

2022-2023



Annual report

Together, we're creating a world where wildlife
and people can thrive

we're
vulnerable



tell me
about it

Bin Bailey 2023



A year of saving nature

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The front cover of this report is a playful yet emotive sketch of a Puffin by RSPB supporter and comedian Bill Bailey. See page 35 for more information about a consultation to ban industrial sandeel fishing, and how RSPB supporters backed a ban, which could offer a lifeline for seabirds. Our thanks go to Bill Bailey for his continued support.

Welcome

Earlier this year, I'm sure that like myself you watched in awe as the BBC series *Wild Isles*, brought some of the very best of UK nature into our homes. As co-producers of the series, the RSPB wanted to showcase our incredible natural world as well as highlight the pressures upon it, to inspire people to come together to save it.

The past year has seen a lot of change. We mourned the sad passing of our patron, Queen Elizabeth II and you can read our tribute to her on page 7. We also spent much of the year tackling the effects of avian flu. Meanwhile, an RSPB delegation contributed to securing a global framework to save nature at COP15 in Montreal.

I've been fortunate to visit many RSPB reserves across the UK over the past year, including our latest acquisition, Glencripesdale, on the Morvern Peninsula. Here I discovered how we are working at scale to protect, restore and connect Scotland's remaining rainforest habitat. Purchases like this are only possible thanks to the generosity of members and benefactors, who support us to deliver conservation at greater scale.

The cost of living crisis has impacted all of us but it's your ongoing support that allows us to continue our vital work. When it became clear just how devastating the impact of avian

flu was on wild bird populations, we launched an emergency appeal. Your generous support enabled us to conduct new research and develop our policy, calling on the UK governments to take action to protect threatened species. You also stood by us when the UK Government proposed ripping up our most important environmental protections. Our response, the Attack on Nature campaign, generated a wave of support, forcing the Government to back down on some of the most concerning proposals.

Lastly, I was delighted to attend the opening of Cameron's Cottage on our Franchises Lodge reserve in the New Forest. It was built in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Cameron Bespolka Trust, set up in memory of a 16-year-old naturalist who sadly died in 2013. It allows young people to connect with nature in unique surroundings. These are troubling times, but that day gave me hope that the young generation cares deeply about our natural world and will work towards a better future for nature and humanity.

Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair



Kevin Cox and Beccy Speight with RSPB President Dr Amir Khan at RSPB Old Moor nature reserve.

The scale of the climate and nature crisis is what makes collaboration essential and following our Attack on Nature campaign and *Wild Isles*, conservation NGOs have arguably never been more united. This breathtaking TV series reached 7.7 million viewers in the first week alone, and our campaign with partners to Save our Wild Isles (SOWI) continues on the back of it.

Wild Isles gave us joy but also served as a reminder of the work we have to do. We will continue to be louder, bolder and bring more people into the fold. From colleagues, partners and volunteers to our incredible supporters, people are the very heart of the RSPB, and our new President and Ambassadors have a crucial role to play. Our President Dr Amir Khan is already making a difference, bringing new ideas, engaging new audiences and bringing his knowledge of the value of nature for human health and communities.

Through the People's Plan for Nature (see page 18), citizens across the UK told us what's needed to protect and restore nature. If we are to succeed, we must do more of this. Listening. Acting. Amplifying. And heading into the political party conference season with this platform alongside a new joint *State of Nature* report gives me hope. With partners and collaborators, we will be advocating tirelessly for nature to be included in all manifestos.

Marine, and food and farming, remain key areas for our policy engagement. There have been encouraging recent signs with Defra's consultation to ban industrial sandeel fishing, which more than 32,000 people responded to, and we now await the final government outcome.

Last year's avian flu outbreak, which devastated the populations of so many globally important seabird colonies, has been a chilling reminder of the need to build resilience in our seabird populations. The disease remains with us and so we must secure food sources, and beyond

that work with the governments of the UK on issues such as offshore wind and over-fishing to create the right conditions for long-term seabird recovery. Meanwhile, through nature-friendly farming projects, we continue to demonstrate how we can produce food alongside a thriving natural world.

Gaining a broader spectrum of support is essential. The risks to businesses from nature loss are ever increasing, and with more than 220 SOWI business screenings of sector-specific films booked to date, we are starting to cut through. Some businesses are already taking action: our new collaboration with Co-op, to restore peatland, and our work around finding new sources of conservation finance are both great examples.

"From colleagues, partners and volunteers to our incredible supporters, people are the very heart of the RSPB."

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

Finally, RSPB Arne shone during BBC *Springwatch*, and the spectacular reserve is set to host *Winterwatch* too, later this year. Being from Dorset, I'm especially proud that we are able to showcase the amazing biodiversity there. We will continue to engage all our stakeholders on ways to support nature, and encourage meaningful action when and where it matters the most.

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

About the RSPB

Our purpose

To advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature. We carry out conservation work that you can see from space, built from the ground up. We believe that the planet is facing a nature and climate emergency and that we have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

Our vision

A shared world where wildlife, wild places, and all people thrive. We believe we're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species and has the right to flourish. We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which these depend are interconnected. We recognise that the health and resilience of individuals, our society and the economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems. We believe that we have the greatest impact when our strategy is informed both by our understanding of the state of species and ecosystems and our core beliefs.

How we deliver public benefit

We believe that in delivering public benefit, we are effective because we bring the breadth of our capabilities to bear on the complex challenges facing species and ecosystems. The RSPB's strategy sets out how we meet those challenges to make a difference. Find out more in the sections 'Our highlights,' 'Our impact' and 'Forward look'.

Royal charter

The RSPB is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter, originally granted in 1904. Together with the Statutes, it provides the RSPB's operating rules and guidelines.

Objects of the RSPB

The objects of the RSPB as set out in its Royal Charter are to:

1. promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively by:
 - (a) conserving wild birds and other wildlife, and the environment on which they depend;
 - (b) protecting, restoring and recreating habitats. This includes raising public understanding and awareness of, and providing information on, such matters.
2. advance education of the public in conservation of the natural environment.

Governance

The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, and we use the Charity Governance Code. How we apply the Code is described throughout this report, in particular on pages 75–87. By setting and reviewing strategic objectives, the RSPB's Trustees test, refine and account for the performance and delivery of the organisation and plan for new challenges as they emerge.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities.

Remembering our patron, The Queen

21 April 1926 – 8 September 2022

We were deeply saddened by the death of our patron, Her Majesty The Queen, who showed unwavering support for the RSPB.

Her role as our patron reflected her dedication to championing charitable causes and the unstinting devotion to public duty she demonstrated throughout her long reign.

Her Majesty frequently displayed a keen interest in wildlife and an awareness of environmental and conservation issues. In a speech to launch the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, she reflected on the scale of the nature

and climate emergency and voiced her hope that by "working side by side, we have the ability to solve the most insurmountable problems and triumph over the greatest of adversities".

We offer our sincere thanks for her unwavering support for our cause. Many RSPB supporters also shared heartfelt messages on our dedication page, which you can view at [rspb.dedicationpage.org](https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-us/our-patron/our-patron-tribute)

What we do

What we do

We work locally in the UK and around the world protecting habitats, saving species and addressing the nature and climate emergency. We do this through five main work areas: **science**, **species**, **places**, **people** and **policy**. We're proud that we can apply our broad capabilities to the many complex challenges facing species and ecosystems to make a positive difference.

Science

We ground our work in a thorough understanding of the natural world. We identify the most important problems, using natural and social sciences to discover their possible causes and potential solutions.

Species

Survival of species and biodiversity are the ultimate signs of whether conservation is working and ecosystems are thriving. That's why we protect species from direct threats, such as loss of habitat, and indirect threats, like loss of food sources.

Places

Nature needs other nature. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and joined up protected areas on land and at sea in the UK

and around the world. We help people and nature coexist in harmony, ensuring that where people are living, nature can thrive.

People

A thriving natural world is essential for our species and is only possible if people feel connected to and understand nature. We inspire, educate and support people young and old from every possible background to act. The more of us who get involved, the bigger, more diverse and more powerful our support for nature will be.

Policy

To stop nature's downward spiral and to build a world where wildlife can thrive, governments must have the right ambition. Ambition that is underpinned by action, which must be framed by targets, law, monitoring and enforcement.

How we do it

We bring people together who love birds and other wildlife, and who want to do something to restore the health and diversity of the natural world. We must also enable more people to take positive action for nature. **We act, we influence, we collaborate, and we empower.**

We act

The natural world and the global climate are in crisis. But our evidence-based conservation work shows that birds and other wildlife will thrive if they're given a chance. We're intensifying our efforts to give nature more opportunities to recover, every single day, delivering conservation across land- and sea-scapes, protecting and restoring habitats and saving birds and other wildlife from extinction. We won't stop while the threat to nature persists.

We influence

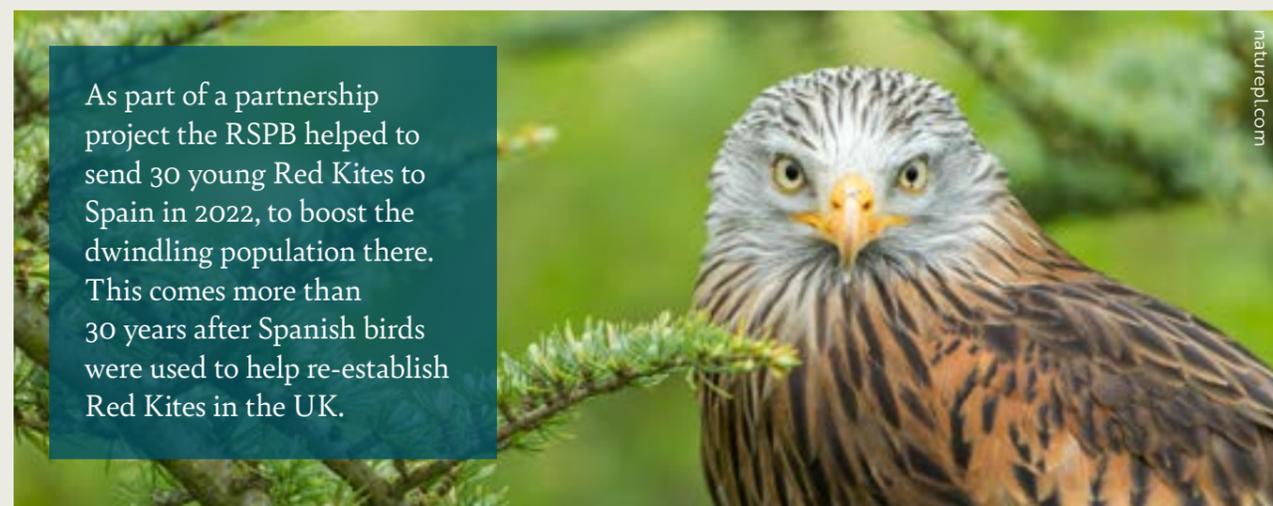
We use our voice to help people understand the threats facing nature, and the solutions to save it. From individuals to businesses and governments, we encourage everyone to play a positive role for nature, and help change the world for the better.

We collaborate

We are one of the few conservation organisations that has the capacity and the expertise to make a difference on a truly global scale. When we partner with organisations, businesses, governments and individuals, we increase the impact we have. And by working together, we will deliver results for birds, nature and the climate at an even greater scale.

We empower

The closer people feel to nature, the more likely they are to defend it. We bring people together – across countryside and cities, in person and online. From experienced naturalists to fledgling enthusiasts, we help everyone connect, champion and take action for nature. By supporting local conservation groups, projects and initiatives, we encourage everyone to get involved.



As part of a partnership project the RSPB helped to send 30 young Red Kites to Spain in 2022, to boost the dwindling population there. This comes more than 30 years after Spanish birds were used to help re-establish Red Kites in the UK.

naturepl.com



In 2022 we launched our online Community Actions for Nature hub, packed with ideas, advice and inspiration to help communities make wildlife welcome in their neighbourhood. Find out more at rspb.org.uk/natureinyourcommunity

Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Our strategy

In 2021, we launched our new strategy to 2030, to ensure the RSPB is making the biggest impact possible for nature.

Our vision for a world richer in nature

We believe that all species have a right to exist, and that nature is fundamental to human health and wellbeing. We have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations, so we want to create a world where...

...wildlife is abundant and diverse in our towns and countryside

...we have a resilient, stable economy that values nature

...all people are living well in harmony with nature

...birds and other wildlife have made a comeback

...nature continues to be restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people

...we benefit from a stable climate, and clean air and water.

Our six strategic shifts

We have identified six main areas where, by stepping up our efforts, we can increase our impact.

- 1 Delivering conservation at greater scale, through deeper collaborations.
- 2 Enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.
- 3 Being a bolder and more influential campaigning organisation.
- 4 Becoming more relevant to the world we're trying to change.
- 5 Diversifying our income and opening up finance opportunities.
- 6 Making the RSPB the best it can be.



What we aim to achieve by 2030



People engagement

More, and more diverse, people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.



UK land

At least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature-positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.



Species recovery

The future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), the East Atlantic migration route and in other selected areas around the world.



Seas

Threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.



Global Land

A network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic migration route, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.



UK Overseas Territories

The conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UKOTs will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.



Food and farming

The majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy (where the carbon emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the carbon removed from it), as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.



RSPB greening

Not only will the RSPB be a nature-positive organisation, we will have progressed towards a net climate cooling impact, having both reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions and reduced emissions and enhanced removals through our land management activities.



Nature-positive economy

The frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.



RSPB capabilities

The RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will reflect the strategic need.

This decade will be vital for the future of our planet and our contribution has never been needed more. We have set clear measures against these outcomes, which we will use to track our progress. The following stories on pages 12 to 63 demonstrate how we are working towards meeting these outcomes.



Meet our new President and first-ever Ambassadors

At our AGM in October 2022, we were delighted to see Dr Amir Khan elected as our new President. Miranda Krestovnikoff became a Vice President, following nine years in the role of President – we'd like to thank Miranda for her dedication and passion for our mission. We also announced our first-ever Ambassadors to support our cause.



RSPB President Dr Amir Khan

Dr Amir Khan is an NHS doctor, best-selling author and resident doctor on ITV's *Good Morning Britain* and *Lorraine*. He is also an incredible advocate and campaigner for nature.

The RSPB's new President inspires his hundreds of thousands of followers on social media with daily videos and photos from his wildlife garden and local green spaces. He has contributed to *Gardeners' World* magazine and his garden has been featured on the programme.

On his appointment, Dr Khan said: "I'm honoured to have been invited to become the RSPB's President. I really wasn't expecting to be offered such an incredible position at an organisation I've respected for many years. Now I'm looking forward to being part of our mission to save nature in this critical decade."

Amir has been a fantastic supporter of the RSPB, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the pressures of his demanding job, he frequently shares tips and posts on social media of the importance of caring for nature. And he also regularly discusses the importance of nature for our mental and physical health. As a doctor, he speaks with expertise on why access to nature and green spaces are so beneficial to us.

He has supported numerous RSPB campaigns and events that you can read about in this report, including Save Our Wild Isles, the People's Plan for Nature and the Urgent Conversation during COP15. He also co-presented this year's Big Garden Birdwatch Live alongside Vice President Chris Packham.

He is incredibly passionate about birds of prey and has spoken out about the persecution of these majestic birds, especially around his home county. He has also enjoyed visiting RSPB reserves including Bempton Cliffs, where he watched the spectacular seabirds as well as the important work by staff and volunteers.

Amir is passionate about taking action to tackle the nature and climate emergency, while encouraging more and more people, of diverse backgrounds, to stand and speak up for nature, before it's too late. As a devoted uncle and godfather, he wants to ensure that the wildlife he treasures is still here for future generations to enjoy.

Our Ambassadors

Welcome to our Ambassadors who are helping us to create a better future for nature and people:



David Domoney

David has been the resident gardening expert on ITV's flagship show *This Morning* for over a decade.

He said: "I believe in the great work the RSPB does and am always happy to support, such as on the Big Garden Birdwatch."



Deborah Meaden

Deborah is a business leader, investor, TV personality and writer, well-known for her appearances on the BBC's *Dragon's Den*. She said: "We have an opportunity right now to change the way we live and to let nature repair at least some of the damage we have already done."

He said: "The environment is everything we fundamentally rely on...it has also provided an invaluable solace for so many people at the times we needed it most."



Indy Kiemel Greene

Indy is a young naturalist who regularly volunteers at our Sherwood Forest reserve.

He said: "The environment is everything we fundamentally rely on...it has also provided an invaluable solace for so many people at the times we needed it most."



Lucy 'Lapwing' Hodson

Lucy is a self-described nature nerd, naturalist and lover of all things wild, who has appeared on BBC *Winterwatch*. She said: "For me, nature is everything. It's the biggest source of fascination, wonder, joy and love that I know."

He said: "The RSPB has always had a place in my life. I can remember my dad taking me across their reserves as a young boy, bird book and binoculars in hand. I'll never forget my excitement as I ticked off what I'd seen."



Megan McCubbin

Megan is a zoologist, author and wildlife TV presenter. She said:

"We share our planet with so many incredible species, but we often forget that we are part of that fragilely interconnected system too."



Nadeem Perera

Nadeem is a wildlife TV presenter, researcher and co-founder of Flock Together. He said: "The natural world is the only world that exists and the idea that we need to reconnect with it is an illusion. We were never separate from it. Nature is us and we are nature."

He said: "To attract a much-needed new audience to the conservation space we need to bring innovation and excitement."



Ollie Olanipekun

Ollie is co-founder of Flock Together and founder of social impact creative agency, Futurimpose.

He said: "To attract a much-needed new audience to the conservation space we need to bring innovation and excitement."



Samuel West

Samuel is an actor and theatre director, and has been a keen birder for 20 years. He said: "Our two young daughters love nature, and watching birds in particular. But the world they'll inherit is in trouble. Biodiversity isn't just a nice thing to have, it's essential for the survival of humanity and the planet."

He said: "The RSPB has always had a place in my life. I can remember my dad taking me across their reserves as a young boy, bird book and binoculars in hand. I'll never forget my excitement as I ticked off what I'd seen."



Steve Brown

Steve is a broadcaster, Paralympian, public speaker, mentor and coach, and a regular correspondent for BBC *Countryfile*. He said: "The RSPB has always had a place in my life. I can remember my dad taking me across their reserves as a young boy, bird book and binoculars in hand. I'll never forget my excitement as I ticked off what I'd seen."

To find out more about our President and Ambassadors, visit [rspb.org.uk/president-and-ambassadors](https://www.rspb.org.uk/president-and-ambassadors)

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OUR HIGHLIGHTS: PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

Saving our Wild Isles

In March 2023, more than three years of hard work culminated in the premiere of *Wild Isles* – the stunning BBC natural history series we co-produced with Silverback Films, alongside WWF and the Open University. Presented by Sir David Attenborough, it showcased UK wildlife like never before.

From Golden Eagles soaring through our skies, to Puffins battling Black-headed Gulls to feed their chicks, the series revealed fascinating behaviour in extraordinary detail and shone a spotlight on the incredible range of habitats and species on our doorstep.

As well as highlighting the beauty of our natural world, the series also delivered a stark message: the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and we must act now to help it recover.

The RSPB was involved in *Wild Isles* from its inception, helping to finance the series alongside WWF, the Open University and the BBC. Over the following years we supported its production every step of the way, from filming, to scientific advice, to publicity and finally using the series to inspire action for nature at scale.

Having seen what the ‘David Attenborough effect’ has done in the past to boost the profile of issues such as plastic pollution, we recognised early on that a landmark TV series presented by Sir David Attenborough would have the power to shape the public conversation about our most threatened wildlife like little else.

Our strategy was simple – work with our partners, including the BBC, to make the series as successful as possible. Then, use that success as a jumping off point to drive the change we need through the Save Our Wild Isles campaign, for which the National Trust joined us as partners alongside WWF.

An epic undertaking

Filming for the series took place over three years using the best camera teams in the world and we were intimately involved throughout. For example, our site team hosted a camera crew at RSPB Loch Gruinart on Islay for several months to secure footage of White-tailed Eagles hunting Barnacle Geese. Many iconic scenes would not have been captured without the support of our experts.

The TV series, with our support, was a huge success. It was among the most watched factual series on UK television in recent years. Media and social media were abuzz both in the lead up and during the transmission of the series, with discussions about the species and places filmed, and the work being done to save them for future generations.

Driving change

The reason for our investment was not just to create a wonderful spectacle, but to drive the change our natural world so badly needs. In joining together with WWF and the National Trust we created:

- *Saving Our Wild Isles* – an additional documentary voiced by Sir David, shown exclusively on BBC iPlayer. From nature-friendly farmers to communities taking action in their neighbourhoods, it showcases inspiring and hopeful conservation work, which we must urgently scale up if we are to turn the nature crisis around. It has become one of the most watched factual shows on iPlayer.
- Four films aimed at a business audience. Featuring the likes of Deborah Meaden and the CEOs of Tesco, Barratt Developments, Natwest and others, they showcase the changes needed to integrate nature into business decision making. These films will be touring the boardrooms of major UK businesses over the coming years.
- A £1 million community fund inspired by the TV series, delivered alongside WWF and Aviva, giving community groups the crucial funding boost needed to take action for nature and play their part in saving our wild isles.



The early data we are receiving suggests the TV series has inspired an increased love of UK nature and awareness of its plight. In the words of Sir David, now the baton passes to all of us to be the first generation to leave these wild isles in a better state than we inherited them.

To find out more about the campaign, including the £1 million Aviva Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund, visit saveourwildisles.org.uk

10 million+

viewers tuned in to watch *Wild Isles*

£1 million

fund for communities taking action for nature

250

business leaders attended our Save Our Wild Isles business launch event

“Showcasing the UK’s spectacular places and wonderful wildlife gave us a powerful platform to build the broadest and most diverse movement for nature there’s ever been.”

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive





“The truth is, every one of us, no matter who we are, or where we live, can and must play a part in restoring nature. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed or powerless by the scale of the issues facing our planet, but we have the solutions.”

Sir David Attenborough



People's Plan for Nature

The crisis facing nature affects each and every one of us and we believe that everyone should have a say in how to solve it. So we joined forces with WWF and the National Trust to give thousands of people from across the UK an open platform to share their views.

The result is The People's Plan for Nature – a plan created by the people, for the people, that sets out a vision for the future of nature and the actions we must all take to protect and renew it.

The People's Plan was developed through a fully independent, impartial and inclusive process, split into two phases. The first phase, which began in autumn 2022, was a National Conversation: an open call to the public about why our nature is so special and what we can do to protect it, which received nearly 30,000 responses from the public.

This fed into the second phase, when 103 people from all walks of life were recruited to form the People's Assembly for Nature. This group met for four weekends over four months to hear from world-leading experts, review evidence and collaboratively create a plan for nature's recovery.

The People's Plan calls for no more harm to nature, supported by stronger enforcement of existing nature protection legislation across land and sea. It calls for clear targets to be set to increase biodiversity. It also calls for the creation of a permanent assembly on nature and has a specific call about ensuring our transition to a future where nature is protected and renewed is a fair one.

Professor Nathalie Seddon of the University of Oxford, one of the Assembly's academic leads,



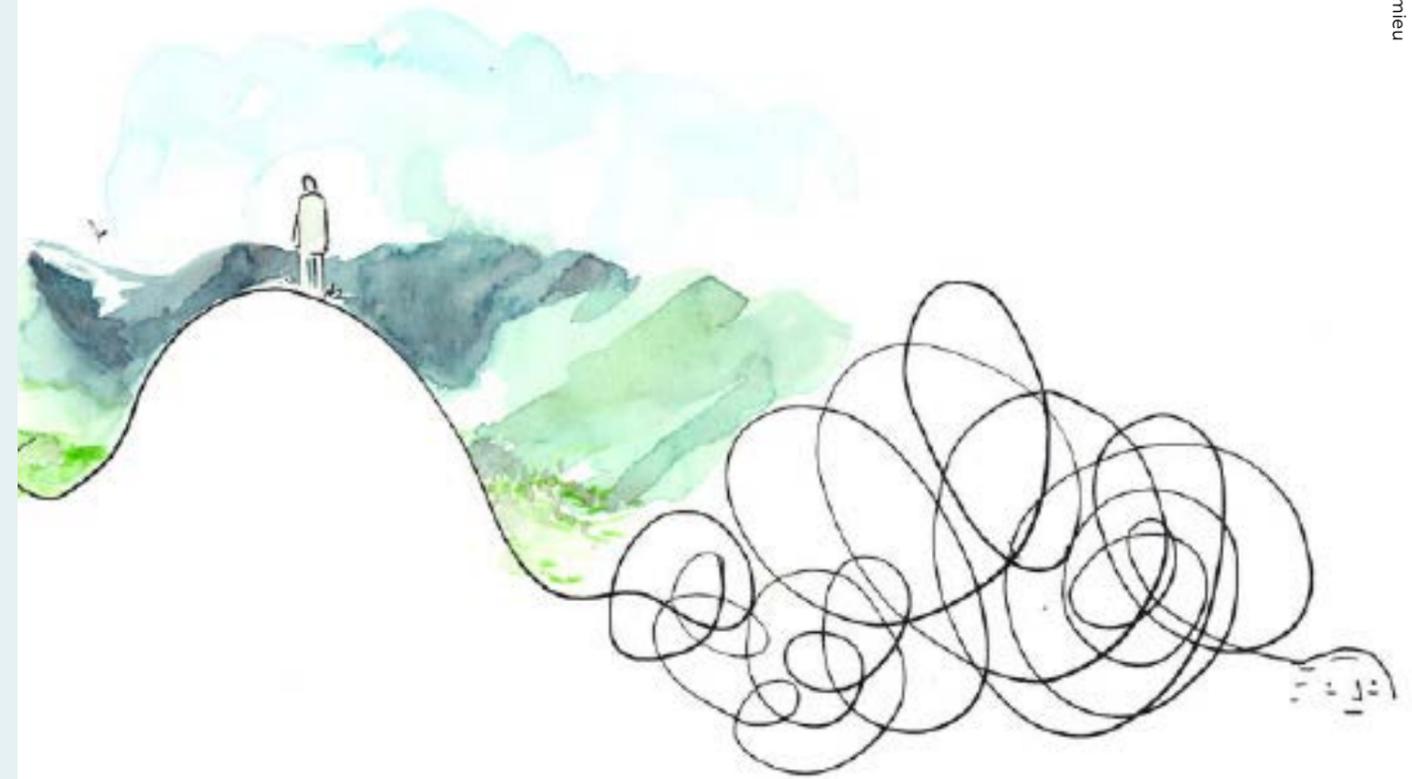
103 people took part in the People's Assembly for Nature

says: "The People's Plan for Nature is a roadmap to help us get from where we are now, living in a highly degraded country, to where we need to be – empowered and living as part of flourishing landscapes, seascapes and cities. Healthier, happier and re-connected with nature.

"The experience left me feeling hopeful for the future of UK nature, as well as for nature in general; there's a good chance that if we get things right here, other places will be inspired to do the same."

We know that decision makers sit up and take notice when enough people call for action on a single issue – that's why we're asking everyone to show their support for the People's Plan and prove just how many people stand behind it. Together, we can make this a turning point for nature.

To read the People's Plan and add your voice in support, visit peoplesplanfornature.org



This illustration by Graham Roumieu was commissioned as part of the People's Plan for Nature, to bring to life some of the key thoughts and ideas that were shared by the public during the National Conversation.



Jemima Stubbs (involve)

"Being part of the People's Assembly was a really cool and unique experience. We had the rare opportunity to engage in discussions with people from all across the UK, who we might otherwise never even have come across, let alone spoken to, which was really interesting and special. By the end, we all came together and the resulting camaraderie created a really hopeful space."

Fawad, member of the People's Assembly for Nature

Attack on Nature

In September 2022, the UK Government of the time announced a raft of measures that amounted to a bonfire of environmental protections. In response, we launched our Attack on Nature campaign.

Our initial tweet signalling our dismay at the Government's plans received more than 15 million impressions and began trending on Twitter, with retweets from a number of celebrities, including Stephen Fry, Chris Packham and Sue Perkins. Our leadership prompted many other organisations, including the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts, to stand with us and the campaign gained huge media interest and coverage.

We continued to keep up the pressure and the campaign gathered momentum, with an amazing 100,000 people answering our call to email their MP.

Our rapid response and clear, evocative messaging, combined with the passion of our supporters, came together to make Attack on Nature one of our most impactful campaigns to date, forcing a climbdown from the UK Government over some of the most worrying aspects of their proposals including Investment Zones, and the scrapping of nature-friendly farming schemes.

As well as achieving its aim to avert a potentially catastrophic watering-down of nature protections, the Attack on Nature campaign has helped to shift people's perceptions of the RSPB and allowed us to take a big step forward in demonstrating that we are a bold and influential campaigning organisation – a key shift outlined in our new strategy.

Although membership recruitment was not a part of the campaign, our approach clearly resonated with the public, because we saw a 645% uplift in new members joining us at that time.

Nature isn't out of the woods yet, but we have demonstrated that by mobilising our supporters, together we can hold governments to account and we will continue to use this bold approach whenever nature needs us.

To find out more about our Attack on Nature campaign, visit rspb.org.uk/attack-on-nature-so-far



COP15: a huge win for nature

A new global framework to save nature was agreed at the COP15 conference in Montreal in December 2022.

Nature underpins all our lives and so for people to thrive, nature must thrive too. But across the globe, habitats and wildlife are being lost at an unprecedented rate, with more than a million species currently facing extinction. Yet it's not too late to turn things around, if countries come together to take action for nature.

That's why, ahead of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) we launched the Urgent Conversation campaign, alongside more than 30 conservation charities, including the Woodland Trust and Wildlife Trusts.

The campaign urged the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, to use this once-in-a-decade opportunity to champion a global deal to reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and 35,000 people signed our petition in support.

To raise awareness of the campaign we teamed up with renowned choreographer Sadeck Waff and a group of 80 students who performed a 'human murmuration'. At the time, Sadeck said: "Our world leaders should follow the example of birds, and these dancers at COP15, and co-operate to create something beautiful – a plan for the future of nature."

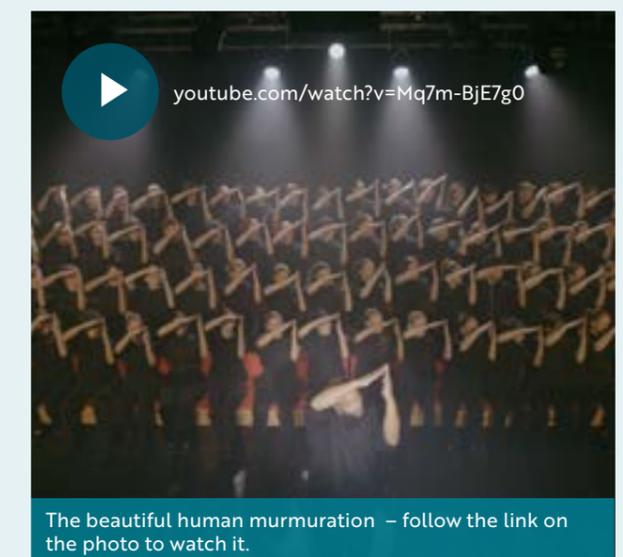
The murmuration film was viewed 190,000 times and generated media coverage with a reach of over 47 million – including featuring on Channel 4 News and in The Guardian. All this support and engagement

was communicated to the Prime Minister and ensured the UK delegation went to COP15 knowing how much nature matters to people.

In the run-up to the conference, we also released our report *A world richer in nature*, which set out clear recommendations for how the UK Government and devolved administrations can translate global promises into a decade of positive action for nature.

After intense negotiations at COP15, countries agreed a new global plan for nature – the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Whilst not perfect, the plan is a commitment to take urgent action to halt extinctions, recover populations, and protect and restore ecosystems by the end of the decade.

It's a landmark moment. But we know from experience that governments often sign up to targets, make promises and then fall short on action. We cannot let that happen again and so over the coming years we will be working hard to hold the UK Government to account and ensure it follows through on its promises.





OUR HIGHLIGHTS: UK LAND



youtube.com/
watch?v=w3T8QUwAzIw

The rainforest at Glencripesdale nature reserve reaches down to the shore of Loch Sunart.

New rainforest reserve purchased at Glencripesdale

In July 2022, we took on the stewardship of Glencripesdale nature reserve in the Western Highlands, as part of a landscape-scale plan to protect, restore and connect Scotland's remaining rainforest habitat.

Scotland's temperate rainforests aren't as well known as their tropical counterparts, but they're just as special. They support a huge range of wildlife, and when in good condition a single hectare of rainforest can contain as many as 200 species of lichens and 200 species of mosses and liverworts.

However, much of Scotland's rainforest has been lost, and what remains is often fragmented and in poor condition, as a result of invasive non-native species, like Rhododendron, and overgrazing by deer.

With the aim of restoring a healthy network of temperate rainforest in Scotland, we purchased Glencripesdale for £754,000. The purchase of this 614-hectare site was only possible thanks to The Banister Charitable Trust, the Carman Family Foundation and gifts left to us in wills – we are very grateful to everyone involved.

In the coming years, we will be working with the local community and landowners to eradicate Rhododendron and find opportunities to expand and connect rainforest habitat around the Morvern peninsula.



A big boost for Little Terns

Through the LIFE on the Edge project, we've been protecting and creating coastal wetland habitats at Horsey Island in Essex for Little Terns and other ground-nesting birds.

Thanks to its offshore location, Horsey Island is relatively free of disturbance and as a result it hosts the most important Little Tern colony in Essex. However, over time the beach here has gradually flattened out, making it increasingly at risk from flooding at high tides, particularly during the breeding season when Little Terns have vulnerable eggs and chicks.

To combat this, we added 79,336 tonnes of sand and shingle to the site, using material from harbour improvement works in Harwich, Essex. Harwich Haven Authority contributed £700,000 to the recharge project, with additional funding from the EU Life+ project and the Environment Agency. This created a series of islands slightly offshore, which in time will join with the existing coastline at Horsey Island to create new habitat for Little Terns.

In 2022, 14 Little Tern nests were found on the newly created habitat, plus a further eight on the existing bank. That's an increase of five nests and 11 fledged chicks compared to 2021. See more information at: projectlote.life

79,336
tonnes of sand and shingle
were used to create new
nesting habitat

14

pairs of Little Terns nested
on the new habitat



Little Terns are already nesting on the newly created habitat.



RSPB investigation leads to gamekeeper's conviction

Thanks to footage captured by the RSPB's Investigations Team, a Wiltshire gamekeeper was brought to justice in June 2022, for dumping the bodies of dead birds of prey in a well.

Following a tip-off in August 2020, investigations officers installed a covert camera on land used for Pheasant shooting, which captured footage of Archie Watson disposing of a dead Buzzard. Later, a camera was lowered into the well, revealing a mass of raptor corpses.

"At this point we had enough evidence to contact the police" explains Investigations Officer Jack Ashton-Booth. After being lowered into the well, police officers retrieved the decomposing bodies of a number of birds, which were later confirmed to include at least four Red Kites, 11 Buzzards and one large gull – making it the largest number of dead birds of prey ever discovered in England.

After his arrest, Mr Watson pleaded guilty to illegally possessing the dead birds and was given a 12-month community order (180 hours of unpaid work) and was told to pay £393 costs.

Sadly, this case is just one of a worrying number of raptor persecution incidents recorded every year, most in connection with land managed for gamebird shooting. "For something as dignified as a bird of prey to end up in a subterranean mass grave is a sign of something deeply wrong" says Jack. "We urgently need greater regulation to keep our birds of prey safe and soaring in our skies, where they belong."

A transformation for nature

Together with our partner, Hanson UK, we've passed the 20-year milestone in our 30-year project to transform a working quarry into a vast wetland nature reserve at Ouse Fen in Cambridgeshire.

So far, we've created new wetland habitat across an area the size of 418 football pitches and this simply wouldn't have been possible without our amazing volunteers, who have helped to plant 130,000 reeds – by hand!

In 2022, eight Konik ponies joined our team, and their grazing has helped to establish areas of diverse grassland, as well as new freshwater habitats around the reedbed margins. We also opened an extra access route to give visitors

even more opportunities to explore and get close to nature.

Ouse Fen is already home to a huge array of wildlife including Bearded Tits, Cranes, Water Voles and Otters. And we're delighted to report that the resonant booms of 12 male Bitterns were heard echoing across the reserve during the most recent peak in 2021. That's more than the entire UK population of Bitterns in 1997, when just 11 booming males remained.

Protecting and enhancing the Lough Erne landscape

As lead partner of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP) we're working with six other organisations to help enhance and protect the natural, cultural and built heritage of the area.

LELP brings together a range of stakeholders from within the rural community of Lough Erne, working with and facilitating partnerships between central and local government, environmental and charitable organisations, community groups, farmers, educational institutions and members of the public.

Since 2018 we have supported the delivery of 43 projects across the landscape, focusing on engaging people with their heritage, landscape and cultural traditions. These partnership projects have involved taking action to protect the unique landscape and biodiversity of the area, delivering conservation projects for key

species and improving people's access to nature and the built heritage of Lough Erne. Through education and engagement programmes with groups of all ages we aim to help people connect with their heritage, and in turn create a deep and lasting personal commitment to its protection.

With support from our main funder, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have now been granted a project extension to December 2024. Over the next year we will be working towards agreeing a lasting legacy to drive sustainable management of the landscape for the communities of Lough Erne.



Ashley Robinson (RSPB NI)

School children getting their hands dirty at a community archaeological dig as part of a LELP project.



OUR HIGHLIGHTS: SPECIES RECOVERY

Celebrating success for Curlews

Curlews are one of the UK's most iconic birds – but they're in trouble. Their numbers fell by 49% in the UK between 1995 and 2021 and they are now facing extinction as a breeding bird here.

We're determined not to let that happen and have been working hard, both on our nature reserves and across the wider landscape, to bring Curlews back from the brink.

Spectacular results in Northern Ireland

In 2022, we celebrated a record-breaking breeding season in the Glenwherry area of the Antrim Plateau in Northern Ireland, where a phenomenal 69 Curlew chicks fledged, thanks to our EU LIFE nature project, Curlews in Crisis, co-funded by the European Union. That's up from 28 chicks the previous year, which was itself a record.

The secret to this conservation success has been advising and supporting farmers to restore habitat for Curlews on their land, through the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' Environmental Farming Scheme. As well as habitat management, electric fences were erected around Curlew nests to protect the vulnerable eggs and chicks from predators. And, because predation is known to be one of the major causes of Curlew declines, these fences were combined with targeted predator control to give chicks a fighting chance.

"The number of chicks we have seen fledge this year is unequivocal proof that conservation works", says Conservation Officer Katie Gibb.

Meanwhile, in County Fermanagh, at least another 11 chicks fledged from our Lower Lough Erne reserve, where we've been managing the habitat to make sure it's perfect for Curlews.

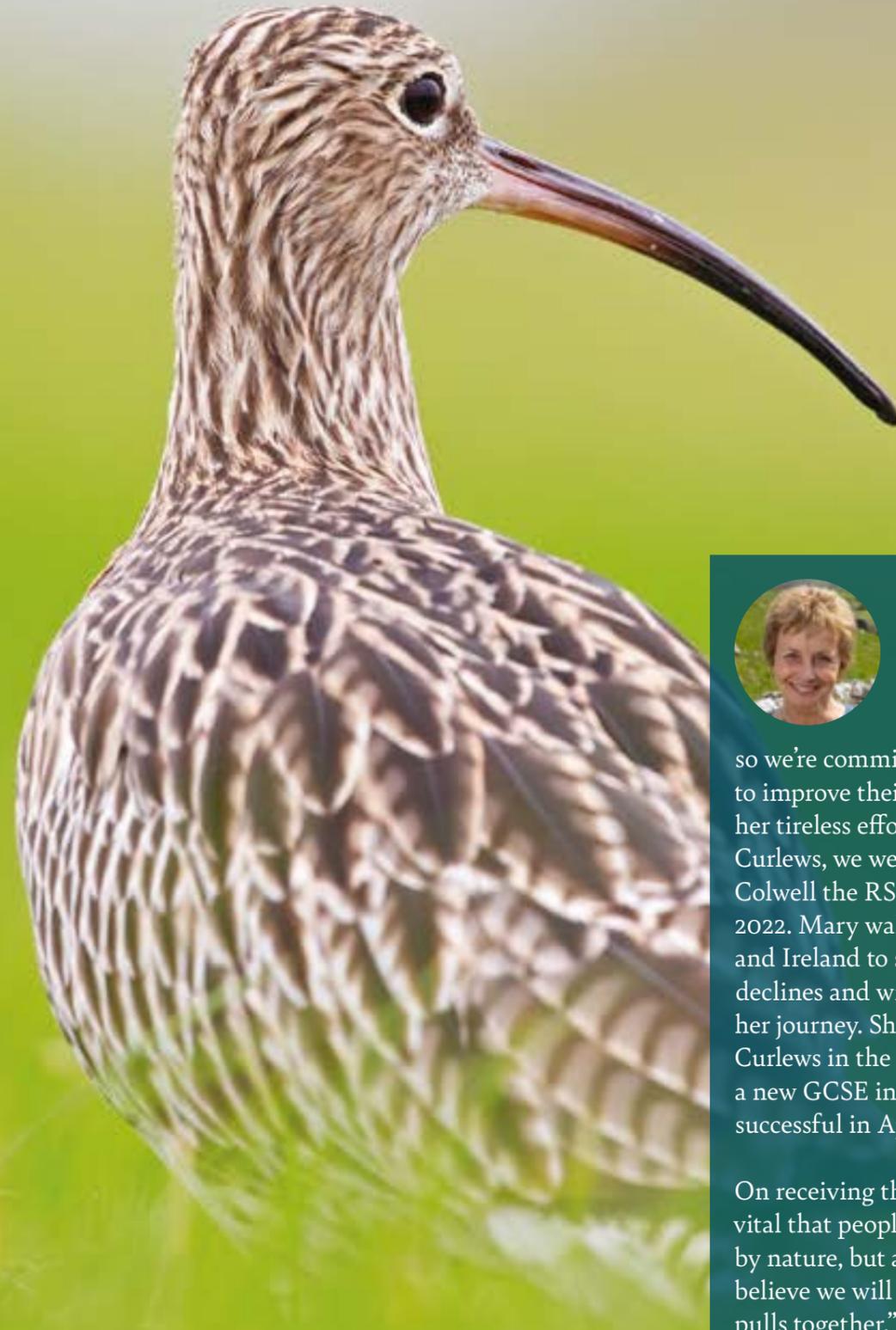
Cause for hope in Wales

Over in north Wales, also through the Curlews in Crisis project (known as Cri'r Glyfinir in Welsh), we completed the second year of Curlew conservation at Hiraethog and Ysbyty Ifan. As a result of wetland restoration, nest fencing and predator control we saw a huge improvement in breeding success compared to 2021, with at least 10 chicks fledging.

Conservation meets creativity

Last year also saw the launch of our Curlew Sounds Project – an innovative collaboration with musicians to create an album inspired by Curlews.

Nature-lover Merlyn Driver gathered fellow artists, including David Gray, to record a range of tracks, which were combined with Curlew soundscapes to form a double album called *Simmerdim: Curlew Sounds*. The title track and album went on sale in spring 2022 and so far they've raised nearly £10,000 for our Curlew Recovery Programme. You can buy the album for yourself at rspb.org.uk/curlewsounds



Curlew champion awarded medal

Saving Curlews from extinction is too big a task for the RSPB to tackle alone,

so we're committed to working with others to improve their fortunes. In recognition of her tireless efforts to help raise awareness of Curlews, we were delighted to award Mary Colwell the RSPB Medal at our AGM in 2022. Mary walked the length of the UK and Ireland to share the story of Curlew declines and wrote a book chronicling her journey. She continues to speak up for Curlews in the media and led a campaign for a new GCSE in Natural History, which was successful in April 2022.

On receiving the award, Mary said: "It is vital that people are not only enchanted by nature, but also informed. I don't believe we will save nature unless everyone pulls together."

This is a sentiment we share at the RSPB, and we will continue to work alongside partners and supporters across the UK to create a brighter future for Curlews.

Protecting Norfolk's first-ever colony of breeding Bee-eaters

In June 2022, a flock of eight European Bee-eaters set up home in a disused quarry in Norfolk, and with the help of the landowner and the North East Norfolk Bird Club, we created a viewpoint to help people catch a glimpse of these dazzling visitors.

We also installed a nest cam, so that people could watch live footage of the birds' antics from anywhere in the world. From local residents and keen birders to holidaymakers and children, around 15,000 people came to see the Bee-eaters and volunteers were always on hand to share their knowledge.

Volunteer, Josh Fusiara, said: "To be able to help manage and protect breeding Bee-eaters in the UK was amazing and something I will never forget. I loved the fact they were accessible for

the public to see, and there was a real sense of community at the viewing site. To stand there and watch Bee-eater chicks fledge was a truly special experience and a tribute to the brilliant work of the whole team."

As well as helping visitors to see the Bee-eaters, we set up a round-the-clock nest protection team to keep the birds safe from predators and egg thieves. And it paid off – by early September, at least three chicks had successfully fledged, and the technicolour family had set off on their migration south.

Bee-eaters usually breed in the southern Mediterranean and north Africa, but their visits to the UK are increasing. "As our planet warms," says Katie-jo Luxton, RSPB Executive Director, Global Conservation "they are being pushed further north. Bee-eaters nesting in the UK is an early warning of what climate change has in store for us all if urgent action isn't taken to curb greenhouse gas emissions."



Mike Edgcombe



At least three Bee-eater chicks fledged from the quarry in Norfolk in 2022 and Bee-eaters returned to the site again in 2023.

Good news for rare invertebrates

Invertebrates are often overlooked and undervalued, but they're vital pieces in nature's jigsaw, so we're delighted that three projects to help rare invertebrates on our reserves in Scotland have been showing positive results.

With their striking markings it's not hard to see how Dark Bordered Beauty Moths got their name. These little insects have never been common, but due to habitat loss they're now found at just one site in England and two in Scotland, where their caterpillars rely on the young suckers of Aspen trees for food. We've been managing the Aspens at RSPB Insh Marshes to provide ideal conditions for the moths and they've responded well, with a record-breaking 81 adults recorded in 2022, up from an average of 40 over the previous four years.

Dark Bordered Beauty Moths rarely travel for more than a few hundred metres, and since suitable habitat is quite fragmented and spaced out, they are unlikely to disperse to new areas themselves. That's why we've joined forces with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland to establish a captive-breeding population at the Highland Wildlife Park. In 2022, the number of eggs grew from 35 to over 500, and some of the caterpillars from these eggs will be released in 2023 – a significant step forward in securing a future for this beautiful moth.

We've also been managing suitable habitat – this time dead wood – for another Aspen-loving species, the aptly-named Aspen Hoverfly. Four adults were seen at Invertromie Wood, part of RSPB Insh Marshes, including two females that were laying eggs – a really positive sign.

Pine Hoverflies also had a good year. Staff and volunteers working for the Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms Project found the first adult Pine Hoverflies to be seen in the wild since 2013, including the first recorded Pine Hoverfly at RSPB Abernethy since the 1980s.



Shutterstock

A record-breaking 81 adult Dark Bordered Beauty Moths were recorded at Insh Marshes in 2022.



Chris Bowden (rspb-images.com)

Chris has helped save several vulture species from extinction.

RSPB vulture expert awarded MBE

The RSPB's Chris Bowden has been awarded an MBE for services to vulture conservation. On accepting the MBE, Chris said: "I'm truly flattered to receive this recognition of my efforts for vultures. I've had the huge privilege of working with so many dedicated partners and individuals from across Asia and more widely, together using good science to bring Asian vultures back from the brink of extinction."

Read the full story at: rspb.org.uk/vulture-expert

Nature in numbers

From windswept blanket bogs in the north of Scotland to colourful heathlands in the south of England, we care for 222 nature reserves across the UK, covering an area four times the size of the Isle of Wight. Here is just a selection of the highlights from last year.



of Manx Shearwaters on Ramsey Island, up 30% on 2016



lekking male Capercaillie at Abernethy, up from 20 last year



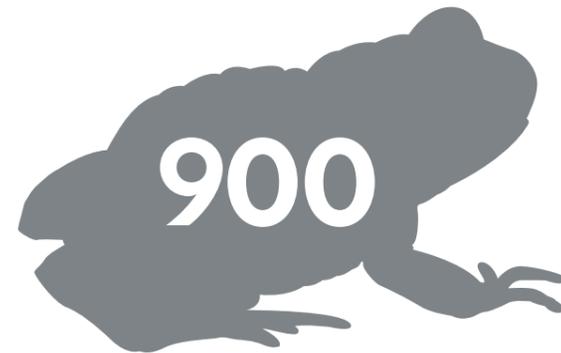
increase in Dartford Warblers on RSPB reserves compared to 2021 – the highest level ever



more flowering Least Yellow Water Lilies at Insh Marshes than in 2020



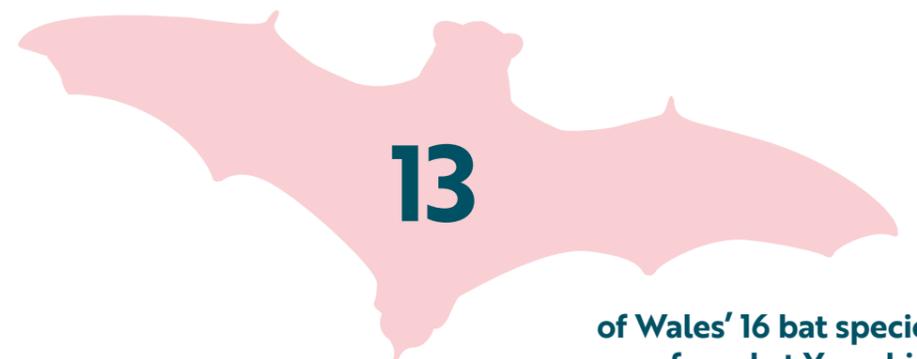
male Irish Damselflies were recorded at Montiags Moss following pond restoration



Natterjack Toadlets were counted at The Lodge



juvenile Smooth Snakes were found at Aylesbeare Common, confirming that the UK's rarest reptiles are breeding here



of Wales' 16 bat species are found at Ynys-hir

RSPB nature reserves are home to more than

18,700
species

Avian flu update

The impact that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (known as avian flu) has had on wild bird populations since winter 2021/22 is unprecedented.

Tens of thousands of birds have died and extensive losses at some colonies of long-lived, slow-breeding birds could send populations of some species into decline. More than 16,000 Svalbard Barnacle Geese – a third of the world’s population – were lost during the winter of 2021/22 on their Solway feeding grounds in Scotland and Great Skuas on the Scottish islands were also decimated. Scotland hosts 60% of the world’s Great Skuas and in summer 2022 we lost 1,400 at Foula alone, which is 4% of the global population. Mortality has also been high in Northern Gannets and terns, with the UK’s only breeding colony of Roseate Terns, at our Coquet Island nature reserve, badly hit. In total, almost 70 wild bird species have tested positive for the virus in the UK.

Avian flu isn’t new, but the scale of the impact and the precarious situation that our globally important seabirds are already in, made the

current outbreak especially concerning. This particular strain of the virus arose in poultry in East Asia and spread into wild birds in the early 2000s, but the current form is more deadly, and we do not know how it will progress.

In December 2021, we launched our emergency avian flu appeal, which raised £477,000 by the end of the 2022-23 financial year. Thanks to this generous support, we have been able to employ two people to work on bird flu advocacy. They are focusing on developing policy and calling on the UK governments to take action to protect wild birds from avian flu and the other threats they face, such as overfishing. We have also recruited a new senior conservation scientist and will be conducting research on the seabirds most affected by avian flu, so that we can better understand the impact of this devastating virus and how best to respond to it.



These two photographs of Coquet Island – taken two weeks apart – show the devastating impact of avian flu on the tern colony.

Shutterstock



“We have lost more than half of our Roseate Terns, resulting in the lowest productivity on Coquet Island since 1985. Watching our beloved birds dying without being able to help them was very difficult, and seeing an entire Roseate Tern family dead is something I will never forget.”

Ibrahim Alfarwi,
Warden at RSPB Coquet Island off the Northumberland coast

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: SEAS

Bird superhighway shortlisted for UNESCO World Heritage Site status

What do Machu Picchu, Mount Etna and the Great Barrier Reef have in common? They're all UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the UK's east coast wetlands are one step closer to joining them, after being added to the UK's Tentative List of potential World Heritage sites.

The RSPB initiated the application for World Heritage status in 2022, with the backing of a number of partners including the National Trust. The proposed site stretches from the mudflats of the River Thames to the reedbeds of the Humber Estuary, incorporating many RSPB reserves, including Wallasea Island in Essex and Minsmere in Suffolk.

These wetlands form a key part of the East Atlantic Flyway, a 'superhighway' used by millions of migratory birds every year, and provide vital places for birds to rest and refuel. And it's not just birds that benefit from this globally-important area – from flood defence and carbon capture, to tourism, the wetlands offer a huge range of other benefits for society.

Michael Copleston, RSPB England Director, said: "We are absolutely thrilled that the global importance of England's east coast has been recognised by government. These diverse places provide an essential refuge for over 155 bird species, as well as world-leading examples of how we can manage our coastlines in the face of a changing climate. We're at the beginning

of a thorough process but we're looking forward to working with local communities and other partners to build a strong case for UNESCO over the coming years."



A range of species use the east coast as a refuge during huge migration journeys, including Wigeons.

David Slater (rspb-images.com)



Ban on sandeel fishing could offer lifeline for seabirds

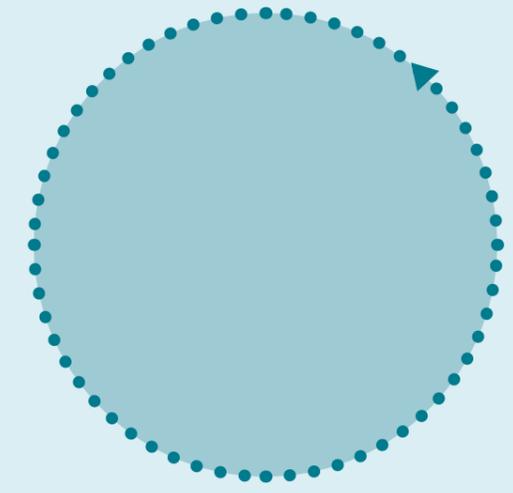
For decades the RSPB has been calling for a ban on industrial sandeel fishing in UK waters. These fish might be small, but they provide a vital source of food for many seabirds that are globally threatened with extinction, including Kittiwakes and Puffins.

Yet hundreds of thousands of tonnes of sandeels are taken from the North Sea every year by EU fishing vessels, to be turned into fishmeal and oil to feed farmed animals. Sandeels are also under threat from warming seas and as a result of these combined pressures they are in increasingly short supply. This is bad news for seabird species such as Kittiwakes, Puffins and terns, which rely on sandeels to feed themselves and their chicks during the breeding season.

Although none of the UK governments support industrial sandeel fishing, they all need to ban it to actually stop it. In April 2022, there was a positive step forward when bottom towed fishing gear was banned in four Marine Protected Areas. This was welcomed, but it only halted a relatively small proportion of sandeel fishing, so we were delighted when, in March 2023, Defra

launched a consultation proposing a complete ban on trawling for sandeels in English waters in the North Sea. In response the RSPB set up an e-action for people to show their support.

250km



25km

Some Puffins now have to make round trips, ten times further to find sandeels.

More than 32,000 people backed a ban and called for action. We've since had confirmation that the Scottish Government will consult on full prohibition of sandeel fishing in Scottish waters. With overwhelming support from the public, other NGOs (including our partners in BirdLife) and stakeholders, we are hopeful a ban can be introduced before the 2024 fishing season.



Puffins rely on sandeels to feed to their chicks.

Drew Buckley (rspb-images.com)

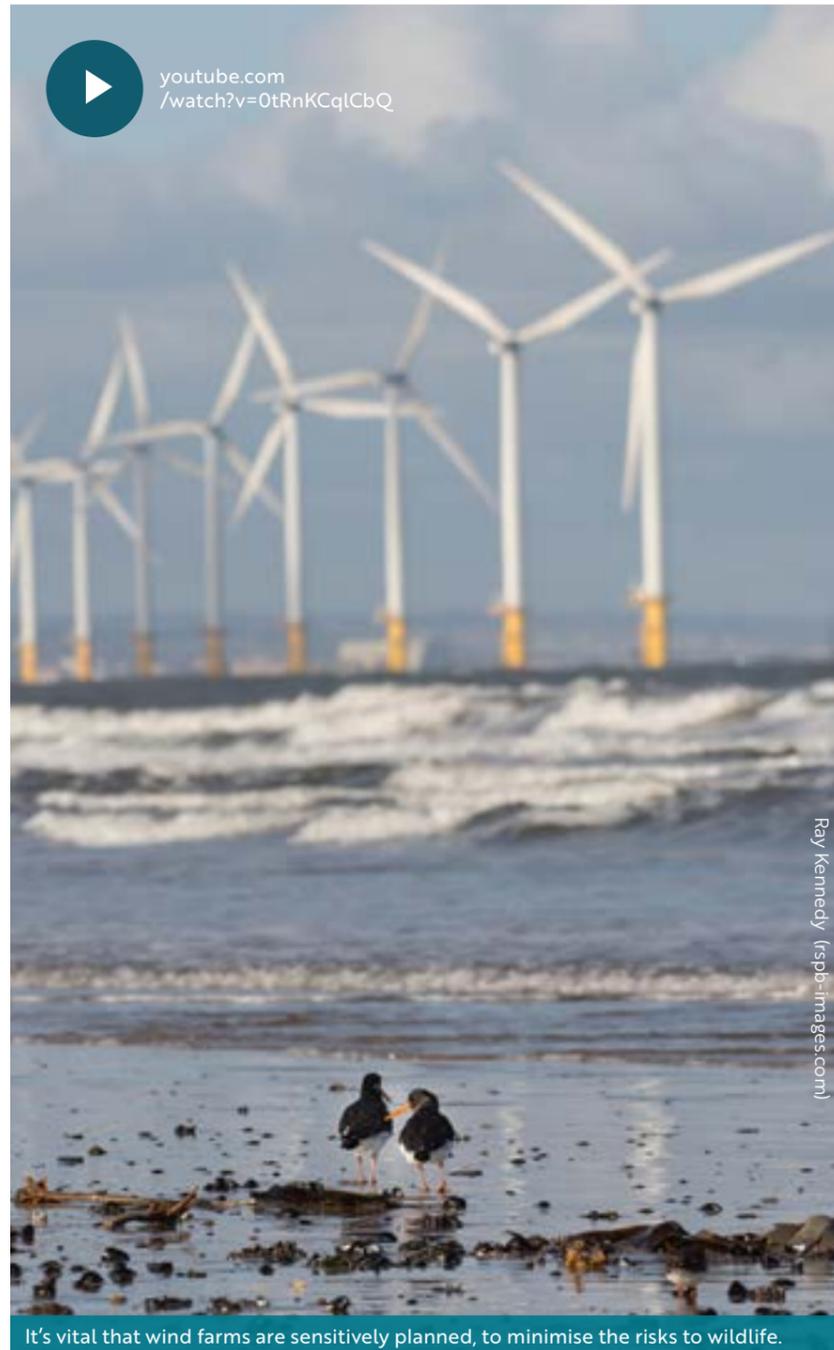
Powering Healthy Seas report published

Offshore wind has a vital role in the fight against climate change and the UK's transition to renewable, locally produced energy. However, to meet government targets, far more offshore wind developments will be required and this could pose a serious risk for marine wildlife.

That's why, with support from our partner, the European Climate Foundation, the RSPB has published a new report – *Powering Healthy Seas* – which makes recommendations for how the UK can shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy while protecting the natural world. It highlights the need for more robust evidence to help inform where and how we create new developments and calls for a more strategic approach to the planning of wind farms.

The UK has lost more than two million seabirds since 1986, and those that remain face an unprecedented barrage of threats, including avian flu and overfishing. Therefore, it's vital that wind farms are sensitively planned to minimise the risks to vulnerable species, such as disturbance, displacement and collisions.

To find out more about our recommendations, read the report at rspb.org.uk/powering_healthy_seas



It's vital that wind farms are sensitively planned, to minimise the risks to wildlife.

Counting albatrosses – from space!

Many species of albatross are in serious decline, so it's vital we keep track of their numbers. The best time to do this is when they're on land raising their young. But as many albatrosses nest on remote islands it can be difficult and expensive to reach them and potentially disruptive for the birds themselves. So we teamed up with the British Antarctic Survey to spot and count albatrosses from space, using the latest super high-resolution satellite images.

Although the pilot project focused solely on Wandering Albatrosses on South Georgia, counting the birds was a mammoth task, so we put out a call for eagle-eyed volunteers to help. More than 600 people got involved, from 73 different countries, reviewing 82,880 images between them! This part of the project has now ended, but in the future our hope is to form a flock of 'albatross detectives' so that together we can complete the world's first worldwide albatross census.





OUR HIGHLIGHTS: GLOBAL LAND

Carbon credits funding rainforest protection in Gola

In 2014 we began generating income from the sale of certified carbon credits to protect Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone. Sales of these carbon credits have gone from strength to strength and now provide finance for other areas across Sierra Leone too.

Like many tropical forests, Gola is under threat from deforestation. This not only destroys habitat for wildlife and reduces the ability of the forest to perform vital ecosystem services, it also exacerbates climate change. However, despite the vital role the rainforest plays in supporting wildlife and people, securing sufficient funding to ensure its protection was a challenge, because of competing demands on limited government funds.

Pygmy Hippos, Western Chimpanzees and Forest Elephants.

Local people benefit from Gola REDD+ too, through sustainable livelihood projects, including Farmer Field Schools, where training is provided to help local farmers to increase their crop yields and income without expanding their farm into the rainforest.



The REDD+ project helps protect Western Chimpanzees.

400,000 tonnes



of carbon emissions saved every year thanks to the Gola REDD+ project

The Gola Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) project solves this problem by allowing companies and individuals to buy carbon credits – essentially creating a value for the carbon stored in the forest. This not only ensures that carbon remains locked away, it also finances our work to protect the forest from illegal activities, such as deforestation and poaching, helping to safeguard rare wildlife, including

Celebrating 100 years of BirdLife International

2022 marked the 100th anniversary of the creation of BirdLife International, a partnership of over 115 conservation organisations working together to protect birds and habitats on every continent.

The RSPB is the UK member of the BirdLife family and we're also the largest organisation in the network, supporting many other partners and helping them to thrive and grow.

Our honorary secretary, Frank Lemon, was there back in 1922 when a group of conservationists

met in London with a vision to join forces and protect birds around the world. They knew that wildlife pays no attention to borders and that sharing local knowledge could play a vital part in saving nature.

United by their passion, they founded what we now know as BirdLife International.

From those humble beginnings, BirdLife has grown into the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations and is critical for the success of the RSPB's strategy. Over the years we've achieved some fantastic successes together, none more so than our work in Kazakhstan, described below.



RSPB project wins UN award

In December 2022, the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was announced as one of only 10 UN World Restoration Flagship projects, as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. We co-founded the project in 2005, alongside the Government of Kazakhstan, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, and other partners. Since then, we've been working to protect Saiga Antelopes and other globally important wildlife across a vast area of steppe grassland, wetlands and deserts. As a result, Saiga numbers have rocketed from fewer than 40,000 to 1.32 million and more than 5 million hectares of state protected areas have been established.

Say cheese! Tigers caught on camera in Harapan

We're using hidden cameras to survey Critically Endangered Sumatran Tigers in Hutan Harapan rainforest in Sumatra.

Hutan Harapan rainforest is one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet, but tracking elusive wildlife through dense undergrowth across almost 100,000 hectares is incredibly challenging. As a result, reliable population estimates for many of Harapan's species, including Sumatran Tigers, are lacking.

To address this, we set up camera traps in the hope of capturing images of tigers, which can be individually identified by their unique stripe patterns. So far, three tigers have been caught on camera, in three different locations. We've also recorded other signs of tigers, such as scratch marks and droppings, in 13 survey areas. This is great news and following additional surveys in 2023 we hope to have a much clearer idea of how many of these rare creatures live in Hutan Harapan.

Sadly, the tigers' forest home is under threat from a proposed coal road, which would pass through the southern part of Hutan Harapan. This road would destroy and fragment habitats, releasing climate-warming carbon from the trees and soil, and also increase access to the area, making it easier for illegal poachers and loggers to reach the protected forest.

The indigenous communities that live in and rely on the rainforest will be affected too. Construction of the coal road will disrupt their way of life and could lead to displacement and a violation of their human rights.

We're determined to protect the forest, and its wildlife and people, so alongside our partners, we're urging the construction company to change the route of the road to minimise its impact.



Camera traps are helping us to discover how many Sumatran Tigers live in Hutan Harapan rainforest.



70,000 tree saplings were grown in community tree nurseries before being planted out into degraded habitat.

Forest restoration progressing in Kenya's Taita Hills

Work to restore fragmented cloud forest in Kenya's Taita Hills made good progress over the past year.

So far, 70,000 indigenous tree seedlings have been grown by local people in nine community tree nurseries, before being planted out across 42 hectares of degraded habitat, to help boost natural regeneration.

As well as producing seedlings for this forest regeneration work, these nurseries are also being used to grow commercially valuable crop trees, such as Macadamia and Avocado.

It's hoped that these trees will not only help to improve the income and livelihoods of local people, but also act as connecting corridors

between forest fragments, allowing wildlife to move more freely.

The Taita Hills are home to more than 28 unique plant and animal species, including the Taita Thrush, which appears to be responding well to the habitat restoration, with numbers increasing in some areas.

The RSPB's partnership work to restore the cloud forest has been made possible thanks to a £148,000 Darwin grant in 2022/2023.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS: UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

Saving iguanas in the Caribbean

Our partnership work to protect endangered iguanas in the Caribbean received a welcome boost last year.

Important new national biosecurity regulations in Turks and Caicos and alien species regulations in the Cayman Islands were introduced, which aim to minimise the impact of invasive non-native species on wildlife.

This is great news for Critically Endangered Turks and Caicos Rock Iguanas and the Cayman Islands' Sister Islands Rock Iguanas, whose populations have plummeted largely due to introduced predators, such as feral cats, which kill and eat them. Invasive Green Iguanas are also a problem, as they spread disease, compete with the native iguanas and increase the risk of genetic extinction by hybridising with them. These new regulations will strengthen our

existing partnership work on the islands to reduce the spread of invasive species through biosecurity and control measures.

Unsustainable development also threatens the islands' wildlife and so in 2019 we purchased 10 acres of dry forest next to the Salina Reserve on Grand Cayman, to help our partners with their efforts to save endangered species, like the Blue Iguana. Thanks to generous funding, including £150,000 from the John Ellerman Foundation and £32,433 from the Quick Response Fund for Nature, we were able to expand the reserve in 2022, by purchasing another 10 acres of forest. This habitat will provide a safe haven for Blue Iguanas, as well as threatened endemic plants.



Ed Marshall (rspb-images.com)

New biosecurity regulations will help to protect Turks and Caicos Rock Iguanas from non-native invasive species.



RSPB employee receives British Empire Medal

In 2023 we received the wonderful news that the RSPB's Andy Schofield had been awarded a British Empire Medal in the King's New Year Honours list, in recognition of his work for the wildlife and people of the UK Overseas Territory (UKOT) of Tristan da Cunha.

Andy has spent thousands of hours on Tristan da Cunha – the most remote inhabited island on earth – working alongside the community to help them progress their conservation aspirations. Most notably he has supported the community for almost a decade to reach their goal of designating an area of ocean that's almost three times the size of the UK as a no-take Marine Protection Zone (MPZ) – the largest in the entire Atlantic Ocean.

The MPZ will safeguard one of the world's most pristine marine environments and protect the wealth of wildlife that lives there, including Critically Endangered albatrosses, Rockhopper Penguins, Blue Sharks and Beaked Whales.

Andy was nominated for the award by the Tristan da Cunha community and the Tristan Government. Trevor Glass, Director of Conservation in Tristan, said: "Andy has built our understanding and gained our trust – allowing us to get the MPZ on its feet and designated. Andy is great with the community, he's always helping others, supporting them with things like training and advice. He's absolutely brilliant and we thank him very much for his work."

On receiving the award, Andy said: "Some of the best, most enjoyable work I've ever done has been working with small communities all over the world and giving them a conservation legacy that even future generations can benefit from. I think listening to and working with communities is the best, most productive way to get things done."



Andy Schofield

Andy was nominated for the BEM by the Tristan community.

"I am incredibly touched and humbled that the Tristan da Cunha community has put me forward to receive this award. Thank you, Tristan! I will proudly share it with you. You have done all the hard work; I just supported you to reach your goals."

Andy Schofield, BEM



Restoring cloud forest in St Helena

We're working with our partners in the UKOT of St Helena to protect and restore the island's vitally important cloud forest.

The cloud forest is home to many rare species, including the Spiky Yellow Woodlouse, which is unique to St Helena. It also plays a vital role in capturing water from the clouds that cloak St Helena's steep central ridge, providing the majority of the island's fresh water supply. This important habitat is fragmented and now covers just 16 hectares (ha), compared to 600 ha before humans began living on the island.

To restore the forest, we're clearing areas of invasive species and growing plants that can be used to create new areas of cloud forest.

With our partners, we've established a world-class propagation facility and so far we've grown more than 63,000 plants – exceeding our target of 60,500. We've also planted more than 33,000 plants from 17 different species into wild restoration sites and living gene banks.

We're already seeing wildlife benefit from the creation of new corridors of habitat between existing patches of cloud forest – in 2022, the Spiky Yellow Woodlouse was seen using habitat corridors that were created just four years ago as part of a previous project.



Liza Fowler (RSPB)

Spiky Yellow Woodlice, which are unique to St Helena, have been seen using areas of newly-created cloud forest habitat.



Bumper breeding season for seabirds on Gough Island

In 2022 – for the first time in 20 years – no Tristan Albatross chicks were killed by invasive non-native mice on Gough Island in the South Atlantic. As a result, breeding success reached an incredible 75%, up from an average of 32%. Results were similarly impressive for Atlantic Petrels whose breeding success doubled to 62%, and for Grey Petrels which saw chick productivity rise from 30% to 75%.

These phenomenal results are down to a reduction in the number of mice following our eradication attempt in 2021. Although we weren't successful in completely removing mice from the island, this year has given us a glimpse of what a future without mice could look like for seabirds – and makes us even more determined to return to Gough and remove the mice forever.



OUR HIGHLIGHTS: FOOD AND FARMING

Fair to Nature scheme gets bigger and better

In November 2022, we relaunched and expanded our Fair to Nature food and farming certification scheme in a bid to help tackle biodiversity loss across the UK countryside.

The Fair to Nature standard has been relaunched and is now available for any UK farmer including arable, horticulture and livestock farmers, and wine producers.

Certified farmers make at least 10% of their land available for a range of wildlife habitats, reduce their use of chemicals and care for their soils in more sustainable ways. These measures have been proven to reverse declines in farmland

wildlife and farmers reap the benefits too: more pollinators for their crops, improvements in soil quality and savings on chemicals.

The relaunch was supported by a campaign to encourage food brands and supermarkets to buy from certified farms.

A new, eye-catching logo was also unveiled, which will be displayed on the packaging of certified products, helping

consumers to identify food that has been produced in a nature-friendly way – much like the now-familiar Fairtrade logo.

Mark Varney, the RSPB's Head of Fair to Nature said: "The scheme has already achieved incredible results. At RSPB Hope Farm we have seen a 226% increase in breeding birds, a 213% increase in farmland butterflies and up to 19 times more bees than on typical farms."



Laurie Campbell (rspb-images.com)



NI farmers win wildlife-friendly farming award

For more than a decade, brothers James and David Bonnar have been working to make their farm on Northern Ireland's Antrim Plateau as wildlife-friendly as possible, creating habitat for threatened species including Hen Harriers and Curlews. In recognition of their dedication we nominated them for the Nature Friendly Farmer of the Year Award 2022 – and they won! A fantastic achievement that is richly deserved.

The future of farming

The future of farming should be nature-friendly: that's the consensus reached by a group of farmers and environmental organisations, including the RSPB.

This consensus rests on an understanding that: a healthy natural environment is key for food security, farming is central to combating the nature and climate emergency, and diversity – of nature, farming systems, animals, crops, and people – will enable farming to be resilient.

The group agreed that the way we currently produce food is unhealthy for ourselves and the planet. We must transform

this so we have a healthy diet, farming works alongside nature, and farmers receive a fair wage. Everyone benefits from good-quality wildlife habitats on farms. They reduce the need for pesticides and boost the numbers of pollinators.

The consensus needs governments to commit to environmental and animal welfare standards, and to providing support for farmers to meet these standards.

The group included individual farmers and representatives from the RSPB, the Foundation for Common Land, National Trust, WWF-UK, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Green Alliance, and Food, Farming and Countryside Commission.

You can read *A Consensus on Food, Farming and Nature* at wcl.org.uk/docs/Food_Farming_Nature_Consensus-2023.pdf

Pesticides: it's time for a rethink

In our *Pesticides and wildlife* report we made the case for a radical rethink of our reliance on toxic chemicals and called for a new approach that works with nature rather than against it.

Across the world, huge quantities of pesticides are used every single day, from farmers' fields to urban gardens. In 2020 alone, the UK treated 56 million football pitches-worth of land with pesticides and at least 150 different active substances were spread onto farmland.

Despite this widespread usage, we know worryingly little about the real-world impacts of these chemicals, and what we do know is extremely concerning. For example, neonicotinoids affect the ability of honeybees to navigate and the ability of bumblebees to grow and produce queens.

Hundreds of pesticides are used in millions of combinations across our landscapes and there is no system to assess the full spectrum of their environmental impacts. So we'd like to see a more precautionary approach to the use of chemicals, with targets for the reduction of their use.

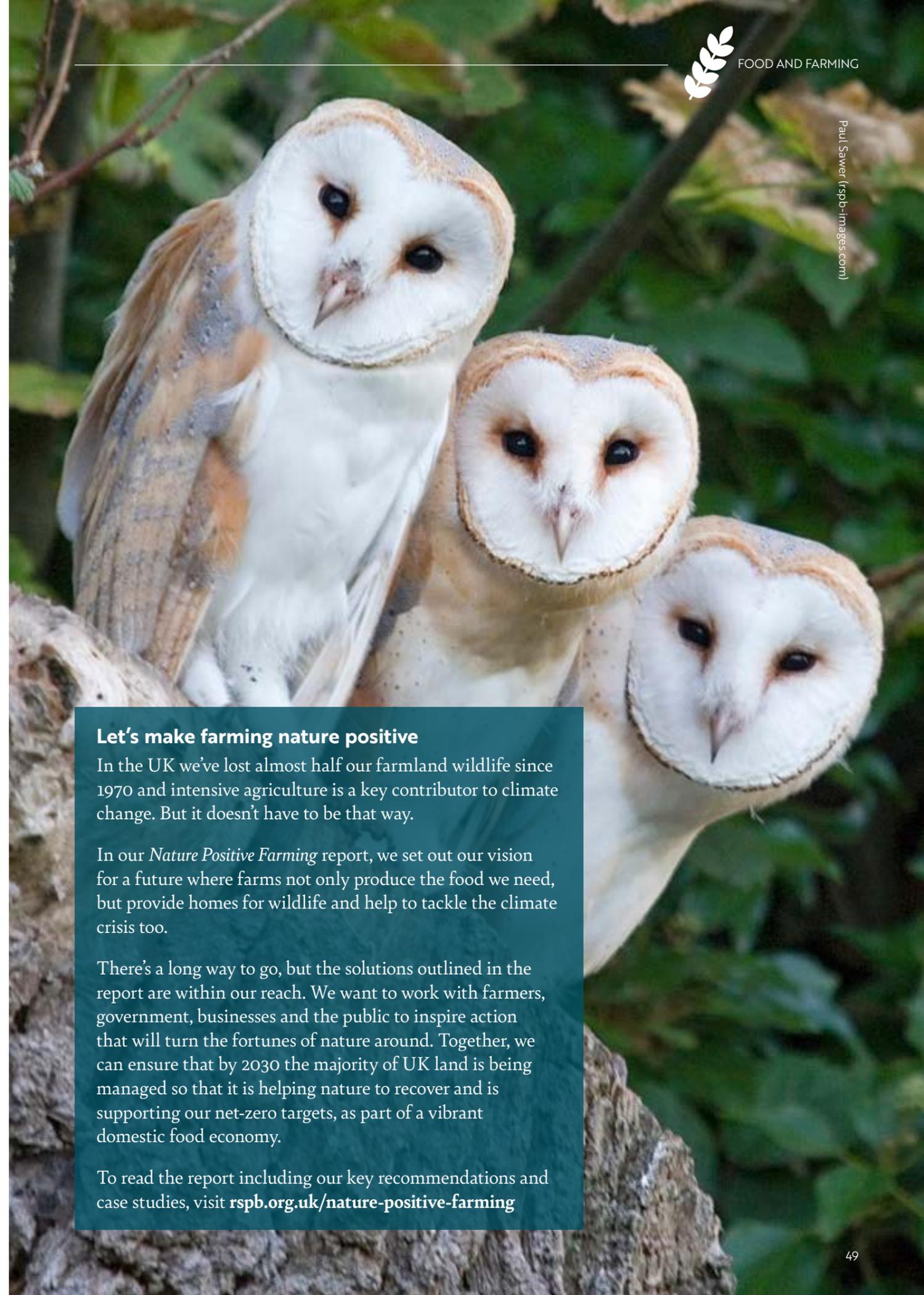
And the good news is that reducing the use of pesticides needn't have an adverse impact on crop production. In fact, wildlife-friendly farmers have found that working with nature, rather than relying on chemicals, can not only maintain crop yields, but even boost them in some cases.

That's why we're calling on UK governments to support farmers to manage their farms in a wildlife-friendly way. You can read the report at rspb.org.uk/pesticidesandnature

With support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we have also teamed up with Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK) and a host of other organisations as part of The Pesticide Collaboration. Together we aim to reduce pesticide-related harms, increase awareness and make sure farmers get the support they need to adopt sustainable non-chemical alternatives. Visit pesticidecollaboration.org



Bees and other insects play a vital role in pollinating our crops, but they're at risk from toxic chemicals.



Let's make farming nature positive

In the UK we've lost almost half our farmland wildlife since 1970 and intensive agriculture is a key contributor to climate change. But it doesn't have to be that way.

In our *Nature Positive Farming* report, we set out our vision for a future where farms not only produce the food we need, but provide homes for wildlife and help to tackle the climate crisis too.

There's a long way to go, but the solutions outlined in the report are within our reach. We want to work with farmers, government, businesses and the public to inspire action that will turn the fortunes of nature around. Together, we can ensure that by 2030 the majority of UK land is being managed so that it is helping nature to recover and is supporting our net-zero targets, as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.

To read the report including our key recommendations and case studies, visit rspb.org.uk/nature-positive-farming



OUR HIGHLIGHTS: GREENING

Improving our environmental performance

We improved our environmental performance in a number of ways this year.

Our directly measured greenhouse gas emissions are slightly lower than the last full normal operating year before Covid, despite catching up on the backlog of work. More operational areas of the RSPB have been accredited to Level 2 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard for the first time. Our overall system and our HQ functions attained Level 3, and our Wales operations retained this. This demonstrates an increased awareness of our significant environmental impacts and our local plans to tackle them.

Over the past year we have improved the insulation and efficiency of a number of our buildings and have begun a review of our travel and transport. A change in the working pattern of many of our staff has led to fewer in-person gatherings and when business travel is needed our new revised hierarchy of options encourages those that are least impactful. In addition, our

trading and publication operations have reduced paper use and cut waste, and we have begun measuring the greenhouse gas flux through land management projects on key sites.

Thanks to our Green Dragon champions network, awareness of our environmental ambitions increased within the organisation last year. Over the coming year, we will improve our data collection and accuracy, and our environmental sustainability programme will begin. This will include a carbon management plan and further improvements to our accreditation.



OUR HIGHLIGHTS: NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMY

Making business nature positive

The business sector is responsible for a significant proportion of the damage caused to the natural world. But by becoming nature positive, businesses can become part of the solution to restore nature.

At the RSPB we've set ourselves up to succeed in driving the transition to a nature-positive economy by developing and strengthening the RSPB's Policy and Advocacy Teams and linking them into income generation through conservation investment.

Following the Dasgupta Review we have been making the case for more public and private funding for nature, and the development of local nature-positive economies. In addition, we have responded to key initiatives such as the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures. Working with external partners, we have also developed

the Nature Positive Business Pledge to help businesses to reduce their impact on nature.

The path to a nature-positive economy means changing how we do business in all areas of society, from the finance and policy sectors, to individual consumers. Through our Landscape Recovery pilots we are working with partners to deliver large-scale habitat restoration, as well as a range of public benefits, including carbon sequestration. Our other business partnerships include working with Whitbread in England, Hafren Dyfrdwy in Wales, Beam Suntory in Scotland and Northern Ireland Water.



New reserve cafés opened

We're hoping to encourage more visitors to discover our nature reserves, and boost income for our work, with four new cafés.

Three of the cafés – at Conwy, Frampton Marsh and The Lodge – are already open and the other one – at the Dee Estuary – is due to open soon. Instead of using core RSPB funds to finance the cafés, we secured a £2.8 million loan from Triodos Bank UK and worked with Finance Earth to ensure they would be profitable enough to repay the loan.

The cafés are bespoke modular structures that were built off site to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Our hope is that, by providing places to enjoy delicious food and drink, we will entice people who would perhaps not have considered visiting an RSPB reserve to experience what we – and nature – have to offer.



OUR HIGHLIGHTS:

CAPABILITIES

Sensory walks at Sherwood Forest

As part of a collaboration with the Royal National Institute of Blind People we ran several walks to allow blind and partially sighted people to enjoy the sounds, smells and textures of our Sherwood Forest nature reserve in Nottinghamshire. We also hosted a tour of the reserve for a group of deaf and hard of hearing visitors, with a British Sign Language interpreter accompanying them. These events have been such a success that more are planned for the future.



Ian Derrain

Updating our brand identity

To succeed in our mission we need to keep inspiring people to join us and take action for nature, so in June 2022 we refreshed our brand to better reflect our work to protect habitats, save species and help end the nature and climate emergency.

We commissioned brand consultancy ASHA & Co to update our positioning, visual identity and tone of voice, taking into account feedback from a range of key stakeholders, including partners, colleagues, members and supporters.

This refresh included creating a new people-led call to action: 'Nature is in crisis. Together we can save it.' We also updated our logo. The avocet remains

the star feature, but we've introduced new colours to represent the land, sky and sea, which reflects our ambition to protect all of nature. Switching to a round, rather than square, logo makes it better suited to digital platforms.

Going forward, our new look will gradually begin to appear in more places, but the branding refresh will not be fully complete for another

few years. That's because we're aiming to reduce costs and waste by only replacing items as and when necessary.



Our eye-catching new logo.

New website launching soon

Once we'd refreshed our brand, we couldn't ignore our website, so we've been hard at work improving our online offer.

Having reviewed our current website, we spoke to real-world users and it became clear that our website no longer meets our needs or the needs of our audiences. So, we set about completely rebuilding the website, to bring our huge portfolio of knowledge and resources into the modern era and make it easier for people to discover nature and take action to save it.

Keep an eye out for our new structure and intuitive layout, fresh imagery and videos, plus new and updated content. The new website will also offer the personalised experience that web users expect and enjoy.

Together, we hope these improvements will lead to better awareness and greater engagement with our mission and will help us to appeal to more diverse audiences with content that is relevant to them.

"Our new website will provide the ideal platform for us to engage and inspire our supporters."

Luke Surry
Chief Digital Technology Officer

A youth manifesto for change

Last year the RSPB Youth Council met in the Cairngorms to discuss their plans for the future. Council member Emily explains more.

"We came up with the idea to create a document which we could use not only to show people what we're about, but also something which keeps us grounded and motivated.

"Since our meeting in the Cairngorms, we have been working hard to create our manifesto, which tells the story of who we are, what we care about and how we aim to create change. It's the foundation from which we hope to achieve amazing things and bring a new youthful energy to

the RSPB. We hope that our manifesto will inspire change; encourage more engagement across all generations; give us more agency so that we can make an impact at the RSPB

and elsewhere; and place the Youth Council on the map."

To read the youth manifesto, visit rspb.org.uk/youthcouncil



Some members of our inspiring Youth Council in the Cairngorms.

Indy Kiemel Greene

Our impact: England

Les Cater

Connecting with the natural world is great for our health and this was the inspiration for our Nature Prescriptions partnership with the NHS that launched in England this year. Big partnerships are a key part of our work – a great example has been highlighting the importance of our east coast wetlands for millions of birds, which resulted in a nomination for potential UNESCO World Heritage Site status (see page 34).

Michael Copleston
Director, RSPB England



Using the power of nature to boost health and wellbeing

Following on from successful pilot projects in Scotland, we launched RSPB Nature Prescriptions in England in 2023.

Research clearly shows that nature has the power to boost our health, happiness and wellbeing, which is why we created Nature Prescriptions – an innovative way for healthcare professionals to prescribe nature as part of a patient's treatment plan. These Nature Prescriptions are supported by a leaflet and calendar of activity suggestions to inspire and encourage people to connect with nature.

Trials of Nature Prescriptions in Scotland have been really encouraging, with 74% of patients saying that they benefited from their prescription.

Building on this success, we are now working with partners to deliver Nature Prescriptions in England, starting in the High Peak area of Derbyshire. In Scotland prescriptions were offered by GPs, but in England many different healthcare professionals, including Social Prescribing Link Workers, will be delivering Nature Prescriptions. We hope this will allow us to reach more people so that they can experience the benefits of nature for themselves.

“Being connected with nature calms me and makes me feel grounded. It gives me perspective and lifts my heart. Thank you so much for this inspired service. It’s absolutely brilliant!”

Nature Prescriptions patient

Celebrating 50 years of Titchwell Marsh

Since we purchased Titchwell Marsh back in 1973 a huge amount has changed at this dynamic coastal reserve. We've realigned and strengthened the sea defences that surround the freshwater marsh and reedbed, to protect them from coastal erosion and rising sea levels, and created a new area of tidal saltmarsh, which acts as a natural buffer for the freshwater habitats beyond.

Over the past 50 years Titchwell has grown to become one of our most popular nature reserves and a key tourist attraction on the North Norfolk Coast. Tens of thousands of people

visit every year to discover the huge range of species at Titchwell, and to celebrate our 50th anniversary we've been running special guided walks to help visitors spot 50 different species in a single day. From Avocets and Bitterns, to Marsh Harriers and Bearded Tits, there's so much to see whether you're a seasoned birdwatcher or a beginner.

As we look ahead to the next 50 years at Titchwell, we'll be focusing our work on further protecting and enhancing the freshwater marsh and reedbed habitats and making the reserve an even better place for visitors to experience nature.

Rare dragonfly discovered at Minsmere

A regular visitor, Les Cater, discovered Suffolk's first ever Scarlet Darter Dragonfly at RSPB Minsmere in July 2022. It's the first new dragonfly species to be recorded on an RSPB nature reserve since 2015 and brings our tally up to 50 species of these colourful insects, proving that our work to create and manage wetland habitat is paying dividends for wildlife. At the time, Les didn't realise quite how significant his discovery was: “I saw and photographed what I thought was a Red-veined Darter. It was only after posting it on social media two days later, many people messaged me on Twitter and phoned me to say, Les, that is a very rare Scarlet Darter. The rest is history!”

Our impact: Northern Ireland



Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)



With no Stormont Assembly sitting, this has been a difficult year politically, but it hasn't stopped us saving nature. We successfully concluded the Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB) project and we opened Montiaghs Moss nature reserve. Curlews had incredible breeding seasons at Glenwherry and Fermanagh. And with our partners, we've made Nature Recovery Networks a reality.

Joanne Sherwood

Director, RSPB Northern Ireland

Bringing nature back to Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is famed for its stunning landscapes, but the reality is that it's the twelfth most nature-depleted country in the world.

That's why we've joined forces with the National Trust, Woodland Trust and Ulster Wildlife to form the Northern Ireland Landscape Partnership and create Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs). These networks are about repairing, creating and connecting spaces where wildlife can live, feed, breed and move across the landscape. Our approach is large scale and collaborative, involving everyone from local landowners and farmers, to people taking action for nature in their gardens.

The first stage in creating NRNs was to complete a set of national habitat maps for Northern Ireland. These helped us to identify the best sites for wildlife, and work out how to restore them and join them up.

Eventually, we want to see Nature Recovery Networks embedded in law, across governments and all decision-making, as a key tool in helping to mitigate the nature and climate emergency.

Nature Recovery Networks are funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the DAERA Environmental Challenge Fund.

Birds and butterflies given a boost

2023 marked the end of Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB), a successful six-year partnership project to save habitats for birds, butterflies and plants across Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland.

Peatland restoration work carried out across the Ox Mountains near Sligo, Muirkirk in Ayrshire, and the Garron Plateau in Antrim has helped to lock away 4.5 tonnes of

carbon, while drain blocking on the Antrim Plateau has allowed sphagnum mosses and other species to recolonise, helping to improve water quality and prevent flooding.

In addition, thanks to the project, 900 pairs of breeding wading birds now have safe places to feed and breed in Lough Erne, Donegal, and Gruinart on Islay.

Butterflies, have benefited too. As a result of the management of 170 hectares of land across

Montiaghs Moss, Pettigoe Plateau and County Leitrim rare Marsh Fritillary Butterflies are now thriving and laying their eggs on newly-created habitat.

CABB was supported by the EU's INTERREG VA programme, with match funding by DAERA in NI. The project was carried out in partnership with RSPB Scotland, Birdwatch Ireland, Butterfly Conservation, Moors for the Future and Northern Ireland Water.

Step out on Rathlin

Visitors to Rathlin Island can now enjoy the new Craigmacagan Walking Trail. Just 15 minutes' walk from the harbour, it offers breathtaking views of the Antrim Coast and across to the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland, as well as the opportunity to watch a host of seabirds, including Razorbills, Shags and Guillemots. This 2.1 km trail was funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' Environment Fund Challenge Competition.

Our impact: Scotland

Jack Perks (rspb-images.com)

Beavers were released in the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.



We're so grateful for your ongoing support – especially for our appeal to meet the challenges of avian flu. It was fantastic to relocate a family of Beavers to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and we hope to see similar projects in the future. We also expanded our peatland restoration programme, undertaking habitat restoration and conservation at a landscape scale.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland

Brilliant Beavers at the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park

We're very excited to report that RSPB Scotland was involved in an important project to move a family of Beavers to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. They were moved from an area where they were causing some disruption, to an area where they will bring a huge amount of benefits.

A vet at Five Sisters Zoo checked the Beavers over thoroughly to ensure they were healthy before they could be released.

Beavers are known as 'nature's engineers'. Through their everyday actions of coppicing trees and shrubs and damming small water courses, they create diverse

wetlands. In turn, these benefit Otters, Water Voles and various birds. Their actions also reduce downstream flooding, as the water courses they create hold water and release it very slowly, reducing siltation. Wetlands help to trap carbon too, which is important for mitigating the effects of climate change.

Following their introduction, we're monitoring the Beavers closely, to see how they fare. We hope their arrival will mark the start of Beaver populations expanding further in Scotland.

This translocation was made possible with support from NatureScot.

We're making Curlews feel at home at Airds Moss

Our Airds Moss nature reserve in East Ayrshire consists of around 1,000 hectares of blanket bog and grassland. Blanket bog is an incredible habitat, and vital for many species, particularly Curlews.

The combination of a grant and a number of legacy gifts meant we were able to extend the reserve in 2023. This extra land will be a real boost for Curlews, which need a wide area and a large mixture of habitats to thrive. Thanks to the new land, we will have the space to create a suitable 'Curlew mosaic' of moorland, marginal upland, rough grassland and 'in-bye' (farmland next to moorland).

We've also been busy planning new wetland habitats, ranging from bog pools to wet grassland. As well as providing the perfect habitat for wading birds, these features are also designed to be resilient against increasingly hot summers, helping to ensure they don't dry up during critical chick feeding periods.

This work won't just benefit Curlews – it will also improve Airds Moss for Hen Harriers, Short-eared Owls and other species too.

The majority of the Airds Moss Special Area of Conservation comes under the ownership of the RSPB. This land purchase cost £318,374.



Curlews are set to benefit from new habitat at Airds Moss.

Our impact: Wales

Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)



Almost 90% of the land in Wales' is farmed, so how we farm has a huge impact on our wildlife. That's why we've been campaigning for a new farming policy that will work for both farmers and nature. The new Agriculture (Wales) Bill last year was a big step in the right direction. Now, our efforts focus on ensuring the new Bill benefits wildlife as much as possible.

Alun Prichard
Director, RSPB Cymru

Lake Vyrnwy becomes an even bigger wildlife haven

Lake Vyrnwy, in Powys, mid-Wales, is set to become an even more important place for nature. In November 2022, we added another piece of land from Natural Resources Wales to our lease holding at the site, bringing the area we manage to just over 2,000 hectares. The new area, which is made up of forested deep peat, is known as Bryn Fawnog.

With the help of local contractors, we plan to restore this land back to healthy blanket bog, which is vital in the fight against climate change, as it locks carbon into the land rather than releasing it into the atmosphere. It also helps to alleviate flooding, by absorbing excess water and

then releasing it gradually. Blanket bog provides a home for an array of wildlife too, including Merlins and Hen Harriers, as well as sphagnum mosses and colourful, carnivorous sundew plants.

Combined, the bogs at Lake Vyrnwy are estimated to contain enough peat to fill Cardiff's Principality Stadium from pitch to rooftop more than 22 times, storing carbon equivalent to nearly half of Wales' annual carbon footprint.

Lake Vyrnwy is one of the most important wildlife sites in Wales and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

First-ever Agriculture Bill for Wales

In Wales, farming has an enormous role to play in looking after nature and helping to mitigate the nature and climate emergency.

But up until now, the policy for subsidising farmers has come at a great environmental cost: for example, 12% of Welsh greenhouse gas emissions come from farming practices, and unsustainable farming is the main driver for loss of wildlife on land. With the launch of the first Agriculture Bill for Wales, we campaigned hard for

a Bill that worked with nature in mind, which would benefit both people and wildlife.

The first Welsh Agriculture Bill was laid before the Senedd by the Welsh Government in September 2022. This contains a number of proposals, including: support for farmers to produce goods and food in a sustainable manner and help to mitigate climate change, help to maintain and enhance ecosystems, and to conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources to

promote public access and engagement.

We're particularly pleased with the plans for using public money to pay for public goods that we all benefit from, such as nature restoration and carbon storage. Farming unions, too, have given the Bill a positive welcome.

The Bill also includes a requirement for farmers to manage 10% of their land for nature. This was a result of our advocacy work.

Wales' second Gannet colony

We're proud to say that a second Gannet colony was recorded in Wales on Ynys Badrig, off the coast of Anglesey in 2022. A total of 21 occupied nests were recorded following monitoring by staff and students from Bangor University's School of Ocean Sciences, with support from local residents, RSPB Cymru, Natural Resources Wales and Swansea University. The first confirmed count of Gannet nests in Wales was on Grassholm Island in 1883. A number of Gannets are on the island again in 2023, and we hope that a permanent breeding colony will become established in the years to come.

Ein heffaith: Cymru

Rachel Bigsby (rspb-images.com)

Mae bron i 90% o dir Cymru yn cael ei ffermio, felly mae'r ffordd rydyn ni'n ffermio yn cael effaith enfawr ar ein bywyd gwylt. Dyna pam rydyn ni wedi bod yn ymgyrchu dros bolisi ffermio newydd a fydd yn gweithio i ffermwyr ac i fyd natur. Roedd y Bil Amaethyddiaeth (Cymru) newydd y llynedd yn gam mawr i'r cyfeiriad iawn. Nawr, rydyn ni'n canolbwyntio ein hymdrechion ar sicrhau bod y Bil newydd yn rhoi cymaint o fudd â phosibl i fywyd gwylt.

Alun Prichard
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

Hafan bywyd gwylt Llyn Efyrrwy yn ehangu

Mae Llyn Efyrrwy, ym Mhowys ar fin dod yn leoliad pwysicach fyth i fyd natur. Ym mis Tachwedd 2022, fe wnaethom ni ychwanegu darn arall o dir gan Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru at ein prydles ar y safle, sy'n ehangu'r ardal rydyn ni'n ei rheoli i 2,000 a mwy o hectarau. Bryn Fawnog yw enw'r ardal newydd, sy'n cynnwys mawn dwfn wedi'i goedwigo.

Gyda chymorth contractwyr lleol, rydyn ni'n bwriadu troi'r tir hwn yn ôl i fod yn orgors iach. Mae hyn yn hanfodol i'r frwydr yn erbyn newid hinsawdd, gan fod yr orgors yn cloi carbon yn y tir yn hytrach na'i ryddhau i'r atmosffer. Mae hefyd yn helpu i liniaru llifogydd drwy amsugno dŵr gormodol ac yna'n ei ryddhau'n raddol. Mae

gorgorsydd hefyd yn gartref i amrywiaeth o fywyd gwylt, gan gynnwys y Cudyll Bach a'r Boda Tinwyn, yn ogystal â mwsoglau Migwyn a phlanhigion gwllithlys cigysol lliwgar.

Gyda'i gilydd, amcangyfrifir bod y corysdd yn Llyn Efyrrwy yn cynnwys digon o fawn i lenwi Stadiwm Principality Caerdydd o'r cae i'r to dros 22 gwaith, ac yn storio carbon sy'n cyfateb i bron i hanner ôl troed carbon blynyddol Cymru.

Llyn Efyrrwy yw un o'r safleoedd bywyd gwylt pwysicaf yng Nghymru ac mae wedi'i ddynodi'n Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig, yn Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig, ac yn Warchodfa Natur Genedlaethol.

Bil Amaethyddiaeth cyntaf Cymru

Yng Nghymru, mae gan ffermio rôl enfawr i'w chwarae o ran gofalu am fyd natur a helpu i liniaru'r argyfwng hinsawdd a natur.

Ond hyd yma, mae'r polisi cymhorthdal i ffermwyr wedi costio'n ddrud i'r amgylchedd: er enghraifft, daw 12% o allyriadau nwyon tŷ gwyr Cymru o arferion ffermio, a ffermio anghynaladwy yw'r prif sbardun ar gyfer colli bywyd gwylt ar y tir. Wrth lansio Bil Amaethyddiaeth cyntaf Cymru, buom yn ymgyrchu'n galed dros Fil a oedd yn

gweithio gyda golwg ar fyd natur, ac a fyddai o fudd i bobl ac i fywyd gwylt.

Cafodd Bil Amaethyddiaeth cyntaf Cymru ei osod gerbron y Senedd gan Lywodraeth Cymru ym mis Medi 2022. Mae ynddo nifer o gynigion, gan gynnwys: cefnogaeth i ffermwyr i gynhyrchu nwyddau a bwyd mewn ffordd gynaliadwy ac i helpu i liniaru newid yn yr hinsawdd, helpu i gynnal a gwella ecosystemau, ac i warchod a gwella cefn gwlad ac adnoddau diwylliannol i hyrwyddo

mynediad i'r cyhoedd ac ymgysylltu.

Rydyn ni'n arbennig o falch o'r cynlluniau i ddefnyddio arian cyhoeddus i dalu am nwyddau cyhoeddus rydyn ni i gyd yn elwa ohonyn nhw, fel adfer byd natur a storio carbon. Mae undebau'r ffermwyr hefyd wedi rhoi croeso cadarnhaol i'r Bil.

Mae'r Bil hefyd yn cynnwys gofyniad i ffermwyr reoli 10% o'u tir ar gyfer natur. Roedd hyn o ganlyniad i waith eiriolaeth gennym ni.

Ail nythfa o Hukanod yng Nghymru

Rydyn ni'n falch o ddweud bod ail nythfa o Hukanod wedi cael ei gofnodi yng Nghymru ar Ynys Badrig, oddi ar arfordir Ynys Môn yn 2022. Yn dilyn gwaith monitro gan staff a myfyrwyr o Ysgol Gwyddorau Eigion Prifysgol Bangor, gyda chefnogaeth gan drigolion lleol, RSPB Cymru, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru a Phrifysgol Abertawe, cofnodwyd bod 21 o nythod yn cael eu defnyddio. Y cyfrif cyntaf o nythod Hukanod i gael ei gadarnhau yng Nghymru oedd ar Ynys Gwales yn 1883. Mae sawl Hukan ar yr ynys unwaith yn rhagor yn 2023, a gobeithio y bydd nythfa fridio barhaol yn cael ei sefydlu yn y blynyddoedd i ddod.

Forward look

2020 to 2030 is the make-or-break decade for the nature and climate emergency. We have the potential to turn things around, but it's in a challenging environment. The political agenda is dominated by global and domestic economic forecasts, inflation and rapid rises in the cost of living, particularly associated with war in Ukraine and the effects of climate change.

The new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) agreed in December 2022 sets a clear mission to reduce and halt biodiversity loss by 2030. Whilst no international framework is perfect, this gives a sufficient foundation for change. It's vital we continue to hold our governments to account, building the urgent call to action and focusing on implementation. We're confident our strategy set in 2021 is still the right one: focusing on scaling up action at a landscape scale and in partnership; mobilising more support for nature from a more diverse range of people; and increasing the influence we have on governments.

Although the climate emergency is now an established part of the political and business agendas, recognition of the extent to which the climate and nature crises are intertwined is not. We need to fix both if we are to fix either. However, the international and domestic response is still inadequate, and the Westminster political environment is uncertain. The union of the UK looks increasingly fragile, and differing political narratives result in divergence in national policies. We have much to do to hold decision-makers to account, and keep the focus on urgent action for the environment and wildlife.

Internationally, rapid inflation in the context of low incomes also looks set to result in

political instability. This will be a challenge to our policy work, but means that agriculture and energy security will be all the more relevant. We have much to contribute in these areas, for example in ensuring that the transition to renewable energy, including offshore wind farms, is sensitively planned to minimise the risks to vulnerable wildlife and habitats.

The persistent outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the UK and Northern Europe seems likely to continue. This moves avian influenza from a welfare issue to a conservation concern for the first time. It is particularly relevant for seabirds, which are already under threat due to marine development and overfishing.

We need to adapt and develop to rise to these challenges, and the pace and scale of change needed. Our continued focus on the development of conservation finance; our work on equality, diversity and inclusion; and strengthening our operations, including our reserves, our digital and built estate, and the wellbeing of our workforce, remain high priorities.

The successes that we have seen in 2022-2023 show the impact of our 2030 strategy. Our priorities for 2023-2024 are to drive the change required across public, political and private sectors that are key to success by 2030.

Our top priorities for the year ahead are:

- Increasing the amount of large-scale collaborative projects we are engaged with, across the UK countries and globally, both on land and at sea.
- Raising the profile of nature as part of the nature and climate crisis. We will also highlight our proposals for how to address the crisis, through:
 - raising the profile of our marine work
 - advocating for energy development that works in harmony with nature
 - responding to the impact of avian flu.
- Continuing to embrace new and different ways of working as the organisation emerges from the effects of Covid-19.
- Influencing and communicating about food and farming policy and legislation. This will be particularly important in the coming year, given the current pressures on food and energy security.
- Enabling the use of equity finance and other new frameworks and income sources that will allow us to drive habitat restoration at scale.

The total number of churring Nightjars recorded on RSPB reserves reached an all-time high in 2022.



Thank you and acknowledgements

The RSPB's work to save nature is only possible thanks to the support we receive from our members, volunteers, partners, supporters, donors and funders – thank you for all that you do.

Vice Presidents

- Dr Elizabeth Andrews MBE DL
- Sir David Attenborough OM GCMG CH CVO CBE
- Nick Baker
- Dr Mike Clarke
- Adrian Darby OBE
- Ian Darling FRICS OBE
- Kate Humble
- Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS
- The Earl of Lindsay
- Sir John Lister-Kaye Bt OBE
- Miranda Krestovnikoff
- Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
- Bill Oddie OBE
- Professor Steve Ormerod FCIEEM FLSW
- Chris Packham CBE
- Julian Pettifer OBE
- Sir Graham Wynne CBE
- Baroness Young of Old Scone

Thank you to our President, Vice Presidents and Ambassadors who give their time freely to support the RSPB. Read more on pages 12–13.

Members and supporters

The support and loyalty of our members and supporters is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting our ambitious conservation targets, connecting more people to nature, bringing species back from the brink of extinction and protecting land for nature would not be possible without your enormous contribution.

Members help in many ways, and they are all crucial to our mission: by donating, giving their time through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns, and by bringing RSPB projects to life on the ground through Local Groups. We would also like to thank our wider group of supporters who also contribute generously with their time, money, voice and action. It is greatly appreciated and crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889, and they're still fundamental to our work today. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to support for office and retail activities, to running the RSPB as members of our Council. In addition, more than half a million people take part in citizen science projects such as Big Garden Birdwatch.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends upon the support of our volunteers and the donation of their time and talents. They are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB.

Volunteers enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives,

whilst demonstrating passion and commitment to our mission.

We have around 11,900 volunteers, who make up 83% of our workforce. The activities of every single one of our volunteers is crucial for our work and the RSPB – thank you.

Community groups

We have a network of community groups across the UK for both young people and adults alike – our Wildlife Explorer groups and Local Groups. These groups form a thriving, active, engaged and valued network that delivers impactful work in communities to save nature. Run by some of the RSPB's most loyal and passionate volunteers, our groups allow the RSPB to have an active presence across the UK. Local Groups are an integral part of the organisation and members contribute their skills, time and energy to act for nature.

Our volunteer-led Wildlife Explorer groups inspire and empower hundreds of young people across the UK to become advocates for nature, both now and in the future, and enable them to share their passion with others to grow a movement of people taking action for nature.

Legacies

Money left to us in legacies makes a vital contribution to our work to save nature every year. Whilst it's impossible to thank every single one of our legators, we'd like to mention the following people:

- Mrs Marcia Bale
- Mrs Pauline Mary Berrisford-Hill
- Mr Gordon Harold Blacklock
- Mr Peter Blood
- Mrs Ann Elizabeth Collins
- Mrs Janet Cuff
- Mr Terence Clive Evans
- Mr David Fisher
- Ms Amanda Jane Geel

- Mrs Elizabeth Florence Gough
- Mr Paul Roderick Mahoney
- Mrs Ann Patricia Moore
- Miss Margaret Moyes
- Mr David Pennels
- Mr Alan Arthur Preston
- Mr Kenneth Rosson and Mrs Patricia Rosson
- Mrs Susan Margaret Shaw
- Mr Roland George Smith

Philanthropic supporters

We'd like to give a special mention to The Banister Charitable Trust, who have provided the RSPB with significant grants over twenty years for purchasing land and restoring habitats for wildlife across our reserves in the UK.

We'd also like to thank the Endangered Landscapes Programme who have supported us and our partners to create a beacon for restoration and conservation practice in the Cairngorms Connect Partnership landscape. This is generously funded by Arcadia, a charitable fund that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

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

- Adlard Family Charitable Trust
- Mr Alan Alderson and Ms Sandra Allen
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- BARI The Bird and Recreation Initiative
- Caroline and William Barnes
- Mr D Benham
- The Bentley Family Trust
- The Big Give Trust
- BirdLife International

- Blue Nature Alliance
- Ms Davidia Bradbury
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Brown Forbes Memorial Fund
- The Brown Source Trust
- Mr P Burley
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Cameron Bespolka Trust
- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Chabot Family Fund
- The Chalk Cliff Trust
- Charities Trust
- The Clapp Family Charitable Trust
- Conservation International (CI)
- The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust
- Drs John and Hinke Couchman
- Ms V Coy
- Craignish Trust
- Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF)
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) – Czech Partner of BirdLife International
- The David Family Foundation
- Julia Davies of We Have The Power (wehavethepower.org)
- Ida Davis Family Foundation
- Ms E Desmond
- The Violet Helen Dixon Charitable Trust
- Mrs Joan and Mr Dick Duley
- John Ellerman Foundation
- Mrs Lynne Ellis
- Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP)*
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- The Finborough Foundation
- Fondation Segré
- The Gannochy Trust
- The Generation Foundation
- Mr James William Gibson
- Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- Mr Charles Glanville
- Global Environment Facility (GEF) Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR)
- Dr John Gowenluck
- Peter and Diana Gulland
- The Hamer Charitable Trust
- The Daphne Hamilton Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- Henocq Law Trust
- Jonathan and Florence Heyhoe
- Ms S Hidderley
- Highlands and Islands Environment Fund (HIEF)
- The Corton Hill Trust
- Nicholas Hooper
- HSBC Bank Trust
- Jersey Overseas Aid
- The Gladys Jones Charitable Trust
- Kusuma Trust
- The Stefan and May Frances Kwasniewski Charitable Trust
- Peter A Lawrence (Betty & Nancy Liebert Trusts)
- Mr Robert and Mrs Elizabeth Lee
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- The Linder Foundation
- The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
- The Makin Family Trust
- Paul and Sandra Marsh in memory of their son Tim
- Julia Maynard
- Robert McCracken KC
- Mentor Mon Cyf
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Mr Mark Mills
- The Thomas Moffitt Clark Charitable Trust
- Mr I Morrison
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Geographic Society
- National Museums Northern Ireland
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- The Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF)
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Peacock Charitable Trust
- The Penchant Foundation
- Mr Michael Percival
- Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
- The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery



Kevin, Pook, Thomas, Black Magic, Roger and Podkin the Dartmoor ponies have been helping with heathland restoration at The Lodge in Bedfordshire by munching Bramble, scrub and Birch saplings. They also trample Bracken and deposit lots of manure! This creates good conditions for wildlife including Nightjars.

- Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
- Mr and Mrs J A Pye's Charitable Settlement
- Q Charitable Trust
- Quick Response Fund for Nature (QRFN)
- The Maurice Henry Roe Charitable Trust
- Helen Roll Charity
- The Rufford Foundation
- The Ryde Family
- Mrs R Scott
- Seacology
- Mr P W Shaw
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- South Georgia Heritage Trust
- Sustainable Fishery Partnership
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust and The Swire Charitable Trust
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Mr R and Mrs S Thirkell-White
- Truell Conservation Foundation
- Mr K and Mrs C Turner
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Reading
- Mrs F Vogel
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Rosemary Warburg
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust

- J & J R Wilson Trust
- World Bank / Liberia Forest Sector Programme (LFSP)
- World Wildlife Fund
- Wyss Foundation

*The Endangered Landscapes Programme is a partnership between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and Arcadia, a charitable foundation that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

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

Celebrity and influencer supporters

We'd like to thank the following people for supporting our campaigns, events and projects over the past year. They're fantastic advocates for nature.

- Bill Bailey
- Mya Bambrick
- Sam Bentley
- Hannah Bourne-Taylor
- Carl Bovis
- Gillian Burke

- JJ Chalmers
- Mya-Rose Craig
- Lizzie Daly
- Mike Dilger
- George Hassall
- Aneeshwar Kunchala
- David Lindo
- Kate MacRae
- Dara McAnulty
- Jim Moir
- Stephen Moss
- David Oakes
- Dermot O’Leary
- Lev Parikian
- Sophie Pavelle
- Ben Porter
- Iwan Rheon
- Nancy Sorrell
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Arlene Stuart
- Iolo Williams
- Hamza Yassin

Youth Council

- Alfie
- Emily
- Freddie
- Indy
- Jannis
- Kabir
- Katie
- Lisa
- Luke
- Natasha
- Sennen
- Thomas

Landfill Communities Fund

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

- Biffa Award
- Clackmannanshire & Stirling Environmental Trust
- EB Scotland Ltd
- Enover Community Trust
- FCC Communities Foundation Ltd
- GrantScape
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Valencia Communities Fund

Business supporters

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

- Adobe Employee Community Fund
- Affinity Water Limited
- Amalgamated Construction Ltd trading as AmcoGiffen
- Appleby (Cayman) Ltd
- The Ardmore
- Baillie Gifford
- Barratt Developments Plc
- Beam Suntory UK Ltd
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Confor
- The Co-operative Bank
- DPDgroup UK
- Ecotalk
- Ecotricity
- Edinburgh International Conference Centre Ltd
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- The Famous Grouse
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP
- holidaycottages.co.uk
- Hurtigruten Group Ltd
- idverde UK
- P Keenan Quarries
- Kingfisher Plc
- The LEGO Group
- Lightrock Power

- Lush Ltd
- Marine Stewardship Council
- Marks & Spencer
- Marshalls plc
- JP Morgan Chase & Co
- Morgan Sindall Group Plc
- Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Ltd
- Norfolk Coast Partnership
- Northumbrian Water Group
- Parkdean Resorts
- Portsmouth Water Ltd
- The PWC Foundation
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Reed Smith LLP
- RWE Renewables UK
- ScotRail
- Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Ltd
- ScottishPower
- Scottish Water
- Severn Trent Boost for Biodiversity Fund
- Severn Trent Water
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- Southern Water
- South Western Railway
- SSE Renewables
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Triodos Bank UK
- Turcan Connell
- UBS Optimus Foundation Singapore Ltd
- United Utilities Plc
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd

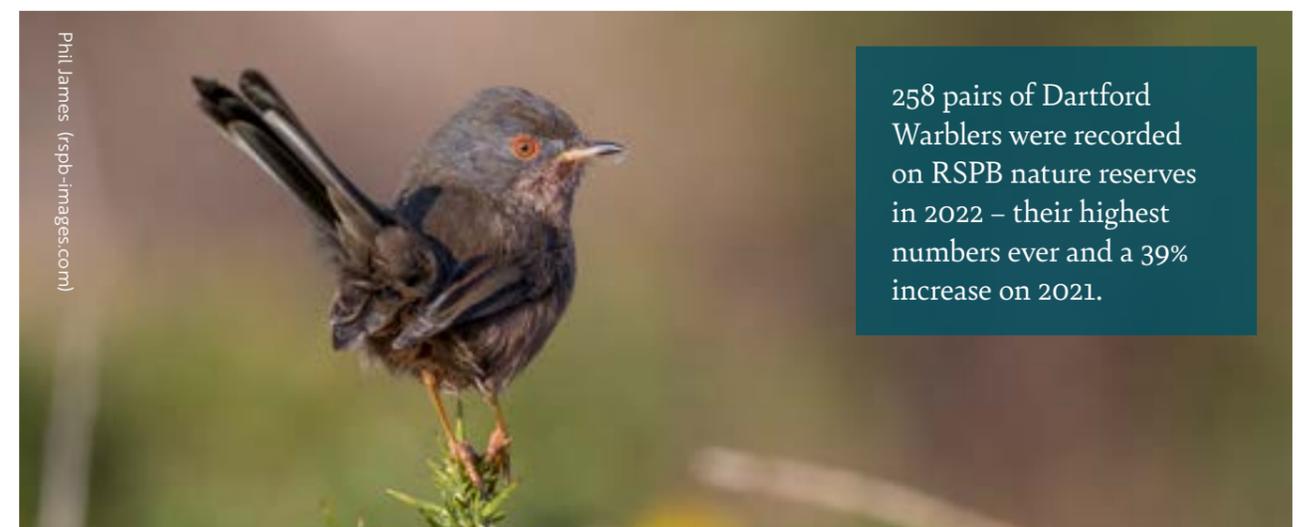
- Wessex Water Services Ltd
- Whitbread Group PLC
- Withers LLP
- Yorkshire Water

National Lottery Heritage Fund

From coast to coast and dale to downs, the National Lottery Heritage Fund has funded nature conservation projects that allow our wildlife to flourish by protecting habitats through restoration and empowering local communities. The RSPB is also indebted to NLHF for their support through their exceptional administration of Defra’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund. We are very appreciative of their support, provided through: the Nature Networks programme for the Lake Vyrnwy Peatland Restoration project on behalf of the Welsh Government; their ongoing support of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership; and the funding provided for projects across all four UK countries.

National Lottery Community Fund

Thanks to grants from the National Lottery Communities Fund, whether people live in busy cities or in remote countryside locations, we can bring them together to celebrate their cultural and natural heritage, and showcase how communities can work together to benefit both nature and people.



Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

Special thanks to Defra for their support through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF), providing more than £5 million in funds to support projects in England. GRCF allowed the RSPB to deliver projects restoring nature and wildlife, introduce new nature-based solutions on our project sites and connect even more people with nature. We would also like to thank Defra for their support through the Environmental Land Management Scheme – Landscape Recovery round one pilot.

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:

- Bird Aware Solent
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Cairngorms National Park Authority – Peatland ACTION Fund
- Clackmannanshire Council
- The Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, Environmental Challenge Competition
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environmental Farming Scheme
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, In Year Capital Strand
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA) – Environment Fund, Strategic Strand
- Dorset Council
- Environment Agency – Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund
- EU Protected Areas Management Support (PAPFor)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – PAPFor (Programme d’Appui la Preservation des ecosystemes Forestiers en Afrique de l’Ouest)
- European Commission – Thematic Programme for environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy (ENRTP)
- The European Regional Development Fund (INTERREG VA) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- European Regional Development Fund managed by NatureScot
- Falkirk Council
- Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz)
- Fife Council
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Glasgow City Council
- Haryana state Govt: MoEFCC, India
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- IREC – Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (CSIC-UCLM-JCCM)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- The Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk
- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW, Credit Institute for Reconstruction), Germany
- Marine Scotland
- Monmouthshire County Council
- National Grid
- National Highways England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- NatureScot
- NatureScot – Better Places Fund (BPF)
- NatureScot – Peatland ACTION Fund
- Partnerships for Forests Programme – UK FCDO
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Alliance for Geoscience, Environment and Society
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Government and VisitScotland’s Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)
- The Scottish Government’s Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot (please note that funding was received for multiple RSPB Scotland projects this year)
- Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- Snowdonia National Park
- Stirling Council
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustrans Scotland
- The United Nations Environment Programme/Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED)
- Visit Wales
- West Bengal state Govt. MoEFCC, India

Thank you

We’ve cleared more than 8,300 hectares of ancient woodland of invasive, non-native Rhododendrons in Wales, through the Celtic Rainforest LIFE project.

Governing body, leadership and effectiveness

Governing body

The RSPB's overall governing body is the RSPB Council. This is composed of up to 18 Council members (Trustees). The RSPB Council has overall responsibility for the conduct of the RSPB. It also ensures that the RSPB operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, statutes, byelaws and the law. It is supported by several committees that all have specific roles, defined by their formal terms of reference.

Each committee meets several times a year, and other subcommittees are established from time to time. The honorary positions of President and Vice President, and our Ambassadors, are not Council members and are not involved in making or influencing Council decisions.

Leadership and effectiveness

The RSPB Council works as a team, with a balance of skills, experience and knowledge, in order to be as effective as possible. We check our ways of working to ensure we align with the Charity Governance Code.

Every year, the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity our Trustees bring to the Council are reviewed alongside the effectiveness of the Council. Trustee vacancies are advertised on the RSPB website, in the *RSPB Magazine* and through specialist search agencies. The appointment process is rigorous and is managed by the Council's Nominations Committee.

We give information about the RSPB and Trustees' duties to people who express an interest in being a Trustee, before there is formal confirmation of a willingness to serve. Once elected to Council, Trustees receive a briefing pack outlining their role, duties and

accountabilities, with information about the RSPB and its policies, structure and work. We hold induction sessions for each new Trustee, which take a strategic look at their roles and responsibilities and the RSPB's strategy and operations. Trustees are also offered opportunities to learn more about the RSPB's work, such as individual meetings with staff, visits to nature reserves and training on important work areas. Each year, we hold a weekend event in an area of natural importance with a focus on the species and habitat work undertaken there. We also hold similar events for Country Advisory Committees.

Trustees and senior staff complete a register showing their interests and related party transactions. This is updated each year, and whenever any changes occur.

As part of the induction, continuing training and annual appraisal for all Trustees, staff and volunteers, we provide information about:

- Our codes of conduct – the values, rules and principles that we expect our staff, volunteers and Trustees to follow.
- Our ethical principles – how we want to engage with the world.
- Our brand – how we want our supporters, stakeholders and the wider public to think about us.
- Our values and behaviours – how we work and relate to each other.

The Feather Speech campaign calls for swift action

We supported and promoted The Feather Speech campaign, created by author and conservationist Hannah Bourne-Taylor, which calls for Swift bricks to be made compulsory in new housing developments. By April 2023, 109,894 people had signed the petition. For the campaign launch, which took place in London, Hannah was covered in painted feathers by the artist Guido Daniele. Find out more at hannahbournetaylor.com and on Twitter: [@WriterHannahBT](https://twitter.com/WriterHannahBT)

RSPB Council



Kevin Cox

Council Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Robert Cubbage

Treasurer and Finance, Audit and Risk Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Kerry ten Kate

Conservation Committee Chair

- Nominations



Linda Grant

Fundraising and Communications Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations



Ghazala Koosar

Committee for England Chair



Dr Vicki Nash

Committee for Scotland Chair

- Finance, Audit and Risk



Prof Sir Adrian Webb

Committee for Wales Chair



Judith Annett

Committee for Northern Ireland Chair



Dr Ben Caldecott



John Bullock

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Nominations
- Remuneration



Jim Lowther



Prof William Sutherland



Jim Sloane

- Finance, Audit and Risk



Veronica Pickering DL



Lord John Randall



John Mason

- Finance, Audit and Risk

All Council members sit on both the Conservation and Fundraising and Communications Committees. For further information on the structure and operation of Council, please see [rspb.org.uk/council](https://www.rspb.org.uk/council). For more information on the RSPB's remuneration policy, see page 79.



In 2022, RSPB advisors worked with hundreds of landowners to provide improved breeding habitats for Turtle Doves across more than 45,000 hectares of land in England.

Mike Read (rspb-images.com)

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounts. These should show and explain the RSPB's transactions and be able to disclose the charity's financial position at any time. These should also ensure the financial statements comply with reporting and legal regulations, and meet the charity's constitution, set out in the Charter and Statutes.

Charity law in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland requires Trustees to prepare financial statements each financial year. These must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the group, and of the income and expenditure of the group for that period. They are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, and financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, known as FRS102.

When preparing these statements, the Trustees must:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Follow the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates.
- State whether they have followed applicable accounting standards, subject to any exceptions which are disclosed and explained.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

They're also responsible for safeguarding the RSPB's assets, and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Management board



Left to right: Beccy Speight, Russell Powell, Rebecca Munro, Katie-jo Luxton, Emma Marsh, Shaun Thomas

I became the RSPB's Chief Executive in August 2019. My role is to lead the organisation, build relationships with key partners, represent our views externally and work with the Council and Executive Board to develop our forward direction and ensure we deliver that plan. I believe I am in the best possible place to make a real difference for birds, the natural world and people in the context of the nature and climate crisis. I feel fortunate to work with a great team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters to do just that.

Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

I became the Executive Director for Digital Technology and Communications in August 2022. I'm focused on ensuring the RSPB makes the biggest possible difference for nature and people across those functions. I joined the RSPB in 2016 as Regional Director in the Midlands, and from 2019 as the Director for RSPB England.

Emma Marsh
Executive Director,
Digital Technology and Communications

I lead the RSPB's mission to save species, protect habitats and restore landscapes to help end the nature and climate crisis, and I've held my current position since November 2021. Prior to this, I was Director of RSPB Cymru for 12 years, leading the delivery of the RSPB's strategy for Wales.

Katie-jo Luxton
Executive Director, Global Conservation

I joined the RSPB in February 2023, from the National Trust. I lead on ensuring the RSPB is financially sustainable, well-governed and is on course to meet the aims laid out in its strategy. As Europe's largest nature conservation charity, we're very grateful for the support we receive. We want to spend every penny in a way that helps further our cause. We do this by working with colleagues and external partners to ensure we achieve good value for the money we spend, we do so in a controlled way, and that we are aligned to our strategy.

Russell Powell
Executive Director,
Finance, Governance and Strategy

I work with colleagues across the RSPB to bring in funding and resources to deliver our strategy and help close the funding gap for nature more widely. This includes engaging and growing the RSPB's membership; partnering with businesses to support our work and transition to a nature-positive economy; running our commercial operations; and deploying conservation investment to achieve landscape-scale nature restoration.

Rebecca Munro
Executive Director,
Income and Conservation Investment

I work with the country teams to implement our programmes across the UK. I'm also responsible for the functions leading on organisational change, and the employment and engagement of our 14,000 staff and volunteers.

I spent the early part of my career focusing on strategic and corporate management. I then managed operational teams in English Nature and Natural England, before joining the RSPB.

Shaun Thomas
Chief Operating Officer

Please note: Shaun Thomas retired from his role as Chief Operating Officer in July 2023. Dr James Robinson is taking on this role in autumn 2023. Russell Hollinshead also retired as Executive Director Finance Governance and Strategy in 2022. Russell Powell was appointed to this role.

Oversight of remuneration

All RSPB staff, including the Chief Executive and Executive Board, are covered by the same remuneration policy. This is based on externally-benchmarked salary bands. This policy is approved by the RSPB Council and is subject to review.

To ensure transparency, the salary of the Chief Executive is overseen by a committee composed of the Treasurer, and the Chairs of Conservation and Fundraising and Communications. This is chaired by the Chair of Council.

The performance of the Chief Executive is subject to a formal appraisal process against previously agreed measures, and this is discussed at an annual appraisal meeting. Recommendations for pay progression are made in line with the RSPB's pay policy for staff.

The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing the salaries of the Executive Board, in line with the same policy.

Integrity

The RSPB's Council has ultimate responsibility for the charity's funds and assets, as well as our reputation. Each Council member must adhere to a Code of Conduct, and endorse the RSPB's five Ethical Principles. These are based on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) ethical principles for the charity sector, and incorporate the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

1. **Beneficiaries first:** the interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do (page 80).
2. **Environment:** nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature (page 80).
3. **Integrity:** we should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct (page 80).
4. **Openness and accountability:** we create a culture where our supporters, staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds (page 81).
5. **Right to be safe:** every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (page 81).

I. Beneficiaries first

To ensure we have the greatest impact for nature, we:

- Carry out our work to provide the greatest impact for people and nature with integrity, regardless of whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB's reputation, leadership or operation.
- Encourage trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate, and by listening and responding to our

beneficiaries. This facilitates engagement and communication.

- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with our beneficiaries in mind.
- Work with organisations and individuals whose goals and values are consistent with our work, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

II. Environment

Our conservation work has a huge impact for nature. We preserve and restore natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact, we're working to reduce the footprint of all our operations, through our systems and policies (see page 50). For environmental management we:

- Take a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (UN Compact principle 7).
- Promote greater environmental responsibility (principle 8).
- Encourage the development of environmentally-friendly technologies (principle 9).

III. Integrity principle

To uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct, we:

- Ensure the appropriate systems are in place to ensure decisions are well-considered and free from any conflict of interest. This includes our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks (see page 82).
- Ensure our resources are managed in a responsible way, and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for. This includes policies and procedures to combat bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion. We also ensure the systems and processes are in place to enable our expenditure to be audited,

meaning that money, funding and grants can be tracked from receipt to expenditure.

- We work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).

Anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies are built into our procurement policies.

IV. Openness and accountability

We try to create a culture where RSPB supporters, staff, volunteers, institutional partners and the public can see and understand how we work, how we deal with issues, and how we spend our funds.

Through the *RSPB Magazine*, our website (rspb.org.uk) and wider communications, we strive to keep you informed and involved about our projects and activities. This means we operate in an open and transparent way within our legal and regulatory requirements. We want to share information about how we work, and ensure it can be accessed easily.

V. Right to be safe

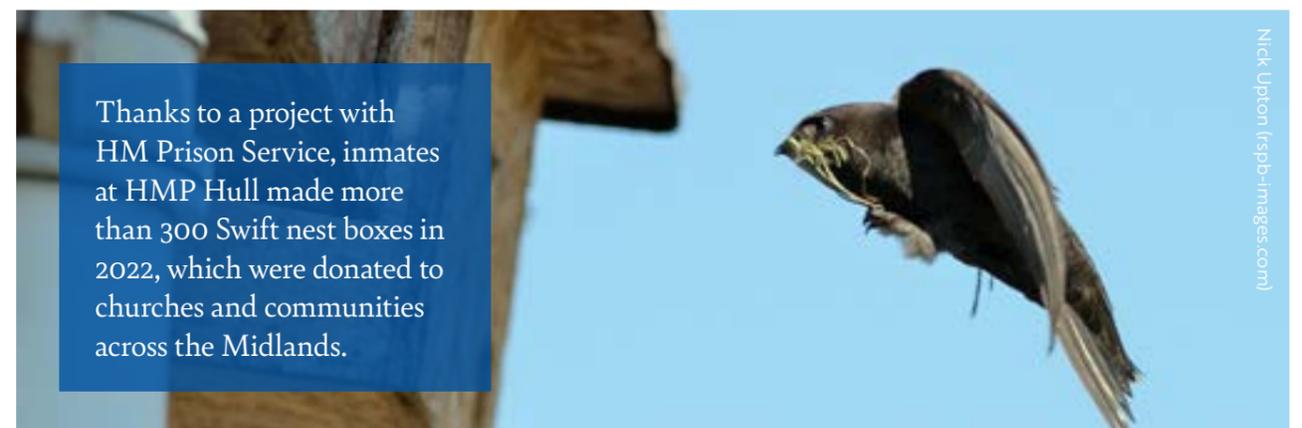
Every person who volunteers, works, or is in contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (UN Compact principles 1 and 2).

This means we:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power, including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities. See also page 84.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of concerns about abuse of any kind of inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands their expectations, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don't feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour (UN Compact principle 5).

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

A full statement of the steps we take to prevent slavery and human trafficking taking place in our business and supply chains can be found at rspb.org.uk/help/modern-slavery-and-the-rspb (UN Compact principle 4).



Thanks to a project with HM Prison Service, inmates at HMP Hull made more than 300 Swift nest boxes in 2022, which were donated to churches and communities across the Midlands.

Decision making, risk and control

We strive for decision-making processes that are rigorous and efficient, incorporate effective delegation, and are informed by assessments of risk and control.

Decision making

RSPB Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive and to the employees for certain activities. There's a detailed schedule of delegation, and systems and policies are in place to monitor these delegations. Major strategic, financial and policy decisions are reserved to Council on advice from its committees.

Risk

The Trustees are accountable for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity, working with the Executive Board. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work: managing large areas of land, much of it visited by many people, entails risk and demands constant attention. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and to charity regulation, Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner. They consider all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Regular reporting provides comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- work on strategy and projects, with a focus on environmental impact;
- reputation, including our environmental credentials;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters, and visitors, and to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;

- compliance with law and regulation;
- management of our financial, physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data and technological assets;
- retaining and building knowledge, delivering good governance and embodying a positive, inclusive and ethical organisational culture;
- protecting and growing sources of income.

The risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council every quarter, and in greater depth once a year. At the full review in April 2023, the Trustees confirmed they are satisfied with such arrangements. They identified a number of risks for the year ahead to focus on that represent both opportunities and challenges. The RSPB will work to limit any possible negative impact on delivering our charitable objects and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite.

Control

The RSPB has a clear framework for monitoring its impact, progress and approach to risk management. Risk registers cover the full range of financial and non-financial risks and we operate the 'three lines' model for risk control and monitoring. This separates execution from control policies and from audit, and maps and rates the control framework. Council approves a plan for internal audits, and a full review of external audit service provision is undertaken periodically with the active involvement of suitably experienced Trustees. The Finance, Audit and Risk committee meets in private with the external auditor once each year.

Risk description		Risk response	
Environmental challenges			
The climate and biodiversity crisis. The threats to nature continue to grow, yet attention is dominated by the climate emergency.		The RSPB's strategy, mission and purpose focus on addressing these issues. We will continue to address the nature and climate emergencies, raise awareness of the role of nature in the climate crisis, and find solutions to both.	
People are disconnected from nature and unaware that it's in crisis.		We undertake activities to help people connect with nature, including education, reserves events, online activities and wide-scale engagement activities, such as Big Garden Birdwatch and <i>Wild Isles</i> .	
Failure to influence public and political views on food and farming resulting in damaging land management practices.		We advocate for environmentally sensitive farming through our policies and campaigns. We build greater knowledge of other organisations working in this area so we can engage with them locally and UK-wide.	
Technology			
The cost and complexity of the technological infrastructure that RSPB work is dependant upon will continue to increase. We contend with requirements to upgrade/replace older systems, issues of connectivity in remote areas, future proofing and protecting from cyber attack.		Increased costs will be managed by onboarding new technology only as legacy tech is retired. The RSPB sourcing strategy will also mitigate risk and cyber security will continue to be upgraded.	
Income			
We are aware of challenging declines in disposable income and competition for funding. Existing sources of income are subject to significant volatility in the current economic climate. New income sources have their own volatility and include restricted funding. New opportunities also bring reputational risk from new partners and a focus is required to make connections with the right partners.		The RSPB Council pays close attention to the RSPB income strategy, bearing in mind the policy on financial reserves. New income opportunities are being explored, with all new arrangements subject to review by our Ethical Gifts board, and major changes reviewed by Trustees.	
Costs			
A significant rise in core costs and limited availability of goods and services. The cost of meeting core obligations significantly increases as a result of sustained high inflation.		Management is placing an increased focus on cost control and procurement, with regular review by Trustees.	
Wellbeing			
Work pressures and volumes have a big impact on wellbeing, as does remuneration. Workforce wellbeing is reported through various channels including the RSPB Staff Association and formal surveys. Ongoing cultural change is required to support staff as they are recruited from a wider range of locations across the UK.		Developing additional tools and support to enable line managers to ensure good working relationships and wellbeing in the workplace. We have changed working locations. The infrastructure, style of working and working patterns now need to change to match.	

Our commitment to inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) underpins the work we do to save nature, and it is embedded in our strategy and its six strategic shifts. We're continuing our journey towards building an organisation where everyone can thrive, recognising and breaking down the barriers that different communities face to access nature and have a say on how to save it.

This year we have proudly reiterated our dedication to our EDI work through updating our EDI commitment statement, publicly setting out our belief that our movement must be inclusive for everyone. It details our achievements and direction, and spells out our commitment towards creating a truly inclusive, anti-racist organisation, because only together can we create a world richer in nature. Read it here: rspb.org.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion

Over the past year we've delivered our internal Why EDI Matters campaign: creating an understanding in our workforce of why EDI is so crucial to our mission to save nature. We've introduced a shared language of

definitions of what inclusion means to us. This has supported us in growing curiosity, courage and confidence around EDI topics within our workforce, building a strong foundation for our continued journey.

We've recruited a Senior Accessibility Specialist who has identified areas of priority around accessibility. Internally we're reviewing how we communicate to better support our staff and volunteers, and externally we've started the process of improving accessibility on our reserves, including the information we provide on facilities and access.

We're continuing to reform our recruitment practices, by reviewing our current framework, and exploring and trialling new processes for inclusive recruitment. To encourage more high-quality candidates from a greater diversity of backgrounds we have also been trialling actions such as holding open briefings for potential candidates and providing additional specialist support and advice to hiring managers on best practice.



EDI underpins the work we do to save nature.

Caring for our supporters

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve. Without their help, our work would be greatly diminished. Volunteers founded the RSPB in 1889 and they are still fundamental to our work today. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical conservation and field surveys, to providing highly specialist skills, raising funds and running the RSPB as members of Council. This year saw the launch of Assemble, a new Volunteer Management System to help us recruit, manage and retain our volunteers.

In addition, more than 540,000 people took part in the RSPB's citizen science project, the Big Garden Birdwatch, recording over 9 million birds.

Our ability to speak out for nature depends on the support of our volunteers. Their activities are crucial to our work and the RSPB seeks volunteer involvement wherever appropriate.

Our approach to volunteering aims to reflect the esteem in which we hold our volunteers. They are an established, valued and integral part of the RSPB. They enhance our work by bringing valuable talents, skills, experience and energy, as well as their gift of time. Volunteers also champion the cause and often provide friendly challenge and new perspectives whilst showing passion and commitment to our mission.

More widely, we provide services to our members and supporters, and respond to more than 225,000 enquiries each year. We sustain our relationships with around two million individuals including members, supporters and volunteers. We send our members a magazine to keep them involved with our work. Our website was viewed by more than 8 million users last year who looked at more than 28 million pages.

Safeguarding

We want everyone to enjoy their involvement with the RSPB, and know that we must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable people, and anyone who encounters our organisation, through:

- Our Safeguarding Policy, which is kept under review to ensure it is meeting the needs of the organisation.
- Safeguarding training for our workforce (including our volunteers) which is currently being revised and updated.
- A comprehensive Speak-up Policy to protect our workforce.
- Our Whistleblowing Policy and independent helpline which is supported by an anonymous reporting capability.
- Our Bullying and Harassment Policy.

- Anti-harassment training delivered to our workforce by an expert partner.
- Bespoke lone traveller training delivered via expert partners to those that work internationally, equipping them to operate in high-risk environments appropriately.
- Membership of external safeguarding groups to ensure we are doing the right things in the right way.

We take steps to ensure our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. And to ensure that these steps are robust, we report regularly on safeguarding issues to our Trustees. See our Safeguarding Policy at rspb.org.uk/safeguarding

How we generate funds to save nature

We're grateful to receive most of our funds from individuals. This comes in a range of different ways, such as appeals, raffles, lotteries, community fundraising and membership.

We work hard to build long-lasting relationships with grant funders, trusts and corporate organisations. Much of our conservation work also generates vital income, which further supports our work to save nature. This includes funds raised through land and farming, and the sale of our research to other organisations.

Our loyal RSPB shop customers help fund our work through the purchase of bird food products, binoculars and telescopes, and educational materials. RSPB members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do, and our work to save nature is only possible thanks to their ongoing support.

Protecting and restoring habitats, saving species and helping end the nature and climate emergency is the key motivation behind our work. We're dedicated to our promise to our supporters, and to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world. We always look to improve how we work and welcome your feedback. We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds, other wildlife, and the places they call home. We endeavour to always show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature. We also share the latest news of what we're achieving thanks to you, and give you control over how you hear from us, whilst managing the cost of doing so.

To achieve our objective to save nature, we carry out fundraising activities. We do this with

RSPB staff, volunteers and the help of carefully selected professional fundraisers and commercial participators. Professional fundraisers are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers who act as agents in raising funds on behalf of the RSPB. Commercial participators are usually businesses who encourage the sale of their goods or services on the basis that the RSPB will receive funding as a result. In all cases, we have contractual arrangements with these fundraising partners that set the standards and obligations that our fundraising activities must meet.

We regularly monitor the quality of all telephone marketing calls and conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with our face-to-face fundraisers. We ask all new members for feedback to understand their experience of joining us, and this also identifies any areas for improvement. Our Local Group network also takes part in fundraising activities. We give group committee members full training and guidance in how to fundraise with the public as part of group activity.

As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances. RSPB staff complete mandatory training including safeguarding and fundraising compliance. Our face-to-face fundraisers have full training in talking about the RSPB cause in a transparent and straightforward way to the members of the public they meet. The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and the Data and Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out of receiving

fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that supporters have the best possible experience in our fundraising efforts. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB's promise to our supporters.

The RSPB complies with the Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's guides and code. RSPB members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted, with the opportunity

to change these at any time. Whilst we endeavour to provide an exemplary service, we do not always get it right. The RSPB believes in reporting non-compliance proactively and we are pleased to highlight that we did not receive any reports of instances of non-compliance in this period. Our website outlines our complaints policy for the public and clearly explains how an individual can complain.

Last year we received 242 complaints about our fundraising by phone, post, email, SMS or face-to-face. We investigated each complaint fully and made improvements to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service.

Thanks to our fantastic volunteers, we're making great progress in removing scrub from the dunes at RSPB Culbin Sands in Moray. This is helping to restore the balance of habitats on the shingle bar, benefiting specialist dune species like the Small Blue Butterfly.



David Kjaer (rspb-images.com)

RSPB greenhouse gas report

The RSPB has utilised the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) methodology voluntarily for the last two years. This year, as we develop our approach to land-based (biogenic) emissions alongside our business (non-biogenic) emissions, we will be utilising the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and we will continue to do so moving forward. We have slightly altered the categorisation of previous results to align with this. There is a minor difference (20t) in last year's reported emissions due to adjustments. As is the norm for other organisations, the inclusion of additional Scope 3 categories means a rise in reported emissions. Capturing data from some parts of the RSPB that had not been included, and improvements in data monitoring and accuracy, have also affected our emissions.

Additional Scope 3 data has been added retrospectively to 2020-21 for comparative purposes, however much of the data for the current baseline year was not available due to Covid-19. Covid affected data gathering in 2019-20 and 2020-21 as a result of staff not being on site and/or contractor data gaps. Therefore using 2020-21 as our baseline is atypical and will be reviewed as part of the Carbon Reduction Plan. We will publish a full GHG inventory by 2024-25.

In 2023-24 we will establish a new Greening Programme Board with a dedicated programme manager and a Lead Carbon Data Analyst. Other work will include:

- rationalising our fleet and introducing more electric vehicles;
- optimising existing renewables;
- rolling out our Environmental Management System;
- embedding staff training;
- improving the sustainability of the products we sell;
- gathering bespoke emissions data from suppliers.

Our Carbon Reduction Plan will set out reduction trajectories and associated actions to achieve our 2030, and longer-term, targets. These targets will be reviewed annually as data collection and associated accuracy improves. We will also report on GHG removals/reduction from our land-based activities to 2030 and beyond. The plan will cover a wide range of themes from decision making and project management to specific impact areas, such as business travel and energy use.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

We are committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and in 2016 a wind turbine was installed at our headquarters.

RSPB greenhouse gas emissions

	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Energy consumption (KWh)			
Electricity	3,238,198	2,920,504	2,505,424
Gas, LPG and oil	2,668,771	2,248,614	2,275,943
Transport fuel – fleet cars	2,908,171	2,783,174	1,145,835
Reserves' machinery	1,494,818	1,183,152	1,644,261
Other – woodfuel	1,486,401	505,645	451,070
Other – renewables (PV and wind)	2,241,337	753,280	1,126,845
Total KWh	14,037,696	10,394,369	9,149,378
Emissions (tCO₂e)			
SCOPE 1 (S1)			
Combustion of gas, LPG and oil for heating	527	454	493
Combustion of fuel for machinery on reserves	367	451	275
Combustion of fuel for fleet transport	700	631	(incl above)
Combustion of woodfuel for heating	14	8	7
Total tCO₂e (S1)	1,608	1,544	775
SCOPE 2 (S2)			
Purchase of electricity (location based)	626	643	584
Purchase of electricity (market based)	115	232	186
Total tCO₂e (S1/2 market based)	1,723	1,776	961
Intensity ratio: total tCO ₂ e / staff (S1/S2 market based)	0.7	0.8	0.5
SCOPE 3 (S3)			
1 Purchased goods and services			
Contractors on reserves	604	598	
Other goods and services	77,751		
3 Fuel- and energy-related activities			
Transmission and distribution (market based)	11	21	
Well to tank (market based)	696	84	
5. Waste generated in operations			
Waste management	4	7	
Water supply and treatment	5	2	
6. Business travel			
Grey fleet	1,021	261	120
Public transport	818	562	1,149
7. Employee commuting			
Emissions for teleworking	405		
9. Downstream transportation/distribution			
	221	372	
10. Processing of sold products			
	697	711	682
Total tCO₂e (S3)	82,233	2,618	1,951
Carbon offsets and carbon units tCO ₂ e	0	0	0
Total annual emissions tCO ₂ e (all scopes) location based	84,467	4,805	3310
Total annual emissions tCO₂e (all scopes) market based	83,956	4,394	2,912
Intensity ratio: total tCO ₂ e / staff (all scopes) market based	33.2	1.9	1.4

Financial review 2022-23

This is the first full year post Covid-19 restrictions that we have been able to begin spending down the high level of financial reserves that had been built up over that period and we saw a planned drawdown to continue tackling the backlog of work. To support there was a 7.8% increase in staff numbers to provide the capacity for this higher work level. However, we are mindful of the economic climate, which has changed significantly during the year, with the war in Ukraine, high rates of inflation and the cost of living crisis having an impact both our cost base and on our income. We continue to benchmark staff salaries to the sector and review our pay structure in line with the market, which means that we have seen a 4.7% rise in average costs in year.

The support and commitment of our members and supporters remains strong and gives a sound financial base to meet the ongoing challenges of the nature and climate emergency, both in the UK and internationally.

We remain financially resilient and in a good position to navigate the current economic outlook.

Summary

Income levels have risen this year to a record £164.7 million, an increase of £7.0 million (4.4%) and charitable expenditure has increased by

£14.4 million (13.5%), giving a drawdown for the year (before the actuarial loss in respect of the pension scheme) of £1.5 million. We finished the year with free financial reserves of £49.3 million which represents 24 weeks expenditure cover, still above the 16 weeks upper limit set by Council, but a significant reduction on last year's 37 weeks. This reflects the planned drawdown to catch up with our backlog of work, and we will continue to plan prudently as we manage our reserves in light of the current economic outlook, mindful of the range set by Council.

Total financial reserves decreased by £8.6 million, being Net Expenditure of £1.5 million and an actuarial loss in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of £7.1 million. Cash and investments decreased by £12.2 million to £56.3 million but leaving a good level of liquidity as we continue in a period of uncertain economic times.

The £0.1 million increase in the Pension Scheme liability reflects the annual updates to the valuation assumptions used to calculate the liability. The main changes were a 2.1% increase in the discount rate mainly offset by a reduction in the value of scheme assets caused by an increase in gilt yields. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed in 2017 and changes

to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees. The latest triennial valuation reflects the funding position as at 1 April 2021 and resulted in annual payments of £7.5 million. The next valuation is due on 1 April 2024.

Income

Overall, total income increased by £7.0 million (4.4%) to £164.7 million which, in the context of the current operating environment, highlights the tremendous support we receive from our members and supporters. A particular highlight is the £3.2 million (7.8%) increase in legacy income to our highest recorded level of £44.2 million. This is another record year for legacy income received and reflects the trust our supporters have that we will use this income to invest in large-scale conservation projects for the benefit of future generations.

Income received from corporates and trusts more than doubled to £9.3 million, more than offsetting the £1.3 million fall in grant income.

Membership subscriptions were broadly in line with last year at £46 million: new member income dropped by £0.9 million, but retention income increased by £0.6 million as retention rates remained high at 89.7%. Total members at the end of the year showed a slight drop to 1.14 million, from 1.15 million last year. RSPB membership is a key part of our income diversity and enables us to speak with confidence and authority when we undertake our advocacy work.

The impacts of the tough economic climate were felt with a drop of £0.7 million in donations and £1.1 million in mail order retail sales.

Grants, corporates and trusts income increased by £3.9 million (12.2%) to £35.7 million. Corporates and trusts accounted for £5.2 million, with a £1.3 million reduction in grant income. This has been used to support a wide range of large-scale projects both in the UK and internationally, including A Greener Thames (£1.5 million), Orkney Native Wildlife (£1.1 million), St Helena Cloud Forests (£0.9 million) and Curlews in Crisis (£0.8 million).

Commercial trading income at £23.7 million was £1.2 million lower than the previous year. Catering and retail income at our reserves increased by £0.5 million, helped by two new modular catering cafés at Conwy and Frampton Marsh. However, mail order and trade income fell by £1.3 million and lottery and advertising income was also £0.4 million lower, which is assumed to reflect impacts of the cost of living crisis on people's spending power.

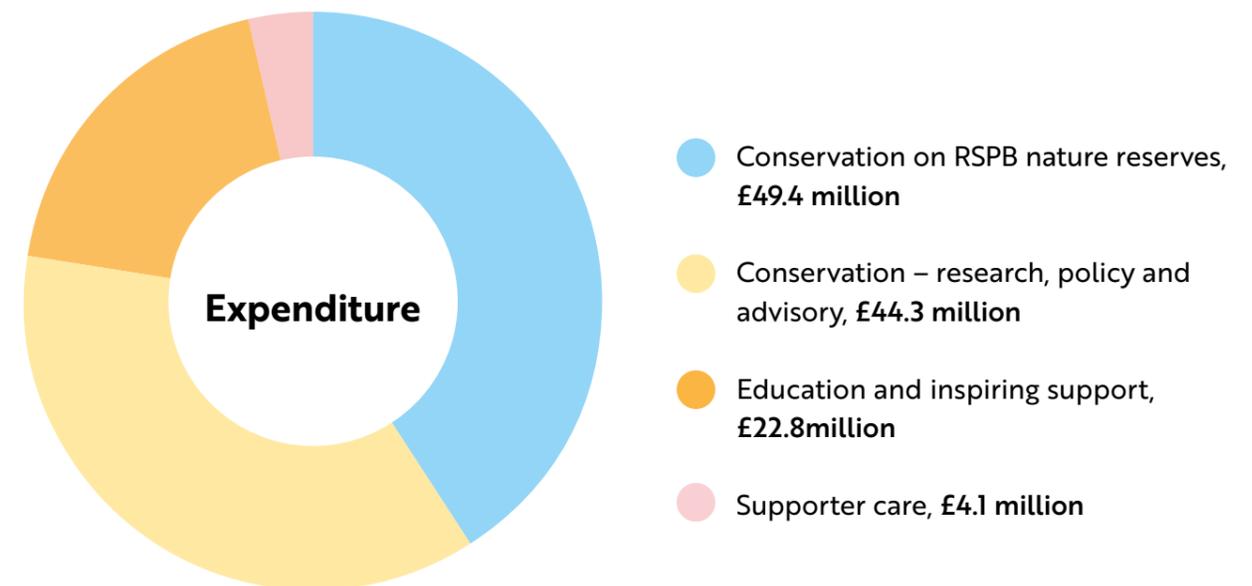
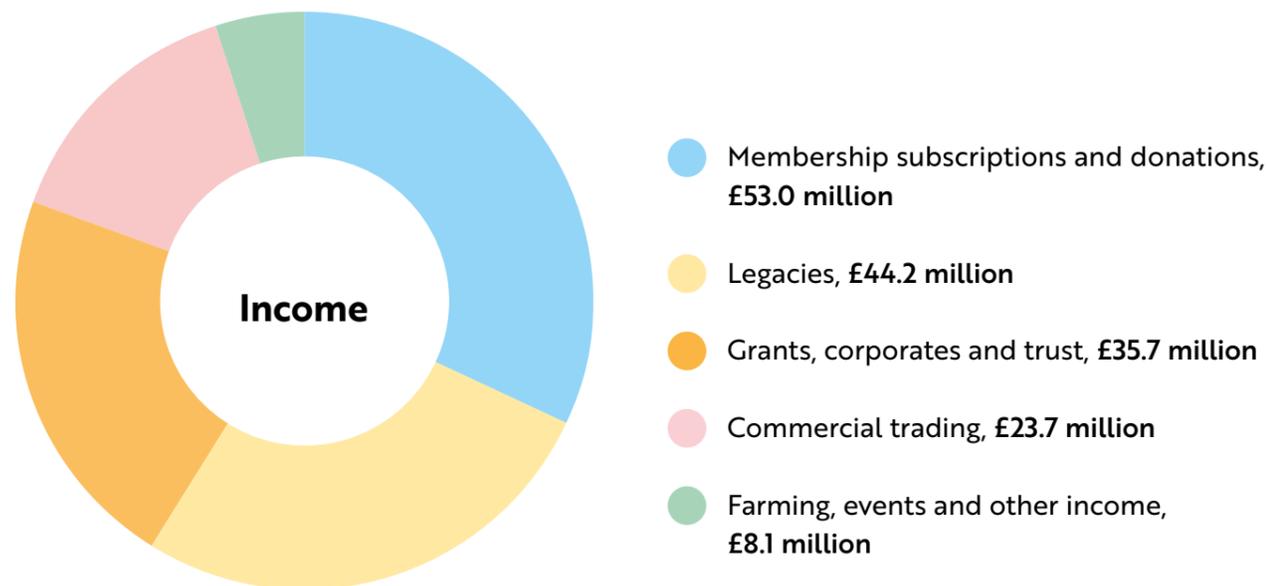
Fees and grants for services income increased by £0.5 million, to £3.0 million, reflecting increased advisory income for a range of projects, including seabird tracking and land use and agri-environment schemes.

Events and media income was £0.6 million higher than last year at £1.3 million, as we saw further increases from the events programme on our reserves.

The cost of raising funds increased by £7.3 million to £44.2 million. Inflationary impacts have increased commercial product costs by £1.1 million putting pressure on margins. £3.4 million of cost initiatives to target future income growth have been absorbed in year, particularly around the *Wild Isles* programme, brand, commercial and a major legacy promotion. Staff numbers have increased by 7.8% during the year.



Our network of youth groups is growing across the UK, helping young people to take action for nature. During 2022, groups got stuck in with tree planting, litter picking and improving habitats for wildlife, like these members of the Cwm Clydach group in Wales.



Expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities increased by £14.4 million (13.5%) to £120.6 million. This represents a full year of resourcing our teams to tackle the backlog of delayed work. High global levels of inflation also impacted costs in general.

Managing nature reserves expenditure at £49.4 million was £2.8 million higher than last year. We manage 222 nature reserves, covering 159,000 hectares and providing a home to over 18,700 species. This increase reflects an increase in major conservation expenditure.

Research, policy and advisory expenditure at £44.3 million was £6.8 million higher, showing additional project and operational expenditure both in the UK and internationally. This includes those already mentioned, as well as the Black-tailed Godwit LIFE and East Caicos Wilderness projects.

The work we undertake to educate and inspire support – whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders, partners or politicians – is designed to bring about a shared world where wildlife, wild places and people thrive. We increased spend in this area by £4.4 million to £22.8 million. Supporter care expenditure was £0.4 million higher than last year at £4.1 million.

Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. They consider a sustained fall in income of 10–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of eight to 16 weeks’ worth of expenditure.

Free financial reserves at 31 March 2023 were £49.3 million, representing 24 weeks’ future expenditure. Although the level of reserves remains higher than the policy range, it has reduced by £19.1 million over the year. This reflects a continued underlying resilience of the income we receive from our members and supporters, despite some impact from the cost of living crisis, and the planned increase in the level of expenditure on Covid-19 delayed projects. We have also been impacted by higher costs as inflation rates have risen around the globe.

Our financial projections reflect these factors and we anticipate free financial reserves returning to the policy range in the next year or two. This higher level of financial reserves gives a greater

level of financial resilience that will help us navigate through a period of continued economic and political upheaval, with Trustees monitoring levels closely.

The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories:

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2023 were £270.3 million which is made up of:
 - Tangible fixed assets of £231.2 million.
 - Cash and investments of £56.3 million.
 - Working capital of £6.9 million.
 - Pension liability of £24.1 million.
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees, to any of the RSPB’s charitable purposes, at 31 March 2023 were £94.8 million, made up of:
 - General funds of £55.0 million including £5.7 million of tangible fixed assets, £39.6 million of investments and £9.7 million working capital.
 - Designated funds of £63.8 million represented by nature reserves owned by the RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
 - Pension reserve liability of £24.1 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2023 were £175.3 million, made up of:

- Nature reserves of £159.7 million.
- Other tangible assets of £2.0 million.
- Investments of £1.8 million.
- Working capital of £11.8 million.
- Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2023 endowment funds were £0.2 million.

Investment policy and powers

The RSPB’s investment powers are as set out in the Charter and Statutes and are wider than those contained in the Trustees Investment Act 2000.

Approach

The RSPB’s primary investment objective is to maintain the real value of its investments. However, as a proportion of the financial reserves are likely to be held in the longer term, it is appropriate to invest conservatively a proportion of the funds to generate income and/or real growth.

Investment properties arising from legacies are managed by the RSPB until disposal.

Responsible investment

In managing our investments, we follow the principles of socially responsible investing. These principles are to:

- invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.
- use influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.
- avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuels and had no exposure during the year under review.

Performance

The Trustees rely upon specialist advice for fund selection and allocation. Investment performance is compared to an independent benchmark and the target for investment returns is to outperform this composite benchmark by at least 1% per annum over a rolling three-year period.

We continue to hold a proportion of our cash holdings in investment grade bonds. The change is designed to increase the returns from our cash holdings without exposing them to the level of volatility associated with equity investment funds.

Relationship with subsidiaries

The RSPB group includes a number of subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 23 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension

The pension liability in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme, that was closed to future accrual in 2017, has remained at a similar level to last year. The factors affecting this movement are largely outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity to changes in discount and inflation rates.

The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the Pension Scheme. In addition to closing the Defined Benefit Scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the Pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work but closes the deficit over a reasonable period. The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees.

The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1 April 2021 and resulted in annual

employer contributions of £7.5 million per annum. This level of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit in just over eight years. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation, which will reflect the funding position as at 1 April 2024. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the Pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the Pension Fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £61.5 million.

Outlook for the future

We have been through several years of challenges unprecedented in modern day history, from a global pandemic to a war in Ukraine, which continues to have major economic and political impacts.

Last year's Outlook highlighted the commitment and generosity of our members and supporters, and we have seen that again this year. With this continued support and our solid financial position, we are confident that we can navigate through the current economic headwinds and continue to act for a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive.

The financial outcome for 2022/23 was a planned deficit and we resourced our teams to deliver that work, but this was also impacted by

higher global prices. We have a cautious plan for 2023/24 including a range of scenarios to assess the financial impact of the current economic situation, so it is reasonable to expect the RSPB to have adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

Signed on behalf of Council

Kevin Cox
RSPB Chair

30 August 2023

In 2022 and 2023 we purchased 25.4 hectares of wet grassland around our Greylake reserve in Somerset, for £218,000. This land will provide additional nesting and feeding habitat for breeding waders, including Lapwings (pictured) and Redshanks.



Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the RSPB

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section

of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 77, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered

the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards.

For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

31 August 2023

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity under regulation 10(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations by virtue of its eligibility under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

After a pandemic-induced hiatus, 2022 marked the return of face-to-face events for our Legacy team. We were delighted to welcome legacy supporters back to our reserves across the UK, to show them first-hand the impact that gifts in Wills can have for nature. To find out more, please call 01767 669700 or email legacy.team@rspb.org.uk

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	50,770	2,274	-	53,044	54,033
Legacies	4	38,517	5,697	-	44,214	41,027
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	3,897	31,753	-	35,650	31,777
Total voluntary income		93,184	39,724	-	132,908	126,837
Commercial trading	6	23,693	-	-	23,693	24,847
Investment income and interest	7	1,109	-	-	1,109	125
Charitable activities						
Fees and grants for services		2,972	-	-	2,972	2,434
Land and farming income		2,606	-	-	2,606	2,653
Events and media sales		1,278	-	-	1,278	672
Total income from charitable activities		6,856	-	-	6,856	5,759
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	136	-	-	136	131
Total income		124,978	39,724	-	164,702	157,699
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial trading	8	27,763	-	-	27,763	24,630
Costs of generating voluntary income	8	16,268	-	-	16,268	12,061
Investment management costs	8	167	-	-	167	163
Total cost of raising funds		44,198	-	-	44,198	36,854
Net resources available for charitable activities		80,780	39,724	-	120,504	120,845
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves	8	32,657	16,760	-	49,417	46,570
Research, policy and advisory	8	27,486	16,839	-	44,325	37,570
Education and inspiring support	8	22,678	140	-	22,818	18,424
Supporter care	8	4,059	-	-	4,059	3,694
Total expenditure on charitable activities		86,880	33,739	-	120,619	106,258
Total expenditure		131,078	33,739	-	164,817	143,112
Net (loss)/gain on investments		(1,368)	-	-	(1,368)	427
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(7,468)	5,985	-	(1,483)	15,014
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme		(7,072)	-	-	(7,072)	27,655
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(14,540)	5,985	-	(8,555)	42,669
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		109,292	169,333	244	278,869	236,200
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		94,752	175,318	244	270,314	278,869

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 26.

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 Consolidated total £'000	2022 Consolidated total £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	223,573	215,807	222,634	215,120
Other tangible assets	12	7,659	6,273	7,659	6,273
Investments	13	41,664	55,451	41,664	55,451
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	-	-	3,801	3,801
		272,896	277,531	275,758	280,645
Current assets					
Stock		4,927	5,075	223	-
Debtors	14	25,635	23,919	27,855	28,051
Short-term cash		14,662	13,044	10,764	9,111
		45,224	42,038	38,842	37,162
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	15	(19,534)	(15,067)	(16,403)	(13,442)
Net current assets		25,690	26,971	22,439	23,720
Total assets less current liabilities		298,586	304,502	298,197	304,365
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year	15	(4,194)	(1,682)	(4,194)	(1,682)
Net assets excluding pension liability		294,392	302,820	294,003	302,683
Pension scheme liability	25	(24,078)	(23,951)	(24,078)	(23,951)
Net assets including pension liability		270,314	278,869	269,925	278,732
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		54,991	73,115	54,602	72,978
Designated funds		63,839	60,128	63,839	60,128
Pension reserve	25	(24,078)	(23,951)	(24,078)	(23,951)
		94,752	109,292	94,363	109,155
Restricted funds		175,318	169,333	175,318	169,333
Endowment funds		244	244	244	244
	21 & 22	270,314	278,869	269,925	278,732

Notes 1 to 26 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 30 August 2023 and signed on behalf of Council by:



Kevin Cox
Chair



Robert Cabbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

For the year ended 31 March 2023	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	120,504	120,845
Less total expenditure on charitable activities	(120,619)	(106,258)
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before gains/(losses)	(115)	14,587
(Losses)/gains on investments and pension scheme	(8,440)	28,082
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	(8,555)	42,669
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	7,766	4,587
Other tangible assets	1,386	1,428
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	(5,411)	732
Movement on pension scheme	(127)	33,393
	3,614	40,140
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	(12,169)	2,529
Cash and investments available at start of year	68,495	65,966
Cash and investments available at end of year	56,326	68,495

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2023	Note	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	24	1,184	13,361
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		1,109	125
Additions to nature reserves		(10,562)	(7,090)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		(5,163)	(4,381)
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		188	188
Purchase of investments		(22)	(30,022)
Proceeds from disposal of investments		3,000	-
Net cash used for investing activities		(11,450)	(41,180)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Bank loan		2,589	(1)
Net cash provided by financing activities		2,589	(1)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		(7,677)	(27,820)
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		22,795	50,615
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		15,118	22,795
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents:			
Cash in hand		14,662	13,044
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		456	9,751
Cash and cash equivalents		15,118	22,795

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a non-statutory body incorporated by Royal Charter and a charity registered in England and Wales (number 207076) and in Scotland (number SC037654). The address of the registered office is The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.

2) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn. The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its

subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity's financial statements.

None of the subsidiary directors received any remuneration or emoluments in respect of their services to those subsidiaries. Where directors are officers/employees of the RSPB they will receive remuneration only from the RSPB.

The RSPB's commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiary, RSPB Sales Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB. RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB's charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

March Farmers (Washland) Limited, a company limited by shares (registration number 01039814). This entity is a wholly-owned subsidiary acquired in 2008 to secure the leasehold interest in land adjacent to the Nene Washes reserve in Cambridgeshire. Through the March Farmers Habitat Restoration project, the former arable land is being restored to floodplain grazing marsh.

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity is being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leases land on the Haweswater Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise.

RSPB Oronsay, a Scottish Limited Partnership of which the RSPB is the General Partner. This entity was established in 1996 to carry out the business of farming and nature conservation on the island of Oronsay.

RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and a non-profit company limited by shares, registered in the Cayman Islands (registration number 304647). This entity was established in 2015 to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the natural environment through the acquisition of land to create or extend nature reserves in the Cayman Islands.

The RSPB holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The RSPB holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. The results have not been included in these accounts; to do so would not materially alter them.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity and as such is potentially exempt from taxation on its income and gains to the extent that they are applied to its charitable purposes. There was no tax charge during the year. The subsidiaries donate, under Gift Aid, all distributable profits to the Charity each year.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are related to:

- Retirement benefit liabilities – as disclosed in note 25, the RSPB has a Defined Benefit Scheme. Year-end recognition of the liabilities under this scheme and the valuation of assets to fund these liabilities require a number of significant assumptions to be made including key financial market indicators such as inflation, discount rate, expectations on future salary growth and asset returns. These assumptions are agreed by the scheme actuary and RSPB management. For each 0.1% change in the discount rate, the carrying amount of pension obligations would change by an estimated £3.7 million.
- Income recognition of legacies – legacies are recognised on the settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier. Management have accrued a portion of the legacy pipeline on a basis consistent with prior years which equates to legacy receipts in the month after year-end.
- Grant income recognition – where a grant contains performance related conditions, income is recognised in line with achievement of those conditions. Management use total expenditure incurred to deliver the performance conditions at the end of each reporting period as a reasonable basis.
- Donated assets – the value of donated land and buildings recognised within fixed assets is based on external surveyor valuations. This includes specific reports and also use of market valuations by internal surveyors.

Funds

Unrestricted funds:

General funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 22.

Restricted funds:

Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Endowment funds:

Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 22.

Capital expenditure

Purchased assets, individually exceeding £2,500 at cost, are included on the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS102 'Property, Plant and Equipment' (note 12). Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised in the year of acquisition and depreciation is charged annually. During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, selected nature reserves were restated to their fair value (note 12).

Depreciation

Nature reserves, either owned as freehold land or held as leasehold land where the lease is held in perpetuity, are considered to have an indefinite useful life and are not depreciated.

Other fixed assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their anticipated useful lives as follows:

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:

Buildings	50 years
Reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves – leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset

Going concern

At the centre of this year's going concern assessment are the ongoing economic challenges presented by high inflation, interest rates and the continuing war in Ukraine.

We have felt the financial impact of these challenges and expect the economic environment to be challenging for the foreseeable future, with Bank of England projections for the medium term at time of writing showing inflation reducing across 2024 and being at low levels in 2025. But with interest rates reducing at a much slower rate, unemployment rising and economic growth forecast to be low, the overall trading environment is likely to continue to be challenging.

Trustees review and respond to financial projections that detail the potential financial impacts of this economic environment on the RSPB, as well as undertaking scenario planning to assess the potential short, medium, and longer-term financial implications of other risks and opportunities.

Looking forward to 2023–2024 we plan to utilise financial reserves to support the organisation and to invest in strategic priorities. However, Trustees remain cautious as the macroeconomic landscape is uncertain and as such are comfortable holding

financial reserves above policy range in the short to medium term.

The financial outcome for 2022–2023 saw us catch up on delayed work, utilising reserves to do this. Our closing free financial reserves reduced to £49.3 million and cash and investments were £56.3 million. Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Investments

The investments in the subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost less provision for impairment.

All other investments are stated at fair value with gains and losses being recognised within income and expenditure. Properties included in investments are those assigned under legacy bequests, awaiting disposal at a future date, and are stated at their fair value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. Investment cash is held for investment purposes only. It is the intention of the Trustees that fixed asset investments will not be drawn upon within the following year.

Stocks

Stocks, which include livestock and products for resale, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Financial instruments

The RSPB has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors (see note 20).

Income

Income is included in the SOFA when the RSPB is entitled to the income, the receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. If these conditions are not met then the income is deferred.

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:

- i.) Membership income is treated as a donation and is accounted for when received.
- ii.) Legacies are accounted for based on settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier.
- iii.) Grants, including government grants, received in advance of the associated work being carried out are deferred only when the donor has imposed preconditions on the expenditure of resources (see Note 17).
- iv.) Donated services are recognised at the value of the gift to the Charity which is the amount the Charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market. They are included in the SOFA and balance sheet as appropriate.

Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Costs incurred that relate to multiple purposes are analysed and allocated to the appropriate categories in line with the joint cost allocation principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102).

- i.) Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
- ii.) Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
- iii.) Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
- iv.) Research, policy and advisory includes the

costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.

- v.) Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
- vi.) Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
- vii.) Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.
- viii.) The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
 - ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
 - the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions

The Defined Benefit Scheme was closed on 31 March 2017 and replaced with a Defined Contribution Scheme.

The Defined Benefit Scheme amount charged in resources expended is the net of the interest cost and interest income on assets. Re-measurements are recognised immediately in Other recognised gains and losses.

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at

fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

With regard to the Defined Contribution Scheme, the amounts charged in resources expended are the employer contributions in the year. The employer contribution rate matches the employee rate up to a maximum of 7%.

Redundancy and termination payments

Redundancy and termination liabilities are recognised when the obligation to transfer economic benefits has arisen. The value of this liability represents the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the obligation(s) at the reporting date.

Operating leases

Operating lease rentals are charged and credited to the SOFA on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end, in accordance with FRS102. Any gains or losses arising on translations are reported as part of the transaction within the SOFA and are not material; they are therefore not disclosed separately.

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Membership subscriptions	46,023	46,265
Donations	7,022	7,768
	53,044	54,033

4) Legacies

The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £31,671,600 (2022: £30,555,258).

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Grants	26,384	27,699
Corporates	4,830	1,711
Trusts	4,436	2,367
	35,650	31,777

Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Services	204	176
Goods	24	17
	228	193

Major grants received during the year include the following:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	7,022	8,766
Natural England*	1,683	860
Scottish Natural Heritage*	1,498	1,559
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	1,301	1,252
Environment Agency*	1,022	170
Scottish Government*	922	897
Landfill Communities Fund	666	380
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	535	642
Forestry Commission*	9	4
UK Government – Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)	-	82
	14,658	14,612
International		
European Union	2,236	2,599
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund	4,340	5,161
Local Councils and Other	5,150	5,327
	26,384	27,699

*Government grants used to fund conservation projects and recognised in the accounts. There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies relating to the government grants or other forms of government assistance from which the charity has directly benefited recognised in the accounts.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	17,579	19,187
Research, policy and advisory	7,285	7,823
Education and inspiring support	1,324	672
Commercial trading	-	17
	26,188	27,699
Acquisition of nature reserves	196	-
	26,384	27,699

6) Commercial trading

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Retail, mail order and trade	18,728	19,857
Catering	3,500	3,177
Lottery	893	1,056
Advertising	572	757
	23,693	24,847

7) Investment income and interest

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	251	48
Listed Stock Exchange investments	858	77
	1,109	125
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	136	131



Our Greener Thames Traineeship programme – developed as part of the Greener Thames Project – gave four young people from under-represented communities the opportunity to develop conservation and transferable skills to help kick-start their careers.

8) Total expenditure

	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 Total £'000
Cost of raising funds:				
Costs of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	10,489	853	11,342	8,602
Grants, corporates and trusts	2,681	234	2,915	1,803
Legacies	1,928	83	2,011	1,656
Total cost of generating voluntary income	15,098	1,170	16,268	12,061
Commercial trading	27,024	739	27,763	24,630
Investment management costs	167	-	167	163
Total cost of raising funds	42,289	1,909	44,198	36,854
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	47,667	1,750	49,417	46,570
Research, policy and advisory	40,658	3,667	44,325	37,570
Education and inspiring support	20,961	1,857	22,818	18,424
Supporter care	4,059	-	4,059	3,694
	113,345	7,274	120,619	106,258
	155,634	9,183	164,817	143,112

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £6,626,907 with support costs of £369,142 (2022: £4,604,159; £256,406). Grants were awarded to 84 (2022: 96) organisations; no individual grant made was material in value and no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available at rspb.org.uk/grant-funding

Future commitments:

Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £2,656,608 (2022: £1,331,735). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2023 for payments in future years.

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance and IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management and other	Governance £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	364	599	568	294	84	1,909	1,572
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	334	549	521	269	77	1,750	1,516
Research, policy and advisory	699	1,151	1,092	564	161	3,667	3,169
Education and inspiring support	354	582	553	286	82	1,857	1,698
Supporter care	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Total Charitable expenditure	1,387	2,282	2,166	1,119	320	7,274	6,398
Total support costs	1,751	2,881	2,734	1,413	404	9,183	7,970

Support costs are included in the expenditure reported in the Consolidated statement of financial activities and have been allocated on the basis of salary percentage. The cost allocation includes an element of judgement and the RSPB has had to consider the cost benefit of detailed calculations and record keeping.

Governance costs include audit, legal advice for Trustees and the costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements, such as Trustees' meetings.

10) Audit fees

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
The total audit fees were:		
Statutory audit:		
Charity	53	44
RSPB Sales Limited	32	27
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	4	3
Farming for Nature	3	3
	92	77

During the year there were £6,320 (2022: £2,670) fees for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.



In recognition of their work to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff, the RSPBeWell team was awarded the Great British Workplace Wellbeing Award for Best Mental Wellbeing Initiative.

11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,406 (2022: 2,231).

Average staff numbers by activity:	2023 No.	2022 No.
Generating incoming resources	580	542
Managing RSPB nature reserves	716	663
Research, policy and advisory	776	717
Education and inspiring support	289	273
Supporter care	45	36
	2,406	2,231

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2023 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Remuneration	65,296	58,058
National Insurance	5,772	4,830
Pension contributions	3,818	3,430
	74,886	66,318

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on pages 76-79.

11) Staff costs (continued)

The total salary of all higher paid employees earning in excess of £60,000, including Directors, are shown in bands of £10,000 below.

	2023 No.	2022 No.
£60,001 – £70,000	23	10
£70,001 – £80,000	10	9
£80,001 – £90,000	1	2
£90,001 – £100,000	-	3
£100,001 – £110,000	2	-
£110,001 – £120,000	1	-
£150,001 – £160,000	-	1
£160,001 – £170,000	1	-
	38	25

Under the RSPB's pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 38 (2022: 24) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme rules. The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £11,418 (2022: £11,139).

Redundancy and termination payments of £197,353 (2022: £50,149) were made in the year, of which £7,857 was paid post year-end.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the 7 (2022: 6) Directors were £788,373 (2022: £690,869) of which, £195,445 (2022: £189,473) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £24,918 (2022: £6,345).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 15 (2022: 12) Trustees on Council business amounted to £7,283 (2022: £739).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £16,800 (2022: £14,000).

Since we began managing Hope Farm in 2000, there has been a staggering 1,326% increase in the number of wintering farmland birds at the site. Yellowhammers are up from zero to 448 birds and Linnets from zero to 733 birds.



12) Tangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves		Buildings	Other tangible assets			Total
	Freehold land	Leasehold land		Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost							
At 1 April 2022	178,634	1,729	64,001	3,662	4,958	27,033	280,017
Additions	4,804	1	5,757	-	358	4,805	15,725
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(658)	(569)	(1,227)
At 31 March 2023	183,438	1,730	69,758	3,662	4,658	31,269	294,515
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2022	-	571	27,986	2,478	4,403	22,499	57,937
Charge for the year	-	19	2,777	85	323	3,317	6,521
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(625)	(550)	(1,175)
At 31 March 2023	-	590	30,763	2,563	4,101	25,266	63,283
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2023	183,438	1,140	38,995	1,099	557	6,003	231,232
At 31 March 2022	178,634	1,158	36,015	1,184	555	4,534	222,080

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net book amount:		
Nature reserves:		
Freehold land	183,438	178,634
Leasehold land	1,140	1,158
Buildings	38,995	36,015
	223,573	215,807
Other tangible assets:		
Other properties	1,099	1,184
Motor vehicles	557	555
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	6,003	4,534
	7,659	6,273
	231,232	222,080

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds Leasehold land of £550,000 (2022: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds Freehold land of £389,000 (2022: £137,000).

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value just below £61,500,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

During the transition to FRS102 in 2016, land with a historic cost of £42,401,000 was revalued at £97,779,000. This £55,378,000 increase in value was reflected in the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

13) Investments – charity and consolidated

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Investments at fair value:		
Investment cash	456	9,751
Equities, bonds and other stocks:		
Equities	10,664	11,446
Corporate bonds	27,411	30,952
Government bonds	1,576	1,745
Listed Stock Exchange investments	7	7
	39,658	44,150
Investment properties within the UK	1,550	1,550
	41,664	55,451

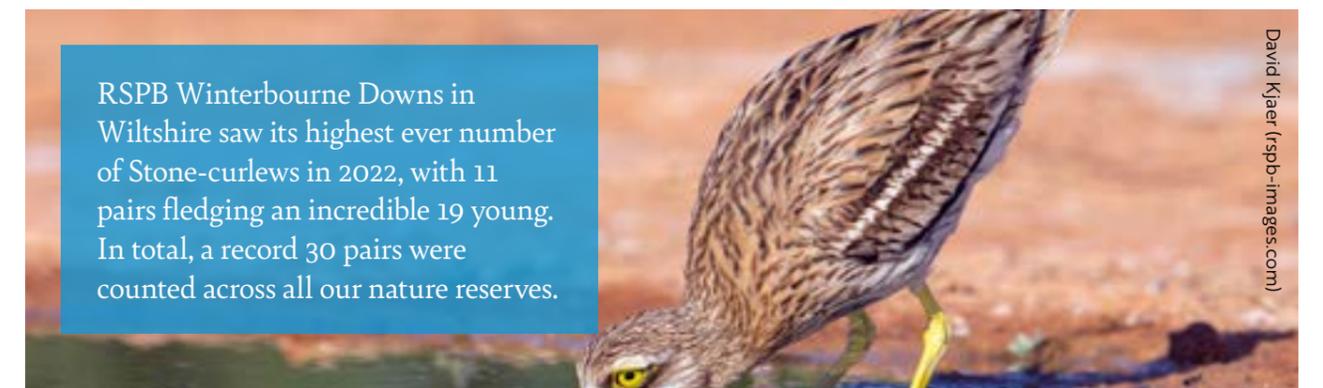
Equities, Corporate bonds and Government bonds are held in unit trusts.

Investment properties are revalued every five years by professional external valuers. They were last revalued at 31 March 2021, based on their fair value at that date. Trustees have considered the valuations in the intervening years and they do not consider that there has been a significant change in value between the valuation date and the balance sheet date. The amount includes property assigned under legacy bequests and donated property.

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Movement during the year:		
Fair value at 1 April	55,451	52,096
Fees	(146)	(100)
Additions	17	30,018
Dividends reinvested	5	4
Disposals	(3,000)	-
Net (loss)/gain on revaluation at 31 March	(1,368)	427
Movement in investment cash	(9,295)	(26,994)
Fair value at 31 March	41,664	55,451
Historical cost as at 31 March	33,840	46,134

The Charity investments in its wholly owned subsidiaries are held at cost and represent the aggregate amount of the subsidiaries' assets, liabilities and funds. The subsidiary investments are:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	3,250	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	551	551
	3,801	3,801



RSPB Winterbourne Downs in Wiltshire saw its highest ever number of Stone-curlews in 2022, with 11 pairs fledging an incredible 19 young. In total, a record 30 pairs were counted across all our nature reserves.

David Kraer (rspb-images.com)

14) Debtors – charity and consolidated

	2023 Consolidated £'000	2022 Consolidated £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	7,076	5,614	4,947	4,306
Other debtors	3,909	4,294	3,907	4,246
Legacies	2,893	3,499	2,893	3,499
Prepayments and accrued income	11,757	10,512	11,102	9,796
Amounts due from subsidiaries	-	-	5,006	6,204
	25,635	23,919	27,855	28,051

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year	2023 Consolidated £'000	2022 Consolidated £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Trade creditors	5,400	3,844	4,837	3,666
Other creditors	827	48	827	46
Deferred income (see note 17)	6,457	5,313	4,607	4,412
Accruals	6,633	5,708	5,915	5,164
Bank loans	217	154	217	154
	19,534	15,067	16,403	13,442

Amounts falling due in more than one year	2023 Consolidated £'000	2022 Consolidated £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Deferred income – lease premium	740	754	740	754
Bank loans	3,454	928	3,454	928
	4,194	1,682	4,194	1,682

On 31 March 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Triodos Bank. The loan was for £0.7 million (fixed rate 4.097%) and was used to finance a range of sustainable energy projects across our nature reserves. The capital and interest will be repaid over a 20-year period using the ongoing energy savings together with income from electricity generation.

On 6 December 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds bank. This loan was for £0.5 million (fixed rate 2.506%) and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl Bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan will be repaid using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council over the five-year loan period.

On 25 April 2022 the RSPB entered into a loan facility with Triodos Bank. A loan of £2.8 million (fixed rate 5.240%) was drawn down on 21 June 2022 and used to fund the development of four modular cafés on our reserves at Conwy, the Dee Estuary, Frampton Marsh and The Lodge. The capital and interest will be repaid over 20 years using profits from the café operations.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2023 not provided for in the accounts were £325,620 (2022: £256,367).

17) Deferred income – charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April	754	768
Amount released to income	-	-
Amounts due within one year	(14)	(14)
Balance at 31 March	740	754
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April	5,313	3,863
Amount released to income	(5,313)	(3,863)
Amounts due within one year	6,443	5,299
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	14	14
Balance at 31 March	6,457	5,313
Deferred income: balance at 31 March	7,197	6,067

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £754,000 (2022: £768,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £6,443,000 (2022: £5,299,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £4,593,000 (2022: £4,398,000) and commercial trading £1,850,000 (2022: £901,000).

18) Operating leases – commitments and contracted income

Commitments: Properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods.

The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Less than 1 year	1,975	54	2,029	2,082
2 – 5 years	3,482	-	3,482	4,159
Over 5 years	6,856	-	6,856	7,662
	12,313	54	12,367	13,903

Lease payments of £2,531,204 (2022: £2,406,351) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income: Land and properties are leased out by the RSPB for defined periods.

The full income of these over the lease period is shown below:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Less than 1 year	1,029	1,041
2 – 5 years	509	486
Over 5 years	2,449	2,517
	3,987	4,044

Lease income of £1,054,467 (2022: £1,053,551) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

The Trustees have given indemnities to executors under the standard terms for legacies received; they believe the chance of significant claims arising as a result of these to be negligible.

20) Financial instruments

	Fair Value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	Total financial instruments £'000	Non-financial instruments £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 Total £'000
Assets						
Tangible assets	-	-	-	231,232	231,232	222,080
Investments	41,664	-	41,664	-	41,664	55,451
Stock	-	-	-	4,927	4,927	5,075
Debtors	-	23,351	23,351	2,284	25,635	23,919
Cash at bank and in hand	-	14,662	14,662	-	14,662	13,044
Liabilities						
Creditors due within one year	-	(13,077)	(13,077)	(6,457)	(19,534)	(15,067)
Creditors due after one year	(3,454)	-	(3,454)	(740)	(4,194)	(1,682)
	38,210	24,936	63,146	231,246	294,392	302,820

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

	Fair Value £'000	Amortised cost £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 Total £'000
Investment income	858	251	1,109	125
Investment management costs	(167)	-	(167)	(163)
Net gains on investments	(1,368)	-	(1,368)	427
	(677)	251	(426)	389

21) Statements of funds – Charity and consolidated

The purpose for which funds are held can be analysed as follows:

	Total funds 1 April 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Total funds 31 March 2023 £'000
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	73,115	124,978	(130,513)	(1,368)	(11,221)	54,991
Designated land fund	60,128	-	-	-	3,711	63,839
Pension liability	(23,951)	-	(565)	(7,072)	7,510	(24,078)
Total unrestricted funds	109,292	124,978	(131,078)	(8,440)	-	94,752
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	160,822	4,178	-	-	-	165,000
Other tangible assets	1,574	1,541	(1,119)	-	-	1,996
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,329	16,428	(15,641)	-	-	2,116
Research, policy and advisory	5,462	17,512	(16,839)	-	-	6,135
Education and inspiring support	146	65	(140)	-	-	71
Total restricted funds	169,333	39,724	(33,739)	-	-	175,318
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	244
Total funds	278,869	164,702	(164,817)	(8,440)	-	270,314

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £3,711,000 from the General Fund to the Designated Land Fund. A transfer of £7,510,000 from the General Fund to the Pension Liability Fund represents a pension deficit recovery payment in line with the triennial valuation as at 1 April 2021, see note 25.

21) Statements of funds – Charity and consolidated (continued)

Inter-company reconciliation

	RSPB Charity 2023 £'000	Farming for Nature 2023 £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd 2023 £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd 2023 £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd 2023 £'000	Elimination 2023 £'000	RSPB Consolidated 2023 £'000
Income	137,440	269	163	30,527	260	(3,957)	164,702
Expenditure	(137,807)	(84)	(124)	(26,872)	(8)	78	(164,817)
Other recognised gains	(8,440)	-	-	-	-	-	(8,440)
Profit/(loss)	(8,807)	185	39	3,655	252	(3,879)	(8,555)
Gift aided	-	(185)	(39)	(3,655)	-	3,879	-
Net movement in funds	(8,807)	-	-	-	252	-	(8,555)
Net Assets at 31 March 2022	278,732	-	551	3,250	137	(3,801)	278,869
Net Assets at 31 March 2023	269,925	-	551	3,250	389	(3,801)	270,314

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2023, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and surplus were £295,096, £538,603 and £89,458 respectively (2022: £174,347, £429,706 and £3,446).

The Charity holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2023, the Charity's share of the net assets, income and deficit were £6,949, £375,704 and £30,462 respectively (2022: £6,350 net liabilities, £383,897 and £13,207).

The results of both interests have not been consolidated into the core financial statements; to do so would not materially alter them.

During the year ended 31 March 2023, the Charity paid £518,000 (2022: £178,000) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan.

Unrestricted funds include free and general funds that are not designated for particular purposes.

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

Restricted funds comprise:

- The Nature Reserves Fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £5,265,418 (2022: £5,178,605) held for future acquisitions.
- The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £4,969,109 (2022: £4,591,820) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds are comprised of permanent endowments.

22) Analysis of net assets between funds

The Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in a suitable form to enable them to be applied in accordance with any restrictions imposed, as set out below:

Asset type:	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2023
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Nature reserves	-	63,839	159,734	-	223,573
Other tangible assets	5,663	-	1,996	-	7,659
Investments	39,573	-	1,847	244	41,664
Current assets	27,766	-	17,458	-	45,224
Current liabilities	(13,817)	-	(5,717)	-	(19,534)
Long-term liabilities	(4,194)	-	-	-	(4,194)
Net assets excluding pension liability	54,991	63,839	175,318	244	294,392
Pension liability	(24,078)	-	-	-	(24,078)
Net assets	30,913	63,839	175,318	244	270,314

Free reserves which are available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees are held as investments or working capital:

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2023
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net assets excluding pension liability	54,991	63,839	175,318	244	294,392
Less: Operating assets					
Nature reserves	-	(63,839)	(159,734)	-	(223,573)
Other tangible assets	(5,663)	-	(1,996)	-	(7,659)
Available reserves	49,328	-	13,588	244	63,160
Less: Restricted and endowment	-	-	(13,588)	(244)	(13,832)
Free reserves	49,328	-	-	-	49,328

23) Connected charities and related party transactions

The RSPB is one of the global partners in BirdLife International (registered charity number 1042125), an umbrella organisation for entities with similar objectives throughout the world. Further information about this organisation can be obtained by writing to BirdLife International at The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ.

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	Farming for Nature £'000	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited £'000
Balance at 1 April 2022	306	155	5,743	-
Gift aid paid	(157)	(52)	(6,521)	-
Gift aid due	185	39	3,655	-
Grants received	-	-	-	78
Other inter-company transactions	6	2	1,645	(78)
Balance at 31 March 2023	340	144	4,522	-

24) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net (expenditure)/ income for the year	(1,483)	15,014
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	6,521	5,399
Losses/(gains) on investments	1,514	(327)
Interest and dividends received	(1,109)	(125)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	(136)	(131)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	148	(616)
Increase in debtors	(1,716)	(2,088)
Increase in creditors	4,390	1,973
	8,129	19,099
Movement in pension scheme	(6,945)	(5,738)
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,184	13,361

The population of Grey Seals breeding on RSPB Ramsey Island, off the coast of Pembrokeshire, is the largest in south-west Britain. In 2022, 397 pups were recorded on the island's beaches – the third highest number on record.



25) Pensions

The Defined Benefit Scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the Scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the Pension Fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1 April 2021 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £7.5 million per annum with effect from 1 April 2022. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a period of eight years and four months. As part of the valuation the Society's contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 14 March 2022.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	269,428	299,951
Interest expense	7,452	6,240
Remeasurements	(72,567)	(31,134)
Benefits paid	(6,556)	(5,629)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	197,757	269,428

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	197,757	269,428
Fair value of scheme assets	(173,679)	(245,477)
Net defined benefit liability	24,078	23,951

Changes in scheme assets:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	245,477	242,607
Interest income	6,887	5,108
Remeasurements	(79,639)	(3,479)
Employer contribution	7,510	6,870
Benefits paid	(6,556)	(5,629)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	173,679	245,477

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Interest expense	7,452	6,240
Interest income	(6,887)	(5,108)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	565	1,132
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	7,072	(27,655)
Total cost related to defined benefit plans recognized in SOFA	7,637	(26,523)

25) Pensions (continued)

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets:

	2023	2022
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	40.2%	53.5%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	49.6%	36.8%
Property	8.9%	7.7%
Cash	1.3%	2.0%

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year:	(72,752)	1,629

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2023	2022
Discount rate	4.90%	2.10%
Rate of increase in salaries	1 April 2023: 3.0% (7.0%) 1 April 2024: 3.0% (5.2%) 1 April 2025: 3.0% (3.4%) 2.80% p.a. thereafter % in brackets include a further allowance for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term	1 April 2023: 2.5% (2.8%) 1 April 2024: 2.0% (2.7%) 1 April 2025: 2.0% (2.6%) 3.25% p.a. thereafter
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	3.00%	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	3.00%	3.00%
Post 07 pension	1.80%	2.00%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment:		
Pre April 09 (CPI max 5.0%)	2.80%	3.30%
Post April 09 (CPI max 2.5%)	2.50%	2.50%
RPI inflation	3.20%	3.8% non-pensioner/ 3.6% pensioner
CPI inflation	2.80%	Deduction of 1% on RPI to 2030, 0% thereafter

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations:

	2023 Years	2022 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – male	22.5	22.8
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – male	23.9	24.2
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – female	24.3	24.5
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – female	25.9	26.7

26) Comparative statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2022

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2022 Total £'000
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	50,051	3,982	-	54,033
Legacies	36,812	4,215	-	41,027
Grants, corporates and trusts	2,595	29,201	(19)	31,777
Total voluntary income	89,458	37,398	(19)	126,837
Commercial trading	24,847	-	-	24,847
Investment income and interest	125	-	-	125
Charitable activities				
Fees and grants for services	2,434	-	-	2,434
Land and farming income	2,653	-	-	2,653
Events and media sales	672	-	-	672
Total income from charitable activities	5,759	-	-	5,759
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	131	-	-	131
Total income	120,320	37,398	(19)	157,699
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	24,630	-	-	24,630
Costs of generating voluntary income	12,061	-	-	12,061
Investment management costs	163	-	-	163
Total cost of raising funds	36,854	-	-	36,854
Net resources available for charitable activities	83,466	37,398	(19)	120,845
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	31,674	14,896	-	46,570
Research, policy and advisory	20,330	17,240	-	37,570
Education and inspiring support	18,372	52	-	18,424
Supporter care	3,694	-	-	3,694
Total expenditure on charitable activities	74,070	32,188	-	106,258
Total expenditure	110,924	32,188	-	143,112
Net gains/(losses) on investments	427	-	-	427
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	9,823	5,210	(19)	15,014
Actuarial (losses)/gains on pension scheme	27,655	-	-	27,655
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	37,478	5,210	(19)	42,669
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	71,814	164,123	263	236,200
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	109,292	169,333	244	278,869

26) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds – charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Total funds 1 April 2021 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Total funds 31 March 2022 £'000
Consolidated						
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	68,173	120,320	(109,792)	427	(6,013)	73,115
Designated land fund	60,985	-	-	-	(857)	60,128
Pension liability	(57,344)	-	(1,132)	27,655	6,870	(23,951)
Total unrestricted funds	71,814	120,320	(110,924)	28,082	-	109,292
Restricted funds:						
Nature reserves	156,415	4,407	-	-	-	160,822
Other tangible assets	1,465	1,283	(1,174)	-	-	1,574
Managing RSPB nature reserves	1,050	14,001	(13,722)	-	-	1,329
Research, policy and advisory	5,059	17,643	(17,240)	-	-	5,462
Education and inspiring support	134	64	(52)	-	-	146
Total restricted funds	164,123	37,398	(32,188)	-	-	169,333
Endowment funds	263	(19)	-	-	-	244
Total funds	236,200	157,699	(143,112)	28,082	-	278,869

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2022 £'000
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	60,128	155,643	-	215,771
Other tangible assets	4,735	-	1,574	-	6,309
Investments	52,376	-	2,831	244	55,451
Current assets	27,440	-	14,598	-	42,038
Current liabilities	(9,754)	-	(5,313)	-	(15,067)
Long-term liabilities	(1,682)	-	-	-	(1,682)
Net assets excluding pension liability	73,115	60,128	169,333	244	302,820
Pension liability	(23,951)	-	-	-	(23,951)
Net (liabilities)/assets	49,164	60,128	169,333	244	278,869

Professional advisers

Bankers

Lloyds Bank PLC
249 Silbury Boulevard
Secklow Gate West
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire MK9 1NA

Co-operative Bank PLC

4th Floor
9 Prescott Street
London E1 8BE

Investment adviser

Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Conservation finance adviser

Finance Earth
W106 Vox Studios
1-45 Durham Street
London SE11 5JH

Independent auditors

Crowe U.K.LLP
Chartered Accountants &
Registered Auditors
55 Ludgate Hill
London EC4M 7JW

Insurance broker

Griffiths & Armour Limited
12 Princes Parade
Princes Dock
Liverpool L3 1BG

Pension actuary

Mercer Limited
1 Whitehall Quay
Whitehall Road
Leeds LS1 4HR

Pension administrator

Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Legal advisers

Withers LLP
16 Old Bailey
London EC4M 7EG

Clifford Chance LLP

10 Upper Bank Street
London E14 5JJ

Hewitsons LLP

Shakespeare House
42 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8EP

Turcan Connell

Princes Exchange
1 Earl Grey Street
Edinburgh EH3 9EE

Charles Russell

Speechlys LLP
5 Fleet Place
London EC4M 7RD

Contacts

England

RSPB England HQ

1st Floor, One Cornwall Street
Birmingham B3 2JN
Tel: 01767 693777

Scotland

RSPB Scotland HQ

2 Lochside View
Edinburgh Park
Edinburgh EH12 9DH
Tel: 0131 317 4100

UK HQ

The RSPB

The Lodge
Sandy
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL
Tel: 01767 680551

Northern Ireland

RSPB Northern Ireland HQ

Belvoir Park Forest
Belfast BT8 7QT
Tel: 028 9049 1547

Cymru

RSPB Cymru HQ

Castlebridge 3
5-19 Cowbridge Road East
Cardiff CF11 9AB
Tel: 029 2035 3000

To find your nearest office, see: [rspb.org.uk/contactus](https://www.rspb.org.uk/contactus)

Bill Bailey's cover artwork has been turned into a beautiful mug. You can get your hands on one at shopping.rspb.org.uk/rspb-bill-bailey-puffin-mug



At RSPB Valley Wetlands on Anglesey, reedbed management designed to create breeding habitat for fish is paying off. Recent electrofishing surveys revealed excellent numbers of fish, which are vital food for Bitterns, Otters and other wildlife.



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Head Office

RSPB The Lodge
Potton Road
Sandy
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL