



giving  
nature  
a home

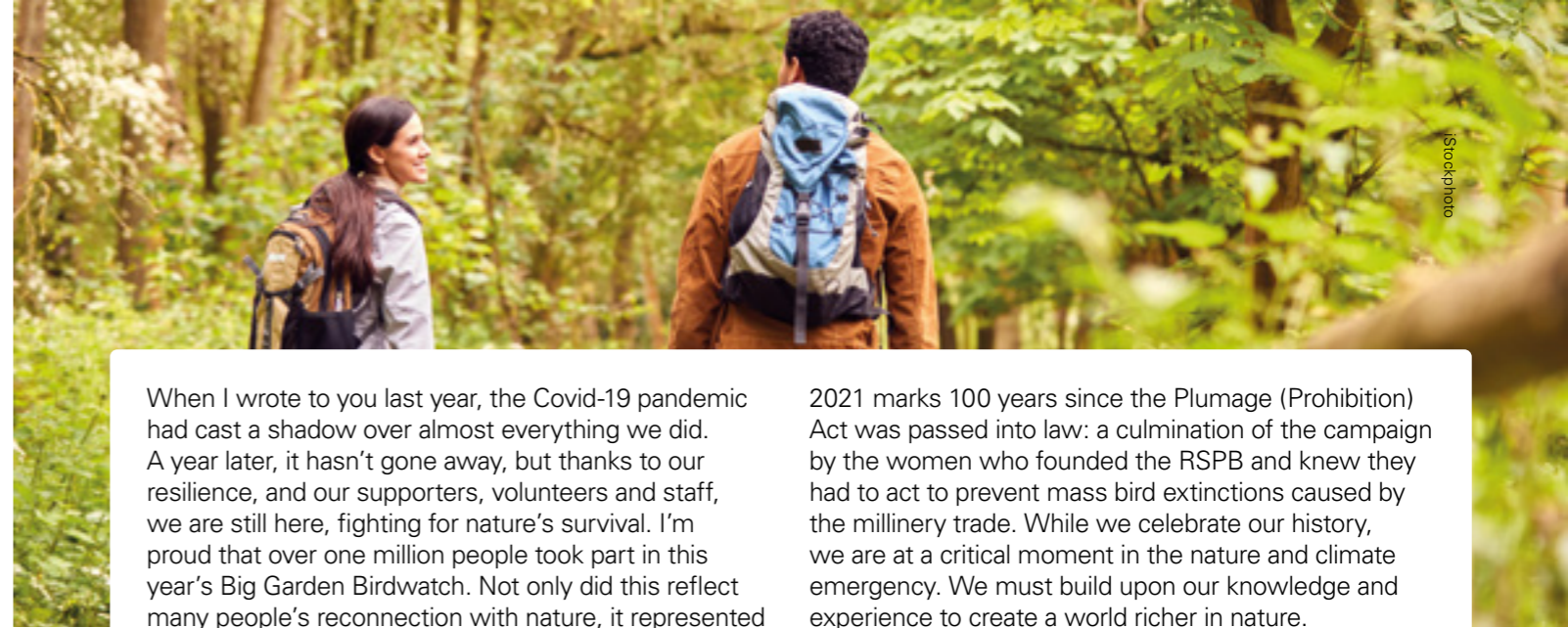
# Annual Report 2020-2021





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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*

**Kevin Cox**  
RSPB Chair



*Becky Speight*

**Becky Speight**  
RSPB Chief Executive



**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



# 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.



## 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.





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](http://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.

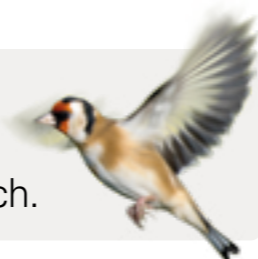
## Biggest Big Garden Birdwatch ever

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

More than a million people took part in Big Garden Birdwatch.



started or reignited a love of nature for many people, right on their doorsteps.'

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](http://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.



Discovering nature on our school grounds.



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





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](https://www.instagram.com/flocktogether.world)



## 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](https://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](https://www.rspb.org.uk/loveminsmere)

## 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.



BBC presenter Gillian Burke reported live from Old Moor for Autumnwatch.



A bit of added puffin-style on display for Covid safety on Coquet Island.



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/](https://naturebftb.co.uk/the-projects/field-cricket/)

Field crickets are one of the UK's rarest species.



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](https://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. Meanwhile, 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](https://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 Becca 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/](https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/review-our-world/)





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 entirely 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 Aptitude, Swift Conservation and the Swifts Local Network. For details, go to: [www.swiftmapper.org.uk](http://www.swiftmapper.org.uk)



Our first look at the refurbished Nature Centre.

## 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](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reviveourworld)

## 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.





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.



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](http://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: [@KauloftheWildUK](https://twitter.com/KauloftheWildUK)



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)

## 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.



Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)

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 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.

We're seeking tougher enforcement to end the illegal killing of birds of prey.





# England

David Boardent (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 Bain (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

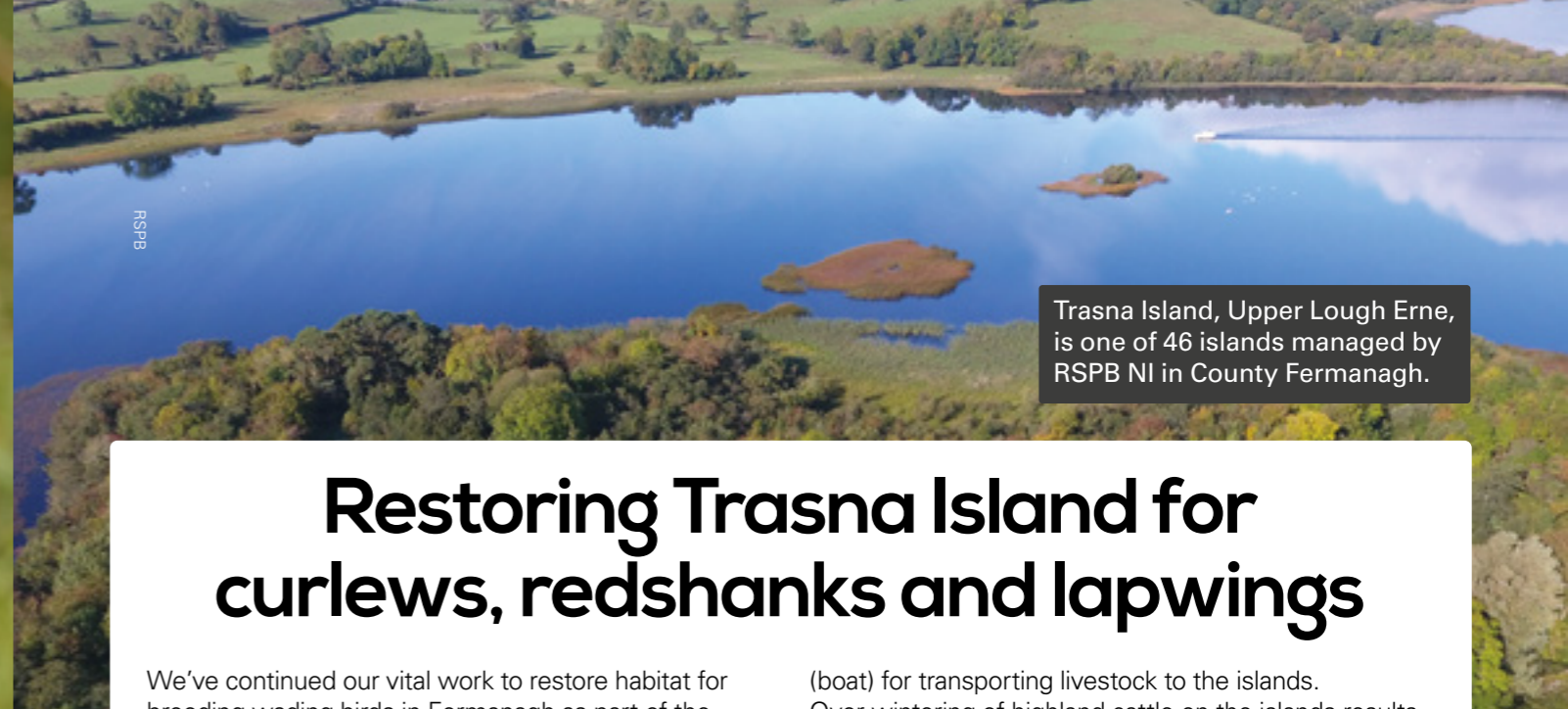


This young curlew hatched from one of the rescued eggs.



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



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 Rainscombe 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](http://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.

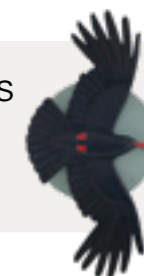
In addition, we have installed beautiful wooden sculptures celebrating the wildlife of South Stack, created by Anglesey sculptor Duncan Kitson, and funded by the Gaynor Cemlyn-Jones Trust. Artwork by pupils from Ysgol Cybi is also on display.

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](http://www.greenrecovery.wales)





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

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.

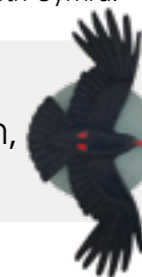
Mae'r cyfleusterau i ymwelwyr wedi gwella ac yn cynnwys caffi newydd sy'n agor allan i ddecin gyda golygfeydd godidog i gyfeiriad Môr Iwerddon. Rydym hefyd wedi gwneud y safle'n wyrddach, gan insiwleiddio'r to a'r waliau newydd, ffenestri gwyrdd dwbl, ac ychwanegu pwmp gwres ffynhonnell aer a phaneli 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 gwylt 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 gwylt 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 gwylt.

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 Cymru

Bu i RSPB Cymru ymateb yn gadarnhaol i her cyfyngiadau Covid-19 yn ym mis Gorffennaf 2020, gan greu gwyl 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 gwylt.

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 gwylt lolo Williams, arddangosiad coginio gan Sam a Shauna, cogyddion ar y BBC, amser stori gyda rhaglen blant S4C Cyw, a thrafodaeth panel ieuencid.

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/](http://www.greenrecovery.wales/cy/)



# International

Andy Schorfield



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](http://www.rspb.org.uk/tristanmarinezone)



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 Namibia 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.'





## 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

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](http://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](http://www.rspb.org.uk/agm)

Email [agm@rspb.org.uk](mailto:agm@rspb.org.uk) or call the Events Team on 01767 680 551

Exclusively for RSPB members





# 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
<b>Environmental challenges</b>	
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.
<b>Financial challenge</b>	
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.
<b>Political and economic challenges</b>	
Loss of a wildlife focus in the environmental agenda at a UK and four-country level.	<p>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.</p> <p>The RSPB will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Campaign alongside and take a leading role in campaigns for a green recovery eg RSPB Northern Ireland Green Recovery Fund.</li> <li>● Utilise <i>State of Nature</i> reports to highlight the need for action.</li> <li>● Highlight the need for nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change.</li> <li>● Emphasise the connection between climate change and nature restoration and protection to the benefit of people and wildlife.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Engage in advocacy work with all four UK country governments to influence budget processes and work programmes.</li> </ul>
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.
<b>Internal factors</b>	
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.



## 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.

## 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.

## 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 Pavelle
- 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](http://www.rspb.org.uk/localgroups) ➔



Pied flycatcher

Richard Packwood (rspb-images.com)

## 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 Ichthus 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
- idverde 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 ecosistememes 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

During the 2020 lockdown, the Central London RSPB local group helped members connect with nature by posting 'virtual walks' around local nature spots on their facebook page.

Find out more at:  
[www.rspb.org.uk/localgroups](http://www.rspb.org.uk/localgroups)



# 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.

# 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

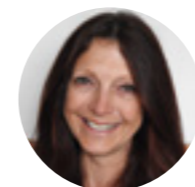


**Prof. Rosie Hails**

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](http://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.



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 commercial 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](http://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
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,149,378</b>	<b>12,930,152</b>
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
<b>Total gross CO2e based on above</b>	<b>1,479</b>	<b>2,901</b>
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)	-	-
<b>Total gross Scope 3 emissions / tCO2e</b>	<b>1,149</b>	<b>2,622</b>
Carbon offsets / tCO2e	-	-
Domestic Carbon Units (e.g. Woodland Carbon Code, Peatland Carbon Code / tCO2E)	-	-
<b>Total annual net emissions / tCO2e</b>	<b>2,628</b>	<b>5,523</b>
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:

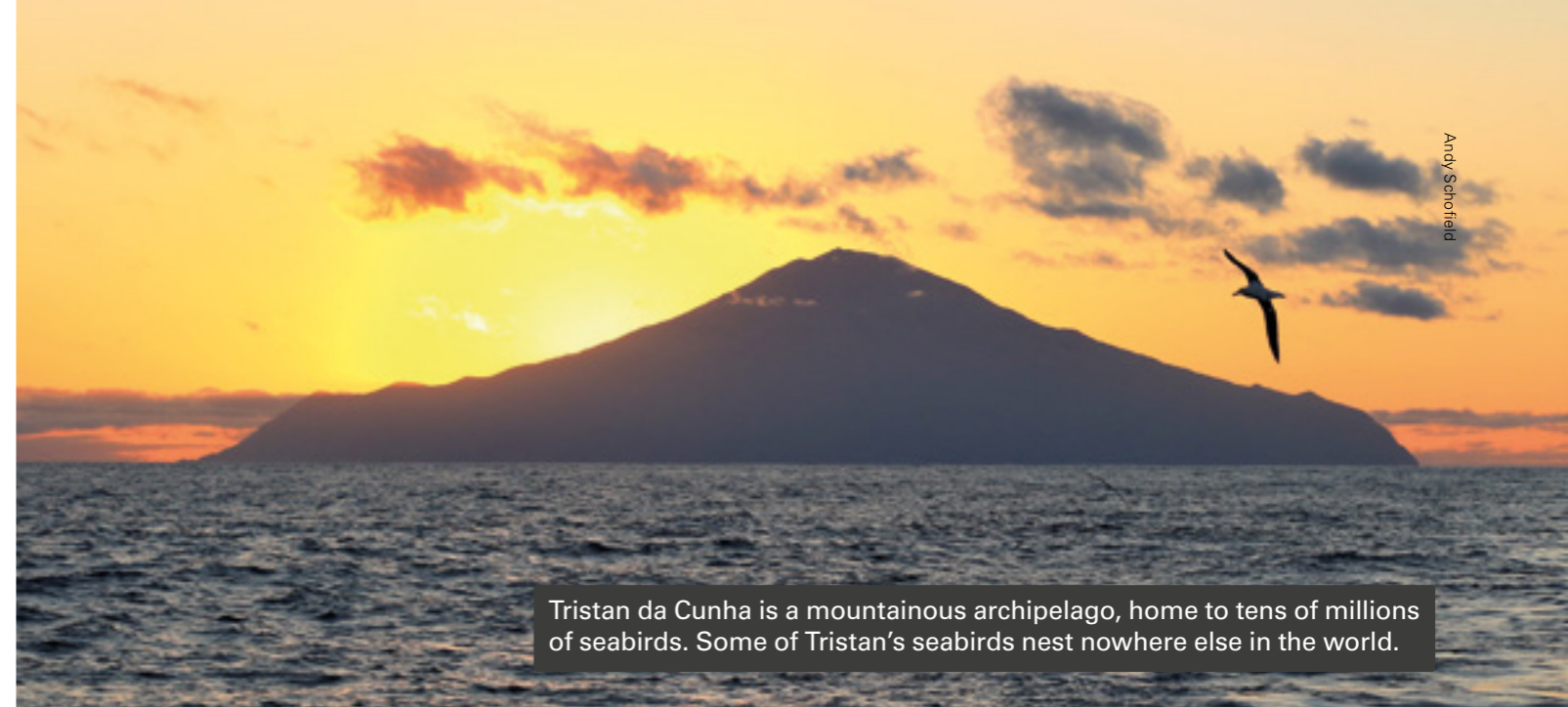
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject 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.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Hope Farm has seen an increase in yellowhammers.



Andy Schofield

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.

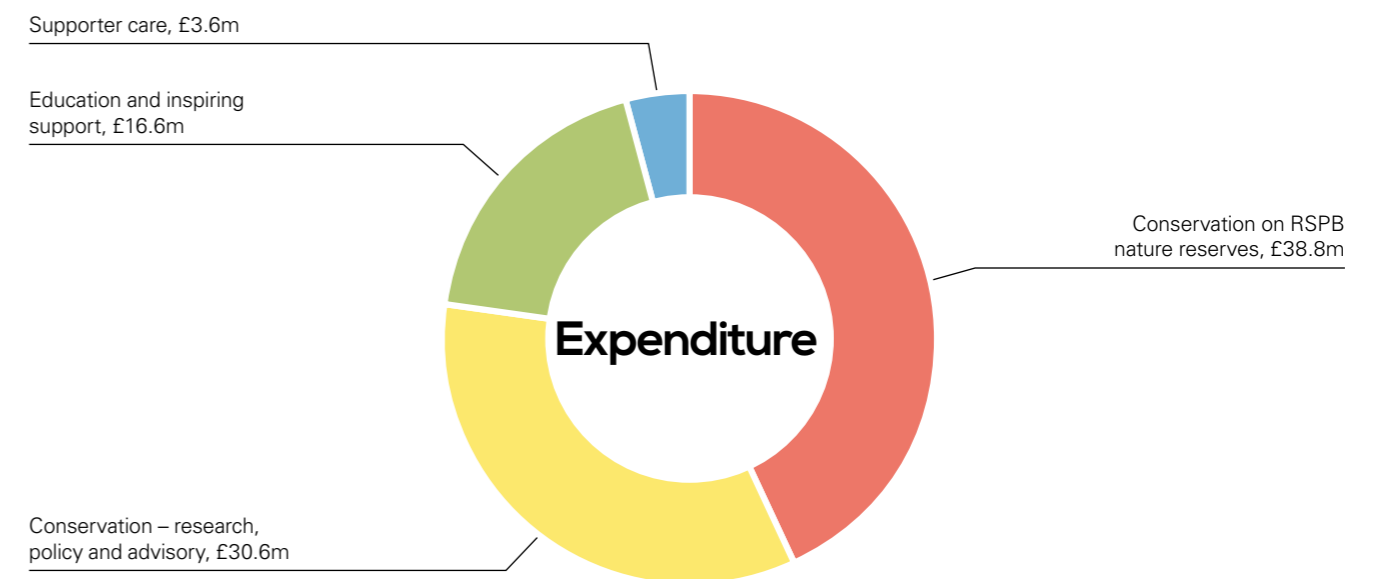
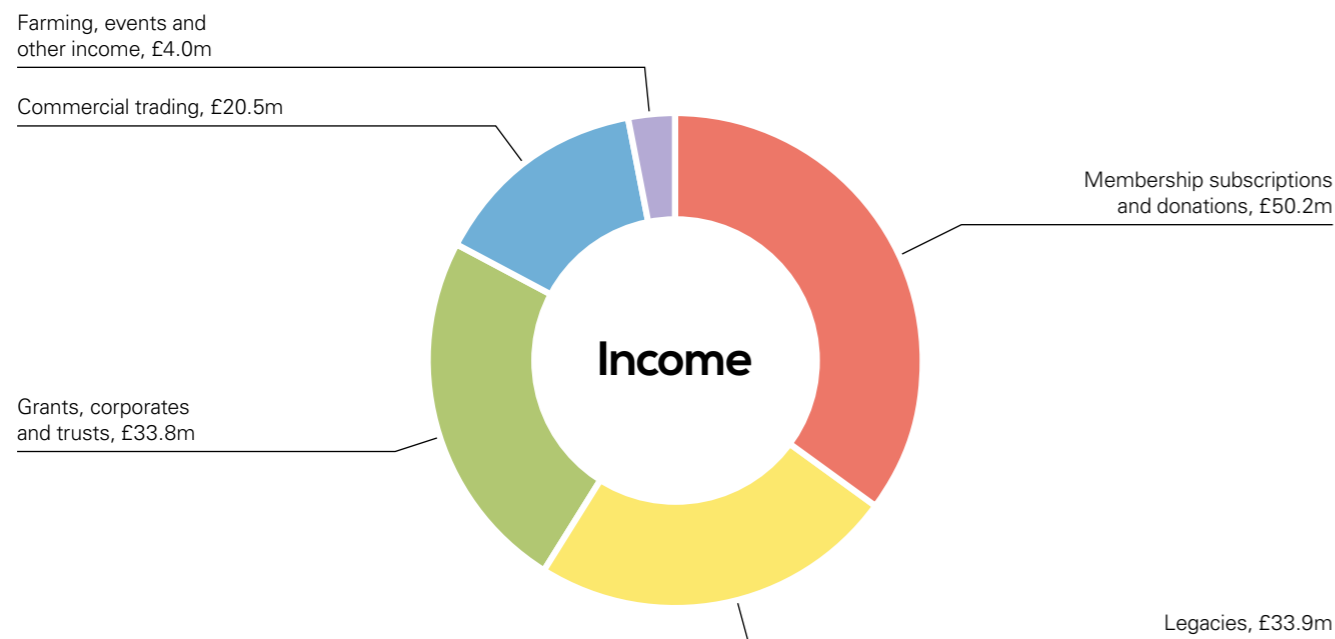
Whilst the Covid-19 restrictions meant that we weren’t able to deliver our normal level of conservation work as restrictions ease we expect conservation work and expenditure to increase significantly in 2021–2022.

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.



## 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

# 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.

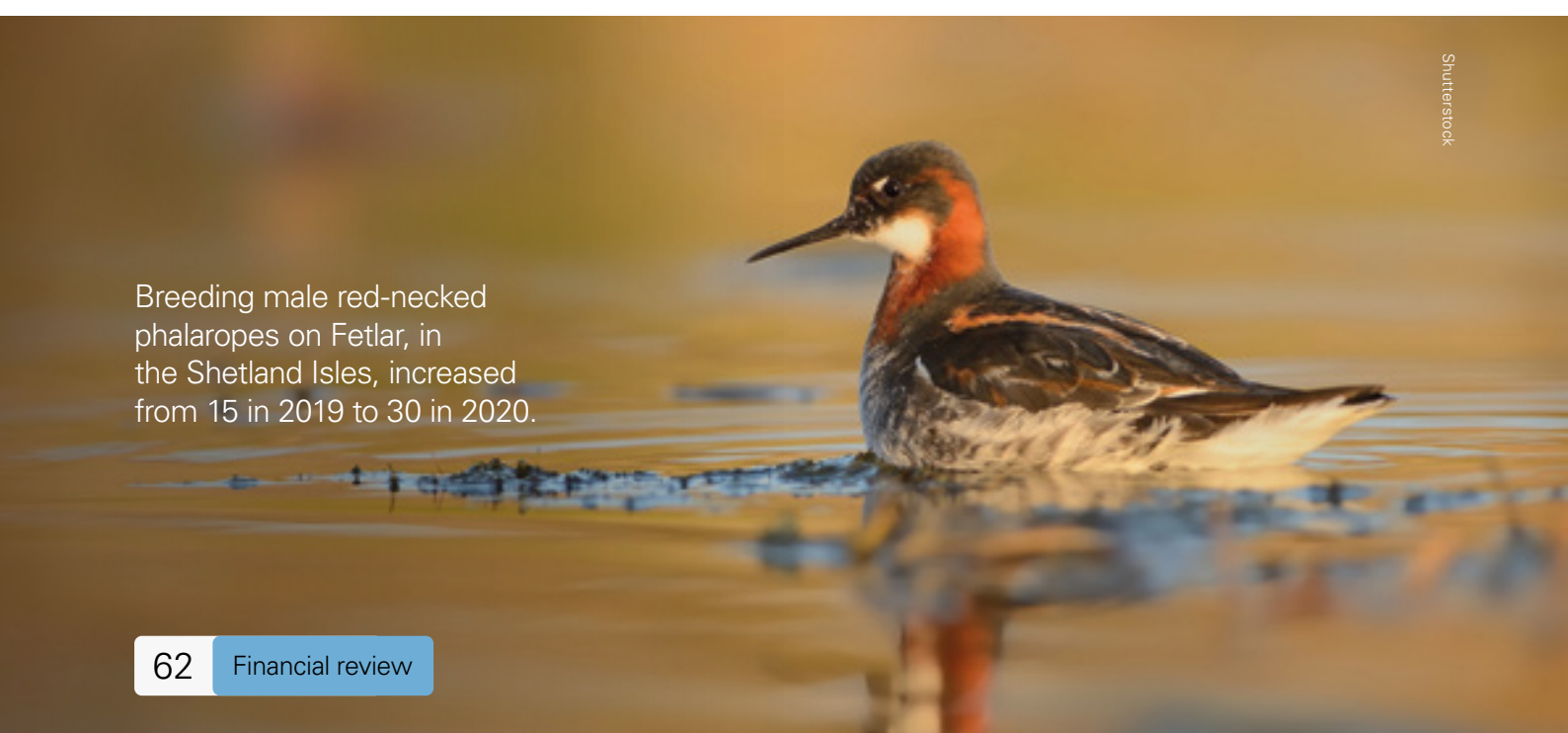
Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## 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.



Breeding male red-necked phalaropes on Fetlar, in the Shetland Isles, increased from 15 in 2019 to 30 in 2020.

Shutterstock



## 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](https://www.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.

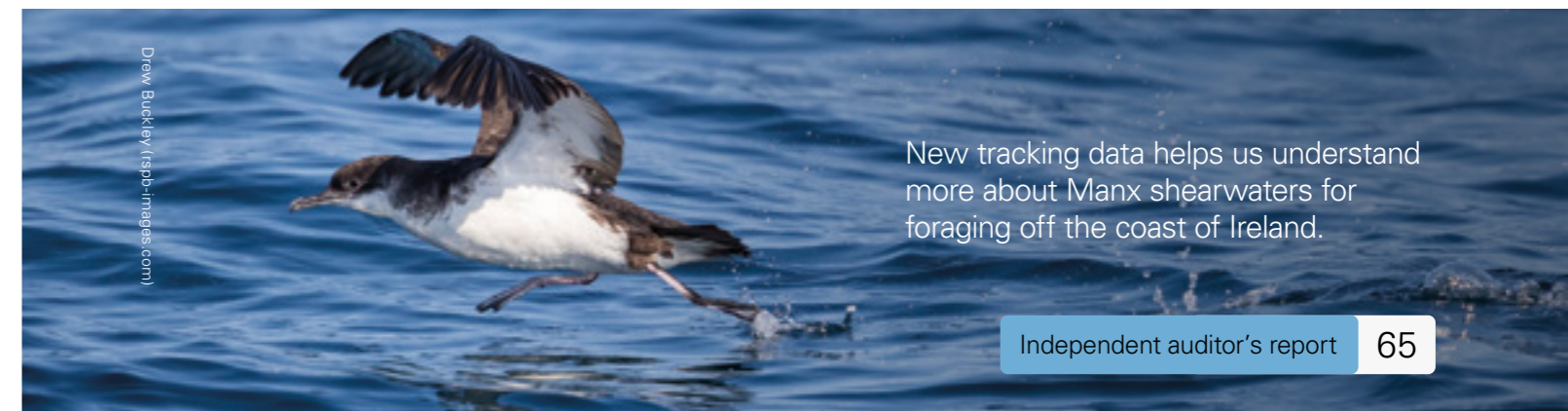
*Crowe UK LLP*

**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.



New tracking data helps us understand more about Manx shearwaters for foraging off the coast of Ireland.



## 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
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>						
<b>Voluntary income</b>						
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
<b>Total voluntary income</b>		<b>93,076</b>	<b>25,128</b>	<b>(341)</b>	<b>117,863</b>	<b>119,016</b>
Commercial trading	6	20,484	-	-	20,484	20,405
Investment income and interest	7	81	-	-	81	233
<b>Charitable activities</b>						
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
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>		<b>3,765</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,765</b>	<b>6,456</b>
<b>Other income</b>						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	190	-	-	190	653
<b>Total income</b>		<b>117,596</b>	<b>25,128</b>	<b>(341)</b>	<b>142,383</b>	<b>146,763</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>						
<b>Cost of raising funds</b>						
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
<b>Total cost of raising funds</b>		<b>31,992</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31,992</b>	<b>31,258</b>
<b>Net resources available for charitable activities</b>		<b>85,604</b>	<b>25,128</b>	<b>(341)</b>	<b>110,391</b>	<b>115,505</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>						
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
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>		<b>67,476</b>	<b>22,150</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>89,626</b>	<b>93,633</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>99,468</b>	<b>22,150</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>121,618</b>	<b>124,891</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments		3,539	-	-	3,539	(503)
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		<b>21,667</b>	<b>2,978</b>	<b>(341)</b>	<b>24,304</b>	<b>21,369</b>
Actuarial (losses)/gains on pension scheme		(15,550)	-	-	(15,550)	10,958
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>6,117</b>	<b>2,978</b>	<b>(341)</b>	<b>8,754</b>	<b>32,327</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>65,697</b>	<b>161,145</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>227,446</b>	<b>195,119</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>71,814</b>	<b>164,123</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>236,200</b>	<b>227,446</b>

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
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
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
		<b>268,161</b>	<b>248,297</b>	<b>271,275</b>	<b>251,402</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
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
		<b>40,160</b>	<b>41,374</b>	<b>35,139</b>	<b>37,028</b>
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	(13,053)	(12,221)	(11,283)	(11,126)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>27,107</b>	<b>29,153</b>	<b>23,856</b>	<b>25,902</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>295,268</b>	<b>277,450</b>	<b>295,131</b>	<b>277,304</b>
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	(1,724)	(1,833)	(1,724)	(1,833)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>293,544</b>	<b>275,617</b>	<b>293,407</b>	<b>275,471</b>
Pension scheme liability	25	(57,344)	(48,171)	(57,344)	(48,171)
<b>Net assets including pension liability</b>		<b>236,200</b>	<b>227,446</b>	<b>236,063</b>	<b>227,300</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>					
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
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)
		<b>71,814</b>	<b>65,697</b>	<b>71,677</b>	<b>65,551</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>164,123</b>	<b>161,145</b>	<b>164,123</b>	<b>161,145</b>
<b>Endowment funds</b>		<b>263</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	21 & 22	<b>236,200</b>	<b>227,446</b>	<b>236,063</b>	<b>227,300</b>

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 Cabbage  
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 ..... Period of lease  
and buildings with a fixed term 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.

### 3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Membership subscriptions	44,660	44,825
Donations	5,503	7,096
	<b>50,163</b>	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
	<b>33,769</b>	29,511
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations:		
Services	89	49
Goods	17	17
	<b>106</b>	66

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Major grants received during the year include the following:		
<b>UK</b>		
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)
	<b>19,967</b>	14,826
<b>International</b>		
European Union	2,090	3,014
<b>National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Lottery Community Fund</b>	<b>3,581</b>	3,526
<b>Local Councils and Other</b>	<b>3,780</b>	3,488
	<b>29,418</b>	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.

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.

Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)



## 5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Grants received were for the following purposes:		
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	-
	<b>28,831</b>	24,074
Acquisition of nature reserves	587	780
	<b>29,418</b>	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
	<b>20,484</b>	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
	<b>81</b>	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

	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	2021 Total £'000	2020 As restated £'000
<b>Cost of raising funds</b>				
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
<b>Total cost of raising funds</b>	30,386	1,606	31,992	31,258
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
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](http://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.



## 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.

## 11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,101 (2020: 2,074).

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).



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.

Peter Ryan



## 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
<b>Cost</b>							
At 1 April 2020	174,046	1,716	58,106	3,662	4,887	22,457	<b>264,874</b>
Additions	1,646	13	2,052	-	88	1,878	<b>5,677</b>
Disposals	(194)	-	(14)	-	(124)	(731)	<b>(1,063)</b>
At 31 March 2021	175,498	1,729	60,144	3,662	4,851	23,604	<b>269,488</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>							
At 1 April 2020	-	533	23,559	2,308	4,242	18,768	<b>49,410</b>
Charge for the year	-	19	2,040	85	306	2,387	<b>4,837</b>
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(124)	(700)	<b>(824)</b>
At 31 March 2021	-	552	25,599	2,393	4,424	20,455	<b>53,423</b>
Net book amount:							
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	175,498	1,177	34,545	1,269	427	3,149	<b>216,065</b>
At 31 March 2020	174,046	1,183	34,547	1,354	645	3,689	<b>215,464</b>

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Net book amount:		
Nature reserves:		
Freehold land	<b>175,498</b>	174,046
Leasehold land	<b>1,177</b>	1,183
Buildings	<b>34,545</b>	34,547
	<b>211,220</b>	209,776
Other tangible assets:		
Other properties	<b>1,269</b>	1,354
Motor vehicles	<b>427</b>	645
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	<b>3,149</b>	3,689
	<b>4,845</b>	5,688
	<b>216,065</b>	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

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Investments at fair value:		
Investment cash	<b>36,745</b>	21,229
Equities, bonds and other stocks:		
Equities	<b>10,868</b>	7,666
Corporate bonds	<b>1,174</b>	1,095
Government bonds	<b>1,753</b>	1,733
Listed Stock Exchange investments	<b>6</b>	5
	<b>13,801</b>	10,499
Investment properties within the UK	<b>1,550</b>	1,105
	<b>52,096</b>	32,833

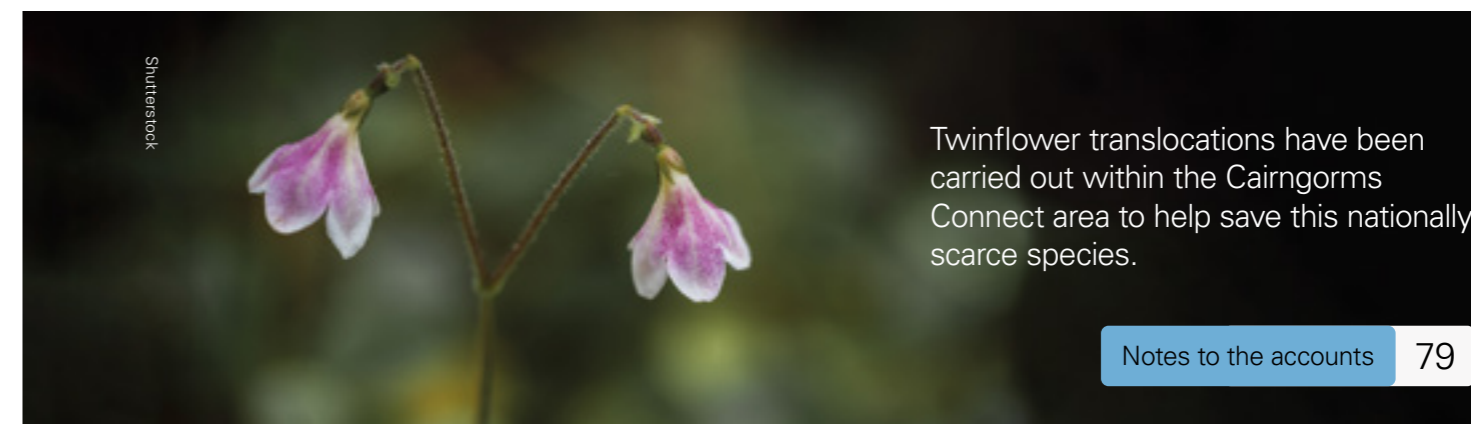
Equities, Corporate bonds and Government bonds are held in unit trusts.

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.

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Movement during the year:		
Fair value at 1 April	<b>32,833</b>	20,964
Disposals	-	(1,673)
Fees	<b>(166)</b>	(113)
New investment property	<b>372</b>	14
Dividends reinvested	<b>3</b>	6
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation at 31 March	<b>3,538</b>	(503)
Movement in investment cash	<b>15,516</b>	14,138
<b>Fair value at 31 March</b>	<b>52,096</b>	32,833
Historical cost as at 31 March	<b>43,129</b>	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	<b>3,250</b>	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	<b>551</b>	551
	<b>3,801</b>	3,801



Twinflower translocations have been carried out within the Cairngorms Connect area to help save this nationally scarce species.



#### 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
	<b>21,831</b>	25,691	<b>25,975</b>	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
	<b>13,053</b>	12,221	<b>11,283</b>	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
	<b>1,724</b>	1,833	<b>1,724</b>	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

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Movement during the year:		
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	<b>768</b>	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	<b>3,863</b>	932
Deferred income: Balance at 31 March	<b>4,631</b>	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	<b>15,290</b>	16,804

Lease payments of £2,435,181 (2020: £2,646,951) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Contracted income:		
Less than 1 year	818	963
2-5 years	640	873
Over 5 years	2,455	2,542
	<b>3,913</b>	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	Amortised cost	Total financial instruments	Non-financial instruments	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	As restated £'000
<b>Assets</b>						
Tangible assets	-	-	-	216,065	<b>216,065</b>	215,464
Investments	52,096	-	52,096	-	<b>52,096</b>	32,833
Stock	-	-	-	4,459	<b>4,459</b>	3,747
Debtors	-	18,976	18,976	2,855	<b>21,831</b>	25,691
Cash at bank and in hand	-	13,870	13,870	-	<b>13,870</b>	11,936
<b>Liabilities</b>						
Creditors due within one year	-	(9,190)	(9,190)	(3,863)	<b>(13,053)</b>	(12,221)
Creditors due after one year	(956)	-	(956)	(768)	<b>(1,724)</b>	(1,833)
	51,140	23,656	74,796	218,748	<b>293,544</b>	275,617

The income, expenditure and net gains and losses recognised in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities are shown below:

	Fair value	Amortised cost	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Investment income</b>	15	66	<b>81</b>	233
Investment management costs	(208)	-	<b>(208)</b>	(150)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	3,538	-	<b>3,538</b>	(503)
	3,345	66	<b>3,411</b>	(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
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>						
General funds	52,214	117,596	(98,402)	3,539	(6,774)	<b>68,173</b>
Designated land fund	61,654	-	-	-	(669)	<b>60,985</b>
Pension liability	(48,171)	-	(1,066)	(15,550)	7,443	<b>(57,344)</b>
Total unrestricted funds	65,697	117,596	(99,468)	(12,011)	-	<b>71,814</b>
<b>Restricted funds:</b>						
Nature reserves	153,318	3,097	-	-	-	<b>156,415</b>
Other tangible assets	1,382	570	(487)	-	-	<b>1,465</b>
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,498	8,966	(9,414)	-	-	<b>1,050</b>
Research, policy and advisory	4,784	12,437	(12,162)	-	-	<b>5,059</b>
Education and inspiring support	163	58	(87)	-	-	<b>134</b>
Total restricted funds	161,145	25,128	(22,150)	-	-	<b>164,123</b>
<b>Endowment funds</b>	604	(341)	-	-	-	<b>263</b>
Total funds	<b>227,446</b>	<b>142,383</b>	<b>(121,618)</b>	<b>(12,011)</b>	-	<b>236,200</b>

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	Farming for Nature	March Farmers for Nature	RSPB Sales Ltd	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd	Elimination	RSPB Consolidated
	2021 £'000	2021 £'000	2021 £'000	2021 £'000	2021 £'000	2021 £'000	2021 £'000
Income	121,459	337	174	24,826	(5)	(4,408)	<b>142,383</b>
Expenditure	(100,685)	(111)	(116)	(20,702)	(4)	-	<b>(121,618)</b>
Other recognised losses	(12,011)	-	-	-	-	-	<b>(12,011)</b>
Profit/(loss)	8,763	226	58	4,124	(9)	(4,408)	<b>8,754</b>
Gift aided	-	(226)	(58)	(4,124)	-	4,408	-
Net movement in funds	8,763	-	-	-	(9)	-	<b>8,754</b>
Net Assets at 31 March 2020	227,300	-	551	3,250	146	(3,801)	<b>227,446</b>
Net Assets at 31 March 2021	236,063	-	551	3,250	137	(3,801)	<b>236,200</b>

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.

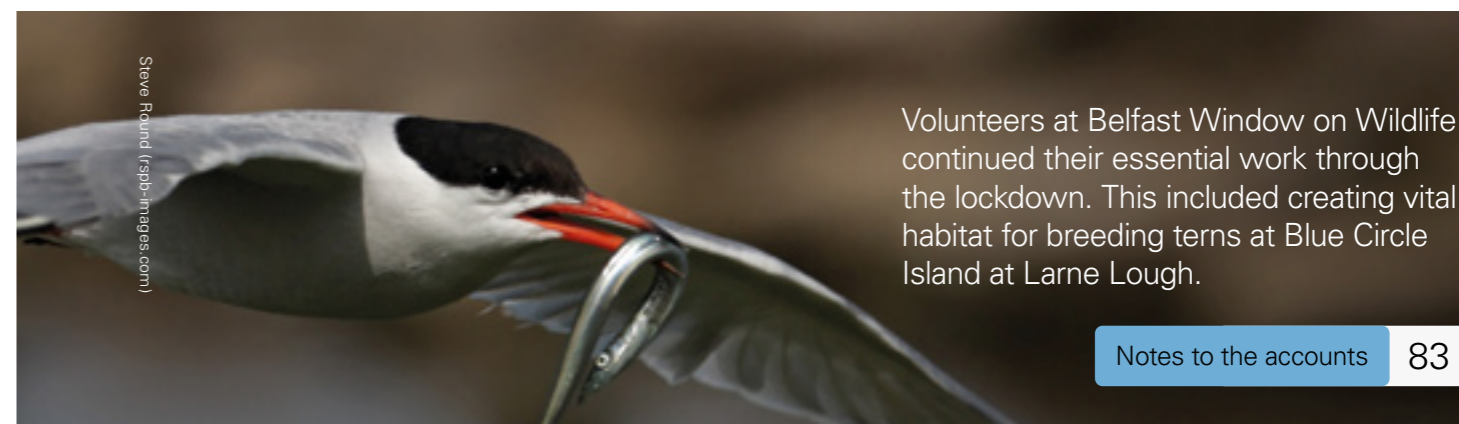
Designated funds comprise the Land Fund which represents land and buildings purchased using unrestricted funds including the investment in March Farmers (Washland) Limited.

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:

Asset type:	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2021 £'000
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	
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 £'000
	General £'000	Designated £'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

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
Remeasurements	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 2022: 2.5% 1 April 2023: 2.0% 1 April 2024: 2.0% 1.9% p.a. thereafter	1 April 2021: 2.5% 1 April 2022: 2.5% 1 April 2023: 2.0% 1 April 2024: 2.0% 1.9% 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	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



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
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>				
<b>Voluntary income</b>				
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
<b>Total voluntary income</b>	<b>84,383</b>	<b>34,913</b>	<b>(280)</b>	<b>119,016</b>
Commercial trading	20,405	-	-	20,405
Investment income and interest	229	-	4	233
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
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
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b>6,456</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,456</b>
<b>Other income</b>				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	653	-	-	653
<b>Total income</b>	<b>112,126</b>	<b>34,913</b>	<b>(276)</b>	<b>146,763</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>				
<b>Cost of raising funds</b>				
Costs of commercial trading	19,476	-	-	19,476
Costs of generating voluntary income	11,632	-	-	11,632
Investment management costs	150	-	-	150
<b>Total cost of raising funds</b>	<b>31,258</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31,258</b>
<b>Net resources available for charitable activities</b>	<b>80,868</b>	<b>34,913</b>	<b>(276)</b>	<b>115,505</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
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
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>	<b>62,559</b>	<b>31,074</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>93,633</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>93,817</b>	<b>31,074</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>124,891</b>
Net (losses)/gains on investments	(503)	-	-	(503)
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>17,806</b>	<b>3,839</b>	<b>(276)</b>	<b>21,369</b>
Actuarial gains on pension scheme	10,958	-	-	10,958
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	<b>28,764</b>	<b>3,839</b>	<b>(276)</b>	<b>32,327</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>36,933</b>	<b>157,306</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>195,119</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>65,697</b>	<b>161,145</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>227,446</b>

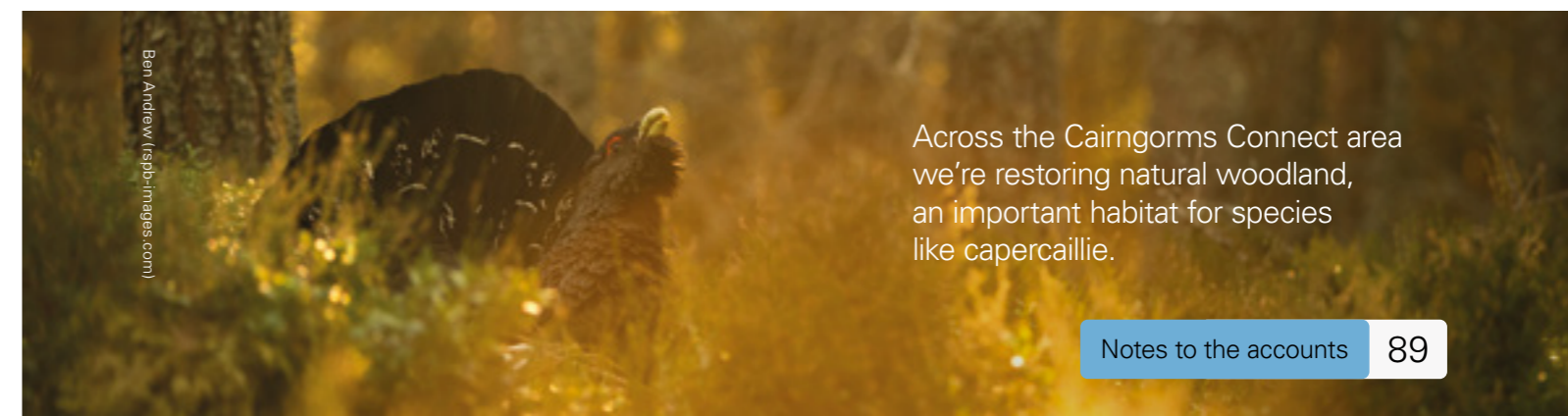
## 26) Comparative statements (continued)

### 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
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>						
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
<b>Restricted funds:</b>						
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
<b>Endowment funds</b>						
	880	(276)	-	-	-	604
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>195,119</b>	<b>146,914</b>	<b>(125,042)</b>	<b>10,455</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>227,446</b>

### Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2020

Asset type:	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2020 £'000
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	
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



Across the Cairngorms Connect area we're restoring natural woodland, an important habitat for species like capercaillie.



# Contacts

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[rspb.org.uk/contactus](https://www.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.

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Look out for puffins at our Bempton Cliffs and Rathlin Island nature reserves.





The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity:  
England & Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654 030-0070-20-21

The RSPB is a member of BirdLife International, a partnership of nature conservation organisations working to give nature a home around the world.

