



giving
nature
a home



RSPB Annual review 2012-2013



Thank you
for looking
after nature

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The RSPB's work gives a home to all nature, from water voles (page 45) to butterflies like this the marsh fritillary (page 35).



Mike Clarke
RSPB Chief Executive

Welcome

IT'S BEEN A YEAR of change for the RSPB. We embarked on a new strategy called *Saving Nature* – it's an ambitious set of objectives to help us fight nature's corner at a time when the challenges facing it continue to gain in size and strength.

Three years ago in Japan, the UK Government committed to a bold set of targets to restore biodiversity by 2020, and that deadline is fast approaching. As the biggest conservation charity in the UK, the RSPB has a significant role to play in helping meet this deadline, and our *Saving Nature* strategy and programme is the framework that will help get us there.

I'd like to welcome our new Chairman, Professor Steve Ormerod, who will tell you more about *Saving Nature* on the next page.

All nature

Our supporters are essential to the success of this new strategy. You are the bedrock of everything we do. If we're going to be able to rise to the challenges facing the natural world, we need to increase massively the number of people supporting us.

There are a lot of people out there who seem as if they should be RSPB members but who aren't yet. They care about the things that we care about, and their hopes for the future of the natural world are the same things we're working towards. So how do we reach those people?

This year, we've brought in experts to help us find out, and we've spent a lot of time listening to these potential supporters.

We've learned that the image many people hold of us as a birds-only organisation is a barrier to them supporting us. The truth is that we do a lot more than they think. The problems facing birds are the same problems facing all wildlife. And the

solutions needed by birds are the same as those needed by other wildlife. We've been working to give nature a home for decades. But maybe we've not been telling people about it enough.

So in this year's annual review, alongside stories on our work to save bird species like turtle doves (page 9), spoon-billed sandpipers (page 25) and vultures (page 12), you'll find stories about our work to save species such as short-haired bumblebees (page 21) and water voles (page 45).

Birds will always be central to what we do, and millions of people will be inspired to support the RSPB by our work that also helps otters, red squirrels, bees, and the thousands of other species that depend on our nature reserves.

Together for nature

As you look through this year's annual review, you'll notice a recurring theme – partnerships. We've always worked with like-minded charities, organisations and corporations to achieve our conservation objectives but, this year, we're working with partners in new and exciting ways.

From our plans with Crossrail to create the biggest man-made nature reserve in the UK at Wallasea (page 29) to our relationship with farmers to restore our threatened farmland wildlife (page 17), the overall message of this review is that together we really can do this, we really can save nature.

Mike Clarke

Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)



Professor Steve Ormerod
RSPB Chairman

Saving nature

The new RSPB Chairman, Steve Ormerod, explains how the Charity is meeting the challenges facing nature through its new corporate strategy.

THE CHALLENGES FACING nature have never been greater, and we must respond in equal measure. I take up the role of RSPB Chairman at a time of unprecedented upheaval in all the spheres of our world: environmental, economic, political and social. In the UK, more than one in ten of our wild species are under threat of disappearing from our shores altogether. The problem is affecting all nature: from turtle doves on UK farms, to albatrosses off the coast of Argentina, to chimpanzees in West African rainforests, to cod in the North Sea.

The pressures involved are truly great: climate change is compounding threats such as habitat loss, pollution, over-exploitation and invasive species. A growing world population is consuming more of our finite resources and living in unsustainable ways, while people are more disconnected from nature than ever before. On top of this, our politicians are dropping nature conservation down the priority list while threatening to undo some of the legal protection for which conservationists fought long and hard.

So what's our response? As Mike said in his welcome piece for this review, we must step up and face these challenges. We

must help the UK governments meet their commitment to achieving the 2020 targets for biodiversity set in Aichi, Japan, in 2010. I have full confidence that we can, and will, meet those targets if we roll up our sleeves and get stuck in together.

Our plan of action is set out in our new corporate strategy: *Saving Nature*, which will take us all the way up to 2020. Our objectives are divided up into the following four areas:

A world richer in nature

We will save threatened species, restore habitats, protect our finest sites for nature, make the countryside and seas a better place for wildlife, and restore lost biodiversity. To achieve this we'll need garden-to-globe action that gives nature a home at all the scales on which we live: in individual gardens, on nature reserves, across entire landscapes and seascapes, and internationally.

Growing support for nature

The RSPB's greatest strength is you, our supporters. More than a million members and tens of thousands of volunteers give us



For everyone with a will to get stuck in and save nature, we'll be there to give them a spade – like these volunteers at RSPB Dove Stone nature reserve in the Peak District.

political strength and the finances to achieve big wins for nature. To meet the challenges that nature faces, we must grow our support at every level: from the politicians whose decisions have an enormous impact on the natural world, from RSPB volunteers who get stuck into physical work on our reserves and fundraise on every major high street, from organisations and businesses with the power to invest in nature, and from gardeners with the power to make their own spaces, however small, better for wildlife. To build this support, we'll communicate with our potential supporters in new ways.

Excelling at nature conservation

The RSPB will build on its reputation as a centre for excellence in conservation science, developing solutions to address the biodiversity crisis. We will get even better at advocating those solutions to the people with the power to adopt them. We will build on our work of the last 120 years, widening our focus to include all threatened wildlife, and leading the way in nature conservation by using our nature reserves as showcases for best practice.

One team for nature

Our success depends on our skills and those of the people we work with. Our staff and volunteers contribute their abilities, loyalty and hard work so that we can achieve the ambitious goals we set. We will work more than ever before with like-minded organisations, businesses, developers, communities, farmers and teachers, because the scale of the challenge facing nature is too great for any one organisation. We all need to step up together, and that work has already begun, as you'll see over the rest of this annual review.

These may well be the most difficult times ever faced by the wildlife conservation movement, but the tougher it gets, the more committed we will be to saving nature.



Danaë Sheehan
Head of RSPB Migrants
Programme



Migrant birds, such as turtle doves, are disappearing at an alarming rate, but with your help we can save them.

Birds Without Borders

Numbers of our summer-visiting birds are declining alarmingly. The RSPB has begun a huge programme of work to help save them.

exactly do they go for the other eight months? There's still so much we don't know, but we're using tiny tracking devices to find out. These recent innovations can help us discover the places where these birds spend the winter and the vital pitstops along their migration routes. Knowing the places that are important allows us to work to protect them and, where the habitat is in poor shape, help restore it.

IT'S A THRILLING MOMENT, seeing the first swallow of the spring, or hearing the first cuckoo call. After a long, quiet winter, the return of our summer migrants heralds the warm months to come, and the frenetic burst of activity that will soon fill our fields and hedgerows and treetops.

It's amazing that these birds, some of which weigh less than a pound coin, can make the perilous 6,000-mile return journey from Africa. But each year, we see fewer and fewer of these birds, and the thrill we await each spring is becoming a rarer event.

The figures are deeply worrying: in the last 15 years alone, we've lost 80% of our turtle doves, 38% of our swifts, 65% of our wood warblers, 50% of our spotted flycatchers and 49% of our cuckoos.

These familiar birds are stuck in a downward trend that, without intervention, could see us losing some of these species from our countryside forever.

These birds lead inter-continental lives. They do not recognise borders. And so our efforts to save them must be inter-continental, too. Birds Without Borders is the RSPB's programme of work to find solutions for our most threatened migratory birds.

Summer migrant birds are on our shores for just four months of the year, so where

We have lost 80% of our turtle doves in the last 15 years alone.

We've already begun this restoration work with our BirdLife Partners in Europe and Africa. Here, we are working with local communities, helping them find ways to manage woodlands more sustainably, for the benefit of people and wildlife.

And in the Mediterranean, we are working with our BirdLife Partners to end the illegal shooting and trapping that stops thousands of migrating birds in their tracks every year.

Migrant birds already have to face enormous challenges – stormy oceans, mountain ranges and baking deserts. Together, we'll do everything we can to ensure they remain the heralds of spring and that future generations have the opportunity to be thrilled in the same way we are.

David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

Our work on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic helped the first frigatebird chick fledge on the mainland since Darwin's time.



Clare Stringer
RSPB Overseas Territories
International Officer

Saving UK wildlife overseas

Working in the UK Overseas Territories gives us a chance to achieve a huge amount for some of the world's most endangered wildlife.

Ascension's frigatebirds and confined the whole of the world's population to tiny Boatswainbird Island. This breeding success comes 10 years after the RSPB worked with other organisations to remove feral cats from the island.

At the 2012 RSPB AGM, we honoured the entire population of **Tristan da Cunha** in the South Atlantic Ocean for their heroic rescue efforts, following an oil leak from a grounded ship. Thousands of endangered

THE 14 UK OVERSEAS Territories include some of the most remote places on earth, some inhabited by just a few hundred people, but they are also home to 33 globally threatened bird species – more than in the whole of Europe.

While these territories are under UK jurisdiction, they do not all have the same high standards of legislation to protect wildlife that we have in the UK. This year, the RSPB reviewed environmental legislation across the territories and found that many have no measures in place to prevent new developments damaging wildlife and habitats. Some have no marine protected areas, and habitat protection on land is also weak in many. We believe many of the highly threatened species of the territories are still vulnerable to extinction.

That's why it's so vital that the RSPB works in these places. The wonderful thing about working on such small islands is that a modest amount of investment, coupled with the expertise of RSPB scientists and our partners, can bring about enormous change for the special wildlife there. I'll tell you about just a few of them.

This year I got to see history in the making on **Ascension Island** in the South Atlantic Ocean. For the first time in over 140 years, two pairs of frigatebirds nested on the mainland. Feral cats had destroyed

UK Overseas Territories hold more globally threatened species than Europe.

rockhopper penguins washed up on the slicked beaches of nearby Nightingale Island. The entire 260-strong population of Tristan joined forces to save the birds and clean them up. Rockhopper penguins have declined in number by 90% over recent decades and we are trying to find out why, and what can be done to conserve them.

The RSPB has been working on the Caribbean island of **Montserrat** since the 1995 volcanic eruption threatened to wipe out the Montserrat oriole – a bird that is found nowhere else on Earth. With the Montserrat Forestry Department, we have been protecting the oriole's habitat from feral livestock, such as pigs, goats and cattle, which were let loose when the volcano erupted. Our efforts are proving successful – the oriole population of 765 pairs is now stable. Our work here also benefits other threatened wildlife, including the galliwasp lizard and the mountain chicken frog.

Derren Fox (Ascension Island Government), Brian Reid



Ananya Mukherjee (RSPB)

This is the team creating safe sites in India and Nepal for the future release of captive-bred vultures, as levels of the toxic drug diclofenac in the environment drop.

The rate of decline in vulture numbers has significantly slowed, and possibly even stopped.

Saving Asia's vultures successes

We're pleased to report that results of the latest vulture surveys in India show the rate of decline in vulture numbers has significantly slowed, and possibly even stopped. This huge success comes thanks to the work of the RSPB and our partners to reduce levels of the toxic veterinary drug, diclofenac, in the vulture's environment. Unfortunately, many vets are still using the drug and we have more work to do to remedy this.

At the vulture conservation breeding centres in India, we celebrated the arrival of 26 new fledglings. And we also helped initiate a Vulture Safe Zones programme in five Indian states – these 30,000 square km areas will one day in the near future provide a safe place to release the captive-bred birds. These successes are all big steps towards stopping Asia's vultures from becoming extinct.



Peter Cairns (rspb-images.com)

Forsinard Flows on the mend

One of the best places for wildlife in Scotland is on track to get even better.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given the RSPB a grant to develop a major project at our Forsinard Flows nature reserve.

'Flow to the Future' is an ambitious plan, co-ordinated by the Peatlands Partnership, to restore seven square miles of globally important peatlands in Caithness and Sutherland. This will give a home to wildlife including otters, hen harriers and golden plovers, along with many rare plants.

If we are successful in getting the full grant, work will begin in 2014. The project plans also include a new education programme for local schoolchildren, an observatory that will allow people to see the best of the reserve in comfort, and on-site visitor materials to explain the important role the peatlands play in storing carbon and combatting the effects of climate change. A new field centre will enable volunteers and scientists to contribute to and monitor the restoration of peatlands.



Jude Lane (RSPB)

Bowland Betty tragedy

'Bowland Betty' was one of only 12 hen harriers to fledge in England in 2011. Fitted with a satellite transmitter on the United Utilities Bowland estate, her journeys between northern England and the far north of Scotland were followed by many via the Skydancer blog. But sadly, in July 2012, she was found dead on a grouse moor in north Yorkshire. A post-mortem revealed that she had been shot.

The culprit has not been caught, but the national media that followed has highlighted the continued persecution of hen harriers.

The RSPB subsequently campaigned successfully for the continued funding of the National Wildlife Crime Unit, and we are campaigning for the introduction of tougher penalties for wildlife criminals and the regulation of shooting practices.

In 2012, only one pair of hen harriers managed to nest successfully in England. This nest fledged four young, but none of those young birds survived beyond the end of 2012.

RSPB Phoenix members getting stuck into saving nature at RSPB Saltholme, Teesside.



Anneke Emery
Member of the RSPB's teenage forum and dedicated wildlife enthusiast

Young people and nature

Anneke reflects on the growing disconnection between young people and nature, and what can be done about it.

THE BEE VEERED ROUND the dangling phone and settled on one of the many lilac flowers crawling up the metal wall. I took a photo through the smashed glass. Around the corner in my small village back garden, swifts later distracted me from revision with their daring acrobatics, screaming up our house wall. A week before, a murderous assassin had stripped our tree of its fledgling starlings. Sparrowhawks; you either love 'em or hate 'em!

I am lucky. Close to me are the wide, flat lands of Pevensey Levels, the ups of the South Downs and the shingle beaches of the south coast. Where would I be if my 'elders' hadn't been fascinated with wildlife and shown it all to me?

Today, young people can get a close dose of the wild at a press of a button. Lions roar. Save it till after dinner. The media hasn't done us any favours and the games culture traps many more inside. Would it amaze you that a friend of mine recently realised badgers weren't mythical creatures and another yelled 'duck!!' as a crow flew over? Is it any surprise that young people are less connected with nature than they used to be?

Young people are tribal. Music draws them, festivals appeal and the call of the wild needs to be just as cool too. It matters a great deal that they are at least sympathetic

to nature, as they soon will be decision makers influencing our environment and becoming parents as well.

So what can we all do to get young people on board? We need to green-up our educational curriculum, back outdoor learning initiatives in our schools and launch an environmental Duke of Edinburgh style Award Scheme of our own. Most of all, we need to make sure that they come into contact with as many young, upbeat knowledgeable wildlife enthusiasts as possible.

Would it amaze you that a friend of mine recently realised badgers weren't mythical creatures?

Phoenix, the teenage wing of the RSPB, has a big part to play in this, as has Wildlife Explorers, for the youngsters. As one of ten members of the Phoenix forum, I have worked with the RSPB's youth team to set up 'RSPB Phoenix Official' on Facebook where currently over 230 enthusiastic teenagers talk wild and chat about the natural world. We are also actively involved in the production of our magazine, *Wingbeat*, and every summer, up at Rutland Water, we promote the RSPB at the Birdfair.

The RSPB's 'Giving Nature a Home' campaign is set to inspire thousands of new people and Phoenix members will be out there supporting it too. Here's my idea; if every school around the country was provided with a bird box camera kit, every child would be given the chance to experience wildlife where they live and learn!

Traditional farming methods, coupled with modern knowledge, can save farmland wildlife, such as skylarks.



Gethin Owen
Farmer in North Wales
and winner of the 2011
RSPB Telegraph Nature of
Farming Award

Farming for wildlife

Five years ago, we changed the way we look after our farm to help wildlife, and the results have been amazing.

MY FAMILY USED TO RUN an intensive all-grass farm for dairy cattle, and then for beef cattle. I'd grown up believing, as most of my peers did, that you can't grow crops without fertilisers and your livestock won't survive unless you use antibiotics. But in 2007, when I had my first child, my attitude to farming changed.

I'd been feeling for a while that something wasn't right about the farm. It felt sterile and there wasn't much wildlife. I remembered growing up on the farm going out and watching birds when I was a boy. I wanted to create a nice environment for my children to grow up in, surrounded by nature.

In 2008, the opportunity came to join the Tir Gofal scheme, which rewards farmers for making changes on their land that help wildlife. We decided to go for it and to convert to organic at the same time.

A diverse farm for diverse wildlife

We've made lots of changes on the farm. We've started growing cereals for the first time since the 1970s. In the spring, the young crops provide a place for birds such as skylarks to nest and feed in.

After harvest, we leave the stubble on the fields over the winter. Those stubble fields are like one big bird table. Now we get lots

of finches, tree sparrows and skylarks – we never used to see skylarks in the winter here, just one or two in the spring.

We grow spring oats and barley mixed with peas. The peas take nitrogen out of the air and put it into the soil, which provides a natural fertiliser for the crops and means we don't need to use artificial fertilisers – this saves about £8,000 a year and allows a great diversity of plants to flourish in the grassland, which means more nectar for insects.

We've made lots of other changes too – put in new hedgerows that give shelter and nesting places for birds; we've created a traditional upland hay meadow, which is great for hares; and we've got fields full of clover – on a still, sunny day, all you can hear is the buzz of bumblebees.

The future of farming

Farmland birds have evolved over the last 5,000 years, since farming began to depend on a patchwork of different crops, grassland and woodland. We've lost the diversity on our land and we've lost the biodiversity on it, too.

I recently went to Brussels with the RSPB to lobby for a change in the way the farms of Europe are managed. At the moment, only about 25% of the payments that go to farmers are for creating environmental benefits. The other 75% of payments are given to farmers just for farming. I'd like to see farmers paid for visible, real benefits to the natural world.

I'm looking after the farm now the way my grandfather and great grandfather looked after it – traditional techniques but with modern knowledge. Our income has actually gone up and wildlife is back. I don't know why more farmers don't do it.



Brian Harris (20/20vision)

Big Garden Birdwatch

The 34th Big Garden Birdwatch in January 2013 was a great success, with 589,000 people counting their garden birds. The results showed that house sparrows and starlings are continuing to drop in number, highlighting the importance of our gardens as a home for nature.

As well as providing valuable data that helps us to focus our conservation efforts, Big Garden Birdwatch has other benefits. This year's event generated £141,500 in donations, and 5,100 new RSPB members. Plus, we were able to tell many new people about the importance of their gardens to wildlife, as the event provided our best ever year for publicity, with 96 million opportunities to see the story.

As well as providing valuable data, this year's Big Garden Birdwatch generated £141,500 in donations and 5,100 new RSPB members.

Energy generation accounts for almost 40% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.



Photo courtesy of the BBC

BBC Springwatch

The BBC *Springwatch* team returned to RSPB Ynys-hir for the second year running, with Chris Packham, Martin Hughes-Games and Michaela Strachan broadcasting live from the tractor shed. A network of mini cameras was set up to follow the daily soap opera of wildlife families on the reserve.

The series brought a string of exciting *Springwatch* firsts, including seeing into the heart of a kingfisher's nest and delving underground to film moles. Despite the Jubilee Bank Holiday and the severe storms that hit west Wales towards the end of the second week, visitor numbers to the reserve were still up on pre-*Springwatch* figures, making this an important way for us to welcome new faces to the RSPB. (For more on *Springwatch*, see pages 47 and 49.)



Brian Harris

Green energy partnership

We have partnered with leading green energy company Ecotricity as part of our efforts to combat climate change. Ecotricity is a 'not for dividend' company that invests more per pound than any other UK energy supplier in building new sources of green electricity. It already powers over 70,000 homes and businesses in the UK with its 55 turbines.

We are encouraging RSPB members to switch over to Ecotricity for their gas and energy supply – for every member who switches to Ecotricity, the RSPB will receive £60 for our conservation work. Switching to a green energy provider like Ecotricity is an easy and important step to take in the fight against climate change.

We will also be involved in Ecotricity's wind, wave and solar generation projects to ensure that wildlife and the places it lives are considered from the start of the planning process.



Jane Sears
RSPB Biodiversity
Projects Officer

A home for ALL wildlife

RSPB nature reserves are home to almost a third of all species of UK land and freshwater wildlife. Many of them are incredibly rare, and in need of special help.

FROM HIGH MOUNTAIN tops to coastal marshes, our nature reserves have become important refuges for many plants, animals and fungi, as the places they live have been lost from the countryside.

Increasingly, we are managing habitats for other wildlife and are focusing our attention on rare and threatened species that have important populations on our reserves.

Our Wareham Meadows nature reserve in Dorset, for example, is the only place you can find a large population of **viper's-grass** in England. We mow and graze the meadow to keep conditions just right for this special plant.

On the boulder-covered slopes of RSPB Abernethy, Highland, grows a very rare liverwort called **Joergensen's notchwort**. Outside of a select few places in Scotland, it is known in only two other places in the world: on a mountain in the rugged Fjordlands of Norway and in the Himalayas.

On RSPB reserves, we take care to look after our rare insects, too. The **small dotted footman** is one of the rarest of the rare moths at RSPB Sutton Fen nature reserve. It was first discovered in the Norfolk Broads in 1961, and it remains the only area where this moth breeds in Britain. We keep our reedbeds just the way these moths like them to be. And on several of our Eastern England

reserves lives a rare species of **mason wasp**, which hunts weevil larvae. It's very fussy about where it nests, so we've created special sand banks for it.

Reintroducing species

The RSPB's bird reintroduction projects for species such as the red kite and white-tailed eagle are well known, but we've been helping other wildlife establish new homes since the early 1980s, when we worked with other conservationists to establish **natterjack toads** on our nature reserves at The Lodge, Bedfordshire, and Minsmere, Suffolk. More recently, we've worked with others to bring **ladybird spiders** to RSPB Arne, Dorset, **field crickets** to RSPB Pullborough Brooks, West Sussex, and RSPB Farnham Heath, Surrey, and one of the most endangered hoverflies in the UK – **the pine hoverfly** – back to RSPB Abernethy.

We've found 15,200 species on RSPB nature reserves.

Perhaps our biggest success this year is reintroducing **short-haired bumblebees** to RSPB Dungeness, Kent. This bee had been extinct in the UK since 2000. In partnership with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Natural England and Hymettus, we helped create and restore 550 hectares of flower-rich meadows within the Dungeness and Romney Marsh area. In spring 2012, we brought queen bees over from Sweden and released 51 into their new home. We're planning to release more, and to add more meadows in future years, to help this species become fully established once again.

We sowed a variety of wild flowers, including red clover, to give a home to short-haired bumblebees at RSPB Dungeness.



At the vulture conservation breeding centres in India, we celebrated the arrival of 26 new fledglings.



David Gibbons
Head of RSPB
Conservation Science

Saving nature with science

Our work to save nature is built on a foundation of science. It's what helps us succeed again and again. And our science is "outstanding"

to promote these solutions to people with the power to implement them. In the case of vultures, working with our partners in India, Pakistan and Nepal, we managed to get the governments of those countries to ban diclofenac and introduce meloxicam instead.

After our solutions have been rolled out, we resume monitoring so we can measure their effectiveness. Right now, for the first time since our initial survey, vulture populations appear to have stabilised. (For more on this story, see page 12.)

Centres of excellence, in partnership

Work is underway to establish the virtual **RSPB Centre for Conservation Science** – the banner under which we will showcase the RSPB's scientific work. We hope it will help raise our scientific profile, and over time attract talented young scientists and new funding.

In partnership with Cambridge University and eight other organisations, we have formed the **Cambridge Conservation Initiative**. A new campus, being built for the Initiative in Cambridge, was recently launched by Sir David Attenborough and will house 500 staff, including scientists and others from the RSPB. The aim of the Initiative is to create an international centre for collaboration in conservation science, policy and practice.

Another good example of this kind of collaborative working is the new **State of Nature** report. Together with 24 nature organisations, we have recently contributed our knowledge of wild bird populations to provide a snapshot of the natural world today. The report revealed that 60% of UK species are in trouble – losing numbers and shrinking in range. This report provides a clear signpost for future conservation work.

AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT we were told by a panel of four eminent scientists, led by ex-RSPB Chairman, Professor Sir John Lawton, who conducted a review of the RSPB's scientific programme. The panel said they were staggered by the breadth of our scientific work, and that more people deserved to hear about it. So that's what I'm here to do.

Our working method forms a kind of cycle. We begin with monitoring species. We see which ones are doing well, and which ones are doing badly. This allows us to prioritise the wildlife most in need of help, so that our members' support is invested where it counts the most.

A good example of this began about 15 years ago. With our partners in India, we discovered that numbers of vultures in India had dropped dramatically – up to 99% of three vulture species had been lost. The cause was discovered to be a veterinary drug called diclofenac, which the vultures were consuming when they fed on cattle carcasses. Even small doses of diclofenac are lethal to vultures.

Once the problem has been diagnosed, we investigate solutions. For vultures, we managed to find an alternative drug called meloxicam, which was good for cattle and caused no harm to vultures.

The final step in our working method is

Chris Bowden (RSPB)



(image courtesy of Seed Animation)

Our specially created campaign animation got the attention of the EU budget negotiators.

Using social media to support our advocacy work

An important part of excelling at nature conservation is having effective communications that motivate people to act. In this regard, social media are a vital tool.

The RSPB's presence in social media has grown considerably in the last 12 months. Over 100,000 supporters now follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, forming a strong movement for nature.

On our social channels, we share news updates and actions that supporters can take to save nature, as well as helping with wildlife enquiries, and sharing in the ups and downs of our supporters' wildlife experiences.

This year, we had our largest e-action to date. We used social media to help us communicate the importance of the Common Agriculture Policy to the masses. We managed to get the biggest public reaction to date on what we acknowledge is a pretty complicated subject. In just eight days, nearly 30,000 people sent a message to the Prime Minister to urge him to defend the bits of the CAP budget that are of greatest benefit to wildlife. While we were not successful in influencing the EU budget, there is no doubt that it could have been much worse, and our specially created campaign animation did manage to reach the EU budget negotiators and engage lots of new people in the debate.

The RSPB now communicates with more than 100,000 people through popular social media sites.



Saving the Spoony update

This year there have been exciting developments in our battle to save the spoon-billed sandpiper from global extinction.

With our partners The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and Birds Russia we have trialled a groundbreaking technique known as "head-starting". This is where eggs are collected from the wild and raised in semi-captivity in the Arctic tundra. Once the chicks are able to fly, they are released alongside wild birds to begin their perilous migration south. This gives a huge boost to the breeding success of the population.

To make this technique fully effective, partner organisations across the sandpipers' migration route, and in the places they spend the winter, must continue their hard work to save intertidal mudflats from damaging developments. We must also continue working with local communities to reduce the hunting of birds in these areas.

The race to save spoon-billed sandpipers is a partnership of the RSPB, WWT, BTO, Birds Russia, ArCona, Moscow Zoo, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force and BirdLife International. For updates, visit saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com



Sasha Cleminson (RSPB)

The RSPB's International Director, Tim Stowe, took Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman into the Brazilian rainforest to show her the nature we're fighting to save.

The Rio Earth Summit

The RSPB travelled to the second Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where 20 years ago John Major signed a series of far-sighted international agreements on the future of the environment. Properly applied, those agreements have the power to change the fortunes of all our wildlife.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg attended the summit on the UK's behalf. In a blog on the RSPB website, he outlined his ambitions for Rio and answered questions from our supporters.

With our BirdLife International Partner SAVE Brasil, we took Caroline Spelman, the then Environment Secretary, out into the lush Brazilian rainforest to help inspire her to fight harder for wildlife.

Although the results of this summit failed to match the ambition of the first summit, we continue to believe that governments must find common ground to save the world's most threatened wildlife.



We help city folk, like these children on Hampstead Heath, get closer to the nature on their doorsteps.



Martyn Foster
Manager of the RSPB
in London

Reaching urban audiences

The RSPB is softening urban landscapes and bringing people and nature closer together.

For the last 10 years, I've worked in London with some of the most amazing people and wildlife. I've seen peregrines re-colonise the capital, thousands of trees planted, and acres of wildflower-rich meadows sown to benefit insects, birds, bats and hedgehogs.

There are obvious places to see wildlife in cities, such as our Rainham Marshes and Sandwell Valley nature reserves in London and Birmingham, but urban parks and public spaces are becoming increasingly important for UK wildlife too. They provide places for wildlife to feed and shelter alongside tree-canopied lawns where people relax, de-stress and picnic. We're encouraging landowners and other people to give nature a home wherever they can.

Our experience is that people want to know more about nature and do more for it, but aren't sure where to start. Right now, we're running an exciting project in North London to bridge the gap, in partnership with the City of London Corporation.

Wild about Hampstead Heath

Hampstead Heath is a 400-hectare public space in North London. It has woodland, ponds and open parks. It is bordered on the north side by some of the most affluent communities in the capital, and on the south by some of the most deprived. These communities in the south have the fewest opportunities to connect with nature, especially younger generations, so our efforts are focusing on them.

Heidi Mansell

Linking with four key schools, we're training teachers to make the most of the opportunities presented by the heath's natural assets. These "Heath Friendly Schools" now use the Heath as an outdoor classroom for a range of subjects.

We've created a purpose-built education centre for visits, a pond-dipping platform and a volunteer base. We also organise weekend and holiday activities to extend the experience to wider communities. Our aim is to equip everyone involved with the skills and knowledge they need to use this brilliant wild space independently. Our small project

80% of people in the UK live in urban areas and are much more likely to be disconnected from nature.

team is making connections that will grow with the schools and successive generations of pupils. The fate of our natural world will one day be in the hands of these children, so it is vital they care about it.

Alongside the education and community work, we have been creating habitats in the more popular areas, including wildflower meadows for bees and butterflies, and a kingfisher bank visible from a busy footbridge so the birds can be enjoyed but not disturbed. We have a tricycle fitted with a foldout table, display kit and iPad linked to live webcam images from the Heath. Our volunteers roam the paths, ponds and woods looking for fascinating wildlife, and then set up shop. It's proving so popular and effective, that we may use this approach at other sites around the UK.



Soil excavated for Crossrail's new tunnels is now creating a huge new wetland nature reserve in the Thames Estuary.



Jo Sampson
Project Manager, Greater
Thames Futurescape

Restoring a landscape

Work has begun on the biggest man-made nature reserve in Europe, part of the Greater Thames Futurescape.

IN SEPTEMBER 2012, Environment Secretary Owen Paterson officially launched Europe's most ambitious coastal nature project. Wallasea Island is a partnership project between the RSPB and Crossrail, which will create a new 670-hectare nature reserve in the Thames Estuary.

Alongside the RSPB and Crossrail, Owen Paterson pressed the big red button at the launch ceremony. This started up the conveyor belt that is carrying soil dug out from beneath London during Crossrail's new tunnel excavations onto Wallasea Island. "This project demonstrates how business development and conservation should be working together," Owen Peterson said at the launch event.

A new home for nature

The 4.5 million tonnes of excavated earth will be used to sculpt a landscape of mudflats, saltmarsh and lagoons that hasn't been seen on the island for 400 years.

Once complete, Wallasea Island will be a thriving new wetland twice the size of the city of London. It will give a home to tens of thousands of migrating birds, along with seals, avocets, lapwings and redshanks.

Eight miles of coastal walks and cycle routes will make this a brilliant place for people to get close to nature, too. Creating a new nature reserve is vital in an area where so much coastal habitat has already been gobbled up by industry

and development, while rising sea levels threaten to swallow another 1,000 hectares in the next decade. Over the next three years, Crossrail will deliver more than 2,000 shiploads of excavated material to Wallasea Island, each one helping to make sure that nature will continue to have a home in this area, despite the effects of climate change.

Landscape-scale conservation

Wallasea Island is one of a number of conservation projects identified within the 1,000 km² Greater Thames Futurescape. Collectively, we are creating a vibrant landscape where the environment and the economy thrive together.

Futurescapes takes what the RSPB does on individual nature reserves to a landscape scale.

The Greater Thames Futurescape is home to 6 million people and stretches from Tower Bridge, past the same broad expanse of marshes and mudflats that Dickens wrote about, out to the North Sea. It includes 11 RSPB nature reserves. We're working here in partnership with local authorities, industry, other organisations and local communities to create new homes for wildlife, and a better, healthier, more sustainable place for people to live, work, learn and play.

We're applying the same philosophy and working methods in nearly 40 Futurescapes projects across the UK, from the Flow Country in the far north of Scotland to the Wiltshire Chalk Country in southwest England. We have identified over 200 projects which will create more space for nature, and for people to enjoy.



The breeding place of the Clarke's weaver has been discovered in Dakatcha Woodland, Kenya

In partnership to save Kenya's wildlife

We're a big step closer to protecting the Tana River Delta's threatened wildlife.

With our BirdLife International Partner, Nature Kenya, we have been fighting to protect two important places for wildlife.

The **Tana River Delta** is one of the most important wetlands in Africa, home to thousands of birds, as well as hippos, lions, elephants and two threatened primates. But it is threatened by plans for large-scale agriculture projects. This year, we succeeded in getting the Delta designated as a Ramsar site (a wetland of international importance). In February 2013, the Kenyan High Court ruled that any land use plans for the Delta have to be developed with the full participation of the communities and other parties with a stake in the area.

Dakatcha Woodland is home to a number of globally threatened birds such as the southern banded snake eagle, Fischer's turaco, Sokoke scops owl and Sokoke pipit. Despite this, it has no formal protection and has been threatened with clearance to make way for biofuels projects in the past. In spring 2013, Nature Kenya confirmed that Clarke's weavers – birds found in only two places on Earth – breed in the Woodland. The breeding place of the Clarke's weaver was previously unknown. This exciting discovery makes the site of critical conservation value to the world – without Dakatcha Woodland, Clarke's weaver would become extinct. This gives us much greater powers of leverage to get full protection for this site.



Stopping seabird deaths

We have called for an urgent review of a substance that is killing birds at sea. Polyisobutene (PIB) is a man-made material with many commercial uses. It is shipped in bulk around the world and although it is considered hazardous, it is legal for ships to discharge PIB at sea under certain conditions when they wash out their tanks. Discharges of PIB, which becomes extremely sticky in contact with seawater, killed thousands of seabirds in 2013. We are fighting for PIB to be reclassified globally, so that it cannot be discharged in any quantity at sea.

The pollutant PIB killed over 4,000 seabirds this year.



Together for Trees

Together for Trees (TFT) is a partnership between Tesco and the RSPB to help save tropical rainforests. In this first year of the partnership, over £300,000 has been raised through the donation of green Clubcard points and Clubcard vouchers, sales from reusable bags bearing the TFT logo and donations direct to the RSPB.

To show supporters what their contributions are helping to achieve, we picked Gareth Jones from Alderley Edge from 25 hopeful finalists to be our Together for Trees Rainforest Reporter. In September 2012, he set off for the Gola Rainforest National Park, Sierra Leone, where he spent two weeks reporting on our work to protect the rainforest alongside our partners.

(For more on the Together for Trees partnership with Tesco, see pages 47 and 49.)



James Robinson
Director of the RSPB in
Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

It's no coincidence that my highlights of the RSPB's year in Northern Ireland are mainly about our partnership work. Now, more than ever, we are working with partners to achieve more for nature.

LET'S BEGIN WAY BACK, in 1781, when a Russian ship was wrecked on the rocks of the Calf of Man, a small island off the coast of the Isle of Man. On that night, rats escaped the sinking ship and quickly established themselves on the island. Up until this point, the Calf of Man had been home to a huge colony of **Manx shearwaters** – it's this island from which they take their name. But over the next 200 years, the rats gnawed away at the seabirds until they were all but gone.

The UK has a huge responsibility for Manx shearwaters. In the spring, when they arrive from South America to breed, about 90% of the world's population comes to our western islands. This year, the RSPB had an opportunity to help them re-establish on the Calf of Man.

Working with Manx National Heritage, the Isle of Man Government, Manx Wildlife Trust, Manx Birdlife and the Food and Environment Research Agency, we began a project to eradicate the rats on the island... except, we can't call them rats there. So pernicious are rats to the Manx islanders, that it's considered bad luck to utter the word "rat". Instead, the locals call them "long tails".

Edwin Kats (rspbimages.com)

So, over the 2012–13 winter, a project team combined the knowledge and experience of each of the partners to rid the island of long tails using skilfully deployed poison bait.

We've been monitoring the island closely since the completion of the operation, and we hope it will be a complete success. Thanks to our joint efforts, the Calf of Man is once again safe for seabirds. We expect the numbers of Manx shearwaters, puffins and storm petrels to begin to grow immediately, improving year on year, until eventually they'll be fully restored to the numbers they once held here.

The Calf of Man is once again a safe home for Manx shearwaters and other seabirds.

On the **Garron Plateau** in Antrim, we've been working with Northern Ireland Water and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on a new project to benefit the wildlife and the people who live in the area.

The Garron Plateau is one of the highest points in the Antrim Hills. From there, you can see right across the Irish Sea to Scotland. You can see high hills, marshes and bogs, heathland, forests and lakes, and you can hear skylarks, meadow pipits and the call of curlews, which in Northern Ireland is a very rare thing these days.

We've been working in partnership to help Manx shearwaters recolonise the Calf of Man.

Continued over.



Otters are one of the many species benefitting from our wildlife-friendly farming project in Northern Ireland.

The blanket bog on the Garron Plateau feeds the large reservoir from which local communities get their water. But it's been in poor shape for a while now. Too much grazing has damaged bog vegetation, which has reduced the amount of wildlife it can support. Livestock trampling and drainage channels have left areas of bare peat, which are a threat to water quality at the reservoir.

We are working with farmers to maintain sustainable grazing levels, which will allow bog vegetation to recover, ensuring that the blanket bog is in ideal shape for wildlife.

We are also blocking the drains so that the bog can hold more water and act as a natural filter for the reservoir. We hope the success of this project will open the doors for lots of similar projects in upland areas across Northern Ireland.

Recently, I've been getting up at the crack of dawn to fulfil my duties as a volunteer surveyor on my local farm in County Down. It's part of an RSPB project to encourage more **wildlife-friendly farming** in Northern Ireland.

When I and the other volunteers survey a farm, we walk along a set route through the farmer's land recording all the wildlife we see and hear. We're especially looking for breeding yellowhammers, tree sparrows and linnets, which are a conservation priority. It's always a pleasure to report to the farmer afterwards – they take real pride in finding out what their land is home to.

We don't just record the bird life on the farm. On my local farm, I've seen red squirrels, Irish hares and otters. We're also working with Butterfly Conservation to record the butterfly life on the farms. The species they're especially looking for is the marsh fritillary butterfly, as little is known about its distribution in County Down.

Stage one of this project is to let the farmers know about the wildlife on their farms; stage two is to advise them on farming practices that will create ideal conditions for their wildlife, and to help them get government grant payments for carrying out this nature-friendly farming.

This first year of the project was funded by EU Life+. At the moment, we're working with 30 farmers, and we have plans to increase this number in the coming years.

Mark Sisson (rspbimages.com)

My final highlight of the year is a big win in a battle we'd been fighting for 10 years. In 1993, we found out about a planning application for wind turbines at **Slieve Beagh** – an upland site on the border of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Slieve Beagh is designated as a Special Protection Area because of its importance to hen harriers.

While the RSPB supports green energy production, any developments must be sited in places that won't harm wildlife – this one would have done considerable damage to the harriers' habitat, as well as posing a threat to the birds themselves through collisions with the turbine blades.

We won a 10-year battle to save Slieve Beagh – the upland home of hen harriers.

If this wind farm proposal had been granted, it would have been the first such application to be allowed on a Special Protection Area, setting a dangerous precedent. This is why it was so vital that we win, and why we were so relieved, when after a decade of negotiations, the Planning Service refused the final application for nine turbines.

Looking forward to the coming year, the main challenge facing the RSPB in Northern Ireland is the same as that facing the other UK countries – **making the case for nature** to Government. The Northern Ireland economy is still in a sorry state, and our politicians seem to believe that nature conservation should come second to business interests. The RSPB believes that a sustainable economy grows out of a sustainable environment, so we will continue to make compelling arguments, and to attract more supporters who'll join us in stepping up for nature.



Stuart Housden
Director of the RSPB
in Scotland

Scotland

Thanks to your support, it's been a year of big wins for nature in Scotland this year.

IN MAY 2012, I was at Edinburgh Castle at the **World Fisheries Congress**, which takes place every four years. It's a chance to talk about sustainable fishing, and the agreements and policies that govern how fishing fleets operate around the world. It's also a great opportunity to promote the need for more to be done to protect seabirds and other wildlife at sea.

We were honoured to have the First Minister Alex Salmond speaking at a reception for delegates at the imposing Edinburgh Castle. He talked about the importance of sustainable fisheries and the process of creating Marine Protected Areas. I took the stage after the First Minister and made the case for our threatened seabirds. We have magnificent, towering 1,000-foot cliffs covered in seabirds that draw tourists from around the world. There's nothing else like it. But these cliffs are going silent, and our seabirds are in big trouble.

Scotland has a good Marine Act now, but the process of designating Marine Protected Areas is slow. I said to the First Minister that it's time to put flesh on the bones of our marine legislation. There are big areas of sea that are vital to seabirds and that should be protected, but aren't yet. We've been running a long campaign to get the Scottish Government to do more. With Scotland holding one third of the EU's seabirds, it's here that their future will be decided.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

The Congress was also a great opportunity to showcase the work of the RSPB and BirdLife International's Albatross Task Force. Wherever our Task Force operates, showing fishing fleets how to avoid catching seabirds, the number of seabirds accidentally killed is being dramatically reduced. The Task Force is a great example of how simple changes in operating procedures can have an enormous effect on the health of seabird populations.

Scotland holds one third of the EU's breeding seabirds – it's here that their future will be decided.

We've added some major new extensions to our **nature reserves** in Scotland this year. We were thrilled to get hold of a piece of land that we've been waiting decades for. Our Insh Marshes nature reserve was essentially split in half by a large chunk of land missing in the middle – the **Dell of Killiehuntly**. When it finally came on the market, the generous response of our supporters to an appeal allowed us to acquire this last puzzle piece and complete what is the largest natural floodplain left in Britain. Thank you for helping make this possible.

I visited the Dell of Killiehuntly in June, when we first took ownership of the land. It's a terrific place. You've got the high hills

Stuart Housden spoke up for Scotland's seabird colonies, such as this one at RSPB Fowlsheugh, Aberdeenshire, at the World Fisheries Congress in Edinburgh.

Continued over.



With a pioneering tracking project, we've been working to uncover the mystery of where Scotland's red-necked phalaropes go in the winter.

of the Monadhliaths to the West, and the Cairngorm massif rising to the East. It's a spectacularly rich area for wildlife. On the day I was there, the air was filled with dragonflies and flying insects, a redstart was singing from the top of a nearby birch tree, and on the marsh was a curlew with its chicks. It's a great place to see otters and roe deer, too.

On the existing part of the reserve, we've opened up a new viewing platform for visitors. It sits 150 feet up the bank of a big knoll and overlooks the whole vista of the reserve and the Spey Flood Plain. If you get the chance, you should come and see it for yourself – it's breathtaking.

In the **Flow Country**, right at the northern tip of Scotland, we acquired the final tranche of a 1,504-hectare forestry plantation. Here, we're going to take out the Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine trees to restore the original bog – as we're already doing to great success on the rest of the reserve. On page 13, you can read about the HLF grant that we hope will help us do it. The unique landscape at Forsinard Flows makes it one of the most valuable places for wildlife in the UK, the world even. This new area will eventually be home to short-eared owls, curlews and greenshanks, along with a huge diversity of bog plants and insects.

In March 2013, we planted our 200,000th tree at our **Wood of Cree** nature reserve as the last phase of native woodland expansion was completed. This SRDP funded project was on the Barclay extension to the reserve, acquired in 2006. When established, this additional 130ha of native woodland will fill the gap in woodland cover between Wood of Cree and Knockman Wood and is part of the on-going Cree Valley Community Woodland project.

We are delighted to have recently completed the first phase of our wetland habitat improvement and restoration work at **Lochwinnoch reserve**. The first part of the project has helped to restore the floodplain to a more natural state, after agricultural work in the past reduced the conservation interest of the local area.

The work involved reconnecting the Millbank Burn back into the Barr Loch. The latest survey shows that fish, including migratory salmon and brook lampreys, continue to thrive here. Neither species was

known to be present in the Millbank Burn prior to the project taking place. We hope that our efforts will allow them to prosper even further.

The second part of the project at Lochwinnoch was to improve the wildlife spectacle at the front of the visitor centre. We excavated 9,000 tons of earth to create new channels and pools on the Aird Meadow. This has brought the water closer to the building, and visitors have already been treated to otters swimming through the channel right in front of them. The work has also exposed soft mud to benefit wading birds and other wildlife. Birds such as redshank, not seen on the reserve for a number of years, have been making use of this new "facility".

The project attracted the largest ever Landfill Communities Fund award in Scotland (£222,183) and was funded by Waste Recycling Environment Ltd (WREN) through their Biodiversity Action Fund.

The casework team in Scotland deals with more than 150 development proposals every year.

Our **casework** load continues to be heavy in Scotland, with the team here working hard to challenge development proposals that threaten wildlife. A large number of these are from renewable energy developers – while we support renewable energy developments, such as wind farms, in the right place and at the right scale, where they threaten to harm important wildlife, we will fight them with great vigour. This year, we've had three particularly notable successes.

We've been running a huge nationwide campaign since 2010 against a proposal

Continued over.



Red clover and kidney vetch are part of the diverse machair plant life here at RSPB Balranald nature reserve, North Uist.

to build a coal-fired power station at **Hunterston**, in North Ayrshire. If allowed, the power station would have devastated the Portencross Coast SSSI, which is one of the few remaining intertidal mudflats on the outer Firth of Clyde, giving a home to thousands of wading birds, including oystercatchers, curlews and redshanks.

During the 'Say no to Hunterston' campaign, over 22,000 people submitted an objection to the proposal. On 26 June 2012, after North Ayrshire Council rejected the proposal, Peel Energy withdrew their plans. There remains the need for vigilance though, as future development proposals could still threaten this valuable place and the wildlife it supports.

In **Stornaway**, our objections to a 42-turbine wind farm resulted in the removal of the six most potentially hazardous turbines from the plans. The site abuts the Lewis Peatlands Special Protection Area (SPA), which is a vital refuge for breeding red-throated divers, black-throated divers and eagles.

And in December 2012, the Court of Session upheld Scottish Ministers' decision to refuse consent for a wind farm at **Stacain** in Argyll. We'd fought another long-running campaign against this proposal, which would have put 14 turbines in the heart of a Special Protection Area (SPA) for golden eagles. After seven years of campaigning and two public inquiries, we were relieved to see this battle end with a win for nature.

In Scotland, it's getting harder and harder for developers to find places to put wind farms that aren't a potential threat to wildlife. We encourage developers to talk to us before selecting a site so we can advise if it is suitable. Most, but not all, now do so. The easy sites are getting used up fast, so our workload in challenging these developments will continue to be heavy. But, as ever, we will remain tenacious.

In the early autumn, I went to Shetland and Fetlar to see our work to save **red-necked phalaropes** – one of our key species. There, we've been restoring bogs and putting grazing back on the land to create ideal conditions for these birds. Our efforts are paying off, with 2012 seeing the highest numbers of breeding red-necked phalaropes (34 males) for the whole of Shetland since 1997.

Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)

We've also been doing a research project in Shetland, putting tracking devices onto phalaropes so we can see where they go in the winter – at the moment, no one knows where our Scottish phalaropes go. They might go to the Arabian Gulf, or an unknown wintering place in the South Atlantic, or they could be the only birds that migrate into the Pacific from Europe. At the time of writing, one of the tracking devices has been recovered and we're about to download the data. We're all very excited to see the answer to this mystery revealed. Look out for an update on this story on the RSPB website or in *Nature's Home* magazine.

Our efforts to stop a 14-turbine wind farm being put in the heart of a Special Protection Area for golden eagles in Stacain were successful.

This is the third year of the EU Life+ machair project to restore crofting habitats for birds like **corncrakes** on Tiree, Islay, Uist, Oronsay, south Colonsay, Harris and Lewis. For me, the unique machair habitat is the closest thing to heaven. The sheer diversity of flowers is incredible, with different flowers in bloom at different times of the year creating a constantly changing sweep of colour. From pansies to corn marigolds, and the purple spikes of northern marsh orchids, this is a paradise for botanists.

Here we have been working with traditional crofting techniques to benefit corncrakes, as well as corn buntings, great yellow bumblebees and a range of wading birds. Corncrakes depend on these traditional techniques to keep their habitat just right. That's why we're particularly

Continued over.



Visitors at the first Scottish Birdfair were excited to get a unique close look at birds like this siskin as part of the ringing demonstration.

concerned at the moment about the future of the Government's agri-environment schemes that encourage farmers and crofters to look after their land in this way. Since the schemes were introduced, crofters have helped corncrake numbers rise from 480 to more than 1,200. But the scheme runs out in 2014 and we're not yet sure what the future holds. We hope that these incentives for farmers and crofters will remain, for the sake of these highly vulnerable birds and the land they need.

Choughs have been declining in Scotland for a while now, and we've been investing in research to help restore their numbers, as well as carrying out a programme of land management targeted at meeting their needs. On the islands of Islay and Colonsay, we're studying choughs' diet and the availability of food for them, as well as trialling some new management techniques to give them an even better home here. The work we're doing is already turning things around for these coastal crows – in 2013, new pairs of choughs established on Islay at Loch Gruinart, the Oa, Ardnave and Smaull Farm, leading to a six-year high in the number breeding on RSPB reserves. We'll continue to do all we can to help choughs regain their former numbers in the Hebrides.

Our **white-tailed eagles** are faring well. Following a re-introduction programme that began in 1975, they are now fully re-established as a breeding species in Scotland. The population in 2012 was 64 pairs – still small, but growing steadily. We'll continue to closely monitor the white-tailed eagles and to protect them from illegal killing, which continues to be a major threat. The east coast release of sea eagles is also proceeding well, with pairs beginning to "eye up" suitable territories.

Towards the end of the financial year, we teamed up with **Scouts Scotland** to launch two new conservation packs that offer young people a chance to get outdoors and explore the wild places and wildlife in their local area.

As well as investigating woodlands or completing seashore surveys, the Environmental Exploration and Conservation Packs include activities designed to get young people better acquainted with their local environment, to take action to protect it and to share their experiences with others.

By working through the packs, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts can complete the requirements for a variety of achievement badges. Their activities will

also count towards their Queen's and Chief Scout Awards. With 43,000 Scout members in Scotland, this new partnership is a great way for us to get more young people excited about nature – and hopefully one day some of these youngsters will be our wardens or ecologists of the future!

The first **Scottish Birdfair** was a big success. We held it at the stunning Hopetoun House on the outskirts of Edinburgh, and nearly 5,000 people came to celebrate the best of Scottish wildlife. There were 85 wildlife-related exhibition stands, ranging from state-of-the-art optics to the latest in

The work we're doing for choughs has led to a six-year high in breeding numbers on RSPB reserves.

wildlife technology, holidays, books and artwork, as well as a programme of talks from conservation experts, guided walks, bird ringing demonstrations and special workshops, and locally sourced food and cooking demonstrations. The Scottish Birdfair will continue as an annual event, run in partnership with BTO Scotland and the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. I had a great weekend there and am already looking forward to the next one in May 2014.

Looking forwards, as we approach the **Scottish referendum**, we're continuing to make the case for nature in Scotland to all parties, with a view to seeking the best outcome possible for wildlife that we can, whatever the people of Scotland decide when the referendum vote happens.

It's incredibly busy and challenging out there, but with our members' support, the help of grant givers like Scottish Natural Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the support of our partners, we're achieving amazing things together in Scotland. Thank you.



Katie-jo Luxton
Director of the RSPB
in Wales

Wales

In Wales this year, we've been creating ideal conditions for golden plovers, families, and BBC production teams.

THE NORTH WALES MOORS have some of the most dramatic landscapes in the UK. This stunning mosaic of mountains, bogs, lakes and hill farms, holds many of the last remnant populations of our characteristic birds of Welsh farmland, such as curlew, ring ouzel and golden plover, all of which have seen dramatic declines in recent decades. After several years in development, it was great to start some of the projects in this Futurescape area.

With only 36 pairs of **golden plovers** left in Wales, RSPB Cymru has been targeting efforts to the places where they are still hanging on. Working with partners on Ruabon Moor, RSPB staff were out in all weathers to cut through the tall stands of thick heather to expose parts of the blanket bog hidden beneath. Working in this fragile habitat required careful attention and we managed to open up 250 ha in all. This hard work was rewarded as one pair nested immediately in an area we had just cleared. We hope that these small but important steps will help us increase our knowledge of how to bring this beautiful bird back from the brink in Wales.

We also welcomed a new advisor on the Migneint, who started working with farmers and landowners to help them enter the agri-environment scheme, Glastir, so that important habitats like the blanket bog, ffridd (in-bye) and heath can be homes

for threatened birds and other wildlife. Talking to local people, so they understand the value of their nature in the context of national declines, is an essential part of our conservation mission.

Once a common sight in reens, ditches and streams, the **water vole** has declined by more than 95% since I was a little girl in the 1970s. On our Gwent Levels Futurescape, we have been working in partnership to bring them back. The first step is to create a mink exclusion zone, and the Newport

With only 36 pairs of golden plovers left in Wales, we're working hard to keep them as a breeding species here.

Wetlands National Nature Reserve (NNR) has 'mink rafts' to check for the presence of this invasive and highly predatory species. We were delighted to support Gwent Wildlife Trust to release 100 water voles on their nearby Magor Marsh reserve. We hope it won't be long before we can release them at Newport Wetlands NNR, and the *Wind in the Willows* "Ratty" will once again be seen across the Levels' reens.

It was a horrendous year for our ground-nesting birds, with severe weather causing floods all over. We were especially worried about our **lapwings**, which are particularly susceptible to flooding.

We did a lot of work to help lapwings

We are working in partnership to reintroduce water voles to the Gwent Levels.

Continued over.



Girl Guide Harriet Sleight got to be Director of the RSPB in Wales for a day. She met with Environment Minister John Griffiths and talked about the importance of nature.

on the four most important RSPB nature reserves for this species: Morfa Dinlle, Malltraeth Marsh, Valley Wetland and Ynys-hir. This included introducing electric fences to keep out foxes. Our efforts really paid off, with more than 100 pairs of lapwings breeding on our reserves and more chicks fledging than the previous year, despite the devastating weather.

The flooding at Ynys-hir wasn't just a problem for our ground-nesting birds. For the second year running, the **BBC Springwatch** team returned to the reserve.

The production team set up a whole village of tents on site, and mid-way through the season, the deluge put them all under water. Working together, we managed to get the production team moved to another bit of land, and RSPB staff quickly found last-minute wildlife filming opportunities around the reserve, now that the cameras set up on ground level were out of action. (For more on *Springwatch* see page 19.)

After nearly four years in development, countless funding applications written, and more than a few setbacks, 2012 saw everything come together on our grand plans to improve **RSPB Conwy** facilities for children and families. Crucial to being able to draw down funding from the EU Communities and Nature Strategic Project was having match funding available. We challenged the Conwy Support Group to help us by raising £20,000 over three years, but these wonderful people raised £30,000 in under two years! This crucial contribution enabled us to raise the remaining £300,000 needed to progress our ambition. Conwy has already been a great reserve for wildlife – home to stoats, common blue butterflies and bee orchids, and in 2013, it will be an even better place for people too.

We managed to persuade the Welsh Government to improve the remit of its newly created agency, **Natural Resources Wales** (the merged Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission), so its role in protecting and enhancing nature was clearer. We think that nature conservation duties must be very explicit and clear so that the needs of nature are properly considered at the heart of Government thinking. We think there are ways to make the Welsh legislation better for wildlife, and our policy advocates continue to press the case as a new Welsh Environment Bill is developed.

The partnership with **Girlguiding Cymru** that started in the RSPB's Wales centenary year 2011, has now seen more than 7,000 girls and women stepping up for nature and joining in activities on our reserves. We wanted to recognise the great relationship we had with Girlguiding Cymru, so we created a special Director for the Day competition. Girls from

across Wales submitted their stories about "Why nature inspires me."

We had entries from all over Wales, and the winner was 12-year-old Harriet Sleight from the Tenby Guides. She wrote about a trip to Kielder Forest in Northumberland, where she saw a red squirrel for the first time. Harriet said the experience inspired her to look out for wildlife whenever she is out and about in her local area, and that discovering nature had brought so much happiness into her life.

For Harriet's prize she got to be me for the day! First up she did her first ever video conference, joining the RSPB Board meeting to deliver the news from Wales. Then it was down to the Senedd to meet politicians from each of the four parties, to urge them to take steps for nature and launch the Every Child Outdoors report, which advocates the positive effects on children of a close connection with nature. Reading her prize winning article to 300 guests at the event that evening, Harriet made a convincing and passionate advocate for nature – and I enjoyed encouraging a young woman to take a lead in public life on something we both care so much about.

RSPB Conwy nature reserve has always been a great day out, but our new play areas and nature-watching room have made it even better for families.

As part of our **Together for Trees** partnership with Tesco, 100 volunteers manned 29 Tesco stores and raised £6,801 – this was then matched by the Size of Wales, which aims to raise funds to support an area of rainforest the size of Wales, altogether raising £13,602. Tesco also donated the 5p charge on carrier bags in Wales to the RSPB, raising a terrific amount, which is already helping many of our conservation projects, such as improving access and management at the wonderful oak woodlands at our Carnhafallt reserve near Rhayader in Powys.

And lastly, I just wanted to mention the group of four **RSPB staff** who on top of their full time day jobs, cycled the length of Wales to raise money for the RSPB. They spent 21 continuous hours in the saddle going 250 miles from RSPB South Stack on Anglesey to RSPB Newport Wetlands Visitor Centre on the Severn Estuary. I'm constantly surprised and delighted by the dedication of the people we work with – our RSPB employees, our volunteers, our supporters, and our partners. Together, we're achieving great things for nature.

Richard Prosser



Katie-jo Luxton
Cyfarwyddwr yr RSPB
yng Nghymru.

Cymru

Yng Nghymru eleni, rydym wedi bod yn creu amodau delfrydol ar gyfer cwtiaid aur, teuluoedd, a thimau cynhyrchu'r BBC.

MAE RHOSTIROEDD GOGLEDD CYMRU yn cynnwys rhai o dirluniau mwyaf trawiadol y DU. Mae'r clytwaith hyfryd hwn o fynyddoedd, corsydd, llynnoedd a ffermydd mynydd yn cynnal llawer o boblogaethau gweddilliol olaf ein hadar nodweddiadol ar ffermdir Cymru, fel y gylfinir, mwyalchen y mynydd a'r cwtiad aur, pob un wedi prnhau'n sylweddol yn y degawdau diweddar. Wedi treulio sawl blwyddyn yn eu datblygu, roedd yn wych rhoi rhai o'r projectau ar waith yn yr ardal Tirwedd y Dyfodol yma.

Gyda dim ond 36 pâr o **gwtaid aur** ar ôl yng Nghymru, mae RSPB Cymru wedi bod yn targedu eu hymdrechion yn y manau lle mae'r adar yn parhau i oroesi. Wrth gydweithio gyda phartneriaid ar Rostir Rhiwabon brwydrodd staff yr RSPB ym mhob tywydd i dorri drwy dyfiant tal grug trwchus i ddadorchuddio rhannau o'r orgors oddi tano. Bu'n rhaid bod yn wylidwrus wrth weithio yn y cynefin bregus hwn a llwyddwyd i glirio cyfanswm o 250 hectar. Gwobrwywyd y gwaith dygn hwn wrth i un pâr nythu mewn ardal a oedd newydd ei chlirio. Gobeithio y bydd y camau bach ond pwysig yma'n ein helpu i gynyddu ein gwybodaeth ynglŷn â sut i achub yr aderyn hardd hwn rhag diflannu'n llwyr o dir a daear Cymru.

Rhodddwyd croeso hefyd i gynghorydd newydd ar y Migneint, a ddechreuodd weithio gyda ffermwyr a thirfeddianwyr i'w helpu i ymuno â'r cynllun amaeth-amgylcheddol Glastir, fel bod cynefinoedd pwysig fel yr orgors, y ffridd a'r rhostir yn gartrefi i adar a bywyd gwylt arall sydd mewn perygl. Mae

Dimmy Green (rspb-images.com)

sgwrsio gyda phobl leol fel eu bod yn gwybod am werth natur yng nghyd-destun prinhad cenedlaethol, ac yn ei ddeall, yn rhan hanfodol o'n hymdrech gadwraethol.

Yn olygfa gyfarwydd mewn ffosydd a nentydd ar un pryd, mae **llygoden bengron y dŵr** wedi prnhau o dros 95% ers pan oeddwn yn ferch fach yn yr 1970au. Ar ein Tirwedd y Dyfodol Gwastadeddau Gwent, rydym wedi bod yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth i gynyddu eu nifer. Y cam cyntaf yw creu rhanbarth lle gellir gwahardd y minc, ac ar Warchodfa Natur Genedlaethol (GNG) Gwlyptiroedd Casnewydd mae 'raffiau minc' i wirio am bresenoldeb

Roeddem yn falch o allu parhau â'n perthynas gyda Geidiau Cymru ar ôl canmlwyddiant Cymru wrth gynnal cystadleuaeth arbennig iawn.

y rhywogaeth hynod o ymwithol hon sy'n ysglyfaethu ar greaduriaid eraill. Roeddem yn falch iawn o gefnogi Cymdeithas Byd Natur Gwent gyda rhyddhau 100 llygoden bengron y dŵr ar eu gwarchodfa Cors Magor gerllaw. Cyn bo hir, gobeithiwn y gallwn eu rhyddhau hefyd ar GNG Gwlyptiroedd Casnewydd, fel bod modd gweld yr hen 'Ratty' o'r llyfr *Wind in the Willows* unwaith eto'n byw ar lannau ffosydd y Gwastadeddau.

Roedd yn flwyddyn ddychrynllud i'n hadar sy'n nythu ar y ddaear ac oherwydd y tywydd difrifol cafwyd llifogydd ym mhob ardal. Roeddem yn arbennig o bryderus am ein **cornchwilogod** oherwydd bod llifogydd yn gallu effeithio'n ddifrifol arny'n nhw.

Gwnaed llawer o waith i helpu'r gornchwiloglen ar y pedair gwarchodfa bwysicaf i'r rhywogaeth hon sy'n eiddo i'r RSPB: Morfa

Rydym yn rheoli cynefinoedd bregus o orgors yng ngogledd Cymru er mwyn sicrhau y bydd cwtiaid aur yn parhau i nythu yn y wlad.



Gyda chymorth cyfeillion, llwyddwyd i ateb ein targed codi arian er mwyn bwrw ymlaen â chynlluniau newydd i roi mwy o groeso i deuluoedd i warchodfa Conwy.

Dinlle, Cors Ddyga, Gwlyptir Y Fali ac Ynys-hir. Roedd hyn yn cynnwys cyflwyno ffensys trydan i gadw llwynogod draw. Bu hyn yn gryn lwyddiant, gyda dros 100 pâr o gornchwiglod yn magu ar ein gwarchodfeydd a mwy o gywion yn hedfan y nyth na'r flwyddyn flaenorol, er gwaethaf y tywydd difrifol.

Roedd y llifogydd yn Ynys-hir yn broblem i'n hadar sy'n nythu ar y ddaear ac i eraill. Am yr ail flwyddyn yn olynol, daeth tîm **BBC Springwatch** i'r warchodfa. Gosodwyd pentref cyfan o bebyll ar y safle gan y tîm cynhyrchu, a hanner ffordd drwy'r tymor, daeth y llifogydd gan foddî'r cwbl. Wrth gydweithio, llwyddwyd i symud y tîm cynhyrchu i ddarn arall o dir, a chafwyd hyd i gyfleoedd munud olaf i ffilmio bywyd gwylt ar y warchodfa gan staff yr RSPB, gan nad oedd y camerâu ar lefel y ddaear yn gweithio bellach. (Am fwy o hanes Springwatch, gweler tudalen 19).

Ar ôl bron i bedair blynedd o waith datblygu, ysgrifennu llu o geisiadau am arian a chryn dipyn o anawsterau, daeth popeth at ei gilydd yn 2012 o ran ein cynlluniau cynhwysfawr i wella cyfleusterau **RSPB Conwy** ar gyfer plant a theuluoedd. Roedd sicrhau arian cyfatebol yn hanfodol bwysig er mwyn derbyn arian o gronfa Cymunedau a Natur yr UE. Rhoddwyd her i Grŵp Cefnogaeth Conwy i'n helpu drwy godi £20,000 dros dair blynedd, ond llwyddodd y bobl wych yma i godi £30,000 mewn llai na dwy flynedd! O ganlyniad i'r cyfraniad hanfodol hwn bu'n bosibl i ni godi'r £300,000 arall angenrheidiol i roi ein cynlluniau ar waith. Bu Conwy'n warchodfa wych i fywyd gwylt erioed – yn gartref i'r carlwm, y glöyn byw'r glesyn cyffredin a thegeirian y gwenyn ac, yn 2013, bydd yn le gwell i bobl hefyd.

Llwyddwyd i berswadio Llywodraeth Cymru i ychwanegu at ddyletswyddau ei hasiantaeth a grëwyd o'r newydd, **Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru** (cyfuniad o'r hen Gyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru, Asiantaeth Amgylchedd a Chomisiwn Coedwigaeth) fel bod ei rôl o ran gwarchod a gwella byd natur yn fwy eglur. Credwn fod rhaid i ddyletswyddau cadwraeth natur fod yn fanwl ac yn hollol eglur fel bod anghenion byd natur yn cael eu hystyried yn briodol ac wrth wraidd dull y Llywodraeth o weithredu. Credwn fod dulliau yn bodoli i sicrhau bod deddfwriaeth Gymreig yn well i fywyd gwylt, ac mae ein heiriolwyr polisi'n parhau i bwysio'r achos wrth i Fesur Amgylchedd Cymru newydd gael ei ddatblygu.

Bellach, mae'r bartneriaeth gyda **Geidiau Cymru** a gychwynnodd yn 2011, blwyddyn canmlwyddiant RSPB Cymru, wedi golygu bod dros 7,000 o ferched wedi camu ymlaen dros fyd natur ac wedi ymuno â gweithgareddau ar ein gwarchodfeydd. Roeddem yn dymuno cydnabod y berthynas wych sydd gennym gyda Geidiau Cymru, felly crëwyd cystadleuaeth arbennig Cyfarwyddwr am Ddiwrnod. Anfonodd merched o bob rhan o Gymru eu straeon i mewn i adael i ni wybod "Pam fod byd natur yn fy ysbyrdoli".

Eleanor Bennett (rspb-images.com)

Cawsom geisiadau o bob cwr o Gymru, a'r enillydd oedd Harriet Sleight, sy'n 12 oed, o Geidiau Dinbych-y-pysgod. Ysgrifennodd am ymweliad â Choedwig Kielder yn Northumberland, lle gwelodd wiwer goch am y tro cyntaf. Dywedodd Harriet bod y profiad wedi ei hysbrydoli i chwilio am fywyd gwylt bob tro y bydd yn crwydro ei hardal leol, a bod darganfod byd natur wedi dod â llawer o lawenydd i'w bywyd.

Gwobr Harriet oedd cyfnewid lle â mi am y diwrnod! Yn gyntaf cymerodd ran yn ei chynhadledd fideo gyntaf erioed, gan ymuno â chyfarfod Bwrdd yr RSPB i adrodd y straeon o Gymru. Yna aeth i lawr i'r Senedd i gyfarfod gwleidyddion o bob un o'r pedair plaid, i bwysio arny'n nhw i gymryd camau dros fyd natur a lansio'r adroddiad Pob Plentyn yn yr Awyr Agored, sy'n hybu effeithiau positif cysylltiad agos â byd natur ar blant. Y noson honno, wrth ddarllen ei herthygl a enillodd y wobwr iddi i 300 o westeion, profodd Harriet ei bod yn bencampwr argyhoeddedig a brwdfrydig dros fyd natur – ac mi wnes i fwynhau annog merch ifanc i fod yn arweinydd mewn bywyd cyhoeddus gyda rhywbeth yr ydym ein dwy mor hoff ohono.

Mae gwarchodfa natur RSPB Conwy wedi bod yn lle gwych i ymweld â hi erioed, ond mae ein manau chwarae newydd a'n hystafell gwylt byd natur yn golygu ei bod hyd yn oed yn well i deuluoedd erbyn hyn.

Fel rhan o'n partneriaeth **Gyda'n Gilydd dros Goed** gyda Tesco, daeth 100 o wirfoddolwyr i siopau Tesco a llwyddo i godi £6,801. Yna, cafwyd arian cyfatebol gan Faint Cymru, sy'n anelu i godi arian i gynnal ardal o goedwig law'r un maint â Chymru. Casglwyd cyfanswm o £13,602. Cyfrannodd Tesco hefyd y tâl o 5c ar fapiau plastig yng Nghymru i'r RSPB, gan godi swm rhyfeddol, sydd eisoes yn helpu llawer o'n projectau cadwraeth, megis gwella mynediad a rheolaeth yng nghoeddydd derw hardd ein gwarchodfa yng Ngharnagallt ger Rhaeadr ym Mhowys.

Ac yn olaf, hoffwn grybwyll y grŵp o bedwar o **staff yr RSPB** a feiciodd ar hyd Cymru i godi arian i'r RSPB, yn ogystal â chyflawni eu swyddi llawn amser bob dydd. Treuliydwyd 21 o oriau parhaol ar y beiciau a theithiwyd 250 milltir o RSPB Ynys Lawd ar Ynys Môn i Ganolfan Ymwelwyr yr RSPB ar GNG Gwlyptiroedd Casnewydd. Rydw i'n cael fy synnu'n aml gan ymrwymiad y bobl yr ydym yn cydweithio â nhw – staff cyflogedig yr RSPB, ein gwirfoddolwyr, ein cefnogwyr, a'n partneriaid. Gyda'n gilydd, rydym yn cyflawni pethau gwych ar ran byd natur.



Alan Martin
Honorary Treasurer

From the treasurer

2013 marks the end of Alan Martin's five-year tenure as Honorary Treasurer. So, in what kind of financial shape is he leaving the RSPB?

BASED ON THE RESULTS for last year, it would be easy for me to say "brilliant," take a bow and leave it at that.

In truth, it should be my predecessor taking the bow, for it is mainly him and his cohort of trustees, staff and volunteers who laid the foundations for recent years. I will comment later on the prospects for the next five years, but start by focusing on 2012–13.

Income and expenditure

I have mentioned previously the RSPB's breadth of income streams and how important this has been in maintaining the flow during one of the longest economic downturns in recent history. I am pleased to say that this breadth continues to serve us well.

Of course, financial strategy counts for nothing without the continued loyalty (and increasing contributions) of our million members and other supporters. Taken together with a record year for legacies, these offset a slightly disappointing year for grants and allow me to report net income growth in the year, albeit by just 1%.

Modest growth

Our spend, at £85.8 million, was at a similar level to last year. However, investment in

land purchases and visitor facilities fell by £1.3 million, with lower availability of grants and the high price of land continuing to hold us back. On the plus side, we have been able to achieve modest growth in our conservation spend and on education and communication – all high priority areas.

I leave the RSPB in good hands and with a challenging and important strategy to pursue.

Administration, governance and membership costs, ordinarily below 10%, have increased slightly to 11% of expenditure due mainly to costs related to launching our new strategy. This still means, on average, 89p out of every £1 goes direct to conservation work.



Loch Lomond by Patricia and Angus McDonald (Aerographica Scottish)

While reduced grant availability held our land purchase plans back, a hugely successful appeal to our members enabled us to purchase Wards Estate, on the banks of Loch Lomond.

At first sight, financial reserves look slightly disappointing, with free reserves falling in spite of the surplus in the year. However, the sum shown is net of funds earmarked to be invested in the first year of the new Saving Nature strategy and without this commitment, reserves would have increased in line with the surplus.

Similarly, net assets have fallen and this is due to the increase in the pension deficit – which in turn has been brought about by the exceptionally low interest rates that prevailed at our financial year end and are critical to the valuation methodology.

The Trustees have agreed to allow the deficit recovery plan to continue at the current rate for the time being – allowing the investment in strategy to proceed as planned.

Passing the baton

Under most circumstances, any Treasurer would be satisfied with the outcome. But I write this article in the wake of the recently published *State of Nature* report that points to a disturbing 50-year decline in UK populations of birds and other taxa – reaffirming the observation that we have to be doing more to protect our disappearing wildlife.

And so it is time for me to pass the baton to a new Treasurer. I am proud to have been able to contribute towards so many great conservation achievements over the past five years.

As Treasurer, I am also pleased to be able to pass on to my successor adequate financial reserves to launch that strategy and to build towards the level of support that will enable the RSPB to make an ever greater difference to nature conservation; both here in the UK and internationally.

I will leave others to judge the effectiveness of the foundations laid during my time in office. What I can say is that I leave the RSPB in good hands and with a challenging but important strategy to pursue. Above all, I leave the Society with exceptionally committed support.

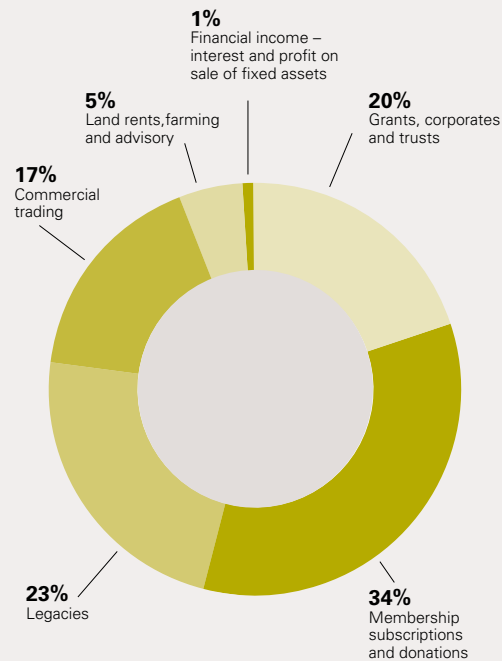
Thank you.

Alan Martin

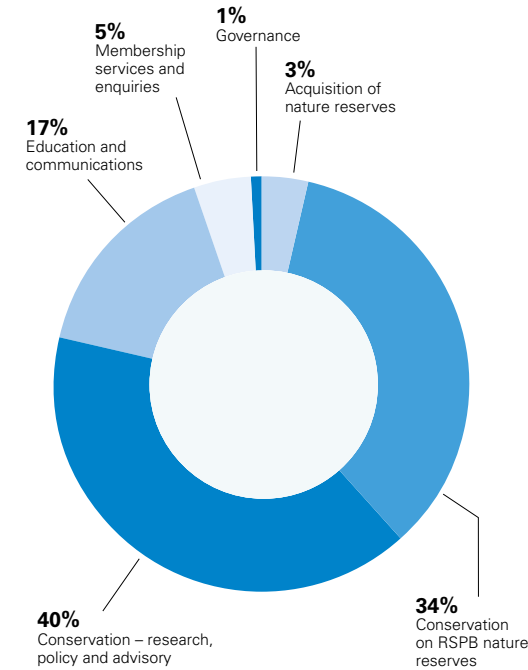
Income and spend

Our income

We raised £90.1 million for conservation this year. This amount is net of the £18.9 million cost of generating income and a further £13.1 million cost of goods for resale for our trading operation. Our varied income sources help keep our finances in robust shape, despite economic fluctuations – the graph below shows our main income streams.



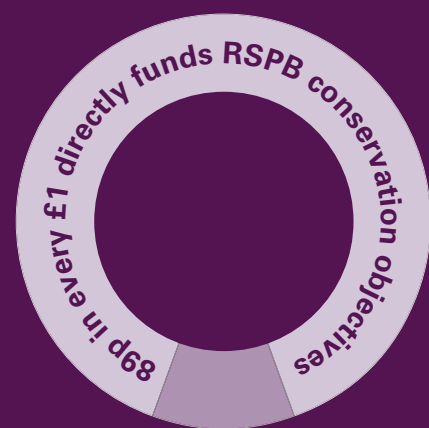
How we spent it to save nature



This year we spent £85.8 million on our charitable activities. Our conservation work includes giving a home to nature on our 213 nature reserves, finding solutions to species population declines, and working to keep nature on the political agenda.

Where your £1 goes

We work hard to make sure as much as possible goes directly into our conservation work – just 11p in every £1 is spent on admin, governance and membership costs.



OPERATING STATEMENT for the year ended 31 March 2013

	2013 £m	2012 £m
INCOME		
Membership subscriptions and donations	41.2	39.0
Grants, corporates and trusts	23.7	26.8
Legacies	28.4	27.1
Commercial trading	21.2	20.4
Land rents, farming and advisory services	6.4	5.8
Financial income – profit on sale of fixed assets and interest	1.2	0.6
TOTAL INCOME	122.1	119.7
COST OF GENERATING INCOME		
Cost of goods for resale	13.1	12.5
Other cost of generating income	18.9	17.9
TOTAL COST OF GENERATING INCOME	32.0	30.4
NET INCOME AVAILABLE FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES	90.1	89.3

	2013 £m	2012 £m
EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE PURPOSES		
Acquisition of nature reserves and operating assets	2.7	4.0
Conservation on RSPB nature reserves	29.6	29.3
Conservation – research, policy and advisory	34.7	34.2
Education and communication	14.2	13.6
Membership services and enquiries	4.0	4.1
Governance	0.6	0.5
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	85.8	85.7
NET OPERATING INCOME	4.3	3.6
OTHER MOVEMENTS		
Investment assets	2.0	0.1
Pension scheme	(1.1)	(2.9)
Stock, debtors and creditors	(0.8)	1.8
TOTAL OTHER MOVEMENTS	0.1	(1.0)
MOVEMENT IN AVAILABLE CASH AND INVESTMENTS	4.4	2.6

	2013 £m	2012 £m
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS		
as at 31 March 2013		
Nature reserves	128.3	125.4
Operating assets	4.5	4.7
Cash and investments	41.8	37.4
Stock, debtors and creditors	6.2	5.4
Pension liability	(67.8)	(46.7)
NET ASSETS	113.0	126.2
FINANCIAL RESERVES		
as at 31 March 2013		
Available financial reserves at the start of the period	42.8	42.0
Net operating income	4.3	3.6
Movement in investment assets and pension scheme	0.9	(2.8)
Available financial reserves for future activities	48.0	42.8
Held for specific purposes	(31.8)	(25.3)
FREE FINANCIAL RESERVES	16.2	17.5

	2013 £m	2012 £m
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS		
as at 31 March 2013		
Nature reserves	128.3	125.4
Operating assets	4.5	4.7
Cash and investments	41.8	37.4
Stock, debtors and creditors	6.2	5.4
Pension liability	(67.8)	(46.7)
NET ASSETS	113.0	126.2
FINANCIAL RESERVES		
as at 31 March 2013		
Available financial reserves at the start of the period	42.8	42.0
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FREE FINANCIAL RESERVES	16.2	17.5

	2013 £m	2012 £m
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS		
as at 31 March 2013		
Nature reserves	128.3	125.4
Operating assets	4.5	4.7
Cash and investments	41.8	37.4
Stock, debtors and creditors	6.2	5.4
Pension liability	(67.8)	(46.7)
NET ASSETS	113.0	126.2
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Representing future expenditure cover of **10 weeks** 11 weeks

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out on this page.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor

You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised statements' consistency with the full financial statements.

Basis of opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2013.

Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors,
St Bride's House, 10 Salisbury Square, London
EC4Y 8EH, UK

THE FULL AUDITED ACCOUNTS were authorised for issue on 2 July 2013 and, together with the Annual Report, have been submitted to the Charity Commission. The opinion of the auditor was unqualified. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, the full accounts, the auditor's report on those accounts and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted. Copies can be obtained, free of charge, from the Director of Finance, The RSPB, UK Headquarters, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL.

Signed on behalf of the Council

Steve Ormerod

Steve Ormerod,
Chairman, 2 July 2013

Thank you for your support – together we've achieved so much for nature this year.

Members

The support and loyalty of our members is essential to the RSPB's successes and achievements. Meeting our ambitious conservation targets would be impossible without the enormous contributions that members make. Members help in many ways, all of them equally important: financially, through volunteering, by supporting our campaigns, through letter writing, and by supporting RSPB projects directly through local groups.

Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked so hard this year. Local groups raised over £376,700 (through donations, sales profit and pin badges and binoculars) for RSPB conservation projects. Wildlife Explorers (our junior members) raised more than £24,000 to help save birds of prey.

On behalf of the RSPB, RSPB local groups and Wildlife Explorer groups throughout the UK, we would like to thank Awards For All (supported by the 'good cause' Lottery distributors across the UK) for their continued support of local projects through their community grants scheme.

Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of more than 15,765 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 1,082,317 hours. This is equivalent to an extra 627 full-time staff working for nature conservation. These volunteers helped with virtually every aspect of the RSPB's work, and we cannot thank them enough for their generous support. Additionally, 592,475 people gave an hour of their time to participate in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, and 73,945 took part in our Make Your Nature Count survey.

Legacies

Legacy income makes a significant impact on the conservation work we carry out every year. Whilst it is impossible to thank every single one of our generous benefactors, we would like to mention the following:

Winifred Isabel Batcheler
Rachel Mary Bishop
Gillian May Burden
Claire Elisande Dewing
Michael Bower Edwards
Margaret Elaine Thornton Fox
George Brian Greenwood
Doris Winifred Mabel Harding
James William Hodgson
Arthur Francis Jacobs
Margaret Joan Kingston
Charles Edward Marsland
June Phyllis Nelline Pike
Michael Stanley Sutton
Maurice Clifford Young

Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided essential support for RSPB projects to restore our natural heritage and bring nature into people's lives. They are also helping us to train much-needed experts in researching and interpreting all types of nature, to create a lasting legacy for us all to enjoy. The Big Lottery Fund has helped us create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to get closer to nature and feel the benefits that the natural world can give. The RSPB is indebted to HLF and BIG for their continued support for our work.

Charitable Trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We're grateful for the support received and would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

Adessium Foundation
Ad Meliora Charitable Trust
A J H Ashby Will Trust
Mrs Joan Laverack Bailey Discretionary Trust
Geoff Ball
The Banister Charitable Trust
Basel Zoo – Across the River
BirdLife International
The Blakenham Trust
Mrs Joy Bower Discretionary Trust
British Birdwatching Fair
British Trust for Ornithology
Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Charitable Trust
Cambridge Conservation Initiative
Mark Constantine
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
Violet Amelia Delany Discretionary Trust
Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund
Durham University
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Frankfurt Zoological Society
The Gannochy Trust
The Gibeah Trust
The Helen and Horace Gillman Trusts
The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Richard Hale
Enid Hodgkinson Discretionary Trust
Gweneth Adeline James Discretionary Trust
Henry Kenner & Deidre Boyle
John Price Ladbroke Discretionary Trust
The Lenfest Foundation
Mrs Beryl Letts Discretionary Trust
The A G Leventis Foundation
Los Angeles Zoo & Botanical Gardens
Mr Peter Lund and Mr David Lund Discretionary Trust
The Marden Charitable Trust
Pauline Meredith Charitable Trust
David Milne QC
Mull & Iona Community Trust
Nationale Postcode Loterij, Netherlands
Nature Canada
The Nature Trust (Sandy) Ltd

The Bill and Margaret Nicol Charitable Trust
The David & Lucile Packard Foundation
The Peacock Charitable Trust
The Pew Charitable Trust
The Robertson Trust
The Rufford Foundation
Save Our Species (SOS)
Scottish Environment LINK
Seaworld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund
The Shears Foundation
Size of Wales
The Peter R.B. Smith Revocable Living Trust
Dr Spalding's Charitable Trust
Nini Isabel Stewart Trust
Teesside Environmental Trust
The family of William Thomson, in his memory
Tilia Environmental Fund
Tsiknakis Charitable Trust
The Tubney Charitable Trust
University of Cambridge
Franziska Vogel
Vogelsbescherming Netherland
David & Christine Walmsley
The Waterloo Foundation
Whitley Animal Protection Trust
J & J R Wilson Charitable Trust
The J L Wilson Will Trust
Judith Woodman
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund

Landfill Communities Fund

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

Angus Environmental Trust
Armstrong Waste Management
Banbridge District Council
Biffa Award
Caird Bardon Community Programme
Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust
Down District Council
FCC Environment through WREN
Fermanagh District Council
GrantScape
Grundon Waste Management Ltd
Highland Council
Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust
Impetus Environmental Trust
Lancashire Environmental Fund
Landfill Communities Fund administered by Ulster Wildlife
Million Ponds project in association with Biffa Award
Newport City Council Landfill Communities Fund
Newry & Mourne District Council
North Ayrshire Council
Perth & Kinross Quality of Life Trust
SITA Trust
South West Environmental Action Trust (SWEAT)
Staffordshire Environmental Fund

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2) Ltd
Veolia Environmental Trust
Veolia North Thames Trust
Viridor Credits Environmental Company

Business supporters and trading partners

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

Abercrombie & Kent
AKA
Arrowgrass Capital Partners LLP
Bloomsbury Publishing
BP through the Scottish Forest Alliance
Brookfield Drinks Ltd
Bupa Care Services
Canon UK
The Caravan Club
Cemex UK Ltd
Chevron
Clifford Chance LLP
Co-operative Bank
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Dorling Kindersley Ltd
Exodus Travels
The Famous Grouse
Fulham Heating Merchants Ltd
The Green Insurance Company
GrowHow UK Ltd
Hartley Anderson Ltd
Headwater Holidays
Hoseasons Group
HSBC
The James Hutton Institute
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Lafarge Tarmac Ltd
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The Otter House Group
Paramo Nikwax Ltd
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United Utilities plc
Viking Optical Ltd
Visit Woods
Vital Earth Ltd
Volvo Ocean Race
Wild Republic (UK) Ltd
Woodmansterne Publications Ltd
Yorkshire Water
Zegrahm Expeditions

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

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

Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute
 Amenity and Accessibility Fund
 Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB
 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Big Lottery Fund
 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
 Cairngorm National Park Authority
 Ceredigion County Council through Ceredigion Community Grant
 Ceredigion County Council through Rural Development Plan Axis 3
 Coast, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways LEADER, through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), joint funded by Defra and the EU
 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Copeland Community Fund
 Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
 The Crown Estate
 Danish Development Assistance Programme (DANIDA)
 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
 Defra / DfID – Darwin Initiative
 Department for International Development (DfID) – Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)
 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)
 Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)
 Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland
 Department of Environment in Northern Ireland
 Dumfries & Galloway LEADER Programme 2007-2013
 East Durham LEADER
 Environment Agency – Catchment Restoration Fund
 Environment Agency Wales
 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
 European Commission – BEST
 European Commission – DG Environment
 European Commission – LIFE+ Information & Communication
 European Commission – LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity
 European Commission (Seventh Framework Programme) – EuroGEOSS project
 European Commission – Tropical Forests and Other Forests in Developing Countries budget line
 European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
 ERDF – INTERREG IVA 2 Seas Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013
 ERDF – INTERREG IVA administered by the Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB)
 ERDF – INTERREG IVA France (Channel) England Cooperation Programme 2007-13
 ERDF – INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Transnational Programme 2007-2013
 Event Scotland
 Fife LEADER Programme 2007-2013
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)
 FCO / DfID – Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP)
 Forest Enterprise Scotland
 Forest of Dean Local Action Group, through RDPE,

jointly funded and supported by Defra, Forest of Dean Partnership, LEADER and EAFRD: Europe Investing in Rural Areas
 Forestry Commission England
 Forestry Commission Scotland
 Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER Programme 2007-2013
 French Government's Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)
 The German Ministry for the Environment (BMU), via the German development bank (KfW)
 Heritage Lottery Fund
 Heritage Lottery Fund – Young Roots
 Heritage Lottery Fund – Your Heritage
 Highland LEADER Programme 2007-2013
 Homes and Communities Agency's Parklands Funding administered by Essex County Council
 Joint Nature Conservation Committee
 Kirklees Council Environment Grant Scheme
 Kirklees Metropolitan Council
 Lancaster City Council
 Lancaster City Council – Take Pride Community Fund
 Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority
 Marine Scotland
 Natural England
 Natural England – Access to Nature, part of the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces Programme
 Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
 Natural England – Nature Improvement Areas
 The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
 Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme administered by the Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas (SOAR)
 Northern Ireland Tourist Board
 Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER
 Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership
 Northumberland National Park Authority
 Orkney Islands Council
 Peak District National Park Authority
 Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
 Rural Tayside LEADER Programme 2007-2013
 Scottish Government
 Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
 Scottish Government Science Engagement Grants Scheme
 Scottish Natural Heritage
 Scottish Natural Heritage Green Stimulus Peatland Restoration Project
 Somerset County Council
 Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group, through RDPE, jointly funded and supported by Defra, Somerset County Council, LEADER and EAFRD: Europe Investing in Rural Areas
 South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD) under the NI Rural Development Programme
 United Nations Development Programme
 Visit West Lothian
 Welsh Government
 Welsh Government Ecosystem Resilience and Diversity Fund
 West Cornwall Local Action Group, through RDPE, jointly funded and supported by Defra, Cornwall Development Company, LEADER and EAFRD: Europe Investing in Rural Areas
 Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority



Looking forward

A NEW REPORT has been published, which is a rallying cry for help from nature. The *State of Nature* report is the work of 25 of the UK's top wildlife conservation organisations and describes how our wild species are faring.

The news is devastating, the bottom line being that two-thirds of the wildlife in the UK is declining. One in ten species is threatened with extinction. If we're going to save nature, we have to act fast, we have to act big, and we have to act together. Giving nature a home is the RSPB's solution to the problem.

Giving nature a home is what we've always done on our nature reserves, and now we're urging people everywhere to do the same thing, to take actions in their gardens to create more space for nature.

Putting up nestboxes, letting a corner of the lawn grow long, digging a pond or feeding the birds in your garden all help. And by supporting the RSPB, you can help us give nature a home across entire landscapes.

To find out how you can give nature a home where you live, visit [rspb.org.uk/homes](https://www.rspb.org.uk/homes)

Giving Nature a Home is our bold new invitation to everyone who shares our dream to get involved.

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Cover: Edwin Kats (rspb-images.com)

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity:
England & Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654 350-1067-12-13



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