
2024-25



RSPB Environmental Report

A summary of our environmental performance

Introduction

The RSPB is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, with nearly 1.2 million members, 2,000 members of staff and 13,000 volunteers, all taking action for nature. We manage more than 200 nature reserves across all four countries of the UK, covering an area the size of 250,000 football pitches. We're the UK's fifth largest landowner protecting an area bigger than Greater London. We work to enhance nature – both species and places - through active land management, world leading research, and campaigns and advocacy work. We are supported via partnerships, funding, our membership and our commercial activity including RSPB shops and cafés.















Inevitably, in achieving positive results for wildlife, our operations have impacts upon other aspects of the environment. 'RSPB Greening' is a key strategic outcome in the RSPB's Strategy to 2030 and commits us to more sustainable ways of delivering our valuable work.



RSPB Greening

‘RSPB Greening’ is the eighth of 10 outcomes set out in the RSPB’s Strategy to 2030. Embedding an Environmental Management System (EMS) to demonstrate continual improvement is one of our associated outcome measures.

The RSPB has established a Greening Programme Board to steer delivery of the overall Greening Programme, including achievement of our Environmental Policy commitments. The Board is responsible for reviewing our EMS objectives and targets and for overseeing the resourcing and improvement of our EMS. The Greening Programme Board also manages the key elements of LARK (Land/ Adaptation/ Reduction/ Knowledge), an acronym that pulls together the key pillars of the RSPB’s internal response to the challenge of climate change.

Land Our reserve management GHG emissions and removals	 Carbon flux from habitats	 Investments/carbon credits	 Owned/non-owned livestock		
Adaptation Dealing with unavoidable climate change	 Ecology/site management	 Premises/infrastructure	 Human/business		
Reduction Our business GHG emissions	 Operations/travel	 Premises/infrastructure	 Supply chain/commercial		
Knowledge Enabling RSPB’s response to climate change	 Evidencing	 Learning	 Managing	 Monitoring	 Reporting

Green Dragon Environmental Standard

The Green Dragon Environmental Standard is an accreditation system that assesses organisations’ capability to take action to understand, monitor and control their impacts on the environment. The RSPB’s Environmental Management System (EMS) is aligned to the Green Dragon standard, and this is assured through our internal processes.

For several years, the RSPB managed Green Dragon at a regional and country level, with areas achieving different levels of the standard. Since 2024, the RSPB has been audited at an organisational level, achieving Level 4 in October 2024 and Level 5 in October 2025. Level 5 is comparable to ISO 14001: 2015 and EMAS. The scope of the Environmental Management System at the RSPB covers all UK workplaces, work activities and workforce, with a few exceptions: land only sites, sites where we are only a partner, staff or volunteer accommodation, and private lets.

Environmental Management Review 2024-25

The overall management of the EMS is led by the Head of Sustainable Practice. The Environmental Advisers and Health, Safety and Environment Advisers then work with sites to embed the EMS and deliver continuous improvement. The workforce at all levels of the organisation are responsible for ensuring they work to deliver the Environmental Policy. A Green Dragon project team meets weekly to oversee our Environmental Management System.

We undertook a full management review of the EMS in August 2025 to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness at the RSPB Executive Board. The Board reiterated a continued commitment towards environmental improvement at the RSPB. The Management Review discussed and approved the changes in the Environmental Policy, agreed to be assessed for Level 5 in 2025, set out communications needs pre and post Level-5 audit, including at Leadership Comms Group (LCG), and discussed the following: performance; non-conformity reports and audit findings; achievements against current objectives and targets; setting of objectives and targets; and a review of the effectiveness of the Greening Programme.

Over the past year, the RSPB has not recorded any contravention of environmental legislation nor has been responsible for any pollution incidents.

Aspects and Impacts

The RSPB has identified a number of environmental aspects and associated impacts relating to our everyday operations and holds these on a register. We consider the life cycle environmental aspects and impacts (adverse and beneficial) that may arise from activities, products and services carried out by RSPB where under our direct control or indirect influence. We include activities and associated impacts (changes) that may occur under normal, abnormal and emergency operating situations plus any existing controls that reduce or minimise them.

We evaluate and rate risk by including consideration of the environmental impact, compliance (legal or other) obligations and views of interested parties. Our significant aspects are reviewed annually to ensure they are relevant and comprehensive. The Aspects and Impacts Register is included within the remit of the annual external Green Dragon verification.

Our three most significant environmental aspects have been identified as:

- suppliers’ aspects related to provision of goods and services
- energy use
- greenhouse gas emissions

Environmental Training and Communications 2024-25

Green Dragon communications plan delivered	All staff intranet articles explaining LARK
Engagement across leadership teams on the emerging GHG Reduction Commitment	HS&E newsletters contained EMS information for staff
Celebration comms on Green Dragon audit success sent out via internal updates	Viva Engage activity on ‘Greening Tips for Work and Home’ and ‘Green Dragon Champions’
Commuting/homeworking survey rerun in accordance with GHG Protocol to inform 2024-25 GHG emissions reporting	Engagement with sites with solar PV systems to gather generation data, advice on system monitoring and correct operation
Notes included in updates to alert all staff to new updated Codes of Practice, changes to legislation and EMS procedures	Leadership Communications Group briefed on Greening progress including board establishment, projects and LARK approach
Updated process, comms and training with site staff to improve monitoring of f-gases, leak testing records and emissions reporting for air-conditioning and heat pump systems	Site managers, Greening champions and staff with compliance responsibilities attended training or info sessions on topics such as waste, pollution, spill kits and environmental monitoring

Measuring and monitoring: environmental data 2024-25

To enable the RSPB to report against our annually agreed EMS objectives and targets we’ve embedded monitoring procedures across the organisation. We undertake monitoring against indicators related to: (GHG); climate adaptation; purchasing; plastics; waste/recycling; and volunteering. Our EMS objectives and targets reflect our significant impacts as set out above plus corporate priorities and the RSPB’s wider commitment to sustainable development.

As part of our commitment to collect, calculate and report our GHG emissions, we engage with numerous data owners across the RSPB to ensure full coverage of all GHG scopes. We publicly report our operational GHG emissions in the RSPB Annual Report (by financial year). Over the next two years, this will be expanded to include emissions from land use change and land management as part of our land GHG emissions accounting project. Our newly launched Climate and Environmental Dashboard has been used to collate and process our diverse business GHG emissions for 2024-25.

Our 2024-25 objectives, targets and progress against our measurement indicators is set out below. More performance detail is included in the annual management review to Executive Board in August 2025.



Our new dashboard automates the collection and analysis of many data sources from energy meters, fuel purchases and finance data. This will be an invaluable tool moving forward to help us reduce emissions and other impacts and track our progress towards our emissions reduction targets.

EMS		
OBJECTIVE The RSPB will be certified to Green Dragon Level 4 by the end of 2025 and Level 5 by the end of 2026.	TARGETS All Operations and UKHQ Directorates at Level 4 by end of 2025 and Level 5 by end of 2026.	PROGRESS Level 4 accreditation obtained in Oct 2024 for full organisation. Level 5 audit in 2025.
VOLUNTEERING		
OBJECTIVE More and more diverse people are taking multiple nature positive actions, giving more time, money and voice and making nature positive choices by 2030.	TARGETS Numbers of RSPB volunteer hours is increasing each year to end of 2029-30.	PROGRESS 1,231,380 hours (19.8% rise from 2023-24) with 13,364 volunteers.
GHG – OUR BUSINESS		
OBJECTIVE Not only will the RSPB be a nature-positive organisation, we'll progress towards delivering a net climate cooling impact, having both reduced our operational GHG emissions and enhanced net emission removals and reductions through our land management activities.	TARGETS Publish RSPB GHG Reduction Plan by end of 2025. Reduce RSPB business GHG emissions by 50% between 2020-21 and 2030-31.	PROGRESS GHG Commitment was delayed but will be published in 2025. 35,167 tCO2e represents a 28% rise from last year. Our annual emissions report (see p11) shows a rise of 28% over the previous year. However, this is the result of expanding of our reporting categories to include capital goods and investments, rather than a direct increase in emissions.
CLIMATE ADAPTATION		
OBJECTIVE The RSPB will understand current and future climate change risks and opportunities for RSPB, and integrate these across the organisation.	TARGETS Develop and publish an RSPB Adaptation Report in 2024-25.	PROGRESS Submitted to DEFRA and on RSPB website.
WASTE		
OBJECTIVE The RSPB will maintain or exceed its current recycling rate.	TARGETS The RSPB will maintain or exceed its current recycling rate.	PROGRESS 87% maintained from 2023-24 (main contract).

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS		
OBJECTIVE The RSPB's operations support a circular economy and generate zero plastic pollution. All plastic used is made from recycled content or renewable sources, is recyclable and recycled; no plastic waste is incinerated.	TARGETS 1) By April 2025, eliminate "problematic" single-use items through re-design, innovation or alternative re-use models. Each year we will take steps to reduce one further significant cause of plastic pollution within our operations. 2) Continue to source products and packaging incorporating recycled materials. 3) By April 2025, 100% of our own brand product packaging and supporter materials could be reused, recycled or composted. 4) By April 2025, 100% of our own brand product packaging and supporter materials contain clear information on how to dispose, reuse, recycle or compost it.	PROGRESS 1) Successful paper trials for remaining bird food packaging, warehouse audits to remove shipping packaging, rebrand of existing products. Linerless labels adopted for customer deliveries saving 2,533 kg of plastic over 5 years. 2) Sourcing of recycled polyester hats and scarfs; securing a supplier for recycled plastic bird feeders; soft toys moving to recycled plastics. 3) 87% up from 82% in 2023-24. 4) 95% up from 92% in 2023-24
NATURE POSITIVE PURCHASING		
OBJECTIVE The RSPB will only purchase products with a high risk of links to unsustainable loss of habitats and wildlife that meet the requirements set out in our high-risk policy. The RSPB will bring in nature positive standards and targets, across our operations, partners and financial policies and investments by 2030.	TARGETS Hold Food for Life Award at 100% of our cafés. Standards published and promoted to relevant sectors by 2030.	PROGRESS Food for Life was put on hold due to Food and Beverage model changes. Local suppliers/produce utilised where practicable on reserves. RSPB signed the 'Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice'. All new suppliers for our commercial ops completed due diligence questionnaire.

Greenhouse gas emissions

The table below presents the annual energy use and associated GHG emissions from RSPB business operations in 2024-25. This year we captured new categories, and introduced or improved datasets, automating their collection where possible. Energy consumption and emissions for Scope 1 for 2023-24 have been adjusted following the introduction of automation which has allowed us to identify missing data. Automation also means a more accurate list of buildings and data feeds for Scope 2.

In this year's RSPB Annual Report we reported an 'increase' of 28% in GHG emissions compared to last year. Our Scope 3 emissions have increased by 30%; expected as we compiled our very first full GHG inventory. If newly introduced categories are ignored, the difference between years is 2%. Positively, our combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions have reduced by 7%.

Renewable generation in 2024-25 was down significantly compared to the previous year. This was due to a 46% reduction in generation from the turbine at Sandy due to reduced wind consistent with being the second weakest year in the last decade. In addition, the turbine experienced a series of complex faults at the end of 2024. Although major issues were addressed by early 2025, intermittent fault occurrences persist but our supplier is working to investigate this. We hope that 2025-26 may see wind generation increase again. Generation of electricity via Solar PV was up by 14% compared to the previous year.

We continue to use the GHG Protocol as follows: Corporate Standard, Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Standard, Scope 2 Guidance and Scope 3 Calculation Guidance. Within Scope 3 there is flexibility as to which factor sets can be used by organisations to calculate the biggest impact category 'Cat 1 Purchased goods and services'. We've updated our approach to the most recently available UK factors from Defra, rather than the more global Quantis factors used previously. We've also recalculated emissions from the two previous years – the point at which we first introduced Cat 1. This has resulted in a significantly 'lower' GHG footprint across all years than that previously reported.

This year's employee commuting survey was improved to include homeworking, and associated emissions calculated using the survey data. This is more accurate than the previous utilisation of contract-based data which is not as representative of individual working patterns. As a result of improved data, emissions from employee commuting have increased by 23% compared to 2023-24 and emissions from homeworking by 49%.

Our business travel methodology has been automated allowing improvements including the removal of obvious mileage entry errors. This correction was retrospectively applied to last years' datasets to allow comparison. Emissions from staff business travel increased by 22% from last year with mileage up by 13%; with a significant increase in air travel mileage of 42%. There were reductions in overall mileage across bus/coach, ferry, diesel hire cars, diesel and hybrid owned cars, and increases in rail, taxi and petrol owned cars. More positive were the mileage increases seen in electric hire cars, hybrid hire cars and hybrid owned cars.

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Energy (kWh)			
Electricity	3,583,699	3,501,268	3,238,498
Gas, LPG and oil	2,129,914	2,191,675*	2,668,771
Transport fuel - fleet cars	2,619,717	2,823,439*	2,908,171
Reserve machinery	2,090,961	2,162,175*	1,494,818
Woodfuel	929,594	1,202,977*	1,486,401
Renewables (PV and wind)	1,243,233	1,951,628	1,875,527
Total kWh	12,597,117	13,833,161*	13,672,186
Emissions (tCO₂e)			
Scope 1 (S1)			
Gas, LPG and oil for heating	399	464*	527
Fuel for reserve machinery	517	536*	367
Fuel for fleet transport	624	673*	700
Woodfuel for heating	10	12*	14
Fugitive emissions	5		
Total tCO₂e (S1)	1,555	1,685*	1,608
Scope 2 (S2)			
Electricity (location based - LB)	634	708	626
Electricity (market based - MB)	92	80	115
Total tCO₂e (S1/2 MB)	1,647	1,765*	1,723
Intensity ratio: Total tCO ₂ e/staff (S1/S2 MB)	0.7	0.7	0.7
Scope 3 (S3) (relevant categories only)			
1 Purchased goods and services	20,771	20,699 ^{\$}	29,541 ^{\$}
2 Capital goods	1,399		
3 Fuel- and energy-related activities			
<i>Transmission and distribution (MB)</i>	8	7	11
<i>Well to tank (MB)</i>	1,009	1,037*	696

Continued overleaf

5 Waste generated in operations			
Waste management	6	13*	4
Water supply and treatment	3	4	5
6 Business travel			
Grey fleet - staff	331	368*	1021
Public transport - staff	1,070	765*	818
Grey fleet - volunteer	64	65*	
Public transport - volunteer	4	3*	
7 Employee commuting			
Commuting - staff	1,649	1,339	
Teleworking - staff	784	528	405
8 Upstream leased assets			
	63	69	
9 Downstream transportation/distribution			
	296	234	221
10 Processing of sold products			
	458	610*	697
13 Downstream leased assets			
	5		
15 Investments			
	5,599		
Total tCO₂e (S3)			
	33,520	25,740*	33,419*
Carbon offsets and carbon units tCO ₂ e	0	0	0
Total annual emissions tCO ₂ e (All scopes) LB	35,709	28,134*	35,653*
Total annual emissions tCO ₂ e (All scopes) MB	35,167	27,506*	35,142*
Intensity ratio: total tCO ₂ e/staff (All scopes) MB #	14.3	11.1*	13.9*

* Adjusted (more accurate) figures due to improved capture and processing of retrospective data as a result of automation

‡ Recalculated figures due to switch from Quantis to DEFRA published conversion factors for 'Purchased goods & services'

Volunteer travel excluded from intensity ratio to ensure ratio data boundaries match

Continuous improvement in 2024-25

Environmental successes in commercial operations include only certified sustainable palm oil in our cafés and retail, and the implementation of our new sustainability objectives.	Food and beverage operations have moved to a centralised supply chain and stock management system to simplify sustainability assurance of suppliers and a greater understanding and minimisation of food waste.
Reserves are replacing petrol-fuelled equipment. Eg RSPB Loch of Strathbeg has replaced petrol chainsaws and brush cutters with electric models which reduces fossil fuel consumption and emissions. It also leads to a reduction in fumes and noise impacts on the reserves/operators. Electric models tend to less maintenance and reduce risks of fuel leaks from storage and when refuelling out on our reserves.	
Several reserves now use GPS electric livestock collars which allows site staff to control where animals graze without having to use fencing, reducing the need for large batteries to power the electric fences. The collars also reduce the need to use vehicles for livestock management as staff can remotely manage them using a phone app.	Energy audits have been carried out and energy efficiency measures implemented at sites including UKHQ, Loch Leven, Aylesbeare and Sandwell Valley. Solar panels with battery storage - funded by a grant from Dunbartonshire Council - have been installed at Loch Lomond providing power to the new visitor building and toilet block.
Advice was provided to Otmoor, Windhouse and Lochwinnoch on proposed new solar PV systems. A new off-grid solar installation installed on Coquet Island will enable staff to stay on the island for more of the year.	
For products the RSPB sells in our shops and online, we phased out traditional cotton products in favour of recycled or organic, removed polystyrene filler from some supplier products, and replaced plastic with paper in our licensed jigsaws.	There are now more electric off-road vehicles for site maintenance, reducing exhaust emissions and representing a continued move away from fossil fuel use. At Corrimony, the EV takes visitors on nature safaris and has improved sightings of Black Grouse leks as the quieter EV means less bird disturbance.
We've doubled the number of memberships on the digital magazine option this year, moving from around 20,000 to 40,000 members. Our paper magazine switched to using paper which has the lowest production emissions in the world; it is also lighter in weight, saving around 12% of paper usage per issue.	
'Greening' initiatives introduced on reserves this year include the first ever electric utility vehicle delivered to Sherwood Forest, upgraded pollution prevention planning, continued reduction and electrification of our own fleet, and the installation of more electric vehicle (EV) charging points.	We've provided clearer recycling information on our delivery labels and now have liner-less labels for customer deliveries, which will save over two tonnes of plastic over the next five years. The rebrand of our suet products has removed an estimated 300kg of plastic a year, based on last year's sales.

LARK

<p>LAND</p> <p>We have produced our first tranche of livestock-related emissions. From across 35 reserves, we documented 23,410 livestock grazing for varying proportions of the year. The highest proportion was sheep and cattle, followed by small numbers of equine, pig and goat.</p> <p>The first year's total covers around 80% of total livestock and produced a figure of 12,490 tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e), which was made up of 10,985 tCO2e from methane (CH4) and 1,505 from nitrous oxide (N2O). ~80% of the total emissions are from cattle alone.</p> <p>We have developed a habitat mapping and land use emissions profiling project.</p>	<p>ADAPTATION</p> <p>The Adaptation Working Group has delivered and submitted the RSPB's first Climate Change Adaptation Report to DEFRA and published it on the website.</p> <p>We have developed Climate Cafés facilitator training to support colleagues experiencing eco-distress.</p> <p>We have continued adaptive management on our reserves and engagement with Natural England in its Adaptive Delivery Plans project.</p> <p>Developed an RSPB Adaptive Capacity Assessment to facilitate the monitoring of progress towards embedding climate adaptation across the organisation.</p>
<p>REDUCTION</p> <p>We've submitted the RSPB ESOS report to Government (via the Environment Agency) and the ESOS Action Plan.</p> <p>We've developed the GHG Reduction Commitment which sets 5- and 20-year targets which will better align with the globally recommended reductions needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as outlined in the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>We have developed a route map that covers all business emissions and includes actions for significant reductions in our emissions from building energy use, electricity contracts and travel, reserves equipment, purchasing and our supply chain.</p> <p>We have produced the first full inventory for business GHG emissions to provide our first complete organisation footprint.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>We have developed an interactive dashboard to streamline and automate how we measure and report our GHG emissions and enable workforce engagement.</p> <p>We've explicitly recognised that those working within our sector have a high risk of eco-distress. The RSPB is developing interventions to support workforce wellbeing, including workshops with external experts, online resources, and a peer listening space for people to share their feelings - the Climate Café.</p> <p>The RSPB has committed to embed environmental sustainability within our science and research activities by signing the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. As a signatory, we recognise the need to change how we conduct research and innovation, as well as promote wider solutions.</p>

Environmental objectives for 2025-26

<p>EMS</p> <p>The RSPB will be certified to Green Dragon Level 4 by the end of FY 2025 and Level 5 by the end of 2025-26.</p> <p>The RSPB will achieve Level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard across all UK operations by the end of 2025-26.</p>	<p>VOLUNTEERING</p> <p>More and more diverse people are taking multiple nature positive actions, giving more time, money and voice and making nature positive choices by end of 2029-30.</p> <p>Numbers of RSPB volunteer hours is increasing each year to end of 2029-30.</p>
<p>GHG - OUR BUSINESS</p> <p>Take action to reduce the GHG emissions produced from our business operations and to meet our published GHG targets.</p> <p>Reduce RSPB business GHG emissions (all scopes) by 26% from a 2024-25 baseline to 2029-30 (50% Scope 1; 100% Scope 2; 25% Scope 3).</p> <p>Publish RSPB GHG Reduction Plan by the end of 2025-26.</p>	<p>GHG - OUR LAND</p> <p>Increase the level of GHG emissions reduction and/or removal as a co-benefit of habitat restoration on our current estate and deliver new nature-based solutions where appropriate.</p> <p>Develop full livestock GHG inventory pa by end of 2025-26.</p> <p>Develop a full land-associated GHG inventory pa by end 2026-27.</p>
<p>CLIMATE ADAPTATION</p> <p>Understand current and future climate change risks and opportunities, and integrate these into our organisational and departmental decision-making.</p> <p>Develop an internal RSPB Adaptation Plan by end of 2025-26.</p>	<p>TRAVEL</p> <p>Minimise the impact of our business travel, using the most sustainable mode by implementing our sustainable travel hierarchy.</p> <p>Increase proportion of public transport used for business travel each year to 2029-30.</p>
<p>WASTE AND RESOURCES</p> <p>Maintain our recycling rate, maximise resource efficiency, and focus on waste reduction, including plastics.</p> <p>Maintain or exceed our current recycling rate.</p> <p>By end of 2026-27, 100% of own brand product packaging/supporter materials can be reused, recycled or composted and 100% of own brand product packaging/supporter materials contain clear info on how to dispose, reuse, recycle or compost it.</p>	<p>NATURE POSITIVE PURCHASING</p> <p>Reduce our purchasing impacts on nature and the climate, working with our suppliers and partners, and continually reviewing our approach to being nature positive.</p> <p>Adopt comprehensive nature-positive purchasing business plan by end 2026.</p>

Other plans for continual improvement in 2025-26

- Launch a new Greening Action Plan to 2030 to raise awareness of our core continual improvement aims with the RSPB workforce.
- Work to further embed LARK (Land-Adaptation-Reduction-Knowledge) across the RSPB in communications and action planning.
- Establish GHG Reduction Working Group under the Greening Board to coordinate reduction actions for meeting the near term (5 year) GHG targets.
- Continue progression against RSPB Adaptive Capacity Assessment – building upon our current Level 2 status and developing pathways and timeframes to meet Levels 3 and 4. Set up annual data collection processes for land-use changes, and management practises including fertiliser use and prescribed burning from reserves.
- Embed the Environmental Dashboard into operations and continue to support staff with its use, monitor its success and respond to feedback.
- Align all corporate and site operations with nature positive policy measures.
- Capture the remaining 20% of livestock data to enable a full inventory of land-associated non-CO2 emissions for the 2025-26 Annual Report.
- Focus on business travel actions as a priority area in 2025-26.

Our RSPB Environmental Policy

<https://base-prod.rspb-prod.magnolia-platform.com/dam/jcr:ea08ef61-ffe3-4701-a342-4a4bf0c71007/RSPB%20Environmental%20Policy%202025.pdf>

Environmental Statement Validation

The information contained within this Environmental Report has been sampled and validated by the Green Dragon auditor and found to be a fair and accurate assessment of the RSPB's activities and environmental performance over the past year within the RSPB's defined scope. Validation of the Environmental Report does not confirm certification of our Environmental Management System to the Green Dragon Standard. Confirmation of certification can be made by obtaining a copy of the RSPB's valid Green Dragon certificate or visiting the Green Dragon website at www.greendragonems.com





Protecting habitats, saving species
and helping to end the nature and
climate emergency.

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