



giving  
nature  
a home

# Annual review

2017–2018





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Kingfisher by Fotolia



**Mike Clarke**  
RSPB Chief Executive

# Welcome

This year has been one of progress, with achievements made during turbulent times.

Our achievements are notable: we celebrated acquiring Franchises Lodge in the New Forest – one of our most exciting nature reserves in recent years. There's more about it on page 34. Our conservation ambitions continue to grow, with the RSPB helping to launch Back from the Brink, a project to save 20 species facing extinction, supported by £4.6 million from the National Lottery. Read more on page 21. And at last, there's some good news from Cyprus, where illegal trapping of songbirds on the British Bases fell by more than 70%.

However, nature is still in trouble. The UK remains one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with more than one in seven species facing extinction, and more than half in decline. Whilst the threats to nature intensify, charities are navigating a period of political flux and changing regulations on fundraising, data and campaigning. Within this context, we've focused on three key areas.

First, our priority has been to connect with you, our supporters. We had a hugely heartwarming response to our "Say Yes" campaign, to ensure that we can keep in contact with you and remain compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). With our membership numbers holding strong at 1,219,308, 91% of those of you that responded said "Yes" to hearing from us. GDPR has been a huge challenge, as with all charities, and your support for the work we do and the difference we make is humbling.

Second, we campaigned with partners to ensure the legal protections for nature are not weakened as the UK leaves the EU.

It's the biggest change in a generation, and vital that we are engaged in the future of the laws and legal system that underpin nature conservation. For more details, see our campaigns update on page 27.

Finally, we're ensuring the RSPB is adapting in changing times, and we're as efficient and effective as we can be. This means refocusing our work so we can make the biggest impact for nature, investing in partnerships to magnify our collective impact, and making savings and changes to how we work to ensure financial resilience in an uncertain world.

Next year is going to be as crucial for nature as any since the RSPB was founded. All UK governments must ensure environmental protection remains at least as robust as it has been within the EU. In 2020, China hosts the UN Summit on Biodiversity, setting the global conservation agenda for years to come. Its success requires leadership at home. If we get it right here, we can inspire the world to act.

Thank you to our members, partners, volunteers and supporters. We couldn't have achieved what we did this year without you. We've had enormous impact over our 130 year history because we've changed with the times, responding to the greatest threats to our natural world. More than ever, we need to continue to act and speak out for nature. With a clear focus and backed by all of you, we can face challenge and change with confidence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.



Back from the Brink has an ambitious target to save threatened species such as the grey long-eared bat from extinction.

Dale Sutton (spp-images.com)



RSPB

**Kevin Cox**  
RSPB Chair

# Making a difference

Kevin Cox reflects on the RSPB's ability to tackle the threats nature faces in a challenging world.

Since being appointed Chair of the RSPB's Council at last year's AGM, I've had a unique and privileged opportunity to see examples of our work throughout the UK. One of the characteristics of so much of this work is that it is long-term. Nature's recovery takes time, but we persevere until we achieve our goals.

We are pressing ahead with a range of transformational work, all supported by our world-leading science. This includes peatland restoration across hills and moors throughout the UK; projects to save migrant birds such as turtle doves and swifts; and work to protect marine resources around the UK's Overseas Territories. These are just a few of our key projects, all undertaken with the assurance that we are working on the highest priorities for nature conservation. Over the past year we have reviewed all our key priority programmes to ensure that the financial support you, our members and supporters, give us is working harder than ever.

As we focus on the areas where we intend to make a real difference, we've continued to forge new and exciting partnerships with other conservation and environmental organisations, businesses, industry and funders. The Back from the Brink project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, led by Natural England and involving the RSPB and seven other organisations, is already tackling projects to restore species across England and engage people in the work to create a vibrant and long-term legacy. We've also joined forces with Greener UK to campaign for the best deal for nature as the UK exits the European Union. Whether we are calling for an ambitious 25-year Environment Plan for England, the need for an effective environment watchdog or the best outcome for wildlife-friendly farming, we are stronger together.

We also recognise the vital importance of inspiring future generations. Our partnership with Aldi has already given over 330,000 children the opportunity to connect with nature. Because of their support we have been able to scale-up the level of our ambition and work with 1,500 schools across 17 cities.

I am also delighted that this year we have acquired our first nature reserve in the New Forest National Park. RSPB Franchises Lodge is 1,000 acres of woodland, wood pasture and heathland, and home to a rich diversity of wildlife. The purchase was made possible partly through a gift in respect of a settlement between the previous owners and HMRC, the first time the RSPB has been a beneficiary of such a gift. We are also grateful for the financial support we've received from a generous legacy, the New Forest National Park Authority and the Friends of the New Forest.

The external environment is challenging: both in terms of the uncertain future posed by the decision to exit the European Union and the continuing squeeze on the economy that inevitably reflects on the fundraising environment faced by all charities, not just the RSPB. It is a sign of real strength that the RSPB's amazing staff and volunteers continued to deliver fantastic results whilst, at the same time, ensuring we can make targeted savings to maintain our financial reserves.

I wish to pay tribute to those staff and volunteers and to thank you, our members and supporters, who give us the confidence and financial support to continue our work. You responded wonderfully to the "Say Yes" campaign, driven by the GDPR legislation now in place, which puts us all in charge of our digital identity – 91% of those responding said Yes to hearing from us. Thank you.



Emma Brockman

We've recently acquired a new nature reserve on the edge of the New Forest: Franchises Lodge.



RSPB

**Graham White**  
Head of Reserves Ecology

# Vital spaces for nature

An update on the vital work we're doing for wildlife on our network of more than 200 nature reserves.

As we look back on the past year, it's impossible not to mention our Minsmere reserve in Suffolk, which celebrated its 70th birthday with a series of events. Minsmere is home to some of the UK's rarest wildlife including avocets, bearded tits and bitterns. But it's not just Minsmere. All our reserves are incredibly rich places for wildlife. A staggering 16,000 species are present on our 218 nature reserves, which cover a total of 152,791 hectares. We're constantly working to ensure that our reserve network provides the most suitable conditions for these species.

RSPB reserves support more than 10% of the UK wintering population of about 35 species. The majority of wetland bird species are faring well on RSPB reserves, as are our priority heathland species, whilst farmland and upland species, and seabirds, show more variable trends. 93% of UK land mammal species occur on RSPB reserves and we are pleased to have found dormice at Radipole Lake in Dorset and Exminster Marshes in Devon, adding to our four other reserves that host this beguiling rodent.

We have identified 65 priority bird species, on which we report the population status across our reserve network. Of these, 40 are faring well; 13 are struggling, but we have identified measures to increase their populations; and 12 are faring poorly, mostly due to factors beyond our control. Our work over the coming months will be focusing on improving the outcomes for these bird species.

## Our species are booming

I'm pleased to announce that the numbers of bitterns on RSPB reserves is at a new high of 77 booming bitterns, including 19 at Ham Wall in Somerset. Even better, in 2017 the number of sites with nesting activity was the highest recorded since nest monitoring began in 1994. Bitterns nested at both Otmoor in Oxfordshire and Cors Ddyga on Anglesey in 2017, following their first breeding at both sites the previous year. At Otmoor, there were two nests, one of which fledged chicks, whilst at Cors Ddyga there was one nest, which fledged one chick. With another two booming bitterns at Valley Wetlands on Anglesey, we hope that they have finally established a presence on the island.

Other rare colonising herons have done well, too – on Ham Wall, the number of great white egrets continues to grow, little bitterns nested again, and night herons nested locally for the first time. With specific management actions in place, nine pairs of great white egrets reared 16 young in 2017. In addition, seven pairs of cattle egrets raised eight young, and a pair of spoonbills raised three young at our Fairburn Ings reserve in West Yorkshire.

More dynamic habitat management at Berney Marshes in Norfolk has enabled combined numbers of lapwings and redshanks to increase to 226 pairs, from 174 pairs in 2016. Elsewhere, predator exclusion fences, which allow chicks to thrive, have proved very effective and lapwings reached their highest ever levels at Cors Ddyga (76 pairs compared to the previous high of 46).

In Northern Ireland, there were record numbers of redshanks at Lower Lough Erne in County Fermanagh (90 pairs). Nearly 100% of the redshanks in Northern Ireland are now restricted to our Lower Lough Erne and Lough Beg reserves.

The success of black-winged stilts on RSPB reserves this year follows a tremendous effort by reserve staff, volunteers, and members of the Reserves Ecology and Investigations teams. At Cliffe Pools in Kent, the plan involved encircling an area of the pools with a predator exclusion fence in 2016, and attracting stilts to nest within the fenced area by cutting and grazing the vegetation, and providing suitable water levels. At Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, rapidly rising water levels posed a threat to the nesting stilts, and reserve staff successfully raised the stilts' nest to prevent it from becoming flooded. At both sites, the nesting stilts were continually watched over by staff and volunteers.

Natterjack toads have been doing well on two of our reserves. At Mersehead in Dumfries and Galloway, we counted a record 240 males as the population responds well to habitat creation, notably a series of newly-dug ponds. Likewise, at The Lodge in Bedfordshire, 500 toadlets were counted in 2017, five times the count in 2016, following pond and bare ground creation.

Rotting fish was the key to finding six examples of a rare carrion beetle on our Loch Leven reserve in Perth and Kinross. *Thanatophilus dispar* is classed as critically endangered in the UK and is globally rare. Loch Leven is one of only two places it has been recorded in Scotland. Anna Jemmett, Loch Leven's assistant warden, set up pitfall traps with rotten fish in them to catch the beetle. She was delighted to catch three beetles in an area they have been found before and three in a new part of the reserve.

Nightjars continue to prosper on our reserves, with a high count of 172 recorded, and at our Geltsdale reserve in Cumbria, black grouse numbers increased from 27 in 2016 to 45 in 2017.

Meanwhile, in Labrador Bay in Devon, ciril buntings have increased in numbers from seven to 29 pairs since we began managing the site in 2008.

### Bad news for Slavonian grebes

Sadly, it's not all good news. 2017–18 was a poor year for Slavonian grebes, which declined from 15 to 11 pairs at Loch Ruthven in the Highlands of Scotland. The main issue here is low productivity. Breeding cranes on our reserves declined slightly in 2017, down to ten pairs from 12. RSPB reserves have been key to the re-establishment of cranes in the Fens and this year, three pairs reared four young at the

Nene Washes in Cambridgeshire. Elsewhere, the re-introduced cranes bred successfully at West Sedgemoor in Somerset for the first time. Reintroduced cranes also made their first nesting attempt at Greylake in Somerset. Cranes attempted to breed at Otmoor in Oxfordshire for the third year in a row, but were again unsuccessful.

### Translocations and releases

On a happier note, we're proud of the success we've had in translocating and releasing various species. Thanks to Veolia funding, we released ladybird spiders at two new locations at our Arne reserve in Dorset in March 2017. Spiders were taken from two other sites and captive-reared, and we released 15 individuals. Further releases at new locations are planned in 2018 through the Back from the Brink programme, funded by the National Lottery.

In Wales, efforts to restore wavy St John's wort at the Mawddach Valley in Gwynedd were rewarded with over 300 flowering plants.

We're part of an exciting project to restore native alpine plants on the fells around Haweswater in Cumbria. Our new partner, the Alpine Garden Society, is helping to propagate and grow locally-scarce species such as the globeflower, roseroot, water avens, wood crane's bill and bitter vetch. These have been collected on the crags and our partner will help replant them at Mardale Head.

### More land for wildlife

Crucial to the development of our reserve network is the acquisition of new land and we have made good progress this year. For example, at Langford Lowfields in Nottingham we have been restoring a sand and gravel quarry in partnership with sustainable building materials group Tarmac. Phase three of this large-scale habitat creation project is now complete and a range of new islands have been created. This area is now attracting marsh harriers and bearded tits, while booming bitterns were first heard at the site in 2011.

On the northern edge of the New Forest, we have recently acquired two adjacent areas of land covering a total of 386 hectares (1,000 acres). This new reserve, which will be called Franchises Lodge, includes areas of broadleaf woodland and grassland, as well as conifer plantation which has the potential to be restored to wood pasture and heathland. There is also a fantastic opportunity to engage people with nature at this site. Further funding will be needed to complete the restoration work required to allow the site to meet its full potential for nature.

### Looking forward

In the future, we'll be focusing our work more on our priority species and reserves, in order to give the best possible outcomes for nature. Thank you so much for all your support.





Steve Round (rspb-images.com)

The success of black-winged stilts on RSPB reserves is the result of tremendous efforts from RSPB staff and volunteers.



RSPB scientists have tagged hawfinches to help determine why they are declining.

Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)



**Kevin Middleton**  
Science Communications Executive

# The fight for nature starts with science

We're working harder than ever to identify problems, develop solutions and put conservation into practice.

December saw the release of our annual *State of the UK's birds* report. The 2017 edition took a close look at one of the biggest threats to global biodiversity – climate change. This is not just a far-off, theoretical scenario: we're already seeing temperatures rising, rainfall patterns changing and our seas warming. The report highlighted the effect of these trends on a wide variety of species, from chiffchaffs, goldfinches and nuthatches shifting their distributions, to birds such as dotterels, whimbrels and Slavonian grebes facing increased risk of UK extinction.

It also demonstrated that there's much we can do to help reduce the impact of climate change on our wildlife. Protected areas – such as our nature reserves – will be a vital part of our response to the problem.

## Crowdsourcing conservation science

Last year we mentioned the launch of Project Puffin; this year we can report on its findings. We received more than 1,400 photos of puffins carrying fish in their bills. Thanks to more than 600 contributors – dubbed the "Puffarazzi" – early indications are that some colonies are struggling to find enough large, nutritious fish. Dr Ellie Owen summed it up: "Using citizen scientists is giving us data on a scale that we have never been able to collect before."

Another species we're continuing to learn more about is the hawfinch. In 2017, researchers continued to look into the causes of its decline, using tiny GPS and radio tags to pinpoint the hawfinches' locations through the breeding season, find their nests and follow the outcomes of their breeding attempts.

The research is ongoing, with a PhD student using genetic analysis of hawfinch droppings to examine what the birds eat and how they use their habitat.

## Revealing natural benefits

For the first time ever, we have developed a Natural Capital Account for our nature reserves in England as a contribution to the debate on how best to reflect the value of nature in decision-making.

Our reserves are special places for wildlife as well as people. Our Account is our first attempt to quantify the value they provide to the public. Even its partial assessment reports that the benefits provided by our reserves are more than twice that of the costs of delivery. But these benefits are overwhelmingly invisible in standard financial accounts.

## Outstanding science

Thanks to the hard work of our scientists, the RSPB enjoys an enviable scientific reputation, demonstrated by our "citation rate". Of the 64 UK institutes that publish in the environment and ecology field, the RSPB ranks third on the number of citations per paper.

Richard Gregory, our Head of Species Monitoring and Research, has been named as Honorary Professor at the Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London. Having our scientists recognised in this way clearly shows how highly our work is valued.





283 MPs signed our motion to "back the blue belt" and protect marine areas in the Overseas Territories.

Graham Eaton (ispb-images.com)



RSPB

**Jonathan Hall**  
Head of the UK Overseas Territories Unit



# Our work in the Overseas Territories

It was a challenging year for some of the Overseas Territories, but it was not without its successes.

Our mission is all about saving nature, but sometimes Mother Nature gives us a kick in the teeth. In September 2017, Hurricane Irma unleashed her fury on some of the UK Overseas Territories (OTs) where we carry out conservation work – notably the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Turks and Caicos.

Some of our partners' homes were damaged or destroyed and the basic infrastructure of normal life and of years of conservation work was trashed. All this is critical to the eco-tourism that underpins conservation work in the Caribbean. We've provided financial support to help our partners get up and running again. Progress has been slow at times, but our partners' dogged determination has been inspiring to witness.

## Making islands safer for birds

There was good news from Cyprus, where illegal trapping of migrating songbirds on the UK Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia plummeted in autumn 2017 by around 72%, saving approximately 620,000 birds. That was thanks to joint efforts from the Base Authorities, the RSPB, BirdLife Cyprus, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), with campaigning from Chris Packham and RSPB supporters. We can't consider this "mission accomplished", but it's an important step in the right direction.

The nesting seabirds of Gough Island, in the South Atlantic, are in danger from a different foe. Introduced house mice kill an estimated one million seabird chicks every year. Together with the Government of Tristan da Cunha, we plan to eradicate the mice in 2019 (fundraising and logistics permitting).

## Measuring up for success

Back in 2011, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets were set, including a commitment to protect at least 17% of land by 2020. Until now, nobody knew how many protected areas the OTs collectively had, or what area they covered. Since the publication of a peer-reviewed RSPB paper, we know the answer: 4.8% of OT land is protected – so there's a long way to go to meet the target.

In order to protect Endangered sei whales around the Falkland Islands, we need to identify Key Biodiversity Areas. We've made good progress this year by funding the collection of 19 hours of acoustic data; 13,400 whale images; 117 bone and 7 faecal samples, and 11 drone recordings.

Thanks to the OTs, the UK is responsible for more penguins than any other nation. The northern rockhopper penguin is one of the most threatened species, with 80% breeding on Tristan da Cunha. Project Pinnamin – pinnamin is the Tristanian name for the penguin – has been using a mix of traditional observation and cutting-edge tracking to help us learn more about the rapid population declines of this charismatic species. Changes in oceanographic conditions are currently a major suspect.

The #BackTheBlueBelt campaign aims to see the world's largest network of locally-led marine reserves around the OTs. The OTs provide a major opportunity for marine conservation as together they hold the planet's largest coral atoll, a quarter of its penguins and a third of its albatrosses. We'd like to thank the 283 MPs who signed our motion to "back the blue belt" and protect OT marine areas.

Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross by Andy Schofield (RSPB)



We are studying  
migrant birds,  
including whinchats,  
to discover what  
threats they face  
when they leave  
our shores.

Mike Lane (rspb-images.com)



RSPB



**Carles Carboneras**  
International Migrants  
Programme Manager



**Guy Anderson**  
UK Migrants  
Programme Manager



Swift by Steve Blair

# Taking action for migratory birds

To turn around the fortunes of our migrant birds, working with partners all along the flyway is critically important.

Through research, partnerships and practical conservation delivery, the RSPB's Birds without Borders programme has made important steps forward in understanding more about declining migratory birds right along the flyway from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa and how we can help them. There's no better example of this joined up, flyway-scale conservation approach than our work on turtle doves.

## Hope for turtle doves

Together with Natural England, Pensthorpe Conservation Trust and Fair to Nature, the RSPB is part of Operation Turtle Dove, which aims to improve the fortunes of these birds through testing and delivering practical conservation action. Having learned that a lack of food during the breeding season is having a negative effect on turtle doves, we've been carrying out work with the University of Sheffield to investigate whether providing supplementary seed during this period is safe and effective. Encouragingly, our research has shown that this is a safe emergency conservation option. We're now working with land managers to ensure that food is available for turtle doves in key areas.

Our work for turtle doves doesn't end there. We're also funding two dedicated advisers who are providing advice to farmers and land managers on how to support turtle doves on their land in East Anglia and south-east England. Further afield, Conservation Scientists have spent the last three winters investigating the habitat use and diet of turtle doves in Senegal. Their findings will help us to better understand what the species needs when it reaches its African wintering grounds.

Saving a migratory species requires co-operation across borders. 2018 sees the completion of a three-year LIFE-funded partnership project with Birdlife International, to develop an international turtle dove Action Plan. With input from 200 experts from 50 countries, the Action Plan highlights the actions required to save turtle doves across its range. The actions must now be put in place, and the European Commission will be looking closely at how EU Member States implement these actions.

## Uncovering the mysteries of migrations

One of the biggest hurdles in the conservation of migrant birds is a lack of knowledge. Efforts to solve problems on the birds' UK breeding grounds can only go so far if we don't have an understanding of how they spend the rest of their lives. Fortunately, technology is providing us with the tools to answer those questions. In partnership with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), we're tracking five species: wood warblers, spotted flycatchers, whinchats, pied flycatchers and swifts. Among the amazing journeys we've recorded, we've found that the pied flycatchers we tracked crossed the Sahara desert in one non-stop, 60-hour flight.

Swifts tagged in Northern Ireland show that during the breeding season they regularly make 50-km round trips to feed over the edges of Lough Neagh. Belfast, Oxford and Brighton are "Swift Cities" where we're working to raise awareness of swifts and help residents give them a home. Across the UK we're providing resources for groups and individuals to help swifts in their area; our work for migratory birds extends from local to intercontinental.



The Shiant Isles are now officially free of rats, which will help to protect seabirds such as these puffins.

Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)





RSPB

**Euan Dunn**  
Principal Policy Officer



# Waves of change for wildlife

Marine conservation forms a large part of the RSPB's work and the last year was no exception.

## Saving seabirds

We're pleased to report on the recovery programmes for little terns and roseate terns, both supported by EU LIFE+ funding. Across the UK's major tern colonies, both species of tern are feeling the benefits of coastal habitat creation and further conservation efforts.

As an example, roseate terns on our Coquet Island nature reserve, off the coast of Northumberland, matched their all-time high of 111 pairs, with a breeding success rate of 1.5 chicks fledged per pair.

International efforts to improve the fortunes of terns are continuing: a first assessment of tern trapping in Ghana, where most European roseate terns winter, sadly found that terns are still being killed, which is an issue that needs to be tackled.

The Albatross Task Force is continuing to make great progress in reducing the numbers of these seabirds killed as bycatch. Argentina and Chile are the latest countries to take action, making it law for trawlers to use bird-scaring lines, to discourage seabirds from the danger zones around the boats. It's estimated this will save at least 9,000 birds a year. The latest findings from Namibia show a major reduction in albatrosses being caught as bycatch, which demonstrates the positive longer-term effects of the project.

## Island restoration

A little closer to home, we're celebrating the fact that the Shiant Isles have officially been declared rat-free – the result of a four-year programme to make sure this remote Scottish island remains one of the most important

breeding colonies for seabirds in Europe. This follows the successful completion of the Isles of Scilly Seabird Restoration Project. The first Manx shearwaters and storm petrels in living memory have returned to crown this community-backed HLF/EU LIFE-funded project.

This year also saw the start of what may be our biggest challenge yet in terms of island restoration – plans to rid the Orkney mainland of stoats and, in doing so, protect threatened breeding wading birds. Our best practice toolkit for rodent eradication was launched this year and is helping further establish the RSPB's international reputation as experts in island restoration.

## Shaping policy

Looking to marine conservation policy more generally, we're continuing to press for legislation that will protect marine habitats, particularly in relation to proposed Marine Conservation Zones (see pages 33 and 49 for more information) and proposals to create a belt of Marine Protection Areas around the UK's overseas territories (see page 13).

Additionally the plans to leave the European Union, and consequently the Common Fisheries Policy, have focused attention on the need for an environmentally-friendly UK fisheries policy and this is an area in which we will continue to work to achieve the best for nature.

## Looking to the future

Reflecting on the last year, it's clear that while there are some important achievements to celebrate, there are many more challenges ahead.

Roseate tern by Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

The European Commission is pressing the UK Government to stop burning blanket bog in England and to restore damaged sites.

Mark Hamblin (rspp-images.com)





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**Pat Thompson**  
Senior Policy Officer



# A brighter future for our uplands

Our mountains, moors, hills and valleys are vital for wildlife. Here's how we're working to protect them.

The UK's mountains, moors, hills and valleys, also known as the uplands, comprise vital habitats. Increasingly, these areas are a refuge for species that were formerly more widespread across the UK. They're not just great for wildlife: the uplands are also vitally important for wider society. Much of our drinking water is sourced here, vast amounts of carbon is stored in peat soils, and upland places provide opportunities for recreation.

However, the uplands are in a poor state. Habitats such as a blanket bog are badly degraded and a number of bird species are declining. For example, UK hen harriers have declined by 14% since 2010. Similarly, curlews are declining across the UK, and a recent BTO/RSPB analysis indicates that this decline in curlew numbers is negatively associated with arable farming, woodland cover and predator numbers.

What's more, upland farms are especially vulnerable to change as a result of the UK's likely withdrawal from the Common Agricultural Policy following the Brexit decision. In view of this, RSPB Cymru hosted a conference in April 2017, to help shape the future of upland farming in Wales. This brought together farmers, farmers' unions, landowners, politicians, civil servants and conservationists in one place.

## Our response: how we're taking action

The question is, what are we doing to protect uplands and the wildlife that calls them home?

Our work to improve the uplands is well underway. At Abernethy Forest, a project to expand an area of native pinewood is in

progress. And in six landscapes across the UK, our curlew recovery programme is up and running, and involves habitat management and predator control. It aims to improve the fortunes of these threatened birds.

Our blanket bog land holdings in northern England, Wales and Scotland's Flow Country host some of the most ambitious peatland restoration projects in Europe, with positive impacts on dunlins, curlews and golden plovers. At Dove Stone in Greater Manchester, dunlins in particular have responded well to our blanket bog restoration work. Peatland restoration is also now progressing at Airds Moss in southern Scotland, and in Northern Ireland, an INTERREG-funded project aims to restore 2,228 hectares of blanket bog (see page 49).

We remain concerned about the impact of burning on blanket bog. The European Commission is pressing the UK Government to stop burning blanket bogs in England, and to restore damaged sites.

The RSPB's hen harrier LIFE project continues to tag record numbers of nestlings across the UK, and we're set to tag 70 birds by the end of the project. We're also part of the Northumberland Hen Harrier Protection Partnership, which saw three nests successfully fledge ten chicks under its watch. However, we need to remain vigilant, as raptor persecution continues.

Our uplands will require continued investment, but by working in a targeted way, I'm confident that we can turn their fortunes around.

Curlew by Steve Round (rspb-images.com)



Black-tailed godwits are benefiting from the ambitious Back from the Brink project.

Jeroen Stel (spbi-images.com)



RSPB

**Nicky O'Malley**  
Partnership Development Manager



Field cricket by iStock

# Partnerships: we're better together

Saving nature is a huge task that we can't tackle alone; that's why we're committed to working in partnership.

## Working with conservation organisations

Launched in 2017, Back from the Brink is an ambitious project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which aims to save 20 species from extinction across England, and benefit more than 200 others. The RSPB is one of eight key partners and the lead on four projects supporting field crickets, little whirlpool ramshorn snails, black-tailed godwits (in tandem with Project Godwit and WWT) and willow tits (with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust).

As well as supporting the conservation of species, we also play a key role in shaping wider environmental management. For instance, the RSPB is a member of Blueprint for Water, the freshwater working group of Wildlife and Countryside Link. Water companies in the UK have a huge role to play in environmental stewardship, investing over £1 billion per year in the environment. In England and Wales they are currently drawing up their business plans for 2020–2025, as part of the Periodic Review 2019 (PR19). The RSPB has led the campaign to develop environmental priorities for PR19, which include protecting and restoring catchments from the source to the sea; stopping water pollution; and ensuring that wetlands are protected.

We've also led the production of the Woodland Wildlife Toolkit, alongside conservation NGOs and statutory agencies. This web-based advice tool is designed to give users tailored habitat management advice, including specific guidance on priority species in their local area. The toolkit has been tested by a range of potential users and final alterations are being made. We hope to fully launch it in 2019.

## Working with businesses

As well as working closely with conservation organisations, the RSPB has also forged strong partnerships with a range of businesses, including CEMEX-UK a quarrying and cement-producing company, with sites all over the UK. In 2010, the RSPB helped CEMEX develop its Biodiversity Strategy, which included ambitious plans to develop 1,000 hectares of priority habitat from worked-out quarries by 2020. Together, we achieved this goal two years ahead of schedule and the new habitat is now home to a range of wildlife, including threatened twites, choughs and turtle doves.

idverde is the largest greenspace management company operating in the UK. We are working together in Bromley to pilot an innovative way to improve the 2,800 hectares they manage for nature and people. So far we have developed plans to restore heaths and mires, and to regenerate extensive areas of native woodland to benefit vulnerable species, such as the lesser spotted woodpeckers.

## Working with farmers

Finally, we know that people are stronger together – and that includes nature-friendly farmers! That's why we're working with the farmer-led Nature Friendly Farming Network. Since its launch in January 2017, 500 farmers have become members, each united in their desire to make farming more productive and better for wildlife. The network also has 850 public members and together they have a strong political voice, which is helping to influence important decisions about post-Brexit agricultural policy. Find out more at [nffn.org.uk](http://nffn.org.uk)



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## Landmark vulture release in Nepal

History was made in November 2017 when six captive-reared, Critically Endangered white-rumped vultures were released into the wild in Nepal. This was the first-ever vulture release in South Asia, marking the beginning of the next phase of vulture conservation in Nepal.

For years, Bird Conservation Nepal and the RSPB have been working as part of the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) project to ensure the region is free of the veterinary painkiller diclofenac, and in so doing, create the world's first Vulture Safe Zone. If livestock treated with diclofenac die shortly after treatment, their carcasses are lethal to vultures that feed on them. SAVE brought about a ban on veterinary diclofenac in 2006 and since then the decline of the vulture population has slowed and the species may be beginning to recover.

In the next phase of the project, we will be fitting satellite transmitters to wild and captive-bred vultures and monitoring their survival to help us evaluate the success of the Vulture Safe Zone and captive breeding programme.



Alamy

## Protecting the Inner Niger Delta

The Inner Niger Delta in Central Mali on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, is one of the most important floodplains in Africa, both for wildlife and people.

Two million people rely on the area for agriculture, food production and fishing and the area is also vital for birds. The delta is home to around 1.5 million yellow wagtails; Lake Debo, formed by the delta's seasonal flooding, is a vital area for 500,000 sand martins; and the wetland is important for many intra-African and Palearctic migrant birds.

The area is threatened by the proposed construction of the Fomi Dam, which would reduce water flowing into the Inner Niger Delta by 23%. This will have huge detrimental impacts to people and nature. After the World Bank pulled out of the project, it was announced that the Chinese would construct the dam and it is unclear what social and environmental safeguards are now in place.

There is no BirdLife Partner in Mali, so the RSPB is working with Wetlands International, who have been working in the area for many years.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)



Caroline Thomas (rspb-images.com)



## Birds of prey still under fire in the UK

Since 1990, we have published *Birdcrime* each year – a report which summarises offences against birds of prey in the UK. It is available to view online at [rspb.org.uk/birdcrime](https://rspb.org.uk/birdcrime).

Sadly, despite full legal protection, we still have a major issue with birds of prey being deliberately and illegally killed. In the uplands, raptors are especially targeted on land used for driven grouse shooting. Birds such as the hen harrier, which is barely clinging on as a breeding species in England, are particularly at risk from human persecution.

The latest report, published in November 2017, contains the complete 2016 data on wild bird crime. There were 81 confirmed raptor persecution incidents including 40 confirmed shooting incidents, 22 confirmed poison abuse incidents and 15 trapping incidents. Many raptor crimes go undetected and unreported, so these figures only scratch the surface.

The RSPB is calling for the Government to license driven grouse shooting, with the option of removing an estate's license if illegal activity is identified.

## Giving nature a home in the Gola forest

We're still working hard to help both people and nature in Sierra Leone and Liberia. This year, we've secured \$1.8 million from the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme to scale up conservation work across the 350,000 hectare Greater Gola forest transboundary landscape.

We have also exported Gola cocoa to international craft buyers, and hope to produce our own RSPB Gola chocolate later in 2018. The cocoa is grown by farmers living around the Gola Rainforest National Park using sustainable methods, which helps to protect the forest and the wildlife that calls it home. The cocoa also provides the farmers with improved livelihoods and food security.

It was a strong year for research into the Gola malimbe, a small, brightly-coloured forest weaver, found at only five known sites. Not only was the species found in good numbers in four of the five sites studied, we now have a greater understanding of its habitat, nesting and feeding preferences, leading to the designation of high-risk areas.



Volunteers gave nearly one million hours of their time to the RSPB last year.

Terry Bagley (rspb-images.com)





RSPB

**Sallie Crawley**  
Volunteering Operations Team Manager



# Celebrating our volunteers

Volunteers have made an extraordinary contribution to the RSPB's work over the past year.

Last year, volunteers gave nearly one million hours of their time to the RSPB. This remarkable donation of time and talent demonstrates how fundamental volunteers are to saving nature. In fact, they make up 85% of our workforce: we genuinely couldn't do what we do without them.

What some might find surprising is the sheer diversity of our volunteers. On a nature reserve, for example, we may have people talking to visitors, others carrying out wildlife surveys and others involved in hands-on habitat management. And of course there's a whole host of people who work outside of our network of nature reserves. We have fundraisers, trainers, campaigners and many more, all making a real difference to nature.

## One team for nature

Diverse our volunteers may be, but all are united in a commitment to save nature. Throughout the year, we've been speaking to our volunteers and it is clear that they also share a sense of achievement. Student Laura Humphries volunteered as a marketing and events assistant for RSPB Northern Ireland. As she explains: "I never thought that in ten short weeks I would learn so much and it has been an experience that I will cherish forever."

At RSPB Arne in Dorset, Joe Stockwell carries out practical conservation work. "It's a hugely varied role but you can't beat it. You go home knackered but you have a real feeling of 'I've done a great job today!'"

Rowan Cannel volunteers with the Aldi Schools Outreach Project to help children experience

nature: "I will never tire of the excitement expressed by children when they realise how much nature is actually on their doorstep, and how easy it can be for them to help conserve it. Volunteering on this project has genuinely been one of the best decisions I have made."

Pine cones by Fotolia

## Making a difference

Paid staff are equally positive about the contribution made by volunteers. Nick Droy is Regional Reserves Manager and Innovation Lead for the Midlands and has recruited volunteers to help with specialist projects. He recalls: "We recruited the ex-head of the Isle of Wight tourist board to review our visitor income generation plans at Sandwell Valley – harnessing professional skills and experience to make a huge, positive impact on our work."

At RSPB Forsinard Flows, Warden Claire Foot runs our Friends and Family Volunteering Holidays scheme in which volunteers spend a week helping out. "Running the Friends and Family Volunteering Holidays has made a great impact for nature and benefited the reserve endlessly. Volunteers are so enthusiastic and just want to help," Claire enthuses.

We recognise that people volunteer because they enjoy it and know they are making a difference, and so we try to ensure that we are able to provide opportunities that reflect an individual's availability, interests and talents. Pleasingly it seems to be working. Our most recent survey of volunteers found that 88% would recommend volunteering with the RSPB to family and friends. And we can't recommend our volunteers enough either!



The RSPB is calling for farmers to be rewarded for protecting nature on their land.

Brown hare by Craig Churchill (rspb-images.com)



RSPB

**Steven Roddy**  
Head of Parliamentary Campaigns



Daisy by Fotolia

# Working together for a Greener UK

We've been working with our partners to influence decision-makers and get nature on the political agenda.

In last year's annual review, we reported that we'd established the Greener UK coalition with 12 other leading environmental groups to raise the profile of wildlife with decision-makers. This year, as we continue to negotiate our future relationship with the EU, our work in this coalition has continued.

The first piece of related legislation, the EU Withdrawal Bill, was introduced in the House of Commons in July 2017. The RSPB, and our partners in Greener UK, encouraged our supporters to contact their MPs and ask them to make sure that this Bill did not weaken the laws protecting our environment.

One of the biggest risks is around how the law will be monitored and enforced. Currently, this role is carried out by the European Court of Justice and the European Commission but this won't continue after we leave the EU. When it was introduced, the EU Withdrawal Bill did nothing to establish a replacement "watchdog".

We are pleased to have had some success. Before being passed, the Bill was amended in several key places, most significantly on the watchdog issue. Defra also launched a consultation on what a new body could look like in England. There is no final decision, but the RSPB will continue to push for a world-leading environmental watchdog.

We have also been working with Greener UK on the future of food and farming in the UK. For years the RSPB has called for reform; a difficult proposition when it was determined by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. However, UK countries will now be able to

set their own policies. The RSPB wants farmers to be rewarded for protecting nature rather than just being paid for owning land. To further this goal, we helped nearly 6,000 supporters to respond to Defra's consultation on future policy. The Westminster Agriculture Bill is due to be published before the end of 2018.

## Looking forward

In January 2018, the UK Government launched its 25 Year Environment Plan for England. We welcomed the acknowledgement that we need to make a generation-long commitment to saving nature, and were pleased that the plan met some of the tests we set out before its launch. However, more is needed: chiefly an ambitious new Environment Act, and a body of legislation surrounding the UK's exit from the EU that puts nature recovery at the heart of our future.

In 2020, the UK will attend the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity conference to play a role in setting new global targets for nature's recovery. If the UK takes the right domestic action now, it can be a global leader in nature conservation at that conference.

## Fighting the good fight

We have been busy with casework again this year, fighting development on three fronts: housing at Lodge Hill in Kent, the extension of the M4 in Wales, and plans for a golf course at Coul Links in Scotland (see pages 33, 41 and 37). Any development on these protected sites would be devastating for protected species and would set a dangerous precedent – that planning consent can be sought and given, regardless of what protection a site has.



Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)



Nick Cunard (rspb-images.com)

## The icing on the cake for our cafés

When you visit one of our nature reserve cafés, you can now be sure that healthy choices are even easier to make, and that what you're eating and drinking is not only good for the planet but also for animal welfare.

All eleven of our cafés that were eligible for the Food For Life Served Here scheme have successfully achieved these awards. Our new café at Sherwood Forest will also be part of the scheme, which is run by the Soil Association, and celebrates sustainable, locally sourced, GM- and additive-free food which meets animal welfare standards and makes healthy living easy.

As a conservation charity, we're keen to lead by example when it comes to serving food that makes a difference. This means reducing the impact of our nature reserve catering on the environment and seeking to support local businesses and nature-friendly farms. For example, at our Minsmere reserve in Suffolk, the fresh milk we use comes from a dairy just 12 miles away. While in South Wales, the organic eggs, bacon and sausages served at the Newport Wetlands café are supplied by local family farms.

## Twirlywoos help kids discover nature

In 2018, the RSPB joined forces with CBeebies favourites the Twirlywoos to encourage young children to engage with nature by taking part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch. Schools that submitted their results were entered into a prize draw to win a visit from the colourful characters and the children at Christ Church Infant and Nurseys School in Newark were the lucky winners.

Chickedy and Chick presented the children with their Birdwatch certificate and helped to launch their Wild Challenge adventure by taking part in a number of activities, including feeding birds and planting for wildlife.

Donna Cobb, a teacher at the school said: "We were delighted to welcome the Twirlywoos to our school – the children loved meeting Chickedy and Chick. Taking part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch was a great way of getting the children outdoors and interested in the birds around them. We have now registered to take part in the RSPB's Wild Challenge and we're looking forward to learning how we can help wildlife in our school grounds."



Alamy



Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

## Raising awareness of Asian hornets

During Invasive Species Week, the RSPB joined forces with other organisations to raise awareness of invasive non-native species and inspire people to help stop their spread.

2017 saw the spotlight fall on Asian hornets, which are native to South Asia. These large insects hitched a ride in a shipping container bound for France in 2004, and the species quickly became established over most of France and northern Spain. In 2016, the first Asian hornet was spotted in the UK.

Asian hornets are predators of other insects, especially bumblebees and other pollinators, and so can cause massive ecological damage. However, if nests are detected quickly enough, there is a real chance we can prevent establishment in the UK.

We have been sharing this message on our website and social media and encouraging people to report sightings via the national invasive species website. By contributing their sightings, our supporters are contributing to genuinely effective conservation action.

## Going for gold with Aldi

Since 2015 we've been working with the discount supermarket Aldi, using £2 million raised from its plastic bag levy.

This funding has allowed us to deliver more than 330,000 connection to nature experiences to children through interactive 90-minute sessions. These were given at more than 1,500 schools in 17 cities across Great Britain and a whopping 85% of children surveyed said they wanted to spend more time outside in nature after taking part. It's incredibly encouraging to hear that so many young people want to turn off the TV and spend more time outside.

Through the RSPB's Wild Challenge programme, which is supported by Aldi, children and their families have also taken more than 44,000 actions for nature in their local areas. From feeding the birds to growing flowers, each Wild Challenge activity is designed to encourage children to help wildlife, explore nature and have fun – while earning awards in the process!

To find out more about Wild Challenge and our work with Aldi, visit [rspb.org.uk/wildchallenge](https://rspb.org.uk/wildchallenge)



Thanks to generous donations from supporters, we were able to extend our Arne nature reserve in Dorset.

Ben Hall (rspl-images.com)



RSPB

**Rebecca Munro**  
Director of Fundraising and Communications



Feather by Shutterstock

# The power of "yes"

Our work to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) has been a success.

Last October we began a journey with our supporters asking them to opt in to receiving future communications from us. We gave our supporters the opportunity to restate their commitment to us, and show them that our relationship with them is of great value, and built on trust. GDPR has enabled us to increase transparency with our supporters.

The results have been positive and encouraging: over 91% of those responding said "yes" to hearing from us through at least one channel, and the number opting in is growing all the time. We launched our opt-in project to new audiences in January through Big Garden Birdwatch and again saw fantastic numbers of people saying yes to hearing from us.

This process has given a real indication of the strength of the relationship we have with our members and supporters. It's quite a bland topic, but one that is fundamentally important to the future of the RSPB and so it's been wonderful to see the level of engagement it has received. It's also fantastic to know that we have a solid network of support for our future conservation work.

## Support all over the country

Our membership number continues to be another source of pride for us. We currently have 1,219,308 members and over the year we have seen more than 87% of our members stay with us and continue to help our work. But the support we receive goes well beyond membership – up and down the country people are buying from RSPB shops, volunteering on our reserves, taking part in Big Garden Birdwatch and donating to appeals.

We have run three major appeals this year, to raise funds to protect Sherwood Forest, to add

67 hectares to Arne in Dorset, and to support our coastal and seabird work. Together these appeals raised more than £820,000, and we are very grateful to everyone who donated to ensure these projects could come to fruition.

Some of the other highlights of the year were sales from our trading arm, and welcoming new life fellows. RSPB Sales made a profit of £4.2 million, which has gone directly to our conservation work, and 954 people became life fellows in this financial year, pledging a lifelong commitment to saving nature.

Our pin badges might be small but in terms of revenue they are definitely mighty. This year, for the first time ever, income from the sale of badges raised over £1 million. More than 7,000 venues across the UK host our badges, enabling our brand to reach a wide range of communities. We couldn't be prouder of our network of 1,600 volunteers who look after pin badge boxes across the UK.

But there's more to life at the RSPB than headline financial figures. What makes us strong is you, our members and supporters. We love to hear from you and over the last financial year our Supporter Services team responded to more than 160,000 queries and requests from supporters and the public via telephone, post, email and social media. This includes questions about our work and reserves, the environment, wildlife crime and wildlife gardening, along with requests to do with memberships, contact details, bank details, communication preferences and donations.

We're incredibly proud of our members and supporters. However you help us, thank you. We couldn't do what we do without you.

The seabirds at our Bempton Cliffs reserve in Yorkshire are at risk from a proposed offshore wind farm.

Michael Harvey (rspp-images.com)







**Chris Corrigan**  
Director, RSPB England

# England

From campaigning to protect key wildlife sites to engaging people with nature, we've had an eventful year.

The past year has seen us fighting a familiar battle: to save the UK's most important home for nightingales from development.

Lodge Hill in Medway, Kent, is so good for nightingales that in 2013, it was designated by the government as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, its owners (formerly the Ministry of Defence; now Homes England) and the local authority, Medway Council, have long touted this former military training ground for the development of up to 5,000 houses.

In early 2017, the Council put out its draft Local Plan for consultation, which proposed allocating Lodge Hill SSSI for development. By May, 11,600 people had joined us and our conservation partners in the flagship campaign to #SaveLodgeHill. Our case was that the proposed destruction of a SSSI would flout national planning guidance and would set a terrible precedent for SSSIs everywhere. For many, the prospect of losing so many nightingales is unthinkable; this famous songster is a red-listed species, which has declined by more than 90% in the last 40 years.

In parallel to all this, we had been building up to a national planning inquiry into the original 2014 planning application for 5,000 houses at Lodge Hill, but this was dropped in September by the developers. However, the Lodge Hill issue was far from over. By March 2018, a revised Local Plan was on the table, with a proposal for reduced but still extensive development right in the heart of the SSSI. Alongside this, Homes England announced that a new planning application was on its way.

We remain clear: destroying parts of a nationally protected site is wholly unacceptable. The impacts on the nightingales would

still be devastating and the implications for SSSIs everywhere are unthinkable. This vital battle continues, and public support for the #SaveLodgeHill campaign remains crucial.

## Protecting seabirds

Elsewhere in the UK, we have been fighting another potentially damaging development, this time one that threatens seabirds.

In September, the Danish company DONG/Ørsted received planning permission to build the world's biggest offshore wind farm off the East Yorkshire coast, despite RSPB objections. The RSPB objected because of a lack of sound evidence about the effects of turbines on birds.

Our reserve at Bempton Cliffs is one of a number of key seabird breeding sites along that stretch of coast. We're now working with DONG/Ørsted, which is funding tracking and population monitoring of seabirds on the Flamborough and Filey coast. We hope this research will enable us to get a better assessment of the impact of turbines, and an understanding of how seabirds might change their behaviour after turbine construction. It is in the interest of us all to ensure future decisions are based on the latest, shared evidence.

## Marine Conservation Zones

In 2016, we submitted proposals to Natural England for six Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) for seabirds and two for sandeels, the fish that are a staple diet of many seabirds, particularly puffins. One of these sites was for a completely new MCZ, the others being proposals to add species and extensions to existing or recommended MCZs. The decision about further consultation and designation now rests with the Department for Environment,



Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and we're building support among MPs for positive results in 2018.

## New Forest on a new scale

In an exciting development, we acquired our first land in the New Forest National Park, one of the most visited landscapes in the UK. The area, known as Franchises Lodge, covers 386 hectares (almost 1,000 acres), and includes a large number of veteran trees, which are vital for wildlife. Over half of it was gifted to the nation in lieu of tax with HMRC transferring to the RSPB as a trusted organisation, together with a legacy and a grant from the New Forest National Park Authority. We look forward to giving more updates over the coming years.

## Good news at Snettisham

The story of the terrible storm surge that battered Snettisham on the Norfolk coast is has a happy ending. This year, we secured funding to rebuild the hide that was smashed in the storm. What's more, it has been designed to be "climate-proof", so that exceptionally high tides in future will not have such a damaging effect. Part of the £140,000 was raised through an innovative crowdfunder. Other generous donors included WREN, Norfolk Environmental Waste Services, the Geoffrey Watling Community Trust, the Paul Basham Trust, Jeanne and Ray Arnold, and the Leslie Mary Carter Charitable Trust. Look out for the new hide in early 2019.

## Progress at Sherwood Forest

We've also been busy building for the future within perhaps the most famous forest in Britain. Seven months after we put in the footings for a new visitor centre in Sherwood Forest, we celebrated the building becoming watertight in a topping out ceremony with our partners on the project. The new centre opened to the public in August 2018.

## Hope Farm lives up to its name

More good news came from Hope Farm in Cambridgeshire, which produced an extraordinary crop of wildlife last year. The farm, which the RSPB purchased at the turn of the millennium, is home to 17 of the UK's 19 "at risk" farmland birds, and numbers have risen by a staggering 226% on average since 2000. Yellowhammers have shot up from 14 territories to 34; skylarks from 10 to 35 pairs; and linnets from 6 to 22 pairs. Grey partridges, lapwings and yellow wagtails have all recolonised the site since it came under RSPB ownership. Butterflies are doing well too: we've seen a 213% increase in butterfly numbers since that first summer and the brown argus, common blue, purple hairstreak and small copper are all new species for the farm.

## Colourful visitors lure crowds

Visitors also flocked to Nottinghamshire's East Leake Quarry when a hat-trick of brilliantly-coloured bee-eaters arrived from tropical Africa again last year. Once security

for the nesting birds was ensured, we opened the site to visitors and 10,000 people came to see the beauties.

Local volunteers worked wonders, quarry owners CEMEX were generous hosts and farmer Brian Burton loaned us a field for parking. Sadly, wet weather meant that none of the chicks survived, but it was a glorious and much-appreciated attempt, which we hope will be repeated again next year.

## Satellite-tagging reveals secrets

From one rare bird now to another: the Montagu's harrier. We learned a great deal this year when satellite tagging showed that our Montagu's harriers winter in Senegal and Mauritania. The tagging also revealed that the four or five pairs which breed here return every year to the same area – the same field even.

They may be our most vulnerable regular breeding birds too. The Norfolk female dubbed "Sally" on BBC's *Springwatch* disappeared – another suspected victim of persecution. Our investigations team's work to protect the harriers has relied on cooperation with landowners, the expertise of the Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation and support from Mark Constantine, owner of Lush cosmetics.

## Active in Nature

More than 7,000 people have got fitter and enjoyed nature at the same time thanks to a pilot project funded by Sport England. Visitors to Strumpshaw Fen in Norfolk enjoyed activities such as Nordic walking, kayaking and cycle rides. Rainham Marshes locals also tried walking, cycling and running, as well as "bouldering", a type of rock climbing without ropes. We're aiming to expand the Active in Nature programme to other reserves, encouraging wider audiences to our sites.

## Nature-friendly developments

Finally, our partnership with Barratt Developments has been renewed for another three years. Together we are setting new standards for wildlife-friendly developments across the country, focusing on features such as swift bricks and hedgehog highways.

People are already moving into new wildlife-friendly homes at Kingsbrook near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, and the innovations and lessons learned there are starting to be included in Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes developments elsewhere.

Significantly, the Government is taking notice of our hard work. Kingsbrook was highlighted as an exemplar site in the Government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment. And this year former Housing Minister, Alok Sharma, visited the site, commenting that new developments should "complement and enhance, rather than threaten, the local and natural environment".



Michael Harvey (rsdb-images.com)

We've been busy creating a brand new visitor centre at Sherwood Forest, ready to welcome visitors to the legendary home of Robin Hood.



41 marked golden eagles have disappeared in suspicious circumstances.

Mark Sisson (spbi-images.com)



RSPB

**Anne McCall**  
Director, RSPB Scotland

# Scotland

We've been working harder than ever to protect wildlife from damaging developments and to connect people to nature.

This year we were delighted that the Shiant Isles were declared officially rat-free thanks to an EU LIFE+ funded four-year partnership project between us, the Nicolson family – custodians of the islands – and Scottish Natural Heritage to restore the islands as a secure haven for nesting seabirds. A month-long intensive check in February found no sign of rats. This means that none have been recorded there for two years, the internationally-agreed criterion for rat-free status. The focus now shifts to Orkney, where the RSPB, Scottish Natural Heritage and Orkney Islands Council are working in partnership to safeguard the future of Orkney's internationally-important wildlife by eradicating non-native invasive stoats.

## A busy year for casework

The past year has been a busy one for our casework teams, who have been working hard to fight damaging developments that threaten Scotland's precious wildlife.

Sadly, the long-running cases of four offshore wind farms located in the Firths of Forth and Tay came to a very disappointing end. Last year, we were initially successful in quashing the Scottish Minister's consents for these projects by judicial review. Although the RSPB is supportive of renewable energy to tackle climate change, these projects are predicted to cause enormous harm to seabirds, including thousands of predicted turbine collisions of gannets, gulls, puffins and other auks found at the Bass Rock, other Forth Islands and seabird colonies along the coast, including our Fowlsheugh reserve.

However, Scottish ministers successfully appealed, with the Inner House of the Court of Session ruling in their favour in May. We applied to the Supreme Court for permission to appeal

the Inner House judgement but, much to our disappointment, it was turned down. Despite this setback, we continue to believe that our original grounds for the case are strong. Furthermore, we are extremely concerned about the precedents that this might set, not just for protected seabird colonies in the Firth of Forth, but for how it could substantially reduce protection for key places for wildlife elsewhere in Scotland and the UK. Regardless of the legal arguments, the time taken to go through the courts has allowed technology to develop considerably. This means that the turbines which may now be constructed are likely to be larger and fewer in number, potentially reducing the impacts on seabirds.

Further north, news of an application to construct a golf course on Coul Links in Sutherland was met with horror and determination by a coalition of conservation bodies, including the RSPB. The site is one of Scotland's last remaining intact dune habitats, home to curlews, oystercatchers, dunlins, bar-tailed godwits, ringed plovers and terns, while large flocks of eiders overwinter just offshore. Wildcats and pine martens have both been recorded and its special plants include sea centaury, purple milk-vetch, moonwort and frog orchid.

Not surprisingly, the area (including neighbouring Loch Fleet) is heavily designated – both as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and internationally as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. We will continue to fight this damaging development.

## Golden eagles in the spotlight

In May 2017, Scottish Natural Heritage published a report entitled *Analyses of the fates of satellite tagged golden eagles in*

Puffin by Steve Fould (rspb-images.com)



*Scotland*, which showed that between 2004 and 2016, 41 out of 131 marked golden eagles had disappeared in circumstances that were described as “suspicious,” and indicative of wildlife crimes having taken place.

This report prompted the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform for the Scottish Government, Roseanna Cunningham MSP, to commission an independent inquiry to consider how grouse moors can be managed sustainably and within the law, including consideration of options for licensing. The inquiry will also look at other matters related to grouse moor management which are causing public concern, such as the large-scale culling of mountain hares, and muirburn taking place on deep peatland habitats. It is due to make its final report in early 2019. We have already given evidence to the inquiry, and we are expecting to be invited to participate further in due course.

### Concern for threatened species

Last year’s corncrake survey revealed a fall in numbers with only 866 calling males recorded in Scotland, the lowest since 2003. Corncrakes are summer migrants to Scotland, with most found in crofting and farmland areas. Since the 1990s, crofters and farmers have received support through agri-environment schemes to create corncrake-friendly conditions on their land. These include delaying mowing dates, and creating corridors of vegetation for the birds and chicks to move through and take cover in.

Possible reasons for a decline since 2014 may be found on their wintering grounds in Africa, or on migration. Also, late springs here could potentially have an effect, and there are concerns that a gap between successive management contracts between schemes has had a detrimental impact.

Elsewhere, capercaillie and black grouse have continued to struggle at Abernethy, part of a worrying wider trend. Capercaillie populations remain critically low at about 1,100 individuals, with more than three-quarters concentrated in Strathspey within landscapes subject to growing human recreation and development pressures. Overall numbers of lekking black grouse on RSPB reserves have fluctuated with recent declines at Abernethy and Lake Vyrnwy in Wales offset a little by an increase at Geltsdale in Cumbria.

### Species on the up

Orkney, North Uist and Tiree were buzzing last summer with rare great yellow bumblebees. A three-year survey on Orkney ended on a high when surveyors recorded almost 100 bees on the tiny island of Copinsay. Numbers on Balranald held up well too, while on Tiree, members of a community project raised and planted out kidney vetch and other nectar-rich flowers that are essential for early-foraging queens. There were more than 100 records of great yellow bumblebees on the island.

There was excitement at Abernethy when one of the UK’s rarest insects was rediscovered there. Extra survey work revealed 21 larvae of the pine hoverfly, and two of them were on the RSPB reserve. This insect has specific requirements – the larvae feed in the bacterial soup of rotten hollows in ancient Caledonian pines – and so we have been enhancing stumps to allow rot holes to form.

### Supporting Glasgow’s house sparrows

Over the past four years, RSPB Scotland, in partnership with University of Glasgow researchers, have been running a citizen science project surveying house sparrow colonies in Glasgow.

This year, thanks to a Knowledge Exchange grant from the university, we have accelerated efforts with a dedicated officer and a work placement student attending events, and creating house sparrow meadows in city parks and community gardens. They have also been working with IT students to create a recording web app to make the project more efficient, and a game app aimed at teaching players to create house sparrow-friendly gardens.

### Connecting people with nature

We have been connecting children to nature on our reserves, within the community and in our cities. In Glasgow and Edinburgh we’ve been working with eight schools within the Ambassador Schools programme, championing species such as the swift, house sparrow, garden bumblebee and water vole.

Schools have been recording and creating habitats for wildlife, as well as planning and designing their local area with nature in mind. The Glasgow schools, for example, learned how to identify signs of water voles, and watched a relocation project in action.

The Ambassador Schools programme encourages local businesses and community green spaces to champion their species through planting meadows and hedges and creating homes for nature.

Continuing this work to help children experience nature, we have been providing engaging outdoor outreach sessions to primary schools across Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh as part of our Aldi-funded education programme. During the 2017-18 school year, a whopping 18,254 young people took part in these sessions and we’ve received some fantastic feedback.

And finally, some great news from Aberdeen, where the groundbreaking Dolphinwatch programme will now include schools outreach, year-round community events and a dolphin festival in 2019. This two-year project has been made possible thanks to new funding from the Scottish Power Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund (Our Heritage Grant).



Danny Green (spsh-images.com)

We've been championing water voles and other species at schools in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



We've been helping children to connect with nature through our Giving Nature a Home project.

Martin Poyner (rspb-images.com)





RSPB

**Katie-jo Luxton**  
Director, RSPB Cymru

## Wales

When I look back over the past year, I'm immensely proud of what we've achieved in that time.

I'm proud to say that it's been a record-breaking year in Wales. We have more members here than ever before, raised our highest community fundraising total, engaged more children with nature, employed satellite tagging technology for the first time on two species and some of our birds have hit new highs on our reserves. Read on!

### News from species in Wales

As of 2017, the largest breeding colony of lapwings in Wales can now be found at RSPB Cors Ddyga on Anglesey. From a handful of pairs when we bought the land, there are now 76 pairs of lapwings on the reserve, up from 42 in 2016. This accounts for 15% of the Welsh breeding population.

Following years of conservation work, a pair of bitterns and a pair of marsh harriers both bred on our reserves in Anglesey in 2016, following their decades-long absence as breeding birds in Wales. In 2017, both species returned to breed again with the great news that there were two confirmed pairs of bittern last year and four "booming" males in the spring of 2018. This means we can confirm that bitterns are now officially a regular breeder in Wales.

We are always keen to find out more about our most threatened species, and thanks to funding from Natural Resources Wales we worked with a number of partners to satellite tag two Greenland white-fronted geese. Back in the 1990s, over 150 of these beautiful birds used to winter on the Dyfi in mid-Wales. Now only 20 or so birds return every year. This technology enabled us to gain a better understanding of these birds' migratory journeys and their use of the various areas around the Dyfi. To our surprise, one of the tagged birds flew over to join a population of the geese in Ireland,

suggesting that the wintering population of these birds in the UK is more mobile and dynamic than we originally thought.

For the first time in Wales, thanks to EU LIFE- funding, we were also able to place satellite tags on a number of juvenile hen harriers to gain a better understanding of where they winter and breed, and of their mortality rates. We learnt that, following fledging, their movements vary considerably, with some remaining in Wales whilst one young male travelled all the way to France. Sadly, one of these birds' tags stopped working suddenly in north-east Wales, raising suspicions that it may have been a victim of persecution.

After two years in the development phase, we received the fantastic news that the Heritage Lottery Fund had awarded a delivery grant of £2.5 million to the Living Levels Landscape Programme. This partnership will enable us to celebrate and promote the heritage and nature of the Gwent Levels with projects to restore the wetland features, and create new orchards and habitat for shrill carder bees, one of the UK's rarest bees.

### Campaigning and casework

Despite its own legislation to enforce sustainable development in Wales, the Welsh Government persists in its drive to create an M4 relief road around Newport which will destroy four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). We strongly object to this proposal, which will destroy this rich habitat for a number of precious species such as shrill carder bees and common cranes. A very long public inquiry into this new road ended on 28 March 2018. The RSPB submitted detailed evidence to the inquiry. We also worked closely with local campaign group CALM, the Future Generations

Wales by Andrew Burgess/Fotolia



Commissioner, Sophie Howe, and other allies such as Gwent Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Earth. We will continue to campaign to save the Gwent Levels and for a more sustainable solution to local traffic issues in 2018.

The debate around whether the UK Government should give the go-ahead for the creation of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon continued throughout the year. We contributed to that debate by looking at the potential environmental impact not only of this lagoon, but the proposal that it should be the first of a number of lagoons in the Severn Estuary and elsewhere in the UK. Our evidence shows that we can meet our energy and carbon targets with less risk to wildlife and nature than tidal lagoons. This is an untested technology, so it makes sense to take a cautious approach. We saw a case for Swansea Bay lagoon as a test site to learn more about the environmental impacts of this untried technology, but only if it was well-researched and met environmental standards. We were not satisfied on either of these points. Much more thinking and research now needs to go into understanding whether tidal energy could be developed in harmony with nature.

In 2017, the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs approved two extensions to existing Special Protection Areas (SPAs): these were for terns around Anglesey and foraging seabirds in the Pembrokeshire seas. They also approved one new SPA, in North Cardigan Bay, and three Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for harbour porpoises.

So far, additional management measures have not been put in place for these sites, but according to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) the future management of all new SPAs in Wales is on a risk-based approach only. We consider the new Cardigan Bay SPA to be the highest priority as it does not have an original set of conservation objectives and we are putting pressure on NRW to ensure it puts in management measures as soon as possible.

### Engaging the public

One of the biggest thrills I get is working alongside the public and community groups who share our passion for wildlife, and supporting them to deliver fantastic things for nature. We joined forces with the Glamorgan Bird Club to help them secure a £50,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to erect a swift tower on the Cardiff Bay Barrage, which will provide a safe place for around 90 pairs of swifts to nest.

We're also involved in a large amount of locally-based habitat creation work for bees and other pollinators in Cardiff. We're working with

ten sites, all managed by local communities, and will help to create a further 20 sites by 2022. The sites include allotments, social housing developments, a homeless hostel and a community centre transferred from local authority to community ownership. Our role is to facilitate and support the communities connected to these sites, and the results so far have been great. The communities have reported increased levels of community cohesion, an improved local environment, and that they have learned new skills, developed an increased sense of empowerment and enjoyment and have spent more time outdoors.

Our engagement work with children grew enormously this year. Thanks to events on our reserves and outreach and community work with our Giving Nature a Home projects in Cardiff and Swansea, we delivered nature connection activities to over 40,000 children in Wales – our highest figure ever.

We were delighted to be selected, along with Buglife Cymru, as the Lord Mayor of Cardiff's Charity of the Year. This is the first time a Cardiff mayor has chosen a conservation charity for the focus of their fundraising, and the impact has been enormous – as of May 2018, the amount raised was more than £38,000.

If you're due to visit one of our reserve cafés in Wales, you'll be in for a delight. They have all been given Soil Association Food for Life awards, with the café at Newport Wetlands being presented with a gold award. The Food for Life certification is an independent award scheme from the Soil Association, and shows that our cafés sell local, fresh food, from sustainable and ethical sources.

From Wales, to the world. With an increase in public concern over plastic pollution, our Pembrokeshire island wardens were seen by millions of people worldwide rescuing gannet chicks entangled in plastic on Grassholm Island. They featured in hourly reports on Sky News and later on YouTube as part of the Sky Ocean Rescue campaign.

As ever, we couldn't do any of this wonderful work without our supporters and partners. The good news for nature is that that support is growing. As of April 2018, we have 60,335 members in Wales, the largest number we've ever had here, and we broke the £100,000 community fundraising barrier for the first time – £80,700 of which was raised through the incredible dedication of our pin badge volunteers. A huge thank you to all of you. Here's to another year of working for wildlife in Wales.



Mark Thomas (spb-images.com)

We're tracking satellite-tagged hen harriers over a three-year period to learn more about their lives.

Derbyniodd lluniau o huganod wedi'u clymu mewn gwastraff plastig ar Ynys Gwales sylw'r cyfryngau yn fyd-eang.

Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)





RSPB

**Katie-jo Luxton**  
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

# Cymru

Wrth edrych yn ôl dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf, rydw i'n falch dros ben o'r hyn yr ydym wedi'i gyflawni yn ystod yr amser hwnnw.

Rydw i'n falch o ddweud y bu'n flwyddyn sydd wedi torri pob record yng Nghymru. Mae gennym fwy o aelodau yma nag erioed o'r blaen, rydym wedi codi ein cyfanswm uchaf wrth godi arian cymunedol, rydym wedi ymgysylltu mwy o blant â natur, rydym wedi defnyddio technoleg tagio lloeren am y tro cyntaf ar ddwy rywogaeth ac mae mwy o rai adar wedi cyrraedd ein gwarchodfeydd. Parhewch i ddarllen!

## Newyddion ynglŷn â rhywogaethau yng Nghymru

Ers 2017, gellir gweld y gytref fridio fwyaf o gornchwilogd yng Nghymru yn awr yn RSPB Cors Ddya ar Ynys Môn. Pan brynwyd y tir, dyrmaid o barau oedd yno yn unig, ond yn awr mae 76 pâr o gornchwilogd ar y warchodfa, sydd wedi codi o 42 yn 2016. Mae hyn yn cyfateb i 15% o'r boblogaeth bridio yng Nghymru.

Ar ôl blynyddoedd o waith cadwraeth, roedd pâr o adar y bwn a phâr o fodaod y gwerni yn bridio ar ein gwarchodfeydd yn Ynys Môn yn ystod 2016, yn dilyn degawdau o absenoldeb fel adar bridio yng Nghymru. Yn 2017, gwelwyd y ddwy rywogaeth yn dychwelyd i fridio unwaith eto, gyda newyddion gwych bod dau bâr o adar y bwn wedi cael eu cadarnhau y llynedd a phedwar o wrywod yng ngwanwyn 2018. Mae hyn yn golygu y gallwn gadarnhau bod adar y bwn yn awr yn fridwyr rheolaidd yng Nghymru.

Rydym wastad yn awyddus i ddarganfod mwy am ein rhywogaethau sydd o dan y bygythiad mwyaf, a diolch i gyllid gan Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC), fe weithiom gyda phartneriaid i dagio dau o wyddau talcen-wyn yr Ynys Las gydag offer lloeren. Yn y 1990au, roedd dros 150 o'r adar hyn yn gaeafu ar afon Dyfi yng nghanolbarth Cymru. Yn awr, oddeutu 20 o'r adar hyn sy'n dychwelyd bob blwyddyn. Galluogodd y dechnoleg ni i gael gwell

dealltwriaeth o siwrneiau mudol yr adar a'u defnydd o ardaloedd amrywiol o gwmpas afon Dyfi. Er syndod inni, hedfanodd un o'r adar a dagiwyd i ymuno â phoblogaeth y gwyddau yn yr Iwerddon, gan awgrymu bod poblogaeth gaeafu'r adar yn y DU yn fwy symudol a dynamig nag yr oeddem yn ei gredu'n wreiddiol.

Am y tro cyntaf yng Nghymru, diolch i gyllid LIFE gan yr UE, roeddem yn gallu gosod tagiau lloeren ar nifer o fodaod tinwyn ifanc er mwyn cael gwell dealltwriaeth ynglŷn â lle roedden nhw'n gaeafu ac yn bridio, ac am eu cyfraddau marwolaeth. Dysgom, ar ôl iddyn nhw gael eu magu, bod eu symudiadau'n amrywio'n fawr, gyda rhai'n aros yng Nghymru, tra bod un gwryw ifanc wedi teithio'r holl ffordd i Ffrainc. Yn anffodus, peidiodd un o dagiau'r adar weithio yng ngogledd-ddwyrain Cymru, gan godi amheuan y gallai fod wedi cael ei erlid.

Ar ôl dwy flynedd yn y cam datblygu, derbyniom newyddion ffantastig bod Cronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri wedi rhoi grant cyflawni o £2.5 miliwn i Raglen Tirwedd y Gwastadeddau Byw. Bydd y bartneriaeth yn ein galluogi i ddathlu a hyrwyddo'r dreftadaeth a natur Gwastadeddau Gwent, gyda phrosiectau i adfer nodweddion y gwlyptiroedd a chreu perllannau a chynefinoedd ar gyfer cardwenyn main, un o wenynt prinnaf y DU.

## Ymgyrchu a gwaith achos

Er gwaethaf ei deddfwriaeth ei hun i orfodi datblygu cynaliadwy yng Nghymru, mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn parhau yn ei ymgyrch i greu ffordd liniaru'r M4 o gwmpas Casnewydd a fydd yn dinistrio pedwar Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig (SoDdGA). Rydym yn gwrthwynebu'r cais yn gryf, a fydd yn dinistrio cynefinoedd i nifer o rywogaethau gwerthfawr, fel y cardwenyn main a'r garanod cyffredin.

Goldfinch by JSook



Daeth ymchwiliad cyhoeddus ynglŷn â'r ffordd newydd i ben ar 28 Mawrth 2018. Cyflwynodd yr RSPB dystiolaeth fanwl i'r ymchwiliad. Gweithiom gyda grŵp ymgyrchu lleol CALM, Comisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol, Sophie Howe, a chynghreiriaid eraill, fel Ymddiriedolaeth Bywyd Gwyllt Gwent a Chyfeillion y Ddaear. Byddwn yn parhau i ymgyrchu i arbed Gwastadeddau Gwent ac i gael ateb mwy cynaliadwy i broblemau traffig lleol yn 2018.

Mae'r ddadl ynghylch a ddylai Llywodraeth y DU roi caniatâd ar gyfer creu Morlyn Llanwol Bae Abertawe wedi parhau drwy'r flwyddyn. Gwnaethom gyfrannu at y ddadl honno, drwy edrych ar yr effaith amgylcheddol bosibl, nid yn unig y morlyn hwn, ond y cynnig y dylai fod yn gyntaf o nifer yn Aber Hafren a mannau eraill yn y DU. Mae ein dystiolaeth yn dangos y gallwn gwrrdd â'n targedau ynni a charbon gyda llai o risg i fywyd gwyllt a natur na morlynnoedd llanwol. Mae hon yn dechnoleg nas profwyd, ac felly mae'n gwneud synnwyr i gymryd agwedd bwyllog. Gwelsom achos ar gyfer morlyn Llanwol Abertawe fel safle prawf i ddysgu mwy ynglŷn ag effeithiau amgylcheddol technoleg sydd heb ei phrofi, ond os yw wedi cael ei hymchwilio'n dda ac yn cwrdd â safonau amgylcheddol yn unig. Nid chawsom ein bodloni gan unrhyw un o'r pwyntiau hyn. Mae angen mwy o feddwl ac ymchwil yn awr er mwyn deall a ellid datblygu ynni llanwol mewn cytgord â natur.

Yn ystod 2017, cymeradwywyd dau estyniad gan Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig Llywodraeth Cymru i Ardaloedd Gwarchodaeth Arbennig (AGAAu) ar gyfer môr-wenoliaid o gwmpas Ynys Môn ac adar môr sy'n fforio ym moroedd Sir Benfro. Hefyd, caeth un AGA newydd ei gymeradwyo yng ngogledd Bae Aberteifi a thair o Ardaloedd Cadwraeth Arbennig (ACAau) ar gyfer llamhidyddion yr harbwr.

Hyd yma, nid oes mesurau rheoli ychwanegol wedi cael eu sefydlu ar gyfer y safleoedd hyn, ond yn ôl CNC, mae rheoli'r holl AGAAu newydd yng Nghymru yn y dyfodol mewn dull seiliedig ar risg yn unig. Rydym yn ystyried AGA Bae Aberteifi yn un o'r blaenoriaeth uchaf, oherwydd nad oes ganddi gyfres wreiddiol o amcanion cadwraeth, ac rydym yn rhoi pwysau ar CNC i sicrhau ei fod yn sefydlu mesurau cyn gynted ag sy'n bosibl.

### Ymgysylltu â'r cyhoedd

Un o'r gwefrau mwyaf yr ydw i'n ei gael yw gweithio gyda grwpiau cyhoeddus a chymunedol sy'n rhannu ein hangerdd am fywyd gwyllt, a'u cefnogi i gyflawni pethau ffantastig dros natur. Gwnaethom ymuno â Chlwb Adar Morgannwg i'w helpu nhw i gael grant o £50,000 gan Gronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri er mwyn adeiladu tŵr ar gyfer gwenoliaid ar Forglawdd Bae Caerdydd, a fydd yn darparu lle diogel ar gyfer oddeutu 90 pâr o wenoliaid i nythu.

Rydym hefyd ynghlwm â llawer iawn o waith creu cynefinoedd yn lleol ar gyfer gwenyn a

pheillwyr eraill yng Nghaerdydd. Rydym yn gweithio gyda deg safle, sy'n cael eu rheoli gan gymunedau lleol a byddwn yn helpu i greu 20 o safleoedd eraill erbyn 2022. Mae'r safleoedd yn cynnwys rhandiroedd, datblygiadau tai cymdeithasol, hostel i'r digartref a chanolfan gymunedol wedi'i throsglwyddo o ofal yr awdurdod lleol i berchnogaeth y gymuned. Ein rôl ni yw hwyluso a chefnogi'r cymunedau sy'n gysylltiedig â'r safleoedd hyn, ac mae'r canlyniadau wedi bod yn wych hyd yma. Mae'r cymunedau wedi adrodd lefelau uwch o gydlyniant cymunedol, amgylchedd lleol gwell, a'u bod wedi dysgu sgiliau newydd, wedi datblygu synnwyr cynyddol o awdurdod a mwynhad ac maen nhw wedi treulio mwy o amser yn yr awyr agored.

Bu twf anferth yn ein gwaith ymgysylltu â phlant eleni. Diolch i ddioglyddiaid ar ein gwarchodfeydd, gwaith allgymorth a'n gwaith cymunedol gyda'n prosiectau Rhoi Cartref i Fyd Natur yng Nghaerdydd ac Abertawe, gwnaethom gyflawni gweithgareddau cysylltu â natur i dros 40,000 o blant yng Nghymru – y ffigwr mwyaf erioed.

Roeddem wrth ein boddau i gael ein dewis, ynghyd â *Buglife* Cymru, fel Elusen y Flwyddyn gan Arglwydd Faer Caerdydd. Dyma'r tro cyntaf y mae Maer o Gaerdydd wedi dewis elusen gadwraeth fel canolbwynt i'w gwaith codi arian, ac mae'r effaith wedi bod yn aruthrol – ers mis Mai 2018, roedd y swm a godwyd yn fwy na £38,000.

Os ydych am ymweld ag un o'r caffis yn ein gwarchodfeydd yng Nghymru, byddwch wrth eich bodd. Mae pob un wedi derbyn gwobrau Bwyd am Fywyd gan Gymdeithas y Pridd, gyda chaffi Gwlyptiroedd Casnewydd yn derbyn gwobr aur. Mae ardystiad Bwyd am Fywyd yn gynllun gwobr annibynnol gan Gymdeithas y Pridd, ac mae'n dangos bod ein caffis yn gwerthu bwyd ffres, lleol o ffynonellau cynaliadwy a moesegol.

O Gymru, i'r byd. Gyda chynnydd mewn pryder y cyhoedd ynglŷn â llygredd plastig, gwelwyd ein wardeniaid ar ynysoedd Sir Benfro gan filiynau o bobl drwy'r byd yn achub cywion huganod a oedd wedi mynd yn sownd mewn plastig ar Ynys Gwales. Roedden nhw yn cael eu gweld mewn adroddiadau bob awr ar newyddion *Sky* ac yn ddiweddarach ar *YouTube*, fel rhan o ymgyrch *Ocean Rescue* gan *Sky*.

Fel erioed, ni allwn wneud unrhyw ran o'r gwaith gwych yma heb ein cefnogwyr a'n partneriaid. Y newyddion da i natur yw bod ein cefnogaeth yn tyfu. O fis Ebrill 2018, mae gennym 60,335 o aelodau yng Nghymru, y nifer fwyaf erioed yr ydym wedi'i gael yma, ac fe dorwyd y rhwystr £100,000 o godi arian cymunedol am y tro cyntaf, a chodwyd £80,700 drwy ymroddiad gwych ein gwirfoddolwyr bathodynnau pin. Diolch enfawr i bawb. Gan obeithio y cawn flwyddyn arall o weithio dros fywyd gwyllt yng Nghymru.



Ben Andrew (fspo-images.com)

Mae adar y bwn  
nawr yn adar bridio  
yn swyddogol yng  
Nghymru.

The Co-operation  
Across Borders for  
Biodiversity project will  
benefit many species,  
including marsh  
fritillary butterflies.

Phil Cunn (rsph-images.com)







RSPB

**Joanne Sherwood**  
Director, RSPB NI

# Northern Ireland

Political uncertainty has dominated the past year, but nevertheless there have been successes to celebrate.

Nobody could fail to be aware of two issues that have dominated Northern Ireland over the last year. Yet despite the continued suspension of the Stormont Executive and Brexit – with its uniquely thorny question of borders dominating public discourse – we have risen to meet the challenges posed by both.

## Tackling political challenges

In the case of Brexit, a whole new initiative recognises that – for wildlife – there are no borders. Wetland habitats across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland received a special Christmas present in December when Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB) was launched. Led by RSPB NI, the five-year partnership programme will improve habitats for birds, butterflies and other species, restore blanket bog and help purify drinking water at a lower cost.

This £4.3-million project is supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). It targets 2,228 hectares of bog for restoration, and raises community awareness of the environmental, cultural and historical importance of bogs. Our big beneficiaries are the Garron Plateau, Montiagh Moss and Pettigo Plateau, each of them a designated Special Area of Conservation. It's truly fantastic news for hen harriers, curlews, cuckoos, rare flowers such as marsh saxifrage and Irish lady's-tresses orchids, and the exquisite marsh fritillary butterfly.

At a policy level, RSPB NI is leading a coalition of environmental NGOs, under the auspices of Northern Ireland Environment Link, to secure the best future for our environment post-Brexit. The public-facing campaign, Nature Matters NI, presses for action on key

issues: nature and environmental protection; sustainable agriculture; marine protection and management; securing funding for nature conservation; and recognition of Ireland as a single bio-geographic unit. We have taken our key messages to Westminster and in conjunction with Environment Pillar, a coalition of 29 environmental groups from the Republic of Ireland, to Seanad Éireann, Dáil Éireann (the upper and lower houses of the Oireachtas, the Irish legislature) and the European Parliament.

We've also been working closely with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to help develop the NI network of Marine Protected Areas. Despite the lack of a Northern Ireland Executive, which has delayed the designation of two large Special Protection Areas, we are pushing forward with new evidence to support our call for more Marine Conservation Zones. We were also pleased to see the Draft Marine Plan for NI released in early 2018 for public consultation and we will be engaging closely on the development of this important piece of policy.

## Good news for farmland wildlife

Farmland birds received a huge boost this year with the much-anticipated launch of the Environmental Farming Scheme. It marks a welcome lift after years of decline without any agri-environment scheme whatsoever. We now have three Farm Focus Areas for breeding waders: Glenwherry, Lough Erne and Lough Beg, and across NI over 400 farmers are supported by RSPB NI in managing their land for farmland birds and other wildlife.

One particularly outstanding farmer in Northern Ireland was recognised during the year for his work. Ballynahinch man Philip Bell was awarded "the boot" at the Farming Life and Danske

Bob Gibbons / Alamy Stock Photo



Bank Awards for being NI's most wildlife-friendly farmer. His close co-operation with RSPB NI advisors has led him to recreate a wildflower meadow, plant a wood and nurture exceptional wild bird cover that sustains farmland birds in winter.

For the first time in 20 years, curlew chicks have fledged at the College of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (CAFRE) Hill Farm in County Antrim. Since 2009, RSPB NI has been working with partners – including CAFRE – on the Glenwherry Hill Regeneration Project to ensure the sustainable management of this extensive upland hill farm, which is used to demonstrate good agricultural practice to students and existing farmers. After a failed attempt to breed at Greenmount Hill Farm in 2016, two pairs of curlews returned in 2017 and one of those pairs successfully fledged three young. The project has undertaken a host of measures to make the area attractive to curlews. These include rush cutting, removing trees that would otherwise provide lookout perches for potential predators, as well as predator control itself, which was carried out by the Irish Grouse Conservation Trust. Other waders have also benefitted, with snipe numbers increasing from 17 to 23 pairs.

Alongside this, RSPB NI is part of the UK-wide Curlew Trial Management Project exploring habitat management and predator control. What's unique about our part in this project is that it's being run on land outside our control: the early results of increased numbers and productivity are a tribute to the efforts of local farmers and communities.

### Island wildlife gets a boost

News from Rathlin Island just seems to get better and better. This year saw the highest-ever visitor numbers at the West Light Seabird Centre (just under 20,000), which we run in partnership with the Commissioners of Irish Lights. Rathlin's Seabird Centre is one of 12 Great Lighthouses of Ireland offering unforgettable experiences and creating a deep appreciation of the role of lighthouses and the maritime and seafaring story.

And best of all, this year we celebrated the acquisition of a significant addition to the Rathlin reserve. Funding from a range of sources – including generous contributions from RSPB supporters – enabled us to buy land we have been managing for over 20 years. The "new" addition ranges from open water and heathland to hawthorn hedge and scrub, and is home to Irish hares, snipe and native bluebells. Crucially, it is a target area in our plans to double the land under management for corncrakes. Someone must have told the birds – this year two corncrakes were reported and one is likely to have bred.

### Connecting people with nature

The past year has provided so many examples of our school and community work flourishing.

For instance, our red kite project has reached 40 schools as well as many young people and communities in counties Down and Armagh, where red kites are present. The Heritage Lottery Fund is foremost among the funders who have enabled us to increase awareness and support for these graceful birds of prey. Next year will mark 10 years since the ground-breaking reintroduction of red kites to NI, after they had been persecuted to extinction around 200 years ago. Even though there is still the very real threat of persecution, there has been a fantastic level of involvement both in terms of people signing up as volunteers and reporting red kite sightings via [redkiteni@rspb.org.uk](mailto:redkiteni@rspb.org.uk).

Elsewhere, we piloted a My Place Within the Landscape project where we joined forces with the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership and the Seamus Heaney HomePlace to work with five secondary schools around Lough Beg, inspiring young people to reconnect with their local landscape through outdoor learning experiences and the poetry of Seamus Heaney.

And in south Belfast, one of our Pledge For Nature Partners, The Greater Village Regeneration Trust, has been promoting urban nature in a big way. It has created a secret wildlife garden, and a nature trail to bring city people closer to a whole range of urban wildlife in our gardens, streets and houses. More than 150 people turned out for an RSPB NI-led bat walk, and over 30 swift boxes have been put up, close to existing swift colonies and where housing development had removed previous nest sites.

### Epic journeys and shocking declines

On the Isle of Man, where we work in partnership with Manx BirdLife, surveyors undertook the first census of the Isle of Man's seabirds since 1999. Ten thousand birds of 17 species were logged. The survey team was especially proud that after 947 nautical miles – equivalent to touring 10 times around the island – they had suffered just one incident of seasickness! Initial findings suggest that only cormorants, guillemots and Manx shearwaters have made gains (the latter thanks to a rodent eradication programme on the Calf of Man). Gull species showed declines of 68–85%, while fulmar, kittiwake, razorbill, shag and black guillemot numbers have all halved.

Finally, we pride ourselves on our scientific expertise and a collaborative study with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is bringing astonishing information about one of our best-loved migrants. We fitted 20 swifts with tiny 1g tags to learn more about their foraging and migratory behaviour throughout the year. Birds nesting in boxes at our headquarters in Belfast made a round trip of more than 40 miles to collect food for their chicks and one bird was recorded travelling as far as Mozambique on migration – isn't nature amazing?



Ben Hall (pspb-images.com)

We've been visiting schools and communities in counties Down and Armagh to raise awareness of red kites.



The magnificent Major Oak at Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire.

Colin Wilkinson (pspb-images.com)



RSPB

**Graeme Wallace**  
Treasurer

## From the treasurer

Overall, while this year's financial performance was satisfactory it has also been something of a balancing act. We continue to pursue our avowed ambition to take action to protect and save birds and other wildlife both in the UK and overseas while, in common with the charity sector as a whole, taking prudent action to manage the financial challenges we face.

In 2017/18 our overall gross income, before investment gains, grew by £4 million from £134 million to £138 million; this is a positive outcome given the uncertain nature of the world in which we are currently operating.

Against this backdrop, our net income available for charitable purposes, before investment gains, rose from £98 million to £101 million and our revenue expenditure remained the same at £99 million. Taken together with some small adjustments for investment gains and the sale of fixed assets, this left us with an operating surplus of £2.6 million.

The operating surplus is calculated after charging depreciation of £4 million, but excludes the acquisition costs of nature reserves, visitor facilities and other assets of £10.7 million. Treating the cost of these assets as an operating expense would result in a deficit of £4.1 million rather than a surplus of £2.6 million and some of our financial reserves have been used to fund this deficit.

Accordingly, our free financial reserves are a bit lower than last year, but they remain well within the acceptable range set by the RSPB's Council. Appropriate steps are being taken to manage our expenditure to ensure that such financial reserves remain within this range. Our balance sheet remains very strong and was helped this year by a £16.7 million

reduction in the pension liability due to marginal improvements in the assumptions in respect of interest rates and inflation.

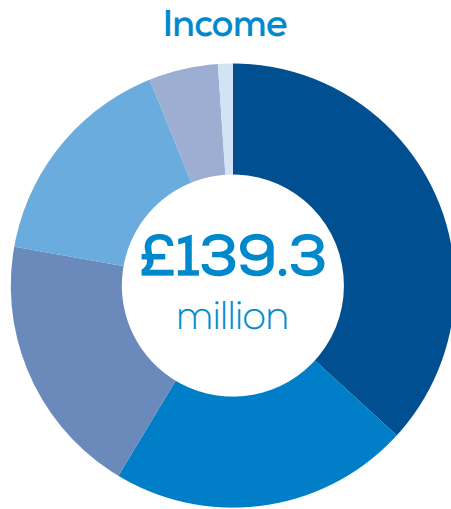
Looking at our major sources of income, our membership and subscriptions remained more or less constant at £51 million gross, which is a good performance given the potential for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to have a negative impact. It is also a testament to the loyalty of our membership which we never forget and for which we are always thankful.

We experienced a decrease in legacy income, which at £30.4 million was £4.3 million less than the previous year. With last year's figure being the highest ever, some reduction was to be expected and the outlook remains positive.

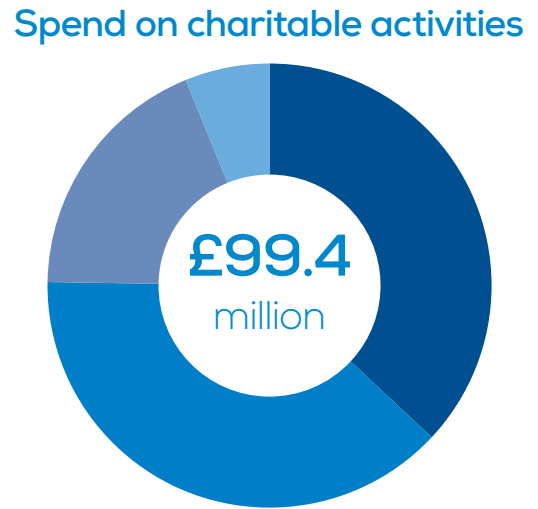
At £26.7 million, income from grants, corporate bodies and trusts was £5.9 million more than last year with all three elements having grown. The main increases were additional grant funding from Defra of £1.6 million and a £3.5 million gift of land at Franchises Lodge in the New Forest. Within land income, the construction of the visitor centre at Sherwood Forest has attracted funding of £2 million from Nottinghamshire County Council.

Our financial reserves provide a buffer against uncertainty. In this context, it's essential that we prioritise work programmes to align expenditure plans with income expectations to continue to maintain these financial reserves. This combination of balancing the books and holding an appropriate level of financial reserves gives the resilience needed to plan with confidence to meet the challenges that lie ahead for birds, other wildlife and the natural world.

# Income and spend



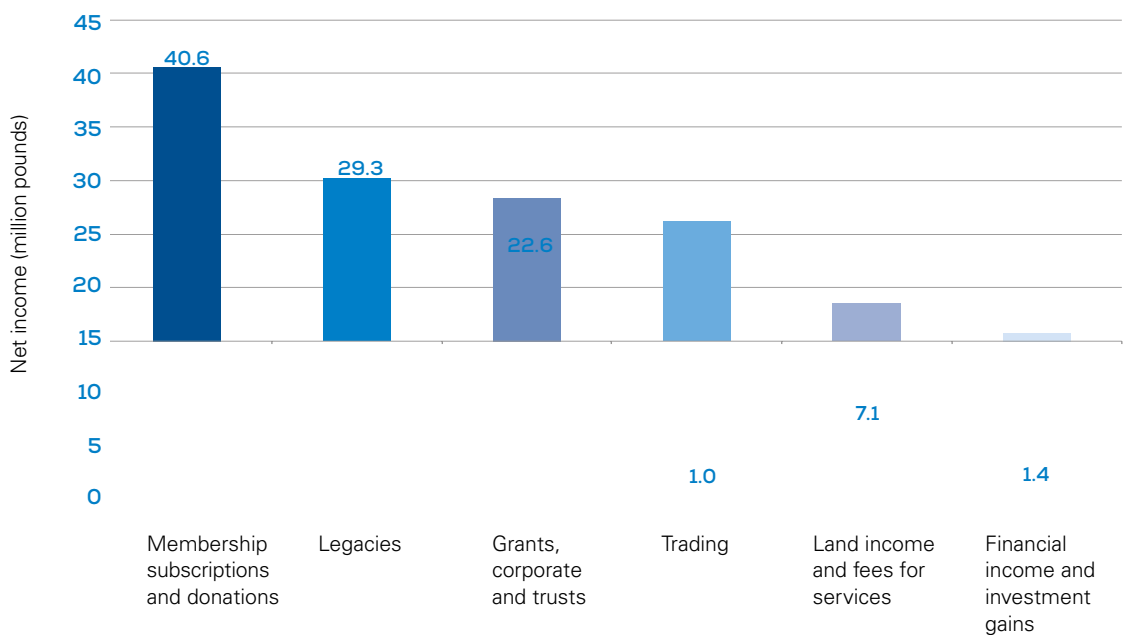
- Membership subscriptions and donations **37%**
- Legacies **22%**
- Grants, corporate and trusts **19%**
- Trading income **16%**
- Land income and fees for services **5%**
- Financial income and investment gains **1%**



- Research, policy and advisory **37%**
- Managing RSPB nature reserves **38%**
- Education and inspiring support **19%**
- Supporter care **6%**

## Net income

The cost of generating income was £37.3 million, leaving net income for charitable purposes of £102 million.



This information is a summary of the financial position of the RSPB. For a fuller understanding please see the Trustees' Report and Accounts available on our website.

# Summarised financial statements for 2017–18

## Raising money for charitable purposes

	Income	Cost	2018 Available for charitable purposes	2017 Available for charitable purposes
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Membership subscriptions and donations	51.2	(10.6)	40.6	40.9
Legacies	30.4	(1.1)	29.3	33.7
Grants, corporate and trusts	26.7	(4.1)	22.6	16.6
Trading income	22.4	(21.4)	1.0	2.6
Land income and fees for services	7.1	(0.0)	7.1	4.1
Other income and investment gains	1.5	(0.1)	1.4	6.6
<b>Total income</b>	<b>139.3</b>	<b>(37.3)</b>	<b>102.0</b>	104.5

£102 million available for charity purposes.

## Expenditure on charitable purposes

	2018 £m	2017 £m
Managing RSPB nature reserves	38.2	36.5
Research, policy and advisory	36.6	36.7
Education and inspiring support	18.4	21.3
Supporter care	6.2	4.4
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>99.4</b>	98.9
Surplus	2.6	5.6

In addition to the amounts spent in the year, shown above, we hold assets as shown below.

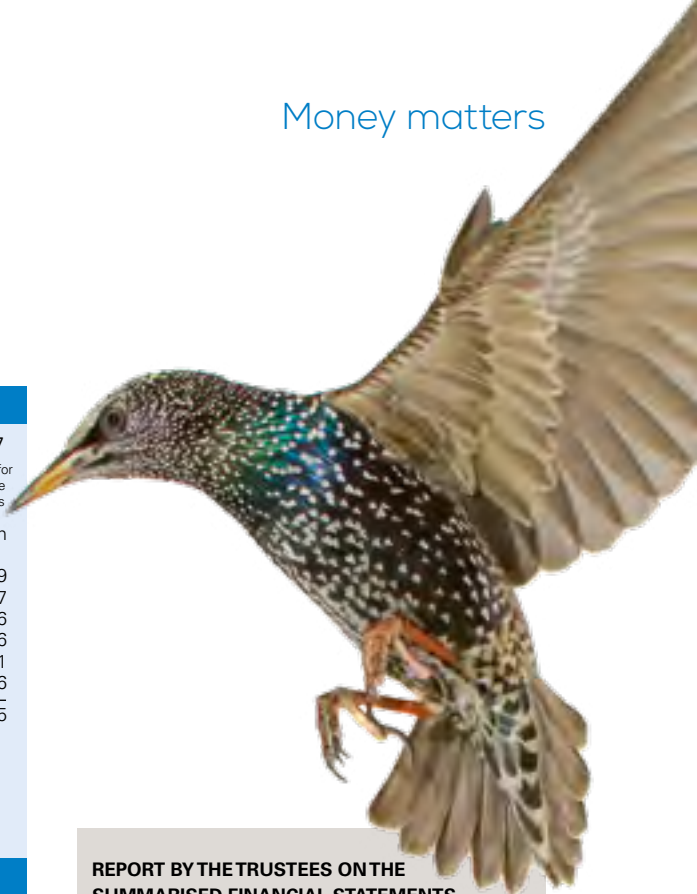
## Assets and liabilities

	2018 £m	2017 £m
Nature reserves	202.7	196.3
Equipment	4.3	4.1
<b>Total long-term assets</b>	<b>207.0</b>	200.4
Pension liability	(73.6)	(90.3)
Cash and investments	25.2	35.8
Stock, debtors and creditors	15.4	11.2
<b>Total representing available financial reserves</b>	<b>40.6</b>	47.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>174.0</b>	157.1

Available financial reserves are held for the following purposes.

## Amount held for future purposes

	2018 £m	2017 £m
Available financial reserves	40.6	47.0
Held for specific purposes	(11.8)	(13.8)
<b>Free financial reserves</b>	<b>28.8</b>	33.2
Representing future expenditure cover of	<b>14 weeks</b>	16 weeks



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### REPORT BY THE TRUSTEES ON THE SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

These summarised financial statements are extracted from the full statutory trustees' annual report and financial statements which were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf. The full financial statements, on which the auditors Crowe U.K. LLP gave an unqualified audit report in September 2018, are available on our website: [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

The auditors have confirmed to the trustees that, in their opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018.

These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. The full statutory trustees' report, financial statements and auditors' report may be obtained from the Director of Finance, RSPB UK Headquarters, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL.

Signed on behalf of the trustees.

**Kevin Cox**  
Chair, RSPB Council

## Members and supporters

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, including: financially, through volunteering, by supporting RSPB campaigns through letter writing, and by helping to deliver RSPB projects on the ground through local groups.

We would also like to thank all of the supporters who contribute generously through in memoriam, raffles, lotteries, payroll giving, regular gifts, appeals and other forms of support.

## Legacies

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

- Miss Barbara Aske Bettridge
- Mr Brian Edward Brown
- Mrs Jean Ethel Hall
- Ms Gwendolen Mary Hunt-Jones
- Mr Harrison Jones
- Miss Veronica Josephine MacMillan
- Mr Maurice George Benjamin Melzak
- Miss Margaret Elizabeth Meredith
- Mr Charles Edward Victor Saxton
- Miss Isobel Marjorie Stewart
- Mrs Margaret Irene Summers
- Mrs José Margaret Tsiknakis
- Mrs Hazel Kathleen Wright

## Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked unstintingly over the year. Our local groups provide a great focus for us in local communities, involve many people in our work, and raised £317,000 for RSPB conservation projects.

## Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of 11,973 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 972,778 hours. 24% of all the time worked to save nature is undertaken by our volunteers and they account for 85% of our workforce.

These volunteers helped with virtually every aspect of the RSPB's work, and we cannot thank them enough for their generous support. Additionally, 451,300 people gave an hour of their time to participate in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.

## Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has provided essential support for RSPB projects to restore our natural heritage and bring nature into people's everyday lives. The RSPB is indebted to HLF for its 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:

- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)
- Derek Allpass Foundation
- Alpine Garden Society
- Angus and Dundee Bird Club
- Jeanne Arnold and Ray Arnold
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Mr Geoff Ball
- Baltic Sea Conservation Foundation
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Mrs Elizabeth Bell
- Mr Dennis John Bennett Discretionary Trust
- Birdlife International
- British Birdwatching Fair
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Brown Forbes Memorial Fund
- Mr Roger Charles Burchett
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey
- Charities Aid Foundation
- Charities Trust
- Comic Relief
- Conservation International (CI)
- Ms Miel de Botton
- Ms E Desmond
- Devon Birds
- Louis Frederick De Warr Discretionary Trust
- EcoFac
- John Ellerman Foundation
- The ERM Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- European Bird Census Council – Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS)
- European Outdoor Conservation Association
- Sir Graham and Lady Toyoko Fry
- The Gannochy Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Gillman Charitable Trusts
- Mr Pat and Mrs Karin Goss
- Mr Richard Hale
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- International Eco Fund
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Dr Peter A Lawrence and The Betty Liebert Trust
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens/ Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association
- Ludwick Family Foundation
- Ms Camilla Rosemary Lyster Discretionary Will Trust
- The Lytham Schools Foundation



- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- National Birds of Prey Trust
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- The National Trust
- The Nature Trust (Sandy) Ltd
- The Bill Nygren Foundation
- Oglesby Charitable Trust
- The Orr Mackintosh Foundation (Sharegift)
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Friends of Pagham Harbour
- The Peacock Charitable Trust
- Mr C Petteward
- Pew Charitable Trust
- Postcode Local Trust
- The Annie Powell Discretionary Trust
- Rainforest Trust
- Renewables Grid Initiative, Stiftung Mercator and the European Climate Foundation
- Ridgeback Charitable Trust
- The Rufford Foundation
- Scottish Mines Restoration Trust
- ScottishPower Foundation
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Mrs Hilda Mary Slee Discretionary Trust
- Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- The Spear Charitable Trust
- St Aidan's Trust Fund
- Nini Isabel Stewart Trust
- Stockholm Environment Institute (York Centre)
- Sussex Lund
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustrans
- Mr K D Sutton and Harewood Downs Golf Club
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust
- The Truell Conservation Foundation
- Ulster Garden Villages
- University of Cambridge
- University of East Anglia
- Vetwork UK
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- J & J R Wilson Charitable Trust
- Woodland Trust
- World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)
- The John Young Charitable Trust
- Zoo Basel

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

### Landfill Communities Fund

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

- Angus Environmental Trust
- Biffa Award
- EB Scotland Ltd
- Enover Community Trust - (formerly Cory Environmental Trust in Britain)
- Environmental Projects Agency Ltd UK (NEWS)

- FCC Environment through WREN
- Ibstock Enover Trust (formerly Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust)
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- Newport City Council
- Northumbrian Water
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd
- Tees Valley Community Foundation
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2)
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Viridor Credits Environmental Company

### Business supporters

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

- ALDI Stores Ltd
- Anesco Ltd
- The Ardmere
- Barratt Developments plc
- Bowland Brewery
- The Caravan and Motorhome Club (CAMC)
- CEMEX UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Co-operative Bank
- Ecotricity Group Ltd
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- The Famous Grouse
- Hanson UK Ltd
- HSBC UK
- Hurtigruten Ltd
- idverde UK Ltd
- Kantar TNS
- Kingfisher plc
- Lush Ltd
- Maginus Software Solutions Ltd
- Marshalls Mono Ltd
- National Grid plc
- PwC
- Reed Smith LLP
- Rohan Designs Ltd
- SABIC UK Petrochemicals
- Scotrail
- ScottishPower
- ScottishPower Renewables
- Scottish Water
- SSE Renewable Generation
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- Swarovski Optik
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Tesco Bags of Help
- Tideway
- TransPennine Express Transform Fund
- Turcan Connell
- United Utilities plc
- Vattenfall
- Walkers Shortbread
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd
- Withers LLP
- Wyndham Vacation Rentals
- Yorkshire Water



## 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:

- Aberdeen Harbour's Community Action Fund
- Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership through North Pennines AONB Partnerships
- Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Big Lottery Fund
- Big Lottery Fund – People and Places
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Coastal Communities Fund Grant
- The Crown Estate
- D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership
- Danish Development Assistance Programme (DANIDA)
- The Darwin Initiative - funded by the UK Government
- The Dedham Vale / Suffolk Coasts and Heath AONB
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) NI
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government NI
- Environment Agency
- Environment Agency Northern Ireland
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development through the RDPE LEADER funding programme via the Central Sussex Local Action Group
- European Climate Foundation
- European Commission – BEST
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)
- European Union – European Environment Agency
- European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- The European Regional Development Fund (INTERREG VA) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body
- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- Forestry Commission England
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Glasgow Council
- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands
- Haryana State Government: MoEFCC, India
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Heritage Grants
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Living Levels Landscape Partnership
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Our Heritage
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- The Highland Council
- Mines Restoration Ltd
- Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India
- Moors for the Future Partnership
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- New Forest Association
- New Forest National Park Authority
- Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Orkney Islands LEADER Programme 2014–2020
- Partnerships for Forests – funded by the UK Department for International Development
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Rural Perth & Kinross LEADER
- Scottish Government and the European LEADER 2014–2020 Programme
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Natural Heritage Peatland Action Fund
- Scottish Rural Development Programme
- Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership through Allerdale Borough Council
- Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- Sport England
- Stirling Council
- Teignbridge District Council
- UK Government – Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
- VisitAberdeenshire
- Waterways Ireland
- Welsh Government – Core Funding
- Welsh Government – Glastir
- West Bengal State Government: MoEFCC, India
- West Sussex County Council
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority





# Looking forward

We're at a key point in history for nature conservation in the UK. It's a time of change, and the RSPB will evolve to respond to the natural world's greatest threats, ensuring that we're in the best possible shape to make a difference for nature. In common with other charities, we need to become more targeted in our work, and more streamlined as an organisation, to ensure our finances are best invested to saving nature. To rise to the challenges of the future we'll do more to inspire and encourage others to act. We're developing innovative approaches to generate future income, whilst always being efficient and effective. As part of this, we're creating an affordable, sustainable financial model.

We're proud that the RSPB achieves amazing things for nature, in many areas. Now is the time to focus our work where we can make the biggest impact. We've worked hard to identify the places and species where our work makes a real difference. The areas of work where our time, energy and expertise are most needed.

We'll continue to save species, ensuring our most threatened wildlife can recover. Through our reserves, and working with landowners, we'll create land that is well-managed for nature. On and around our coasts, we'll be pushing for urgent action and the creation of essential protection so that our seas are well-managed for nature too.

We must invest in saving nature through people. We need to inspire people to recognise and understand their connection to nature, and to motivate and provide the tools for every individual to take action and every organisation to recognise it can be part of the solution. This will mean raising awareness of the threats to nature, but also the benefits that come from a healthy environment, the difference each individual can make, and the impact private or public sector organisations can give.

The RSPB of the future may be different to the organisation it is now, but it will be best-placed to tackle conservation's biggest challenges.

Guy Rogers (rspb-images.com)

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[rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

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

Front cover: swift by Alamy.

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