictions. This activity includes the reopening of reserves, bringing back staff from furlough, ensuring volunteers can return, recruiting seasonal staff, re-starting catering and retail offers on reserves, re-starting face-to-face recruitment, and re-opening offices. Our expectation is that the spring and summer period will be extremely challenging for parts of the organisation, in particular our frontline operations and central support teams. We will prioritise key activity during this period, and we may need to slow down other work areas.

Principal risks

Our approach to risk management and control is described on p.51. Following review by Council, the principal risks and uncertainties facing the RSPB and its subsidiaries are listed here, together with a summary of our approach to managing those risks.

Risk	Our response
Environmental challenges	
The nature emergency, in particular wildlife declines and threats to habitats as a result of climate change, continues to grow, though attention is dominated by the climate emergency.	Our strategy, mission and purpose as a charity are focused on addressing this threat. We will continue to deliver a clear and convincing explanation of the need to address both the nature and climate emergencies, and the RSPB's role in delivering solutions.
Our operations are threatened as a result of climate change, for example through increases in flooding or wildfires, or interrupted through major incidents.	Our project and reserve management plans, and office business continuity plans, include contingencies to adapt and respond to emergencies and crises.
Financial challenge	
The response of our members and supporters during the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the resilience of our major income streams. However, the fundraising environment is constantly evolving and unless we respond effectively to those changes there is a risk that the level of support we receive will decline.	We manage this risk in a number of ways from investment in audience research and insight to ensure our membership model remains relevant, to the development of advocacy plans to ensure government funding is at the level needed to drive a green recovery.
Political and economic challenges	
Loss of a wildlife focus in the environmental agenda at a UK and four-country level.	We will focus our campaigning, communications and advocacy work through the Revive our World campaign and other activity to set the agenda and show public support to decision makers in advance of COP26. We will review the outcome of COP26 to inform our campaign planning and integrate with future communications planning. The RSPB will: • Campaign alongside and take a leading role in campaigns for a green recovery eg RSPB Northern Ireland Green Recovery Fund. • Utilise *State of Nature* reports to highlight the need for action. • Highlight the need for nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change. • Emphasise the connection between climate change and nature restoration and protection to the benefit of people and wildlife. • Push national Ecological Networks to reframe and rejuvenate the priority given to our most important areas for wildlife as part of the UK government's commitment to a 30% target. • Engage in advocacy work with all four UK country governments to influence budget processes and work programmes.
Damaging commercial forestry expansion that is driven by ambitious government planting targets.	We work with partners like the British Trust for Ornithology, NatureScot and Forestry and Land Scotland/Scottish Forestry to map sensitive areas, particularly in Scotland, where we contribute to the new Scottish Forestry Strategy.
Internal factors	
Keeping pace with rapid changes in technological developments and related connectivity and training with resulting increase in vulnerability to cyber attack, loss of productivity and reduction in our ability to deliver a digital experience matched to the expectations of our supporters, partners and workforce.	Our technology plan, alongside our corporate strategy, highlights the level of technological investment needed to respond effectively to those rapid changes

Thank you

We're so proud and thankful for the support we've received from so many people over this challenging year. Here are just a few of those people who have given their support to help us continue to fight for nature.


Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Acknowledgements 2020-2021: thank you for supporting us

Philanthropic supporters

Support from philanthropists is always significant and greatly appreciated, but in 2020 it was crucially important that we retained the engagement and commitment of the generous individuals who, over the years, have become close friends of the RSPB.

Among these are Christine and David Walmsley, who have been supporting us for almost 20 years, with a special interest in the Albatross Task Force (ATF), but who also help to fund our wider work.

David Milne started his journey with us in the 1960s when he volunteered at Arne. A keen birder, David has travelled with us to many places and supported us loyally and generously.

Judith Woodman and her late husband Johnathan were members of the original group of supporters of the ATF when it was set up in 2005; Judith still supports the ATF and has also taken a keen interest in Gough Island.

Rosemary and Michael Warburg have generously supported us for almost two decades, contributing to many projects, but recently they have been touched by the plight of the birds of Gough and have done much to help. Sadly Michael passed away last December and we would like to take this opportunity to honour his memory with our heartfelt thanks to him, and to all of our wonderful philanthropic friends.

President

Mrs Miranda Krestovnikoff

Vice Presidents

Dr Elizabeth Andrews MBE DL
Sir David Attenborough OM CH CVO CBE FRS
Mr Nick Baker
Dr Mike Clarke
Mr Adrian Darby OBE
Mr Ian Darling FRICS OBE
Ms Kate Humble
Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS
The Earl of Lindsay
Sir John Lister-Kaye Bt OBE
Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
Mr Bill Oddie OBE
Professor Steve Ormerod FCIEEM FLSW
Mr Chris Packham CBE
Mr Julian Pettifer OBE
Sir Graham Wynne CBE
Baroness Young of Old Scone

Thank you to our President and Vice Presidents who all give their time freely to support the RSPB's work.

Members and supporters

The support and loyalty of our members is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting the ambitious conservation targets that we set would not be possible without the enormous contributions that members make.

Members help in many ways, all of them crucial to our mission: by donating, giving their time through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns through letter writing, and by helping to deliver RSPB projects on the ground through local groups. We would also like to thank all of the supporters who contribute generously through in memoriam, raffles, lotteries, payroll giving, regular gifts, buying from the shop and giving to our appeals, as well as those citizen scientists that take part in Big Garden Birdwatch each year. It is greatly appreciated and crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Legacies

Legacy income makes a vital impact on our conservation work each year. Whilst it is impossible to thank every single one of our generous benefactors here, we would like to mention the following:

- Mrs Margaret Alean Campbell Cattanach
- Mrs Muriel Joyce Crawshaw
- Mrs Mary Rose Stewart Creese
- Mr Ian Dixon Fisher and Mrs Elizabeth Fisher
- Mr Michael Antony Marsh
- Mr Donald Victor Newbold CBE
- Mr Raymond Henry Pritchard

Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked unstintingly over the year. Our local groups provide a great focus for us in local communities, involve many people in our work, and raised £317,000 for RSPB conservation projects.

Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of 12,011 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 917,997 hours. Volunteers account for 85% of our workforce. These volunteers helped with virtually every aspect of the RSPB's work, and we cannot thank them enough for their generous support. Additionally, more than a million people gave an hour of their time to participate in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.

Country advisory committees

Thank you to our country advisory committee members for their help and support.

Celebrity and influencer supporters

We would like to thank the following for their generous support across our campaigns, events and projects over the past year and for being fantastic advocates for nature.

- Kate Bradbury
- Steve Brown
- Gillian Burke
- Lindsay Chapman
- Mya-Rose Craig
- Lizzie Daly
- Mike Dilger
- David Domoney
- Monty Don
- Kabir Kaul
- Dr Amir Khan
- Indy Kiemel Greene
- Sam Lee
- David Lindo
- Kate MacRae
- Simon Mayo
- Dara McAnulty
- Ferne McCann
- Megan McCubbin
- Deborah Meaden
- David Oakes
- Ollie Olanipekun
- Dermot O'Leary
- Sophie Pavellle
- Nadeem Perera
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Bill Turnbull
- Samuel West
- Iolo Williams

Youth Council

- Anna
- Chloe
- Emily
- Jannis
- Jess
- Kabir
- Katie
- Indy
- Sennen
- Thomas



The South Wilts RSPB Local Group took their fundraising online during the first lockdown, raising over £1,000!

Find out more at:
www.rspb.org.uk/localgroups



Richard Packwood (rspb-images.com)

Pied flycatcher

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We are grateful for the support received and would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Adlard Family Charitable Trust
- Mr G and Mrs L Alexander
- Dr Roger Allport
- Arkle Trust
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Philip Baldwin and Phillip Arnold
- Mr Geoff Ball
- Baltic Sea Conservation Foundation
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Bayesian Shift
- Bells Buxton
- The Big Give Trust
- Blue Nature Alliance
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- CAF America Donor Fund (Charities Aid Foundation)
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Cameron Bespolka Trust
- Miss Joyce Cater Charitable Trust
- The Chadwyck-Healey Charitable Trust
- The Chalk Cliff Trust
- Charities Trust
- Conservation International (CI)
- Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) – Czech Partner of BirdLife International
- Pearl Miriam Dearden
- Dedham Vale AONB
- Ms E Desmond
- Devon Birds
- Disney Conservation Fund
- Dorset AONB
- Arthur Ronald Dyer Charitable Trust
- Mr D Easton
- The Pamela Edmundson Connolly Charitable Trust
- John Ellerman Foundation
- The Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP)*
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- Farming the Future
- The Finborough Foundation
- Fondation Segré
- Fort Worth Zoo
- Friends of South Georgia Island
- The Gannochy Trust
- Mr Harry Gilbert
- The Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- David and Sarah Gordon
- The Barry Green Memorial Fund
- Susan H Guy Charitable Trust
- Mr Richard Hale
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- Henocq Law Trust
- The Corton Hill Trust
- Mr Anthony Hoare
- HSBC Bank Trust
- Andrew, Robert and Christopher Hunter
- Henocq Law Trust
- The Icthius Trust
- IDH The Sustainable Trade Initiative
- International Iguana Foundation
- Helena Jefferson
- Marjorie Kingsland Discretionary Trust
- Peter A. Lawrence (Betty & Nancy Liebert Trusts)
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- Lithuanian Ornithological Society (LOD) - Lithuanian Partner of BirdLife International
- Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens/ Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association
- The Makin Family Trust
- Mr S Martin
- Prof. Christopher and Dr. Sheila Mason
- MAVA Foundation
- Julia Maynard
- Mr K and Mrs J Metcalf
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Hazel Geraldine Mitchell
- Chris Morley
- Morley Ornithological Society
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Geographic
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- Cynthia Noble Marshide
- The Northwick Trust
- The Bill Nygren Foundation
- Oceans 5
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Mr Roger Harold Christopher Pattison
- The Peacock Charitable Trust
- Mr Ronald & Mrs Annie Petrie
- Pew Charitable Trust
- Peter and Diana Poole
- Prince Albert II Foundation Monaco
- Rainforest Trust
- The Ridgeback Charitable Trust
- Sloane Robinson Foundation
- Romulus Trust Mr P Noyon
- The Rufford Foundation
- San Diego Zoo Global
- ScottishPower Foundation
- The Skelton Trust
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- South Georgia Heritage Trust
- Chris Spooner
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- The Titcomb Foundation
- Ms Gillian Tucker
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Reading
- University of Sheffield
- Vetwork UK
- Mrs F Vogel
- Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN) - Dutch Partner of BirdLife International
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Michael and Rosemary Warburg
- Mo and Ron Warren
- The Waterloo Foundation
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- Mr R A Williams
- J and J R Wilson Trust
- Mrs B Wright

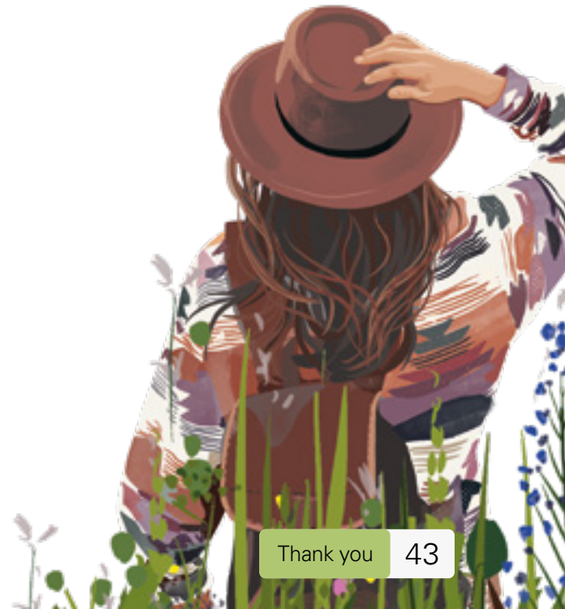
**The Endangered Landscapes Programme is managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, in partnership with Arcadia – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin.*

We would also like to acknowledge supporters who wish to remain anonymous, who have generously contributed towards our conservation work.

Landfill Communities Fund

We are grateful for funding support from the following organisations through the Landfill Communities Fund and the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund:

- Biffa Award
- EB Scotland Ltd
- FCC Communities Foundation
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) Ltd
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Veolia Pitsea Marshes Maintenance Trust
- Viridor Credits Environmental Company



Business supporters

The RSPB enjoys successful partnerships with business supporters to our mutual benefit. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

- Affinity Water
- Appleby (Cayman) Ltd
- Barratt Developments Plc
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Confor
- The Co-operative Bank
- Divine Chocolate
- Ecotalk
- Ecotricity
- EDF Energy Ltd
- The Famous Grouse
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP
- holidaycottages.co.uk
- HSBC UK
- Hurtigruten Group Ltd
- *i*dverde UK Ltd
- Lightrock Power
- Lush Ltd
- Maginus (a Naveo Commerce Company)
- Marks and Spencer
- Marshalls plc
- Mills & Reeve LLP
- Mines Restoration Ltd
- Morecrofts LLP
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Reed Smith LLP
- SABIC UK Petrochemicals
- SC Johnson
- Scotrail
- Scottish and Southern Energy
- ScottishPower
- ScottishPower Renewables
- Severn Trent Water
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- South Staffordshire Water
- SSE Renewable Generation (Seagreen Wind Energy Ltd)
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Swarovski Optik
- Tarmac
- Thames Water Community Relief Fund
- Turcan Connell
- United Utilities Plc
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd
- Wild Gin, Secret Garden Distillery
- Withers LLP
- Yorkshire Water

National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) has provided essential support for RSPB projects to restore our natural heritage and to bring nature into people's everyday lives. The RSPB is indebted to NLHF for their continued support, particularly during Covid-19 through the National Lottery Heritage Emergency Fund awards across all four nations.

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

We are grateful for co-operation and support from organisations of many kinds, and would especially like to thank those Councils who have provided Covid-19 relief funding. For other non Covid-19 support we'd also like to specifically thank the following:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)
- The Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) - Environment Fund – Environmental Challenge Competition
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) - Environmental Farming Scheme
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) - Environment Fund – In Year Capital Strand
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund – Strategic Strand
- Department of Justice NI
- Durham County Council
- ECOFAC
- Environment Agency
- EU Protected Areas Management Support (PAP-For)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Commission – BEST
- European Commission – Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA)
- European Commission - Biogeographical Unit
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission - Programme d'Appui la Preservation des ecosystemes Forestiers [en Afrique de l'Ouest]
- European Commission – Thematic Programme for environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy (ENRTP)
- The European Regional Development Fund (INTERREG VA) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- EventScotland
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU): International Climate Initiative (IKI)
- Green Action Trust
- Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund
- Haryana state Govt: MoEFCC, India
- Highways England
- Historic England
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- IREC - Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (CSIC-UCLM-JCCM)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- KfW German Development Bank
- Marine Scotland
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Emergency Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- Naturescot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage)
- Orkney Islands Council
- Partnerships for Forests Programme – UK FCDO
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Port of London Authority
- Rochford District Council
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Rural Development Programme – Agri-Environment Climate Scheme
- Sustrans Scotland
- Teignbridge District Council
- UK Government – Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)
- The United Nations Environment Programme/ Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
- Visit Wales
- Water Environment Grant (EAFRD as part of the RDPE)
- Welsh Government Glastir
- Welsh Government Green Infrastructure
- Welsh Government SMS
- Welsh Government SMS – Supporting Natura 2000 Restoration
- West Bengal state Govt. MoEFCC, India

Thank you



Governing body, leadership and effectiveness

Governing body

The governing body is the RSPB Council, which comprises up to 18 Council members. The Council may nominate any person to the honorary office of President and appoint any person as Vice President. The President and Vice Presidents are not Council members and take no part in making or influencing decisions of the Council.

Council is responsible for the conduct of the RSPB's affairs and for ensuring that the Charity operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, the Statutes, the Bye-laws and the law.

Council is currently supported by several committees with specific roles, each reporting directly to Council, each of which meets several times each year. Other subcommittees are established from time to time, in every case accountable directly to Council.

Leadership

The RSPB has developed frameworks to guide and describe how we want to work:

- Our ethical principles describe how we want to engage with the world.
- Our brand values are how we want to be thought of by our supporters, stakeholders and the wider public.
- Our cultural values underpin how we go about our work and how we relate to each other.
- Our code of conduct describes how each member of the workforce behaves.
- Our competency framework describes the behaviours we expect from our workforce when performing their roles.

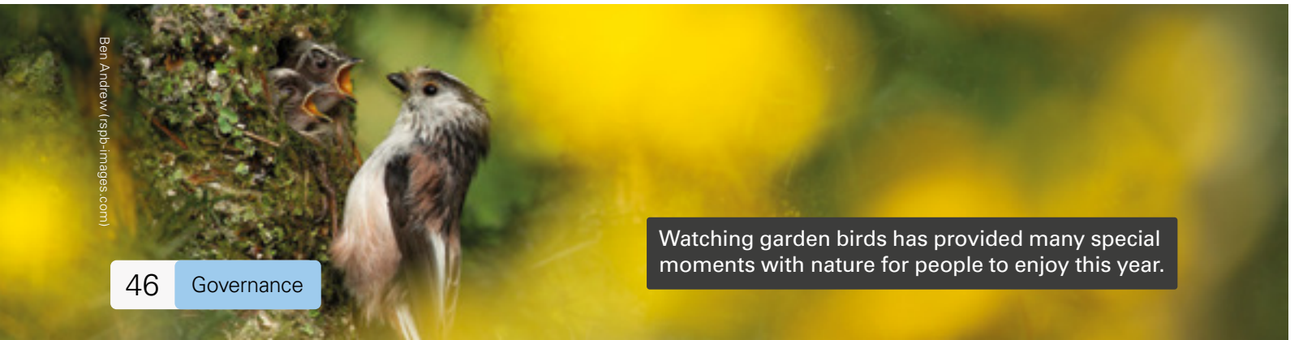
These form part of the induction for our whole workforce and are included as part of everyone's annual Career Performance and Development Plan (CPDP).

Prospective Trustees are given information about the RSPB and the duties of Trustees, and make a formal confirmation of their willingness to serve. Following their election to Council, each Trustee receives an in-depth briefing pack outlining their role, duties and accountabilities, together with information about the RSPB, its policies, structures and work. Each Trustee completes a register of interests and related party transactions: this register is updated annually and whenever any changes occur. A series of induction sessions, taking a strategic look at the roles and responsibilities of Trustees and management, is provided to each new Trustee. They are also offered opportunities to learn more about specialist areas of our work, through individual meetings with employees and site visits to nature reserves throughout the UK, and specific training on important areas of work. A special weekend event is held each year in an area of high nature conservation importance, focusing on species and habitat management work being undertaken. Similar events are held for the Country Advisory Committees.

Effectiveness

RSPB Council works as an effective team, using an appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge.

Trustee vacancies are advertised via the RSPB website and the members' magazine. The appointment process is rigorous, including interviews and due diligence checks, and the involvement of Council's Nominations Committee. Every year we conduct a review of the skills our Trustees bring to the Council, and an overall review of Council's effectiveness. We conduct an appraisal for the Chair of Council every year. We also check our ways of working to ensure full alignment with the Charity Governance Code.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Watching garden birds has provided many special moments with nature for people to enjoy this year.

Members of the RSPB Council



Kevin Cox
Council Chair

Finance, Audit and Risk
Nominations
Remuneration



Robert Cubbage
Treasurer and Finance, Audit and Risk Chair

Finance, Audit and Risk
Nominations
Remuneration
Investment



Kerry ten Kate
Conservation Committee Chair

Nominations
Remuneration
Investment



John Bullock
Fundraising and Communications Chair

Finance, Audit and Risk
Nominations
Remuneration



Jennifer Ullman
Committee for England Chair

Finance, Audit and Risk
Co-opted Dec 2020



Dr Vicki Nash
Committee for Scotland Chair

Finance, Audit and Risk



Prof. Sir Adrian Webb
Committee for Wales Chair



Judith Annett
Committee for Northern Ireland Chair

Appointed Oct 2020



Helen Browning



Linda Grant

Appointed Oct 2020



Prof. Rosie Hails

Nominations



Viscount Chris Mills



Prof. Debbie Pain



Veronica Pickering



Lord John Randall

Appointed Oct 2020



Martin Saunders

Investment



Matt Taylor

Investment Chair



David Baldock

Retired Oct 2020



Clive Mellon

Retired Oct 2020



Stephen Moss

Retired Oct 2020



Victoria Chester

Resigned Dec 2020



Colin Galbraith

Resigned Feb 2021

All Council members sit on both the Conservation and Fundraising and Communications Committees. During the 2020–2021 financial year, Victoria Chester, Chair of the Country Advisory Committee for England, resigned from her post and her Vice-Chair, Jennifer Ullman has stepped into the role. In addition, Colin Galbraith resigned from his position as Chair of the Scotland Committee and is succeeded by the Committee Vice-Chair, Vicki Nash, a current Council Member. Mike Boorman is an independent (non-Trustee) member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

For further information on the structure and operation of Council, please see **www.rspb.org.uk/council**
For more information on the RSPB's remuneration policy, see p.56.

Principal professional advisers

Bankers
Lloyds Bank PLC
249 Silbury Boulevard
Secklow Gate West
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire MK9 1NA

Co-operative Bank PLC
4th Floor
9 Prescot Street
London E1 8BE

Independent auditors
Crowe U.K.LLP
Chartered Accountants &
Registered Auditors
55 Ludgate Hill
London EC4M 7JW

Investment advisers
Finance Earth
W106 Vox Studios
1-45 Durham Street
London SE11 5JH

Insurance broker
Griffiths & Armour Limited
12 Princes Parade
Princes Dock
Liverpool L3 1BG

Investment adviser
Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Pension actuary
Mercer Limited
One Christchurch Way
Woking GU21 6JG

Pension administrator
Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Legal advisers
Withers LLP
16 Old Bailey
London EC4M 7EG

Clifford Chance LLP
10 Upper Bank Street
London E14 5JJ

Hewitsons LLP
Shakespeare House
42 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8EP

Turcan Connell
Princes Exchange
1 Earl Grey Street
Edinburgh EH3 9EE

Charles Russell Speechlys LLP
5 Fleet Place
London
EC4M 7RD

Executive board



Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

'I became the RSPB's Chief Executive in August 2019, having held the same position at the Woodland Trust for five years. Prior to that I worked for the National Trust for 14 years. My role as Chief Executive is to lead the organisation, build relationships with key partners, represent our views externally and work with the Council and Executive Board to develop our forward direction and ensure we deliver that plan. I believe I am in the best possible place to make a real difference for birds, the natural world and people in the context of the climate and nature crisis. I feel fortunate to work with a great team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters to do just that.'



Ann Kiceluk
Executive Director, People

'I have more than 25-years' experience in the education, public and not-for-profit sectors. I have responsibility for the employment and engagement of our 14,000-strong workforce (paid and unpaid), which includes the functions of Volunteering Development, Health Safety and Environment, Internal Communications, Facilities Management and Logistics, Human Resources and Development, Transformation and Safeguarding.'



Shaun Thomas
Executive Director, UK Countries

'I work with the country teams to deliver the RSPB's programmes in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Of course, to do this successfully we rely on the support of many others across the Society. I joined the RSPB having spent the early part of my career focussing on strategic and corporate management before moving on to manage operational teams in English Nature and Natural England.'



Rebecca Munro
Executive Director, Fundraising and Communications

'I work with colleagues across the RSPB to inspire mass engagement and action to make the world richer in nature. This includes strengthening our technology infrastructure and reach; connecting children, families and communities to nature; engaging and growing the RSPB's membership; inspiring support for our mission through impactful communications; and fundraising for our work.'



Martin Harper
Executive Director, Global Conservation

Martin was in post as Executive Director, Global Conservation for the time period of the Annual Report, but left in May 2021 after 17 years with the RSPB. Jo Gilbert is currently Acting Executive Director, Global Conservation.



Russell Hollinshead
Executive Director, Finance and Governance

'I am a Chartered Accountant and became Director of Finance and Governance in 2019 . I head up the teams that are responsible for the management of financial resources and the assurance, risk and governance frameworks that support the RSPB's operations and decision-making.'

Integrity

Trustees, and the Council collectively, have ultimate responsibility for the charity's funds and assets as well as its reputation. Each Council member adheres to a formal Code of Conduct and endorses RSPB's Ethical Principles. These are based on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) overarching ethical principles for the charity sector, and incorporate the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

- Principle 1: Beneficiaries first — The interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do. p.50
- Principle 2: Environment — Nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature. p.50
- Principle 3: Integrity — We should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct. p.50
- Principle 4: Openness — We create a culture where donors and supporters, our workforce of staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the wider public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds. p.50
- Principle 5: Right to be safe — Every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. p.51

Beneficiaries first

To ensure we have the greatest impact, we:

- Carry out our purpose to provide the greatest impact for universal public benefit and for our cause with integrity, regardless of whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB's reputation, operation or leadership.
- Enhance trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate and by listening and responding to our beneficiaries, facilitating engagement and communication.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with the interests of our beneficiaries in mind.
- Promote and seek support from, or collaboration with, organisations and individuals with goals and values that are consistent with those of the RSPB, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

Environment

Our conservation work has a huge and positive environmental impact by preserving and restoring natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact for nature, we are working to reduce the footprint of all our operations through our environmental management systems and policies. For environmental management we:

- support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (UN Compact principle 7);
- undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility (principle 8); and
- encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies (principle 9).

(See also our SECR report on page 55.)

Integrity principle

To uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct, we:

- Ensure appropriate systems are in place to help guarantee that all decisions are well-considered and free from conflict of interest, such as our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks.
- Ensure our resources are managed responsibly and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for, including policies and procedures to combat the risk of bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion; systems and processes to enable auditing of expenditure, enabling money, funding and grants to be tracked from receipt to expenditure.
- Work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).

In support of this we have developed anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies which are built into our procurement processes.

Openness

We try to create a culture where donors and supporters, our workforce of employees and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the wider public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds. Through our magazine, our website and our wider communications we strive to keep people involved and informed about the huge range of projects and activities we deliver. This means we operate a presumption of openness and transparency; subject to complying with existing legal and regulatory requirements, we are willing to share information about how we work, ensuring it is easily accessible.

Right to be safe

Every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. This means we:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse of any kind or inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands the expectations placed upon them, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don't feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour



Decision-making, risk and control

We strive for decision-making processes that are rigorous and efficient, incorporate effective delegation, and are informed by assessments of risk and control.

Decision-making

RSPB Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive and to the employees for certain activities. There is a detailed schedule of delegation in place which is re-confirmed annually. We have systems and policies in place to monitor these delegations. Major strategic, financial and policy decisions are reserved to Council and its committees, all of which have formal terms of reference.

Risk management

The Trustees are responsible for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work: managing large areas of countryside, much of it visited by many people, entails risk and demands constant attention. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner, considering all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Risk registers, risk mapping and internal audit provide comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- delivery of our strategy and projects;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters, and visitors, and in particular to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;
- our reputation, including our environmental credentials;
- our compliance with relevant law and regulation;
- our physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data, technological and financial assets;
- retaining and building know-how;
- protecting and growing our sources of income.

Our risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council every quarter and in greater depth once each year. Following the most recent full review in March 2021, the Trustees confirmed that they are satisfied with such arrangement and identified the principal risks for the year ahead that, by their nature, represent both opportunity and challenge. The RSPB will work to limit any possible negative impact on the delivery of our charitable objects and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite. Finance, Audit and Risk committee meets in private with the external auditor once each year.

Control

We have a clear framework for monitoring our impact, our progress and our approach to risk management. We have extensive risk registers that cover the full range of financial and non-financial risks and we operate the 'three lines' model for risk control and monitoring, which separates execution from control policies and from audit; and maps and rates the control framework. Council approves a plan for internal audits, and a full review of external audit service provisions is undertaken periodically with the active involvement of suitably experienced Trustees.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We have continuous reporting against Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were agreed to by our Management Board in 2019. These are reported against annually to Council. We have made some inroads to embed the principles of EDI into the work of the RSPB, however we recognise that these are insufficient to make the progress that we would like in this area. We are undertaking a complete review of our approach to EDI, which will begin to be implemented during the 2021–2022 financial year.

Processes that have been put in place to date include all of our HR policies being analysed to identify and remove any barriers to equality of opportunity. We also promote the use of Equality Analysis to be carried out on our projects to increase the likelihood of managing the impacts of bias effectively and encourage equality within our work.

We have achieved our KPIs that 30% of our Trustees will be female (as of January 2021 this was 50%) and that 45% of our Senior Managers will be female (as of March 2021 this was 54%). We are actively working to develop a route map to greater ethnic diversity across the organisation, including at Council level.



Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Volunteers are an integral part of the RSPB – sharing their love of the natural world.

How we generate funds to save nature

We receive most of our financial support from individuals through a range of activities, such as appeals, raffles and lotteries, community fundraising and membership.

We also aim to build lasting support from institutional bodies. These include statutory grant funders, trusts and corporate businesses. Much of what we do to deliver conservation also generates income. This ranges from land and farming income through to the sale of research to other appropriate organisations. Finally, our commerical operation helps to support our work by focusing on the sale of bird care and bird food products, optics, educational material and items to help people live more sustainable lives.

RSPB members and supporters across all of these fundraising areas are the foundation of everything we do and giving nature a home is only possible thanks to their generosity.

Our promise to our supporters is that: 'Saving nature is the motivation for everything we do. We are dedicated to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world. We always seek to improve how we work and welcome your feedback. We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds and other wildlife. We show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature. We share with you the latest news of what you are helping us to achieve, and give you control over how you hear from us.'

To achieve our objectives, we have to raise vital funds by carrying out fundraising. Our employees do this with the help of carefully selected professional fundraisers and commercial participators. Professional fundraisers are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers who act as agents in raising funds on the Charity's behalf. Commercial participators are usually businesses who encourage the sale of their goods or services on the basis that the Charity will receive funding as a result.

In all cases, we make sure we have contractual arrangements in place with these fundraising partners that set out the standards and obligations that must be met in all our fundraising activities to uphold the high standards that we and the public expect.

We regularly monitor the quality of all outbound telephone marketing calls and conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with our face-to-face fundraisers. We seek feedback from all new members to understand their experience of joining us, thus identifying any areas where we can make further improvements.

As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, is a member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising – we participate in its Public Fundraising Certification Programme – and the Direct Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out from receiving fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that, in our fundraising efforts, supporters have the best possible experience. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB's promise to our supporters.

The RSPB complies with the Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's guides and code. RSPB members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted, with the opportunity to change these at any time.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, our fundraising practices have followed the guidance outlined by the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice and the guidance within the Chartered Institute of Fundraising published booklet on Treating Donors Fairly. Our face-to- face fundraising team were trained in safe methods of operating to ensure social distancing and contact free sign up processes when operations re-started to keep both staff and the public safe. Covid-specific risk assessments were in place and updated regularly in line with the changing restrictions in place.

Whilst we endeavour to provide an exemplary service, we do not always get it right. Our website outlines our complaints policy for the public and clearly explains how an individual can complain. Last year we received 175 complaints (79 in 2019–2020) about our fundraising by phone, post, email, SMS or face to face. Each complaint was fully investigated and improvements were made to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service.

Caring for our supporters

Volunteering

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve; without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889 and they are still fundamental to our work. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to support for office and retail activities, to running the RSPB as members of Council.
In addition, more than a million people put time and enthusiasm into the RSPB's citizen science projects, such as the Big Garden Birdwatch.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends upon the support of our volunteers. The activities of our volunteers are crucial to our work and the RSPB seeks volunteer involvement wherever appropriate.

Our volunteering policy aims to reflect the high esteem in which the RSPB holds volunteers. Volunteers are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB.

They enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experiences and energy as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives whilst demonstrating passion and commitment to our mission.

More widely, we provide services to our members and supporters and respond to more than 225,000 enquiries each year. We sustain our relationships with around two million individuals including members, supporters and volunteers. We send our members a magazine to keep them aware of, and involved with, our work. Our website receives around 19 million visits each year.

Safeguarding

As an organisation that works with children and vulnerable adults, the RSPB acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. Our safeguarding policy is published on our website at **www.rspb.org.uk/safeguarding**

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

The RSPB considers as a matter of policy that modern slavery is a human rights abuse which undermines human dignity, and is inconsistent with the RSPB's identity as an ethical organisation.

In pursuing our work to preserve the natural world, it would never be acceptable to contribute to or turn a blind eye to the problem of modern slavery.

All those working for or on behalf of the RSPB must:
- Report any slavery concerns in accordance with this policy; and
- Be conscious of slavery risks, especially when working in a higher risk sector or region.

The RSPB's Ethical Procurement Policy sets out labour standards expected of suppliers, including that there is no forced, bonded or involuntary prison labour.

The RSPB's standard terms and conditions require suppliers and recipients of funding to undertake that they comply with the Modern Slavery Act (2015). The RSPB's standard contracts include anti-slavery compliance provisions where relevant. The RSPB has adopted policies that indirectly support and underpin the combating of slavery within our supply chains.

The approach we take to the right to be safe aligns with the UN Global Compact. Organizations should:
- support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights (principle 1); and
- make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses (principle 2).
- eliminate all forms of forced and compulsory labour (principle 4),
- ensure the effective abolition of child labour (principle 5), and
- ensure the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (principle 6).



Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (SECR)

In line with the SECR Regulations, we have set out our energy use and associated carbon emissions in the table below. The RSPB achieved its 30% reduction target for carbon emissions between 2010–2011 and 2020–2021. We are working on a more detailed carbon account as part of our commitment to achieve reductions in our negative carbon emissions and increase the climate cooling impact of our reserves up to 2030–31.

	Current reporting year 2020–2021	**Comparison reporting year 2019 –2020**
	UK and offshore [mandatory]	UK and offshore [mandatory]
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions: /kWh		
Electricity	2,505,424	3,437,817
Gas, LPG and oil	2,275,943	3,495,940
Transport fuel - fleet cars	1,145,835	3,022,798
Reserves' machinery	1,644,261	1,595,136
Other - woodfuel	451,070	609,096
Other - renewables (PV & wind)	1,126,845	769,365
Total	9,149,378	12,930,152
Emissions from combustion of gas tCO2e and oil (Scope 1)	493	802
Emissions from combustion of fuel for transport purposes (Scope 1)	275	749
Emissions from combustion of woodfuel for heating (Scope 1)	7	10
Emissions from business travel in rental cars or employee-owned vehicles where company is responsible for purchasing the fuel (Scope 3)	120	462
Emissions from purchased electricity (Scope 2, location-based)	584	879
Total gross CO2e based on above	1,479	2,901
Intensity ratio: tCO2e gross figure based from mandatory fields above/ Per member of staff	0.7	1.3
Methodology	GHG Reporting Protocol	GHG Reporting Protocol
Emissions from other activities which the company own or control including operation of facilities (Scope 1)	-	-
Emissions from purchased electricity (Scope 2, marketbased factor)	186	266
Emissions from heat, steam and cooling purchased for own use (Scope 2)	-	-
Total gross Scope 3 emissions / tCO2e	1,149	2,622
Carbon offsets / tCO2e	-	-
Domestic Carbon Units (e.g. Woodland Carbon Code, Peatland Carbon Code / tCO2E)	-	-
Total annual net emissions / tCO2e	2,628	5,523
Additional intensity ratio: tCO2e net figure/Per member of staff	1.3	2.2
Third Party verification	-	-

The unprecedented changes to working patterns last year have resulted in major decreases in energy use. In addition, major schemes to improve energy efficiency and add renewable energy installations were completed at South Stack and Conwy (Wales), Wallasea and Haweswater (England) and Fetlar (Scotland).

Oversight of remuneration

All employees, including the Chief Executive and the Executive Board, are covered by the same remuneration policy which is based on externally-benchmarked salary bands. The remuneration policy is approved by Council and subject to periodic review. To ensure clear governance and transparency, the remuneration of the Chief Executive is overseen by a committee comprising the Treasurer and Chairs of Conservation and Communication; chaired by the Chair of Council. The performance of the Chief Executive is subject to formal appraisal against previously agreed measures and is discussed at an annual appraisal meeting. Any recommendation for progression is made in line with the RSPB's pay policy for all employees. The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing the salaries of the Executive Board in line with the same policy.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity and group's transactions, disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and group, and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the reporting and legal regulations and the provisions of the Charity's constitution as set out in the Charter and Statutes. They are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with FRS102 – The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

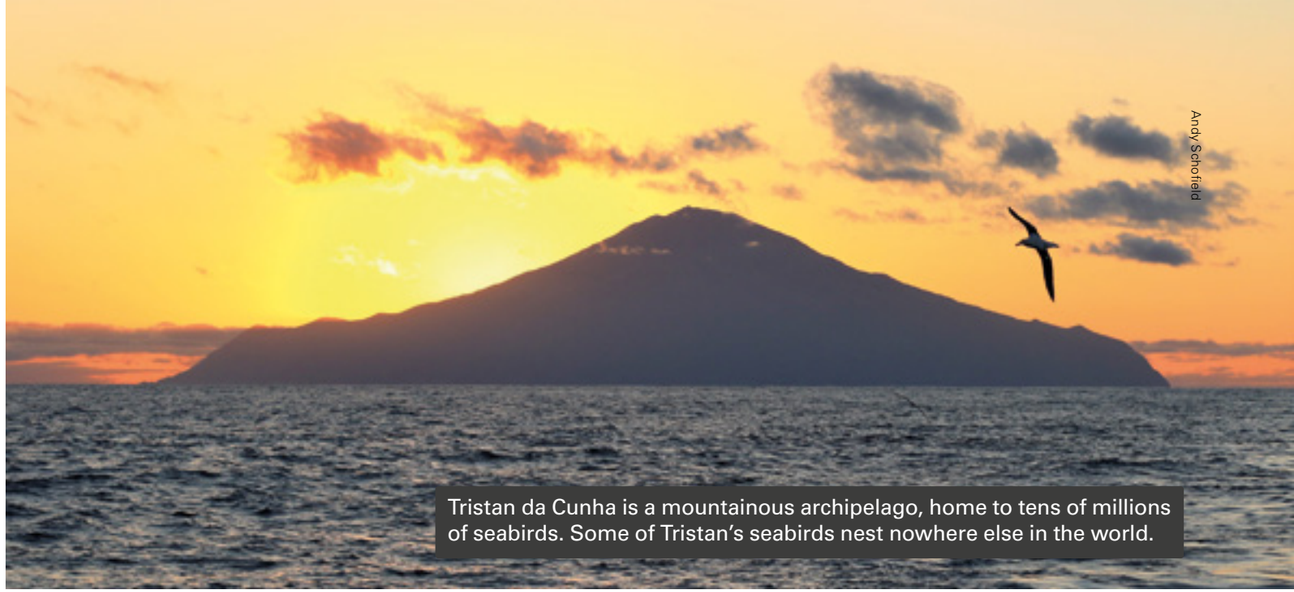
The law applicable to charities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and the group, and of the income and application of resources of the charity and group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.



Hope Farm has seen an increase in yellowhammers.



Tristan da Cunha is a mountainous archipelago, home to tens of millions of seabirds. Some of Tristan's seabirds nest nowhere else in the world.

Financial Review 2020-2021

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting national lockdowns had a major impact on our financial performance this year. The lockdowns required us to suspend a wide range of our income generating activities for long periods of the year including retail, catering, events on reserves and face-to-face membership recruitment. In addition, the closure of nature reserves, the restrictions on travel both nationally and internationally and the need to furlough staff caused significant disruption to our conservation work with many planned activities not able to take place, and others deferred to future years. However, with the continued support of our members and supporters and with help from the Government's Job Retention Scheme we were able to deliver a robust financial performance that puts us in a good position to meet the continuing demands of the Covid-19 pandemic and to fund both our usual conservation work as well as the work deferred from 2020–2021 to future years.

Summary

In summary, income fell by £4.4 million (3%) but, as a result of the operating restrictions outlined above, expenditure on charitable activities also fell, by £4.0 million (4%), giving a surplus for the year (before the actuarial loss in respect of the pension scheme) of £24.3 million. We finished the year with free financial reserves of £64.8 million which represents 34 weeks expenditure cover; this is significantly ahead of the 16 weeks upper limit set by Council. However, a significant element of the additional financial reserves reflects expenditure planned for 2020–2021 which had to be deferred to 2021–2022 or later and we therefore anticipate a significant drawdown and corresponding reduction in free financial reserves in 2021–2022 as Covid-19 restrictions ease and project work recommences.

Total financial reserves increased by £8.8 million with the surplus of £24.3 million referred to above partly offset by a £15.6 million actuarial loss in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension scheme. Cash and investments increased by £21.2 million to £66.0 million, giving a good level of liquidity as we continue to navigate our way through this challenging operating environment.

The increase in the Pension Scheme liability reflects an increase in the valuation of the Scheme liabilities due to changes to the inflation and discount rate assumptions used to calculate the liability, partly offset by a significant increase in the value of the Pension Scheme assets. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed to new entrants in 2017 and changes to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations and the next triennial will reflect the funding position as at 1st April 2021.

Income

Overall, total income reduced year on year by £4.4 million (3%) to £142.4 million which, in the context of the operating environment for the year, is a very positive result and highlights the strength of the financial support we receive from our members and supporters. The Covid-19 restrictions meant a range of income generating activities were closed for large parts of the year including our retail, catering, and community fundraising operations with income from these operations down £8.2 million compared to last year. The other main contributor to the fall in income was legacy income, which was down £3.7 million, although with 2019–2020 legacy income at a record high a fall to more normal levels had been expected. Whilst we did experience significant income shortfalls, we were able to mitigate some of this loss. In particular, our trading team reacted superbly to the move to online trading with our mail order operation increasing income by £6.7 million (72%) compared to last year. However, if the income from the Government's Job Retention Scheme is excluded total income was £10.5 million lower than last year. In light of this reduction, and to maintain our financial resilience, we accessed the Job Retention Scheme to protect the jobs of our staff and keep the specialist teams that we need to deliver our vital conservation work in place. In 2020–2021 we received Job Retention Scheme income of £6.1 million.

The diversity of our income streams is a financial strength that helps us plan and invest for the future with confidence to support our mission for nature.

Membership subscriptions and donations reduced by £1.8 million to £50.2 million due in the main to operating restrictions affecting our community fundraising activities. It was particularly pleasing to see our membership retention rate increase from 88.7% to 90.5% and we remain thankful for the financial and other support we receive from our members. Whilst the membership retention rate was up the number of members we had at the year-end was down slightly at 1.13 million from 1.15 million last year, although once again with our face-to-face membership recruitment teams unable to operate for large parts of the year this is a very positive result. Our membership is both a key component of our financial resilience and allows us to speak with confidence and authority when we undertake our advocacy work.

Legacy income decreased by £3.7 million to £33.9 million although with legacy income at a record high of £37.6 million last year a return to more normal levels had been expected.

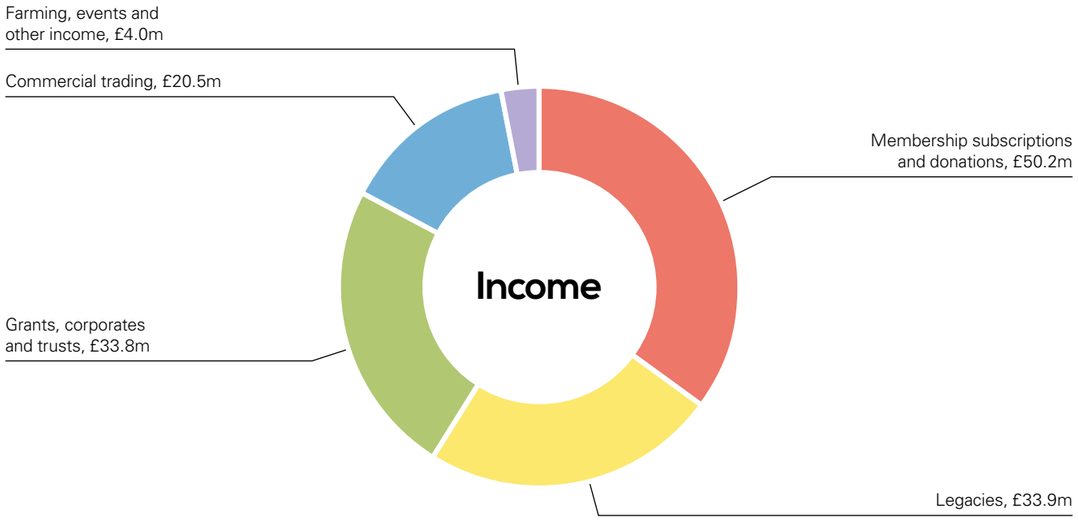
Grants, corporates and trusts income increased by £4.3 million to £33.8 million. Grants income increased by £4.5 million due mainly to Job Retention Scheme income of £6.1 million to support staff on furlough and a further £1.1 million of support from local authorities in relation to Covid-19 support grants. Other notable grants received for a range of large projects include Orkney Native Wildlife in Scotland £0.9 million; Living Levels Partnership project £0.8 million, the Celtic Rainforest project £0.7 million in Wales, and the Gola Rainforest work in Sierra Leone £0.6 million. This illustrates the range and reach of the large scale conservation projects we undertake, often in collaboration with a wide range of partner organisations.

Commercial trading income at £20.5 million was £0.1 million higher than the previous year. This includes an exceptional year for mail order with sales of £16.0 million, £6.7 million higher than 2019–2020. The increase in mail order income offset the losses suffered on our reserve operations for retail and catering in what has been a difficult trading year.

Fees and grants for services income decreased by £1.4 million, to £1.5 million. This fall reflects lower income in respect of the Sherwood Forest visitor centre following completion of the remediation works last year.

Events and media income was £1.0 million lower than last year at £0.2 million with the restrictions in place causing the cancellation of our usual events programme on reserves.

The cost of raising funds increased by £0.7 million to £32.0 million. This increase was largely driven by the increased product and fulfilment costs associated with the substantial increase in mail order sales.



Expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities was £89.6 million, which is £4 million lower than last year as much of our work could not take place or was put on hold due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Managing nature reserves expenditure at £38.8 million was £0.9 million lower than last year. We manage 222 nature reserves, covering 158,751 hectares and providing a home to over 18,500 species of which more than 3,500 are of conservation concern. The lower spend this year reflects the scaling back of work due to the Covid-19 restrictions together with the completion of projects including the Sherwood Forest visitor centre and project delays for a wide range of planned projects.

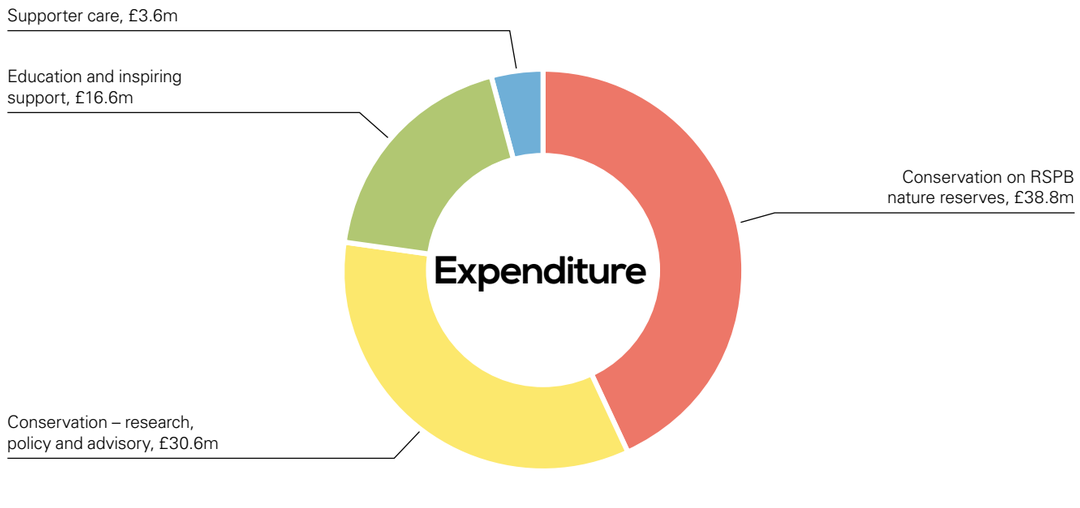
Whilst the Covid-19 restrictions meant that we weren't able to deliver our normal level of conservation work as restrictions ease we expect conservation work and expenditure to increase significantly in 2021–2022.

Research, policy, and advisory expenditure at £30.6 million was £2.6 million lower reflecting lower project and operational expenditure for our International work. Work on projects including the Gough Island Restoration project for the eradication of the non-native mouse in the South Atlantic, have been delayed to 2021–2022. There have also been significant operational savings particularly for travel due to the Covid-19 international travel restrictions in place.

We undertake a wide range of work to educate and inspire support, whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders, political support or our partners, and it is designed to build momentum and focus support for our vision of a world richer in nature. In doing this work we spent £16.6 million, which was in line with last year.

Of particular note was the hugely successful Big Garden Birdwatch with over a million people taking part in the mass birdwatch, the highest number of participants ever for this event. We also went online with Birdwatch LIVE where 100,000 people tuned in to watch nature through livestreamed cameras broadcasting from four of our reserves for 16 hours over three days.

Supporter care expenditure was in line with last year at £3.6 million.



Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. Trustees consider a sustained fall in income of 10–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of 8 to 16 weeks' worth of expenditure. Free financial reserves at 31st March 2021 were £64.8 million representing 34 weeks' future expenditure. However, given the current exceptional operating environment Trustees are comfortable holding financial reserves above the policy range to provide a higher level of financial resilience as we continue to navigate through this period of financial uncertainty. Our financial projections over the next three years anticipate that free financial reserves will return to the required Council range.

The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories:

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2021 were £236.2 million, which is made up of:
  - Tangible fixed assets of £216.1 million
  - Cash and investments of £66.0 million
  - Working capital of £11.4 million
  - Pension liability of £57.3 million
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied, at the discretion of the Trustees, to any of the RSPB's charitable purposes, at 31 March 2021 were £71.8 million, made up of:
  - General funds of £68.1 million including £3.4 million of tangible fixed assets, £48.3 million cash, and investments and £16.4 million working capital.
  - Designated funds of £61.0 million represented by nature reserves owned by the RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
  - Pension reserve liability of £57.3 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2021 were £164.1 million, made up of:
  - Nature reserves of £150.2 million
  - Other tangible assets of £1.5 million
  - Investments of £3.5 million.
  - Working capital of £8.9 million.
- Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2021 endowment funds were £0.3 million.

Grant making policy

The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:

- ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
- the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Investment policy and powers

The RSPB's investment powers are as set out in the Charter and Statutes and are wider than those contained in the Trustees Investment Act 2000.

Approach

The RSPB's primary investment objective is to maintain the real value of its investments. However, as a proportion of the financial reserves are likely to be held in the longer term, it is appropriate to invest conservatively a proportion of the funds to generate income and/or real growth.

Investment properties arising from legacies are managed until disposal.

Responsible investment

In managing investments, since 2001 we have followed the principles of socially responsible investing. These principles are to:

- invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.
- use influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.
- avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuel. We held a de minimis exposure to fossil fuels (circa 0.00%) during the year under review.

Performance

The Trustees rely upon specialist advice for fund selection and allocation. Investment performance is compared to an independent benchmark and the target for investment returns is to outperform this composite benchmark by at least 1% per annum over a rolling three-year period.

Relationship with subsidiaries

The RSPB group includes several subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 23 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension

The pension liability in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme that was closed to future accrual in 2017 continues to change significantly from one year to the next. This is largely driven by factors outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity of the pension liability to changes in interest and inflation rates. The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the pension scheme. In addition to closing the defined benefit scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the RSPB Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work, but closes the deficit over a reasonable period. The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the pension Trustees. The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1st April 2018 and resulted in annual employer contributions of £6.9 million per annum. This level of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit over a 12 year period. Due to the timing of payments made to the pension scheme in 2020–2021,13 payments totalling £7.4 million have been included in the results for this year. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation which will reflect the funding position as at 1st April 2021. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the pension fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £61.9 million.



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Research into the mountain ringlet butterfly has given new insight into their very exact habitat requirements.

Outlook for the future

The clear message from what has been the most challenging of years is that the loyalty and generosity of our members and supporters is as strong as ever. The operating restrictions introduced to combat Covid-19 and the resulting closure of a range of income generating activities had a significant financial impact. However, with the support of our members and with help from the Government's Job Retention Scheme we were able to mitigate much of this loss and end the year financially resilient and well placed to both catch-up with the work that we had to put on hold in 2020–2021 as well as delivering our usual vital conservation work.

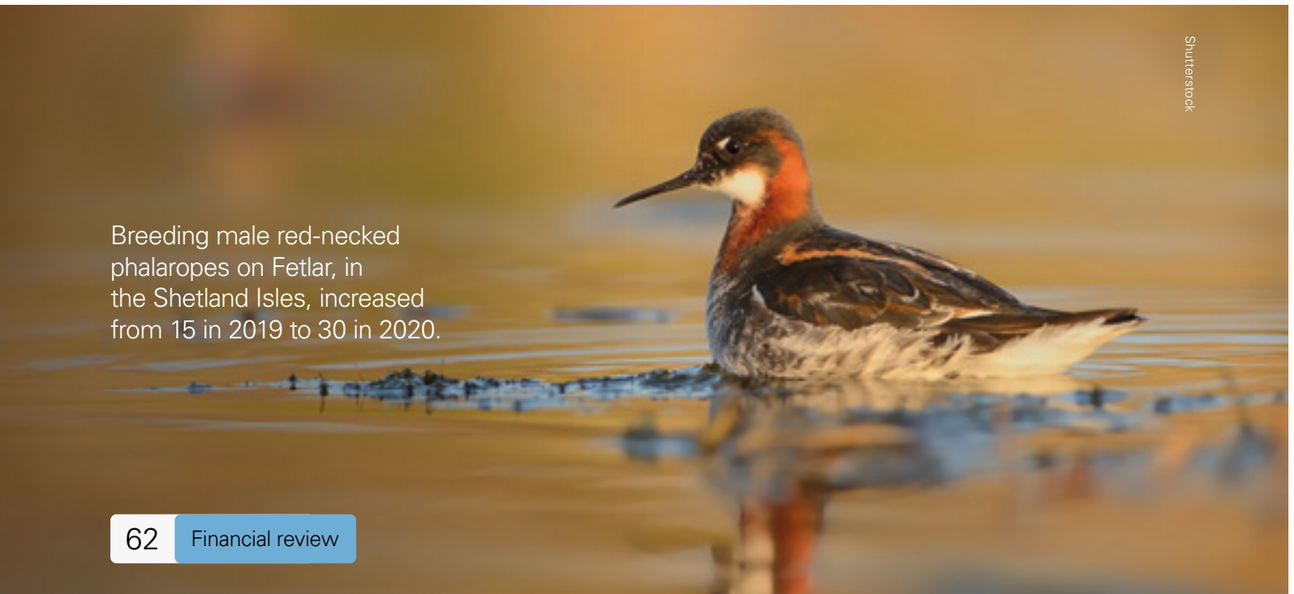
Whilst restrictions continue to ease, and the outlook is becoming clearer, uncertainty and caution remain. This is reflected in our planning for 2021–2022 with financial reserves targeted to remain slightly above the range set by Council to provide a financial cushion in case of further disruption to operations. However, a significant drawdown is planned for 2021–2022 with project expenditure originally planned for 2020–2021 now taking place in 2021–2022.

Given the financial outcome for 2020–2021, a cautious plan for 2021–2022 including a range of scenarios to assess the financial impact of further lockdowns, it is reasonable to expect the RSPB to have adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

Signed on behalf of Council,



Kevin Cox
Chair, 31 August 2021



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Breeding male red-necked phalaropes on Fetlar, in the Shetland Isles, increased from 15 in 2019 to 30 in 2020.

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 56, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at:
frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities
This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud.

The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, and the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

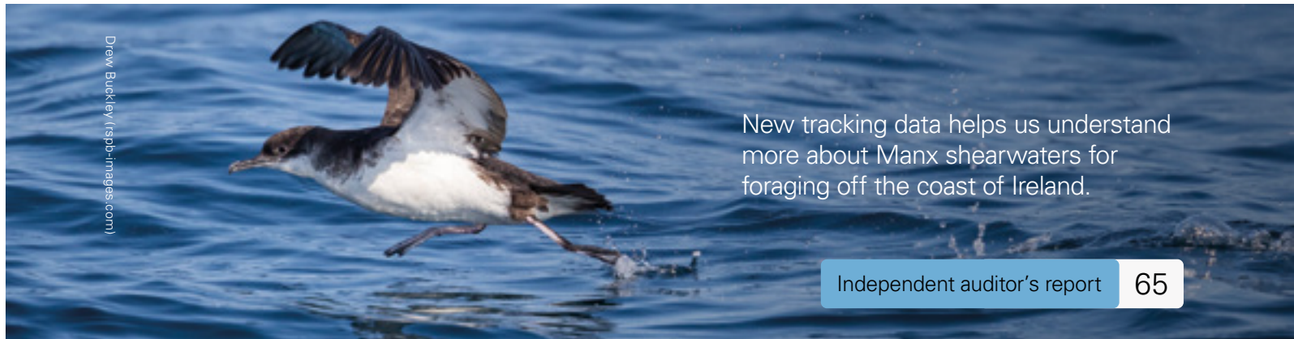
This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London
31 August 2021

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity under regulation 10(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations by virtue of its eligibility under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.



Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	**2021 Total £'000**	2020 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	47,337	2,826	-	**50,163**	51,921
Legacies	4	28,429	5,502	-	**33,931**	37,584
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	17,310	16,800	(341)	**33,769**	29,511
Total voluntary income		**93,076**	**25,128**	**(341)**	**117,863**	**119,016**
Commercial trading	6	20,484	-	-	**20,484**	20,405
Investment income and interest	7	81	-	-	**81**	233
Charitable activities						
Fees and grants for services		1,465	-	-	**1,465**	2,941
Land and farming income		2,131	-	-	**2,131**	2,362
Events and media sales		169	-	-	**169**	1,153
Total income from charitable activities		3,765	-	-	**3,765**	6,456
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	190	-	-	**190**	653
Total income		117,596	25,128	(341)	**142,383**	146,763
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial trading		20,864	-	-	**20,864**	19,476
Costs of generating voluntary income		10,920	-	-	**10,920**	11,632
Investment management costs		208	-	-	**208**	150
Total cost of raising funds		31,992	-	-	**31,992**	31,258
Net resources available for charitable activities		**85,604**	**25,128**	**(341)**	**110,391**	**115,505**
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves		28,902	9,901	-	**38,803**	39,688
Research, policy and advisory		18,438	12,162	-	**30,600**	33,249
Education and inspiring support		16,510	87	-	**16,597**	16,771
Supporter care		3,626	-	-	**3,626**	3,925
Total expenditure on charitable activities		67,476	22,150	-	**89,626**	93,633
Total expenditure		**99,468**	**22,150**	**-**	**121,618**	**124,891**
Net gains/(losses) on investments		3,539	-	-	**3,539**	(503)
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**21,667**	**2,978**	**(341)**	**24,304**	**21,369**
Actuarial (losses)/gains on pension scheme		(15,550)	-	-	**(15,550)**	10,958
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		6,117	2,978	(341)	**8,754**	32,327
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		65,697	161,145	604	**227,446**	195,119
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**71,814**	**164,123**	**263**	**236,200**	**227,446**

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 26.
Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets as at 31 March 2021

	Note	**2021 Consolidated total £'000**	2020 Consolidated total £'000	**2021 Charity £'000**	2020 Charity £'000
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	**211,220**	209,776	**210,533**	209,080
Other tangible assets	12	**4,845**	5,688	**4,845**	5,688
Investments	13	**52,096**	32,833	**52,096**	32,833
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	**-**	-	**3,801**	3,801
		268,161	248,297	**271,275**	251,402
Current assets					
Stock		**4,459**	3,747	**-**	-
Debtors	14	**21,831**	25,691	**25,975**	27,849
Short-term cash		**13,870**	11,936	**9,164**	9,179
		40,160	41,374	**35,139**	37,028
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	**(13,053)**	(12,221)	**(11,283)**	(11,126)
Net current assets		**27,107**	29,153	**23,856**	25,902
Total assets less current liabilities		**295,268**	277,450	**295,131**	277,304
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	**(1,724)**	(1,833)	**(1,724)**	(1,833)
Net assets excluding pension liability		**293,544**	275,617	**293,407**	275,471
Pension scheme liability	25	**(57,344)**	(48,171)	**(57,344)**	(48,171)
Net assets including pension liability		**236,200**	227,446	**236,063**	227,300
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		**68,180**	52,214	**68,043**	52,068
Designated funds		**60,978**	61,654	**60,978**	61,654
Pension reserve	25	**(57,344)**	(48,171)	**(57,344)**	(48,171)
		71,814	65,697	**71,677**	65,551
Restricted funds		**164,123**	161,145	**164,123**	161,145
Endowment funds		**263**	604	**263**	604
Total funds	21 & 22	**236,200**	227,446	**236,063**	227,300

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 31 August 2021 and signed on behalf of Council by:

Kevin Cox
Chair

Robert Cubbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

for the year ended 31 March 2021	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	**110,391**	115,505
Less Total expenditure on charitable activities	**(89,626)**	(93,633)
Net incoming resources before gains/(losses)	**20,765**	21,872
(Losses)/gains on investments and pension scheme	**(12,011)**	10,455
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	**8,754**	32,327
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	**1,444**	4,989
Other tangible assets	**(843)**	868
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	**(3,871)**	(4,652)
Movement on pension scheme	**(9,173)**	16,243
	(12,443)	17,448
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	**21,197**	14,879
Cash and investments available at start of year	**44,769**	29,890
Cash and investments available at end of year	**65,966**	44,769

Consolidated statement of cash flows

for the year ended 31 March 2021	Note	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	**24**	**23,085**	24,289
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		**81**	233
Additions to nature reserves		**(3,711)**	(6,997)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		**(1,966)**	(3,261)
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		**429**	765
Purchase of investments		**(375)**	(20)
Sale of investments		**-**	1,673
Net cash used for investing activities		**(5,542)**	(7,607)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Bank loan		**(93)**	466
Net cash provided by financing activities		**(93)**	466
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		**17,450**	17,148
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		**33,165**	16,017
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**50,615**	33,165
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents:			
Cash in hand		**13,870**	11,936
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		**36,745**	21,229
Cash and cash equivalents		**50,615**	33,165

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter and a charity registered in England and Wales (number 207076) and in Scotland (number SC037654). The address of the registered office is The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.

2) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn. The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity's financial statements.

None of the subsidiary directors received any remuneration or emoluments in respect of their services to those subsidiaries. Where directors are officers/employees of the RSPB they will receive remuneration only from the RSPB.

The RSPB's commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiary, RSPB Sales Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB. RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB's charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

March Farmers (Washland) Limited, a company limited by shares (registration number 01039814). This entity is a wholly-owned subsidiary acquired in 2008 to secure the leasehold interest in land adjacent to the Nene Washes reserve in Cambridgeshire. Through the March Farmers Habitat Restoration project, the former arable land is being restored to floodplain grazing marsh.

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity is being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leases land on the Haweswater Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise.

RSPB Oronsay, a Scottish Limited Partnership of which the RSPB is the General Partner. This entity was established in 1996 to carry out the business of farming and nature conservation on the island of Oronsay.

RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and a non-profit company limited by shares, registered in the Cayman Islands (registration number 304647). This entity was established in 2015 to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment through the acquisition of land to create or extend nature reserves in the Cayman Islands.

The RSPB holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The RSPB holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity and as such is potentially exempt from taxation on its income and gains to the extent that they are applied to its charitable purposes. There was no tax charge during the year. The subsidiaries donate, under Gift Aid, all distributable profits to the Charity each year.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty
In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates, and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are related to pension liability. The Charity recognises its liability to its defined benefit pension scheme which involves a number of estimations as disclosed in note 25.

Funds
Unrestricted funds:
General funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 22.

Restricted funds:
Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Endowment funds:
Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Capital expenditure
Purchased assets, individually exceeding £2,500 at cost, are included on the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS102 'Property, Plant and Equipment' (note 12). Donated assets are included at market value as determined by the Trustees. Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised in the year of acquisition and depreciation is charged annually. During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, selected nature reserves were restated to their fair value (note 12).

Depreciation
Nature reserves, either owned as freehold land or held as leasehold land where the lease is held in perpetuity, are considered to have an indefinite useful life and are not depreciated. Other fixed assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their anticipated useful lives as follows:

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:	
buildings	50 years
reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves – leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset

Going concern
Central to our assessment of going concern last year was the potential impact of Covid-19 on our income streams. Whilst the operating restrictions implemented to combat the pandemic did affect a number of them, those not directly affected remained robust during a very challenging year.

Consequently, with the continued support of our members and supporters and with help from the Government's Job Retention Scheme we were able to mitigate against much of the lost income and end the year in a financially resilient position. Our operational response to the impact of Covid-19 is detailed on page 8.

Looking forward to 2021–2022 we are planning for a significant drawdown due to expenditure originally planned for 2020–2021 now taking place in 2021–2022. However, whilst a drawdown is planned our financial planning remains cautious with closing free financial reserves targeted to remain above the maximum set by Council to provide an additional financial cushion in case of further disruption to operations. Scenario planning has been used to assess the potential impact of further Covid-19 restrictions on our income to help guide the level of planned expenditure in 2021–2022.

Looking beyond 2021–2022 we are undertaking a longer-term review of our plans to ensure we continue to operate a sustainable financial model in light of the experience of the last year.

The financial outcome for 2020–2021 was robust, closing with free financial reserves of £64.8 million and cash and cash equivalents of £50.6 million. Given this result, which was underpinned by the resilience of our major income streams and our prudent approach to financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statement on a going concern basis.

Investments
The investments in the subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost less provision for impairment. All other investments are stated at fair value with gains and losses being recognised within income and expenditure. Properties included in investments are those assigned under legacy bequests, awaiting disposal at a future date, and are stated at their fair value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. Investment cash is held for investment purposes only. It is the intention of the Trustees that fixed asset investments will not be drawn upon within the following year.

Stocks
Stocks, which include livestock and products for resale, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Financial instruments
The RSPB has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors (see note 20).

Income
Income is included in the SOFA when the RSPB is entitled to the income, the receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. If these conditions are not met then the income is deferred.

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:
i) Membership income is treated as a donation and is accounted for when received.
ii) Legacies are accounted for based on settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier.
iii) Grants, including government grants, received in advance of the associated work being carried out are deferred only when the donor has imposed preconditions on the expenditure of resources (see Note 17).
iv) Donated assets are recognised at the value of the gift to the Charity which is the amount the Charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market. They are included in the SOFA and balance sheet as appropriate.

Expenditure
All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Costs incurred that relate to multiple purposes are analysed and allocated to the appropriate categories in line with the joint cost allocation principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102).

i) Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
ii) Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
iii) Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
iv) Research, policy and advisory includes the costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.
v) Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
vi) Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
vii) Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.

viii) The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
- ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
- the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions
The defined benefit scheme was closed on 31 March 2017 and replaced with a defined contribution scheme.

The defined benefit scheme amount charged in resources expended is the net of the interest cost and interest income on assets. Re-measurements are recognised immediately in Other recognised gains and losses.

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

In the view of the Trustees, no assumptions concerning the future or estimation uncertainty affecting assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date are likely to result in a material adjustment to their carrying amounts in the next financial year.

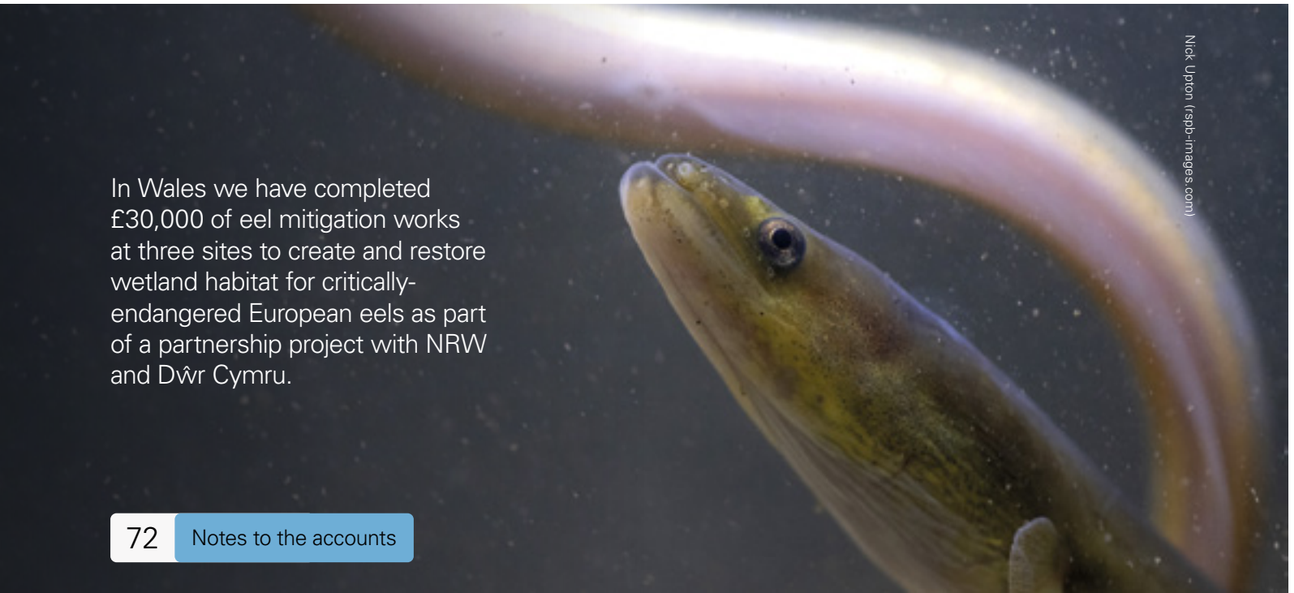
With regard to the defined contribution scheme the amounts charged in resources expended are the employer contributions in the year. The employer contribution rate matches the employee rate up to a maximum of 7%.

Redundancy and settlement payments
Redundancy and settlement liabilities are recognised when the obligation to transfer economic benefits has arisen. The value of this liability represents the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the obligation(s) at the reporting date.

Operating leases
Operating lease rentals are charged and credited to the SOFA on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

Foreign currency
Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end, in accordance with FRS102. Any gains or losses arising on translations are reported as part of the transaction within the SOFA and are not material; they are therefore not disclosed separately.

Forward contracts
Forward contracts are measured at fair value on the date the contract is entered into and subsequently measured at fair value through the SOFA.



In Wales we have completed £30,000 of eel mitigation works at three sites to create and restore wetland habitat for critically-endangered European eels as part of a partnership project with NRW and Dŵr Cymru.

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Membership subscriptions	**44,660**	44,825
Donations	**5,503**	7,096
	50,163	51,921

4) Legacies
The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £28,955,347 (2020: £23,238,985).

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Grants	**29,418**	24,854
Corporates	**1,406**	1,707
Trusts	**2,945**	2,950
	33,769	29,511
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations:		
Services	**89**	49
Goods	**17**	17
	106	66

Major grants received during the year include the following:	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	**7,271**	8,683
UK Government - Job Retention Scheme	**6,142**	-
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	**1,696**	1,005
Scottish Government*	**1,213**	1,018
Scottish Natural Heritage*	**1,196**	1,510
Environment Agency*	**990**	152
Landfill Communities Fund	**765**	1,500
Natural England*	**407**	651
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	**255**	308
Forestry Commission*	**32**	(1)
	19,967	14,826
International		
European Union	**2,090**	3,014
National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Lottery Community Fund	**3,581**	3,526
Local Councils and Other	**3,780**	3,488
	29,418	24,854

*Government grants used to fund conservation projects and recognised in the accounts. There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies relating to the government grants or other forms of government assistance from which the charity has directly benefitted recognised in the accounts.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**21,848**	18,797
Research, policy and advisory	**4,537**	5,170
Education and inspiring support	**1,391**	107
Commercial trading	**1,055**	-
	28,831	24,074
Acquisition of nature reserves	**587**	780
	29,418	24,854

6) Commercial trading

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Retail, mail order and trade	**17,859**	15,291
Catering	**548**	3,232
Lottery	**1,321**	1,191
Advertising	**756**	691
	20,484	20,405

7) Investment income and interest

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	**66**	194
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**15**	39
	81	233
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	**190**	653

Included above is investment income of £142 (2020: £4,444) which relates to the Hanson Environment Trust. This treatment has been agreed with the donor and the fund is held as an expendable endowment.

8) Total expenditure

Cost of raising funds	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	**2021 Total £'000**	2020 As restated £'000
Cost of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	7,392	733	**8,125**	8,545
Grants, corporates and trusts	1,454	248	**1,702**	1,861
Legacies	1,035	58	**1,093**	1,226
Total cost of generating voluntary income	9,881	1,039	**10,920**	11,632
Commercial trading	20,297	567	**20,864**	19,476
Investment management costs	208	-	**208**	150
Total cost of raising funds	30,386	1,606	**31,992**	31,258
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	37,376	1,427	**38,803**	39,688
Research, policy and advisory	27,443	3,157	**30,600**	33,249
Education and inspiring support	15,248	1,349	**16,597**	16,771
Supporter care	3,621	5	**3,626**	3,925
	83,688	5,938	**89,626**	93,633
	114,074	7,544	**121,618**	124,891

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £4,300,072 with support costs of £266,737 (2020: £6,210,851; £364,529). Grants were awarded to 102 (2020: 135) organisations; no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available at **www.rspb.org.uk/grants**

Future commitments:
Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £783,151 (2020: £1,339,152). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2021 for payments in future years.

Gains and losses on foreign currency transactions are recognised in charitable activity, research, policy and advisory spend as international project expenditure that gives rise to these gains and losses is included here. This has resulted in a restatement to prior year end balances of £151,000, with a corresponding restatement in investment income and interest.



The Puffarazzi citizen science project was given a boost as 10 more volunteers were trained to analyse puffin prey images, which were submitted by 1,160 members of the public.

Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance and IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management and other £'000	Governance £'000	**2021 Total £'000**	2020 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	265	624	330	321	66	**1606**	1505
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	235	555	293	285	59	**1,427**	1,398
Research, policy and advisory	520	1,226	648	632	131	**3,157**	2,909
Education and inspiring support	222	524	277	270	56	**1,349**	1,500
Supporter care	1	2	1	1	-	**5**	27
Total Charitable expenditure	978	2,307	1,219	1,188	246	**5,938**	5,834
Total support costs	1,243	2,931	1,549	1,509	312	**7,544**	7,339

Support costs are included in the expenditure reported in the Consolidated statement of financial activities and have been allocated on the basis of salary percentage. The cost allocation includes an element of judgement and the RSPB has had to consider the cost benefit of detailed calculations and record keeping.

Governance costs include audit, legal advice for Trustees and the costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements, such as Trustees' meetings.

10) Audit fees

The total audit fees were:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Statutory audit:		
Charity	**42**	39
RSPB Sales Limited	**26**	25
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**3**	3
Farming for Nature	**3**	3
	74	70

During the year there were £1,170 (2020: £19,055) fees for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.



We have received government funding to save the Wilkins' bunting from extinction. This small finch is the rarest British bird on the planet, down to just 20 pairs. It is endemic to Nightingale Island in the Tristan da Cunha archipelago where the trees in its forest home have been largely wiped out by an invasive insect.

11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,101 (2020: 2074).

Average staff numbers by activity:	**2021 No.**	2020 No.
Generating incoming resources	**527**	550
Managing RSPB nature reserves	**613**	628
Research, policy and advisory	**674**	607
Education and inspiring support	**251**	253
Supporter care	**36**	36
	2,101	2,074

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2021 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Remuneration	**49,418**	44,901
National Insurance	**4,317**	3,775
Pension contributions	**5,906**	5,346
	59,641	54,022

Included within staff costs is a provision for holiday entitlement not taken at year-end: remuneration £1,565,000, national insurance £132,000 and pension contributions £186,000 (2020: £840,000, £69,000 and £84,000 respectively). Due to the pandemic, the level of holiday not taken was considerably higher than normal.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on pages 47, 48 and 49.

The total salary of all higher paid employees earning in excess of £60,000, including Directors, are shown in bands of £10,000 below.

	2021 No.	2020 No.
£60,001–£70,000	**5**	9
£70,001–£80,000	**10**	7
£90,001–£100,000	**4**	5
£150,001–£160,000	**1**	-
	20	21

Under the RSPB's pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 20 (2020: 21) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the payment schedule recommended by the scheme actuary at the last triennial valuation (see Note 25). The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £10,623 (2020: £6,486).

Redundancy and settlement payments of £122,997 (2020: £317,179) were made in the year.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the 6 (2020: 7) Directors were £717,172 (2020: £719,922) of which, £180,636 (2020: £166,483) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £1,542 (2020: £20,858).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 6 (2020: 19) Trustees on Council business amounted to £1,749 (2020: £32,803).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £6,435 (2020: £3,850).

12) Tangible fixed assets - charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves			Other tangible assets			Total
	Freehold land	Leasehold land	Buildings	Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Cost							
At 1 April 2020	174,046	1,716	58,106	3,662	4,887	22,457	**264,874**
Additions	1,646	13	2,052	-	88	1,878	**5,677**
Disposals	(194)	-	(14)	-	(124)	(731)	**(1,063)**
At 31 March 2021	175,498	1,729	60,144	3,662	4,851	23,604	**269,488**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2020	-	533	23,559	2,308	4,242	18,768	**49,410**
Charge for the year	-	19	2,040	85	306	2,387	**4,837**
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(124)	(700)	**(824)**
At 31 March 2021	-	552	25,599	2,393	4,424	20,455	**53,423**
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2021	175,498	1,177	34,545	1,269	427	3,149	**216,065**
At 31 March 2020	174,046	1,183	34,547	1,354	645	3,689	**215,464**

Net book amount:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Nature reserves:		
Freehold land	**175,498**	174,046
Leasehold land	**1,177**	1,183
Buildings	**34,545**	34,547
	211,220	209,776
Other tangible assets:		
Other properties	**1,269**	1,354
Motor vehicles	**427**	645
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	**3,149**	3,689
	4,845	5,688
	216,065	215,464

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds Leasehold land of £550,000 (2020: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds Freehold land of £137,000 (2020: £146,000), receiving a refund of stamp duty in the year.

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value just greater than £61,900,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

In 2016, land with an historic cost of £42,401,000 was revalued at £97,779,000. This £55,378,000 increase in value was reflected in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

13) Investments - charity and consolidated

Investments at fair value:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Investment cash	**36,745**	21,229
Equities, bonds and other stocks:		
Equities	**10,868**	7,666
Corporate bonds	**1,174**	1,095
Government bonds	**1,753**	1,733
Listed Stock Exchange investments	**6**	5
	13,801	10,499
Investment properties within the UK	**1,550**	1,105
	52,096	32,833

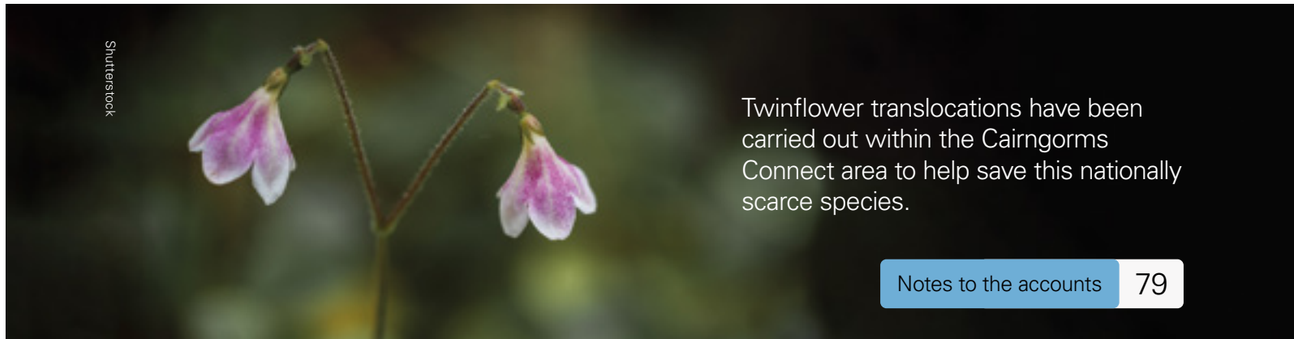
Equities, Corporate bonds and Government bonds are held in unit trusts.

Investment properties were revalued at 31 March, based on their fair value at that date. The revaluation was carried out by external professional valuers. The amount includes property assigned under legacy bequests and donated property.

Movement during the year:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Fair value at 1 April	**32,833**	20,964
Disposals	**-**	(1,673)
Fees	**(166)**	(113)
New investment property	**372**	14
Dividends reinvested	**3**	6
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation at 31 March	**3,538**	(503)
Movement in investment cash	**15,516**	14,138
Fair value at 31 March	**52,096**	32,833
Historical cost as at 31 March	**43,129**	27,278

The Charity investments in its wholly owned subsidiaries are held at cost and represent the aggregate amount of the subsidiaries' assets, liabilities and funds. The subsidiary investments are:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	**3,250**	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	**551**	551
	3,801	3,801



14) Debtors - charity and consolidated

	2021 Consolidated £'000	2020 Consolidated £'000	**2021 Charity £'000**	2020 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	**3,021**	4,072	**2,006**	2,412
Other debtors	**3,077**	4,946	**3,037**	4,876
Legacies	**2,404**	3,083	**2,404**	3,083
Prepayments and accrued income	**13,329**	13,590	**12,391**	12,955
Amounts due from subsidiaries	**-**	-	**6,137**	4,523
	21,831	25,691	**25,975**	27,849

15) Creditors - charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year

	2021 Consolidated £'000	2020 As restated Consolidated £'000	**2021 Charity £'000**	2020 As restated Charity £'000
Trade creditors	**2,318**	2,298	**1,932**	2,008
Other creditors	**1,503**	2,269	**1,503**	2,269
Deferred income (see note 17)	**3,863**	932	**2,924**	561
Accruals	**5,242**	6,597	**4,797**	6,163
Bank loans	**127**	125	**127**	125
	13,053	12,221	**11,283**	11,126

Amounts falling due in more than one year

	2021 Consolidated £'000	2020 As restated Consolidated £'000	**2021 Charity £'000**	2020 As restated Charity £'000
Deferred income - lease premium	**768**	782	**768**	782
Bank loans	**956**	1,051	**956**	1,051
	1,724	1,833	**1,724**	1,833

On 31st March 2019 RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Triodos Bank. The loan was for £0.7 million and was used to finance a range of sustainable energy projects across our nature reserves. The capital and interest will be repaid over a 20 year period using the ongoing energy savings together with income from electricity generation.

On 6th December 2019 RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds bank. This loan was for £0.5 million and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan will be repaid using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council over the 5 year loan period.

The bank loan balance has been split between amounts falling due within one year and in more than one year. This has resulted in a restatement to prior year balances.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2021 not provided for in the accounts were £326,170 (2020: £156,472).

17) Deferred income - charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April	**782**	797
Amount released to income	**-**	-
Amounts due within one year	**(14)**	(15)
Balance at 31 March	**768**	782
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April	**932**	1,565
Amount released to income	**(932)**	(1,565)
Amounts due within one year	**3,849**	917
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	**14**	15
Balance at 31 March	**3,863**	932
Deferred income: Balance at 31 March	**4,631**	1,714

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £782,000 (2020: £797,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £3,849,000 (2020: £917,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £2,909,000 (2020: £547,000) and commercial trading £940,000 (2020: £370,000).

18) Operating leases - commitments and contracted income

Commitments:
Properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods. The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Less than 1 year	2,240	61	**2,301**	2,228
2–5 years	4,954	-	**4,954**	5,280
Over 5 years	8,035	-	**8,035**	9,296
	15,229	61	**15,290**	16,804

Lease payments of £2,435,181 (2020: £2,646,951) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income:	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Less than 1 year	**818**	963
2–5 years	**640**	873
Over 5 years	**2,455**	2,542
	3,913	4,378

Lease income of £972,687 (2020: £940,347) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

The Trustees have given indemnities to executors under the standard terms for legacies received; they believe the chance of significant claims arising as a result of these to be negligible.

20) Financial instruments

	Fair value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	Total financial instruments £'000	Non-financial instruments £'000	**2021 Total £'000**	2020 As restated Total £'000
Assets						
Tangible assets	-	-	-	216,065	**216,065**	215,464
Investments	52,096	-	52,096	-	**52,096**	32,833
Stock	-	-	-	4,459	**4,459**	3,747
Debtors		18,976	18,976	2,855	**21,831**	25,691
Cash at bank and in hand	-	13,870	13,870	-	**13,870**	11,936
Liabilities						
Creditors due within one year	-	(9,190)	(9,190)	(3,863)	**(13,053)**	(12,221)
Creditors due after one year	(956)	-	(956)	(768)	**(1,724)**	(1,833)
	51,140	23,656	74,796	218,748	**293,544**	275,617

The income, expenditure and net gains and losses recognised in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities are shown below:

	Fair value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	**2021 Total £'000**	2020 Total £'000
Investment income	15	66	**81**	233
Investment management costs	(208)	-	**(208)**	(150)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	3,538	-	**3,538**	(503)
	3,345	66	**3,411**	(420)

21) Statement of funds - charity and consolidated

The purpose for which funds are held can be analysed as follows:

Consolidated	Total funds 1 April 2020 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	**Total funds 31 March 2021 £'000**
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	52,214	117,596	(98,402)	3,539	(6,774)	**68,173**
Designated land fund	61,654	-	-	-	(669)	**60,985**
Pension liability	(48,171)	-	(1,066)	(15,550)	7,443	**(57,344)**
Total unrestricted funds	65,697	117,596	(99,468)	(12,011)	-	**71,814**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	153,318	3,097	-	-	-	**156,415**
Other tangible assets	1,382	570	(487)	-	-	**1,465**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,498	8,966	(9,414)	-	-	**1,050**
Research, policy and advisory	4,784	12,437	(12,162)	-	-	**5,059**
Education and inspiring support	163	58	(87)	-	-	**134**
Total restricted funds	161,145	25,128	(22,150)	-	-	**164,123**
Endowment funds	604	(341)	-	-	-	**263**
Total funds	**227,446**	**142,383**	**(121,618)**	**(12,011)**	**-**	**236,200**

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £669,000 from the Designated land fund to the General fund.

21) Statement of funds - charity and consolidated (continued)

Inter-company reconciliation

	RSPB Charity 2021 £'000	Farming for Nature 2021 £'000	March Farmers for Nature 2021 £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd 2021 £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd 2021 £'000	Elimination 2021 £'000	**RSPB Consolidated 2021 £'000**
Income	121,459	337	174	24,826	(5)	(4,408)	**142,383**
Expenditure	(100,685)	(111)	(116)	(20,702)	(4)	-	**(121,618)**
Other recognised losses	(12,011)	-	-	-	-	-	**(12,011)**
Profit/(loss)	8,763	226	58	4,124	(9)	(4,408)	**8,754**
Gift aided	-	(226)	(58)	(4,124)	-	4,408	**-**
Net movement in funds	8,763	-	-	-	(9)	-	**8,754**
Net Assets at 31 March 2020	227,300	-	551	3,250	146	(3,801)	**227,446**
Net Assets at 31 March 2021	236,063	-	551	3,250	137	(3,801)	**236,200**

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2021, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and deficit were £164,528, £312,408 and £38,706 respectively (2020: £228,854, £132,308 and £50,040 surplus).

The results have not been consolidated into the core financial statements; to do so would not materially alter them.

During the year ended 31 March 2021, the Charity paid £109,127 (2020: £427,948) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan.

Unrestricted funds include free and general funds that are not designated for particular purposes.

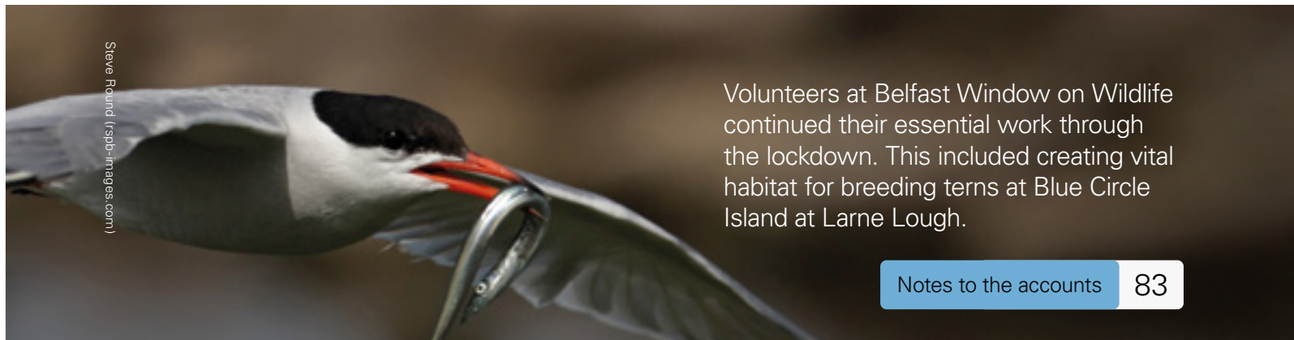
Designated funds comprise the Land Fund which represents land and buildings purchased using unrestricted funds including the investment in March Farmers (Washland) Limited.

Restricted funds comprise:

- The nature reserves fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £6,180,209 (2020: £5,195,763) held for future acquisitions.
- The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £4,222,190 (2020: £4,710,536) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds comprise the following expendable and permanent endowments:

- The Hanson Environment Fund granted an endowment of £1,000,000 in 2002 for the creation and management of Needingworth wetland nature reserve. Investment income, net of fees, for this endowment is currently accruing to the fund. During the year, £341,115 (2020: £281,600) was expended on the nature reserve. It is RSPB's intention to fully spend the total funds on the project on compliant Landfill Communities Fund works as soon as practicably possible – both the capital and the interest.



Volunteers at Belfast Window on Wildlife continued their essential work through the lockdown. This included creating vital habitat for breeding terns at Blue Circle Island at Larne Lough.

22) Analysis of net assets between funds

The Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in a suitable form to enable them to be applied in accordance with any restrictions imposed, as set out below:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds 31 March 2021**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	60,985	150,235	-	**211,220**
Other tangible assets	3,380	-	1,465	-	**4,845**
Investments	48,300	-	3,533	263	**52,096**
Current assets	27,407	-	12,753	-	**40,160**
Current liabilities	(9,190)	-	(3,863)	-	**(13,053)**
Long-term liabilities	(1,724)	-	-	-	**(1,724)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	68,173	60,985	164,123	263	**293,544**
Pension liability	(57,344)	-	-	-	**(57,344)**
Net assets	10,829	60,985	164,123	263	**236,200**

Free reserves which are available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees are held as investments or working capital:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	**Total funds**
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Net assets excluding pension liability	68,173	60,985	164,123	263	**293,544**
Less: Operating assets					
Nature reserves	-	(60,985)	(150,235)	-	**(211,220)**
Other tangible assets	(3,380)	-	(1,465)	-	**(4,845)**
Available reserves	64,793	-	12,423	263	**77,479**
Less: Restricted and endowment	-	-	(12,423)	(263)	**(12,686)**
Free reserves	64,793	-	-	-	**64,793**

23) Connected charities and related party transactions

The RSPB is one of the global partners in BirdLife International (registered charity number 1042125), an umbrella organisation for entities with similar objectives throughout the world.

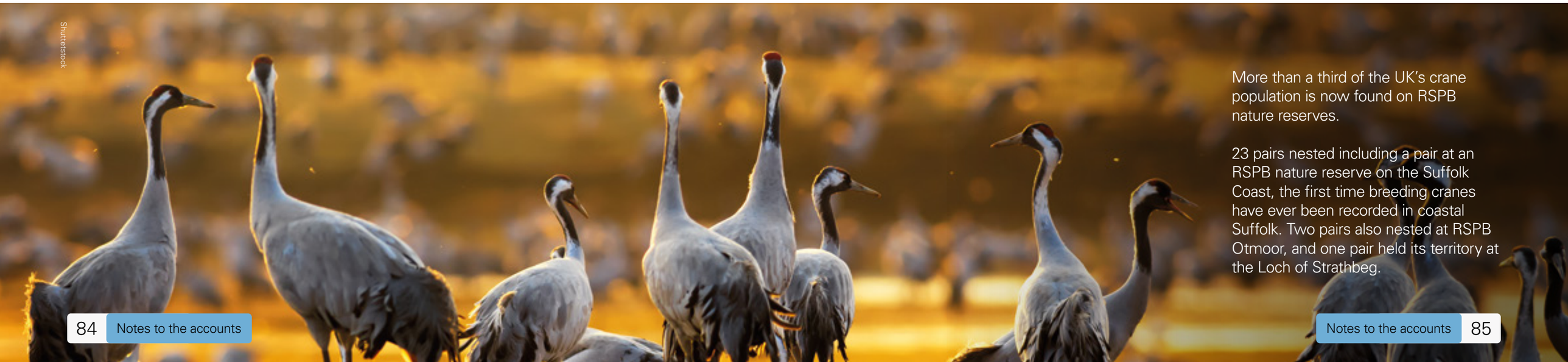
Further information about this organisation can be obtained by writing to BirdLife International at The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ.

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	**Farming for Nature £'000**	**March Farmers (Washland) Limited £'000**	**RSPB Sales Limited £'000**	**RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited £'000**
Balance at 1 April 2020	638	153	3,732	-
Gift Aid paid	(150)	(62)	(5,736)	-
Gift Aid due	226	58	4,124	-
Grants received	-	-	-	5
Other inter-company transactions	140	7	3,007	(5)
Balance at 31 March 2021	**854**	**156**	**5,127**	**-**

24) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Net income for the year	**24,304**	21,369
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	**4,837**	4,288
(Gains)/loss on investments	**(3,372)**	617
Interest and dividends received	**(81)**	(233)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	**(190)**	(653)
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	**(712)**	365
Decrease in debtors	**3,860**	2,919
Increase in creditors	**816**	902
	29,462	29,574
Movement in pension scheme	**(6,377)**	(5,285)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**23,085**	24,289



Shutterstock

More than a third of the UK's crane population is now found on RSPB nature reserves.

23 pairs nested including a pair at an RSPB nature reserve on the Suffolk Coast, the first time breeding cranes have ever been recorded in coastal Suffolk. Two pairs also nested at RSPB Otmoor, and one pair held its territory at the Loch of Strathbeg.

25) Pensions

The defined benefit scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the pension fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1st April 2018 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £6.9 million per annum with effect from 1st April 2019. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a 12 year period. As part of the valuation the Society's contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 10 June 2019.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	**275,080**	273,842
Interest expense	**6,463**	6,487
Remeasurements	**29,958**	1,820
Benefits paid	**(11,550)**	(7,069)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	**299,951**	275,080

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	**299,951**	275,080
Fair value of scheme assets	**(242,607)**	(226,909)
Net defined benefit liability	**57,344**	48,171

Changes in scheme assets:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	**226,909**	209,428
Interest income	**5,397**	5,022
Remeasurments	**14,408**	12,778
Employer contribution	**7,443**	6,750
Benefits paid	**(11,550)**	(7,069)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	**242,607**	226,909

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Interest expense	**6,463**	6,487
Interest income	**(5,397)**	(5,022)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	**1,066**	1,465
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	**15,550**	(10,958)
Total cost related to defined benefit plans recognised in SOFA	**16,616**	(9,493)

25) Pensions (continued)

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets:

	2021	2020
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	**65.4%**	55.4%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	**27.0%**	32.7%
Property	**6.6%**	7.1%
Cash	**1.0%**	4.7%
Insured policies	**0.0%**	0.1%

Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	**19,805**	17,800

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2021	2020
Discount rate	**2.10%**	2.40%
Rate of increase in salaries	**1 April 2021: 2.5%**	1 April 2021: 2.5%
	1 April 2022: 2.5%	1 April 2022: 2.5%
	1 April 2023: 2.0%	1 April 2023: 2.0%
	1 April 2024: 2.0%	1 April 2024: 2.0%
	1.9% p.a. thereafter	1.9% p.a. thereafter
	In addition, a further allowance has been made for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term	
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	**3.00%**	3.00%
Post 07 pension	**2.10%**	1.80%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment	**2.70%**	1.90%
RPI inflation	**3.30%**	2.50%
CPI inflation	**2.70%**	1.90%

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations:

	2021 Years	2020 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) - male	**22.6**	22.5
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) - male	**24.5**	24.4
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) - female	**24.7**	24.6
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) - female	**26.7**	26.6



David Broadbent (rspb-images.com)

Solihull Local Group member Ashley Grove hosted a 'Lockdown Birdwatch challenge'. Birders all over the world joined in to share what they saw. Ashley also raised £1,600 for the RSPB.

26) Comparative statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2020

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2020 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	48,731	3,190	-	**51,921**
Legacies	33,985	3,599	-	**37,584**
Grants, corporates and trusts	1,667	28,124	(280)	**29,511**
Total voluntary income	**84,383**	**34,913**	**(280)**	**119,016**
Commercial trading	20,405	-	-	**20,405**
Investment income and interest	229	-	4	**233**
Charitable activities				
Fees and grants for services	2,941	-	-	**2,941**
Land and farming income	2,362	-	-	**2,362**
Events and media sales	1,153	-	-	**1,153**
Total income from charitable activities	6,456	-	-	**6,456**
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	653	-	-	**653**
Total income	112,126	34,913	(276)	**146,763**
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	19,476	-	-	**19,476**
Costs of generating voluntary income	11,632	-	-	**11,632**
Investment management costs	150	-	-	**150**
Total cost of raising funds	31,258	-	-	**31,258**
Net resources available for charitable activities	**80,868**	**34,913**	**(276)**	**115,505**
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	22,582	16,955	-	**39,537**
Research, policy and advisory	19,488	13,912	-	**33,400**
Education and inspiring support	16,564	207	-	**16,771**
Supporter care	3,925	-	-	**3,925**
Total expenditure on charitable activities	62,559	31,074	-	**93,633**
Total expenditure	**93,817**	**31,074**	**-**	**124,891**
Net (losses)/gains on investments	(503)	-	-	**(503)**
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	**17,806**	**3,839**	**(276)**	**21,369**
Actuarial gains on pension scheme	10,958	-	-	**10,958**
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	28,764	3,839	(276)	**32,327**
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	36,933	157,306	880	**195,119**
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	**65,697**	**161,145**	**604**	**227,446**

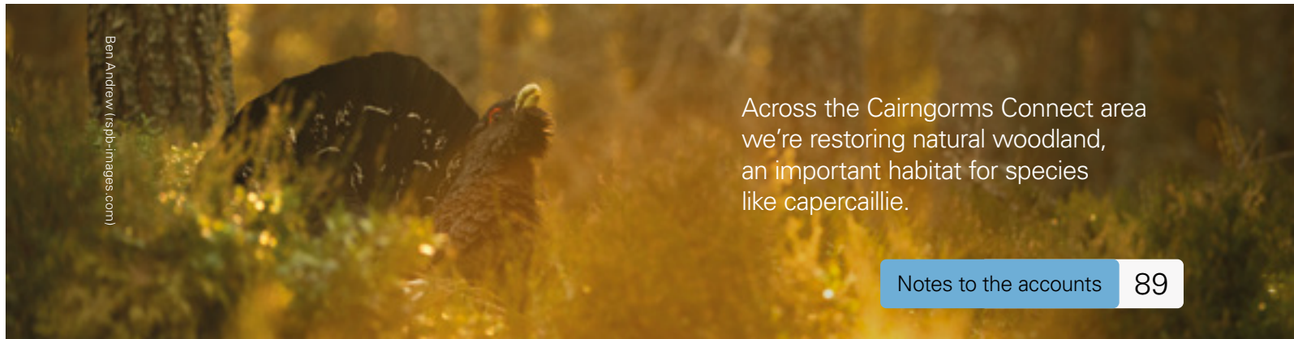
26) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds - charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2020

Consolidated	Total funds 1 April 2019 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Total funds 31 March 2020 £'000
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	40,091	112,277	(92,503)	(503)	(7,148)	**52,214**
Designated land fund	61,256	-	-	-	398	**61,654**
Pension liability	(64,414)	-	(1,465)	10,958	6,750	**(48,171)**
Total unrestricted funds	36,933	112,277	(93,968)	10,455	-	**65,697**
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	150,554	2,764	-	-	-	**153,318**
Other tangible assets	1,030	783	(431)	-	-	**1,382**
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,739	16,283	(16,524)	-	-	**1,498**
Research, policy and advisory	3,639	15,057	(13,912)	-	-	**4,784**
Education and inspiring support	344	26	(207)	-	-	**163**
Total restricted funds	157,306	34,913	(31,074)	-	-	**161,145**
Endowment funds	880	(276)	-	-	-	**604**
Total funds	**195,119**	**146,914**	**(125,042)**	**10,455**	**-**	**227,446**

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2020

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	61,654	148,122	-	**209,776**
Other tangible assets	4,306	-	1,382	-	**5,688**
Investments	29,217	-	3,012	604	**32,833**
Current assets	32,340	-	9,034	-	**41,374**
Current liabilities	(11,691)	-	(405)	-	**(12,096)**
Long-term liabilities	(1,958)	-	-	-	**(1,958)**
Net assets excluding pension liability	52,214	61,654	161,145	604	**275,617**
Pension liability	(48,171)	-	-	-	**(48,171)**
Net (liabilities)/assets	4,043	61,654	161,145	604	**227,446**



Contacts

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RSPB England HQ
1st Floor, One Cornwall Street
Birmingham B3 2JN
Tel: 01767 693 777

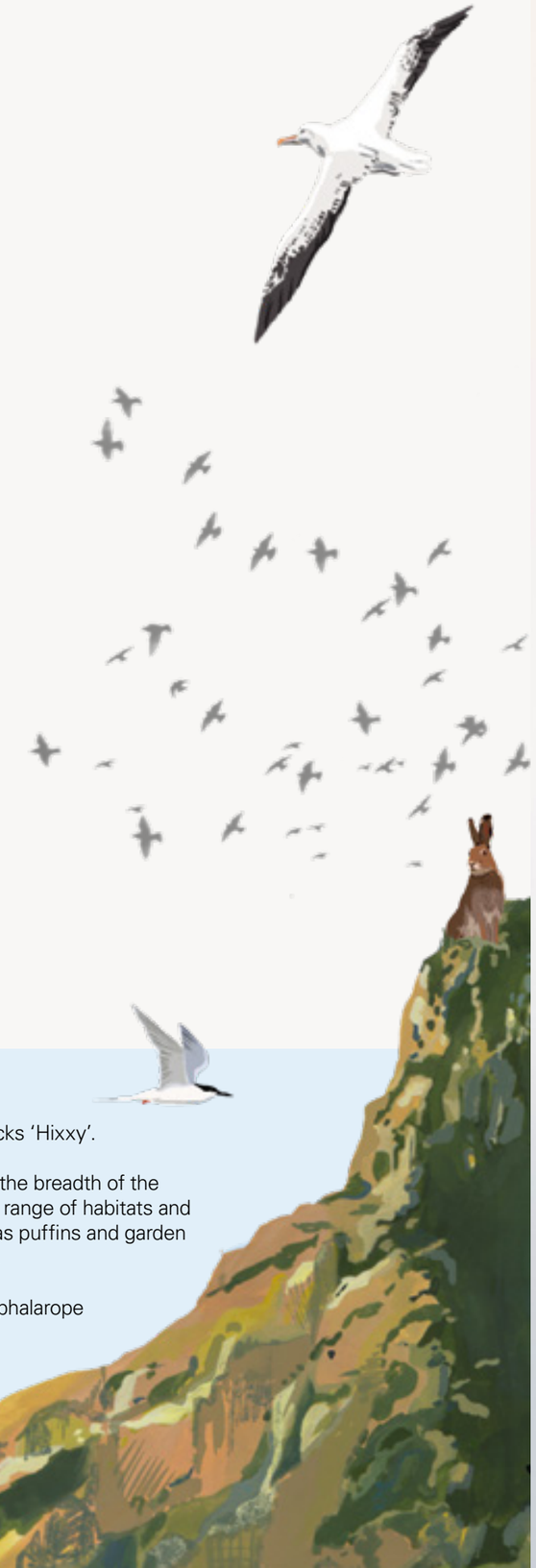
RSPB NI
RSPB NI HQ
Belvoir Park Forest
Belfast BT8 7QT
Tel: 02890 491 547

RSPB Scotland
RSPB Scotland HQ
2 Lochside View
Edinburgh Park
Edinburgh EH12 9DH
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To find your nearest office see:
rspb.org.uk/contactus



About the cover
This year's RSPB Annual Report cover is by illustrator Josephine Hicks 'Hixxy'.

It captures the scene of 'taking a moment with nature' and reflects the breadth of the RSPB's work across the four countries and internationally through a range of habitats and species. It has some instantly recognisable familiar species – such as puffins and garden birds, and some where you need to look a little closer to spot them.

Look out for South Stack (Wales), the Orkney vole and red-necked phalarope (Scotland), spoonbill (England) and roseate tern (Northern Ireland). There's also an albatross, representing our work with the Albatross Task Force, and as a nod to our international work.

Look out for puffins at our Bempton Cliffs and Rathlin Island nature reserves.

Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)



giving nature a home

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