



SAVING NATURE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The RSPB's year 2011–12



✓
 ALL OF US
TOGETHER
 CREATING A WORLD
RICHER IN NATURE.
 A LEGACY FOR
GENERATIONS
 TO COME.

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 Look at what we achieved together...



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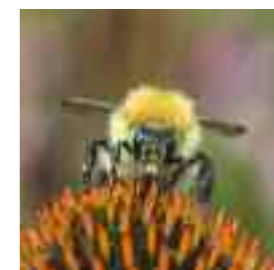
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Mike Clarke
Chief Executive



Ian Darling
Chairman

We'd like to start by thanking you for making possible everything in this annual review of the RSPB's achievements.

WELCOME

Right from its beginnings, the RSPB has always been about people coming together to tackle nature's greatest challenges. We've always worked in partnership. But this year, more than ever before, under the banner of Stepping Up For Nature, our most ambitious campaign to date, we have raised a clarion call, we have banged our drums and blown our bugles, we have hollered in the streets, asking for your help to save nature.

And you have answered. In your thousands. In your homes, in your neighbourhoods and supermarkets, in your places of work, in your local nature reserves, in Westminster, and even across the other side of the world in the icy tundra of North-East Russia – a place you may never have been, but where, nevertheless, your footsteps have been felt.

Individuals, businesses, fellow charities, ministers: you have stepped up for nature and the results have been outstanding, as you'll see when you begin reading through this annual review.

Whether you support the RSPB as one of our 1,090,000 members, or as one of our volunteers who donated more than a million hours of their time this year, or by campaigning with us via Twitter, or by buying Christmas cards from our gift catalogue, each of the stories reported in these pages is yours to celebrate. They are *your* achievements – steps we've taken for nature together.

You helped us push for, and get, a Marine Bill for Northern Ireland. You helped bitterns increase to record-breaking numbers. You enabled us and our conservation partners to take a major step in saving the spoon-billed sandpiper from extinction, bringing chicks all the way from Russia to Slimbridge in Gloucestershire to set up the world's first captive breeding centre.

In a year when politicians questioned whether environmental protections were a barrier to economic growth, you helped us speak up in nature's defence. And you helped us continue to defend our Harapan Rainforest from commercial exploitation.

You helped us acquire two fabulous new nature reserves – Pagham Harbour on the Sussex coast, and Wards Estate on the banks of Loch Lomond; they are yours to visit, and the wildlife there, from curlews and water voles to Greenland white-fronted geese and Atlantic salmon, are yours to enjoy.

You helped the Welsh Black Grouse Recovery Project beat its Biodiversity Action Plan target four years ahead of schedule. You helped our efforts to boost populations of some of the rarest species on our nature reserves, releasing more field crickets at Farnham Heath and Pulborough Brooks, more pine hoverflies at Abernethy Forest, and more pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies at Tudeley Woods. You helped us establish a new population of Britain's rarest spider, the ladybird spider, at our Arne nature reserve.

You helped our innovative Future of the Atlantic Marine Environment (FAME) seabird tracking project shatter long-held beliefs about these ocean wanderers – discovering that they wander twice as far as previously thought to find food for their chicks.

Most of all, in these pages you'll see that a year of austerity did not hamper our efforts to save nature, but strengthened the belief we've always had – that creative and collaborative working with like-minded people can achieve wonders.

Mike Clarke Ian Darling

A YEAR OF STEPPING UP FOR NATURE

Around the world...

... we're losing the diversity of life that is vital for our health and makes this place special. Stepping Up For Nature is a way we can all help. We can all take simple actions that, when combined, make significant changes for wildlife. We hope that when governments see how much you care about birds and wildlife, they will act too. Your steps will push them to make the changes in policy that only they can make.



AT HOME

"I've stepped up to save the albatross by collecting stamps and sending them to your campaign."
Alison Frank

This year RSPB volunteers gave a million hours to nature. Read about two of them on page 28.



IN YOUR LOCAL AREA

"I objected to a development proposal on greenbelt land, adjoining a nature reserve and destroying a wildlife corridor."
Valerie Campbell

You can read about a building proposal we fought on page 16.

AT YOUR LOCAL SHOP

"I donated my green Clubcard points to save a rainforest."
Lyn Barron

Find out how the RSPB and Tesco are getting Together For Trees on page 22.





Rob Sheldon reports on the ground-breaking partnership racing to save the spoon-billed sandpiper from extinction.

Rob Sheldon
RSPB Head of International Species Recovery

SAVING THE SPOONY

The spoon-billed sandpiper is a little wader in big trouble. Today there are fewer than 100 pairs left. There are more people working to save this bird than there are spoon-billed sandpipers left in the wild. I'm one of them.

The race to save the spoony is being run in three different ways. The first begins in one of the most remote regions in the world – the icy tundra of North-East Russia. Here, the spoonies arrive to mate as soon as the snow starts to retreat. They make their nests – no more than a dimple in the tussocky vegetation – and lay three or four eggs.

This year, a team of conservationists collected 20 of these eggs to begin the world's first conservation programme for spoon-billed sandpipers.

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) is leading the breeding team alongside Birds Russia, with support from the RSPB, BTO, BirdLife International, ArcCona, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force and Moscow Zoo.

Inside their eggs, these chicks began an enormous journey. First, the team brought the eggs back to base camp in the small Russian settlement of Meinypilgyno in Chukotka. From there, to Anadyr in Russia by a Heritage Expeditions boat. It was on this boat that all the eggs hatched, immediately recognisable as spoonies: little balls of fluff with enormous feet and that amazing bill.

From Anadyr, the chicks travelled to Moscow Zoo, where they spent a month in quarantine in preparation for coming to the UK. The chicks flew into Heathrow in November, and were transported to their new home – the custom-built breeding facility at WWT Slimbridge.

There are now 12 young birds in captivity, ready to kickstart the world's first captive-bred population when they reach maturity in 2013.

The second part of the race to save the spoony tackles the loss of habitat along their migration route.

When the spoonies leave the Russian tundra for their wintering grounds, they make pitstops all along the 5,000-mile journey in the East Asian mudflats. But this intertidal habitat is being lost rapidly to agriculture and industrial development in countries such as China and Korea.

We are helping prepare a detailed report on this habitat loss and its effect on spoon-billed sandpipers and other waterbirds to present in September 2012 at the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The congress is being held on Korea's Jeju Island, so it's the ideal place to highlight this crucial issue.

The final part of the race to save the spoony is to protect them from hunters in their wintering grounds. One of the most important wintering sites for spoonies is the Gulf of Mottoma – a vast unspoilt estuary in Myanmar. I travelled there in January to meet the local communities.

The villages around the Gulf are incredibly poor. Local people trap birds with nets just so they've got something to eat. They're after bigger waders, but are trapping the spoonies unintentionally.

BANCA, our BirdLife partner in Myanmar, has been working with villagers to provide alternative sources of income, including boats and fishing nets, and ice boxes so they can keep the fish fresh. The villagers want to help, and now that they have an alternative livelihood the hunting has stopped. The impact of the work here has been immediate and dramatic.

The partnership is making great progress, but there's a long way to go. The population is declining by 26% every year. Without our help, the spoony could be extinct by 2020. For the latest on our efforts to save it, visit www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com

You're helping us save the spoony from extinction.





Every day, the RSPB Investigations Team receives reports of illegal trapping and killing of birds of prey. Mark Thomas describes a major case that has just come to a close.

Mark Thomas
RSPB Senior Investigations Officer

FIGHTING CRIME

The RSPB Investigations Team has just come to the end of a two-year case involving a South Yorkshire gamekeeper.

The gamekeeper, Glenn Brown, worked on an estate within the Derwent Valley in the Peak District National Park. Birds of prey have suffered terrible fortunes in the valley in recent years, and in 2010 we decided to monitor the situation closely.

We frequently visited the estate well before dawn, and on one spring morning, at the bottom of a densely wooded slope, we found a cage trap. The trap was the size of a garden shed, made of wood and mesh, and it had a funnel entrance that would let the target species enter, but not escape. This kind of trap is legal when used to catch crows, but inside we saw a live domestic white pigeon – this kind of bait could only be intended to illegally catch a bird of prey.

The cage also contained hundreds of white feathers from a different pigeon. We searched the area and found the body of that pigeon, and close by, a dead sparrowhawk. The underside of the sparrowhawk's tail was covered in faeces – evidence that it had been confined before dying. No doubt, the pigeon had been used to entice the sparrowhawk into the trap. We installed a hidden camera, and then sat and waited.

Shortly after eight, we heard the distinctive snapping of branches underfoot and saw a figure carrying a gun moving through the trees towards the trap. We watched him check the cage, and then leave with a disappointed look on his face. We maintained our surveillance.

On Saturday morning the situation changed suddenly. The covert camera caught a man arriving wearing a balaclava. He released the white pigeon and disarmed the trap. He probably did this because weekends there are busy with tourists and the trap was likely to have been found.

What the keeper didn't know was that we had marked the white pigeon's wings in a unique way, so if we came across it later, we could identify it again.

We had now gathered enough evidence to get the police involved. That afternoon, we briefed the police on everything we had discovered, and at 7pm went with them to execute a search warrant at Glenn Brown's home.

We found clothing and a balaclava that matched the one he had been wearing when we filmed him visiting the trap that morning, and, most significantly, we found the marked pigeon in his loft.

Glenn Brown was arrested and interviewed at 1am. We'd now been up nearly 24 hours, our surveillance that day having started at 3am.

His trial began in June 2011 at Chesterfield Magistrates Court and lasted 12 days. The whole Investigations Team were at court, and the keeper was convicted of seven offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Animal Welfare Act 2006. He was sentenced to 100 hours community service and ordered to pay £10,000 costs.

We were stunned when, in the face of all the evidence, he appealed. A complete retrial took place in January 2012. Once again our integrity was questioned, and we were even accused of planting evidence, which of course was a terrible lie.

Glenn Brown was once more found guilty of all charges and ordered to pay a further £7,000 in costs. We were satisfied with the outcome, but we will continue efforts to bring wildlife criminals to justice if we're going to protect these magnificent, but vulnerable, birds of prey.

You are helping us tackle bird of prey persecution.



THE BEST YEAR FOR BITTERNS

This year, we counted a record 104 booming bitterns in England – the highest number in living memory.



Britain's loudest bird, once extinct in the UK, has enjoyed its best year since records began. The bittern is bouncing back, following intensive conservation efforts, which have helped its population rise over the last 15 years from 11 males in 1997 to 104 this year.

We were pleased also to see from the RSPB and Natural England survey that bitterns are expanding their range and moving into new territories. There were nesting bitterns in six new sites in Cambridgeshire, Somerset and Yorkshire, as well as booming bitterns at new sites in Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire,

Nottinghamshire and Somerset.

For decades we've been recreating wetland habitats on an enormous scale at our nature reserves. These exciting results really demonstrate that when you give habitat back to wildlife, the wildlife responds.

the big picture Bitterns are at the top of the reedbed food chain – their success this year shows that our habitat recreation work is helping all the reedbed wildlife to thrive: plants, dragonflies, fish – all of it.

NEW HOME FOR BRITAIN'S RAREST SPIDER

We've settled 29 ladybird spiders into their new home on RSPB Arne nature reserve in Dorset.

In the 1990s, the ladybird spider was on the brink of extinction in the UK, with only a single colony of 56 individuals left. To give them a hand establishing a new population, we relocated 29 spiders to our Arne nature reserve.

The spiders travelled in style – in plastic drinks bottles filled with heather and moss, so they felt at home on the journey. To release them, we simply buried the bottles in holes in the ground, leaving the spiders free to move out in their own time. We hope these pioneers will kindle a new population of ladybird spiders in the area.

the big picture Ladybird spiders are just one of the rare creatures we've been reintroducing to new sites across the UK. For the second year running, we released more field crickets at Farnham Heath and Pulborough Brooks, and pine hoverflies at Abernethy Forest. We also topped up the population of pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies at Tudeley Woods.



Rare beetles discovered

We do our best to meet the needs of all the wildlife on our nature reserves, so we are thrilled that our efforts have been rewarded with the discovery of some exciting new beetles.

At RSPB Mersehead, Dumfries and Galloway, we found the impressive rhinoceros beetle *Sinodenron cylindricum*. The male uses its rhino-like horn to guard the entrance to its tunnel while the female lays her eggs. At South Stack in Anglesey we discovered *Calosoma inquisitor*, the "caterpillar-hunter". And our ecologists have discovered a new site in East Anglia for *Omophron limbatum* – a ground beetle that lives on quicksand. It's found in only a few sites in Britain – three of which are RSPB nature reserves.

Albatross Task Force shows the way

The RSPB and BirdLife International's Global Seabird Programme completed a major review of the impact of longline fisheries on seabirds. We estimate that 160,000 seabirds are being caught and killed each year on longline hooks – but the actual figure may be double. The Albatross Task Force has demonstrated that this problem can be significantly reduced or even eliminated in fleets that use bird-detering 'tori' lines and other simple devices that keep birds away from the baited hooks.

Save swifts campaign

You contributed thousands more records of nesting swifts in this third year of our save swifts campaign. Each of your records feeds into an online inventory that we'll use to encourage local authorities, builders and developers to provide and protect swift nest sites as a routine part of their work. Swifts need all the help they can get – since 1995 we've lost over a third of them. We hope your records will help to reverse these declines. www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts

Being the best we can be for all wildlife

To make sure that we're doing everything we can for the most important species on our reserves, we are reviewing our management for plants, fungi, and other animals. The first step was to combine all non-bird wildlife records from all of our reserves into a single database. We used it to identify the rare and scarce species that rely on RSPB reserves for their protection in the UK. Some of these already benefit from the work we are doing for birds, but we have identified others that need special help. We are working with other experts to try to find out what some of these species need and to provide the right conditions for them. Some require special habitats, others might need numbers boosting by translocations (see the ladybird spider story, left).



The **Great Crane Project** reared and released a second generation of 17 young cranes. The two generations are getting on well together in the wild, boding well for future breeding.

It was a good year for our **Asian vultures** programme. Captive breeding centres in India fledged 18 young vultures, almost double last year's total. And levels of diclofenac, the drug that has killed millions of vultures feeding on carcasses of treated cattle, have halved in the environment.

It was the worst year for **hen harriers** in England since their recolonisation in the 1960s. There were just four successful nests in England, all on land the RSPB and United Utilities manage. We launched the **Skydancer** project to galvanise local communities to protect hen harriers in northern England, where illegal persecution persists.



Numbers of **stone-curlews** continued to rise at Winterbourne Downs, and on acid grassland created at RSPB Minsmere. Since 2005, breeding pairs at these sites have increased from two to 13.

Slavonian grebes raised eleven young on RSPB Loch Ruthven (their only RSPB breeding site) – a big jump from last year's six young.

We had the highest recorded **lapwing** hatching success at Otmoor after installing fences to keep out foxes.

An RSPB-led study demonstrating how illegal killing has limited red kite population growth in northern Scotland has been awarded the **Watson Raptor Science Prize**.

We continue to fight to save the **Northern bald ibis** in Syria. The population is down to just three birds, which successfully fledged two young this year.

Red-backed shrikes bred for a second year on Dartmoor, with two pairs raising seven young, the only successful breeding in the UK. An RSPB-led team of 30 volunteers protected the nest sites.





Our newest nature reserve in West Sussex is a well-known and much-loved gem. Adrian Thomas reports on how we have helped secure Pagham Harbour's future.

Adrian Thomas
RSPB Communications Officer

SAFE AND SECURE: PAGHAM HARBOUR

You know the theme music to Desert Island Discs, all those dreamy strings and seagulls calling in the background? Called 'By the Sleepy Lagoon', its composer Eric Coates was inspired by a sweep of idyllic Sussex coast, offshore from a place called Pagham Harbour.

It's at the village of Pagham that the coastal conurbation, which has stretched almost unbroken from Brighton, finally takes a deep pause. Here the sea finds a narrow path through the shingle beach into a wide, sheltered bay – the Harbour – that fills and empties with each tide. It is surrounded by a rich mosaic of fields and hedges, pools and freshwater streams called 'rifes', which together with the Harbour forms Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

It's the kind of place that draws local people and visitors from all around the south-east to walk, enjoy the wildlife, and get away from it all. I love it: it's so peaceful, with a great vault of sky over the top and Chichester cathedral and the South Downs a distant backdrop.

And, yes, the gulls do call, but more often in winter it is the plaintive whistles of curlews and wigeons and the yapping herds of brent geese that break the silence, just some of the 20,000 or so waterbirds for which the site is internationally important. There are breeding birds too, such as little terns, not to mention water voles, adders, and rare plants such as the delicate childing pink.

But the LNR faced an uncertain future. West Sussex County Council had been its guardian since 1964, but in 2009 they approached the RSPB, concerned that they didn't feel well placed to manage the site in the long-term.

It was tempting to just leap in, but it is at precisely these moments that the RSPB must take a deep breath and carefully examine the implications. After all, Pagham

Harbour LNR is a big, complex, costly nature reserve, and, as the Council had always said, it needs investment. They themselves also needed to be sure that the move was the right one, especially as it would include their existing team moving to the RSPB.

The good news is that, after an intense period of research, deliberation and negotiation, both the RSPB and the Council concluded that this was most certainly the right move. In February 2012, we took over the day-to-day management of the core area of the LNR and its staff team.

West Sussex County Council remains very much involved as welcome partners, continuing to provide much needed funding and support. We're working closely too with the Friends of Pagham Harbour, the local charity that has long championed the reserve. And we're engaging closely with local communities.

Our key task is to ensure that the LNR remains the special place that so many people – and so much wildlife – adore. There are no sweeping changes to be made, but we will improve the visitor centre facilities. And of course the whole nature reserve needs ongoing care and attention. For such a special place, it's the least it deserves.

Pagham Harbour is open to the public year round. The RSPB visitor centre is open daily, and is just south of Sidlesham on the B2145 Chichester/Selsey road.

Your support helped us keep our 213 nature reserves in tip-top condition, for their wonderful wildlife and for the people who come to be inspired.





The RSPB tackles around 700 new development proposals on behalf of nature each year. Renny Henderson reports on just one of them.

Renny Henderson
RSPB Conservation Officer

SAVING TALBOT HEATH

On a cold day in February 2012, I was driving when my phone rang and set my heart pounding. Was this the news I had been waiting for? For the last two years, I had been part of an RSPB team fighting a development proposal threatening a precious bit of wildlife habitat called Talbot Heath.

We first stepped into the fight when we received a letter from Poole Borough Council. They were notifying us of a proposed development by the Talbot Village Trust that included 378 houses and 450 student units on an area of farmland in Poole. The farmland was immediately adjacent to Talbot Heath. As soon as I read this, alarm bells began ringing in my head.

Talbot Heath is home to several threatened species including Dartford warblers, nightjars, smooth snakes and sand lizards, and so has the highest level of legal wildlife protection available in Britain: it is a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and a Ramsar Site.

We began a four-month process of putting together our objection. We always try to work with developers to find solutions, but sometimes the threat is so high we have to dig in and fight unacceptable proposals.

The Council's own planning rules state that you cannot build within 400 metres of a protected heath, and if you build within 400 to 5,000 metres, you have to provide for effective measures to make sure no harm is done to the heath. The Talbot Village Trust's measures were inadequate. For example, they proposed a cat-proof fence to protect the heathland wildlife. We knew it would only take one hole in this fence to allow cats onto the heath.

While we were preparing our objection, local people began writing to us asking what we were going to do about the development – they didn't want it either. The campaign against the development was huge. When we put in our official objection, it went alongside a thousand letters from local people, plus an objection from Natural England, too.

So we were shocked when, in June 2010, despite this vigorous opposition, Poole Borough Council resolved to grant planning consent. We immediately wrote to the Government raising our concerns.

In September 2010, we were delighted to hear that the Minister had called a Public Inquiry, allowing all the arguments to be made to decide if the development should be permitted.

At this point, we decided that the most powerful way for us to fight this development was to join forces with Natural England. In July 2011, the inquiry began, and we presented our joint case to the Inspector. The developer's barrister grilled our ecological experts on the stand. Our barrister grilled their witnesses. For four weeks, notes were furiously taken, arguments and counterarguments revised. It was like a nail-biting courtroom drama because the fate of so much wildlife was at stake.

At the end of it, exhausted, we knew we'd done everything we could. The Inspector would now submit recommendations to the Minister. But even though we'd made a strong case, at that time the planning system was in a state of flux. The Government had included all 278 pieces of environmental legislation and regulations in its 'Red Tape Challenge' – labelling these vital protections as mere bureaucracy and asking whether they should be scrapped altogether. So no matter how strong our case had been, with the climate in Westminster, we really did think the decision could go either way.

That's why, when my phone rang on that cold day in February, my heart started pounding. I pulled over and returned the call. I got the news that the Minister had refused planning permission for the development. Nature and common sense had won.

You're helping us fight developments that threaten wildlife.



HOLDING BACK THE SEA AT TITCHWELL

Our three-year Coastal Change Project at RSPB Titchwell Marsh nature reserve is complete, saving the homes of bitterns, bearded tits and water voles.



Rising sea levels on the North Norfolk coast have been pounding Titchwell's crumbling sea defences for years, threatening to inundate the nature reserve's precious freshwater habitats.

To save this habitat, we have just completed a pioneering project to realign and reinforce the sea wall.

This involved punching a 40-metre wide hole in the wall, allowing the sea to flood a part of the reserve, but in a controlled way. The flooded area has created a tidal saltmarsh that will work as a natural

sea defence, and also form ideal habitat for wading birds.

We've named this newly created saltmarsh 'Volunteer Marsh' as a tribute to the reserve's invaluable team of volunteers.

The project has ensured that RSPB Titchwell will remain one of the best wildlife sites in Europe.

Thanks to EU LIFE+ Nature Fund, WREN, The SITA Trust, Marine Communities Fund, and the many individuals and RSPB supporters who donated to make it possible.

WORK BEGINS AT WALLASEA

We are transforming Wallasea Island on the Essex coast into one of the best wetland habitats in the UK.

Four hundred years ago, the Essex coast was a wild and stunning saltmarsh – a haven for wildlife. Today, agriculture and coastal erosion have eaten up more than 90% of this habitat.

To bring a good chunk of it back – 744 hectares – we are working with Crossrail in a landmark conservation and engineering scheme on a scale never before attempted in the UK.

The Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project will use material excavated during Crossrail's construction of a new rail link across London to create the RSPB Wallasea Island nature reserve. This material will build up land levels, creating a major new

wetland and saltmarsh habitat on the banks of the River Crouch.

Over the next decade, this recreated ancient wetland landscape of mudflats and saltmarsh, lagoons and pasture will fill with nationally and internationally important wildlife. It will also be the perfect place for the local community and visitors to get close to nature in a way that's not been possible here for decades.

the big picture | Recreating wetlands is one of our priorities. We're also doing it at Lydden in Kent and Bowers Marsh in Essex.



Saving Henderson Island

Thanks to a unique international partnership, contributions from the UK Government, and generous donations from our supporters, an aerial baiting operation using helicopters was completed on Henderson Island. The goal was to preserve the ecology of one of the most remote islands in the world, and save the Henderson petrel from extinction. Despite this effort, rats survived on Henderson, and we are now considering the next steps in our programme to save this special place.

One step closer to nature reserves at sea

We've helped ensure that seabirds receive better protection at sea.

This includes six important sites for seabirds in the final proposals for Marine Conservation Zones in England. These zones will provide a safe place for seabirds to find food for their chicks, as well as allowing other marine life, from corals to lobsters, to flourish.

In Scotland, we're working hard to ensure the Scottish Government creates an ambitious network of sites that protects marine life. And we continue to push for similar Marine Conservation Zones in Welsh waters.

Futurescapes update

Futurescapes is the RSPB's most ambitious programme to date, creating more space for nature at a landscape-scale across the UK. In 2010, working in partnership with farmers, landowners, businesses, and other non-governmental organisations, we launched our first phase of 34 Futurescapes, extending to over a million hectares.

This year, the Futurescapes Programme received a major boost in the form of just under €2 million from the EU LIFE+ fund. This has allowed us to employ eight new members of the Futurescapes team around the UK.

Protecting the best places for wildlife overseas

We have helped protect several Important Bird Areas. In Kazakhstan, we supported our BirdLife partner and the Government of Kazakhstan to get full protection for a sensational 900,000-hectare area in Altyn Dala. And in Kenya, to our great relief, G4 Industries pulled their proposal to grow 28,000 hectares of biofuel crops in the magnificent Tana River Delta, following pressure from the RSPB and our BirdLife partner.

IN BRIEF

It was another record-breaking year for our **Hope Farm** in Cambridgeshire. Breeding birds have more than doubled since 2000, while crops also brought in a record profit. It can be done!

We added 1,392 hectares, including **two new reserves**, to our reserve network: at Pagham Harbour, West Sussex, and at Loch Lomond, West Dunbartonshire. As of 1 April, the RSPB managed 143,780 hectares at 213 nature reserves – an area nearly four times the size of the Isle of Wight.

BBC Springwatch presenter Iolo Williams opened our new extension to RSPB Dee Estuary reserve at **Burton Mere Wetlands** in Cheshire. He said: "This is a brilliant example of a place which is not only fantastic for wildlife but is now great for people to come and visit and get excited about nature."

We transformed 270 hectares of farmland into wetland at **Bowers Marsh**, part of RSPB South Essex Marshes.



Following a long-running RSPB campaign, the **Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits** in Northamptonshire were confirmed as a Special Protection Area. This gives the site full protection,

and recognition as an internationally important wetland for the ducks, swans and wading birds that visit in winter.

RSPB campaign volunteers contributed to preventing a damaging **tidal barrage** development on the Mersey Estuary.

Just 15 years after their inception, our **Avalon Marshes** nature reserves in the Somerset Levels are among the best wetlands in the country. A quarter of UK bitterns (25 booming males) were found here in 2011, plus the UK's only breeding little bitterns.

Natural England awarded us top marks for the Site of Special Scientific Interest at **The Lodge** nature reserve, Bedfordshire. This follows years of work on the old heath to get it just right for heathland wildlife, such as nightjars, woodlarks and Dartford warblers. Volunteers have helped turn 38 hectares of conifer plantation into a new heath, the largest in Bedfordshire.





Ellie Owen
RSPB Seabird Ecologist

Ellie Owen has been making history as part of the innovative FAME seabird tracking project.

TRACKING SEABIRDS

I've always loved fulmars. They were one of the first species I worked with when I became a seabird researcher. Fulmars can live longer than 50 years, which meant some of the beautiful seabirds I was handling then had been out, struggling to survive in the harsh marine environment, since my parents were children.

I met a particularly remarkable fulmar as part of my work on the Future of the Marine Atlantic Environment (FAME) seabird tracking project.

It was on Copinsay – one of the Orkney islands. I first spotted the fulmar sitting on its spartan nest, on a tiny cliff-ledge, far above the crashing waves. By creeping up along the top of the cliff, I was able to get quite close to the fulmar without it seeing me. But the fulmars on the adjacent part of the cliff *could* see me, and started cackling away – calls that sound to me like giggling.

Thankfully, my fulmar didn't pick up on their signals, and I was able to slip the net over the nest and catch it. Bringing it gently up onto the cliff top, I stuck a little GPS tracker on its back with special waterproof tape, and then released it again.

A couple of days later, the fulmar was back on its nest. I wasn't sure whether to catch it again right away and collect the data about where it had been in the last 48 hours, or whether I should leave it and allow the tag to gather a bit more data. The danger of waiting was that if I left the tag on too long, it would fall off, and then I would have no data at all. But something in me said to take the risk and wait.

I came back the next day, and the fulmar was not there. I came back twice the day after that, and it was still not there. I regretted not getting the tag back when I'd had the chance.

Four days after I'd last seen the fulmar, it returned. Now, carrying six days worth of data, this fulmar's tag

was extremely valuable, which made re-catching it a nerve-wracking experience.

Back at my tent, when I connected the GPS tag to my laptop, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The GPS map showed that this fulmar had been all the way to *Norway* and back. That's 292 miles. This was just one of the many surprises we've had so far during the FAME project.

The €3.4 million EU-supported FAME project is led by the RSPB, working in partnership with conservation organisations in Spain, Portugal, France and Ireland. In the UK, we've been tracking five seabird species: guillemot, razorbill, fulmar, kittiwake and shag.

Until now, where seabirds go to feed has been one of the great unsolved mysteries in natural history. The FAME seabird tracking project is revealing for the first time exactly where seabirds go when they leap off the cliff edge and head out for the horizon. Knowing where seabirds feed is the first step in saving them.

One of the major reasons for the recent seabird declines is that they're struggling to find the right food at the right time to successfully raise chicks. Climate change and human activities at sea are rapidly changing the marine environment, and seabirds just can't keep up.

The aim of FAME is to locate the most valuable feeding sites for seabirds, so that we can push for them to become Marine Protected Areas – nature reserves at sea. That way, we can increase the chances that when seabirds, like my remarkable fulmar, go out foraging, they can find fish and bring them back to their hungry chicks waiting on the cliff.

You helped us take the first steps in protecting vital seabird feeding grounds at sea.





Jonathan reports from the front line of tropical forest conservation – where we continue our efforts to protect precious rainforests.

Jonathan Barnard
Head of Tropical Forest Unit

TOGETHER FORTREES

I'm lucky to have spent a fair amount of my career so far in rainforests, but never, until now, wearing a suit. A suit is not ideal clothing for rainforest work, but on this particular day, it was essential. We had a very special visitor – the President of Sierra Leone – who had come to officially declare the Gola Rainforest a National Park. And he wasn't alone.

This was a massive event, with hundreds of people: local chiefs and community members, ministers, civil servants and the President's entourage. It was surreal to be standing at the edge of the rainforest in a suit and tie, in the heat, listening to amplified speeches and a pop song written for the occasion. But it was wonderful to see this place get the protection it deserves after two decades of working with the Sierra Leonean Government, and our BirdLife Partner, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone.

Even after a rainforest receives legal protection like this, the fight to protect its boundaries goes on. Mostly, we manage to keep illegal loggers at bay, but at Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra, this year they arrived on a bigger scale than before.

Satellite images of Harapan Rainforest revealed the tell-tale bare squares nibbled into the forest – illegal loggers had cleared several areas to grow oil palm. We're working with the Indonesian authorities to tackle this illegal activity. It's hard work, but this is the frontline of conservation and we're confident this will be resolved soon, keeping the forest safe for the rare Sumatran tigers, Asian elephants and other wildlife, as well as the 800 indigenous people who without the forest would have nowhere else to go.

Once the threat is removed, we will be able to restore these damaged areas. This year, we grew a massive 1.7 million seedlings, and planted out 250,000 trees of more than 60 different species to regenerate damaged areas of rainforest and create the canopy under which so much life flourishes.

Deforestation like this is still being driven by the demand for commodities, such as palm oil, which hide, mostly unlabelled, in everyday products from biscuits and crisps to shampoos. More and more, our fight to save the rainforests is fought here, in the UK, making consumers aware of the consequences for rainforests of picking certain products off the shelf.

That's why we were so pleased this year to begin a new partnership with Tesco – Together for Trees – which has the potential to do enormous good for tropical forests.

We're helping Tesco look at and improve the environmental impact of their supply chain. Plus, the Together for Trees partnership means that every time a shopper opts in and reuses a carrier bag, 1p is donated to our tropical forest conservation work. We expect this to raise £1 million in the first year, giving a massive boost to the RSPB and BirdLife International rainforest programme in Indonesia, Kenya, Montserrat, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Thailand and Uganda.

Re-using a carrier bag might seem like a tiny gesture, but, like many of the ways you can step up for nature with the RSPB, thousands of people taking small actions together creates a major force for positive change in the natural world.

The very first funds that Together for Trees has raised have already gone straight to the Gola Rainforest to buy a new Land Rover for the team there. They were in desperate need of one, as in the wet season they're often working in knee-deep mud. Next time I go back, I will definitely *not* be wearing my suit.

You're helping the RSPB and our BirdLife International Partners protect nearly 240,000 hectares of tropical forest in seven countries. ✓



MAKING WIND FARMS WORK FOR WILDLIFE

We've fought several wind farm proposals this year, but we've supported some too. It's all about where they go.

We objected to three major offshore wind farm proposals in the Greater Wash, which could have harmed the Sandwich tern population on the North Norfolk Coast SPA. The Government refused



one of the proposals and granted two, striking a balance between maximising clean energy production and safeguarding wildlife.

At Waterhead Moor, North Ayrshire, we successfully fought off an application for a 29-turbine wind farm that would have damaged hen harrier habitat (more on page 36). But we supported the major new Pen y Cymoedd wind farm in south Wales. Here, we've been working with and advising the developer, Vattenfall, to make sure that the benefits of sustainable energy do not come at the expense of the natural

environment. As part of the development, Vattenfall will restore 1,000 hectares of degraded bog for wildlife, creating habitat for golden plovers, hen harriers, merlins, peregrines and curlews.

Katie-jo Luxton, Director of the RSPB in Wales, said: "We welcome Vattenfall's positive approach to nature conservation here, which will result in a net gain for wildlife in this area. We hope other companies adopt a similar attitude, and this project will set a positive example for wind farm developments."

TRISTAN DA CUNHA OIL SPILL

The whole population of Tristan da Cunha came to the rescue when a massive oil spill threatened to destroy a vital colony of northern rockhopper penguins.

On 16 March, the bulk carrier, *MS Oliva*, ran aground. The ship was travelling from Brazil to Singapore with a cargo of 65,000 tonnes of soya beans and 1,500 tonnes of bunker fuel.

As the ship broke up in the rough seas, the soya and oil were discharged into the waters around Nightingale Island. In the days that followed, the oil reached Inaccessible Island, a World Heritage Site, and Tristan, more than 30 km away. This group of islands is home to over 65% of the world's endangered northern rockhopper penguins.

A massive rescue mission began, involving all the residents of Tristan da Cunha, the Tristan Conservation Department, the crew of the *Edinburgh*, RSPB staff and the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds. Together, we moved quickly to collect and clean up the oiled birds and prevent many more from coming into contact with the oil.

The true impact of the spill won't be known for some time yet, but a considerable number of penguins died. We can at least be sure that everything that could be done was done.



Seeing off cuts to wildlife friendly farmers

In June 2011, we discovered plans were afoot in Brussels to significantly cut Pillar II of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which funds agri-environment schemes that reward farmers who take steps for wildlife. We launched into action, lobbying and letter-writing to the Prime Minister, MPs and MEPs, and providing testimonials from farmers committed to wildlife-friendly farming. We also led a campaign with BirdLife Europe that generated over 11,000 e-mails to European Commission officials. While the effort was successful and these plans were scrapped, Pillar II may face fresh attacks as the CAP reform round moves forward.

Farmland bird friendly zone launched

We launched an ambitious new landscape-scale conservation project at the Oxford Farming Conference in January. The Thorney Farmland Bird Friendly Zone in the Cambridgeshire Fens is a partnership between 14 farmers and the RSPB. The farmers are all stepping up for nature together, by taking measures to provide nesting and year-round feeding opportunities for farmland birds on 3,782 hectares of arable farmland.

Putting nature at the heart of planning

In July, the Government unveiled draft plans for a radical overhaul of national planning policy. We publicly criticised the proposals for putting the economy ahead of the environment, fighting alongside the National Trust, CPRE and other partners. In response to our objections, the new National Planning Policy Framework contains positive policies for nature that will enable local authorities to plan for vital homes, jobs and transport links without causing damage to our wildlife and countryside.

Live Q&A with Marine Minister

On 29 November, Defra Minister Richard Benyon faced an audience of RSPB sealife champions in a Q&A session about Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The event was streamed live and watched by several hundred people. We presented the Minister with an image of a tern created from over 50,000 marine pledges from RSPB supporters, to remind him that Britain's marine life urgently needs a coherent network of MPAs. You can see highlights of the Q&A at www.rspb.org.uk/marine



Working closely with other wildlife organisations, we participated in the Government's review of the **Birds and Habitats Directives** in England. The evidence we gave helped Defra conclude that protecting vulnerable species and habitats enhances our wellbeing and is not a block on appropriate development.

The **National Ecosystem Assessment** was launched. The report took more than 300 experts (including RSPB staff) two years to compile and provides further compelling evidence on the importance of the natural environment to human wellbeing.

The **Natural Environment White Paper** has been released. It outlines how the Government intends to protect wildlife and reverse biodiversity loss. To succeed, it's critical that these responsibilities are shared across all government departments.

We are campaigning against proposals from the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, and renowned architect, Lord Foster, for an **International Airport hub in the Thames Estuary**. Much of the estuary has European conservation protection and is on a migratory route for hundreds of thousands of birds.

The Public Inquiry into the proposed **Lydd airport** expansion ended in September 2011. The Inspector has assessed the cases for and against the proposal and it is with the Government to decide. We have objected to the proposal, which would damage important wildlife habitats.

We co-hosted a major **conference on climate change** at the Royal Society with Natural England and WWF, raising awareness of the dangers of climate change to biodiversity and people.

In the run-up to the Rio+20 earth summit, Stop Climate Chaos created an animation, *Reasons to be Cheerful*, which has been viewed online around 12,000 times now. You can watch it here: <http://rioconnection.org>





Adam Rowlands has been part of the team creating the ultimate wildlife experience for families at our revamped Minsmere nature reserve.

Adam Rowlands
Senior Site Manager, RSPB Minsmere

MINSMERE MAKEOVER

Where can you sit on a giant bittern egg? Or crawl inside a sand martin's burrow? There's only one place – the new RSPB Minsmere – the beating heart of Suffolk's wild coast.

After seven years of planning, fundraising, consultation and design, and six months of construction, we were proud this year to finally open Minsmere's *Discover Nature* visitor facilities. This is a place where families and schoolchildren can get close to nature in a completely new way.

The giant willow bittern nest and sand martin tunnels are part of the new Wild Zone – the ultimate play area – which deftly teaches children about wildlife and even basic field-craft while they're busy having the time of their lives.

While navigating their way through the log maze, children learn about the birds that migrate to Minsmere every spring and winter. While turning the handles on the bumblebee, bittern, teal and tawny owl listening posts, they will hear animal sounds from each of Minsmere's seasons. While following a joke trail, they can use their binocular skills to find and read the punchlines.

In the Wild Wood Adventure, it's time for bush-craft. Dads can get quite competitive over their den-building skills. There's a woven willow hide beside the river, and a Wildlife Lookout, from which you can see avocets and marsh harriers and bearded tits, or even a spoonbill. A carved totem tells the story of Minsmere's beginnings in WW2, when the site was deliberately flooded to keep out invading armies, inadvertently creating the perfect habitat for avocets.

With the help of visitor attraction consultants A Different View, and £2 million in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Interreg 2 Seas Programme through the European Regional Development Fund, among many others, we have

created a wonderful visitor experience here, a journey of discovery that begins from the moment you pull into the car park.

Every visit begins at the visitor centre, which is now totally transformed. The shop is better, the café is bigger (the fresh-baked cakes are the same size, but still as delicious as ever). We've got a new, bright glass reception building, where a staff member or one of our 100-plus volunteers greets you as you walk through the door to help you get your bearings and offer whatever advice you need to make the most of your day.

And everything has been designed to work in a sustainable way, with an ecological footprint that's smaller than an avocet's. The new toilets flush with collected rainwater. Our hot water is solar heated. And something called an air source heat pump (don't ask me how it works) takes ambient warmth from the air and uses it to heat the new Discovery Centre.

In the Discovery Centre are two modern classrooms equipped with electronic whiteboards, interpretive murals and floor-prints, and interactive exhibits. These are perfect formal classrooms for visiting school groups of up to 80 children; and on evenings and weekends, they're free for families to investigate together.

The beauty of these major additions to the reserve is that they've all been done with sensitive zoning. This means everyone can have their ideal experience here, whether that's a lone ramble in some of the best countryside the UK has to offer, or an unforgettable family adventure.

You helped create a new way for children to connect with nature at RSPB Minsmere.





This year, for the first time ever, the RSPB's 17,609 volunteers donated one million hours of their time. Mary and Dave Braddock were two of them. Mary tells their story.

Mary and Dave Braddock
RSPB volunteers

ONE MILLION HOURS VOLUNTEERING

One million hours. It makes my mind boggle just to think about it. It has all kinds of equivalents: 591 full time RSPB staff, or 12 people spending their entire working life with the RSPB, or one person volunteering 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for 116 years. An impressive feat. And, I'm proud to say, my husband Dave and I contributed some of those hours.

We begin in the early hours – 5am – because as well as being volunteers and running the RSPB North West Surrey Local Group, Dave and I both have full-time jobs. Dave works for Thames Water and I'm an NHS primary care nurse. Our day jobs can be stressful – nature is the perfect antidote to that.

With our local group of 140 members, we run events throughout the year. We run RSPB stands at local fairs and garden centres. We do quiz nights and barbecues. We organise street collections. We give wildlife talks to local natural history groups, women's groups and church groups. We do guided walks. We organise events to coincide with the big RSPB events such as the Big Garden Birdwatch. All of it to raise money for the RSPB and to recruit members.

Dave and I step up for nature at home too. Dave's a whizz in the garden. He grows about 1,700 plants a year, geraniums and the like, to sell and raise more funds. Dave's plants have earned such a good reputation that we get advance orders from people. On my way to work in April and May, I play delivery-woman, dropping the plants off and collecting a few more pounds for nature. We've raised over £7,000 in the last few years with those plants alone.

Dave has designed our garden for wildlife. It's not a big garden – we live in a semi-detached house – but you'd be amazed at what we get there: 115 house sparrows on one occasion, tonnes of finches, and all sorts of bees: tree bumblebees, red-tailed bumblebees, buff-tailed bumblebees and honey bees. We've just installed a stag beetle nesting site on the front lawn. Last night, Dave left a light trap out overnight and found 46 different species of moth this morning. Our hedgehog box has attracted a pair of hedgehogs who are at this moment raising a young one that we've named Trundle. Oh, and we have a 1m-long grass snake called Loopy who lives under the waterfall in the pond.

We get so much pleasure from encouraging nature wherever and however we can. The RSPB is such a big part of our lives. We even met at our local group in 1996, and got married in 2003 (our wedding presents from our fellow volunteers were nestboxes for our garden). Now we run the local group together. The more we get involved, the more we enjoy it. It gives us a real buzz.

I sometimes think about how I'm just one little person in this one little part of the world, giving a few hours to the RSPB here and there, but if you put all the people like me together, it adds up to something big. That's what makes change happen. And that's what keeps driving us to do our bit.

You made time for nature – thank you.
For more ways to step up for nature
by volunteering, visit
www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering



EVERY CHILD OUTDOORS FESTIVAL

On 24 June, local schoolchildren and their MPs visited 20 of our outdoor classrooms across the UK.



We believe it's vital that children have regular contact with nature. Our Every Child Outdoors festival was a great opportunity to promote this to MPs, while demonstrating the quality of our work with schools and young people.

Jessica Morden MP, who joined Lliswerry Primary School pupils on a visit to RSPB Newport Wetlands in Wales, said: "Educational visits like this are incredibly important if we are to highlight to the next generation the wonder of our natural environment and the need

to protect it. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and learning with the children."

The day attracted national media coverage, including outside broadcasts by BBC Breakfast and interviews with RSPB President Kate Humble.

We followed up this day by encouraging the Government to meet its commitments to outdoor learning in the Natural Environment White Paper. The festival was a partnership between the RSPB, Field Studies Council and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

SPRINGWATCH AT YNYS-HIR

When BBC *Springwatch* set up their new home at RSPB Ynys-hir nature reserve, we had a terrific opportunity to showcase this wonderful place.

Preparations for the arrival of the BBC team began months in advance, with dummy cameras being installed so the birds could get used to them. The production village was erected on a neighbouring farmer's field. For the Ynys-hir staff and volunteers, it was a thrilling, hectic, fun experience.

Reserve Warden Russell Jones said: "From the first programme to the last, we have followed the stories of the bird families, rejoiced in the wood warblers and grasshopper warblers fledging, and have been dejected on the death of the pied flycatcher broods. The grey heron chicks have been fascinating and the barn owl chicks

wonderfully ugly from the start but slowly turning into the majestic beauty of the adults. Close shaves for wrens, writhing grass snakes on a compost heap, bobbing dippers and fleeting glimpses of badgers – we have enjoyed it all."

During *Springwatch* season, Ynys-hir got a massive boost in visitor numbers – we put on special guided walks to point out the nest cameras and the bird stars of the show, such as the redstarts and buzzards.

The *Springwatch* team are back at Ynys-hir in 2012.



Date With Nature goes HD

The Manchester peregrines Date With Nature event streamed live high definition video from the city centre nest this summer. The peregrines also had their own Twitter and Flickr accounts, to keep fans updated all the way through to the successful fledging of four chicks. Thanks to the Manchester Digital Development Agency who made this possible. This was just one of the 70 Date With Nature events, which brought 432,000 people closer to nature, including ospreys, seabirds, red deer and dragonflies.

International education projects

All year we've been working with our BirdLife International partners on education projects. In China, we helped train teachers and birdwatching volunteers at the two most important wetlands on the Chinese coast for the spoon-billed sandpiper. In Bulgaria, we helped the BirdLife Partner with an imperial eagle and saker falcon education project, and another project about protected wetland sites in Bourgas on the Black Sea coast. We also supplied educational games and materials to the Spanish, French, Finnish and Armenian BirdLife Partners.

Stepping up with social media

Social media is becoming a more and more popular way for our supporters to get involved with our work. In March 2012, for example, supporters used social media to take part in our Wake Up George campaign, calling on the Chancellor, George Osborne, to put the environment at the heart of the UK's economic recovery. There was also a live Q&A with Marine Minister Richard Benyon (see page 25) where supporters submitted questions to him via Twitter and Facebook.

There are now more than 20,000 fans on the national RSPB Facebook page: [facebook.com/RSPBLoveNature](https://www.facebook.com/RSPBLoveNature) and over 25,000 followers on our national Twitter page: twitter.com/natures_voice. There are also regional RSPB Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as specific RSPB Facebook pages such as Volunteering, which has over 3,500 fans.

Learning outdoors

In July, we were awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge for another two years. The Quality Badge is a nationally recognised indicator of good quality education provision. It reduces the red tape associated with learning outside the classroom, making it easier for teachers to get their pupils out of the classroom and into nature. This year, 51,000 school children visited our outdoor classrooms.



In spite of difficult economic times, **RSPB membership** remains as strong as ever, at more than 1,090,000. On top of all the members renewing their support, more than 185,000 people joined as members in the last year – a fantastic endorsement of our work and how much the UK public cares about nature.

Almost 600,000 people took part in the **Big Garden Birdwatch** in January, making it the second biggest ever. Over nine million birds of 73 species were counted and 140 special events were held around the UK.

A record number of children – 83,024 – took part in the **Big Schools' Birdwatch** in January, investigating the wildlife around their schools.

Love Nature Week took place for the third year, with 622 volunteers taking to their local streets, supermarkets and shopping centres to collect donations for nature and raising a fantastic £35,635.

This was also the third year for our **Make Your Nature Count** survey in June. Around 77,000 people took part. This year, we asked people to look out for some more unusual species, such as stag beetles, great crested newts and grass snakes.

The RSPB stand at **BBC Gardeners' World Live** featured two distinct wildlife habitats: a brownfield site dressed with a derelict postbox and an abandoned bath surrounded by wild flower-filled grass, and a wildlife garden with trees, flower beds and a pond. We recruited 419 members, making it easily the highest recruiting show on the RSPB calendar.

The number of farmers entering the 2011 **Nature of Farming Award** more than doubled. We run the award in partnership with the *Daily Telegraph*, Plantlife and Butterfly Conservation. Over 22,000 votes were cast in the public voting round, and the winner was Treshnish Farm, on the Isle of Mull.



James Robinson
Director, Northern Ireland

A new Marine Bill, a welcome return for breeding choughs, and nettle gatherers: James Robinson reflects on a wonderful year for wildlife in Northern Ireland.

NORTHERN IRELAND

This year, I've been seeing something exciting when I go cycling near my home on the County Down coast. It's a landscape of hills, called drumlins, on which there are lots of small farms. The farmers produce a mix of grain, meat, vegetables and milk, and it's here, perched on telegraph wires and on top of hawthorn bushes, that I've been seeing more and more of a bright yellow bird with a distinctive song.

At one time, yellowhammers were found all over Northern Ireland. They thrived on the mixed farms that reared animals and grew oats – a seed-rich environment. But now the farming landscape has changed, yellowhammers are generally restricted to the east, where lots of arable crops are still grown.

To help yellowhammers regain their former numbers, we've been visiting farms and advising farmers on how they can manage their land to make it better for wildlife. As encouragement to make these kinds of changes, the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland gives payments to farmers through agri-environment schemes. Recently though, the department has been questioning whether these schemes actually work. The Government puts a lot of money into them – what are the results?

This year, we've been able to demonstrate those results: on farms we've visited to offer advice, the number of yellowhammers has increased by 79%. A terrific success.

Michael Calvert is one of the farmers we've worked with. In 2009, he won the Nature of Farming Award for his efforts to create space for wildlife on his land. Prince Charles visited Michael's farm this year, and we were able to show him what a rich, healthy environment the agri-environment schemes help create.

Michael told us: "We maintained rough-grass margins and planted wild bird cover. As we are part of the Countryside Management Scheme, we were able to cover costs for this. I was amazed to see how quickly the

yellowhammers re-established themselves. It makes me proud to be able to ensure that this bird will be there for future generations."

It's not very often that you get to see a basking shark moving up the mile-long road to Stormont – the Northern Ireland parliament, but this year, I did.

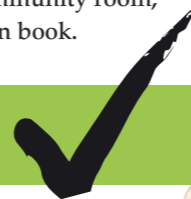
The shark was made of weaved willow, full size, and was carried by some of a 150-strong march that we organised to push our politicians to create a Marine Bill for Northern Ireland.

I was on the march, among the local schoolchildren, RSPB staff and volunteers, and people from our campaigning partners. When we reached Stormont, the environment minister, Alex Attwood MLA, came out to meet us. He answered questions from the children about getting better protection for wildlife in our oceans, and even sat inside the mouth of the shark for photos. We were all thrilled when the minister announced that he would be bringing a Marine Bill to the rest of the Assembly. After years of campaigning, this is a great achievement we can all be proud of.

The Bill is a strong one, with provisions for marine reserves, which should protect seabirds and help depleted fish stocks to recover. Now it will go through the environment committee for rigorous assessment. As soon as the Bill is made law, we'll announce it in a future issue of your *Birds* magazine.

In June, we opened a new visitor centre at our beautiful Portmore Lough nature reserve at the south-east corner of Lough Neagh. This lovely wooden lodge fits discretely into its natural surroundings and includes a community room, which anyone from the local community can book.

You helped get a marine bill
in Northern Ireland





Already people are using the room for children's parties and all kinds of meetings.

One visitor said: "I don't live very far from here and I never knew this place existed, we'll definitely be back". We hoped this new community room would act as a gateway to the reserve to introduce local people to the wonderful reserve on their doorstep – it's working a treat.

This spring, I took six members of the Northern Ireland Committee to see what your support is helping us achieve at Lower Lough Erne – one of the ten RSPB nature reserves in Northern Ireland.

We travelled out in a cot across the Lough to visit several of the islands that we look after. A cot is a traditional flat-bottomed boat that's usually used for carrying cattle, and so it had a bit of cow dung in the bottom. Not the most luxurious way to travel, but none of us minded because the wildlife to be seen was so spectacular. The council members were astonished to see skies full of curlews and drumming snipe, and lapwing and redshank chicks scuttling around on the islands. This is a sight you just can't get anywhere else. It's truly unique. In supporting the RSPB, you're creating an experience that's vanished from the rest of Northern Ireland.

Around 20,000 people take the boat from Ballycastle to Rathlin Island every year to visit the RSPB nature reserve there, and this year, a lot of them were coming to see some very special new arrivals.

For years we've been looking after the coastal grassland there to keep it in top condition for choughs, but the birds had never before nested on our nature reserves on the island. We've watched choughs establish themselves in Cornwall again, and wondered how we could help them regain their former numbers in Northern Ireland, too.

Working with colleagues from Cornwall and Scotland, we have learned a lot about the needs of these birds, and we've done everything we can to meet those needs. We've grazed the coastal grass heavily, at just the right time of year, so that the sward is short enough for them to probe the sandy soils beneath with their curved beaks. And the cattle are given none of the worming chemicals that can affect the number of invertebrates present in their fields. Now this work really seems to be paying off.

This year, two chough chicks successfully fledged from their cliff nest – the first ever from our nature reserve.

We continue to study the needs of the choughs to get the environment just right for them, and hope that these new chicks will be the first of many more. If you're over this way, I do recommend taking that boat from Ballycastle – you won't get a sight like this anywhere else in Northern Ireland...yet, but hopefully one day soon. Already, the chough chicks have spread to the north coast of the mainland.

We've been working hard on Rathlin this year to create habitat for another bird that has vanished from Northern Ireland. Our Rathlin wardens, Liam McFaul and his nephew Sean, can remember being kept awake on summer nights by the constant calls of corncrakes – a persistent rasping sound that's been absent since 2000 when breeding was last recorded.

Corncrakes like to hide in nettles when they arrive to breed in the spring, but there aren't many nettles on Rathlin, so a group of volunteers went round to farmers on the mainland asking if we could take theirs. The farmers unanimously said, "yes please!"

In all, the volunteers filled 45 big bags with nettle roots, then took them across to Rathlin and planted them by hand round the edges of fields, helping to create 20 hectares of habitat for corncrakes.

Patsy Harbinson, who co-ordinated the volunteer teams, said afterwards, "It was good craic and something different, plus it's doing something positive for our local wildlife".

Corncrake experts from Scotland came over to take a look at what we'd created, and they said that from a corncrake's perspective, it was just right.

From Rathlin, we can see Islay, where there is a healthy corncrake population, so our hopes are high that a few will pop over in spring 2013 to kindle a new Northern Ireland population. Watch this space.

You helped choughs breed on our Rathlin nature reserve for the first time ever.





Stuart Housden
Director, Scotland

High times for Orkney's hen harriers, whisky receptions for conservation heroes, and a new nature reserve in one of Scotland's most iconic landscapes: Stuart Housden shares his conservation highlights of the year in Scotland.

SCOTLAND

The RSPB in Scotland has celebrated some big successes this year, and not just our own conservation achievements, but those of many like-minded people and organisations. This is where I'll begin.

In March, I got dressed up in my best black tie to attend the inaugural Nature of Scotland Awards dinner at the Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh.

The RSPB created the awards to recognise and celebrate excellence, innovation and outstanding achievement in nature conservation in Scotland. Our host for the evening was comedian and presenter Fred MacAulay, who entertained 241 guests – all eager to see who had won in the six different categories.

The evening began with a drinks reception sponsored by Black Grouse Whisky. This was followed by the awards ceremony itself, a three-course dinner, and a ceilidh into the wee small hours.

The event brought together a range of businesses, public sector organisations, community groups, politicians and individuals, all of whom have an interest in protecting Scotland's greatest asset – its natural heritage.

After tough deliberations sifting through nearly 90 entries, the judges managed to narrow it down to six winners. These are all people who are stepping up for nature in some truly inspirational ways. You can see their details, and find out more about the awards, which will run again next year, at www.rspb.org.uk/thingstodo/natureofscotland

In last year's review, I wrote about the threat of a proposed coal-fired power station at **Hunterston**. We've been fighting this one since the planning application was submitted in 2010. The development would involve building a dirty-great carbon dioxide-belching factory on a Site of Special Scientific Interest – one of the few remaining intertidal mudflats on the outer Firth of Clyde, where oystercatchers, curlews and redshanks thrive.

This year, I'm pleased to say, we moved one step closer to seeing this dreadful proposal off. With our supporters, we were able to gather and present 22,000 signatures from people objecting to the station – the most ever submitted to a development proposal in Scotland. North Ayrshire Council has now rejected the proposal, forcing it to go to public inquiry.

This puts the decision in the hands of the Scottish Government. We will play an active part in the inquiry, providing evidence to back up our original reasons for objecting to Hunterston. We are also working with other organisations under the banner of the *Say 'No' to Hunterston Campaign* to ensure that a broad range of concerns is raised during the inquiry. (*Editor's note: just as this review went to print, the plans were scrapped by the developer. We remain vigilant!*)

In North Ayrshire, we've had success with another development that we've been objecting to for the last seven years. We were delighted to hear in October 2011 that Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) had withdrawn its proposal for a 29-turbine windfarm on **Waterhead Moor**.

This windfarm would have been built within one of the best places for hen harriers in Europe. The site has been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for harriers.

We look forward to continuing our constructive relationship with SSE and the renewables industry to ensure that windfarms are built in the right places, without harming Scotland's precious wildlife habitats.

Staying on the subject of **hen harriers** – whilst they're in big trouble across most of the UK (see page 13), on

Pink-footed geese are just one of the species you helped us protect at Crook of Baldoon.





our Orkney reserves we celebrated a 20-year-high in numbers of this stunning bird of prey: 100 breeding females produced more than 100 chicks.

This success comes after decades of careful management of the hen harriers' habitat on Orkney, grazing just the right number of sheep to keep the grass at the perfect height for voles, their main food source.

At our **East Scotland Sea Eagles (ESSE)** reintroduction project, we celebrated the release of the 60th white-tailed eagle (and then the 61st, 62nd and 63rd). We began this project in June 2007, in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland, and in 2012 it will come to an end, bringing the total number of birds released to 86. The people of Tayside, Fife and lowland Scotland can now enjoy seeing these magnificent birds restored to their former haunts.

Elsewhere, we still have much ground to gain before nature can enjoy similar successes. We have been reporting declines in seabird numbers for several years now, with the far north particularly badly affected. Some species have been hit especially hard – kittiwakes declined by around 30% between 2000 and 2010, and many once-massive colonies in the Northern Isles have dwindled. It appears that climate change is driving some significant changes in the marine environment, and that this is having knock-on effects for top predators like seabirds.

So it was very disappointing to learn that greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland were 2% higher in 2010 than the previous year. This means Scottish Government ambition has not been matched by action.

More must be done to protect Scotland's seabirds – these aren't just our seabirds, but the world's. Scotland has 45% of all the EU's breeding seabirds, so we have an international responsibility.

Following the passing of the Scottish Marine Act, we were hoping that Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) would have been set up by now, but the Scottish Government has yet to implement any – we will continue to push for the declaration of a meaningful suite of protected areas.

Moving from nature reserves at sea to nature reserves on land... in Dumfries and Galloway, we extended our **Crook of Baldoon** nature reserve. The new 39 hectares of grassland takes the total reserve size to 191 ha. This new area will enable us to develop wetland habitat to help nesting lapwings and redshanks, which are now present in very low numbers.

Since we first acquired the Crook of Baldoon in 2010, we've worked hard with the help of the local community to make this a rich site for wildlife, and rich it is. Every year, internationally important numbers of wintering whooper swans, pink-footed geese and a variety of wading birds come here. Whimbrels and black-tailed godwits use it as a pit stop on their migrations. And in winter you can see hen harriers here. We'll soon have a great wildlife spectacle for visitors to the new part of the reserve, too.

As the 2011–12 financial year came to a close, we completed the purchase of a brand new RSPB nature reserve – a cracking piece of land for wildlife on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond.

Wards Estate sits within one of the best wetland habitats in Scotland. It's at the southern end of the Loch, and gives a view north of the wooded islands, Ben Lomond and the other snow-capped mountains that divide the Highlands from the Lowlands. It really is breathtaking – one of the best views in Scotland.

This is a pioneering partnership project between the RSPB, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and Scottish Natural Heritage – the first time all three of us have worked together in this way. The purchase was made possible by a hugely successful appeal to our members. Thank you to all those who helped us secure this place. It really is something special.

The new reserve sits within a Special Protection Area, designated because every winter one in every 50 of the world's Greenland white-fronted geese comes here. It's a Special Area of Conservation for the salmon that fight their way upstream to spawn in the autumn, and for the rare brook and river lampreys. It's a National Scenic Area, a RAMSAR site (a wetland of international importance), and it includes three Sites of Special Scientific Interest. This site is vital for so much nature, from oakwoods and mosses, to beetles and dragonflies. And, of course, the bird life here is knockout.

Now begins the management work to make this site even better for wildlife, improving the habitat for breeding waders such as lapwings, curlews, snipe and redshanks.

As funds allow, we'll also be transforming the area into a spectacular place for you to come and visit by sympathetically introducing visitor facilities and paths. We'll be able to get you as close to the wildlife as possible without disturbing it. When it's finished, Wards Estate will be an unforgettable day out. We'll keep you updated on our progress.

I'll finish on the ending of our **Bird Friendly Schools** project in Scotland. Over four years, the project sent trained RSPB volunteers and field teachers to nursery and primary schools to give the pupils first-hand experience of nature, both in and outside the classroom. Bird Friendly Schools reached 22,094 children in 736 schools across the country. I'm sure that this experience will have sparked a lifelong interest in nature for many of these children, and that one day soon, just like all the other people I've mentioned in these pages, they'll be stepping up for nature, too.

Your support helped us acquire a new nature reserve on the banks of Loch Lomond.





Katie-jo Luxton
Director, Wales

In the year that we celebrated 100 years of the RSPB in Wales, help for nature came from many unusual quarters: whisky, Girlguiding Cymru and carrier bags. Katie-jo Luxton explains all.

WALES

This has been a hugely exciting year for the RSPB in Wales – our Centenary – a chance to look back over some of our conservation successes of the last 100 years and look forward to the challenges ahead.

We kicked off our celebrations on St Dwynwen's Day, 25 January. Saint Dwynwen's bones are supposedly laid to rest on a tiny island off the south coast of Anglesey, which was the workplace of the first ever person to be employed by the RSPB in Wales. Her name was Mrs Jones, and she was paid to watch over and protect the tern colony there.

In her honour, Black Grouse Whisky, who sponsored our Centenary celebrations and our black grouse conservation work, concocted a special whisky cocktail and named it after her. At our Centenary celebration on Conwy, I had the pleasure of clinking glasses of this cocktail with the great, great granddaughter of Mrs Jones.

And while I'm talking about black grouse, this has been a record-breaking year for them in Wales. The annual survey recorded 328 displaying males – the highest since the survey began in 1997. This means the Welsh Black Grouse Recovery Project has beaten the 2015 Biodiversity Action Plan target four years earlier than expected.

Captain Tim Bell, manager of one of the grouse moor estates we've been working with, said: "We have been working in partnership with RSPB Cymru and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) to manage Ruabon Moor since the late 1990s. The combination of conservation and game management with keeping is working well here – last year's results are good evidence of this. We also have a number of curlews breeding on the moor, and hope that other waders such as golden plovers will re-establish themselves in the near future."

We celebrated our Centenary at events at five of our nature reserves across Wales. It was wonderful to meet

so many people who have been involved in the success of each reserve – staff, volunteers, local supporters, businesses and sponsors.

One particularly memorable event was held at Ynys-hir, in the formal gardens of the Ynyshir Hall hotel, on a perfect warm summer evening, with the sound of birdsong everywhere. Over 100 people attended, including the wife of the first ever warden of Ynys-hir nature reserve, who entertained us with stories about the early days of the reserve in the 1950s.

Meanwhile, the BBC were setting up their *Springwatch* 'production village', and I went along to their open evening to talk to the local villagers, who'd come along to see what was going on. I hope you got to see some of the brilliant coverage of Ynys-hir on the programme – the team there worked so hard, and we're all really proud of the results. (For more on *Springwatch* at Ynys-hir, see page 30).

Of course the Centenary wasn't just about celebrating. It was also a great opportunity to raise more funds for conservation work, especially for curlews, which were the focus of our efforts.

We created special golden curlew badges and gave them to people who had done especially great things for nature, or who had raised more than £50 for the RSPB.

Curlews are iconic birds of rural Wales, and their distinctive call is familiar to everyone who grew up here. But curlews have been declining dramatically. In the last 20 years, we've lost more than 80% of them. There are now more red kites breeding in Wales than curlews. It's a shocking fact, and one that has made clear to people the desperate need to protect the curlews' habitat.

You helped black grouse recover to record levels.





That's what we've been doing in Hiraethog in North-East Wales, where we've been working in partnership with farmers to secure the mixed-farmland on which curlews thrive. This is one of the very few places in Wales where curlews are just about hanging on. We'll continue to work with farmers in this area to secure a brighter outlook for these beautiful birds so that future generations will continue to hear their evocative call.

We joined forces with Girlguiding Cymru this year, as part of our centenary celebrations. Guides, Brownies and Rainbows from all over Wales have been visiting our nature reserves and Futurescapes sites. More than 3,750 Girl Guides and Leaders have taken part, doing various activities, from pond dipping to making bird feeders. Some have even camped on our reserves before heading out at first light for dawn chorus walks. They've also been fundraising for our conservation work. We've really enjoyed their support, and are very grateful for it.

One particular girl comes to mind whenever I think about their involvement with us this year. She was one of a group of eight-year-old Brownies who came along to our Stepping Up For Nature launch, at the Pier Head Building in Cardiff Bay.

The Brownies asked the politicians lots of questions about what they were doing to save nature, but this one girl in particular gave them a really hard time, demanding to know: 'What exactly have you done in your life for nature?' It was heartwarming to see youngsters really holding their politicians to account.

In June 2011, we had elections to the National Assembly, so we immediately got busy meeting the new Assembly Members and making the case for biodiversity. Our letter-writing volunteers were a great help with this.

There was also a referendum, which devolved primary legislation from Westminster, giving Welsh politicians control over the levers of power that protect and manage our environment. Within months, the Welsh Government was consulting on a decision to merge together the three bodies (Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales) that oversee and deliver environmental management. Clearly the decisions on the structure, powers and priorities of the new body will have an enormous, long-term impact on the environment, so we've been lobbying hard to make sure nature is placed high up on the agenda.

Nothing makes a reserve warden happier than a conservation success, but a close second is an enormous bit of new machinery. So we had a very happy warden at Malltraeth when the new Softrak tractor was

delivered. The Softrak was funded by Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN), and has already helped us do a huge amount of habitat creation work on this wetland reserve.

The ground at Malltraeth is very boggy, making it difficult to drive regular machinery around. But the Softrak is designed for working in these conditions, spreading its weight over its enormous tracks and having very little impact on the ground.

So far we've used the Softrak to create new ditches, pools, scrapes and 27 ponds. It's also had an unexpected use. The lapwings on the site are very sensitive to people walking about, and will fly up and away as soon as you get near, but they're so used to seeing tractors that they stay put. This means the Softrak has also become a kind of mobile hide, allowing us to move about the reserve doing counts of lapwing chicks without disturbing the birds. It's odd that you have to get into something so big to become invisible, but it works.

We have continued discussions with Severn Trent Water to buy the leasehold of the farmed land of Lake Vyrnwy estate in partnership with United Utilities this year, though progress has been much slower than we had hoped. We remain committed to securing the future of the internationally valuable habitats and species at Vyrnwy and encouraging more people to enjoy this incredibly beautiful place.

My last highlight came from an unexpected source. This year, the Welsh Government introduced a 5p levy on every plastic and paper carrier bag sold in Wales. Tesco decided to give the profits raised from sales of plastic bags in their stores to the RSPB. So far, they've donated £400,000.

We put this money to use right away at our Carngafallt nature reserve, helping us look after the Atlantic oak woodland with its wonderful veteran trees, which are home to some very rare lichens. We also used the donation to help create the new 'close to nature' family visitor facilities on our Conwy nature reserve. Furthermore, the donation from Tesco helped lever £350,000 in match-funding for the project from the European Union. This is the first time I've heard of carrier bags doing something good for the environment (see page 22 for more on how Tesco has been Stepping Up For Nature with the RSPB).

Thanks for all your support. If you want to keep up-to-date with everything you're helping us achieve in Wales, go to www.rspb.org.uk/wales

You helped us to make sure the Welsh Government steps up for nature.





Katie-jo Luxton
Cyfarwyddwr

Yn ystod y flwyddyn y buom yn dathlu 100 mlynedd o'r RSPB yng Nghymru, daeth cymorth dros fyd natur o ffynonellau hynod o anghyffredin: chwisgi, Geidiau Cymru a bagiau plastig. Mae Katie-jo Luxton yn egluro'r cwbl.

CYMRU

Bu'r flwyddyn hon yn un arbennig o gyffrous i'r RSPB yng Nghymru – ein Canmlwyddiant – ac yn gyfle i fwrw trem yn ôl ar rai o'n llwyddiannau o ran cadwraeth dros y 100 mlynedd diwethaf yn ogystal ag edrych ymlaen at sawl her sydd o'n blaenau.

Cychwynnwyd ar ein dathliadau ar ddydd Santes Dwynwen, 25 Ionawr. Yn ôl y chwedl, mae esgyrn Santes Dwynwen yn gorwedd ar Ynys Llanddwyn, ynys fechan oddi ar arfordir deheuol Ynys Môn, a man gwaith yr unigolyn cyntaf erioed i gael ei chyflogi gan yr RSPB yng Nghymru. Ei henw oedd Mrs Jones, ac roedd yn cael ei thalu i wyllo'r nythfa o fôr-wenoliaid yno a'u gwarchod.

Er cof amdani, crëwyd coctel arbennig o chwisgi gan Chwisgi'r Rugiar Ddu, a noddodd ein dathliadau Canmlwyddiant a'n gwaith cadwraeth dros y rugiar ddu, a'i enwi ar ei hôl. Yn ein dathliad Canmlwyddiant yng Nghonwy, cefais y pleser o flasur coctel hwn gyda gorgor-wyres Mrs Jones.

Tra fy mod yn sôn am y rugiar ddu, hon oedd y flwyddyn orau eto i'r aderyn hwn yng Nghymru. Cofnodwyd 328 o geiliogod yn arddangos eu hunain yn yr arolwg blynyddol - y nifer uchaf ers rhoi'r arolwg ar waith ym 1997. Mae hyn yn golygu fod Project Adfer y Rugiar Ddu yng Nghymru wedi ateb targed Cynllun Gweithredu Bioamrywiaeth 2015 bedair blynedd yn gynt na'r disgwyl.

Meddai'r Capten Tim Bell, rheolwr un o'r stadau grugieir yr ydym wedi bod yn cydweithio â nhw: "Rydym wedi bod yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth gydag RSPB Cymru a Chyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru (CCGC) i reoli Rhostir Rhiwabon ers diwedd yr 1990au. Mae'r cyfuniad o gadwraeth a rheolaeth anifeiliaid hela gyda chipera yn gweithio'n dda yma – mae canlyniadau'r llynedd yn dystiolaeth o hyn. Mae gennym hefyd nifer o ylfinirod yn nythu ar y rhostir, a gobeithiwn y bydd rhydwyr eraill fel cwtaid aur yn ailsefydlu eu hunain yn y dyfodol agos."

Buom yn dathlu ein digwyddiadau Canmlwyddiant ar bump o'n gwarchodfeydd ledled Cymru. Roedd yn wych

cyfarfod cymaint o bobl sydd wedi bod yn rhan o lwyddiant pob gwarchodfa – staff, gwirfoddolwyr, cefnogwyr lleol, busnesau a noddwyr.

Cynhaliwyd un digwyddiad cofiadwy yn Ynys-hir, yng ngerddi ffurfiol gwesty Neuadd Ynys-hir ar noson braf o haf, gydag adar yn canu o'n cwmpas. Daeth dros 100 o bobl draw, yn cynnwys gwraig warden cyntaf gwarchodfa natur Ynys-hir, a fu'n adrodd straeon i ni am ddyddiau cynnar y warchodfa yn yr 1950au.

Yn y cyfamser, roedd y BBC yn paratoi eu 'pentref cynhyrchu' ar gyfer Springwatch, ac mi es i draw i'w noson agored i siarad â'r pentrefwyr lleol, a oedd wedi galw heibio i weld beth oedd yn digwydd. Gobeithio eich bod wedi cael cyfle i weld y lluniau gwych o Ynys-hir ar y rhaglen – gweithiodd y tîm yno'n ddygn iawn, ac rydym i gyd yn falch iawn o'r canlyniadau. (Am fwy ar Springwatch yn Ynys-hir ewch i dudalen 30).

Wrth gwrs, roedd y Canmlwyddiant yn golygu mwy na dathlu'n unig. Roedd hefyd yn gyfle gwych i godi mwy o arian ar gyfer gwaith cadwraeth, yn enwedig ar ran y gylfinir, sef canolbwynt ein hymdrechion.

Crëwyd bathodynnewau gylfinir aur arbennig a roddwyd i bobl oedd wedi cyflawni llawer dros fyd natur, neu a oedd wedi codi dros £50 i'r RSPB.

Aderyn nodweddiadol o Gymru wledig yw'r gylfinir, ac mae ei alwad trawiadol yn gyfarwydd i bawb a fagwyd yma. Ond, mae'r gylfinir wedi prinhau'n arw. Yn yr 20 mlynedd diwethaf, rydym wedi colli dros 80% ohonyn nhw. Bellach mae mwy o farcutiaid yn nythu yng Nghymru na gylfinirod. Dyma ffaith ddychrynllyd, ac un sydd wedi dangos i bobl cymaint yw'r angen i warchod cynefin y gylfinir.

Gyda'ch cymorth chi daeth miloedd o Geidiau'n nes at fyd natur.



Dyna beth yr ydym wedi bod yn ei wneud yn Hiraethog yng ngogledd ddwyrain Cymru, lle'r ydym wedi bod yn cydweithio mewn partneriaeth â ffermwyr i sicrhau'r ffermdir cymysg sy'n gartref i'r gylfinir. Dyma un o'r ychydig iawn o fannau yng Nghymru lle mae'r gylfinir yn dal ei thir.

Byddwn yn parhau i gydweithio gydag amaethwyr yr ardal hon i sicrhau gwell dyfodol i'r adar hardd yma fel bod cenedlaethau'r dyfodol yn parhau i glywed eu cân nodweddiadol.

Fel rhan o'n dathliadau Canmlwyddiant eleni, daeth Geidiau, Brownies a Rainbows ledled Cymru i ymweld â'n gwarchodfeydd natur a'n safleoedd Tirlun i'r Dyfodol. Mae dros 3,750 o Geidiau ac arweinwyr wedi cymryd rhan mewn amrywiol weithgareddau o rwydo'r pwll i wneud bwydwr adar; bu rhai'n gwersylla ar ein gwarchodfeydd cyn cychwyn yn y bore bach i wrando ar gôr y wawr. Maen nhw hefyd wedi bod yn codi arian ar gyfer ein gwaith cadwraeth, ac rydym wedi gwir fwynhau eu cefnogaeth, ac yn hynod o ddiolchgar amdano.

Mae un ferch arbennig yn dod i'r cof pryd bynnag y byddaf yn cofio am eu rhan gyda ni eleni. Roedd hi'n un o grŵp o Brownies wyth mlwydd oed a ddaeth draw i'n lansiad Camu 'Mlaen Dros Natur yn Adeilad Pen y Pier ym Mae Caerdydd.

Gofynnodd y Brownies lawer o gwestiynau i wleidyddion ynglŷn â'u cyfraniad i achub byd natur, ond bu'r ferch arbennig yma'n gofyn cwestiynau arbennig o dreiddgar fel: 'Beth yn union ydych chi wedi ei wneud yn eich bywyd dros fyd natur?' Roedd yn galonogol gweld plant yn gofyn i wleidyddion egluro'n union beth oedden nhw wedi ei wneud dros fyd natur.

Ym mis Mehefin 2011, cynhaliwyd etholiadau i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, felly aethom i gyfarfod Aelodau newydd y Cynulliad yn syth bin er mwyn cyflwyno achos bioamrywiaeth. Cafwyd llawer o gymorth gan ein gwirfoddolwyr ysgrifennu llythyrau gyda hyn.

Cafwyd refferendwm hefyd, lle datganolwyd deddfwriaeth gynradd o San Steffan, gan roi rheolaeth i wleidyddion Cymru dros rymoedd sy'n gwarchod a rheoli ein hamgylchedd. O fewn misoedd, roedd Llywodraeth Cymru yn ymgynghori ar benderfyniad i uno'r tri chorff (CCGC, Asiantaeth Amgylchedd Cymru a Chomisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru) sy'n arolygu ac yn darparu rheolaeth amgylcheddol. Mae'n amlwg y bydd penderfyniadau ar strwythur, pwerau a blaenoriaethau'r corff newydd yn cael effaith enfawr a thymor hir ar yr amgylchedd, felly rydym wedi bod yn lloïo i sicrhau bod byd natur yn cael ei osod yn uchel ar yr agenda.

Mae llwyddiant cadwraethol ar warchodfa'n sicr o fodloni warden, ond yn ail agos i hynny mae peiriant newydd anferth. Felly roedd gennym warden bodlon iawn ym Cors Ddyga pan gyraeddodd y tractor Softrac newydd. Ariannwyd y Softrac gan Ailgylchu Gwastraff

Amgylcheddol (WREN), ac mae eisoes wedi ein cynorthwyo i wneud llawer iawn o waith creu cynefin ar y warchodfa wlyptir hon.

Mae tir Cors Ddyga yn hynod o gorsiog, ac mae hi'n anodd iawn felly gyrru peiriannau yno. Fodd bynnag, cynlluniwyd y Softrac i weithio o dan yr amodau hyn, gan wasgaru ei bwysau dros ei draciau anferth ac felly effeithio ychydig iawn ar y ddaear.

Hyd yma rydym wedi defnyddio'r Softrac i greu ffosydd, pyllau, pantiau a 27 pwll newydd. Cafodd ddeunydd annisgwyl hefyd. Gan nad yw cornchwiglod y safle yn gyfarwydd â phobl yn cerdded o gwmpas, maen nhw'n codi oddi ar eu nythod cyn gynted ag y bydd rhywun yn agosáu. Ond, maen nhw wedi arfer â thractorau sy'n sefyll yn llongydd. O ganlyniad, mae'r Softrac wedi dod yn fath o guddfan symudol, ac wedi ein galluogi i symud o gwmpas y warchodfa a chyfrif cywion cornchwiglod heb aflonyddu ar yr adar. Mae'n rhyfedd fod rhaid dringo i rywbeth mor fawr i fod yn anweledig, ond mae'n gweithio.

Rydym wedi parhau â thrafodaethau gyda Dŵr Hafren Trent i brynu les y tir a amaethir ar stad Llyn Efyrynwy mewn partneriaeth ag United Utilities eleni, er bod hyn wedi cymryd cryn amser. Rydym yn parhau'n ymrwymedig i sicrhau dyfodol y cynefinoedd a'r rhywogaethau sy'n bwysig yn rhyngwladol yn Efyrynwy ac annog mwy o bobl i fwynhau'r ardal hynod o hardd hon.

Daeth fy uchafbwynt olaf o ffynhonnell annisgwyl. Eleni, cyflwynodd Llywodraeth Cymru dâl o 5 ceiniog ar bob bag plastig a phapur a werthwyd yng Nghymru. Penderfynodd Tesco roi'r elw o werthiannau'r bagiau yn eu siopau i'r RSPB. Hyd yma, maen nhw wedi cyfrannu £400,000.

Defnyddiwyd yr arian hwn yn syth bin ar ein gwarchodfa yng Ngharnafallt, i'n helpu i warchod y goedlan dderw Atlantig gyda'i choed hynafol hardd, sy'n gartref i gennau hynod o brin. Defnyddiwyd y rhodd hefyd i helpu i greu adnoddau ymwelwyr 'agos at natur' i deuluoedd ar ein gwarchodfa yng Nghonwy. Hefyd, helpodd y rhodd gan Tesco i sicrhau £350,000 mewn arian cyfatebol gan yr Undeb Ewropeaidd ar gyfer y project. Dyma'r tro cyntaf i mi glywed am fagiâu plastig yn gwneud rhywbeth da i'r amgylchedd. (Gweler tudalen 22 am fwy ynglŷn â sut y bu Tesco'n Camu 'Mlaen Dros Natur gyda'r RSPB).

Diolch i bawb am eu cefnogaeth. Os hoffech gael y newyddion diweddaraf ar y cwbl a wireddwyd gyda'ch cymorth chi yng Nghymru, ewch i www.rspb.org.uk/cymru

Gyda'ch cymorth chi camodd Llywodraeth Cymru ymlaen dros natur.





Alan Sharpe
Director of Finance



Alan Martin
Honorary Treasurer

MONEY MATTERS

Outcome for the year 2011–12

Despite the wider economic difficulties, we ended the year with a surplus, adding £2.6 million to our cash and investments available for conservation. We are thankful that the majority of our income streams held up well, so our conservation work programmes could continue uninterrupted. The Trustees are committed to putting income to work as soon as possible, and the surplus has been earmarked for projects which span the year-end.

Income

The continued backing we receive from our members and supporters means that the underlying income trend was stable in spite of challenging times. We value highly the current support of more than a million people through membership, donations, buying from our shops and catalogue, and of course from legacies. These are the bedrock of all we do and we are hugely grateful that people continue to join and support us even in difficult times. However, we are not immune to the impact of external pressures on our income.

Membership subscriptions and donations include tax recovery under the Gift Aid scheme, which fell by around £0.7 million due to the end of the “transition relief” - introduced by the Government to cushion the impact of reducing the basic rate of income tax from 22% to 20% in 2008.

The reduction in grant income trend is slightly deceptive where the timing of receipt of the income is crucial. It would have been flat over the two years if we had received the £1.2 million that was earmarked by the donor for the restoration of Bowers Marsh in Essex a couple of weeks later. However, a proportion of our grant income has been adversely affected by the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review and funding for some species recovery projects was lost. Fortunately, some grant agreements run over many years. This gives us time to both advocate against reductions and seek alternative funding. Support in this area comes from local, national and international sources – see pages 52–54 for the full list – the breadth gives us the opportunity to plan our work with a degree of confidence.

To provide even more stability and growth to our income, we are starting to gain more support from the corporate sector where social responsibility, despite economic difficulties, is gaining importance all the time. There is a growing recognition amongst forward-thinking companies that this is an important ingredient for success and we are ideally placed to benefit. In this arena, we are delighted to be working with Tesco to help protect rainforests around the world. Twenty million shoppers, including RSPB supporters, can now take another “step for nature” through this scheme – a huge opportunity in the battle against climate change. Partnerships like this one can take many months from inception to launch but a sound relationship can serve both parties well over many years. The deal with the Co-operative Bank has run since 1989 and has helped us to raise around £10 million through the RSPB affinity credit card.

Net income (money available for charitable purposes), at £89.3 million, was slightly down on the previous year. This is shown after deducting the £17.9 million cost of generating income and a further £12.5 million cost of goods for resale by our trading operation. The majority of products sold, such as bird food and feeders, optics, wildlife books and videos, relate directly to our charitable objectives.

The cost of generating income increased due to inflationary pressure in a number of areas such as printing and postage costs. We also invested in future income growth by bringing our processes up to date and promoting the opportunity for supporters to upgrade their annual subscription to a monthly amount of their choice.

Expenditure

The diversity of our income streams gave us the financial stability to continue to increase our conservation and education work, spending £1.2 million more than last year. In addition, expenditure on land purchases and associated visitor facilities increased by £1.0 million from a comparatively low base in 2011. The reduced availability of grants and the high price of land continue to constrain our aspirations. We believe that acquiring land is the

most enduring way of safeguarding habitat. It would be a disaster for nature conservation if future generations were to witness further loss of biodiversity as a consequence of our generation’s financial woes.

As well as making nature reserves and protected areas the best they can be for nature, we must work on the pieces of land between them to join up the fragments of habitat that go to make up the landscapes that are important to wildlife. Futurescapes is the name we give to the vision for these landscapes, and it provides a brilliant example of how the RSPB has been able to progress land management in spite of the recession.

Nature reserves are an important part of landscape-scale conservation, but it is unrealistic for a single organisation to realise the vision alone. The key to success is partnership working. For example, we work with United Utilities in the Forest of Bowland in Lancashire – the only place in England where hen harriers nested successfully in 2011. We have to do more in partnership with companies, farmers and other conservation charities, and our fundraisers are striving to come up with new and innovative ways to fund more land purchases.

To help constrain the damaging impact on conservation of sea level rise, we undertook two major projects on the English east coast during the year. The first one was at Wallasea Island in Essex, where Crossrail and the Environment Agency have helped to fund the Defra-supported project to secure 155 hectares of saltmarsh and mudflat as replacement habitat for that lost to “coastal squeeze”. And secondly, with financial support from the European Union, we have improved the sea defences to protect freshwater habitats at Titchwell on the Norfolk Coast.

The amount we spend on education and communications has been stable for the last couple of years, but the amount spent probably is not the best way by which to judge the scale of much of our work. For example, new technology is driving down the cost of communication – which is a relief given the rising cost of postage – so this doesn’t mean we are doing less, we are just doing it more efficiently. Our monthly e-newsletter is a good example – we now have more than 400,000 subscribers.

Turning to education specifically, we are consciously investing in quality rather than quantity as verified by the Government sponsored Quality Badge – 14 of our sites reached the standard of outstanding or very good. And on the quantity side, we are very pleased that more than 50,000 children visited RSPB countryside classrooms in organised school groups. Minsmere’s million pound makeover (much of it funded by partners) sees a new discovery centre designed for families and children with a dedicated learning facility, Wild Zone and Wild Wood Adventure. We were taken by surprise by the level of participation in the Big Schools’ Birdwatch after

widespread coverage on TV. We sent out so many packs to schools that we ended up with just eight left!

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg because education, in its widest sense, needs to engage every age group. With regard to new technology mentioned earlier, we have just made our debut into the world of Smartphone technology by launching two apps: LoveNature and LoveBirds.

Looking further afield, through BirdLife International we work very closely with our overseas partners. About 12% of our expenditure supports overseas conservation but about half of this is funded from money specifically donated for the purpose (from the EU or KfW – the German Development Bank for example). Support for BirdLife Malta and Cyprus to save migrant birds that use the flyway between Africa and Europe is one of our top conservation priorities. It is an issue that many RSPB supporters care passionately about and, of course, success isn’t just dependent on funding, we have to change the behaviour of those involved in illegal trapping and hunting too.

Looking ahead

One of the challenges we face is the pension deficit. The RSPB, like all other responsible employers, has invested considerable time and effort in finding the best solution to the complex problem of providing an affordable pension scheme for its employees. We are committed to providing a remuneration and reward package that attracts and retains the quality of people we need to deliver our conservation ambitions. We have made a number of changes over the last nine years to share the risk of pension provision more equally between staff and the RSPB and we have in place a long-term deficit recovery programme, which is agreed with the Pension Trustees. The latest triennial review is underway. In reaching an outcome we will strike a balance between the needs of all those involved but, at this stage, the specific details are under review.

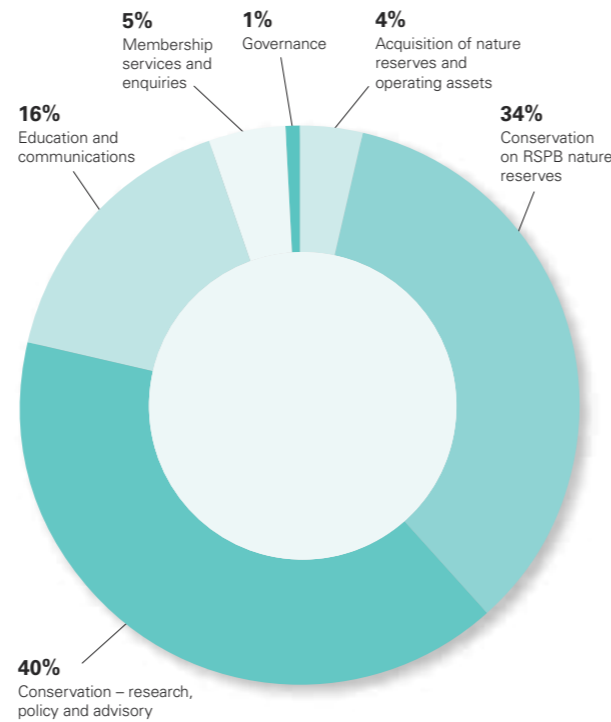
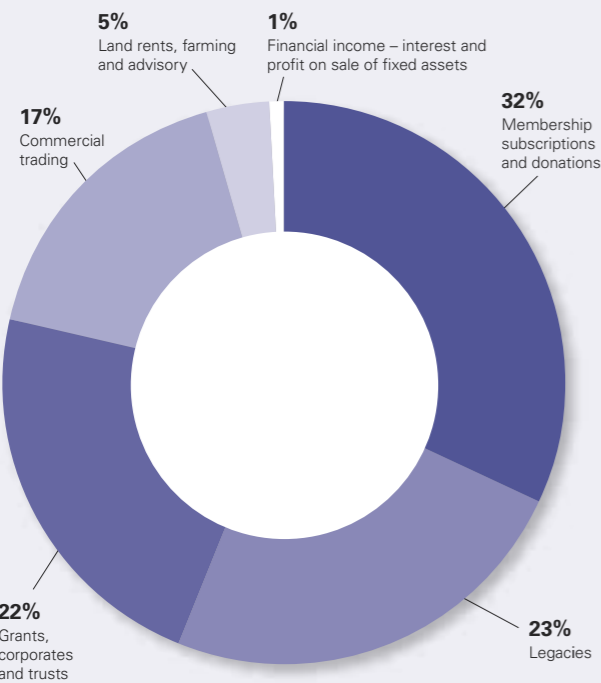
However, it isn’t just the financial consequences of recession that are of concern. Economic woes have shifted the environment down the Government’s agenda as well as buffeting the security of our income, making funding sources harder to tap into. Thankfully, we have strong support from our members and we are weathering the storm reasonably well.

We would love to be able to say that we confidently expect brighter skies to appear on the horizon by this time next year. The Trustees spend a lot of time balancing between the need for prudence and the need to invest wisely for the benefit of wildlife today and tomorrow. Being realistic, we think that will be a feature of our financial planning meetings for some time to come.

HOW WE RAISED IT

We raised £89.3 million for conservation this year. This sum is net of the £17.9 million cost of generating income and a further £12.5 million cost of goods for resale for our trading operation. The majority of products sold, such as bird food, optics, wildlife books and videos, relate directly to our charitable objectives.

More than two-thirds of RSPB income comes from individuals, and with the adult membership renewal rate approaching 90%, the loyalty of our members provides a robust foundation for our work. Much of the remaining third comes from grants, corporate relationships and land-related income. Whilst each of these sources fluctuates, the diversity provides reasonable stability.



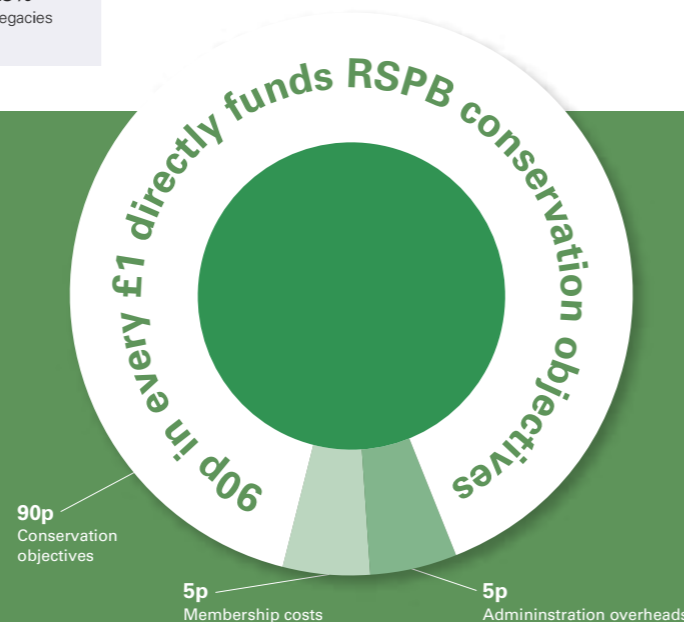
HOW WE USED IT TO SAVE NATURE

This year we spent £85.7 million on our charitable activities. The diversity of our income streams and continuing support of over a million people gave us the financial stability to continue to increase our conservation and education work.

We deliberately maintain a modest level of free financial reserves to maximise the funds available for immediate conservation needs. These currently stand at £17.5 million and represent 11 weeks' expenditure. This is towards the lower end of the range set by the trustees of between eight and sixteen weeks.

WHERE YOUR £1 GOES

We do everything we can to make sure that almost all of every £1 goes directly to fund our conservation objectives. Only 5p from your pound goes to administrative overheads, including governance, and another 5p on our membership related costs. This leaves 90p of your £1, which makes all of the successes in this annual review possible.



OPERATING STATEMENT for the year ended 31 March 2012

	2012 £m	2011 £m
INCOME		
Membership subscriptions and donations	39.0	39.2
Grants, corporates and trusts	26.8	29.7
Legacies	27.1	27.5
Commercial trading	20.4	20.9
Land rents, farming and advisory services	5.8	4.5
Financial income – profit on sale of fixed assets and interest	0.6	0.7
TOTAL INCOME	119.7	122.5
COST OF GENERATING INCOME		
Cost of goods for resale	12.5	12.8
Other cost of generating income	17.9	15.7
TOTAL COST OF GENERATING INCOME	30.4	28.5
NET INCOME AVAILABLE FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES	89.3	94.0
EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE PURPOSES		
Acquisition of nature reserves and operating assets	4.0	3.0
Conservation on RSPB nature reserves	29.3	28.9
Conservation – research, policy and advisory	34.2	33.7
Education and communication	13.6	13.3
Membership services and enquiries	4.1	4.0
Governance	0.5	0.5
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	85.7	83.4
NET OPERATING INCOME	3.6	10.6
OTHER MOVEMENTS		
Investment assets	0.1	0.9
Pension scheme	(2.9)	(2.4)
Stock, debtors and creditors	1.8	(4.4)
TOTAL OTHER MOVEMENTS	(1.0)	(5.9)
MOVEMENT IN AVAILABLE CASH AND INVESTMENTS	2.6	4.7

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS as at 31 March 2012

	2012 £m	2011 £m
Nature reserves	125.4	121.7
Operating assets	4.7	4.3
Cash and investments	37.4	34.8
Stock, debtors and creditors	5.4	7.2
Pension liability	(46.7)	(33.5)
NET ASSETS	126.2	134.5

FINANCIAL RESERVES as at 31 March 2012

	2012 £m	2011 £m
Available financial reserves at the start of the period	42.0	32.9
Net operating income	3.6	10.6
Movement in investment assets and pension scheme	(2.8)	(1.5)
Available financial reserves for future activities	42.8	42.0
Held for specific purposes	(25.3)	(28.5)
FREE FINANCIAL RESERVES	17.5	13.5

Representing future expenditure cover of

11 weeks 9 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 2012.

Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP

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

26 June 2012

THE FULL AUDITED ACCOUNTS were authorised for issue on 26 June 2012 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:

Ian Darling, Chairman, 26 June 2012

THANK YOU

By Stepping Up For Nature together, we've achieved so much. Thank you all.

Members

The support and loyalty of our members is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting the rigorous conservation targets that we set would not be possible without the enormous contributions that members make. Members help in many ways, all of them equally important: financially, through volunteering, by supporting RSPB campaigns through letter writing, and by helping to deliver RSPB projects on the ground through local groups.

Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked unstintingly over the year. Local groups provide a great focus for us in local communities, involve many people in our work, and raised over £431,500 for RSPB conservation projects. Wildlife Explorers (our junior members) raised more than £23,000 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 over 17,600 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of over 1,017,782 hours. This is equivalent to an extra 591 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, 594,684 people gave an hour of their time to participate in the RSPB's Big

Garden Birdwatch, and 90,043 took part in our Make Your Nature Count survey.

Legacies

This year, as ever, we are grateful to individuals who generously remember the RSPB in their wills. The income generated in this way makes a significant impact on the amount of conservation work we are able to carry out throughout the year. Whilst it is impossible to thank each and every one of our benefactors, there are a few we would like to mention:

Ronald Charles North
Vera Constance Messam
Eileen Nora Campbell White
William John Else
Stephen Cooper Shepherd
James William Hardcastle
Anna Margaretha Moesker
Mary Collins
Kathleen Mary Davidson
Stanley James Baldry

Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided essential support for RSPB projects to restore and secure natural heritage for current and future generations to discover, learn about and enjoy. The Big Lottery Fund has helped us create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to have greater access to the natural environment, involve local communities and provide sustainable energy initiatives. The RSPB is indebted to HLF and BIG for their continued support for our work.

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We are grateful for the support received and would particularly like

to acknowledge the following:

Adessium Foundation
Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
Arrowgrass Capital Partners LLP
A J H Ashby Will Trust
Geoff Ball
The Banister Charitable Trust
Basel Zoo – Across the River
The Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation
BBC Wildlife Fund
BirdLife International
BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme Lost Species Fund
British Birdwatching Fair
British Trust for Ornithology
Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Charitable Trust
Cambridge Conservation Initiative
Mr Ronald Glyn Carr Will Trust
Mrs M M G Carter Deceased Will Trust
Alfred Chandler
Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey
Miss Joyce Stephanie Collard Discretionary Trust
Conservation International – Global Conservation Fund
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
Mrs Peter Edgson Trust
Ellem Foundation
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Frankfurt Zoological Society
A M Frost Discretionary Trust
The Gannochy Trust
The Helen and Horace Gillman Trusts
The A B Grace Trust
The Doris Louise Hailes Charitable Trust
Richard Hale
Peter Harrison MBE
Mrs Iris Hulse Discretionary Trust
J E V B Charitable Trust
Henry Kenner & Deirdre Boyle
The Kirby Laing Foundation
The A G Leventis Foundation

Mr Peter Lund and Mr David Lund Discretionary Trust
Miss Helen Rachael Mackaness Discretionary Trust
Miss J A Matthews
Robert McCracken QC
Joan Montague Discretionary Trust
Mull and Iona Community Trust
Nationale Postcode Loterij, Netherlands
The National Trust
The Nature Trust (Sandy) Limited
Northern Ireland Environment LINK
The Oglesby Charitable Trust
Susan and Franklin Orr
The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
The David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Mr Brian and Mrs Nancy Pattenden Discretionary Trust
The Peacock Charitable Trust
Charles Petteward
Mr A Rafinski
Rapid Response Facility
RBS CommunityForce
Restore UK
Alice Richie Irrevocable Trust
The Robertson Trust
The Rufford Foundation
Save our Species (SOS)
Scottish Environment LINK
Scottish Power Green Energy Trust
The Shears Foundation
Smart Energy for Europe Platform (SEFEP)
Nini Isabel Stewart Trust
The Suffolk Foundation
Sir John Swire CBE
Teesside Environmental Trust
The Tree Council
Mrs C Tremeeer
The Tubney Charitable Trust
Mrs Margaret Turner Discretionary Trust
University of Cambridge
University of Durham
University of Leeds
Vogelsbescherming Netherland
Wales Environment LINK
David and Christine Walmsley
Michael and Rosemary Warburg
Waterloo Foundation
The Joan Whitehead Trust
Whitley Animal Protection Trust
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Wildlife & Countryside LINK
Geoff Woodard
John Young Charitable Settlement

Landfill Communities Fund

We are grateful for funding support from the following organisations

through the Landfill Communities Fund:
Angus Environmental Trust
Argyll & Bute Council
Banbridge District Council
Biffa Award
County Durham Environmental Trust Ltd
Down District Council
EPAC through Groundwork Pride Ltd
Fermanagh District Council
Glasgow City Council
GrantScape
Highland Council
INCA
Million Ponds project in association with Biffa Award
Newport City Council Landfill Communities Fund
Newry & Mourne District Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Environmental Key Fund
Perth & Kinross Quality of Life Trust
SITA Trust
Smith Skip Ltd
Staffordshire Environmental Fund
Ulster Wildlife Trust Landfill Communities Fund
Veolia Environmental Trust
Veolia Havering Riverside Trust
Veolia Pitsea Marshes Trust
Viridor Credits Environmental Company
Waste Recycling Group Ltd (WRG) through Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN)

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:

ACE UK
Audioboo
BBC Wildlife Magazine
Bloomsbury Publishing plc
BP through the Scottish Forest Alliance
Bupa Care Services
The Caravan Club
Carillion plc
CEMEX UK Ltd
Chevron
Co-operative Bank
Co-operative Financial Services
Cumnock and Doon Valley Minerals Trust
Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund

Dorling Kindersley Ltd
The Famous Grouse
Fulham Heating Merchants Ltd
The Green Insurance Company
Hartley Anderson Ltd
Hoseasons Group
JD Sports Fashion plc
Jeanie Media Ltd
Just Go! Holidays
Northern Ireland Electricity
The Otter House Group
Paramo Nikwax Ltd
PD Ports
Puffin Post
PURE
Questmark Ltd
Ricoh Europe plc
Scottish & Southern Energy
Scottish Power
Scottish Power Renewables
Swarovski Optik
Talisman Energy UK Ltd
Tarmac Ltd
The Telegraph Media Group
Tesco Stores Ltd
Two Ravens Press Ltd
Turcan Connell
United Utilities plc
Vital Earth Ltd
Zegrahm Expeditions

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

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

Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All Programme
Big Lottery Fund – Community Sustainable Energy Programme, distributed by BRE
Bonn Convention for Migratory Species (CMS)
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Ceredigion County Council through Rural Development Plan Axis 3
Coasts, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways LEADER, through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), joint funded by Defra and the EU
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Danish Development Assistance Programme (DANIDA)
Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Sustainable Development Fund

Department for International Development (DfID) – Civil Society Challenge Fund
 Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
 Defra – Darwin Initiative
 Department of Agriculture & 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 and Galloway Council
 Dumfries and Galloway LEADER 2007–2013, jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission
 English Heritage
 Environment Agency
 Environment Agency Wales
 Environment Wales
 Environment Wales Biodiversity Fund
 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
 European Commission – DG Environment
 European Commission – LIFE+
 European Commission – LIFE-Nature
 European Commission – LIFE-Information and Communications
 European Commission (Seventh Framework Programme) – EuroGEOSS project
 European Commission – Tropical Forests and Other Forests in Developing Countries budget line
 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
 ERDF – INTERREG IVA 2 Seas Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013
 ERDF – INTERREG IVA administered by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB)
 ERDF – INTERREG IVB North Sea Region Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007–2013
 ERDF – INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Transnational Programme 2007–2013
 Event Scotland
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) / DfID – Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP)
 Fife LEADER

Forestry Commission England
 Forestry Commission Scotland
 The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 Forest of Dean Local Action Group, through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), jointly funded and supported by Defra, Forest of Dean Partnership, LEADER and EAFRD: Europe Investing in Rural Areas
 Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER 2007–2013, jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission
 French Government's Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)
 The German Ministry for the Environment (BMU), via the German state development bank (KfW)
 Heritage Lottery Fund
 Heritage Lottery Fund – Your Heritage
 Highland LEADER 2007–2013, jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission
 Homes and Communities Agency's Parklands funding administered by Essex County Council
 Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
 Lancashire County Council Green Partnership Awards
 Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority
 National Heritage Memorial Fund
 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 After Minerals
 Natural England – Wetland Vision Grant Scheme
 Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme administered by the Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas (SOAR)
 Northern Ireland Tourist Board
 Orkney Islands Council
 Orkney LEADER
 Peak District National Park Authority

Pennine Prospects
 Renfrewshire LEADER 2007–2013, jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission
 Ribbles Valley Borough Council Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
 Rural Tayside LEADER
 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
 Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
 Scottish Government Science Engagement Grants Scheme
 Scottish Natural Heritage
 Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group, through the Rural Development Programme for England (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 Rural Development Programme
 St Albans City & District Council
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council through the Future Jobs Fund
 Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Sustainable Development Fund
 Suffolk Coastal District Council – Economic Development Support Fund
 Teignbridge District Council
 USAID/USFS STEWARD Programme
 US Fish and Wildlife Service
 Visit West Lothian
 Welsh Government
 Welsh Government Ecosystem Resilience, Diversity and Compliance 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: SAVING NATURE

So where do we go from here? We are at a crossroads. The threat to the natural world is too big for any one organisation: in just 40 years, there has been a 40% decline in the average abundance of species. We cannot afford to lose any more.

We are faced with a choice: to limit our ambition, or to step up to the challenge and work with others to fulfil our conservation ambitions.

Decades of collective experience have taught us that success comes not from looking at any individual species or site or habitat in isolation, but as an interconnected whole. This awareness will continue to drive our conservation efforts.

This annual review demonstrates that together we can achieve remarkable things. With the pressure of the 2020 biodiversity targets fast approaching, we each have a responsibility to help achieve even more of these remarkable things. Together, we are ready to build on our successes and step up to the next level, to save nature.



However you step up for nature, whether it's with your RSPB membership donation, by volunteering your time, or speaking up for it in the workplace, thanks for helping make possible the enormous range of successes in this annual review.

Please help us win even more victories for wildlife this year:
www.rspb.org.uk/supporting

Cover: girl in bluebell wood by David Tipling, page 3: bee by David Tipling and black-headed gull by Nigel Blake (rspb-images.com), page 4: people on reserve by Andy Hay, page 6: love nature cyclist by Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com), page 7: house sparrow by Ray Kennedy, Gola Rainforest by Alex Hipkiss, food planting, looking at clipboard and two ladies by Andy Hay, pond dipping by Eleanor Bentall (all rspb-images.com), fishing boat by Albatross Task Force, staff with painted backs by RSPB Northern Ireland, volunteer by Richard Campbell, page 9: spoon-billed sandpiper chick by Eleana Lappo, page 11: sparrowhawk by Steve Round (rspb-images.com), page 12: bittern by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), ladybird spider by Ian Hughes, page 13: ground beetle by Bob Gomes (RSPB), crane by Nick Upton, stone-curlew and hen harrier by Andy Hay (both rspb-images.com), page 15: Pagham Harbour by Dreamstime, page 17: Dartford warbler by Ben Hall (rspb-images.com), page 18: workers at Titchwell and Wallesea Island by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), page 19: helicopter by Richard Cuthbert, grey plover and RSPB The Lodge nature reserve by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), page 21: FAME project by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), page 23: Gola launch by Jonathan Barnard (RSPB), page 24: wind farm by iStockphoto.com, penguin rescue by Katrine Herian, page 25: Norfolk farming staff at work by Andy Hay, large blue butterfly by Mark Sisson and redshank by Roger Wilmshurst (all rspb-images.com), page 27: Minsmere Wild Zone by Ian Barthorpe, page 29: Mary and Dave Braddock by Mary Braddock, page 30: Every Child Outdoors by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), Springwatch presenters by Bryan Bland (RSPB), page 31: peregrine by Ben Hall, Big Schools' Birdwatch by David McHugh (both rspb-images.com), page 33: willow basking shark by Laura Hagan, page 34: chough by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), page 37: pink-footed geese by Chris Knights (rspb-images.com), page 38: Loch Lomond by Patricia and Angus McDonald (Aerographica Scottish), page 41: black grouse by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com), page 42: Softrak (RSPB), page 45: Mike Clarke with Brownies by Katie-jo Luxton (RSPB), page 46: walking in woodland by Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com), page 55: Mike Clarke by Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

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The RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.

We belong to BirdLife International, the global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

www.rspb.org.uk

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