



giving
nature
a home

Annual review

2016–2017





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Avocet by David Tipling (rspp-images.com)



Mike Clarke
RSPB Chief Executive

Welcome

A year of great political uncertainty did not hamper our efforts to save nature and we have much to celebrate.

Throughout our long history, the RSPB has always been about people coming together to make a difference for nature. In 1889, our founders began to speak out for birds and ultimately brought about the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act in 1921, forbidding plumage from being imported to Britain. Almost 100 years on, we've been celebrating yet another fantastic victory for nature. After two years of hard work and dedicated campaigning to prevent the world's strongest wildlife laws from being weakened, we heard that the EU Nature Directives are safe.

This momentous achievement wouldn't have been possible without the combined efforts of our many partners and the 500,000 people across Europe who declared their support for the Directives. A significant number of these were RSPB supporters and I am immensely proud of the part that they played. You can read more about this campaign, and others, on page 23.

The past year has been one of tremendous political uncertainty, and the UK's vote to leave the European Union in particular could have a significant impact on nature. There's a risk that we will lose many of the environmental protections currently in place. But there are also important opportunities, for example the creation of a new and improved agricultural policy. That's why we're working hard to make sure that we get the best deal possible for nature post-Brexit. To find out more about our vision for farming and nature, turn to page 15.

The RSPB has always worked in partnership, and in 2016/17 we continued to join forces to ensure that we make the biggest impact for nature. In September 2016, we teamed up with more than 50 other organisations to launch the *State of Nature: 2016* report. Published three

years after its predecessor, this important report contained some worrying statistics: 56% of the UK species studied have declined since 1970 and one in ten could be lost from our shores (you can read more on page 11).

It is clear that the threats facing nature are immense, but this annual review is full of stories that should give us hope. Whether it's the 800% increase in cirl buntings thanks to our targeted recovery project (see page 15) or the reduction in albatross deaths brought about by the efforts of our Albatross Task Force (read more on page 16) we can, and do, achieve great things for nature.

It would be impossible to highlight all of the RSPB's work in the following pages, but the country sections will give you a taste of the wonderful conservation and public engagement projects we've been involved with across the UK. You'll also find an overview of how we're giving nature a home on our reserves on page 7.

None of the RSPB's achievements would be possible without our members and supporters, and I'm proud to report that we ended the 2016/17 financial year with 1,222,985 members – more than ever before (see page 29). Volunteers also play a vital role in saving nature, by contributing their time and expertise. In fact, volunteers donate a staggering 954,000 hours of their time to us each year. Turn to page 19 to find out more about how their passion and dedication is helping us to achieve our goals.

Whatever role you have played over the past year, I am immensely grateful. Together, we can save nature.

Mike Clarke



Dartford warblers bred for the first time at our nature reserves at Farnham Heath and Hazeley Heath in southern England.

Ben Hall (rspp-images.com)



Professor Steve Ormerod
RSPB Chairman

A year of progress

As his time as RSPB Chairman comes to an end, Steve Ormerod reflects on a successful year for conservation.

Although my time as RSPB Chairman has coincided with a period of political uncertainty, the RSPB has grown with the challenge and, buoyed by your support, is striving more than ever to save nature. The natural world faces unprecedented threats, and yet, with your backing, and with the collaboration of like-minded organisations, the RSPB continues to win many important victories.

Our nature reserves go from strength to strength and this year we can celebrate the addition of St Aidan's Nature Park near Leeds, which is home to bitterns and bearded tits. This follows decades of work to restore and safeguard this special place. Elsewhere across the UK, we've been adding to our nature reserve network and celebrating its role in boosting the fortunes of wildlife: 2016 broke records for a number of species on our reserves, including nightjars and Irish lady's-tresses orchids, and Dartford warblers bred for the first time on two of our reserves in southern England.

At a time when some international ties look fragile, the RSPB seeks to work across borders, to make new connections, and to reinforce long-existing ones. Nature doesn't recognise political or geographical boundaries, and nor must saving nature.

As the UK partner of BirdLife International we have clear strategic goals for our work overseas. After three years of intensive effort, our ambitious project to collate data on all the known species across the UK's Overseas Territories is complete. Combing through 300 years-worth of data has revealed more than 32,000 native species, over 1,500 of which occur nowhere else. This figure is an important baseline for future surveys, and for identifying conservation priorities over the coming years.

There was good news for two of our existing priority species in 2016 when, thanks to our work with partners, the St Helena plover and Montserrat oriole were pulled from the brink of extinction. The Albatross Task Force also had cause to celebrate as it marked 10 years of reducing the accidental catching and killing of albatrosses and petrels by fisheries in the Southern Ocean.

The *State of Nature* was back on the agenda during the year, with the indomitable Sir David Attenborough joining the partnership to launch this 2016 report, updating the original 2013 study. While there is clear evidence that targeted conservation action works, the conclusion is clear – more needs to be done.

Farming is at a crossroads as we face an uncertain, post-Brexit future. So many farmers are making a real difference for wildlife – the recovery of curlew buntings being a great example. That's why we're making the case for putting nature at the heart of future UK farm policies, to create a farmed landscape that supports healthy wildlife populations by 2030.

Saving nature is a huge and complicated task. There is so much to be done, and we can't do it on our own. To save nature, we must increase our support from individuals, businesses, organisations and governments. We will continue work to inspire millions of people to step up and become the force for positive change that nature needs. Whether it is standing behind our successful Defend Nature campaign, volunteering, taking part in our activities or helping us in other ways, members and supporters like you are the heart of everything we do. I have been blown away by your enthusiasm, commitment and generosity throughout my term as Chairman – thank you.



By 2030 we aim to have doubled the amount of land we manage for nature from 2005 levels.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Andy Gibb



Jo Gilbert
Deputy Director, Conservation Programmes

An ambitious vision for nature

We've made great progress towards our goal of doubling the land we manage for nature by 2030.

The RSPB cares for more than 200 nature reserves across the UK, covering an area four times the size of the Isle of Wight, but with nature still in decline (see page 11) we want to do more to help.

That's why we're aiming to double the area of land we manage for wildlife by 2030. It's an ambitious vision, but thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, I'm delighted to say that we have made good progress towards our goal and have increased the area by 30,000 hectares (ha) since 2005, with 1,108ha added in the last financial year.

Completing the jigsaw

In Scotland we were really pleased to be able to connect the two parts of our Mersehead reserve in Dumfries and Galloway, by acquiring 112ha of land, including dune grassland and land we will restore into wetland. This simply wouldn't have been possible without the £285,000 raised through donations to our appeal, and we can't thank our supporters enough.

The expansion of Mersehead is great news for wildlife, because the new piece of land will allow us to manage water levels across the whole reserve, so we can get conditions right for wetland species such as lapwings and redshanks. Mersehead is also an important site for natterjack toads and recent counts have shown that the population is doing really well. In fact, if you visit in May, you'll hear more natterjacks calling there than at any other site in Scotland.

Bringing bogs back to life

Elsewhere in Scotland, we were able to extend our rugged and beautiful Forsinard Flows reserve in Sutherland by purchasing an area of conifer plantation to restore into blanket bog.

As well as storing vast quantities of carbon, the peatlands of the Flow Country are a stronghold for a wide variety of wildlife, from rare bog plants to hen harriers. However, in the 1980s large areas of the peat bogs were damaged through drainage and the planting of non-native commercial conifer trees. As a result, much of the area's special wildlife disappeared.

Now we have acquired another area of non-native plantation we can get to work removing more trees and blocking ditches. We are beginning to see encouraging increases in the numbers of golden plovers, dunlins and greenshanks at Forsinard and there is evidence that our restoration work is allowing the bog to absorb greenhouse gases once again, helping to tackle climate change.

Restoring wetlands

At the opposite end of the UK, down in east Kent's Lydden Valley, we're undertaking another restoration project on newly-acquired land that could help wildlife adapt to climate change.

Like in so many marshland areas, historical drainage for agriculture dramatically reduced Lydden Valley's appeal for wildlife. But we're hoping to reverse

Natterjack toad by Arco Images GmbH/Alamy Stock Photo



this by blocking drains and restoring the network of “grips” – shallow meandering watercourses that provide vital feeding areas for wader chicks. When the restoration is complete it will not only provide vital habitat for wetland species, it will increase flood protection for the neighbouring village too.

With Lydden so close to the south coast, the new wetland could offer a convenient refuge for species being pushed north by climate change. In a few years’ time there may even be purple herons, night herons and cattle egrets feeding in the wetlands there.

Leaving a lasting legacy

Another wetland site benefitting from the generosity of our supporters is Ham Wall in Somerset. It’s a wonderful place for a variety of wildlife, including bitterns and water voles. Great white egrets can also be found here and we noticed that these elegant birds were feeding on the reserve but nesting just outside of it. So when we had the opportunity to extend the reserve, using money left to us in a legacy, we jumped at the chance to protect and enhance both parts of their home.

Saving curlews with cows

Across the water in Northern Ireland, Lower Lough Erne is a really important site for curlews, which have declined by 64% since 1970 and now appear on the Red List of birds at risk of extinction in the UK. We already manage a number of the lough’s islands, which provide vital breeding habitat for curlews, so we were delighted when we were able to purchase Trasna Island to increase the amount of habitat available to these struggling birds.

Curlews rely on open habitat to raise their young, so our first task will be to remove the scrub that has encroached across the island. We may then employ the help of some island-hopping cows. These “living lawnmowers” do such a good job of grazing vegetation and keeping it in good condition for wildlife that we regularly move them between islands by boat – which makes for a rather unusual sight!

Creating homes for nature

Last year wasn’t just about acquiring new land for nature, but also about managing our existing reserve network in the best possible way for wildlife. And our work to give nature a home is certainly paying off.

For the second year running, both nightjar and woodlark numbers were at their highest level on our heathland reserves, and we received the exciting news that Dartford warblers had bred at Farnham Heath in Surrey and Hazeley Heath in Hampshire, for the first time since we acquired the reserves.

We also celebrated another first when it was confirmed that bitterns had nested successfully at our Cors Ddyga reserve (formerly called Malltraeth Marsh), a first in Wales for 32 years

(see page 42 for more information). Bitterns are continuing to do well at other sites too, with the number of booming males increasing again to a record 162 at 77 sites. When you consider that there were just 11 booming males left in the UK in 1997, it’s clear that targeted conservation work can, and does, achieve great things for nature.

Continuing the positive theme, cranes also had a record-breaking year with the population reaching its highest level and a record 14 chicks fledging, including one that was raised on the Gwent Levels in Wales. This is the first time that cranes have bred in Wales for over 400 years and to see them spread back into their former haunts is wonderful – and a real testament to the success of the Great Crane Project, of which we are a partner.

Despite worrying declines in many seabird species across the UK, we’ve seen some encouraging results on our reserves. The population of Manx shearwaters on Ramsey Island in Wales has increased by 25% since 2012 and 104 pairs of roseate terns nested on Coquet Island off the Northumberland coast – the second highest number in recent years.

16,000 species

As well as recording some heartening increases in bird numbers, we’ve also seen many of the other 16,000 species on our reserves doing well. For instance, 2016 was a boom year for orchids, with more than 6,000 fen orchids at Sutton Fen in Norfolk and a record 1,014 Irish lady’s-tresses orchids at Lough Beg in Northern Ireland. We were also really pleased to rediscover the rare stump lichen at Abernethy in Scotland, after an absence of 18 years.

Back in 2009, we joined forces with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust to re-introduce the UK’s rarest reptile to Devon and 2016 saw us reach an important milestone in the project – the first confirmed wild breeding of smooth snakes at our Aylesbeare Common reserve. These secretive reptiles were last recorded in Devon in the 1950s, but disappeared as a result of habitat loss. The fact that smooth snakes are now breeding on our reserve is great news, and clear evidence that our management is creating ideal conditions for heathland wildlife.

We’ve had similar success with our field cricket re-introduction project. In 2015, there were 72 males heard calling at Farnham Heath, but by 2016 this had increased to 98, well exceeding our target. We’re hoping to reach a cricket century next year!

Together we’re saving nature

It’s hard to summarise all the success stories from our reserves in just a few pages, but I hope that I have given you a snapshot of what your support is helping us to achieve for nature. Together, we really are making a difference. To find out more, visit rsfb.org.uk/annualreview.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Following a successful reintroduction project, smooth snakes are now breeding at RSPB Aylesbeare Common.



Sir David Attenborough spoke at the launch of *State of Nature 2016*.

RSPB (rspb-images.com)



Chiara Ceci
Science Communications Executive

Using science to save nature



RSPB science has an outstanding reputation and we're committed to finding solutions to nature's problems.

In September 2016, three years on from the first *State of Nature* report, we joined forces with more than 50 other organisations to launch *State of Nature 2016*, with the help of Sir David Attenborough. This report gives us the clearest picture yet of how wildlife is faring across the UK and its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, and the statistics are overwhelming.

The report revealed that 56% of the UK species assessed have declined since 1970, and one in ten are under threat of disappearing from our shores altogether. The report also included new research, which found that the way we manage our farmland has been the strongest driver of species' declines since 1970. Climate change has also had a major impact on UK species.

Tagging turtle doves

While the picture presented by the report is bleak, it is not without hope. The rallying call for action issued in the 2013 report has been met by a myriad of exciting and innovative conservation projects. For example, in 2014 we satellite tagged turtle doves to identify their migration routes and the staging and wintering grounds they use across their flyway. In June 2015, a bird named Titan became the first UK-breeding turtle dove to have been followed on its complete migration to and from Africa, and following this success we were able to tag more turtle doves in summer 2016. The unique insights this work is providing into the time they spend outside the UK will inform our research, ultimately helping us to work out how to reverse the catastrophic 93% decline that these iconic birds have suffered since 1995.

Helping people make a difference

Another key theme of *State of Nature 2016* was that individuals can make a difference for nature, and the report encouraged readers to get involved in volunteering, creating homes for wildlife, campaigning, living sustainably and monitoring wildlife. So in March 2017, we were delighted when we were awarded almost £50,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project that aims to encourage people to help save one of the UK's best-loved birds – the puffin.

Numbers of these charismatic birds have plummeted across the UK and Europe and the species is now vulnerable to global extinction. Project Puffin will combine the latest technology with citizen science to tackle three of the biggest challenges hampering conservation efforts for puffins: discovering more about where they go to find food, how their numbers are changing and what they feed their chicks. Our scientists have tagged puffins and conducted counts at puffin colonies to address the first two of these issues, while the public was asked to send in photographs of puffins with fish in their beaks to address the third. This is helping us to build a picture of what puffin chicks are being fed and we hope that the information collected will ultimately allow us to inform the Government on the best ways to protect puffins.

Through this, and many other projects conducted by the RSPB and our fellow conservation organisations, we hope to have better news on the state of nature by the time the next report is published.



Northern rockhopper penguins are among the wildlife that will benefit from newly-pledged marine protections.

Andy Schofield (RSPB)



RSPB

Jonathan Hall
Head of UK Overseas Territories Unit



Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross by Andy Schofield (RSPB)

Our work in the Overseas Territories

It's been a great year for wildlife in many of the UK's Overseas Territories, but we still face challenges ahead.

In 2016, we received some fantastic news when the UK Government, together with four Overseas Territory (OT) governments, announced that more than two million square kilometres of UK ocean will be protected for wildlife. This far-reaching agreement will ensure that vast marine areas around the Pitcairn Islands, St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha will be protected from unsustainable fishing as part of the largest protected areas that the RSPB has ever helped to create.

We have been campaigning for the designation of so-called "blue belt" marine reserves for many years, alongside the other members of the Great British Oceans coalition and OT governments, so it was wonderful to hear that the future of these amazing places is more secure, for both wildlife and local people.

Exploring the unknown

In another exciting partnership project, we joined forces with the National Geographic Pristine Seas team and the Tristan da Cunha Government in January 2017 to undertake an expedition exploring the remote Tristan da Cunha archipelago in the South Atlantic.

Over a period of five weeks scientists satellite tagged sharks and seals, counted seabirds, and deployed high-tech camera equipment to record the rare and fascinating wildlife that calls this place home. During the expedition we recorded a huge amount of valuable data and we'll now be focusing on bringing all the information together to help the Tristan islanders with their plan to safeguard their waters by 2020.

Good news for the UK's rarest birds

In December 2016, we celebrated yet more conservation success when the St Helena plover and Montserrat oriole were both down-listed from Critically Endangered to Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. This is thanks to concerted conservation efforts from the RSPB, the St Helena National Trust and the Montserrat Department of Environment.

The down-listing of these two species means the UK's only remaining Critically Endangered birds – the Tristan albatross and Gough bunting – are dependent on Gough Island in the South Atlantic. This is one of the world's most important seabird nesting islands, but 900,000 chicks are killed there each year by introduced house mice. Together with the Tristan da Cunha Government we're fundraising for an ambitious programme designed to save the island's threatened species by eradicating the mice and we were delighted when the UK Government announced £1.75 million of funding to help.

No end in sight to bird trapping

Sadly, it hasn't all been good news for our OT wildlife. In Cyprus, the illegal trapping of wild birds continues unabated, with an estimated 800,000 birds killed on a British OT military base last year alone – a 183% increase since 2002. The military base authorities began to curb the illegal activity, but their initial attempts were brought to an end by protests by the trappers. We are responding by stepping up our efforts to get the authorities to remove acacia trees, which are used by the trappers, from their firing range. We will also continue to work with BirdLife Cyprus to bring an end to the slaughter.



Farmers played a vital role in the amazing recovery of curlew buntings.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)



Harry Greenfield
Land Use Policy Officer



A brighter future for farmland wildlife

We're working with farmers to turn around the fortunes of the UK's threatened farmland species.

With 75% of the UK's land used for agriculture, what happens on farmland is vital for nature. That's why we work closely with farmers to promote simple wildlife-friendly farming techniques that will boost the populations of the UK's struggling farmland species.

One such species is the cirl bunting. This little bird was on the brink of extinction just a quarter of a century ago, with barely more than 100 pairs left in Britain. But now, it's bucking the overall downward trend for most other farmland birds, with 1,079 pairs recorded in 2016 – an amazing increase of more than 800%.

This phenomenal rise is down to the hard work and dedication of all those involved in our Cirl Bunting Project, which reached its 25th anniversary in 2016. Following research by the RSPB into the reasons for cirl bunting declines, we teamed up with Natural England in 1995, as part of the Action for Birds in England programme. Together, we helped more than 200 farmers in south-west England to take up agri-environment schemes to manage their land for cirl buntings. Without the hard work of these farmers the cirl bunting's outstanding comeback simply wouldn't have been possible, so we are incredibly grateful to them all.

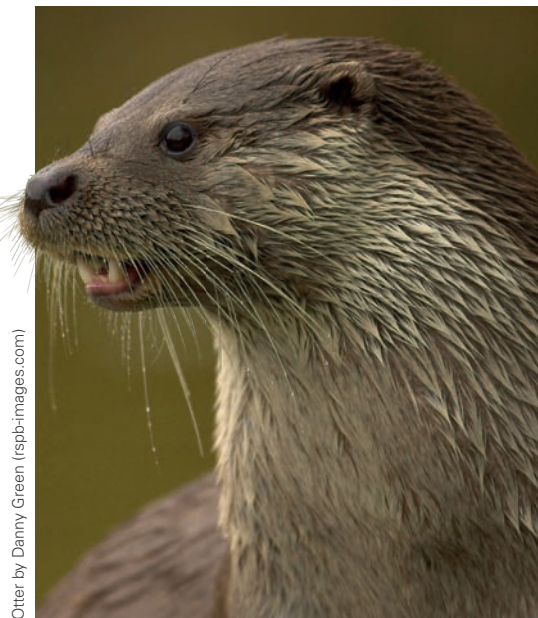
Chris Sutton-Scott-Tucker, owner of Great Combe Farm in Devon, says: "The project made it easy to use a Countryside Stewardship Scheme to manage my land to help wildlife, without seeing a drop in my farming income. Since then I have enjoyed seeing all different types of wildlife making a home on the farm and I look forward to continuing with the RSPB in the future."

Our vision for farmland and nature

When it was announced in June 2016 that the UK would be leaving the European Union, we quickly realised that Brexit would be one of the defining events for farming in living memory. Despite some notable successes of the Common Agricultural Policy's agri-environment schemes, they are simply too limited. If we are to make a success of Brexit for nature, we will need future environment, farming and rural development policies to drive the restoration of nature across the countryside.

That's why we joined forces with WWF, the Wildlife Trusts and the National Trust to make the case for fundamental reform of farm policy in the UK, so that it works better for nature and people. We believe that the future of food, farming and nature is inextricably linked – the sustainability of food production depends on natural resources, while nature depends on farmers having the right support to enable them to manage their land to the benefit of wildlife.

We launched our vision for farming at the Conservative Party conference in September 2016, but this was just the first step in our advocacy work. In February 2017 we teamed up with 12 other organisations, as part of the Greener UK coalition, to launch a manifesto calling on the Government to restore and enhance the environment. Since then 200 MPs from all parties have signed Greener UK's Pledge for the Environment and we will continue to ensure that farming and nature stay on the political agenda. The opportunity to create policies that drive truly sustainable land management is not one we can afford to miss.



Celebrating 10 years of saving albatrosses

2016 marked the tenth anniversary of the launch of the Albatross Task Force (ATF), a team of experts led by the RSPB and BirdLife International that's helping to prevent needless albatross deaths.

Every year, an estimated 100,000 albatrosses are killed on hooks and by trawlers, and as a result of this and other factors, 15 of the 22 species of albatross are now facing extinction.

Over the past decade the ATF team has developed simple and effective ways to keep albatrosses off the hook and has been sharing the best techniques and tools with fishermen.

As a result, eight out of 10 of the fisheries we have worked with have adopted regulations to reduce albatross deaths and bycatch has been reduced by 99% in the South African trawl fishery – a fantastic result!

In 2016 and early 2017, breakthroughs in Chile, Namibia and Argentina gave us hope that substantial reductions in albatross deaths are within sight in another four fisheries.

Turning quarries into homes for wildlife

In 2017, we reached another important anniversary: 10 years of our Nature After Minerals (NAM) programme, through which we work with the minerals industry to restore quarries into homes for nature.

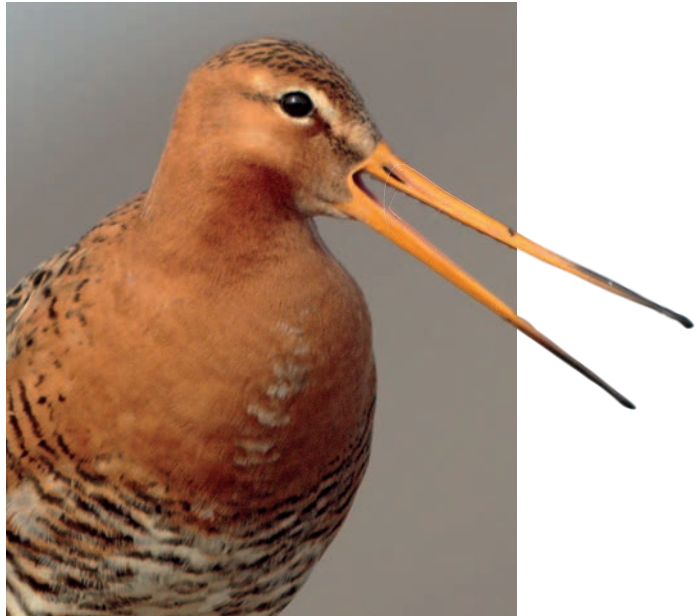
Supported by Natural England, the Minerals Products Association and the British Aggregates Association, NAM has given advice on the creation and management of 3,600 hectares of habitat for wildlife. The creation of wetland habitat, particularly on former quarries, was identified as a key factor benefitting wildlife in the *State of Nature 2016* report. Fifteen per cent of the UK's breeding bitterns now nest in restored quarries, and other species, including otters and bearded tits, are benefitting too.

Not only do appropriately restored quarry sites provide a vital refuge for wildlife, they can help with flood alleviation and landscape-scale conservation delivery too. They are also popular with visitors, proving that biodiversity-led restoration of quarries is good for local communities, helping people to re-connect with nature on their doorsteps.

Pygmy hippo by Michael Leach and Meriel Land (NHPA/Photoshot)



Steve Round (rspp-images.com)



Liberia's rainforest protected for nature

In September 2016 we were thrilled to hear that the Government of Liberia had passed a Bill officially designating 88,000 hectares of Liberia's rainforest as the Gola Forest National Park. It also passed the National Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Management Act, which is the result of more than six years of work by the Government of Liberia, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia and the RSPB.

This is great news, as the Gola Rainforest is a global biodiversity hotspot, home to rare pygmy hippos, endangered chimpanzees and more than 300 different species of bird.

The park, together with Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest National Park, creates the largest single block of the remaining Upper Guinea Forest and will allow the two neighbouring countries to work together to promote conservation and sustainable management.

Though there is still a lot of work ahead, this is a tremendous milestone that offers hope for a brighter future for Gola's wildlife and people.

Great news for black-tailed godwits

In August 2016 we began Project Godwit, which aims to improve the future of black-tailed godwits in the UK, thanks to major funding from the EU LIFE Nature Programme, HSBC, Natural England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Fewer than 60 pairs of these large wading birds nest in the UK, and because of their vulnerable population they appear on the Red List of birds of high conservation concern. Thanks to this funding we will be able to embark on a five-year project with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. Together we aim to increase the population and range of black-tailed godwits breeding at the Nene Washes and Ouse Washes, where poor productivity is currently affecting their recovery.

We'll be enhancing habitat for the godwits, trialling methods to increase the number of chicks that successfully fledge and tracking godwits on their migration routes to help us identify sites that are important for them in the non-breeding season. The partnership will also be trialling the use of "head-starting", which involves rearing godwit chicks in captivity before releasing them to boost the wild population.



Volunteers help thousands of children to discover nature every year.

RSPB (rspb-images.com)

Julia Upton



Alan Murray
Head of Volunteering and Employee Engagement

A little time goes a long way

Volunteers are the RSPB's lifeblood; they come from all walks of life and are involved in all elements of our work.

In a recent article published by *Best of British* magazine, volunteers were voted the number one thing that makes Britain great, above the Queen, who came in at number two and streets ahead of a good old cup of tea, which languished down in 51st place. As an organisation that relies heavily on the time and talents of our thousands of volunteers it's no exaggeration to say that they are vital to the RSPB – without their dedication, we simply wouldn't be such a powerful force for nature.

Something for everyone

An incredible 85% of the people who "work" for us do so as volunteers and, collectively, they contribute more than 954,000 hours of their time to saving nature every year. In fact, 23% of all the time worked at the RSPB is by volunteers.

What is so wonderful about our volunteers is that they come from all age groups and walks of life. Our youngest volunteer, Jack Adams, is just two years old and helps monitor the bird feeding station at Highnam Woods in Gloucestershire with his parents; while our oldest volunteer, Elizabeth Nelson, started her volunteering at Minsmere in Suffolk aged 81 and is still going strong at 95.

We're incredibly proud that our volunteering opportunities not only allow people to actively contribute to protecting nature, but also to developing their confidence and skills. At our Old Moor reserve in Yorkshire, we have a brilliant Wetland Workforce made up of volunteers with learning disabilities. Supported by the Barnsley Adult Learning Disabilities

Employment and Volunteer Service, they work in the café, look after the flower beds and make sure the reserve is looking at its best by collecting litter and cleaning the hides and classrooms. Not only does this help our reserve team by providing extra pairs of hands, the volunteers themselves are able to get together in a friendly environment and gain new skills, boosting their confidence and self esteem.

Gaining skills

An increase in confidence is just one of the things that Joanna Lindsay, a 22-year-old zoology graduate, gained when she took up a post as a visitor experience volunteer at Lochwinnoch in November 2016:

"In such a short time, volunteering with the RSPB has already done so much for me both personally and professionally; through meeting people and building my confidence, as well as preparing me for a career in conservation. I have never been one of those people who are naturally charismatic and brilliant at chatting to anyone and everyone, but through the support and training I've received at Lochwinnoch I've really built up my confidence in public engagement. Now I love sharing my enthusiasm for nature with the wonderful variety of visitors that come through our doors; from kids and families to expert birdwatchers."

A step on the ladder

Whether our would-be volunteers have a few hours to spare, or a few months, we offer a huge range of opportunities from office-based volunteering to hands-on conservation work in the great outdoors. One of our most popular

Dandelion clock by Fotolia.com



opportunities is to spend time on a reserve as a residential volunteer. The scheme was set up in the late 1970s and almost 40 years on we now offer places at 44 sites across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In 2016, nearly 600 people took up placements and a third of those used the opportunity as the first step on the ladder to a career in conservation, like Gavin Chambers, who spent time as a residential volunteer at Mersehead in Dumfries and Galloway and is now the Assistant Warden at Lake Vyrnwy in Powys.

For the love of nature

While some of our volunteers join us to help make a career in conservation possible, others donate their time purely for the love of nature. One such volunteer is Hilary Brooker-Carey, who works as a volunteer warden on Coquet Island off the Northumberland Coast. This tiny uninhabited island is a stronghold for roseate terns – the UK's rarest seabird – and Hilary helps to protect them by keeping watch over their nest sites at night, ready to sound the alarm if the terns are at risk of disturbance.

When she's not on the night watch, Hilary can often be found reclining in a wheelbarrow monitoring the birds' comings and goings (it's quite comfortable apparently!) and can't see herself giving up volunteering any time soon:

"I love the work, it's a real passion for me and I just want to keep on doing it forever. It's that good. I can't ever see myself giving up volunteering – I'd be here on my zimmer if health and safety allowed it!"

Volunteers saving nature

Volunteers play a crucial role in the RSPB's work and we try to ensure that their individual strengths and talents are used in the best possible way, whether that's out on a nature reserve or behind a desk. For example, Chas Leslie, a former Training Consultant, volunteers with our Learning and Development team and has been running workshops for our managers:

"It seems remote from maintaining reedbeds and woodland, but by training and developing the RSPB's managers, they are better able to do their jobs – promoting and protecting habitats for birds and other wildlife. It's really just making the best use of my experience and expertise to make a difference. That's all any volunteer wants really – to know they are making a difference."

Similarly, Mark Smith has been putting his computer skills to good use by running the RSPB eBay account, which brought in more than £55,500 during the 2016/17 financial year. Since we first launched our eBay account it has raised £125,000 for nature, something that simply wouldn't have been possible without the support of volunteers.

Looking forward, we're particularly keen to help volunteers become more involved in our nature

recovery work and have been piloting new ways to do just that throughout 2016. As part of our Saving Nature Scheme, we've been recruiting volunteers as project co-ordinators and volunteering managers. By providing training, we aim to equip them with the skills they need to take on decision-making and management roles within their particular project.

We hope that enabling volunteers to become more deeply involved in our species recovery projects will make volunteering with us an even more fulfilling experience, and also help to build a much stronger RSPB for the future. With volunteers truly embedded in our conservation work we will be able to do even more to tackle the challenges facing nature.

A very special thank you

Though nature is still under threat, we can rightly celebrate a host of conservation successes, many of which have been brought about with the help of volunteers. To recognise the dedication of those who have really gone above and beyond for the RSPB, we present six President's Awards at our AGM each year.

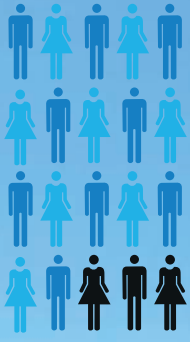
In 2016, one of these awards went to our team of Chough Watchers, who have played a vital role in the recovery of Cornish choughs by protecting nests from disturbance, keeping the choughs safe and acting as ambassadors for the birds. Each member of the team contributes in their own way – whether it's by donating artwork to raise funds or by putting their carpentry skills to good use creating equipment – and each can be proud of their contribution to this conservation success story.

Tea with the Queen

In June 2016, we were able to say thank you to some of our other volunteers in a more unusual way, by taking five of them to London to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. As patron of more than 600 charities – including the RSPB – the Queen had invited 10,000 guests to join her at a Great British street party on The Mall. Unfortunately the weather was rather soggy, but the rain didn't dampen our volunteers' enthusiasm and they had a great time enjoying the parade and seeing various members of the royal family. The event was a great success and a wonderful way to say thank you for all that the volunteers – and indeed all our volunteers – have done for the RSPB.

I'd like to finish this overview of the year with the thoughts of Mike Clarke, our Chief Executive and a former volunteer himself, who knows just how vital a role volunteers play at the RSPB:

"Our volunteers bring their passion, skill, flair, loyalty and hard work to our cause every day, allowing us to do our best for the nature that needs us. Saving nature is complex, long-term and challenging, and every one of our thousands of volunteers matters. We couldn't do what we do without them."



85%
of people who
work for the
RSPB
are volunteers



Volunteers give
more than
954,000
hours to the RSPB
each year



Heather Stuckey / (rspb-images.com)

From hands-on conservation to public engagement, volunteers are involved in all elements of our work.



We're fighting to save one of the UK's most important sites for nightingales from development.

Chris Knights (spp-images.com)



RSPB

Steven Roddy
Head of Parliamentary Campaigns



Green hearts by RSPB

Speaking out for nature in the UK

This year proved that if enough people make their voices heard, we can achieve great things for nature.

The EU Nature Directives have formed the foundations of nature protection across the EU for more than 35 years and underpin a huge amount of the UK's domestic wildlife legislation. These vital laws protect threatened species, such as the bittern and otter, and help to safeguard an area 13 times the size of Greater London. More than 90% of us live within 15 miles of a protected site, so the Directives have a direct impact on us all.

Back in 2015, it looked like the Directives could be weakened when the European Commission ran a consultation on their future. We joined forces with environmental organisations across Europe to form an unprecedented coalition and, together, we launched a campaign to defend the Directives. More than half a million people rose up with us in support of the laws protecting nature, and a hundred thousand of those voices – the majority of them RSPB members – came from the UK.

In December 2016, wildlife across Europe got an early Christmas present when all EU member states agreed that the Nature Directives were fit for purpose. This was a fantastic victory for nature, made possible in no small part by our supporters. Thank you.

Engaging with MPs

Here in the UK, our defence of the Nature Directives sets a firm challenge to our governments to maintain and build upon these world-leading laws as we negotiate our future relationship with the EU. We are determined to keep wildlife on the political agenda so, shortly after the Referendum, we embarked on an

initiative to raise the profile of wildlife among decision-makers. Together with 12 other leading environmental groups we established the Greener UK coalition and called on MPs to support our Pledge for the Environment. Encouragingly, more than a third of the MPs in Parliament at the time signed up.

The battle for Lodge Hill

The financial year ended with another battle still in the balance. Lodge Hill in Kent is the most important site in the UK for nightingales, which have declined by 90% in 50 years, but Medway Council wants to develop the site. That would pave the way for one of the largest ever losses of a protected site in Britain.

We encouraged our supporters to make their voices heard during a public consultation and the council received more than 10,000 emails telling it not to include Lodge Hill in its Local Plan for development. If 5,000 houses are built at the site, it would undermine the Government's own tests for preventing damaging development on every other Site of Special Scientific Interest in England, meaning that they too could be at risk. We await the results of the consultation.

Show the Love 2017

Finally, in February, we participated in a campaign organised by our partners in The Climate Coalition to raise awareness of the threats to nature from climate change. "Show the Love" events took place at more than 350 venues across the UK, including RSPB reserves. Celebrities, including Emilia Fox, showed their support by wearing handmade green hearts, many of them crafted by RSPB staff.



Sherwood Forest
is a very special
place for wildlife
and people.

Jack Perks (jspb-images.com)

Ross Frazer



Ross Frazer
Sherwood Forest Project Manager



A new chapter for Sherwood Forest

One of the most well-known forests in the world is set to get an RSPB-led makeover.

Sherwood Forest is a place of legends and as you wander through the dappled shade of the woodland the magic of this special place is palpable. Here, amidst hundreds of other ancient trees, stands the Major Oak, a colossus of a tree whose gnarled boughs reach out from a trunk measuring a whopping 10 metres in girth. This mighty tree is thought to be more than 1,140 years old, meaning that it has lived through the Norman Conquest and seen the rise and fall of all six of Henry VIII's wives. Robin Hood is even said to have hidden from the Sheriff of Nottingham within the tree's huge canopy.

Whether the legendary outlaw and his band of merry men did indeed use this forest to escape capture we'll never know, but what we do know for sure is that Sherwood is an amazing place for wildlife. Lesser spotted woodpeckers and redstarts nest in the cavities of the ancient trees, nightjars breed on the adjacent heathland, and rare invertebrates scuttle through the leaf litter.

A new gateway to the forest

The sheer variety of wildlife to be found in Sherwood Forest, coupled with its fascinating history, make it a popular tourist attraction with 350,000 people visiting every year. Back in 2015 we received the exciting news that, together with our partners, we'd been given the go-ahead to build a new visitor centre and take over the management of an additional 183 hectares of Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve, bringing the total area in our care up to almost 400 hectares. Since signing contracts with Nottinghamshire County Council we've been working hard alongside our partners to create plans for the new visitor centre and to engage

local people. We want to create a building that complements not just the natural landscape, but also the heritage of the site; a gateway to the forest where people can come together to learn more about Robin Hood's home, connect with nature and make lots of new memories.

I'm happy to report that we were granted planning permission in early 2017 and we will open the new visitor centre in summer 2018. The state-of-the-art building will include a shop, a café and an amphitheatre that will be used for events. The reserve will also feature eye-catching interpretation to bring the forest's story to life for visitors. We hope that these impressive facilities will encourage more people to come and experience the forest's inspiring beauty for themselves.

Our vision for the future

While the new visitor centre will be a key part of Sherwood's makeover, our vision for the site extends well beyond it. Once we take over management in 2018 we will protect the forest's precious ancient trees and thin areas of non-native conifers, which provide little benefit for woodland wildlife. And over the long term, our ultimate aim is to link Sherwood Forest with other isolated woodlands as part of an ambitious programme to reconnect Britain's fragmented wild places, allowing wildlife the freedom to roam.

It's an incredibly exciting time for the RSPB and we feel very privileged to have been given the opportunity to be part of Sherwood's iconic history and to use our expertise to protect this special place for wildlife and future generations.

Oak leaf and acorns by iwka (istockphoto.com)



Badger by Neil Phillips (rspb-images.com)

Families discover night-time nature

For the fourth year running, we encouraged families to camp out in their gardens last summer and discover the secret world of night-time nature as part of the Big Wild Sleepout.

An amazing 32,569 people requested a Big Wild Sleepout pack – 8,000 more than in 2015. The pack included a “night-time passport” full of exciting activities designed to help children discover nocturnal wildlife, plus glow-in-the-dark bunting to decorate their tent.

Throughout the Sleepout weekend people enthusiastically shared pictures and anecdotes of their experiences in their gardens and on RSPB reserves, with one mum claiming “moths + bats + midnight feasts = happy children!”. Another lucky camper even discovered that a vole had come to join her in her tent.

The Big Wild Sleepout also returned in the summer of 2017, with lots of activities designed to inspire families to sleep under the stars and discover their nocturnal neighbours.

Bringing wildlife into our living rooms

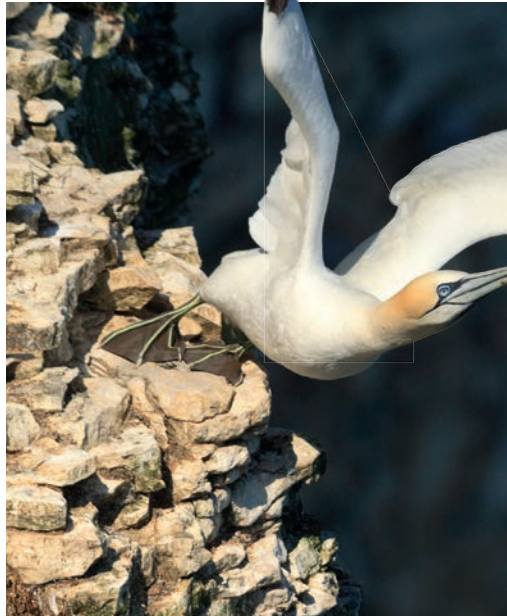
It’s easy to think that you need to travel halfway around the world to see nature at its best. But the footage of RSPB Minsmere and Arne broadcast by the BBC during *Springwatch*, *Autumnwatch* and *Winterwatch* reminded armchair nature enthusiasts that there’s wonder to be had right on our doorsteps, if we take the time to look.

The BBC returned to Minsmere for a third year in May 2016, and more than 2.5 million viewers regularly tuned in to watch the antics of everything from barn owls to badgers. The first episode even beat viewing figures for the new *Top Gear*!

Come October, Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan and Martin Hughes-Games relocated to Arne in Dorset, where they discovered that sika deer sound like squeaky gates and that mice have an impressive ability to negotiate complex mazes. The team returned to Arne in January 2017 for *Winterwatch*, giving us another wonderful opportunity to showcase one of our most nature-rich nature reserves and the incredible work our staff and volunteers do every day.



RSPB (rspb-images.com)



Gannet by Guy Rogers (rspb-images.com)

Connecting children to nature with Aldi

We're celebrating the first anniversary of our partnership with Aldi, which has given more than 50,000 children fun, exciting and educational nature experiences.

Funds from the carrier bag levy collected in Aldi stores have allowed us to provide children in 15 cities across Britain with valuable opportunities to get outside and experience nature. Children have been getting hands-on in school grounds, green spaces, gardens and on selected RSPB reserves, including Conwy and Loch Leven. The programme aims to get more than 500,000 children closer to nature and is predicted to raise over £2 million in a three-year period.

Thanks to Aldi, we've also had the opportunity to completely overhaul our Wildlife Action Awards scheme, which was in need of modernising for today's audiences. The new online scheme encourages children and families to explore the great outdoors and take action for nature. By undertaking and completing multiple activities, and logging their achievements on our Wild Challenge webpages, participants can collect bronze, silver and gold awards.

Bempton goes from strength to strength

RSPB reserves continue to play a vital role in engaging the public, allowing visitors to discover nature. Since the completion of its new seabird centre in 2015, Bempton Cliffs in Yorkshire has seen a huge increase in visitor numbers. During the 2016/17 financial year, the reserve welcomed over 102,000 visitors, 13,000 more than the previous year.

The centre, which forms the gateway to the largest and most accessible mainland seabird colony in the UK, also hosted 1,757 school children last year, who visited as part of the reserve's education programme. The success at Bempton Cliffs is also paying dividends for the area's economy, with 40 per cent of visitors to the reserve staying locally.

The new centre may be finished, but work is ongoing to make the reserve even better for visitors. Several viewpoints are now fully accessible to people with disabilities and a circular route of hard-surfaced paths was completed in summer 2016 to allow visitors with wheelchairs and pushchairs to enjoy as much of the reserve and its wonderful wildlife as possible.



People support the RSPB in many different ways, including by taking part in the Big Garden Birdwatch.

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)



RSPB

Rebecca Munro
Director of Fundraising and Communications

Growing support for nature

It's been a record-breaking year for RSPB memberships, helping us to do even more for the nature you love.

We ended the year in an unprecedented position, with RSPB memberships at 1,222,985 – our highest ever total. This is both humbling and uplifting. It shows there are many people with a love for nature and that, together, we can help protect it for many years to come.

Nevertheless, we are under no illusions. The sheer scale of the challenge to save nature means the projects reflected in this annual review need ongoing support in all of its guises. Our members and supporters express this in a range of ways, whether they are joining, making donations, buying from our shops or volunteering. Large numbers of people have also been creating homes for nature in their gardens and becoming citizen scientists by taking part in the Big Garden Birdwatch. Around 500,000 people took part in the world's largest wildlife survey in 2017, helping us to find out more about how garden species are faring.

Achieving more for nature

People continue to give very generously to the RSPB through making a legacy gift to us in their Wills. This thoughtfulness is incredibly important in funding so much of our conservation work, so thank you if you have thought of us in your Will.

Supporters also continue to help us raise funds for specific projects, such as our recent appeal to extend our Mersehead reserve on the Solway coast (see page 7). You gave us the confidence to bid for the land and the security of reaching the £285,000 target to buy a 112-hectare extension to this fantastic reserve.

Other projects have also received our members' generous support this year, including the Global Seabird Appeal. Donations to the appeal have been helping to fund the Albatross Task Force, which saves hundreds of thousands of seabirds from drowning in fishing gear every year.

You can help the RSPB in so many ways, including by buying RSPB products through mail order, retail and catering. Over the last financial year, this has brought in net income of £2.9 million for our conservation work.

Keeping in touch

The relationship we have with you, our members and supporters, is fundamental. This year we will be asking for your consent to contact you in the future – this means we will ask you to “opt in” and choose the ways you would most like us to contact you, whether by mail, email, phone or text. Moving to “opt-in” gives you control of how you hear about conservation news, saving nature successes and ways that you can support us in the future. You'll find more details about this in October's *Nature's Home* and over the coming months.

We are very grateful for all you do for nature and for your generosity in helping us deliver conservation work right across the UK and the UK Overseas Territories. The work showcased in this annual review would simply not have happened without you. We hope that in reading all that has been achieved you will think your money and support has been put to good use.

Blue tit by Shutterstock



Our work with United Utilities helped Dove Stone to win a major EU conservation award.

Ben Hall (sps-images.com)



Tom Corrigan



Chris Corrigan
Director, RSPB England

England



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

There were birthdays, launches, awards and records broken in a remarkable year for conservation in England.

A very happy anniversary

On the Staffordshire-Warwickshire border, Middleton Lakes celebrated its 10th anniversary as an RSPB reserve with some new recruits on the hoof. Konik ponies were brought in to graze Jubilee Wetlands into good condition for wading birds, such as lapwings, redshanks and avocets. Little egrets duly marked the birthday by nesting there for the first time. The Manchester peregrine project also registered 10 years going strong, with a pair once more performing aerial acrobatics to an admiring public.

East of Manchester, Dove Stone scooped a major EU conservation award. Our work with United Utilities to restore nature's home in this dramatic Peak District landscape was rewarded by being voted winner of the Conservation category in this year's Natura 2000 Awards. At the other end of the country, our West Sussex reserves at Pulborough Brooks and Amberley Wildbrooks gained a special prize for being exceptionally dark.

These two RSPB reserves are the first in England to benefit from a special international award recognising the high quality of their starry night skies. Both reserves lie within the South Downs National Park, which was awarded International Dark Sky Reserve status. It is the second location in England and only the 11th in the world to be recognised by the International Dark-Sky Association.

On clear nights, visitors to Pulborough Brooks might see owls, moths and rare bats, but also the Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy with the naked eye.

Transforming habitats in the East

Two relatively new reserves in East Anglia reported outstanding breeding results in 2016.

The Hanson-RSPB Wetland Project (or "Ouse Fen" as completed areas of the nature reserve are known) is a national flagship project and is now halfway through its 30-year development. This incredible landscape is being transformed from a working quarry into 700 hectares (ha) of wildlife-rich wetland habitat, which when complete will include Britain's biggest reedbed and 32km of paths. The reserve now covers 218ha and the project has smashed its species targets with 24 pairs of bearded tits, 10 booming bitterns and six marsh harrier nests.

In Essex, the Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project is a partnership between the RSPB and Crossrail. Following on from the creation of the 165ha Jubilee Marsh, we have now created a further 40ha complex of saline lagoons and a saltpan. This sits within 80ha of grazing marsh surrounded by a 4km partially-submerged predator fence within a new, wide and very deep ditch.

Our new habitats attracted 101 breeding pairs of avocets, and with another 260ha of lagoons planned we expect Wallasea will soon have the largest number of breeding avocets anywhere in the UK.

Seabirds bounce back

In the last year we've seen successes in our work to restore seabird populations in the South West. Seventy-three pairs of Manx shearwaters were recorded breeding on St Agnes and Gugh, in the Isles of Scilly, up from 22 before the removal of rats. Puffins have also bounced back on Lundy Island, off the Devon coast, thanks to rat removal, with 300 birds recorded – an increase of 295 birds in 10 years. Down on Chesil Beach in Dorset a record 39 little tern pairs nested, raising 71 chicks, thanks to our partnership project to protect them.

Stone-curlew by David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

Breeding success

There were other notable species successes in 2016. It was the most successful year for choughs in Cornwall since their return in 2001, with 23 young fledged; 23 pairs of cranes made 18 nesting attempts in Somerset (out of 48 pairs across the UK); and there were 162 booming bitterns across the UK, including 19 at RSPB Ham Wall.

In the north-west, an unprecedented 60 avocets fledged at Marshside, while in Cumbria, butterflies gave us cause to cheer. Campfield Marsh saw the first known natural re-colonisation of marsh fritillary butterflies anywhere in England, after they spread successfully from a neighbouring reintroduction site. Campfield Marsh is the only RSPB reserve in England hosting this beautiful butterfly.

Connecting people to nature

We had many exceptional public engagement activities both on and off reserves last year. Arne was the venue for the BBC's *Autumnwatch* and *Winterwatch* for the first time and record numbers of visitors flocked to see the reserve's wonderful wildlife for themselves.

By contrast, Coquet Island on the Northumberland coast has no visitors at all; it's strictly off limits while 44,000 seabirds nest there, including the UK's rarest nesting seabird – the roseate tern. However, if you can't take the people to the island, you can take the island to the people. We transported the old night hide (which provided shelter for the night watch, who guard the sleeping birds from egg collectors) to Tyneside's famous Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts. Here we ran a live video feed of the seabird colony and thousands of passers-by enjoyed the action, as well as 250 school pupils and more than 1,500 kids who attended a creative conservation week event. For those not able to attend these events, we showed live footage of the seabird action on our website, which was viewed 91,000 times.



Over in Oxford, our Swift City project began in January 2017, following a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The two-year partnership project aims to combat a decline in swift numbers by increasing the number of nesting sites and food sources across Oxford. Local residents are being asked to improve prospects for the birds by installing nestboxes and planting wild flower plots. As part of the project we ran a competition to design a new "Swift Tower" – a free-standing structure which provides nesting sites for swifts. We hope that the winning design will soon join the city's dreaming spires, providing valuable new homes for these incredible birds.

Ups and downs

The year began and ended showing two facets of our relationship with Natural England, the Government's conservation body. It started with a challenge, as the European Commission commenced legal proceedings against the Government for breaches of the Habitats Directive. Quite simply, our research and analysis showed that decisions made by Natural England to allow the burning of blanket bog on five Special Areas of Conservation in northern England (including Walshaw Moor) were wrong on a number of grounds and would lead to the deterioration of some 73,000ha of peatlands. Our view was backed by the Commission.

Then, at the end of the financial year came news of collaboration and support. A Heritage Lottery Grant of £4.6 million has enabled us to start a joint project to improve the fortunes of some of England's most threatened species.

The Back from the Brink project is led by Natural England and includes the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, Plantlife, Butterfly Conservation, the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, the Bat Conservation Trust and ourselves.

Prior to this project, Natural England and its predecessors have given us long-standing support – funding work for corn buntings and stone-curlews as part of the Action For Birds In England project for more than 10 years, for example. However, this latest bold initiative does not simply set out to conserve the highest priority threatened species. It also aims to reach out to the public, so that ordinary people can discover, value and take action for nature.

The initiative will be supporting 19 projects, targeting habitats such as Dorset heaths, Cotswold limestone grassland, Lancashire dunes and Yorkshire Wolds farmland. Struggling wildlife, including little whirlpool ramshorn snails, narrow-headed ants, pine martens, shrill carder bees and willow tits will also be given special attention. A film festival, community arts project, behind the scenes tours and volunteer mentoring will also help us to support the wildlife that is most in need of our help.



Rare marsh fritillary butterflies can now be found at Campfield Marsh, after spreading from a nearby reintroduction site.

Colin Vandell (alamy.com)



Abernethy was
voted Nature Reserve
of the Year in the
BBC Countryfile
Magazine Awards.

Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)



Stuart Housden OBE
Director, RSPB Scotland

Scotland

This year, my last as Director, has been a fantastic one for RSPB Scotland, and I'm very proud of all we've achieved.

First of all, I'm delighted to announce that RSPB Scotland's Abernethy nature reserve has been voted the overall winner of Nature Reserve of the Year in the *BBC Countryfile Magazine Awards 2017*. The reserve is beloved by visitors and is home to more than 5,000 species, including ospreys, crested tits and wildcats. We're incredibly proud that Abernethy has gained this recognition, and the award is now on display in the Osprey Centre.

Black grouse on the up

Wildlife conservation is often full of depressing stories, which is why I'm glad to report that at our Corrimony nature reserve, an upland site of 1,531 hectares (ha) in the Highlands, black grouse are doing well. We acquired the site in 1997, with the intention of restoring native Caledonian pinewood especially for black grouse, and that's exactly what we've done.

Black grouse are a red-listed species, and habitat loss and overgrazing have led to shocking population declines nationally. However, I'm proud to say that black grouse numbers at Corrimony have increased from 16 lekking (displaying) males when we acquired the site, to 35 lekking males today.

Good news for golden eagles

And the good news also applies to our unofficial "national bird", with the results from the fourth national golden eagle survey showing that the population has increased to 508 pairs. That's a rise of 15% since 2003. It also means that because the population has now surpassed 500 pairs, it meets targets to be classified as having "favourable conservation status in the UK".

Sadly, the recovery is not consistent across Scotland, and golden eagles are still absent in

many parts of the eastern Highlands, with less than one third of the home ranges in this area occupied. The predominant land use in this area is driven grouse shooting and we have long suggested that there is a link between this type of land management and raptor persecution.

We were therefore delighted when our work to tackle illegal raptor persecution was vindicated by the publication of a report commissioned by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham MSP. It showed that about a third of tagged golden eagles fledging from Scottish nests are being illegally killed, with a clear link between these crimes and land intensively managed for driven grouse shooting.

As a result, Ms Cunningham showed decisive leadership in setting up an independent inquiry into game bird shoot licensing, with additional immediate measures to target areas with a long and proven history of the criminal targeting of protected birds of prey. We commend her for such a progressive and significant response.

In more golden eagle news, we're working with our partners to help increase the numbers of these magnificent birds in the south of Scotland. In 2014, a study by Scottish Natural Heritage found that southern Scotland could support up to 16 pairs of golden eagles, but currently there are between just two and four pairs, and they have limited nesting success. The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project offers great opportunities to increase their numbers in this area and hopefully make golden eagles a regular sight in southern Scotland once again.

We're delighted by the support for this important project from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and to be working with Scottish





Red squirrels are set to benefit from £2.46 million of funding for a new five-year project.

Edwin Kats (rspb-images.com)

Land and Estates, Buccleuch, the Langholm Initiative, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland and Eskdale Solutions. Golden eagles are one of Scotland's most iconic species and it's wonderful that this project will mean that more of these birds will be returning to their historical ranges.

A big step for little gulls

During the summer of 2016, we were delighted to confirm the news that little gulls nested at the Loch of Strathbeg. As their name suggests, little gulls are the smallest species of gull in the world, and this was the first confirmed breeding in Scotland ever, and only the sixth breeding attempt in Britain since 1970. Both chicks fledged successfully, and we're thrilled that this happened on one of our reserves.

All nature

As you'll know, the RSPB is about more than just birds – our work benefits a range of different species. One such species is the chequered skipper. This delightful butterfly is one of Britain's smallest and fastest-flying butterflies. Once found across much of Britain it is now restricted to the West Highlands, where the sight of it is eagerly sought by butterfly enthusiasts.

In recent years conservationists have made a determined effort to find out more about this special butterfly and surveys have been carried out, which have revealed the chequered skipper in several new locations. Among the sites is RSPB Scotland's Glenborrodale nature reserve, which is already known to host a number of rare butterfly species.

Beavers are back

From butterflies to beavers now, and in late 2016 Roseanna Cunningham MSP announced that Scotland's beavers are here to stay.

Beavers, which are currently living wild in areas like Tayside, will be reclassified as a native species and be given full protected status under European laws in 2017. We've been advocating for the reintroduction of beavers to Scotland since 2014, when the official trial project in Argyll came to an end, so we were very pleased to hear the news. In the coming months we will be campaigning for the timely introduction of legal protection for beavers.

Funding for red squirrels

Another of Scotland's iconic species received a boost when the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels – Developing Community Action project was awarded a £2.46 million grant from HLF.

The exciting five-year project hopes to recruit 800 volunteers to work in three areas of Scotland. Their aims will be to stop the spread of invasive grey squirrels, remove greys from the Aberdeenshire area and protect vulnerable populations of red squirrels in southern Scotland. We've been supporting the work of

the Scottish Wildlife Trust to save red squirrels since 2015 and will continue that support through this exciting new phase of the project.

Saving rare insects

Over in the Cairngorms National Park, a new project was launched in spring 2017 to save six of Scotland's rarest insects. The shining guest ant, dark bordered beauty moth, small scabious mining bee, northern silver-stiletto fly, pine hoverfly and Kentish glory moth have all been identified as needing urgent action. Many of them have their last strongholds within the national park.

Over the next three years, we'll be working with the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation and Scottish Natural Heritage to improve the conservation fortunes of these six insects.

As part of the Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms project, we'll recruit volunteers to help with surveying work to establish the size and distribution of the species' populations, and implement practical management on the ground to help them thrive. This project is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Another rare insect to benefit from RSPB conservation work is the great yellow bumblebee. Once seen throughout the UK, this bee can now only be found on the north coast of Scotland, and on some Scottish islands. 2017 marked the second year of co-ordinated surveys, showing that great yellow bumblebees had a good year on a number of reserves in Orkney. We plan to repeat the survey next year to help us build a better picture of the status of great yellow bumblebees on Orkney, so that we can plan what we can do to help them.

Protecting Orkney's wildlife

Stoats, which are not native to Orkney, were first sighted on the Orkney Mainland in 2010. It is likely they were introduced by accident, but these accomplished predators pose a serious threat to Orkney's wildlife, particularly ground-nesting birds. Early attempts to remove them were not successful, and by 2013 stoats were present across the Orkney Mainland and connected isles – an area over three times larger than the biggest successful eradication in the world to date.

Undeterred, we joined forces with Scottish Natural Heritage to eradicate the stoats and protect Orkney's precious native wildlife. We funded a feasibility study, which revealed that eradication would be possible, and have since developed a costed project that could rid the islands of stoats within five years. We are currently working to secure funds and community support for what will be the most ambitious stoat eradication project ever to be undertaken.

Farming for nature on Islay

Over to Islay now, where the area of farmed land under our direct control on the island stands at 4,000ha. We believe passionately that agriculture and conservation can go hand in hand, and we use low-intensity High Nature Value farming to benefit wildlife, including corncrakes and hen harriers. The farms at Loch Gruinart and The Oa are under our full control, meaning that we can both maximise them for wildlife, and seek to ensure that they are as profitable as possible.

By using the same breeds of animals and the same basic farming techniques as farmers elsewhere in Scotland, we are able to keep what we do relevant. We've had a presence on Islay for a third of a century, so we're now very much part of the community. Our herds of cattle and sheep are sold through local markets to buyers who come from all over the UK. We also regularly exhibit our animals at local and national shows – and occasionally leave with the top prizes!

Safeguarding protected areas

We've maintained our very good record of managing protected areas designated by law, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest. At the end of the 2016/17 financial year, 95.8% of features on our reserves, mainly rare species and habitats, were reported in "favourable" condition by Scottish Natural Heritage.

RSPB Scotland manages 682 features on protected areas in Scotland, more than anyone else – but it's clear we've got a bit of work to do, so we've identified ways we can improve on all our remaining unfavourable features. These include management improvements, such as introducing or increasing grazing, removing scrub and cutting fen. We will also continue our research into why some species are declining, such as breeding common scoters at our Forsinard Flows reserve.

Elsewhere, the fight to protect wildlife outside of our reserve network continues, and there has been no let-up in our planning and casework workload. We are working hard to ensure a proposal to build 1,500 homes in the Cairngorms National Park doesn't impact on precious capercaillie; to stop an inappropriate golf course development on a protected area of valuable coastal dune habitat at Coul Links in East Sutherland; to reduce the impacts of the project to dual the A9, especially through the Strathspey corridor; to prevent the Strathy South wind farm in the Flow Country; and to stop four offshore wind farms in the Firths of Forth and Tay, which we are progressing by means of a legal Judicial Review challenge.

In more positive news, our partnership in the ambitious Cairngorms Connect project continues to excite and energise us. It extends over 60,000ha of forest, floodplain, moorland and high mountains with multiple partners all

sharing the aims and objectives of improving and enhancing habitat, especially expanding the native Caledonian woodland. Ultimately, our vision is for the forest to become the very best example of an oceanic boreal forest in north-west Europe by 2216. Our management is already helping to make this ambitious vision a reality and we hope this will continue as we move forward.

Nature of Scotland Awards

It is clear that nature faces many threats, but also that across Scotland people and organisations are taking action. The Nature of Scotland Awards exist to celebrate excellence, innovation and outstanding achievement in Scottish nature conservation and there were a record number of applications in 2016, across eight categories. Around 300 guests attended the black tie presentation dinner to discover the projects, organisations and people who were successful in picking up a prestigious award.

One of the lucky winners was Craig Macadam. He was presented with the RSPB Species Champion Award for his work to champion the conservation of invertebrates and his development of Buglife Scotland from a single part-time post to an established conservation organisation with five members of staff.

And finally...

I'd like to end with a story of how Scottish wildlife has inspired 2,000 London children.

In the summer of 2016, RSPB staff and volunteers from the Shetland Ringing Group retrieved a geolocator from a rare, male red-necked phalarope on the island of Fetlar. We already knew that these tiny birds spend the winter at sea, but had expected to find that the small Shetland population wintered at the nearest known site in the Arabian Sea. So we were amazed to find that this extraordinary bird had actually spent the winter of 2012/2013 in the Pacific Ocean between the Galapagos Islands, mainland Ecuador and Peru.

London-based composers Kate Stiltz and Jilly Jarman were so inspired by this phalarope's 14,000-mile journey that they wrote a song cycle called *One Small Bird* about it. 2,000 local children, as well as a group of young musicians from Peru, performed it at the Royal Albert Hall in London in June 2016 as part of the Haringey Schools' Music Festival.

Ten-year-old Aisha, a pupil at Tiverton Primary in Tottenham, said:

"It [the phalarope's epic journey] makes me think that no matter what your size, if you have courage you can do anything you want."

I hope that this powerful sentiment will serve as motivation for all our fantastic staff, volunteers, supporters and partners. Together, we can save nature.



Danny Green (spb-images.com)

A geolocator attached to a red-necked phalarope revealed the bird's astonishing 14,000-mile migration.



Eight-foot high performers dressed as crows helped us launch the *State of Nature 2016: Wales* report in Cardiff.

Callum Baker Photography



RSPB

Katie-jo Luxton
Director, RSPB Cymru



Bittern by Richard Brooks (rspb-images.com)

Wales

From the return of some rare species to efforts to engage people with Welsh wildlife, we've had an eventful year.

This year I'm pleased to report on some landmark developments, from legislative change to the return of some of our rarest birds. While there is much to celebrate, sadly the findings from the *State of Nature 2016: Wales* report leave no room for complacency.

State of Nature 2016: Wales

The *State of Nature 2016: Wales* report is a stock-take of wildlife in Wales put together by more than 50 conservation bodies, including the RSPB. Devastatingly, it found that one in 14 species in Wales is extinct or heading towards extinction. Despite this bleak message, we made the report's launch one of the most colourful events of the year and used poetry, spoken word, beat-boxing, rapping, graffiti, music and eight-foot high choughs (costumed performers on stilts) to take the report to the streets of Cardiff.

By launching the report in such a public way, we hope to have reached more people than we did with the previous report. Particularly touching was the public's response to the question of what nature meant to them. "Without them (wildlife), there's no us," read one heartfelt comment. It's a sentiment that cuts right to the heart of another of this year's highlights – the enshrinement of biodiversity in Welsh law.

Commitment to biodiversity

This year saw the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act getting underway. The Act puts a commitment to "sustainable development" at the heart of all actions by Welsh public bodies and sets out seven broad well-being goals for Wales. These include, crucially, a call for a resilient Wales that "maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems".

Another vital piece of legislation in the early stages of implementation is the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which sets out the Welsh Government's plans to manage Wales' natural resources and tackle climate change. RSPB Cymru staff were instrumental in informing and influencing key aspects of both Acts.

Together, these pieces of legislation provide a framework for sustainable development and environmental management that includes a clear commitment to enhance biodiversity. This framework will set the backdrop for land and marine management policies in Wales following Brexit. With sustainable development and biodiversity at the core of these two acts, we can be more hopeful that they remain central to any future policies.

As such, they offer a great opportunity, but we know there is some way to go. We still need to see how things change "on the ground" and we're continuing to work with our partners to make sure the framework will deliver on its ambitions for the environment.

Campaign update

The biodiversity and sustainable development duties included in these Acts have added further impetus to our opposition to the proposed M4 "relief road" around Newport. The Welsh Government's proposed route runs through the Gwent Levels, cutting through four Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Wales' largest coastal floodplain grazing marsh. It is likely to have a devastating impact on wildlife including water voles, bats and shrill carder bees.

Perhaps the potential of the habitat under threat is best represented by the fact that last year common cranes bred there – the first time cranes have bred in Wales for around 400 years.

We believe the proposals go against the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and directly contradict the duty to biodiversity set out in the Environment Act. The Welsh Government has a responsibility to maintain and enhance biodiversity and take account of any priority species, and the proposals as they stand run counter to this. We have made this case in our written evidence to the ongoing local public inquiry on the scheme and are expecting a final decision in 2018.

While we completely oppose the scheme and hope the road won't be built, we're not taking any chances and are currently working hard to make sure that, should the road be given the go-ahead, there will be adequate measures taken to compensate for the habitat lost.

Shaping the Welsh uplands

Moving on from lowland wetlands now to the future of the Welsh uplands, which are made up of a range of internationally important habitats and provide homes for iconic species, such as the hen harrier, curlew and black grouse. Sadly, many of these habitats are in a poor state and a worrying number of upland birds appear on the Red List of high conservation concern. While Britain's upcoming withdrawal from the EU presents a variety of challenges, it is also an opportunity for upland farming to realign with sustainable land management policies that will benefit these threatened species and habitats.

In March 2017 we held a conference with Bangor University and Cynidr Consulting on the future of upland farming post-Brexit. Many farmers and other rural stakeholders attended and we were able to share our own experience of managing an organic farm on the Vyrnwy estate. Not only is Tŷ Llwyd Farm a profitable business, it is a clear example of how sensitive management can deliver a host of other benefits, including enhanced water quality and a landscape in which wildlife can thrive.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to discuss upland management with a cross-section of rural stakeholders and, following on from the event, we presented a report to the Welsh Government detailing the policy priorities put forward by delegates. The call for a clear vision for the Welsh uplands was unambiguous, and we'll continue to work to ensure that biodiversity and sustainability are at its heart.

Roseate terns on the Skerries

One encouraging news story from 2016 is the first breeding attempt in 10 years of a pair of roseate terns on the Skerries, a group of rocky islets off Anglesey. Warden Ian Sims explains: "We're very excited about having roseate terns breeding again although, sadly, the pair's chick did not survive. It hatched very late in the season and was always unlikely to make it." The breeding attempt is particularly significant, having happened in a year when the tern population was reduced by at least 10% due to

an, as yet unidentified, source of botulism. "So far, so good," Ian says nervously when asked about his hopes for the coming year. "We're all keeping our fingers crossed that they'll return to breed here every year."

Return of Welsh rarities

The last year also saw the exciting return of breeding bitterns to Cors Ddyga (formerly called Malltraeth Marsh) on Anglesey. Bitterns last bred in Wales at the nearby Valley Wetlands reserve in 1984. However, last year a nest was discovered late on in June at Cors Ddyga and Site Manager Ian Hawkins says he's confident that two young fledged.

We bought Cors Ddyga in 1994, specifically with the aim of providing habitat for bitterns, and are delighted that our work is finally paying off.

We have also been celebrating the return of the marsh harrier – a bird that last bred in Wales in 1946 – and the fledging of four chicks from Cors Ddyga last year. "It's brilliant to have marsh harriers in Wales," says Ian. "We've made a lot of efforts to improve wetlands in suitable areas, both on Anglesey and also in South Wales. It really is giving nature a home. We have lots of habitat opening and maturing, and ready for nature to utilise."

Half a million pounds for nature in Cardiff

As well as achieving some real milestones in terms of giving nature a home, we can also proudly say we've been able to make further progress in our ambition to engage the Welsh people. Our Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff project, in partnership with the City of Cardiff Council and Buglife Cymru, has benefitted from £500,000 from the Big Lottery Fund.

Since the project began in 2014, we've engaged over 20,000 children with nature in Cardiff, through our work in schools, parks and open spaces. This fantastic new funding means we'll be able to inspire even more young people, as well as their families and communities, to enjoy and engage with Cardiff's wildlife for another five years.

Reasons to be cheerful

Looking back on last year, I'm struck by how many of our success stories show the long-term nature of our work and the need for ongoing effort. The return of roseate terns and bitterns, for example, are the results of many years' work developing habitat. Similarly, the passing of legislation that seeks to place biodiversity at the heart of public policy decision making in Wales is a result of continued efforts to engage and persuade.

While our successes are clear reasons to be cheerful, the finding that one in 14 Welsh species are extinct or at risk of extinction, strengthens our resolve to continue to save nature in Wales.



Roger Tidman (i.sph-images.com)

Marsh harriers successfully reared four chicks at Cors Ddyga after a gap of nearly 60 years.

Fe all "ffordd osgoi"
arfaethedig yr M4 gael
effaith ddifrifol ar fywyd
gwyllt, yn cynnwys
llygod pengrwn y dŵr.

Jenny Hibbert (ispob-images.com)





RSPB

Katie-jo Luxton

Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru



Cymru

Gyda dychweliad ambell i rywogaeth brin a'n hymdrechion i gysylltu pobl gyda bywyd gwylt Cymru, rydym wedi cael blwyddyn gofiadwy.

Eleni rydw i'n falch o adrodd ar rai datblygiadau arloesol, o newid deddfwriaethol i ddychweliad rhai o'n hadar mwyaf prin. Mae llawer i'w ddathlu, ond mae darganfyddiadau adroddiad *Sefyllfa Byd Natur 2016: Cymru* yn peri cryn bryder.

Sefyllfa Byd Natur 2016: Cymru

Yn adroddiad *Sefyllfa Byd Natur 2016: Cymru*, a luniwyd gan yr RSPB a 50 o gyrrff cadwraeth eraill, ceir darlun o dynged bywyd gwylt Cymru. Yn drist iawn, mae un o bob 14 rhywogaeth yng Nghymru wedi diflannu neu'n prinhaus. Er gwaethaf hyn, roedd y lansiad yn ddigwyddiad lliwgar a chafwyd barddoniaeth, y gair llafar, rapio, graffiti, cerddoriaeth a brain coesgoch tal iawn (perfformwyr stryd) wrth fynd â'r adroddiad i strydoedd Caerdydd.

Wrth lansio'r adroddiad yn gyhoeddus, bydd mwy o bobl yn gwybod amdano. O holi pobl ynglŷn â gwerth byd natur cafwyd atebion teimladwy. "Hebddydd nhw (bywyd gwylt), does dim ni," oedd un sylw o'r galon. Mae'r teimlad hwn wrth wraidd un arall o uchelbwyntiau eleni sef cynnwys bioamrywiaeth yng nghyfraith Cymru.

Ymrwymiad i fioamrywiaeth

Eleni rhoddwyd Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru), sy'n gosod ymrwymiad i "ddatblygu cynaliadwy" wrth wraidd holl weithrediadau cyrff cyhoeddus Cymru, ac sy'n nodi saith amcan llesiant eang dros Gymru, ar waith. Ymysg y rhain mae galwad am Gymru wydn sy'n "cynnal ac yn gwella amgylchedd naturiol bioamrywiol gydag ecosystemau gweithredol iach".

Rhoddwyd Deddf yr Amgylchedd (Cymru) 2016, sy'n amlinellu cynlluniau Llywodraeth Cymru i reoli adnoddau naturiol Cymru a mynd

i'r afael â newid hinsawdd, hefyd ar waith. Cyfrannodd staff RSPB Cymru tuag at gyflenwi gwybodaeth a dylanwadu ar agweddau allweddol y ddwy Ddeddf.

Gyda'i gilydd, mae'r deddfau yma'n darparu fframwaith dros ddatblygu cynaliadwy a rheolaeth amgylcheddol sy'n cynnwys ymrwymiad clir i wella bioamrywiaeth.

Y fframwaith hwn sy'n gosod y cefndir ar gyfer polisiau rheoli tir a môr yng Nghymru yn dilyn Brexit. Gyda datblygu cynaliadwy a bioamrywiaeth wrth wraidd y ddwy ddeddf yma, gobeithiwn y byddan nhw'n parhau i fod yn ganolog i unrhyw bolisiau yn y dyfodol.

Serch hyn, rydym yn gwybod bod cryn waith eto i'w wneud. Cawn weld sut y bydd pethau'n newid "ar y ddaear" ac fe weithiwn gyda'n partneriaid i sicrhau y bydd y fframwaith yn gwireddu ei amcanion dros yr amgylchedd.

Y diweddaraf ar ymgyrchoedd

Mae'r dyletswyddau bioamrywiaeth a datblygu cynaliadwy sy'n rhan hanfodol o'r Deddfau hyn wedi ychwanegu hwb pellach i'n gwrthwynebiad i'r "ffordd osgoi" arfaethedig ar yr M4 o amgylch Casnewydd. Mae'r llwybr a gynigir gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn rhedeg drwy Lefelau Gwent, pedwar Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig a chors bori arfordirol mwyaf Cymru ar orlifer. Mae'n debyg o gael effaith ddifrifol ar fywyd gwylt yn cynnwys llygod pengrwn y dŵr, ystlumod a chardwenyn main.

Nythodd garanod cyffredin yno'r llynedd – y tro cyntaf i aranod nythu yng Nghymru ers rhyw 400 o flynyddoedd – ac mae hyn yn amlygu gwir botensial y cynefin o dan fygythiad.

Cornthwigen gan Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

Credwn fod y cynigion yn mynd yn erbyn amcanion Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol ac yn groes i'r ddyletswydd i fioamrywiaeth sydd yn Neddf yr Amgylchedd. Mae gan Lywodraeth Cymru gyfrifoldeb i gynnal a gwella bioamrywiaeth ac ystyried unrhyw rywogaethau â blaenoriaeth, ac mae'r cynigion yn groes i'r rhain. Rydym wedi anfon tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig i'r ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus parhaus ar y cynllun ac arhoswn am benderfyniad terfynol yn 2018.

Rydym yn gwrthwynebu'r cynllun ac yn gobeithio na fydd y ffordd yn cael ei hadeiladu, ond dydyn ni ddim am gollu cyfle. Rydym felly'n gweithio ar hyn o bryd i sicrhau, pe bai caniatâd yn cael ei roi i greu'r heol, y bydd mesurau digonol mewn grym i wneud yn iawn am y cynefin a gollir.

Llunio ucheldir Cymru

O wlyptiroedd yr iseldir awn i drafod dyfodol ucheldir Cymru a'i ystod o gynefinoedd sy'n bwysig yn rhyngwladol ac sy'n darparu cartrefi i rywogaethau eiconig fel y boda tinwyn, y gylfinir a'r rugiar ddu. Yn drist, mae llawer o'r cynefinoedd mewn cyflwr gwael ac mae nifer o adar yr ucheldir ar y Rhestr Goch o bryder cadwraethol uchel. Er y byddwn yn wynebu heriau amrywiol wrth i Brydain adael yr UE, cawn gyfle hefyd i ail-gysylltu ffermio ar yr ucheldir gyda pholisïau rheoli tir cynaliadwy a fydd o fudd i'r rhywogaethau a'r cynefinoedd hyn sydd o dan fygythiad.

Ym mis Mawrth 2017 cynhaliwyd cynhadledd ar y cyd â Phrifysgol Bangor ac Ymgynghori Cynidr ar ddyfodol ffermio ar yr ucheldir yn dilyn Brexit. Daeth llawer o ffermwyr a rhanddalwyr gwledig eraill i'r gynhadledd ac roeddem yn gallu rhannu ein profiad ein hunain o reoli fferm organig ar stad Efyrrwy. Yn fusnes proffidiol, mae fferm Tŷ Llwyd yn enghraifft glir o sut all rheolaeth sensitif sicrhau buddion lu fel gwell ansawdd dŵr a thirlun y gall bywyd gwyllt ffynnu ynddo.

Yn y gynhadledd cafwyd cyfle gwych i drafod rheolaeth yr ucheldir gyda rhanddalwyr gwledig ac wedi'r digwyddiad, cyflwynwyd adroddiad i Lywodraeth Cymru yn nodi blaenoriaethau polisi mynychwyr y gynhadledd. Roedd galwad digamsyniol am weledigaeth glir ar gyfer ucheldir Cymru, a byddwn yn gweithio i roi bioamrywiaeth a chynaliadwyedd wrth wraidd y weledigaeth hon.

Môr-wenoliaid gwridog ar Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniaid

Yn 2016 cafwyd yr ymgais gyntaf mewn 10 mlynedd gan bâr o fôr-wenoliaid gwridog i nythu ar Ynysoedd bach creigiog y Moelrhoniaid oddi ar Ynys Môn. Meddai'r Warden Ian Sims: "Rydym wrth ein bodd bod môr-wenoliaid gwridog yn nythu eto er, yn drist, ni orosodd cyw'r pâr, gan iddo ddeor yn hwy'r iawn yn y tymor. Roedd yn debygol iawn na fyddai'n goroesi." Mae'r ymgais i nythu'n arbennig o arwyddocaol gan fod poblogaeth y fôr-wennol

wedi gostwng o 10% o leiaf eleni oherwydd ffynhonnell o fotwliaeth. "Mae pob dim yn iawn hyd yma," meddai Ian am obeithion eleni. "Rydym i gyd yn gobeithio y byddan nhw'n dychwelyd i nythu yma bob blwyddyn."

Dychweliad adar prin i Gymru

Yn ystod y flwyddyn ddiwethaf dychwelodd adar y bwn, a nythodd am y tro olaf yng Nghymru ar warchodfa Gwlyptiroedd y Fali ym 1984, i nythu yng Nghors Ddyga (a elwid gynt yn Malltraeth Marsh), Ynys Môn. Cafwyd hyd i'w nyth ym mis Mehefin a dywedodd y Rheolwr Safle Ian Hawkins bod dau gyw wedi hedfan y nyth.

Prynwyd Cors Ddyga gennym ym 1994 gyda'r nod penodol o ddarparu cynefin i adar y bwn, ac rydym yn falch bod y gwaith yn talu ar ei ganfed erbyn hyn.

Rydym hefyd wedi bod yn dathlu dychweliad boda'r gwerni, a nythodd am y tro olaf yng Nghymru yn 1946. Magwyd pedwar cyw ar Gors Ddyga'r flwyddyn ddiwethaf. "Mae'n wych cael boda'r gwerni yng Nghymru," meddai Ian. "Rydym wedi gwella gwlyptiroedd mewn ardaloedd addas ar Ynys Môn a de Cymru, ac yn rhoi gwir gartref i fyd natur. Mae'r cynefinoedd yn agored ac yn aeddfedu, ac yn barod i fyd natur eu defnyddio."

Hanner miliwn o bunnoedd i fyd natur yng Nghaerdydd

Cyrhaeddwyd cerrig milltir arwyddocaol o ran rhoi cartref i fyd natur, a gallwn ymfalchio hefyd ein bod wedi sicrhau cynnydd yn ein huchelgais i sicrhau rhan pobl Cymru. Mae ein project Rhoi Cartref i Fyd Natur yng Nghaerdydd, mewn partneriaeth â Chyngor Dinas Caerdydd a Buglife Cymru, wedi elwa o £500,000 o Gronfa'r Loteri Fawr.

Ers i'r project gychwyn yn 2014, rydym wedi cysylltu dros 20,000 o blant gyda byd natur yng Nghaerdydd drwy ein gwaith mewn ysgolion, parciau a mannau agored. Mae'r arian gwych newydd hwn yn golygu y gallwn ysbrydoli mwy o bobl ifanc, yn ogystal â'u teuluoedd a'u cymunedau, i fwynhau a chysylltu â bywyd gwyllt Caerdydd am bum mlynedd arall.

Rhesymau i fod yn obeithiol

Y lllynedd, cafwyd llu o straeon am lwyddiant; dengys hyn natur tymor hir ein gwaith a'r angen am ymdrech barhaus. Er enghraifft, canlyniad llawer o flynyddoedd o waith datblygu cynefin yw dychweliad môr-wenoliaid gwridog ac adar y bwn. Yn yr un modd, mae pasio deddfwriaeth sy'n gosod bioamrywiaeth wrth wraidd penderfyniadau polisi cyhoeddus yng Nghymru wedi digwydd o ganlyniad i ymdrechion parhaus i ymgysylltu a darbwyllo.

Er bod ein llwyddiannau'n rhesymau i fod yn obeithiol, mae'r darganfyddiad bod un o bob 14 o rywogaethau Cymru wedi diflannu neu mewn perygl o ddiflannu yn atgyferthu ein penderfyniad i achub byd natur Cymru.



Martyn Poynton (sp@hmgas.com)

Ers 2014, rydym wedi helpu dros 20,000 o blant i gysylltu â byd natur yng Nghaerdydd.



A record 17,000 people visited the West Light Seabird Centre in summer 2016.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)



Joanne Sherwood
Director, RSPB NI

Northern Ireland

Our 50th anniversary year has been filled with highlights, but political uncertainty will mean challenges ahead.

The 2016/17 financial year began with great expectations for our Rathlin Island reserve – a real jewel off the north Antrim coast that is home to tens of thousands of puffins, razorbills, guillemots and kittiwakes. We had just opened the impressively refurbished West Light Seabird Centre in time for the seabird breeding season and hoped that it would encourage more people to discover the island's wildlife for themselves.

Our hopes were fulfilled when more than 17,000 visitors travelled to Rathlin to visit the Seabird Centre during the summer; a record for the attraction. It seemed that the island's birds wanted to rise to the occasion too. Northern Ireland's only pair of choughs once again raised two young on our reserve and a male corncrake called for 51 consecutive days in habitat created by the RSPB. A male calling for such a prolonged period of time is likely to indicate breeding – a first for many years.

Celebrating 50 years

2016 was also the year that saw us mark the 50th anniversary of the RSPB in Northern Ireland, concluding with a special Members' Day at the Seamus Heaney Homeplace. It was the perfect venue to celebrate the beauty of the landscape in which we work, just as Seamus did in his inspiring poetry.

Fittingly, we had some record-breaking statistics to celebrate on our reserves too. Sandwich terns had a bumper year on the Larne Lough Islands with a staggering 1,229 pairs, making it the second largest colony in the whole of Ireland. The reserve is also home to Ireland's largest colony of black-headed gulls, with a best-ever 3,201 pairs.

Our work to provide nesting areas for terns on the Fermanagh reserves has paid dividends,

with a record 226 pairs of Sandwich terns recorded and 41 pairs of common terns, the highest number since 1975. In addition, we had our highest numbers of redshanks since records began, with 89 breeding pairs.

Redshanks also did well at Lough Beg, with 34 pairs recorded – the most since 1992. On the same reserve, Irish lady's-tresses continued their blooming success. A total of 1,014 spikes of this beautiful orchid, with its creamy white flowers, was yet another record.

The state of nature in Northern Ireland

Though the breeding season brought us notable results on reserves, September brought us down to earth with the publication of the latest *State of Nature* report, which revealed that 20% of all species studied in the report are at risk of extinction here.

Nevertheless, the document also enabled us to restate Northern Ireland's importance for nature. Although we cover just 5,500 square miles, we have a huge number of national and international designations, including 15 Special Protection Areas, 57 Special Areas of Conservation, 21 Ramsar sites and almost 400 Areas of Special Scientific Interest. All in all, around 23,500 species make their home here in Northern Ireland.

Thanks to this report, and other research, we now know more than ever about the threats facing nature, and this year we have made real progress in tackling some of these challenges. For instance, thanks to a £2.5 million grant from the EU LIFE Programme, we're embarking on an ambitious five-year project alongside our partners BirdWatch Ireland and the North Wales Wildlife Trust to revive the fortunes of roseate terns. These birds are some of the rarest in



the UK and Ireland, and the RSPB's reserve on Blue Circle Island in Larne Lough holds the last remaining population in Northern Ireland.

Blue Circle Island was created in the 1990s for breeding seabirds, but its sea defences have suffered a breach. As a result, erosion has reduced the amount of breeding habitat and nests and chicks are at risk during high tide. As part of the EU LIFE project we aim to reinstate the sea wall and recreate the habitat lost to erosion, helping to protect these rare birds.

A boost for curlews

We've also been working hard to improve the fortunes of another of Northern Ireland's most threatened birds – the curlew. Erratic weather, including several frosts in May 2016, contributed to another poor breeding season for curlews throughout the country, but our efforts to reverse a long-term decline began in earnest with the launch of a five-year research project.

Glenwherry in the Antrim Hills is one of six sites involved across the UK. The area is one of the best sites for breeding curlews in Ireland and supports almost a tenth of the Northern Irish population. Researchers began by surveying and mapping the site, then we cut 65 hectares of rush to create new foraging and nesting areas. We also brought in contractors to control foxes and hooded crows, the main predators of curlews in this area. The new breeding season began with a note of optimism and we hope to have good news to report in next year's annual review.

Farming for nature

There's no doubt that agriculture shapes the landscape of Northern Ireland. With three quarters of our countryside used for farming, it is crucial that we work with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to safeguard our special places and species. This new government department was launched in the spring of 2016 and we successfully advised its staff on the design of the Environmental Farming Scheme, which will provide a £100 million fund for farmers to help protect nature. We publicly called for the Scheme to open as quickly as possible and it opened for applications at the end of February 2017. We also successfully advocated for the addition of group options to encourage farmers to co-operate, which we will pilot over the next five years.

Political uncertainty

It would be impossible to review this year without highlighting two major areas of great political uncertainty. Once the Brexit result had been announced, we started the process of trying to ensure that the environment would be afforded at least the same protection as it currently benefits from under EU legislation, and that there would be sufficient money to fund this protection. We also wanted to

ensure the wider countryside is protected from either abandonment or the intensification of agriculture. The island of Ireland is a single bio-geographic zone, so we have also been working with our partners in the Republic of Ireland to ensure that Brexit decision-makers understand that nature knows no borders and that the environmental management of our land and sea has cross-border impacts.

The other significant political upheaval came with stagnation at Stormont, after the Renewable Heat Incentive scandal resulted in a snap Assembly Election in March 2017 and the subsequent failure to form a new government. It was especially frustrating after our efforts earlier in the year to win support from Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). In the build-up to the May 2016 Assembly Elections, we encouraged candidates to support nature with the Vote for Bob campaign (Bob, as you'll recall, was the squirrel mascot for the environment). More than half of the new MLAs had voted for Bob, a great foundation of support that will hopefully stand the test of time, in spite of the subsequent political uncertainties.

Hearts and minds

Politicians are not the only people we have to convince about the importance of nature, and much of our work this year centred around winning hearts and minds. For instance, our summer Paper Meadows project involved working with artists from Belfast Print Workshop to create 1,500 handmade paper flowers embedded with native wild flower seeds. The week-long display outside Queen's University, Belfast, attracted huge interest from both the public and the media.

In another exciting first, we were chosen as the charity partner for SunflowerFest – a unique family friendly music festival held near Hillsborough, County Down, where we reached out to enthuse a wider range of people than usual. We also teamed up with the world's biggest youth organisation in 2016 to create a joint RSPB/Girl Guiding Ulster badge for Rainbows. This will help children between the ages of four and seven to learn more about wildlife.

And on the Isle of Man, where we support Manx BirdLife, nature education in primary schools has been given a boost by funding from the Scheinberg family. Manx BirdLife's new Managing Director, Neil Morris, knows the future of the island's threatened seabird, hen harrier and chough populations depends on nurturing a love for wildlife among the island's up and coming generations and we hope to inspire some conservationists for the future.



Mark Hamblin (spb-images.com)

We've embarked on a five-year research project to help struggling curlews.



From extending our reserves to delivering education projects, your support has allowed us to do so much for nature and people.

Eleanor Bental (rspb-images.com)



RSPB

Graeme Wallace
Treasurer

From the treasurer

This has been a good financial year for the RSPB, particularly when set against the backdrop of continuing austerity and uncertainty arising from the Brexit vote to leave the EU.

At £105 million, our income available for charitable purposes was the highest ever and we spent £99 million on saving nature (£97.3 million in 2015/16), leaving us with a surplus of just over £5 million. We spent a further £4.6 million on acquiring more than 1,100 hectares of land and investing in our visitor facilities.

We invested in saving nature through acquiring new land, through cutting edge scientific research and through education projects inspiring young people and adults.

On the downside, a change in interest rates meant the pension fund deficit, having recovered somewhat last year, went up substantially. However, at the year-end we maintained £33.2 million of free financial reserves, enabling us to plan for the future.

Our successes reported this year were made possible through your generosity. Our appeal to you to help buy a 112-hectare extension to Mersehead nature reserve in Dumfries and Galloway brought in a magnificent £285,000.

Our income grew by 4% on last year through a mixture of consistently strong performance in some areas and some one-off windfalls. We maintain a diversity of income streams to build stability in the RSPB's available resources. Our biggest income is from you, our supporters. £74 million net comes from individual supporters, backed up by another record – we now have 1,222,985 members!

Through the humbling generosity of our supporters, legacy income reached an all-time high of £34 million net.

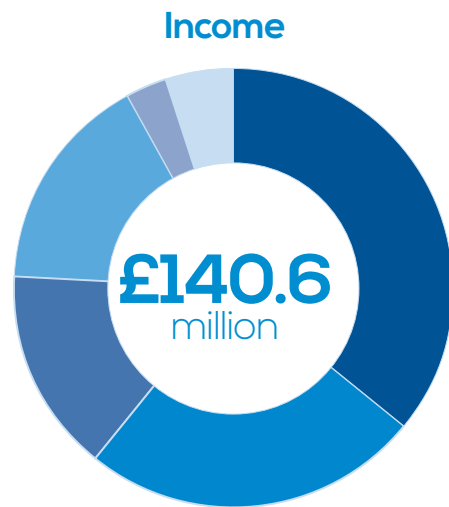
Trading income also rose again to £23 million gross, with our high ethical and sustainability standards helping to build trust and loyalty in our customers.

We are committed to putting our income and financial reserves to work as soon as possible. Free financial reserves are held at a modest level to maximise the funds that are available for conservation needs. At year-end our free financial reserves were £33.2 million (£31.7 million in 2015/16) equivalent to 16 weeks of expenditure. This is required to cover working capital during the year and provide some flexibility to adapt to a changing and increasingly competitive funding environment.

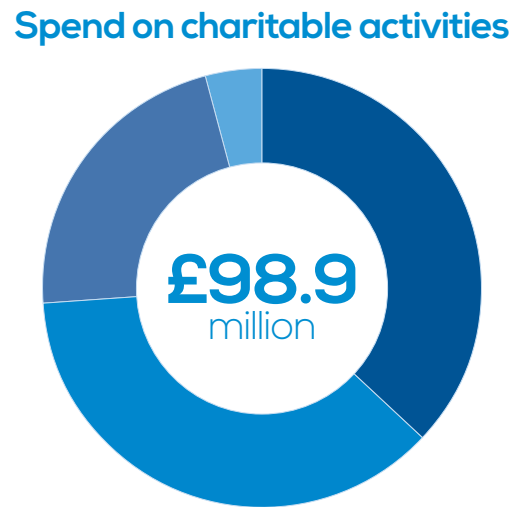
From a financial perspective, there is much to celebrate and be optimistic about. Despite the financial crash of 2008 and the years of financial challenge that have followed, expenditure on conservation and the RSPB's charitable objects has risen every year for the last 15 years. Income has grown consistently for a number of years and this is testament to a resilient organisation with varied income streams and to the generosity of our supporters.

Our science programme, our nature reserves, and heartening stories such as the recovery of curlew buntings in south-west England and albatrosses in the Southern Ocean are just a few examples of the fruits of our strong financial performance over many years. Ultimately that is down to the support of our funders, partners, supporters and members. Your support enables us to make a difference and to save nature. Thank you.

Income and spend



- Membership subscriptions and donations **36%**
- Legacies **25%**
- Grants, corporate and trusts **15%**
- Trading **16%**
- Land income and fees for services **3%**
- Financial income and investment gains **5%**

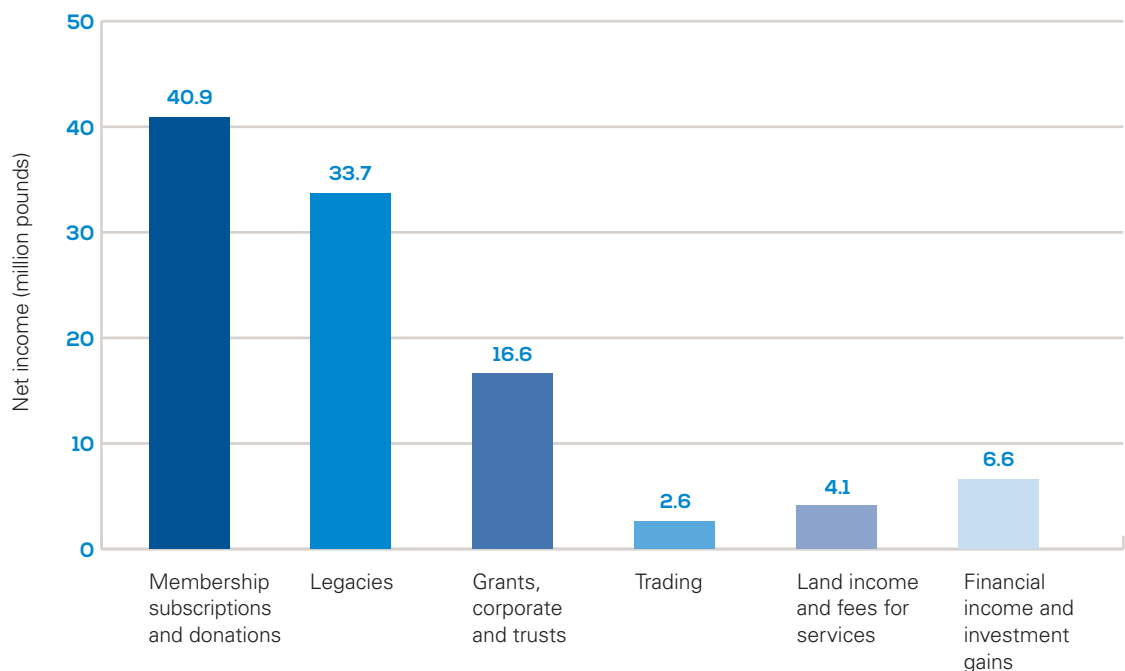


- Research, policy and advisory **37%**
- Managing RSPB nature reserves **37%**
- Education and inspiring support **22%**
- Supporter care **4%**

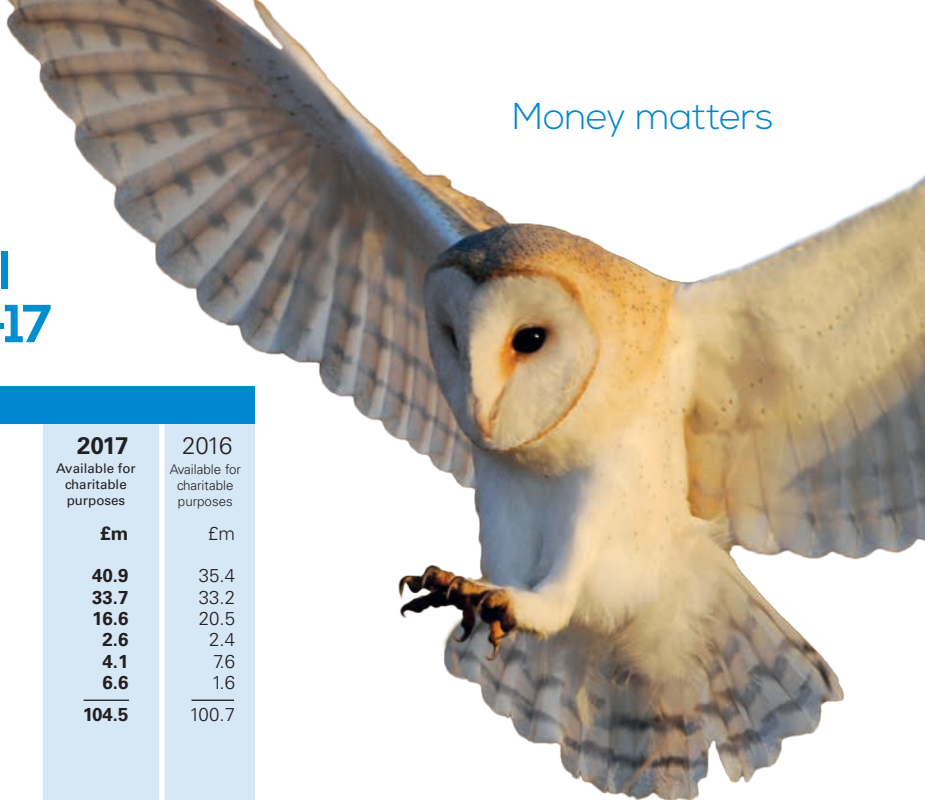
We also spent a further £4.6 million on acquiring new nature reserves and investing in visitor facilities.

Net income

The cost of generating income was £36.1 million, leaving net income for charitable purposes of £104.5 million.



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



Summarised financial statements for 2016–17

Raising money for charitable purposes				
	Income	Cost	2017 Available for charitable purposes	2016 Available for charitable purposes
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Membership subscriptions and donations	51.4	(10.5)	40.9	35.4
Legacies	34.7	(1.0)	33.7	33.2
Grants, corporate and trusts	20.8	(4.2)	16.6	20.5
Trading income	22.9	(20.3)	2.6	2.4
Land income and fees for services	4.1	(0.0)	4.1	7.6
Financial income and investment gains	6.7	(0.1)	6.6	1.6
Total income	140.6	(36.1)	104.5	100.7

£104.5 million available for charity purposes.

Expenditure on charitable purposes		
	2017 £m	2016 £m
Research, policy and advisory	36.7	37.4
Managing RSPB nature reserves	36.5	34.0
Education and inspiring support	21.3	21.5
Supporter care	4.4	4.4
Total expenditure	98.9	97.3
Surplus	5.6	3.4

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

Assets and liabilities		
	2017 £m	2016 £m
Nature reserves	196.3	194.3
Equipment	4.1	4.3
Total long-term assets	200.4	198.6
Pension liability	(90.3)	(59.0)
Cash and investments	35.8	32.3
Stock, debtors and creditors	11.2	11.9
Total representing available financial reserves	47.0	44.2
Total	157.1	183.8

Available financial reserves are held for the following purposes.

Amount held for future purposes		
	2017 £m	2016 £m
Available financial reserves	47.0	44.2
Held for specific purposes	(13.8)	(12.5)
Free financial reserves	33.2	31.7
Representing future expenditure cover of	16 weeks	16 weeks

REPORT BY THE TRUSTEES ON THE SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

These summarised financial statements are extracted from the full statutory trustees' annual report and financial statements which were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf. The full financial statements, on which the auditors Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP gave an unqualified audit report in August 2017, are available on our website: rspb.org.uk

The auditors have confirmed to the trustees that, in their opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017.

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

Signed on behalf of the trustees.

Professor Steve Ormerod,
Chairman, RSPB Council

Members and supporters

The support and loyalty of our members is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting the rigorous conservation targets that we set would not be possible without the enormous contributions that members make.

Members help in many ways, all of them equally important, including: financially, through volunteering, by supporting RSPB campaigns through letter writing, and by helping to deliver RSPB projects on the ground through local groups.

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

Legacies

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

- Mrs Joyce Margaret Anderson
- Mr Victor Robert Arnold
- Mr John Robin Bishop
- Mr Michael Thomas Bishop
- Mr Peter Blud
- Mr Brian Edward Brown
- Mrs Daphne Margaret Ford
- Dr Sylvia Rosalind Meek
- Mrs Meriel Kathleen Moulson
- Mrs Sylvia Parry
- Mr Leonard Wilfred Saunders
- Mr Reginald George Selley
- Mr John Edward Stennett
- Mr Craig Thomas and Mrs Jill Thomas
- Mr Frederick Raymond Trevett
- Mrs Wilna Wilson

Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked unstintingly over the year. Our local groups provide a great focus for us in local communities, involve many people in our work, and raised over £420,000 for RSPB conservation projects.

Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of 12,560 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 954,075 hours. This is equivalent to an extra 558 full-time staff working for nature conservation.

These volunteers helped with virtually every aspect of the RSPB's work, and we cannot thank them enough for their generous support. Additionally, 498,000 people gave an hour of their time to participate in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.

Heritage Lottery Fund

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

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

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

- Afra Gent Memorial Trust
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Dr M Baker-Schommer
- Mr Geoff Ball
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Basel Zoo – Across the River
- BirdLife International
- Miss D E Blake
- British Birdwatching Fair
- British Trust for Ornithology
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey
- Mr R G H Chapman
- Charities Aid Foundation
- Charities Trust
- Comic Relief
- Conservation International
- Mrs M J Crawshaw
- Devon Birds
- Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund
- The Arthur Ronald Dyer Charitable Trust
- John Ellerman Foundation
- The ERM Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Fondation Segré
- The Gannochy Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Ms A M Garnham
- Gillman Charitable Trusts
- David and Sarah Gordon
- Mr Pat and Mrs Karin Goss
- Miss Pamela Hadley Discretionary Trust
- The (Doris Louise) Hailes Charitable Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- International Eco Fund
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
- The Ivo Trust
- Mrs E M Jones
- Dr A von Kanel
- The Kennedy Charitable Trust
- Walters Kundert Charitable Trust
- Dr Peter A Lawrence
- Leethorne Trust
- The A G Leventis Foundation
- Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens/ Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association
- Robert McCracken QC
- Mrs J H Mihell
- Miss Pamela Joan Millard Discretionary Trust
- National Birds of Prey Trust
- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

- The National Trust
- The Nature Trust (Sandy) Ltd
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Friends of Pagham Harbour
- Peacock Trust
- People's Postcode Lottery
- Mr M J L Percival
- Per Undeland
- Mr C Petteward
- Jane and Nick Prentice
- Rainforest Trust
- Renewables Grid Initiative, Stiftung Mercator and the European Climate Foundation
- Ridgeback Charitable Trust
- The Rufford Foundation
- Miss Norah Sharples Discretionary Trust
- Mr Nicholas Sherwin and Dame Sarah Asplin
- Size of Wales
- Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- St Aidan's Trust Fund
- Nini Isabel Stewart Trust
- Sussex Lund
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustrans
- Sir John Swire
- The Late Miss E M Tyler Charitable Trust
- Ulster Garden Villages
- University of Cambridge
- Vetwork UK
- Franziska Vogel
- David and Christine Walmsley
- Michael and Rosemary Warburg
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- Mrs Judith Woodman
- The Woodspring Trust

Landfill Communities Fund

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

- Alpha Resource Management Ltd
- Angus Environmental Trust
- Biffa Award
- Cory Environmental Trust in Britain
- Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust
- Derbyshire Environmental Trust
- EB Scotland
- FCC Environment through WREN
- Fife Environment Trust
- GrantScape
- Highland Council
- Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust
- Impetus Environmental Trust
- Mick George Community Fund
- Patersons Quarries Ltd through LandTrust
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd
- Tarmac Ltd
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2)
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Veolia North Thames Trust
- Viridor Credits Environmental Company

Business supporters

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

- ALDI Stores Ltd
- Anesco Ltd
- Appleby (Cayman) Ltd
- Ardmore Whisky
- Barratt Developments plc
- Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica GmbH
- The Botanist Gin
- The Caravan Club
- CEMEX UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Conservation Grade
- Co-operative Bank
- East Village E20
- Ecotricity Group Ltd
- The Famous Grouse
- Hanson UK Ltd
- HSBC Water Programme
- Hurtigruten Ltd
- intu Properties plc
- Kelda Group Ltd
- Kettle Produce Ltd
- Kingfisher plc
- The Lagavulin Legacy
- Lush Ltd
- Marks & Spencer Farming for the Future Innovation
- Marshalls
- National Grid plc
- Northumbrian Water
- PwC
- Reed Smith LLP
- Rohan Designs Ltd
- SABIC
- ScottishPower
- ScottishPower Foundation
- ScottishPower Renewables
- SSE Renewable Generation
- Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- Swarovski Optik
- Tarmac Ltd
- Tesco Bags of Help
- Tesco Stores Ltd
- Tideway
- TNS Research International
- Turcan Connell
- United Utilities plc
- Walkers Shortbread Ltd
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd
- Withers LLP
- Wyndham Vacation Rentals
- Yorkshire Water

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

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

- Aberdeen Harbour Community Action Fund
- Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership through North Pennines AONB Partnerships

Thank you

Hedgehog by Fotolia

- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Big Lottery Fund
- Big Lottery Fund – People and Places
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Clacks Heritage Trust
- Coastal Communities Fund Grant
- The Crown Estate
- Danish Development Assistance Programme (DANIDA)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Defra – Darwin Initiative
- Defra – Darwin Plus
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- East Lothian Council
- Environment Agency
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Commission – BEST
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – Erasmus+
- European Commission – European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)
- European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- ERDF – INTERREG IVA 2 Seas Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013
- ERDF – INTERREG IVA France (Channel) England Cooperation Programme 2007–2013
- Falkirk Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Forestry Commission England
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- The German Ministry for the Environment and Construction (BMUB) via the German State Development Bank (KfW)
- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands
- Haryana State Government: MoEFCC, India
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Heritage Grants
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Landscape Partnerships
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Our Heritage
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Highlands Council
- Historic Environmental Scotland
- Isle of Anglesey County Council – Sustainable Development Fund
- Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India
- Moors for the Future Partnership
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Natural Resources Wales Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- North Ayrshire Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Rural Perth & Kinross LEADER
- SEPA Water Environment Fund
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Government – Marine Scotland Science
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Natural Heritage Peatland Action Fund
- Scottish Rural Development Programme
- Solways Wetlands Landscape Partnership through Allerdale Borough Council
- Somerset County Council
- Sport England
- Stirling Council
- Tees Valley Community Foundation
- Teesdale Area Action Partnership Fund via Mid Teesdale Project Partnership
- Teignbridge District Council
- Tourism NI
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service – Wildlife Without Borders
- VisitAberdeenshire
- Waterways Ireland
- Welsh Government – Core Funding
- Welsh Government – Glastir
- West Sussex County Council
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority





Looking forward

People are at the heart of our charity. Our commitment to a world richer in nature can only come true if we grow and deepen our relationships with our members, supporters, partners and collaborators, who share our vision at home and with BirdLife International overseas.

In an uncertain world we will focus on our highest priorities to ensure that the precious resources and support we are given by so many are used as effectively as possible – any other approach would simply short-change nature.

Brexit means change

Whether it's the hard-won laws that protect our natural world, the future of farming in the hills and lowlands of Britain, or the state of our seas and the management of the UK's fish stocks – Brexit will challenge the status quo.

Understanding the risks and making the most of opportunities will be at the heart of

our approach, and we will work with others in our sector and beyond, through Greener UK and Wildlife and Countryside Link, to secure the best outcomes for birds, other wildlife and the natural world.

Opt in for nature

Since we were founded in 1889 respect for our supporters has been core to our values. Nearly 130 years on, we are all bombarded by more and more information and individually we want to be able to take control of how we receive communications. Offering each of our members and supporters the option to opt-in to receive communications and carry on the conversation about how, together, we can save nature will be a significant undertaking during the coming months.

The achievements we report in next year's annual review will, as they always do, depend on the support we receive and the generosity of so many. Opting in will ensure that we can continue to save nature.

David Broadbent (rspb-images.com)

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rspb.org.uk

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

Front cover: wandering albatross by David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity:
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