



giving  
nature  
a home

**Annual review  
2015–2016**



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Starling (RSPB)



**Mike Clarke**  
RSPB Chief Executive

# Welcome

Looking back over the 2015–6 period, it was a time of highs, but also uncertainty.

We aim to inspire everyone to give nature a home, across the whole breadth of our charity's work. Thanks to our supporters, we've managed to secure even more land for nature on RSPB reserves, including in The Broads National Park, in Norfolk; Lade Pits, adjacent to our Dungeness reserve in Kent, and we've just taken on the management of Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve.

Turn to page 13 to read how we're helping farmers give nature a home, and the staggering success of the techniques pioneered on RSPB's Hope Farm, where numbers of yellowhammers increased from just two when we took on the farm in 2002, to an estimated 723 in December 2015.

Of course, the RSPB works to give nature a home all over the UK, so you can find out all about what's happening in England (page 35), Scotland (page 39), Wales (page 45) and NI (page 53). You'll also be pleased to hear that our hard-working red squirrel campaigner, Bob, returned to put nature on the political agenda during the run-up to the devolved elections. Find out more on page 15.

Offshore, we're still fighting for species that wander the oceans, such as seabirds. I'm proud to announce the opening of Bempton's newly refurbished seabird centre, where we've been trialling new remote GPS tags. Find out more on page 11.

Our membership has grown by over 100,000 in the last three years, and again numbers are at an all-time high, now standing at 1,187,839 members. This is great news, as it shows

that more people than ever care about nature. Charity fundraising practices have been under the spotlight, and we remain committed to the highest fundraising standards possible. There's more on page 33.

One of the greatest threats to the natural world is young people's disconnection from it, so that's why I'm really pleased about our partnership with the supermarket chain Aldi. Head to page 25 to discover how the partnership aims to connect thousands of children with nature, in primary schools and public green spaces.

Our international programmes with our BirdLife International partners have seen considerable success. Read about vultures in South Asia (page 18) and the Gola Rainforest in Sierra Leone (page 21), through to our campaigning to safeguard the world's most effective nature conservation laws (page 23) and to influence the climate change agenda (page 27). I'm proud of the RSPB's role in the lead-up to the Paris Agreement, which seeks to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global temperature increases by 2020.

Regardless of the challenges ahead, including the implications of the EU referendum result, rest assured that we'll continue to work hard with others around the world to save nature.

Of course, the fantastic work of the RSPB is only possible with the help of our supporters, staff, volunteers and partners. Thank you so much for all that you do.

*Mike Clarke*



Find out more about the work we're doing to help European eels on page 19.

Jack Perks (rspb-images.com)





Grahame Madge (rsfb-images.com)

**Professor Steve Ormerod**  
RSPB Chairman

# Giving nature a home is what we do

As we face the implications of the EU referendum, I look back on a successful year.

Yet again, your support has provided the unshakeable foundation for a successful RSPB year. Thanks to you, we continue to make a difference for birds and wildlife: every story in this annual review demonstrates the positive outcomes for nature that become possible when we work together.

Even though the result of the EU referendum has left the conservation world in an uncertain state, we are well used to fighting nature's corner in difficult conditions. As always, we will face these challenges positively and constructively.

We are working now to influence the post-referendum situation, fostering the spirit of collaboration and shared action that will win the day. We have confidence in the enormous capability of our members, our workforce, and our partners in the UK and overseas. Global UN imperatives still drive us, but whichever side of the EU boundary the four UK countries eventually land on, wildlife does not recognise borders, and new initiatives to give nature a home must transcend them too.

Giving Nature a Home is much more than a campaign. It's an ideal that is at the heart of everything we do: in growing our nature reserves network, which is home now to no fewer than 16,000 species; in our fight to protect nature's home from damaging development proposals, and in the way we work with a great many partners and

individuals, often at a landscape-scale, to improve the prospects for nature.

There are many good reasons why the RSPB is seen as the leading charity saving nature. At a time when the charity sector has been under the spotlight, we continue to operate with the highest integrity, always building our capacity to do more for nature: our member numbers are at an all-time high; we've built huge momentum in our work to help children connect with nature; our income and legacy donations are up again this year, and we have successfully galvanised more people than ever to take action for nature, as demonstrated by the hundreds of thousands of you who got behind our partnership campaign to protect the EU Nature Directives.

Of course, the tangible effects of how well we're doing are in our impact on individual species and habitats. And in that regard, we've had some terrific successes to celebrate over the past 12 months. You can read about them in the following pages.

In all my years of association with the RSPB, I have never doubted our ability to do the best for nature, to engage people in the cause to save it, and to get behind it as volunteers, supporters and employees. Every year my faith is justified. And every year, we find a new level of solidarity in the face of difficulty that helps us to deliver the best outcomes. I thank you profoundly for being the source of our courage, strength and momentum.



Ladybird spiders are gaining ground again, after almost becoming extinct in the 1990s. We've reintroduced a colony to RSPB Arne, in Dorset.

Ladybird spider © Fritz Geller  
Grimm, CC-BY-SA-3.0







Andy Gibb

**Jo Gilbert**  
Head of Reserves Ecology



# The wealth of wildlife on our reserves

Here's an update on our work to help nature thrive on our reserves over the last 12 months.

## New land for nature

This has been a significant and successful year for land acquisitions. Thanks to funding of nearly £1 million from WREN, we've been able to purchase an area of 120 hectares, equivalent to 100 football pitches, in the Broads National Park, Norfolk, bringing life to this beautiful place. The newly-purchased land sits alongside RSPB Berney Marshes and Breydon Water, and will create vital marshes that will be grazed by cattle, adding to the Broads landscape, and will serve as a crucial habitat for wading birds such as lapwings and redshanks. By creating carefully-designed habitat features such as shallow pools, we'll provide suitable conditions for breeding birds such as lapwings, avocets, redshanks and yellow wagtails, and bring a richness of wildlife back to this grassland area.

In Wales, work is underway on the Lake Vyrnwy estate in Powys to nurture healthy upland heath and woodland, and develop farming practices that will benefit the environment and encourage wildlife to thrive. This new long-term agreement means that we can invest in the area in ways that have been impossible before, and secure the long-term future of hen harriers, black grouse and curlews. The new site also includes woodland species such as wood warblers and pied flycatchers. For more details, see page 45.

At Rathlin Island, County Antrim, the West Light Seabird Centre re-opened in March 2016. We count seabirds using sample plots, and at just

one plot in Rathlin, seabird numbers increased from 62 in 2014 to 165 in 2016.

Another exciting new acquisition is Lade Pits, adjacent to our Dungeness reserve in Kent, a former site of our partner CEMEX UK that was sold to the RSPB for £1. This site is unusual in that it contains three sound mirrors – concrete structures that were used to listen to enemy aircraft prior to World War II and before the invention of radar. They became obsolete very quickly, and are now listed due to their historical significance. Our team are now investigating whether they can listen out for migrant birds using the sound mirrors, and will continue their popular open days to celebrate the historical significance of the site.

In partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council, the Sherwood Forest Trust, landowner Thoresby Estate and Continuum Attractions, the RSPB will take over the management of the Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve, including designing a new visitor centre. The current visitor centre, built in 1977, is surrounded by ancient oaks on land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Replacing the new visitor centre gives the partnership a once-in-a-generation opportunity to start a new and exciting phase for the forest and the RSPB. The RSPB contract was signed in front of the 1,000-year-old Major Oak. Michael Coplestone is the Reserves Area Manager for the North Midlands. He said that he's looking forward

David Tipling (rspb-images.com)





Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

to enhancing the conservation of the nature reserve, and developing a first-class visitor facility for the people of Nottinghamshire and beyond. The new visitor centre is planned to open in Spring 2018.

### 16,000 species on our reserves

Our work to give nature a home on our reserves is certainly paying dividends.

The fen raft spider, a rare spider species and a priority species for conservation under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, used to be found at fewer than five sites in the UK. Thanks to a highly successful translocation project with these spiders in the Yare Valley in the East of England, the population there is now thriving.

At Geltsdale in Cumbria, we recorded the highest ever number of lekking black grouse: 59, up from 55 in 2014. Black grouse males gather at traditional open spaces to perform their flamboyant displays, called "leks", peaking in April to May, and mainly in the early morning or at dusk. The females, known as grey hens, select a mate, and afterwards leave to rear their chicks alone. At Geltsdale, we have spent the past ten years introducing a new way of grazing the area, with an increase in hardy cattle who leave a more varied vegetation structure which benefits these birds.

2015 was also the year when we recorded the highest numbers of booming bitterns in living memory, and they are also spreading to new areas, including Ouse Fen, a partnership project with Hanson, in the East of England. In 2011 there were no booming bitterns here at all, but in 2015 Ouse Fen was home to ten. To date, the peak nest count has been six (in 2014).

Lapwings and redshanks have shown fantastic successes on lowland wet grassland, and are now at their highest ever numbers on RSPB reserves. They are doing extremely well at RSPB Malltraeth March in Anglesey, where productivity, which needs to be at an average of 0.6–0.7 young produced by each pair each year

to maintain a stable population, is now at 2.44. This is mostly due to our usage of anti-predator electric fencing that keeps foxes and badgers out of areas where lapwings and redshanks are nesting.

Avocets also had a record-breaking year. 172 pairs were counted at Cliffe Pools in Kent, an area once threatened by an airport development.

On the brink of extinction in the 1990s, we're pleased to say that ladybird spiders are slowly gaining ground again. At our Arne reserve in Dorset, we've been taking steps to reintroduce a new colony. In 2015, we had our first evidence of breeding with five new webs recorded outside of the release area.

We've also had success with our field cricket reintroduction to Farnham Heath in Surrey. In 2015 there were 72 males heard calling, exceeding our five-year target of 50, and they are spreading into adjacent areas of newly-restored heathland on the reserve.

### Giving nature a home on our reserves

Once again, we've shown how, if we can create the right habitats, often working in partnership, wildlife will flourish. Red-necked phalaropes, for example, had a phenomenal year, and there are now 31 males on Fetlar in the Shetland Islands. 2015 was also the best breeding season for little terns in 22 years at Pagham Harbour, West Sussex. Little terns were also found nesting in three former colony sites, thanks to an EU LIFE+ funded little tern project. Dungeness, in Kent, is now home to one of the largest populations of Sussex emerald moths, and Winterbourne Downs in Wiltshire now has soaring rare butterfly populations, due to the addition of butterfly banks erected in partnership with Butterfly Conservation. At Sutton Fen in Norfolk, we've had great fen orchid success too, working with Plantlife.

At Coquet Island, just off the coast of Northumberland, we now have 111 pairs of roseate terns, the highest number in 40 years. We're proud that the vast majority of roseate terns make their home on RSPB-managed land.

Finally, we've got some really thrilling news. Common cranes aren't really common at all – they were lost as a breeding bird 400 years ago due to losing their nesting sites and being hunted for food. Whilst a small population re-established themselves in Eastern England in the late 1970s, the Great Crane Project, of which we are a partner, along with The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), The Pensthorpe Conservation Trust and Viridor Credits, can now boast the successful rearing of crane chicks in the West Country, for the first time in 400 years: a real milestone for the project. Nine pairs of cranes made breeding attempts, and four chicks fledged in total. The project is now moving into its next phase, with increased effort in protection and monitoring of breeding pairs through local volunteer teams.





Chris Gomersall (fspb-images.com)

There are now 111 pairs of roseate terns on Coquet Island. This is the highest number in 40 years.



An amazing new Seabird Centre is now open at Bempton Cliffs in Yorkshire.

Kevin Sawston (rspb-images.com)



(RSPB)

**Euan Dunn**  
Principal Policy Officer

# Saving our seabirds and our seas



We've put science into practice to safeguard our seabirds.

Bempton Cliffs, at Flamborough Head in Yorkshire, lies at the heart of the UK's largest mainland seabird colony and, between March and September, provides one of the UK's top wildlife spectacles. Now, thanks to the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Coastal Communities Fund, we've opened a new, award-winning Seabird Centre, with fully accessible footpaths, six viewing decks perched on top of the 100-metre high chalk cliffs, self-guided trails, live CCTV footage, family activities, educational visits and a picnic area. This makes it the UK's most accessible place to see puffins, guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes, fulmars and shags, as well as the largest seabirds in the UK: gannets. It's a fantastic gateway to the seabird city.

We've been using GPS tags to help us understand where seabirds go, and where they look for food, at Bempton Cliffs and more than 30 other sites across the British Isles. On the Shiant Islands in the Outer Hebrides, one of the most important seabird breeding sites in Europe, GPS tags were attached to 17 guillemots and 31 razorbills, and a boat-based survey was carried out simultaneously, enabling the seabird scientists to make a direct comparison between the GPS tracks and the boat observations.

This seabird tracking technology was also instrumental for us in fighting against the development of the Hornsea Project 2 wind farm, scheduled to be built 56 miles (90 km) east of Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs Special Protection Areas (SPA), and the Flamborough and Filey Coast potential SPA. Through our tracking, we demonstrated that the proposed site is within the areas where breeding gannets and kittiwakes search for food. Based on known foraging ranges, puffins,

guillemots and razorbills from Bempton are also likely to feed in these areas.

We were concerned that a wind farm in this location could have serious impacts on these protected sites and their species. Natural England also campaigned against Hornsea Project 2, but withdrew their final objection in December 2015 after the developers agreed to remove 60 of the turbines and raise the height of the remaining ones. Although these changes should reduce the numbers of gannet and kittiwake collisions, the number of casualties is still predicted to be high. These changes also do not fully address our concerns for the feeding guillemots, puffins and razorbills that are displaced.

The RSPB supports the need for renewable energy, but it is vital that renewable developments are located away from important wildlife sites. Hornsea Project 2 is located in an important wildlife site. Sadly, Government consented Hornsea Project 2 in August 2016, but we will continue to work hard to protect seabirds from any future offshore developments within sensitive seabird areas; and we can't do this without an evidence base.

In January 2016, we had the extremely positive news that an area of 85,000 square miles (220,000 square kilometres) around the UK Overseas Territory of Ascension Island will be protected as a marine reserve. The island lies 1,000 miles from West Africa, in the Atlantic Ocean. Ascension Island is home to the second largest green turtle nesting site in the Atlantic, and unique fish species such as the resplendent angelfish. The RSPB played a key role in getting this area designated as a marine reserve. As just 3% of the global seas have any form of protection, this is a vital step.

Grahame Madge (rspb-images.com)





Hope Farm, Cambridgeshire, is an example of how farming for business and wildlife can work hand in hand.

Andy Hay (sps-images.com)



(RSPB)

**Richard Winspear**  
Head of Technical Advice

# Giving nature a home on farms

The RSPB wants the UK's farms to be profitable and productive – and teeming with wildlife.

We know it's possible to achieve efficient food production whilst giving nature a home, because we have witnessed it on some wildlife-friendly farms including on our own Hope Farm in Cambridgeshire. The national farmland breeding bird index has fallen by 10% since we bought Hope Farm in 2000, but on Hope Farm, it has risen by 194%. The breeding population of yellowhammers on Hope Farm has doubled; starlings, linnets and reed buntings have tripled and skylarks have quadrupled. Grey partridges, lapwings and yellow wagtails are now also regular breeding birds, having been absent 16 years ago. We had a remarkable count of 723 yellowhammers last winter, and we've also increased numbers of butterflies, moths and bees.

We've teamed up with other wildlife organisations to form Farm Wildlife, an advisory partnership which works with the farming industry. The partnership has identified six steps which will have the most positive impact for wildlife on arable farmland:

- Look after established wildlife habitats such as woods and trees, as these are particularly valuable for wildlife.
- Make the most of hedges, ditches and margins, as these areas are often where most wildlife is found.
- Create wet features, such as ponds, providing important habitat for many species.
- Create flower-rich habitats on 2% of your arable land for pollinators and other insects.
- Create seed-rich habitats on 2% of your arable land to help wildlife through the winter.

- Include spring crops or in-field features such as fallow plots to provide opportunities for wildlife in the middle of the field. Visit [farmwildlife.info](http://farmwildlife.info) for details.

In addition, RSPB advisors provide targeted advice for farms in focus areas where there are nationally-important populations of farmland birds. This is the most efficient way to help declining populations in arable landscapes. Hopefully, these core areas will boost numbers sufficiently that the birds will re-populate the wider landscapes. We also work with farmers who have populations of wading birds to support them in giving nature a home.

We have farming enterprises on 60 of our reserves, many of which are managed to support wading birds and give us the experience to advise other farmers.

Our research into farm wildlife conservation is paying dividends. We've learned about the migration route of our fastest-declining farmland bird: turtle doves. We tagged one bird, Titan. He travelled 5,600 km, at an average speed of 55 km per hour. One night, he travelled 700 km. We know that, after making a 2,000 km crossing of the Sahara desert, he stopped for a couple of weeks to refuel. We know more about where the doves spend winter, and what they eat. This information allows us to work out how to help these birds, and they need help as they've declined by 96% in recent decades. Our farmland bird research and experience from managing our own sites underpins all of the advice that our advisors give to farmers.

David Trilling (rspb-images.com)





Puffins have recently joined the IUCN Red List as a threatened species. The MP Species Champion for puffins is Kevin Hollinrake, MP for Thirsk and Malton.

Genevieve Leaper (rspl-images.com)





(RSPB)

**Steven Roddy**  
Head of Parliamentary Campaigns

# Engaging politicians to help save nature

We report on two ways in which we've been taking a creative approach to campaigning with politicians.

Our red squirrel campaigner, Bob, was launched in September 2014, with the aim of getting nature back on the political agenda during the 2015 UK General Election. He was hard at work again in the lead-up to the 2016 devolved elections, on the campaign trail in Scotland, Wales and NI. More than 6,500 people in NI, Wales and Scotland asked their political candidates what they intended to do for wild places, the countryside and wildlife, and 268 of those candidates came on board: a great result for a small red squirrel.

## MP Species Champions

We've been engaging with politicians, in a light-hearted and friendly way through our MP Species Champions programme. This was first launched successfully in Scotland in 2013, by Scottish Environment LINK, and its England launch marks the next stage. In this programme, we have joined forces with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Bat Conservation Trust, Buglife, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation and Plantlife. Twenty-seven Westminster MPs and four MEP Species Champions have been recruited. The species championed are varied,

and include birds, plants, beetles, bees and fish. The MPs have been carefully matched to those species that are found in their respective constituencies. A similar scheme was launched in Wales in June 2016, and the RSPB were involved as a part of Wales Environment Link. On March 1 2016, the Champions attended an event at Westminster where they were presented with a factsheet on their species. A number have also been on visits to RSPB reserves, to give them a real-life experience with their species. For example, Kelly Tolhurst, Conservative MP for Rochester and Stroud, has visited the nightingales at Lodge Hill, and Jess Phillips, Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley, has been introduced to the dunnocks at Sheldon Country Park.

The hope is that, where appropriate, they will champion their species at Westminster. Beyond that, becoming Species Champions will engage them with nature conservation more broadly, and we hope that they will support us in our other challenges, such as halting and reversing the loss of habitats.

Squirrel (Stock)





Sir David Attenborough © Toby Smith, Cambridge Conservation Initiative



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

## Science leads the way

A new collaborative initiative opened in Cambridge in 2015. The David Attenborough Building now houses the largest group of nature conservation organisations and university researchers in the world: the Cambridge Conservation Initiative. Staff from our Conservation and International Directorates are now at the heart of this fantastic environment for collaborative working. It was opened by Sir David Attenborough, who marked the occasion by abseiling down the reception's plant wall! Our RSPB Centre for Conservation Science had a record-breaking year, producing 136 peer-reviewed publications. To date, our literature has been cited 42,156 times, demonstrating our commitment to rigorous scientific research.

2015 also marked the second year of the annual RSPB Centre for Conservation Science awards. The award for 'Outstanding PhD' went to Gurutzeta Guillera-Arroita from the University of Kent. Senior Conservation Scientist Dr Jennifer Smart won the award for Outstanding RSPB Conservation Scientist for launching the RSPB Centre for Conservation Science. The award for scientific paper of high conservation importance went to Bojana Bajželj.

## Saving stone-curlews

This year we celebrated 30 years of work to save stone-curlews in East Anglia and Wessex, helping to bring these intriguing birds back from the brink of UK extinction. Since 1985 farmers, landowners, gamekeepers and conservationists have worked together to protect nest sites, recovering the population from fewer than 150 breeding pairs in the 1980s to around 400 today.

We're now in the third year of the EU LIFE+ stone-curlew project, and farm conservation advisers are helping land managers to create enough safe nesting habitat to sustain the population. This should ease the reliance of stone-curlews on direct nest protection.

The number of stone-curlews nesting on safe habitat has already increased, and more habitat will be created through the new Countryside Stewardship scheme, which opened to farmers this year. Community engagement officers are raising local awareness of the species, and our 2020 transition strategy and vision for stone-curlews should ensure that these birds are back for good.



Yellow-bellied toad (RSPB)



Bee eater, Hanson Quarry (RSPB)

## RESTORE project makes a difference

The RESTORE project, a three-year partnership project promoting the restoration of quarries for the benefit of wildlife, people and local economies across north-west Europe, ended in 2015.

It was co-financed by the EU's European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVB NWE Programme, and involved us working with six co-partners in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

During the life of the project, we teamed up with the minerals industry and stakeholders right across north-west Europe, to: assess the value to society of creating new priority habitat in quarries, create and manage approximately 500 hectares of such habitat and advise on the appropriate restoration of around a further 2,300 hectares.

This work helped several key species, including white-clawed crayfish, bittern, turtle dove, otter and twite in the UK, and yellow-bellied toad, eagle owl and midwife toad in mainland Europe. For details on the RESTORE project, visit [restorequarries.eu](http://restorequarries.eu)

## Bee-eaters breed at Hanson quarry

During the summer of 2015, two pairs of bee-eaters nested at the Hanson Aggregates Quarry in Brampton, Cumbria. They were first seen by the quarry foreman, who noticed their brightly-coloured plumage amongst the nesting sand martins.

This is very exciting, as although bee-eaters have bred in the UK on three occasions since 2002, they are still a very rare breeding bird and their nests are at risk from disturbance and egg collectors. Normally, bee-eaters nest in southern Europe.

The RSPB set up a 24-hour protection scheme and viewpoint at the Hanson site, so that members of the public could get great views of the birds as they successfully raised their young. The bee-eaters nested by burrowing tunnels in the quarry banks. Sightings of bee-eaters in the UK have been on the increase in recent years, and this is the second consecutive summer that they have bred here. It's likely they are being pushed northwards by climate change, and may become more regular breeders in the UK in the future.





Kingsbrook (RSPB)



Vulture chicks by Chris Bowden (RSPB)

## Giving nature a home with Barratt Developments

The UK's largest house builder, Barratt Developments, is working with us to improve the prospects for wildlife on future housing developments. Barratt's first project, Kingsbrook, a large development near Aylesbury, is already underway. The design work was recognised in the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence where it was a finalist in the Natural Environment category. The new development will incorporate swift bricks, (bricks with spaces for swifts to nest in), plus hedgehog highways, newt ponds, bat and owl boxes and orchards.

With hundreds of thousands of homes needed in the next few years, this development means that conservationists and housebuilders can pull together to ensure wildlife is boosted rather than ousted in the process.

We're monitoring the changes in wildlife during and after construction at Kingsbrook, and we hope that the project will inspire developers to build homes with wildlife in mind.

## Breakthrough for the SAVE Partnership

The Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) partnership had a breakthrough in August 2015, when the Indian Ministry for Health announced a ban on multi-dose vials of the human formulations of diclofenac, a painkiller responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of vultures. It had earlier been banned for veterinary use, but availability in these larger vials meant it continued to be used on cattle illegally. This ban will further discourage its veterinary use, and so reduce the risk to vultures feeding on dead cattle.

SAVE now needs to ensure that safe alternative drugs are used by vets. Some alternatives are also not vulture safe.

The SAVE partnership was set up in 2011 and has 17 partners, including the RSPB, national and international NGOs and government organisations in the relevant countries. The aim is to review and co-ordinate scientifically agreed conservation priorities, helping channel and implement actions and funding where they are most urgently required.



Nature close-up event at Leighton Moss (RSPB)



Response for Nature (RSPB)

## Disney helps European eels

Thanks to a \$25,000 Disney Conservation Fund grant, we've been working on a project to help eels on our reserves.

Eels' incredible journeys take them from the Sargasso Sea, in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean, to the UK in search of freshwater habitats. This epic journey takes around two years. Once they arrive, they gather in large river mouths. One issue that young eels (known as elvers) face is the obstacles they encounter whilst trying to reach suitable areas of wetland habitat, where they feed and grow.

The Disney funding has enabled us to install eel passes at our Leighton Moss, Minsmere and Ham Wall reserves, enabling them to move over the water control structures to find the wetland areas on these reserves.

Children in particular seem to find eels fascinating. We've run Exciting Eel trail events at Leighton Moss, Minsmere and Ham Wall reserves, where almost 1,000 visitors, including 400 children, took part in eel-related activities.

## Response for Nature

In 2013, the *State of Nature* report set out the state of the UK's wildlife, with alarming clarity. It showed that 60% of the species assessed had declined over the previous 50 years, and 30% had declined strongly.

In response to *State of Nature*, in 2015 we worked in partnership with 33 conservation organisations across the four countries in the UK. In October 2015, this resulted in the publication of four country-specific reports, called *Response for Nature*. The documents make key recommendations to governments on what's needed to restore nature in the UK.

The priorities in each report reflect the different parts of the UK, but there are common themes. We want to see governments delivering an inspiring vision for nature. Specific programmes should be targeting our core threatened species; existing nature laws need to be fully implemented and defended, and governments should identify and protect an effective network of special places for wildlife. Read the reports at [rspb.org.uk/responsefornature](http://rspb.org.uk/responsefornature)



We've reached some important milestones in our efforts to save seabirds.

Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)





Gola Forest by Caroline Thomas (spsb-images.com)



Storm petrel by Steve Round (spsb-images.com)

## Working with communities in Gola Rainforest

The Gola Rainforest is the largest remaining area of Upper Guinean Tropical Rainforest left in Sierra Leone. Covering an area of 70,000 hectares, it's equivalent in size to just under half the area of London, with more than 330 bird species. We've been working in Sierra Leone for 25 years and our project has continued through civil war and the Ebola crisis.

The 122 Forest Edge Communities living around the Gola Rainforest National Park have a very high unemployment rate, particularly amongst the young. We recently piloted a Community Youth Conservation Volunteer programme, to encourage their involvement in nature conservation, specifically by protecting pygmy hippos and the white-necked picathartes. Also, we've helped 24,000 people develop sustainable agricultural projects that increase their standard of living and protect the forest. We hope to strengthen the sense of local ownership and pride through community-based activities, which include monitoring community areas for signs of pygmy hippos. We set up an appeal this financial year which aims to raise £750,000 to help Gola's wildlife.

## Helping seabirds recover across the world

We've reached some important milestones in our efforts to save seabirds this year. In February, the Isles of Scilly Seabird Recovery Project team and local people celebrated as St Agnes and Gugh were officially declared rat-free. Seabirds are already benefiting, with Manx shearwaters and storm petrels successfully breeding on the islands for the first time in living memory.

This year also saw the start of a rat eradication programme on the Shiant Isles off north-west Scotland. These islands are among the most important places for seabirds in Europe; the project is already helping puffins, common guillemots and razorbills and it is hoped that breeding Manx shearwaters and storm petrels may return.

Overseas, the recovery of Ascension frigatebirds on Ascension Island is strong following the island restoration project. There are now over 100 pairs on this small island in the South Atlantic, up from two pairs in 2013.



The UK has some fantastic places for wildlife, such as Abernethy Forest.

David Tipling (rspb-images.com)





(RSPB)

**Kate Jennings**

Head of Site Conservation Policy

# What's next for the Nature Directives?

The EU laws that protect our nature were under threat. Here's the next part of the story.

In 2015, the world's most effective cross-border nature protection laws came under threat. You've helped us fight back to defend the laws that protect our nature. We're fortunate that in the UK we have fantastic places for wildlife, from the Scilly Isles to Abernethy, from Lough Neagh to Lake Vyrnwy and the Norfolk Broads. These homes for nature, and the wildlife within them, are protected thanks to key legislation: the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, collectively known as the Nature Directives.

They are the foundation of nature conservation across Europe, providing the highest available levels of protection for species or habitats. They ensure our wildlife has the same level of legal protection across the EU, especially important for our migratory species. But the most important thing about them is that, when implemented properly, they work: numerous scientific and practical studies attest to their effectiveness.

In a political climate hostile to regulation, however, these laws came under attack. A "regulatory fitness check" of the Nature Directives, to ensure they were still fit for purpose, provided detractors with a perfect opportunity to try to undo decades of conservation progress.

The RSPB and BirdLife International were quick to act. In the UK, we led over 100 other environmental groups to pull together a single response: the laws work – for wildlife, for people and for business. Partners across the EU did the same. Then we asked for

your help. We created a joint campaign with hundreds of other environmental groups across Europe, and from May to July 2015 over 520,000 people spoke up against weakening the Nature Directives. Over 100,000 responses came from the UK, and more than 65,000 were from RSPB supporters. The response was over three times the previous record response to an EU consultation, and the strength of your voices became a key point in every subsequent discussion about the laws.

As the technical aspects of the review continued, RSPB supporters got involved to back our politicians in both the UK and European parliaments to join the Defend Nature campaign. Your efforts ensured Environment Ministers from across Europe – including the UK Minister at the time Rory Stewart – and the European Parliament both spoke up in defence of the Nature Directives, starting to tip the scales of political support in favour of these vital laws.

The future is not yet secured, but the science is compelling, the evidence is clear, and people who love nature have spoken in unprecedented numbers – the Nature Directives must be protected and their implementation must be improved. Whatever the outcome of negotiations following the UK referendum, they will remain vital for the protection of wildlife across Europe (including migratory species that move between the UK and other EU countries). It will be essential that nature protection law in the UK remains at least as strong as that currently provided by the Nature Directives. Find out more at [rspb.org.uk/DefendNature](https://www.rspb.org.uk/DefendNature)

Created tit by Edwin Kats (rspb-images.com)







Our partnership with Aldi has enabled us to connect more children with nature.

Gift by David Tipling (ispb-images.com)



(RSPB)

**Martyn Foster**  
Head of Education, Families and Youth



Pipistrelle bat (Fotolia)

# Inspiring a love of nature in children

Encouraging and inspiring children to enjoy and value nature is vital for conservation, now and in the future.

Sadly, the current generation of children spend far less time out in nature than previous generations did. Fewer than 10% of children now play regularly in natural places. The RSPB believes that connecting with nature should be a part of every child's life, and that doing so helps to develop deeply-held feelings and attitudes towards wildlife and the natural world.

## Connecting children with nature

We need to develop our efforts in connecting children with nature. We're focusing on providing children with first-hand experiences of nature, where they learn something and have fun. This has long been at the core of what we do across our work with young people, but we have renewed focus to deliver those experiences to many more children, be it directly, or through facilitation or partnership.

Connection to nature is the bond with the natural world that means people care about nature and want to protect it. It is most often developed in childhood and if young people develop this connection, they're much more likely to support nature conservation in the future. Nature is in trouble, and children's connection to nature is linked to this. The *State of Nature* report (2013) shows that nature in the UK is being lost – 60% of species assessed have declined over recent decades. Not only can children take action to help turn this around, but they will also benefit from having more contact with nature. Children need nature and nature needs children.

We have lots of routes to reach young people and help better connect them to nature. From our schools on reserves programme and our Big Schools Birdwatch campaign to our family events on reserves.

## Our Aldi partnership

A pioneering partnership between the RSPB and food retailer Aldi is also inspiring hundreds of thousands of children to build a stronger connection with nature. Now in its second year, our partnership with Aldi is proving truly transformational. Driven by the ambition to inspire a generation of children, and funded by the UK-wide carrier bag levy of 5p per bag, we are working with Aldi to run programmes in urban schools, provide family activities in city parks and lots more. As Aldi's exclusive charity partner for the UK bag levy, they are providing more than £2 million to fund our ground-breaking education and family engagement work and enabling us to reach out to schools, families and communities in England, Scotland and Wales.

Without Aldi's support we wouldn't be able to reach out to so many children, or do something on this huge scale, and we're working together to grow the partnership to be even better for nature in the future.

Our ambitions are big and we understand that we cannot reach every child in the UK on our own. Increasingly, we'll work with partners to scale up this work and increase the connection to nature that a whole generation of children can feel.





The RSPB's UK headquarters at The Lodge in Bedfordshire is now powered by a wind turbine located very close to it.

Turbine at The Lodge, Sandy (RSPB)





(RSPB)

**Melanie Coath**  
Senior Policy Officer



# Tackling climate change

The RSPB is stepping up to meet the challenges of a changing climate.

Climate change is one of the greatest long-term threats to nature. The RSPB's report, *The Nature of Climate Change*, published in 2015, makes sobering reading. It shows how Europe's wildlife is already being affected by climate change, and how its effects are likely to intensify. For example, the report shows that species are now becoming mismatched: in the Netherlands, between 1988 and 2005, oak leaves emerged 1.7 days earlier per decade, the abundance of caterpillars that feed on them peaked at 7.5 days earlier per decade, and chicks of great tits, who feed on the caterpillars, hatched around five days earlier. But sparrowhawk chicks, who feed on small birds, are not hatching earlier, creating a mismatch that would threaten their future. The report was taken by RSPB staff to the UN Climate Change conference in Paris, between 30 November and 13 December 2015.

The conference negotiated the Paris Agreement, a global agreement on the reduction of emissions leading to climate change, which will come into practice in 2020. The RSPB and BirdLife International were present at the conference, focusing on obtaining sound climate change mitigation measures on land use and forests, because so much wildlife is found there – 76% of the world's threatened birds are found in tropical forests. We're pleased that, after campaigning on the issues, the agreement contains a large section on the need for reducing emissions from deforestation and the role of conserving forests and other carbon-rich ecosystems in reducing climate change.

However, it is not clear if the overall ambition of the treaty is strong enough to ensure that the world really will stay below the temperature

targets the Paris Agreement sets. Neither is it clear that enough money will flow to help poorer nations reduce emissions and adapt to climate change; there is still work for us to do.

We take our commitment to tackling climate change very seriously, and in January 2016 we located a wind turbine in a field adjacent to the RSPB's UK headquarters in Bedfordshire. The installation of this turbine demonstrates our commitment to renewable energy: it produces the energy equivalent to 66% of the RSPB's electricity needs. The turbine also supplies power directly to our headquarters. Working in partnership with green energy company Ecotricity, assessments were conducted over three years on all aspects of the wind turbine proposal and how it could affect the surrounding area. These assessments analysed potential impacts, which included landscape, ecology, ornithology, hydrology, noise, and transport and access. We engaged with the local community, and the local council granted planning permission in April 2014.

Our campaigning continues, and in February 2016 we once again teamed up with the WWF, Oxfam, The National Trust, the WI and other partners from The Climate Coalition, to participate in the second year of the Show the Love campaign. A short film, *I Wish For You*, starring Maxine Peake and Jeremy Irons, was released in time for Valentine's Day, as part of the campaign. Created by Ridley Scott Associates and written by Michael Morpurgo, the film received more than four million views. Hundreds of thousands of people made, wore and shared green hearts around the UK, and inspired people to think about all the things they love most about the natural world and value in their own lives, and how these might be affected by climate change.

Orange tip butterfly by Niall Bernive (rspb-images.com)



Stickleback by Jack Perks (rspb(images).com)

## Spineless Simon steals Springwatch

In 2015, the long-running BBC wildlife show *Springwatch* was broadcast from Minsmere in Suffolk for the second time.

Chris Packham has described RSPB Minsmere as the “Disneyland of Wildlife”, but the unexpected star of the show was a 5 cm long stickleback known as Spineless Simon. He became the UK’s most famous fish, having two dorsal barbs instead of the usual three. Viewers watched the story unfold as an otter attempted to destroy his burrow, and then a hungry bittern appeared. Thankfully, after all the drama, Spineless Simon did eventually find a mate.

2.5 million people tuned into the 8 pm shows, and once again numbers to Minsmere soared due to the *Springwatch* effect. It is very encouraging to see how *Springwatch* is getting people interested in wildlife and visiting nature reserves; at Minsmere we’ve seen greater levels of visitor satisfaction, which is down to the dedicated work of Minsmere staff and volunteers.

*Springwatch* also returned to Minsmere in May–June 2016.



Intu Birdhouse created by Richard Whitehead. Photo (RSPB)

## Big Birdhouse tour takes flight

After 18 months, we have now come to the end of our flagship partnership with shopping centre owner intu: the Big Birdhouse Tour. Since hatching at intu Lakeside in July 2015, 15 giant birdhouses have flown around the country, roosting at 15 intu shopping centres across the UK, and finishing at intu Metro Centre on 16 October 2016.

The tour has enabled us to engage with hundreds of families and win support from more than 1,500 new members. intu colleagues from each centre also visited local primary schools, using RSPB resources, to encourage children to give nature a home and create bird-inspired artwork for display throughout the tour.

The 15 fabulous big birdhouses, designed by well-known personalities including Vic Reeves, George Clark, Jo Whiley, Will Greenwood and our president Miranda Krestovnikoff, will be auctioned in October and November 2016, raising further funds for the RSPB.

Big Schools Birdwatch by David McHugh (rspb-images.com)



Hurtigruten cruise ship (Alamy)



## 15 years of Big Schools' Birdwatch

90,000 pupils and teachers counted the birds in their school grounds during the first half of the 2016 Spring Term (4 January–12 February 2016), taking part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch.

The survey, now in its 15th year, is the biggest wildlife survey in schools. During this time it has helped to track numbers of birds in school grounds, providing an insight into how species are doing, and inspiring many children about nature.

Since its launch in 2002, the Big Schools' Birdwatch has provided a million opportunities for children and teachers to connect with nature in their school grounds.

More than 70 different species were recorded this year, ranging from starlings and house sparrows to red kites and green woodpeckers.

The survey revealed that the blackbird is still the most common school ground visitor. 87% of schools that took part reported seeing blackbirds, with an average of seven birds seen per school.

## New Hurtigruten partnership

We've joined forces with adventure travel company Hurtigruten in a three-year partnership. They are committed to raising £100,000 to fund vital marine and seabird conservation projects.

Hurtigruten's explorer cruise ships visit some of the most remote places in the world, including Antarctica, Greenland and Norway. The company is committed to preserving the destinations they visit for future generations.

Hurtigruten has had an informal relationship with the RSPB for many years, but this new three year partnership will generate significant funding for marine projects. The agreement also includes discounts for RSPB supporters.

The Norwegian coast, home to the majority of the Hurtigruten fleet, is also home to an impressive variety of species, and Hurtigruten passengers have the opportunity to visit one of the most accessible bird cliffs in Norway. Local residents include colourful Atlantic puffins and numerous other birds such as Arctic skuas, cormorants, kittiwakes, guillemots, razorbills, Brünnich's guillemots and northern fulmars.





We're satellite tagging hen harriers to find out their movements. Lush have supported this project through sales of their hen harrier bath bombs.

Steve Knell (rsfb-images.com)

Lush hen harrier bath bomb (markavery.info)



President's award by Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)



## Lush news for the RSPB

The fresh handmade cosmetics company Lush has raised over £100,000 for the RSPB, through sales of its hen harrier-shaped bath bombs.

Launched in August 2015, to help raise awareness of the persecution of one of Britain's rarest birds of prey, nearly 50,000 bath bombs have now been sold. The funds raised by Lush will help our EU LIFE+ Hen Harrier Life project, satellite tagging hen harriers to find out more about their movements.

Martin Harper, RSPB Conservation Director, said: "Satellite tagging is a hugely important tool in protecting hen harriers and aiding their conservation. The tags provide us with a wealth of information on the hen harriers' habits and movements, which ultimately helps us protect them from illegal persecution – the main reason they are absent from vast swathes of the UK uplands.

"Our Hen Harrier LIFE+ Project is a vital programme of work designed to help the species recover, so it's great that this fantastic support from Lush and its customers is helping to fund such important work."

## President's Award winners 2015

The President's Award celebrates the fantastic work of all of our volunteers. Here we celebrate the 2015 winners.

**John Oliver** has volunteered at Pulborough Brooks, West Sussex for 15 years, offering practical help whilst focusing on volunteer recruitment. There are now 223 volunteers.

**Brian Nobbs** has been volunteering for 37 years, latterly with the Sevenoaks local group. He has given more than 400 talks so far and raised over £10,000.

**Pip Goodwin** combines a passion for nature with knowledge of environmental law, leading important policy research on the Nature Directives.

**Brian Foster** is a key member of the Aylesbeare team in Kent where he runs the reserve's workshop.

**Allan Dawson** started volunteering at Bempton Cliffs 9 years ago to say thank you for years of enjoyment. He's now a vital team member.

**David Baynes** has volunteered at Loch Leven since February 2010, building new structures and making countless improvements.

Congratulations to our winners, and every one of our volunteers. Without their time and talents we couldn't achieve all we do for nature.





In an exciting new development, the RSPB will be managing the land at Sherwood Forest.

Major Oak, Sherwood Forest (iStock)





**Beth Thoren**  
Director of Fundraising and Communications

# How you're helping us do more for nature

Thanks to our members and supporters, we're able to do even more to help wildlife and the natural world.

The threats to nature are ever-increasing, and due to this, we need to keep stepping up our conservation ambitions. This means we have a need for an increase in all kinds of support for the RSPB, be it financial, volunteering, campaigning, leaving a legacy, or taking part in the Big Garden Birdwatch.

In view of this, I'm proud to say that 2015–2016 was a great year for nature. Our membership numbers are now at an all-time high, with over 100,000 new members during that time. The number now stands at 1,187,839 members. It's wonderful that so many people want to do something for nature, and that they're choosing to do so through their RSPB membership. We're particularly proud of our increase in family memberships, because by inspiring children and families to care about nature, we're ensuring that the future of the natural world is in safe hands.

The past year was a time of income growth for sources such as trading income, and the same period was also a record-breaking year for legacy income. The RSPB received valuable legacies from 1,116 people this year, up from 1,105 in the 2014–2015 period. Legacy gifts can come in all sizes, and each one matters for wildlife.

Each gift means that we can do more great things for nature, and it's thanks to our members and supporters that we're able to do that. The pages of this annual review are great evidence of what we can achieve together. Whether we're restoring thousands of hectares of disused industrial land for the benefit of nature, or protecting and providing vital habitat for Red List species such as the puffin or turtle dove, or campaigning for action to defend the laws that protect nature in the UK, your support has made a big difference.

## Keeping our fundraising standards high

In recent years, charity fundraising practices have been under the spotlight, not always positively. Although this has presented a challenge across the charity sector as a whole, we've welcomed the opportunity to review our ways of working in this area. We've always worked hard to achieve the highest standards within our fundraising practices, as at the RSPB's core is the trust of our members, and this is something we value more highly than anything else.

Our members and supporters form the backbone of our organisation, without whom we couldn't do any of our great work to save nature. Thank you so much for supporting the RSPB.



Conservation doesn't stay the same on our reserves. Wardens and ecologists are always looking to find better ways to manage our sites.

Guy Rogers (rsph-images.com)



**Shaun Thomas**  
Director of Region and Country Operations

# England

It's been a successful year for wildlife on our restoration projects, and we've seen the benefits of partnership working.

The earth moved for Wallasea Island in the Thames estuary this year. Our coastal habitat creation has gone ahead on a massive scale, as three million tons of spoil were brought in from the tunnel being dug for London's Crossrail project. The material has helped create nearly 66% of the reserve, and we will be looking to complete this amazing new wetland over the coming years. Much of the groundwork is now complete on this – the biggest coastal habitat restoration project of its kind in Europe. The sea wall was breached in July 2015, and, by the end of the year, we had 168 hectares of new coastal habitat, ranging from lagoons to creeks. It was enough to draw in up to 10,000 birds in the first winter alone.

Smaller, but nevertheless important restoration projects elsewhere continue to progress. At Hesketh Out Marsh reserve in Lancashire, we landscaped lagoons and dug creeks, while the Environment Agency completed its sea wall, to manage the flow of seawater.

The developing reedbeds at Ouse Fen in Cambridgeshire gained a big endorsement from the bitterns we had hoped to attract there. Just five years ago, there were none at all. 2015 saw the number of booming males rise to 10.

In July, an unprecedented group of up to 150 sharks swarmed into the shallow intertidal waters at our Medmerry reserve in West Sussex. Measuring up to 1.5 metres in length, with the typical triangular shark fins sticking out of the water, these were smooth-hounds – usually found offshore.

Amazing footage of the event received international attention and goes to show the variety of wildlife that RSPB reserves attract. Medmerry is the largest open-coast managed realignment scheme ever in the UK – designed to protect over 350 homes in Selsey from coastal flooding. The Environment Agency, with RSPB support, has carried out a significant amount of work. Now we are really starting to see the benefits to wildlife, as well as the people living close by.

## Wildlife success stories

Breeding birds did exceptionally well at our Lakenheath Fen reserve in Suffolk this year. After two unsuccessful years, the cranes managed to fledge three chicks between two pairs – the most since they began breeding in 2007. Other rarities had a good season too; we had four successful bittern nests, and the first record of their diminutive cousin, the appropriately named little bittern, with a male calling during May and June. Only a generation ago, this incredibly productive reserve was farm fields.

It was a blooming good year for the extremely rare fen orchid at two of its only known sites in the UK. At Catfield Fen and Sutton Fen in Norfolk, the number of spikes more than doubled, from 3,600 to 7,700. We have to maintain a delicate balance to preserve this flower, keeping steady levels of acidity and the water level at or near the surface of our fens.

However, at Catfield Fen, where over 50% of the UK's fen orchid population is found, we think water abstraction is the key reason the site is becoming more acidic. Therefore,





along with Natural England, the RSPB will be supporting the Environment Agency at a public inquiry in April as they defend their decision to refuse to renew two water abstraction licences.

Breeding wading birds at Rainham have been doing well with lapwings and redshanks increasing every year since 2011 – lapwings from 13 pairs to 68 pairs in 2015, and redshanks from four pairs to 60 pairs in 2015. Careful management of the grazing, water levels, and an anti-predator fence, have clearly paid off.

The islands of Langstone Harbour on the Solent are home to one of the UK's most important colonies of little terns. The breeding population in Southeast England declined by 89% between 1986 and 2013, with Langstone Harbour's population crashing from 162 to 26 pairs. Our dedicated volunteers, the community and youth groups hand-painted over 100 model birds to act as decoys, drawing these threatened seabirds back to the site. Just before the birds arrived in April, we were busy putting out these model terns, as well as shelters to protect chicks from predators. We also played recordings of their calls to draw the real birds in.

A brightly-coloured spider caused a stir at our Radipole Lake reserve in Dorset. Spotted by

volunteers on a butterfly survey, *Hypsosinga heri* hadn't been seen in the UK since 1912. Small and reddish, it has a chequered pattern on its back. Not only did volunteers find two at the reserve, they also discovered a second group at nearby Lodmoor.

**In other news...**

Our blanket bog restoration at Dove Stone – in partnership with United Utilities and backed in 2015 by £228,000 of WREN funding – is storing water that would otherwise rush downhill, and potentially cause problems similar to those experienced in the terrible floods that engulfed parts of northern England in 2015. We've halted peat burning, helping to store carbon in the ground and improve water quality, and brought in Sphagnum moss to act as a green sponge. Breeding populations of birds such as golden plovers have rocketed.

Climbing boulders and cycling are not words you'd associate with RSPB reserves, but they feature in a two-year partnership launched with Sport England at Rainham Marshes in Greater London and Strumpshaw Fen in Norfolk. It's part of a £300,000 initiative to get more people outdoors and doing physical activity. London's Rainham Marshes has begun hiring out bikes to visitors for use on its trails, and has installed two climbing boulders. Strumpshaw Fen is encouraging runners and leading cycle rides. Many people will be getting fit and enjoying wildlife at the same time. We've been careful to ensure these activities cause no problems for wildlife or other visitors.

This year has marked the tenth anniversary of a project to bring peregrines closer to thousands of people in Manchester. The birds have been nesting right in the heart of the busy city centre, and we have been employing information assistants for the last decade to show the birds to the public. The birds have done well, and so too have the assistants – nearly all have progressed to other RSPB jobs.

At Lincolnshire's Frampton Marsh, seed company Limagrain have helped us with a "three scrape principle" in which we dry out our three lagoons (known as scrapes) on rotation. Each year, one scrape is sown with seed-rich crops, and then flooded. Last winter, they were brimming with ducks. Once the crops are cut, the decaying vegetation attracts invertebrates for wading birds. It's a rotation of habitats and birds.

**And finally...**

One of the RSPB's greatest stalwarts was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Cumbria for a "lifelong and outstanding contribution to nature conservation"; in recognition for his work at Leighton Moss. John Wilson became the reserve's first warden in 1964, and, in that year, there were just 365 visitors. Now, the reserve welcomes 110,000 visitors annually. John retired in 2001, but he's still ringing on the reserve, with bearded tits his speciality.



David Osborn (rspb-images.com)





Andy Hay (rsph-images.com)

At Ouse Fen reserve in Cambridgeshire, we're creating the largest reedbed in the UK, thanks to our partnership with construction materials company Hanson.



Through our nature reserves, such as Sumburgh Head, we're able to give more nature a home in Scotland.

Jack Perks (rspb-images.com)







**Stuart Housden OBE**  
Director, RSPB Scotland

# Scotland

Being able to buy new nature reserves has allowed us to help more wonderful wildlife in Scotland. But the fight to protect and give nature a home goes on.

I will never forget the first time I saw a white-tailed eagle. The experience was so awe-inspiring it took my breath away. I can still see it now – that square-winged silhouette against the sky, the biggest bird I'd ever seen in the UK.

In 2015, 40 years after white-tailed eagles were reintroduced to Scotland, we celebrated a milestone: the 100th pair nesting in Scotland, which just happened to be at our nature reserve on Hoy, Orkney. It was the first time white-tailed eagles had nested in Orkney for 142 years and, even though the pair was not successful, it demonstrated the power of conservation when we get things right.

It's not just the RSPB's success. Bringing white-tailed eagles back to Scotland owes a great deal to the partners involved, as well as the support of Police Scotland, landowners, farmers, local community groups and organisations, and to Norway who gifted the young eagles that went on to be released.

It's fantastic to see how these magnificent birds have captured the public's imagination and that the sight of a white-tailed eagle soaring in the Scottish sky is no longer a thing of the past. Thanks to this conservation success, thousands of people each year are experiencing that "wow" moment, that sharp intake of breath; their first white-tailed eagle.

## Birds of prey still persecuted

Sadly, my love for white-tailed eagles and other birds of prey is not shared by everyone. In 2015, we published a 20-year review of the

illegal killing of birds of prey in Scotland. This confirmed that 779 protected raptors were illegally killed between 1994 and 2014, including 10 white-tailed eagles, 37 golden eagles and 104 red kites. These were just the bodies that were discovered and confirmed as involving criminal activity. No doubt there will have been many more.

There is now scientific evidence of the impact of illegal killing on Scotland's golden eagle, hen harrier, peregrine, and reintroduced red kite populations. The last national hen harrier survey, for example, showed the population had declined by 22% in Scotland between 2004 and 2010. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee Hen Harrier Framework 2011 concluded that illegal killing was having a significant impact on this species, particularly on land managed for driven grouse shooting in the southern uplands and eastern Highlands.

We welcome measures taken by the Scottish Government over the past 20 years to improve the laws protecting our birds of prey, and the recent improvements by Police Scotland and the Crown Office in tackling wildlife crime. However, our data shows that illegal killing of raptors continues to be a widespread problem in significant parts of upland Scotland. These crimes impact the natural wealth of Scotland and undermine our international reputation, wildlife tourism and diversified rural businesses.

## Hope at Abernethy Forest

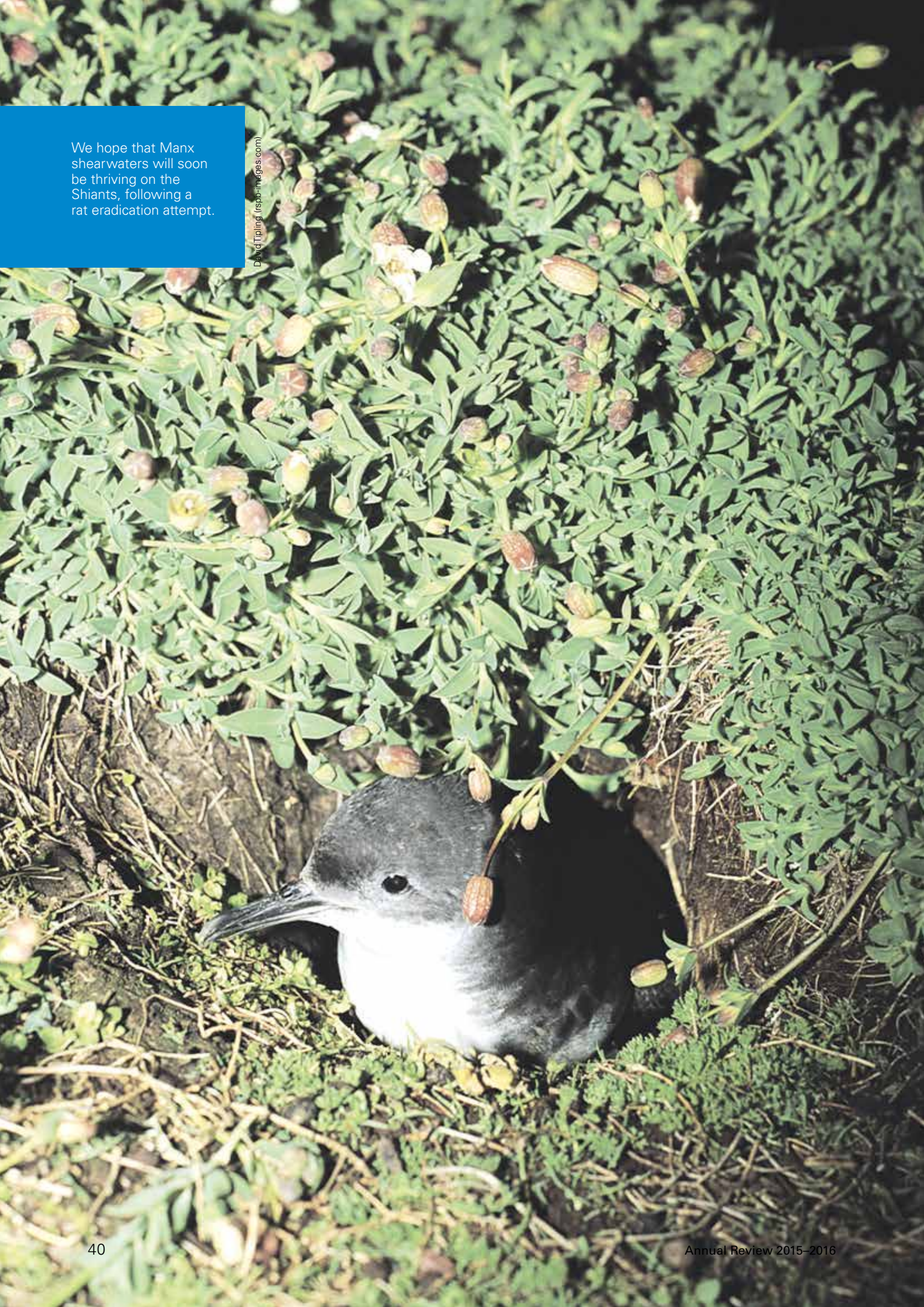
While the challenges for birds of prey that we faced 20 years ago still remain, we are making





We hope that Manx shearwaters will soon be thriving on the Shiant, following a rat eradication attempt.

David Tipling (repp-images.com)





great progress in other areas of conservation in Scotland. Abernethy Forest in the Highlands, at over 13,000 ha, is one of our largest nature reserves and is spectacular: the smell of the Calendonian pine trees, the sound of crested tits trilling and the sight of red squirrels scampering away from you up a tree are all so thrilling.

Over centuries, Caldonian pine forests were felled or failed to regenerate, so in 2015, we launched our tree nursery to nurture new saplings to help restore it. Thanks to the financial support of the Scottish Power Foundation and Walkers Shortbread Ltd, trees such as alder, aspen, birch and willow are now being grown at the nursery from seeds from the forest. They will then be transferred into the reserve to help create a richer habitat for wildlife. Over the next ten years almost 100,000 trees will be planted amongst the already regenerating Scots pines with the help of local schoolchildren, volunteers and contractors. In 200 years' time we hope to have almost doubled the size of the forest. This is giving nature a home on a very grand scale.

### More land for nature

It's not just our Abernethy nature reserve that is giving even more nature a home. We bought our first nature reserve in Clackmannanshire in 2015. Black Devon Wetlands alongside the Forth was originally created when soil was excavated from the site to cap an adjacent area of landfill. It is already home to snipe, short-eared owls, teals and black-headed gulls and we're working to improve the habitats and the visitor facilities.

Thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, we have now purchased Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of the UK mainland. We have been leasing and managing the site since 2008. Go there in the spring and you'll be greeted by the cacophony of thousands of breeding seabirds, including puffins, guillemots, razorbills, fulmars and kittiwakes. The dramatic 300-foot high cliffs offer stunning views over to Orkney on a clear day. We're determined to ensure this headland remains a fantastic place for nature in the future.

### Shiant Isles now rat-free?

Scotland's seabirds have not fared well in recent years, one of the reasons why our Shiant Isles Recovery Project is so important. The Shiant Islands are a group of islands in the Outer Hebrides, owned by the Nicolson family. Non-native black rats are thought to have arrived there from an 18th century shipwreck and their presence has been detrimental to the nesting seabirds.

Despite this, the islands are still one of the most important breeding colonies for seabirds in Europe – around 10% of UK puffins and 7% of UK razorbills breed there each year. How much better could they be without rats?

Half of the money required to eradicate the rats came from the EU LIFE+ fund and Scottish

Natural Heritage. We then launched an appeal to raise the remainder. Thanks to many supporters, we were able to carry out the work last winter. The team worked relentlessly for many months in such a remote place – the islands are not inhabited. We put down over 1,000 baits, and needed to abseil off cliffs to get to the most remote spots. These baits were checked every three to four days – no mean feat when sometimes the team were facing Force 12 hurricane winds.

Gradually, the take-up of the bait reduced and just before Christmas 2015 we saw what we hope was the last rat. We will need to keep monitoring for another two to three years to be sure, but we are hopeful that the islands are now rat-free and the seabirds can thrive again.

### Decision on Forth and Tay legal challenge

It was disappointing for us when, in October 2014, Scottish Ministers granted consent for four offshore windfarms in the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Tay. Of course, renewables in the right place, including offshore wind, are critical to help combat climate change, but this area is truly vital for seabirds. It's where we've been running our popular boat trips and it's a fantastic place to see puffins, kittiwakes and razorbills.

We issued a challenge to the consent, as we were concerned about the impacts that a windfarm in that location would have, particularly on seabirds such as puffins and gannets. Happily for us, and for wildlife, the judge in the Court of Session ruled in our favour, after RSPB Scotland challenged the decisions by way of judicial review. The judge ruled that the Scottish Ministers had acted unlawfully as they had failed to consult on environmental information on the project. We are awaiting a decision from the Scottish Government on whether they will appeal.

We'll always take action against the most damaging developments, so we're really pleased about this result. It sends a strong message that we'll always speak up for wildlife, no matter how big the opposition.

### Nature of Scotland Awards

The Nature of Scotland Awards are designed to recognise and celebrate excellent innovation and outstanding achievement in Scottish nature conservation. I'm going to focus on the Lifetime Achievement Award winners, as I think they deserve a special mention. First up were Philip and Myrtle Ashmole, who are best known for being the leading lights behind the Carrifran Wildwood project of the Borders Forest Trust. This visionary ecological restoration initiative, eight miles northeast of Moffat, is transforming a heavily grazed upland glen into a carefully restored patchwork of wooded wild land. Myrtle and Philip have been supporters of the RSPB since the 1950s.

Great skua by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)





Thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, we've now purchased Dunnet Head, the most northerly point on the UK mainland.

Andy Hay (spb-images.com)



The other winners were Mike and Val Peacock, who between them have a lifetime of wardening, monitoring, habitat creation and management on the spectacular edges of the western seaboard of the UK under their belts. Mike's wetland creation at Loch Gruinart is now the largest roost site for Greenland white-fronted geese in the UK.

### Big Nature Festival

RSPB Scotland's Big Nature Festival returned in 2015 for a fourth successful year. Located at Levenhall Links, one of the best birding sites in Scotland, it was two days of festival activities for all, including more than 100 exhibitors. More than 6,000 visitors of all ages joined in an exciting celebration of Scotland's wonderful wildlife, and Bill Oddie gave talks.

### Dolphinwatch makes a splash

Record numbers of people visited Aberdeen's third annual RSPB Dolphinwatch in 2015, to witness the iconic spectacle of the bottlenose dolphin. Aberdeen is rapidly becoming famous as the best place to see dolphins in the UK, and it's fortunate that the dolphin watchpoint is so close to the city centre. The 2015 Dolphinwatch received 5,038 visits, up from 1,668 in 2014, including visitors from Germany, Spain, Sweden, Mexico, Canada and Malaysia, as well as all over the UK.

The Dolphinwatch team was on hand between April and August and also ran events, from guided walks and rockpool rambles, to beach cleans. Luckily, the dolphins did not disappoint. They were spotted on around 95% of the days when the team was working, and on some days, up to 20 dolphins were seen.

### 50 years at Balranald

2016 marks the 50th anniversary of our Balranald reserve, on North Uist. In 1966, RSPB Scotland, and local crofters and landowners, came together to create the reserve, now one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Western Isles.

The reserve was originally set up due to the presence of rare red-necked phalaropes, which bred sporadically at Balranald until 1984, and then disappeared. Imagine our excitement, then, when another pair returned there to breed in 2015. Corncrakes have more than doubled on the reserve in the past 50 years, but sadly corn buntings are only a quarter of what they were 50 years ago. However, new species have also come to breed, including swallows, sand martins and linnets. We're excited to see what the next 50 years of partnership hold for Balranald.

### Greening Glasgow

I'm really excited about a project that's underway to transform some areas of Glasgow to a resplendent shade of green. "Dear Green Future" is a partnership between RSPB Scotland and Glasgow University

Wildlife Garden Group. Led by the young people and students themselves, and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots Programme, the project seeks to transform areas into green spaces that are perfect for wildlife, as well as run community events and a cultural research project. The events include workshops on subjects including foraging and wildlife identification. The project has been running since August 2015 and it's making great progress so far. The project will conclude with an exhibition at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, showcasing the discoveries and achievements of the young people involved.

### And finally...

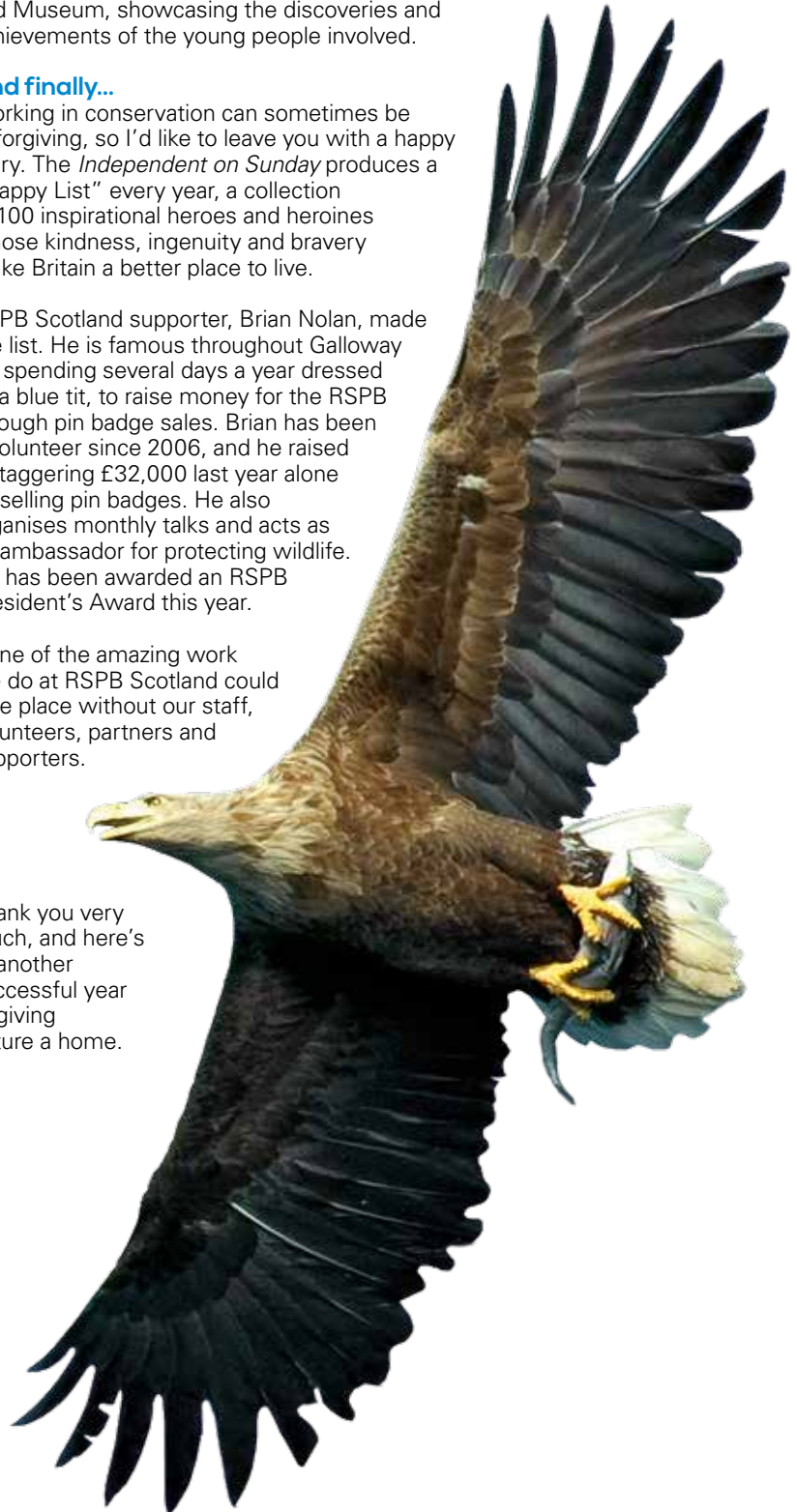
Working in conservation can sometimes be unforgiving, so I'd like to leave you with a happy story. The *Independent on Sunday* produces a "Happy List" every year, a collection of 100 inspirational heroes and heroines whose kindness, ingenuity and bravery make Britain a better place to live.

RSPB Scotland supporter, Brian Nolan, made the list. He is famous throughout Galloway for spending several days a year dressed as a blue tit, to raise money for the RSPB through pin badge sales. Brian has been a volunteer since 2006, and he raised a staggering £32,000 last year alone by selling pin badges. He also organises monthly talks and acts as an ambassador for protecting wildlife. He has been awarded an RSPB President's Award this year.

None of the amazing work we do at RSPB Scotland could take place without our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters.

Thank you very much, and here's to another successful year of giving nature a home.

White-tailed eagle by Chris Comersall







We're fighting for  
twites in Snowdonia,  
by working with  
farmers to increase  
their food sources.

Andy Hay ([spb-images.com](https://spb-images.com))

(RSPB)



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

# Wales

From landscape-scale conservation to targeted help to save threatened species, we've been making great strides in our efforts to save nature in Wales this year.

It's been a good year and I'm pleased to report on some of our notable successes and conservation projects. Looking back, I've been struck by the variety of our work, from large-scale conservation in the Gwent Levels to the very focused fight for twites in Snowdonia, as well as projects that consolidate our role in saving nature in Wales and those that engage future generations with our natural world.

## Safeguarding the future

Last year we announced a landmark agreement that secures the future of our tenancy at the Lake Vyrnwy estate farm in Powys. A year on and we're really feeling the benefits of a 30-year tenancy. The farm sits within a 10,000 hectare national nature reserve that welcomes over 200,000 visitors a year. It's also a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and the largest area of heather moorland in single ownership in Wales. The area includes blanket bog, moor and woodland and is home to hen harriers, merlins, red grouse, and very special plants and insects.

The tenancy provides us with long-term control over the habitat, key to the conservation of this very special environment. We've already started on a huge programme to repair many miles of fencing, and we're building a muck store. It doesn't sound pretty, but we need the manure to grow crops to feed the animals in the winter, and the store will enable us to make a highly nutrient-rich fertiliser in a more time-efficient and cost-effective way.

## Farming for wildlife

We've also been looking at our grazing techniques. As well as Welsh mountain sheep and Welsh mountain ponies, we have Welsh black cattle. Recently we've been grazing them on the mountains in summer. They graze differently to the sheep, creating a mosaic of different habitats. As a result, we've seen violets come up, which are popular with fritillary butterflies. There's also evidence that meadow pipits produce bigger eggs in areas where cattle have grazed moorland. The rich dung supports insects, which are eaten by meadow pipits, which in turn provide food for merlins.

It's a great demonstration of how we're running the farm both commercially and for nature. The farm has always been run to be economically viable and this is a way of managing the farm for wildlife, while also farming in the "real world".

## Protecting our natural heritage

I'm delighted to announce another large-scale project, albeit of a very different nature – the Gwent Living Levels Landscape Partnership. The Gwent Levels are a patchwork of diverse wildlife havens, sweeping the Severn Estuary coastline from Cardiff to the Severn Bridge and beyond. It's home to a wealth of charismatic and threatened species including lapwings, otters, water voles, the great silver water beetle and one of the UK's rarest bumblebees, the shrill carder bee. The area also hosts a number of specialist plants including frogbit, arrowhead and Wolffia – the smallest flowering plant in the world.





**Achieving more through partnerships**

At the end of last year RSPB Cymru, in partnership with 11 other organisations and local authorities in Wales, was awarded £2.8 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore and protect the natural heritage of the Gwent Levels. This project will involve reconnecting the community to the landscape to create a sustainable future for this fascinating part of the country.

We're currently engaged in the development stage: together with our partners, we are working on a programme of activities which will be implemented from September 2017 to the end of 2020. Community engagement is at the heart of our work to ensure the views and wishes of local people shape the project. We are very proud of our involvement in this: by working with partners and the community on landscape scale projects like this, we can achieve and do more for nature.

**Creating new policy**

RSPB Cymru's policy team worked hard with Assembly members and officials to inform new environmental legislation in Wales. I was especially pleased with our input into a new Environment (Wales) Act which received Royal Assent in March 2016. With the backing of our supporters and working with partners, we ensured that the new legislation included a commitment that Wales manages its natural resources in a more sustainable way. We're now helping to inform the development of the policies and reports which are being produced in compliance with the Act. We'll continue to advocate for sustainable policies which work for nature and people.

**Inspiring a love of nature**

Our work to give nature a home in Cardiff took a dramatic twist last year when we worked in partnership with North Wales arts organisation Migrations and the City of Cardiff Council to produce *TAPE*, an art installation that caught the imagination of thousands of people from the city and beyond. Nestled in a tree in Cardiff's Bute Park, *TAPE* was a cocoon-like

structure of fantastical proportions big enough to fit a whole family. A key element of our Giving Nature a Home strategy is to engage children and their families with nature and this certainly delivered. Around 74,000 people came to see it in August: around 10,000 climbed inside *TAPE*, while others came to admire it, picnic by it, or just have a look.

Alongside this we ran more traditional nature-related activities for children – successfully engaging 1,000 children. A big thank you to our volunteers who gave 700 hours to help build *TAPE*, run events and engage with people.

We're really pleased with how it went and Migrations are too. In fact we're running another event together in July 2016 called *In the Eyes of the Animal*. More about that in the 2016–7 Annual Review. Collaborations like this are important. It's about pushing the boundaries, being innovative, taking risks and extending our reach to people that don't already engage with us. Nature and art go very well together and it puts us in a new light that gets people talking.

**The fight for twite**

From the dramatic to the diminutive. Twites are a humble-looking brown finch that seriously need our help. Once relatively widespread in the uplands of North Wales, twites are now restricted to two areas of Snowdonia, with a 2008 survey estimating only 14–17 pairs. Twites only eat seeds and rear their young on seeds alone. This makes farmland vitally important for their survival, and we've been working with farmers for a number of years to underline this; some farmers already boost the birds' natural menu by feeding them nyjer seed. Last year we ramped up our efforts, and we now have four farms that take "grazing breaks" in which the animals are removed for 8 to 10 weeks to allow the grasses and flowers to go to seed and crucially provide food for twites. The fields are then grazed as normal.

The goal is to eventually remove the need to provide nyjer seed, and we're monitoring the grazing breaks to see how much the twites use them as a seed source. The British Trust for Ornithology is working closely with us on this project, carrying out ringing at the feeding stations and the birds' wintering grounds on the Dee Estuary. But it's the community of farmers within Snowdonia who are making a real difference to this delicate brown bird. By changing some of their farming practices, they're playing a vital role in securing a better future for twites.

**Saving nature together**

There remain huge challenges for wildlife in Wales: habitat loss, species decline and climate change among others. However a look back over our achievements this year provides plenty of reason for optimism. Not least our efforts to work in partnership. By working together, I am hopeful we can save nature.

Shrill Carder-Bee by Will George (rspb-images.com)





TAPE (Omni Productions)

A family enjoying the  
TAPE exhibit.



Y llynedd, cyhoeddwyd  
cytundeb o bwys  
sy'n sicrhau dyfodol  
ein tenantiaeth ar fferm  
ystâd Llyn Efyrnwy  
ym Mhowys.

Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)



(RSPB)



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

# Cymru

O gadwraeth ar raddfa'r tirwedd i gymorth wedi'i dargedu i helpu i achub rhywogaethau dan fygythiad, rydym wedi bod yn gwneud cynnydd da yn ein hymdrechion i achub natur yng Nghymru eleni.

Bu'n flwyddyn dda ac rwy'n falch o allu adrodd ar rai o'n llwyddiannau nodedig a'n projectau cadwraeth. Wrth edrych yn ôl rwyf wedi cael fy nharo gan amrywiaeth ein gwaith, o gadwraeth ar raddfa fawr ar Wastadeddau Gwent i'r frwydr hynod benodol dros linosod y mynydd yn Eryri, yn ogystal â phrojectau sy'n atgyfnerthu ein rôl o achub natur yng Nghymru a'r rhai sy'n ennyn diddordeb cenedlaethau'r dyfodol yn myd natur.

## Diogelu'r dyfodol

Y llynedd, cyhoeddwyd cytundeb o bwys sy'n sicrhau dyfodol ein tenantiaeth ar fferm ystâd Llyn Efyrynwy ym Mhowys. Blwyddyn yn ddiweddarach ac rydym yn gwirioneddol deimlo manteision tenantiaeth 30-mlynedd. Saif y fferm o fewn gwarchodfa natur genedlaethol 10,000 hectar o ran maint sy'n croesawu dros 200,000 o ymwelwyr bob blwyddyn. Mae hefyd yn Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig, yn Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig, yn Ardal Cadwraeth Arbennig a dyma'r arwynebedd mwyaf o rostir grug mewn perchnogaeth unigol yng Nghymru. Mae'r ardal yn cynnwys gorgors, rhostir a choetir ac mae'n gartref i fodaod tinwyn, cudyllod bach, grugieir coch a phlanhigion a phryfed arbennig iawn.

Mae'r denantiaeth yn rhoi rheolaeth hirdymor i ni ar y cynefin, sy'n allweddol i gadwraeth yr amgylchedd arbennig iawn yma. Rydym eisoes wedi cychwyn ar raglen enfawr i atgyweirio milltiroedd o ffensys, ac rydym yn adeiladu cwt tail. Nid yw'n swnio'n rhyw hyfryd iawn, ond rydym angen y tail i dyfu cynydau i fwydo'r anifeiliaid yn y gaeaf, a bydd y cwt yn ein

galluogi i wneud gwrtaith llawn maethynnau mewn modd effeithiol ac effeithlon o ran amser.

## Ffermio ar gyfer bywyd gwyllt

Rydym hefyd wedi bod yn edrych ar ein dulliau pori. Yn ogystal â defaid mynydd Cymreig a merlod mynydd Cymreig, mae gennym hefyd wartheg duon Cymreig. Yn ddiweddar, buom yn eu rhoi i bori ar y mynyddoedd yn yr haf. Maent yn pori'n wahanol i ddefaid, gan greu brithwaith o wahanol gynfinoedd. Rydym wedi gweld fioledau yn tyfu, sy'n boblogaidd gyda gloynnod byw brith y gors. Mae tystiolaeth hefyd fod gorhedyddion y waun yn cynhyrchu wyau mwy o faint mewn ardaloedd lle y mae gwartheg wedi pori rhostir. Mae'r tail cyfoethog yn cynnal pryfed, sy'n cael eu bwytia gan orhedyddion y waun, sydd yn eu tro yn darparu bwyd i gudyllod bach.

Mae'n dangos yn glir fel yr ydym yn rhedeg y fferm yn fasnachol ac er budd byd natur. Mae'r fferm wedi ei rhedeg erioed i fod yn economaidd hyfyw ac mae hon yn ffordd o reoli'r fferm ar gyfer bywyd gwyllt, gan ffermio yn y "byd real" yr un ffordd.

## Amddiffyn ein treftadaeth naturiol

Mae'n bleser gen i gyhoeddi project arall ar raddfa fawr, ond un o natur wahanol iawn - Partneriaeth Tirwedd Gwastadeddau Byw Gwent. Mae Gwastadeddau Gwent yn glytwaith o hafanau bywyd gwyllt amrywiol, yn ymestyn hyd Aber Afon Hafren o Gaerdydd at Bont Hafren a thu hwnt. Maent yn gartref i gyfoeth o rywogaethau carismatig sydd dan





fygythiad gan gynnwys cornchwiglod, dyfrgwn, llygod dŵr, y chwilen ddŵr arian fawr ac un o gacynod prinnaf y DU sef y gardwenynen feinlais. Mae'r ardal hefyd yn cynnal nifer o blanhigion arbenigol gan gynnwys ffugalaw, saethlys a llinad di-wraidd – y planhigyn blodeuol lleiaf yn y byd.

Ddiwedd y llynedd, dyfarnwyd £2.8 miliwn gan Gronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri i RSPB Cymru mewn partneriaeth ag 11 o sefydliadau eraill ac awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru i adfer a gwarchod treftadaeth naturiol Gwastadeddau Gwent. Bydd y project hwn yn cynnwys ail-gysylltu'r gymuned â'r tirlun i greu dyfodol cynaliadwy ar gyfer y rhan hynod hon o'r wlad.

### Cyflawni mwy drwy bartneriaethau

Ar hyn o bryd rydym yn y cam datblygu: ynghyd â'n partneriaid, rydym yn gweithio ar raglen o weithgareddau a fydd yn cael eu rhoi ar waith o fis Medi 2017 hyd ddiwedd 2020. Mae ymgysylltu â'r gymuned wrth galon ein gwaith i sicrhau fod barn a dymuniadau pobl leol yn rhoi ffurf ar y project hwn. Rydym yn hynod falch ein bod yn ymwneud â hyn: drwy weithio gyda phartneriaid a'r gymuned ar brosiectau ar raddfa'r tirwedd fel hyn, gallwn gyflawni a gwneud mwy dros natur.

### Creu polisi newydd

Bu tîm polisi RSPB Cymru yn gweithio'n galed gydag aelodau'r Cynulliad a swyddogion i gyflwyno gwybodaeth ar gyfer deddfwriaeth amgylcheddol newydd yng Nghymru. Roeddwn yn arbennig o falch o'n mewnbwn i Ddeddf Amgylchedd (Cymru) newydd a dderbyniodd Gydsyniad Brenhinol ym Mawrth 2016. Gyda chefnogaeth ein cefnogwyr, a chan weithio gyda phartneriaid, sicrhawyd bod y deddfwriaeth newydd yn cynnwys ymrwymiad y bydd Cymru yn rheoli ei hadnoddau naturiol mewn modd mwy cynaliadwy. Rydym yn awr yn cynorthwyo i oleuo datblygu polisiau ac adroddiadau sy'n cael eu cynhyrchu mewn cydymffurfiaeth â'r Ddeddf. Byddwn yn parhau i gefnogi polisiau cynaliadwy sy'n gweithio ar gyfer natur ac ar gyfer pobl.

### Ysbrydoli cariad at natur

Cafwyd tro dramatig i'n gwaith i roi cartref newydd i natur yng Nghaerdydd y llynedd pan fuom yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth â sefydliad celfyddydol o Ogledd Cymru "Migrations" a Chyngor Dinas Caerdydd i gynhyrchu TAPE, gosodiad celfyddydol a daniodd ddychymyg miloedd o bobl o'r ddinas a thu hwnt. Wedi'i osod mewn coeden ym Mharc Bute, roedd TAPE yn strwythur tebyg i gocŵn enfawr a oedd yn ddigon mawr i gynnwys teulu cyfan. Elfen hanfodol o'n strategaeth Rhoi Cartref i Fyd Natur yw ymgysylltu plant a'u teuluoedd â natur, a bu hyn yn fodd o gyflawni hynny yn sicr. Daeth oddeutu 74,000 o bobl i'w weld ym mis Awst: dringodd ddeutu 10,000 i mewn i TAPE, a bu eraill yn edrych yn edmygus arno, yn cael picnic gerllaw, neu ddim ond yn cael golwg.

Ochr yn ochr â hyn buom yn cynnal gweithgareddau mwy traddodiadol yn ymwneud â natur i blant – gan ymgysylltu 1,000 o blant yn llwyddiannus. Diolch yn fawr i chi ein gwirfoddolwyr a roddodd 700 o oriau i helpu i adeiladu TAPE, cynnal digwyddiadau ac ymgysylltu â phobl.

Rydym yn hynod falch o'r ffordd yr aeth pethau, ac mae Migrations yn hapus hefyd. Gymaint felly fel ein bod yn cynnal digwyddiad arall gyda'n gilydd ym mis Gorffennaf 2016 o'r enw 'Yn Llygaid yr Anifail'. Mwy am hynny yn adolygiad blynyddol 2016-7. Mae cydweithio fel hyn yn bwysig. Mae'n ymwneud â gwrthio'r ffiniau, bod yn arloesol, cymryd risgiau ac estyn allan at bobl nad ydynt eisoes yn ymgysylltu â ni. Mae natur a chelf yn mynd gyda'i gilydd yn dda iawn ac mae'n ein dangos mewn goleuni newydd sy'n gwneud i bobl siarad.

### Y frwydr dros llinos y mynydd

O'r dramatig i'r bychan iawn. Mae'r llinos yn aderyn bach brown di-nod yr olwg sydd wirioneddol angen cymorth gennym. Unwaith roedd yn eithaf cyffredin yn ucheldir Gogledd Cymru, ond mae bellach yn gyfyngedig i ddwy ardal yn Eryri, gydag arolwg yn 2008 yn amcangyfrif nad oedd ond 14-17 o barau ar ôl. Dim ond hadau fydd y llinos yn eu bwyta, gan fagu cywion ar hadau yn unig. Mae hyn yn golygu fod tir amaethyddol yn hollbwysig er mwyn iddynt oroesi ac rydym wedi bod yn gweithio gyda ffermwyr ers nifer o flynyddoedd i danlinellu hyn; mae rhai ffermwyr eisoes yn ychwanegu at fwydlen naturiol yr adar drwy fwydo hadau nyjer iddynt. Y llynedd, aethom ati i gynyddu ein hymdrechion ac erbyn hyn mae pedair fferm yn cymryd "seibiau oddi wrth bori" pryd y caiff yr anifeiliaid eu symud ymaith am 8-10 wythnos i ganiatáu i weiriau a blodau hadu a darparu bwyd ar gyfer llinosod. Yna caiff y caeau eu pori fel arfer.

Y nod yn y pen draw yw cael gwared â'r angen i ddarparu hadau nyjer, ac rydym yn monitro'r seibiau pori i weld faint o ddefnydd sy'n cael ei wneud ohonynt fel ffynhonnell hadau gan llinosod. Mae Ymddiriedolaeth Adareg Prydain yn cydweithio'n agos â ni ar y project hwn, gan fodrwyo yn y gorsafoedd bwydo ac yn yr ardaloedd lle bydd yr adar yn treulio'r gaeaf sef yn aber Afon Dyfrdwy. Ond y gymuned o ffermwyr yn Eryri sy'n gwneud gwahaniaeth gwirioneddol i'r aderyn brown bregus hwn. Drwy newid rhai o'u harferion ffermio, maent yn chwarae rôl hanfodol o ran sicrhau dyfodol gwell i'r llinos.

### Achub natur gyda'n gilydd

Erys heriau enfawr i fywyd gwyllt yng Nghymru: colli cynefin, dirywiad rhywogaethau a newid yn yr hinsawdd ysgyrra eraill. Fodd bynnag, wrth edrych yn ôl dros ein llwyddiannau eleni, mae digon o resymau dros fod yn obeithiol. Nid yn lleiaf ein hymdrechion i weithio mewn partneriaeth. Drwy weithio gyda'n gilydd, rwy'n obeithiol y gallwn achub natur.



Guy Rodgers (rspl-images.com)

Drwy weithio gyda'n  
gilydd, rwy'n obeithiol  
y gallwn achub natur.





Portmore Lough is a haven for rare breeding wading bird species.

David Wootton (iStock.com)



**Joanne Sherwood**  
Director, RSPB Northern Ireland

# Northern Ireland

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we look back on a very successful year at RSPB NI, where nature always comes first.

I'm writing this on the 50th anniversary of RSPB NI, and I can't believe how far we've come in that time. Frank Hamilton was our first regional officer, working from an office in Queen's University with just one member of staff. Now we have 50 members of staff, 280 volunteers and we own or manage thousands of hectares of land vital for wildlife across NI. We also offer better-than-ever visitor experiences at our reserves, including the revamped Window on Wildlife (WOW) in Belfast, and the Rathlin West Light Seabird Centre, which re-opened in March 2016.

Talking of the public, I'm proud to say we welcomed almost 2,000 new members in the 2015–16 period, and we now have around 14,000 members in NI. In addition, through education and outreach, we connect around 20,000 young people with nature every year. We're really proud of our hands-on events to connect people with nature, including the wildlife photography event at Portmore Lough, and the Big Wild Sleepout. The wildlife photography event takes place in an area of Portmore Lough not normally open to the public, in an area well-known for Irish hares. Our Big Wild Sleepout, nominated for Family Event of the Year, is the biggest UK Sleepout event – with a staggering 500 people taking part over three nights in 2015! We've also been very successful in connecting people to nature through Big Garden Birdwatch, increasing numbers of people taking part from 12,000 to 25,000 in two years.

I'm delighted to report that 2015–16 was a wonderful year for wildlife across our sites. For example on just one plot on Rathlin, the number of kittiwake pairs increased from 62

in 2014 to 165 in 2015. At Lough Beg near Toomebridge we recorded 121 'spikes' of the rare Irish Lady's Tresses orchid. In County Fermanagh, Sandwich terns returned to breed on Gravel Ridge Island in Lower Lough Erne from their wintering grounds in West Africa. This colony is unique as normally they only nest at the coast. Counts revealed 138 pairs, up from 124 the previous year, an impressive rate of breeding success.

This year, our reserves had their highest numbers of breeding wading birds ever, potentially holding up to 49% of the NI population of redshanks. There were also some rare sightings across the country, including pintail ducks at Portmore Lough and the discovery of the rare beetle *Carabus clathratus* in the Glenwherry area, previously thought to be extinct in County Antrim!

## Farming for wildlife

There's no doubt that agriculture shapes Northern Ireland's landscape. Close to three quarters of the land is dedicated to producing food, with the agri-food industry employing over 100,000 people and boasting an annual turnover of around £4 billion.

Technological improvements and a temperate climate mean that NI has developed a sophisticated and productive livestock farming system. However, wildlife, habitat, landscape character, water and soil quality have all suffered declines as an unintended consequence of agricultural modernisation. We've been working closely with farmers in key areas to plan how, together, we can attract more wildlife. Through this work, we've been able to improve





the fortunes of species such as curlew and yellowhammer, birds that have seen declines of up to 90% in some areas. We would not have been able to do this without the help and support of farmers, who are essentially saving species from extinction in the wider countryside.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded funding to preserve and enhance one of NI's greatest national treasures: Lough Erne in County Fermanagh. This money will go to the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership, of which we're a lead partner, for the stage one development phase. It will be used to conserve 'at risk' heritage buildings and to preserve and improve wildlife species and their habitats within the Fermanagh Lakelands, which are an important breeding ground for wading birds such as curlews, snipes and lapwings.

Our work does not solely take place in rural areas. We're continuing with the Belfast Swift City project, which raises awareness of the plight of swifts, monitors swift populations, and works in partnership with planners, developers, local authorities and businesses to protect and provide nest sites. We're continuing to promote the Swift Inventory, where the public can record their swift sightings online.

Over half of NI's wildlife is found at sea, so we must ensure marine wildlife has proper protection. Four new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) have been proposed: Carlingford Lough, outer Belfast Lough, Waterfoot and Rathlin Island. These are home to a wealth of unique wildlife, including seagrass, black guillemots and the ocean quahog. RSPB NI was instrumental in campaigning for the successful implementation of these, and we're waiting for a final decision.

### Beyond reserves

To create a healthy, wildlife-rich environment based on sustainable land management, we must look beyond our reserves and work in partnership to help give nature a home. We've formed a partnership with Forest Service to provide advice and expertise on potential peatland restoration on their land and with

Northern Ireland Water to identify poor quality water catchment areas with the potential to become sustainable catchment areas. An INTERREG funding bid with RSPB Scotland, Birdwatch Ireland and other environmental organisations has been developed to restore wetland habitats, bog and wet grassland to benefit breeding wading birds and rare plants and insects.

### Adapting to changing conditions

There are always things we can't control. In winter 2015, we experienced the highest levels of flooding in 30 years, particularly affecting our Portmore Lough reserve. We've also been adjusting to major changes in government funding, changes to local government, and planning for post-election changes to the Northern Ireland Executive.

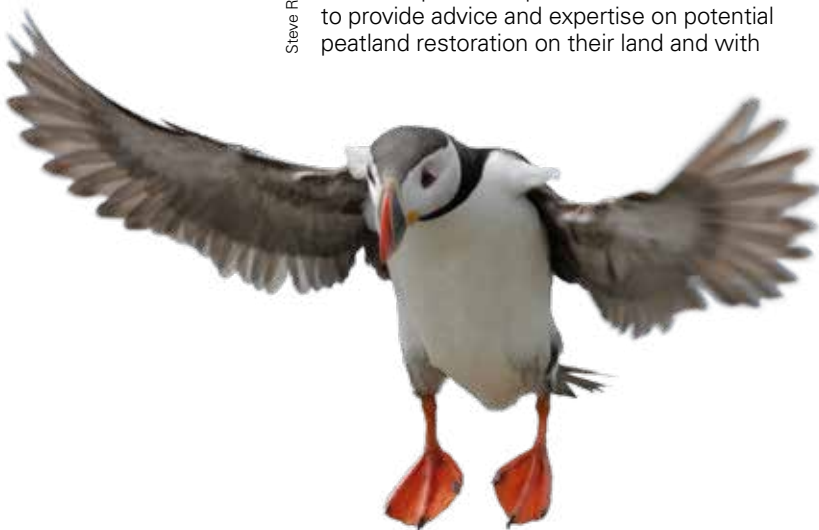
We started this financial year reeling from the severity of cuts to the Natural Heritage Grants Programme which affected environmental organisations working for nature in NI. We joined up with Northern Ireland Environment Link and other affected eNGOs to provide a sectoral response to this devastating news. In May, we were relieved that our voice had been heard and we were able to recoup a significant amount of our funding losses through the new Natural Environment Fund that raised revenue through the carrier bag levy. Whilst this fund was a welcome reprieve, it underlies the fragility of our environmental sector in NI, and the low levels of funding on which it relies.

On 1st April, 11 new 'super councils' took over from the previous 26 councils with new powers and responsibilities for planning functions. This shift to 11 councils working simultaneously on local and community plans will create a considerable and concentrated volume of work for our small planning team. We will continue to target our efforts in those areas where there are the greatest opportunities for, and threats to, our special places and species.

Finally, another fundamental change for us to plan for is the merger between the Department of Environment and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs effective from the May 2016 elections will also be responsible for Inland Fisheries and Sustainable Development, whilst the Rivers Agency, Inland Waterways and Strategic Planning moves to the new Department for Infrastructure.

As we look to the future, we're adapting to changing conditions, and you can rest assured that RSPB NI will always be a strong campaigning voice for nature.

Steve Round (rspb-images.com)







Nigel Blane (knp-images.com)

Rathlin Island boasts NI's largest seabird colony.





Your continuing support  
enables us to do more  
for nature, every day.

Ed Marechal (spb-images.com)



(RSPB)

**Graeme Wallace**  
Treasurer

## From the treasurer

Our commitment to continue to invest in important conservation work to save nature is central to our financial report for 2015–16. We increased our annual spend on our charitable objectives, ending the year with a surplus of £3.4 million, allowing us to maintain modest but sound financial reserves that give us capacity to deal with whatever challenges may lie ahead. This is thanks, in part, to prudent financial management, but mainly due to our dedicated team of staff and volunteers together with the generous support that you, our members, give. I'm pleased to report that expenditure on conservation has risen for the tenth year in succession.

Our overall expenditure on our charitable purposes was £97.3 million (£96.4 million 2014–15), which supported the essential research that underpins all our work, helped maintain the rich natural biodiversity found on our reserves, enabled us to purchase 1,042 hectares of nature reserves at a cost of £2.7 million and invest £4.2 million in improvements to our visitor facilities. Importantly, and with the generous support of Aldi, we significantly expanded our education work helping to connect more children with nature which is essential if conservation and nature is to continue to have the support it needs a generation from now.

We also increased investment communicating as widely as possible what we do and the impact that we have. This includes use of digital communications, as well as more traditional media such as TV advertising.

This expenditure was financed by growth in almost all of our income streams which, while very welcome financially, also demonstrates the faith that people have in the RSPB to save nature on their behalf. I as Treasurer, and the RSPB as a whole, never, ever, take that for granted.

Throughout the last year, public trust in charities was the subject of considerable negative media scrutiny. Our commitment to work to the highest standards in all that we do and recognition that our success is solely based on your continued trust and support has contributed to taking our membership to an all-time high of 1,187,839 members.

At year end, our free financial reserves were the equivalent of eight weeks' expenditure. This allows us to plan our work with confidence, and to react quickly to opportunities and risks, as appropriate.

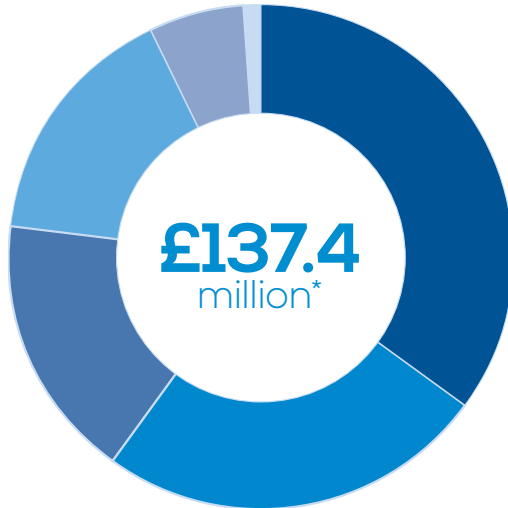
Your continuing support is enabling us to do more for nature, grow our support and invest.

**Thank you.**

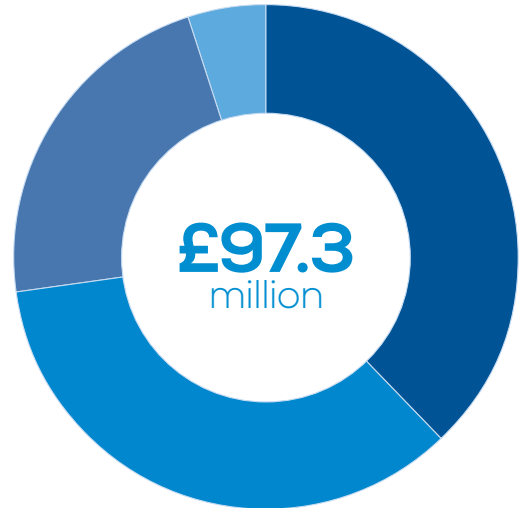


# Income and spend

## Total income



## Total spend



**\*Net income was £101 million. Cost of generating income was £37 million.**

- Membership, subscriptions and donations **35%**
- Legacies **25%**
- Grants, corporate and trusts **17%**
- Trading income **16%**
- Land income and fees for services **6%**
- Financial income and investment gains **1%**

- Research, policy and advisory **38%**
- Managing RSPB nature reserves **35%**
- Education and inspiring support **22%**
- Supporter care **5%**

We also spent a further £6.9 million on acquiring new nature reserves and investing in visitor facilities.

Harvest mice by Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com)





Roger Tatham (rspb-images.com)

## Summarised financial statements for 2015–16

### Raising money for charitable purposes

	Income	Cost	2016 Available for charitable purposes	2015 Available for charitable purposes
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Trading income	22.5	(20.1)	2.4	2.9
Membership subscriptions & donations	47.7	(12.3)	35.4	34.2
Grants, corporate & trusts	23.8	(3.3)	20.5	23.7
Legacies	34.1	(0.9)	33.2	29.7
Land income and fees for services	7.6	(0.0)	7.6	7.2
Financial income and investment gains	1.7	(0.1)	1.6	3.1
<b>Total income</b>	<b>137.4</b>	<b>(36.7)</b>	<b>100.7</b>	<b>100.8</b>

£100.7 million available for charity purposes.

### Expenditure on charitable purposes

	2016 £m	2015 £m
Research, policy and advisory	37.4	38.1
Managing RSPB nature reserves	34.0	34.2
Education and inspiring support	21.5	19.6
Supporter care	4.4	4.5
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>97.3</b>	<b>96.4</b>
Surplus	3.4	4.4

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

### Assets and liabilities

	2016 £m	2015 £m
Nature reserves	194.3	189.8
Equipment	4.3	4.1
<b>Total long-term assets</b>	<b>198.6</b>	<b>193.9</b>
Pension liability	59.0	86.5
Cash and investments	32.3	41.1
Stock, debtors and creditors	11.9	4.2
<b>Total representing available financial reserves</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>45.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>183.8</b>	<b>152.7</b>

Available financial reserves are held for the following purposes.

### Amount held for future purposes

	2016 £m	2015 £m
Available financial reserves	44.2	45.3
Held for specific purposes	(31.7)	(31.3)
<b>Free financial reserves</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>14.0</b>
Representing future expenditure cover of	<b>8 weeks</b>	9 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 September 2016, are available on our website: [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

The auditors have confirmed to the trustees that, in their opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

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 Sylvia Ross Amner
- Mrs Hazel Carter
- Mrs Joyce Gillian Curzon
- Mrs Lois Dodwell
- Mr Robin Edwards
- Mrs Cynthia Daphne Figg
- Mrs Joan Elizabeth Franks
- Miss Elsie Rosevear Frost
- Mr Peter Frank Harvey
- Mrs Jean Howard
- Mr Derek Frank Kneller Howes
- Mrs Ruth Mary Hughes
- Mrs Gisela Jones
- Mr Brian William Kyle
- Mrs Brenda Frances Nesbitt
- Mr Peter Foulger Quick
- Mr Peter Robertson
- Mrs Irene Mary Townsend
- Mr Alfred Charles Vinall
- Mrs Margaret Walker
- Mrs Mary Edwina Anne Watkinson
- Mr Stanley Harry White
- Mr John Whittle
- Mrs Eileen Julia Wilks
- Miss Bertha Doreen Worswick

## 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 £350,000 for RSPB conservation projects.

## Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of 11,878 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 936,219 hours. This is equivalent to an extra 547 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, 519,600 people gave an hour of their time to participate in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.

## Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund 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 their continued support for our work.

## Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

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

- African Bird Club
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)
- Mr J K Allen
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Dr M Baker-Schommer
- Mr Geoff Ball
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Basel Zoo – Across the River
- Mr D G Benham
- BirdLife Europe
- Miss D E Blake
- British Birdwatching Fair
- British Trust for Ornithology
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey
- Charities Aid Foundation
- Charities Trust
- The Edith Mary Clark Foundation
- Dr Marie Clough Discretionary Trust
- Mark Constantine and The Sound Approach
- Miel de Botton
- E Desmond
- E Desmond and A Davison
- Devon Birds
- Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund
- Philip Dorn Discretionary Trust
- Dream Fund – People's Postcode Lottery
- The Pamela Edmundson/Connolly Charitable Trust
- John Ellerman Foundation
- The ERM Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Fondation Segré
- Mr John Foster
- E M and M R Frisby Charitable Trust
- The Gannochy Trust
- Warren Gilchrist
- Gillman Charitable Trusts
- The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
- Susan H Guy Charitable Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- Andrew Charles Oliver Hawcutt
- The Hawthorn Trust
- Mr G and Mrs C E Huckle
- International Eco Fund
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
- Mr D W Lamont
- The A G Leventis Foundation

- Mrs A Lewis
- Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens/  
Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association
- Miss J A Matthews
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Dr A Musset
- National Birds of Prey Trust
- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- The National Trust
- The Nature Trust (Sandy) Ltd
- Northwick Trust
- Oceans 5
- Mr H and Mrs S Oldham
- The Orr Mackintosh Foundation (Sharegift)
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Friends of Pagham Harbour
- The Peacock Trust
- Mr and Mrs Pentland
- Per Undeland
- Mr M Percival
- Mr C Pettward
- Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation
- Postcode Community Trust
- Kathleen Postlethwaite Discretionary  
Will Trust
- Mr N Prentice
- Anthony Rae Foundation
- Rainforest Alliance
- Rainforest Trust
- Renewables Grid Initiative, Stiftung Mercator  
and the European Climate Foundation
- Ridgeback Charitable Trust
- Mr J M B Robertson
- The Rufford Foundation
- Save Our Species (SOS)
- ScottishPower Foundation
- Mr N Sherwin
- The Barnett and Sylvia Shine No 1  
Charitable Trust
- Size of Wales
- Miss Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- St Aidans Trust Fund
- Nini Isabel Stewart Trust
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Sustrans
- Elizabeth Shirley Thomas Discretionary  
Will Trust
- Vetwork UK
- Franziska Vogel
- Michael and Rosemary Warburg
- The Waterloo Foundation
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Elsie May Wilks
- Woodland Trust
- Woodpeckers Trust
- Sophia Elizabeth Wrightson
- Yorkshire and Clydesdale Bank Foundation

#### 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
- Caird Bardon Community Programme
- Caird Peckfield Community Fund

- Cumbria Waste Management  
Environment Trust
- Derbyshire Environmental Trust
- Falkirk Environment Trust
- FCC Environment through WREN
- Fife Environment Trust
- GrantScape
- Groundwork Northern Ireland
- Highland Council
- Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust
- Impetus Environmental Trust
- Lafarge-Tarmac Ltd
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- Mick George Community Fund
- Scottish Water
- SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd (formerly  
SITA Trust)
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- 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
- Brookfield Drinks Ltd
- The Caravan Club
- CEMEX UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Co-operative Bank
- Credit Suisse
- Crossrail Ltd
- Ecotricity Group Ltd
- The Famous Grouse
- Hanson UK Ltd
- Hartley Anderson Ltd
- HSBC Water Programme
- Hurtigruten Ltd
- intu Properties plc
- Kettle Produce Ltd
- Kingfisher plc
- Lush Ltd
- Marks & Spencer Farming for the Future  
Innovation
- Marshalls
- Network Rail
- PwC
- R&A Championship Ltd
- Rohan Designs Ltd
- SABIC
- Scottish Power and Scottish Power  
Renewables
- Scottish and Southern Energy plc
- Smiths & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd
- South West Trains
- South West Water Ltd
- Swarovski Optik
- TAQA
- Tarmac



## Thank you

- Tesco Stores Ltd
- Thames Tideway Tunnel
- TNS Research International
- Turcan Connell
- United Utilities plc
- Walkers Shortbread Ltd
- Weird Fish Clothing Ltd
- 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
- Arts Council of Wales
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Big Lottery Fund
- Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Coastal Communities Fund Grant
- The Crown Estate
- Danish Development Assistance Programme (DANIDA)
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (NI)
- Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Defra – Darwin Initiative
- Defra – Darwin Plus
- Department for International Development (DfID) – Commonwealth Scholarship Commission
- East Lothian Council
- Environment Agency
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Commission – BEST
- European Commission – DG Environment
- European Commission – DG Justice
- European Commission – Erasmus+
- European Commission – LIFE
- 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 – Europe & Scotland, Investing in your Future
- ERDF – INTERREG IVA 2 Seas Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013
- ERDF – INTERREG IVA administered by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- ERDF – INTERREG IVA France (Channel) England Cooperation Programme 2007–2013
- ERDF – INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Transnational Programme 2007–2013
- ERDF – INTERREG IVB North West Europe Transnational Programme 2007–2013
- Falkirk Council
- Forestry Commission England
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- The German Ministry for the Environment (BMU), via the German State Development Bank KfW
- Government of Tristan da Cunha
- 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 Environment Scotland
- Historic England
- Historic Scotland
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Natural Resources Wales Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Pennines AONB (SDF)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency – Natural Environment Fund
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Orkney Islands Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- SEPA Water Environment Fund
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Natural Heritage Peatland Action Fund
- Scottish Rural Development Scheme
- Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership through Allerdale Borough Council
- Somerset County Council
- Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA)
- Sport England
- Sport Scotland
- Stirling Council
- Teesdale Area Action Partnership Fund via Mid Teesdale Project Partnership
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service – Wildlife Without Borders
- VisitAberdeenshire
- Welsh Government – Core Funding
- Welsh Government – Glastir
- Welsh Government – The Nature Fund
- West Sussex County Council
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

# Looking forward

Our charitable mission is to create a world richer in nature so that our wildlife and natural places in the UK and beyond can thrive. We know that nature urgently needs our help, but in order to tackle the challenges it faces, we must continue to work together to halt the loss of species around the globe and see our wildlife and special places restored.

## State of Nature 2016

Three years on from the launch of the groundbreaking *State of Nature* report in 2013, the RSPB has joined forces with over 50 conservation and research organisations to produce *State of Nature 2016*. The report provides a comprehensive and cutting-edge assessment on how nature is faring across the UK, and now contains newly developed measures of change for more species than ever before.

Over the next year, we have exciting plans to encourage children to explore, learn about and take action to save nature, whenever and wherever they are. Our new scheme will

support our Giving Nature a Home campaign, and will help inspire children to develop a deeper relationship with the natural world.

The threats to the natural world are far too big for any one organisation. Whatever the outcome of the post-referendum negotiations, we know that partnerships like *State of Nature* give us a powerful and united voice to raise awareness and change the fortunes of wildlife across the UK and beyond.

The uncertainty that lies ahead means that our role in the BirdLife International Partnership is also now more important than ever.

The RSPB is seen as a leading charity on saving nature. With the continued support of individuals, communities, our members and supporters – in whichever form they take, it is you who ultimately give us the tremendous capability to achieve the winning outcomes that our wildlife so greatly needs. Together, we can succeed.



# Contact us

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

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

Cover: northern gannet by Andrew Parkinson ([rspb-images.com](http://rspb-images.com)).

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