

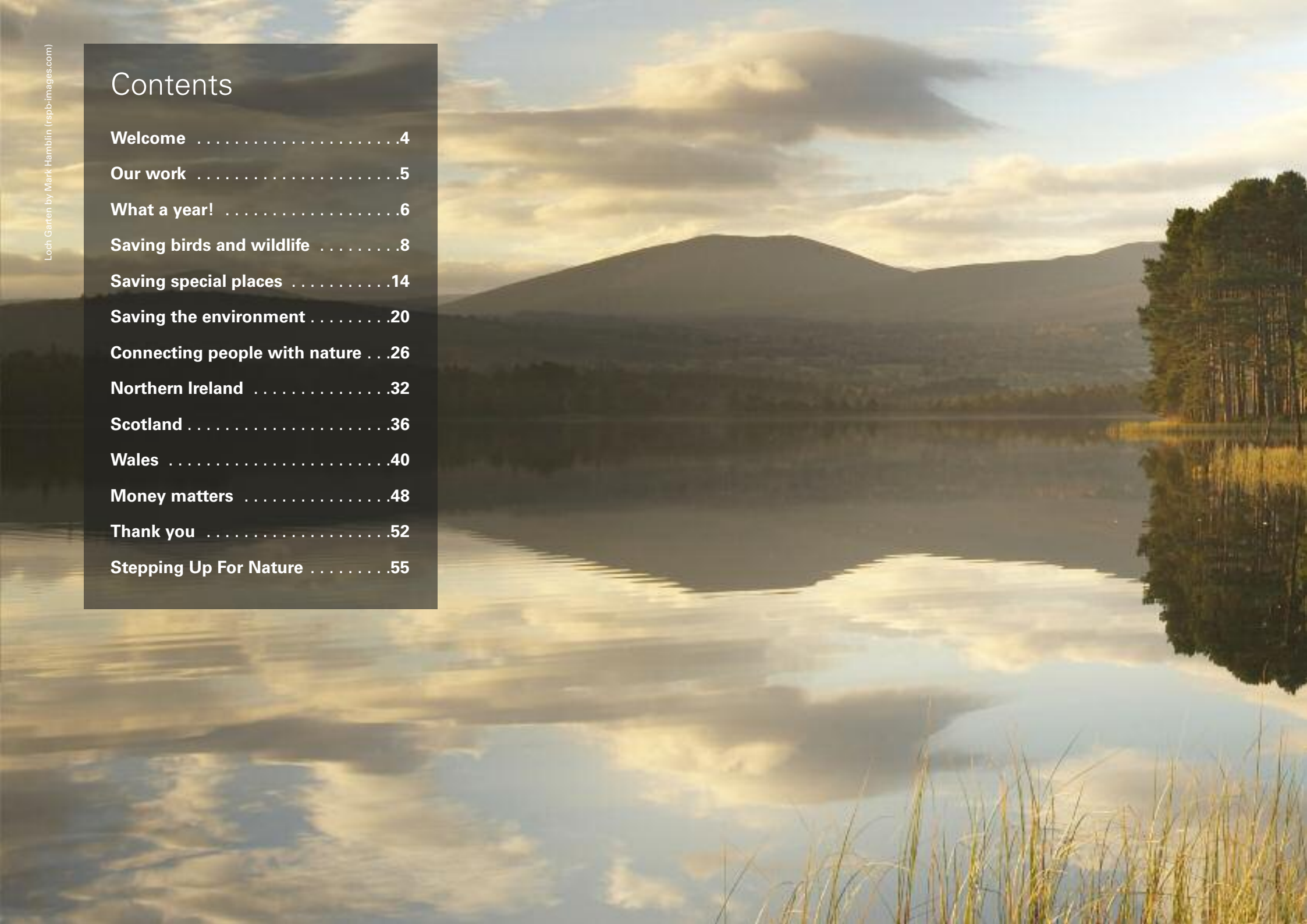


THE RSPB 2010-11
ANNUAL REVIEW



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WELCOME

2010 was a significant year for nature conservation. At the turn of the millennium, the world's governments had pledged to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010, but the global summit held in Nagoya highlighted the fact that they had failed.



Ian Darling
Chairman



Mike Clarke
Chief Executive

Meanwhile, back in England, Professor Sir John Lawton led a review, *Making Space for Nature*, recommending to the Westminster Government the actions needed to help wildlife survive and adapt to a growing range of pressures.

Both events make a strong case for the RSPB to redouble its efforts – to ensure that the natural world is protected for future generations. Looking through this annual review of the RSPB's achievements in 2010–11, we have real hope that it is possible to restore biodiversity, at home and overseas.

It's clear that where conservation effort is applied, wildlife responds. In this review you can read about examples from all over the UK, and indeed the world. And we are proud to highlight our successes in Wales, where we are celebrating our centenary and developing some exciting new partnerships.

Working together is a predominant theme of this annual review. In doing so, we can scale-up our conservation effort. The launch of Futurescapes clearly demonstrates the power of collaboration. After the first year of this landscape-scale programme we are helping

conserve a million hectares more space for nature by working together with other environmental charities, landowners and businesses. Birds and other wildlife will be the beneficiaries.

It can't have escaped many people's attention that this was a year of major political and economic change; a year of mixed fortunes for biodiversity, for the environment, and for education. We campaigned relentlessly the whole year to ensure that nature's voice was heard and that politicians understood the value of the natural world. Our Letter to the Future campaign demanded that more be done for conservation. We can proudly say that over the past year we have helped influence the outcome of many events in wildlife's favour, including the spending review and the Nagoya biodiversity summit. The launch of our *Every child outdoors* report, highlighting the importance of nature in young people's lives, is being used to convince governments and schools of the benefits of learning outside the classroom.

In a time of change, the chance to be at one with the natural world is more important than ever. All across our nature reserves, our Date With Nature events and our field teaching centres, we work hard to give people unforgettable moments with something wild; moments that can create passionate advocates for nature. A little tern snatching fish from the sea, a peregrine soaring across a city skyline, a red deer bellowing in the early morning mist – all moments that, when under threat, inspire people to write letters, send e-mails and wave banners – and that's just what nature needs right now.

However you support or work with us, thank you. Together we can make a real difference and have something to be proud of when we report back on future achievements: a country, and a world, richer in wildlife. It's time for us all to step up for nature.

OUR WORK

Wherever you are right now, you wouldn't have to travel far, maybe only a few metres if you're in a city, to find someone who is part of the RSPB's work for nature.

That person might be a farmer following our advice to help the wildlife in his fields, it might be a bus driver who supported our Sumatra appeal, it might be a seven-year-old who did the Big Garden Birdwatch and helped give us a picture of the state of the UK's garden birds. That person might be you.

We work across the UK and around the world, from remote islands to busy urban centres, to save nature. As you'll see from this annual review, the work we do, the people we work with, and the wildlife we save, is hugely varied. But broadly speaking, we do four different things, and we're almost certainly doing at least one of them in your local area.

SAVING BIRDS AND WILDLIFE



We pull threatened wildlife back from the brink. We're doing it for corncrakes, stone-curlews, great yellow bumblebees, hen harriers, water voles, albatrosses, vultures, lapwings, skylarks...more than you could fit on this whole page.

SAVING SPECIAL PLACES



Saving wildlife means saving the places where it lives. We protect special habitats and even recreate them where they've been lost. We work on a landscape-scale, on our nature reserves, and through many collaborative partnerships.

SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT



We campaign hard to get nature at the heart of the decision-making process. With our supporters, we influence policies on agriculture, energy, transport, planning, fisheries, sustainable development and water use – all of which affect the environment.

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE



We believe that bringing people closer to nature enriches their lives. We create opportunities for people to experience wildlife at first hand, at our nature reserves, our outdoor classrooms, our Date With Nature events, and even in their own gardens.

WHAT A YEAR!

The time sandwiched in between April 2010 and March 2011 is rich with stories of successes gained for nature.

Why did we block enough **drains** to stretch from Vyrnwy to London and back?

Find out who mated for the first time in Northern Ireland for **200 years**.

Find out how we brought **bugles** to the Somerset Levels.

2010

APRIL

In the run-up to the Westminster election, we used the hundreds of thousands of signatures on our **Letter to the Future** to demand that more be done for nature conservation. The manifestos of all three main parties featured elements of our *Challenge 2010* report. David Cameron said this would be 'the greenest government ever'.

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On 8 June, we launched our **Futurescapes** programme in London. Lord Henley, the Defra Minister, was there to express the new coalition Government's enthusiasm for the landscape-scale approach, and the need for more to be done to meet the ambitious 2020 biodiversity targets.

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Our **captive vulture breeding programme** reported that 10 vulture chicks had fledged this year, with three long-billed vulture chicks fledging in captivity for the first time ever. These chicks were joined by three slender-billed vultures and four oriental white-backed vultures, offering hope for the future recovery of India's vultures.

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On 19 September, after playing parents to 18 lanky chicks, it was release day for the **Great Crane Project**. After an absence of 400 years, the bugling call of the common crane was once again heard on the Somerset Levels and Moors, thanks to this partnership project.

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Find out how **purple herons** helped our campaign against Lydd airport.

Why is there a **golden curlew** in Wales this year?

How will **cement** help make 1,000 new hectares of wildlife habitat?

Find out why **fishermen** in Brazil are celebrating because they caught nothing.

2011

JAN

MARCH

Professor Sir John Lawton's ***Making Space for Nature*** report was published on 24 September. It describes the bad state of England's natural environment, and proposes 24 recommendations for actions that will benefit wildlife and people. Sir John, who is Vice President of the RSPB, described it as a "repair manual to help re-build nature."

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On 18 October, the Biodiversity Summit began in **Nagoya**, Japan. People were pessimistic after the disappointments of Copenhagen, so it was a relief when a set of ambitious targets was agreed. The RSPB and its supporters worked hard to influence the new Natural Environment White Paper for England during the consultation that followed.

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More than 600,000 people took part in **Big Garden Birdwatch**, making it our biggest ever. We were glad to see that the numbers of goldcrests, long-tailed tits, blue tits and coal tits had all increased a little, after the long harsh winter of 2009/10 had taken its toll on them.

The **Albatross Task Force** held one of its 18-monthly workshop get-togethers in Uruguay. There was much good news to be shared there – new methods developed to keep seabirds off the hook, and proof that seabird bycatch can be reduced to zero (or near zero) in Brazil, Namibia, Argentina and Uruguay.

p 8

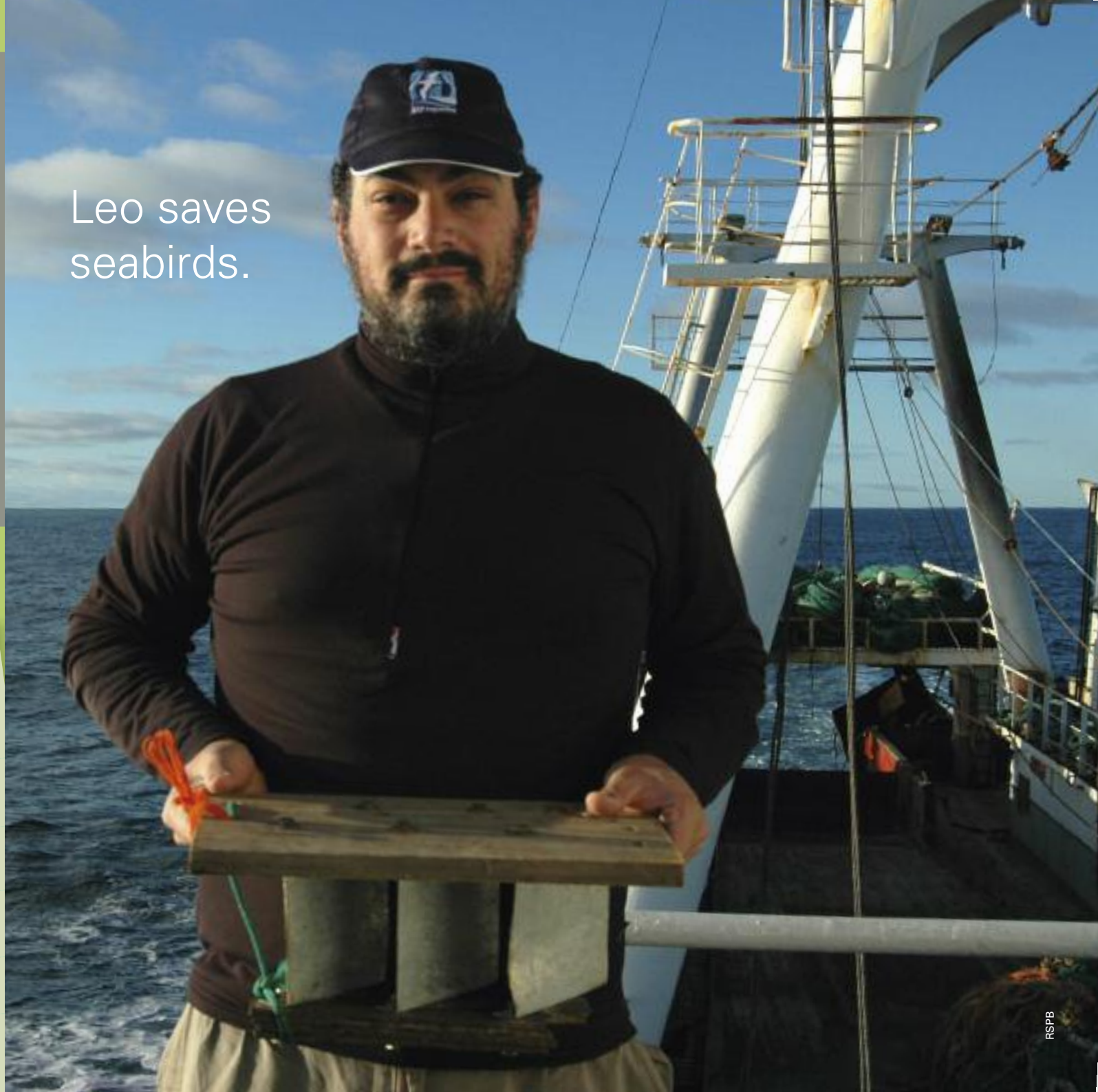
The Albatross Task Force has shown that it is possible to reduce the number of seabirds caught by 80% or more in just three to five years. Albatrosses have a very slow breeding cycle, and take years to reach maturity, so it will take a few more years before we start to see the populations recover, but I'm confident that we will.

Cleo Small
Senior Policy Officer,
Global Seabird
Programme



My role is to bring together the achievements of the Albatross Task Force, and to present their successes to fishery managers worldwide, particularly through the world's tuna organisations. There I encourage governments to adopt the Albatross Task Force's mitigation methods into their own fisheries.

Leo saves seabirds.



Out of the 22 albatross species, 17 are threatened with extinction.

The Albatross Task Force has helped stop seabirds being caught on vessels in Uruguay, Namibia, Argentina and Brazil.

It's quite an experience when the Albatross Task Force (ATF) members get together. After spending many lonely weeks on some of the world's roughest seas, they can't wait to share their experiences. They have incredible passion for their work.

In March 2011, the Task Force met in Uruguay, and there was much to share. New ATF research in Argentina has discovered for the first time that many thousands of seabirds are being caught and killed every year by the Argentinian hake trawl fishery.

Governments are often unaware that seabirds are being accidentally caught within their fisheries, or the implications of this for seabird populations around the world, so highlighting the problem is usually the first step. But the ATF doesn't just go to the Governments with the problem, it also brings the solution. There are simple methods, such as bird streamer (or "tori") lines, and weights to make the baited hooks sink faster, that can be used on their fishing boats to dramatically reduce seabird bycatch.

This year we've succeeded in demonstrating how the number of seabirds caught can be reduced to zero or near zero in Brazil, Namibia, Argentina and Uruguay. As we roll this out over the next 2–3 years, the ATF will be saving the lives of tens of thousands of seabirds every year.

To help fishermen, the Task Force is also improving the methods to reduce seabird bycatch. This year, Leo Tamini from ATF Argentina finalised his "Tamini Tabla," which will help the Argentinean trawl fleet to fly tori lines. A tori line is

attached to the back of the boat and has long streamers that keep albatrosses away from the baited hooks. But the tori line can sometimes get tangled with the fishing gear. Leo's invention, which acts a bit like a small surfboard in water, attaches to the end of the tori line and stops this happening. Leo devised the prototype while at sea, working with the boat's engineer. The Tamini Tabla is proving so successful that we hope it will now be rolled out to the hundreds of boats in Argentina's trawl fleets around the world.

Another major ATF innovation this year has been created by Global Seabird Programme Co-ordinator and ATF Manager Ben Sullivan, who has worked with a UK engineering firm (Fishtek) to invent a new mitigation method called the 'hook pod'. It's a plastic pod that clips over the tip of each hook to prevent seabirds from getting to the hooks while the lines are being set. The hook pods have a pressure release, which can be set to different depths, so they don't pop open to expose the hooks until they have sunk below the diving depth of the seabirds. These hook pods are being tested right now in Brazil and early results are very promising.

This year the ATF has begun working in Ecuador too, with a quite different fishery. Here the boats are small, just 10 metres or so long, manned by one or two people out fishing for hake. Their baited hooks aren't sinking fast enough, and they're accidentally catching critically endangered waved albatrosses. The ATF's line weights are very effective against this, and are popular with the fishermen also, as they are increasing the size of their catch.

Another major ATF success this year was the Brazilian government's move to make it mandatory for all of their longline boats to use tori lines and line weights. This is the ultimate aim of the ATF – once the mitigation measures have become part of fisheries legislation, we'll be on our way to ensuring the albatross's long-term recovery.

For more info check out www.rspb.org.uk/albatross

The most emotional moment for me was not release day, but a few weeks later, seeing all the cranes together, spiralling high into the sky on a thermal. These birds, that had had the strangest upbringing, were living as a real wild population.

Damon Bridge
Great Crane Project
Manager



There are many people involved in the Great Crane Project: partner organisations, volunteers, members of the local community and RSPB staff – one of my key roles within the Great Crane Project is to help everyone work effectively together to achieve the project's aim of putting cranes back into the UK's skies.

One misty morning, I watched a man dressed in a grey hooded dress walk across a field, closely followed by a bunch of lanky crane chicks – an odd sight, but one I got used to over the summer of 2010.

The cranes were part of a group of 24, brought over from Germany at Easter while still in their eggs to kindle a new UK population – a major addition to the small resident population on the other side of the country in Norfolk. The man in the crane costume was an aviculture expert from The Pensthorpe Conservation Trust, who are working with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), Viridor Credits Environmental Company and the RSPB to bring back these beautiful, bugling birds.

The Great Crane Project started in 2009, but it took a year of intense planning and preparation before we were ready to bring over the first eggs. We had to wait for the right moment to move them from the nature reserve in Germany – just before they hatched. Crane chicks take about 24 hours to fully emerge from their eggs after the first pipping moment, when they break through the shell with their beaks. Travelling by road across Europe in specially built incubators, some of the eggs began pipping en route.

The first cranes hatched at the WWT Slimbridge centre on St George's Day, the remainder hatching over the next fortnight. For the first four weeks of their lives, the chicks had to be kept in isolation from each other, as they are naturally aggressive when first hatched, and in the wild would have fought with their siblings for supremacy. The only living creatures they saw during this time were people in the grey full-length dresses – an odd but effective facsimile of a parent.

Crane chicks need a lot of exercise – in the wild they follow their parents for miles every day searching for food. Walking makes their long legs grow strong and straight. Too much standing around could result in legs growing crooked or to different lengths. So the team took turns to walk each of the crane chicks around the paddock, one after the other, all day long. The chicks fed on insects they caught for themselves in the paddock, alongside the supplementary pellets we gave them, which contained a perfect balance of protein, calcium, phosphates and minerals.

At five weeks old, the group were mature enough to be brought together for communal exercise, and then five weeks later, we transported them to the release site on the Somerset Levels and Moors – a journey of a couple of hours. We moved them in specially adapted flamingo crates, and took a spare van in case one of the vans should break down. The cranes travelled standing up, and coped remarkably well. When we opened the crates at the other end, they seemed unfazed by their journey.

Here the cranes would spend three weeks in large aviaries getting anchored to their new home in the Somerset Levels and Moors. One of the RSPB's contributions to the project is to maintain and enhance the habitats here, in partnership with local landowners, to provide ideal conditions for the cranes.

Release day was intense and stressful for me and the rest of the team. After living beside these birds for so long, we all had a huge personal investment in their safety. What if they just flew off and were never seen again? But our concerns were allayed when, on the first night, the birds all chose to roost together at the release site within a shallow pool, just as a wild population would do.

This successful first year was the beginning of a five-year release programme – we'll go through the same process with two batches of eggs every year until we have 100 cranes in the area. Within the next three years, the first arrivals should begin to breed, and, we hope, hatch out this project's first truly wild cranes.

For more, visit www.thegreatcraneproject.org.uk or www.facebook.com/thegreatcraneproject

Flocks of cranes had been missing from the South-West of the UK for hundreds of years.

After the first year of the Great Crane Project, there are now 18 cranes living wild in Somerset.



First captive-bred long-billed vultures

The vulture programme in India celebrated the first ever long-billed vulture captive breeding, fledging three birds with the aid of artificial incubation techniques.

Dr Vibhu Prakash, who was there at the historic hatching said: "Our most exciting moment was when we kept the egg on a flat surface and it started twitching, and then



Chris Bowden (rspb-images.com)

suddenly in the morning around 11 o'clock, the egg pipped and it cracked and out came a chick. We got really frightened because the bird was not calling, but then the chick yawned and it looked fine. Oh it was such a satisfying moment, knowing that 'yes, we could do it!'"

Work continues to rid the vultures' environment of the diclofenac veterinary drug that is killing them via the dead cattle they eat. We hope that in 10–15 years, we'll be able to release the birds from the breeding centres, safely, into the wild.

In 2010, we also launched 'Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction' (SAVE) in Delhi and Kathmandu. This is a new

THE BIG PICTURE

Across the globe, 1,226 bird species are threatened with extinction. That's more than a tenth of all bird species. Vultures are just one example of where we're fighting to save endangered species. Others include the Henderson petrel, Jerdon's courser, 17 albatross species, northern bald ibis and spoon-billed sandpiper, all of which are in serious trouble.

consortium of partners committed to securing the future of the three Critically Endangered species. And we all have a huge challenge ahead of us. Outside the safety of the conservation breeding centres, vultures are still hurtling towards extinction. Fifteen years ago, there were around 40 million vultures in India – now just a few thousand remain, and declines have been continuing at a rate of 40% every year.

The captive vulture breeding programme is essential to securing the future of these species. To find out more, watch the short film at www.rspb.org.uk/vultures



David Kjaer (rspb-images.com)

Crickets and stumps

We have been helping to ensure the future survival of several rare and threatened UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) invertebrates.

In Spring 2010, we released field crickets on recently created heathland at RSPB Pulborough Brooks, West Sussex, and Farnham Heath, Surrey. At our Abernethy reserve in Inverness-shire, we specially prepared pine stumps for the re-introduction of pine hoverfly larvae in September 2010, to be followed by a release of captive-bred adults in 2011. And the first generation of pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies at RSPB Tudeley Woods, Kent, was also on the wing, following the release of over 100 butterflies in 2009.

The RSPB was given special responsibility for nine non-bird Biodiversity Action Plans:

- A mason bee, *Osmia uncinata*
- Alpine sulphur tresses lichen, *Alectoria ochroleuca*
- The stump lichen, *Cladonia botrytis*
- Stinking hawk's beard, *Crepis foetida*
- The pine hoverfly, *Blera fallax*
- The dark bordered beauty moth *Epione vespertaria*
- Northern colletes bee, *Colletes floralis*
- Great yellow bumblebee, *Bombus distinguendus*
- And the aspen hoverfly, *Hammerschmidtia ferruginea* (which we discovered this year is able to fly up to 5 km to lay eggs in rotting aspen).

Henderson Island

On Henderson Island in the south Pacific, rats are driving the endemic Henderson petrel to extinction. In 2010, we began raising the £1.7 million needed to eradicate these rats. At the end of March 2011, we'd raised £1.3m through major donor supporters, a contribution of over £400,000 from the British Government, and a reception hosted at the Foreign Office by the Minister for Overseas Territories, Henry Bellingham MP, and addressed by Sir David Attenborough and seabird expert and wildlife artist Peter Harrison. Fundraising successes have continued and work on the island has now begun.

Help us help swifts

In the UK, we've lost around a third of our swifts since 1995. In response to this, we launched our 'help us help swifts' campaign, which has so far brought in over 30,000 records from the public. These will help us build up a detailed plan of the places swifts nest so that any building projects within those areas can take the swifts into account, and, we hope, protect more of their nest sites. Please take part:

www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts

Birdcrime 2009

Launched in September 2010, *Birdcrime 2009* again presented a bleak picture of bird of prey persecution in the UK. Headlines included 158 reports of poisoning, with 85 confirmed as deliberate abuse cases, 268 reports of shooting and destruction of birds of prey, 63 reported egg-collecting incidents and 65 reports of illegal taking, possession or sale of birds of prey.

Black grouse boost

Black grouse populations within the Welsh key areas where we are working are now stable, thanks to a successful partnership between the RSPB, Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and major landowners, including shooting estates. Overall, 238 displaying males were recorded during 2010, compared with 173 in 2009. RSPB Geltsdale in Cumbria is now home to nearly 10% of the English population. Outside of these key areas, the black grouse population continues to fall.



Mike Lane (rspb-images.com)

IN BRIEF

New laws to protect wildlife: RSPB lobbying helped push through the **Wildlife and Natural Environment Act** in Northern Ireland and the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill in Scotland. A huge step.

Purple herons nested at RSPB Dungeness, Kent – a first for the UK. The reserve also celebrated its first breeding bitterns.

Hen harriers at RSPB Lake Vyrnwy, Powys, fledged 17 young – a record for the reserve.

Bearded tits nested at RSPB Conwy – the first pair to breed in North Wales for 40 years.

Habitat management on farms and RSPB reserves in Scotland has helped the **corncrake** population increase for the first time in three years. There are now an estimated 1,200 calling males – a rise of 66 on the previous year.

Slavonian grebes had the best breeding season in Scotland for years – 17 fledged, six of them at RSPB Loch Ruthven, Highland.

We continue to fight **bird hunting in Malta**. The Maltese Government allowed a one-week spring hunting season for quails and turtle doves, and illegal killing is still rampant, including a horrific night-hunt on a flock of 70 spoonbills, leaving just six alive by morning.

Staff at RSPB Arne, Dorset, made artificial osprey nests adjacent to Poole Harbour and populated them with **polystyrene osprey models** in an attempt to attract the real thing.

The RSPB's Dr Paul Donald was awarded the prestigious **Marsh Award for Conservation Biology**. Paul's early work on skylarks for the RSPB paved the way for the development of skylark patches now included within the English agri-environment scheme. Congratulations Paul.

RSPB **lobbying** helped secure the £220,000 needed to continue funding the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

White-tailed eagles in Scotland passed the milestone of 50 breeding pairs in 2010 – the highest number since their re-introduction.

The Maid of Kent beetle was rediscovered at RSPB Elmley Marshes, Kent.

Together with Birds Russia, WWT, BTO, the BirdLife Secretariat and BirdLife Partners in a range of countries, we have launched a new last-ditch initiative to stop the extinction of the charismatic **spoon-billed sandpiper**.



David Kjaer (rspb-images.com)

Red kites bred in Northern Ireland for the first time in 200 years after a successful re-introduction (more on page 33).

We helped to successfully introduce two **northern bald ibises** from Turkey into the miniscule Syrian population of just three.

Cranes bred at RSPB Nene Washes – the first in Cambridgeshire for 400 years.

Nest protection at Dartmoor helped bring about the first successful **red-backed shrike** breeding in 17 years.

A good year for **little terns** at Chesil Beach (nine fledged – the best on record), and at Langstone Harbour (at least 47 fledged).

Stone-curlew numbers continued to increase on habitat re-creation areas at RSPB Minsmere, Suffolk, and RSPB Winterbourne Downs, Wiltshire, and they expanded their range into the Marlborough Downs – the first confirmed breeding there since 1976.

After 10 years of lobbying by the RSPB and 23,000 signatures, there will be an **EU Seabird Plan of Action** by the end of 2011. We hope this should address the 200,000 seabird deaths caused by fishing fleets every year.

Landscape-scale conservation
doesn't just benefit wildlife;
it's for everybody.

A landscape that's looked after
in a sustainable way is a more
vibrant place to live. Fresh air,
bird song, green places to
explore – these are the things
we're helping bring back into
the heart of communities,
even in urban areas.

Aidan Lonergan
Futurescapes
Programme Manager



I started working for the RSPB in 2001 as the
Country Programmes Manager in our International
Division. I then became Director of the RSPB
in Northern Ireland, before returning to the
UK headquarters in 2009 to run the RSPB's
landscape-scale conservation programme.



To restore the UK's biodiversity, reserves need to be complemented by conservation at a landscape-scale.

We are working with a huge variety of partners to create more space for nature across vast areas of the UK.

You only have to spend a few minutes at an RSPB nature reserve to realise just how great they are for wildlife. They're buzzing with life.

The RSPB manages just under 142,000 hectares (ha) – that's about 0.6% of the UK's land surface. It's a fair amount, but not nearly enough to help stop the loss in biodiversity that's happening right now, and not nearly enough to provide the habitat needed to help wildlife adapt to the effects of climate change.

It's been obvious to us for a while now, that if we're really going to solve the problems facing wildlife, we have to think beyond the scale of protected areas. We have to think on a landscape-scale. We've reclaimed vast areas for wildlife at our reserves at Lakenheath Fen and Minsmere (both Suffolk), Forsinard Flows and Abernethy (both Highland), but still it's not enough. That's why in 2010, we launched our Futurescapes programme.

We can't go buying up lots more land – it's beyond our means. The way forward is to work with the people who own this land: the farmers, landowners, the state and its agencies, businesses, water utilities companies and other NGOs, to help them look after it in a sustainable way that creates more space for nature. This year, we launched 34 Futurescapes, totalling a million hectares. At the heart of these are more than 60 RSPB nature reserves, providing the vital core from which wildlife can flourish.

At the Wiltshire Chalk Country Futurescape, we are working within the Stonehenge World Heritage Site with the National Trust, the Ministry of Defence, and local landowners to restore vital chalk grasslands. This habitat is so rich in plantlife, you could sit anywhere and sweep your hands around you and touch more than 40 species of grass

and herb. It is also the home of rare stone-curlews and adonis blue butterflies. But more than three-quarters of England's chalk grassland has been lost. In this futurescape we are connecting isolated fragments of chalk grassland, as well as recreating 305 ha at our Winterbourne Downs nature reserve. This will result in the largest area of this habitat in north-west Europe.

In the 90,000-ha Morecambe Bay Futurescape, Lancashire, we are working with Morecambe Bay Wildlife Network and local farmers to create a network of wet meadows, reedbeds and reed-lined rivers and ponds. By creating space for bitterns, water voles, ospreys and dragonflies, we hope that the Morecambe Bay area will become one of the best places to experience wildlife in the country. In turn, local hotels, shops and cafés will benefit through the rise in ecotourism.

The Thames Futurescape is a 110,000-ha patchwork of habitats, stretching from Tower Bridge to the open water. This area includes 39 sites that have various designations for their value to wildlife. A new internationally important marine area is being proposed here too, which will include the entire wider Thames Estuary, east of Sheerness – a vital site for 300,000 migrant birds. Here we are working with more than 70 partners to benefit the wildlife and the people living within the Futurescape.

And that's one of the most important things about Futurescapes – they're not just for the wildlife. They're so big that they incorporate whole communities; the Thames Futurescape is the back garden of nine million people. Managing places for wildlife also means a better quality of living for people, and in places improvements in natural services, such as flood prevention and recreation opportunities.

We've got a long way to go, but with another 49 Futurescapes projects in development, we're well on our way to changing the face of the UK landscape, for good.

For more info check out www.rspb.org.uk/futurescapes

I have one of the most exciting jobs in the world. When I visit the tropical forests where we're working, I can see at first-hand the positive effects we're having on the rainforest wildlife and the people who depend on these forests.

Jonathan Barnard
Head of Tropical Forest Unit



I lead the RSPB's Tropical Forest Unit, which includes our work in the Gola Rainforest in Sierra Leone, and Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra. I work with our BirdLife Partners, overseas governments and local communities, as well as with RSPB colleagues in the UK, to link up our conservation work at home and abroad.

When people think about Sierra Leone, too often the first thing that comes to mind is the civil conflict that occurred there a decade ago. But when you actually arrive in the country, you're immediately struck with what a friendly place it is.

The conflict is long over, and Sierra Leone has come a long way since, especially in terms of nature conservation. The Government has just declared the Gola Rainforest, where we've been working for 20 years, a National Park.

The Sierra Leoneans call the Gola Rainforest "the green jewel in Sierra Leone's crown," and when you arrive there it's easy to see why. After travelling through mile after mile of fields cleared for agriculture and charcoal (sometimes still smouldering), you're suddenly surrounded by life. Insects are buzzing everywhere. You hear the tremendous swooshing of huge hornbills flying overhead. Rare white-necked picathartes nest in mud cups on rocky overhangs, pygmy hippos gaze out from the rivers that flow through the forest, and many rare monkeys jump through the canopy. Much of the life here is found nowhere else in the world.

A hundred years ago, the whole coast of West Africa, from Guinea to Togo, was covered by Upper Guinea forest like this, with trees so big it would take a dozen people to encircle their girth. But now, 70% of it is gone. What remains is fragmented and damaged by logging and unsustainable use. Few of those beautiful big trees are left.

Gola Rainforest is the largest remnant in Sierra Leone. It's one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in the world, and it also has a hugely important role in storing millions of tonnes of carbon, thereby helping mitigate the worst effects of climate change. We work here with the Sierra Leonean Government and our BirdLife Partner, the

Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, to keep this place safe from illegal loggers, poachers and the companies who seek to mine this area for its rich supply of iron ore. From the Gola Rainforest, you can see, just across the border in Liberia, the fate that might have met this place if we'd not intervened. There is a great dusty hole where there was once a forest-clad hill. The whole thing was ripped apart for iron ore.

A large part of the Gola Rainforest is owned by the people of the seven chiefdoms surrounding the forest. All of it was earmarked for logging. Part of our work here has been to work with them to improve their livelihoods and help compensate them for profits foregone from logging. In return they have given their approval for the forest to be declared a National Park. We've helped them build primary schools, health centres and a hospital – the nearest good hospital is a day's journey away, so having local access to healthcare will have an enormous impact on their lives.

Without this mutually beneficial relationship, the villagers would have few chances to improve their lives. Previous experience from logging operations in Sierra Leone shows that local people received few benefits, and logging can degrade the forest so severely that it loses its value to wildlife.

Right now, there are 100 staff at Gola Rainforest. They have a tough job – it's hot and sticky, and they have many hills to climb. As well as the rangers who protect this place, there are also researchers who go out on week-long trips, deep into the 710 square kilometre forest (roughly twice the size of the Isle of Wight), to monitor the wildlife here. They've already discovered three butterfly species and a frog that are new to science, and there are undoubtedly plenty more waiting to be found.

With our partners, we're working to link up the Gola Rainforest National Park with two forest reserves in Liberia. This cross-border Peace Park, once completed, will be about 3,000 square kilometres in size. We've accomplished great things here, but there is potential for even greater success in protecting these precious rainforests.

For more info check out www.rspb.org.uk/gola

70% of Sierra Leone's tropical forest has been destroyed.

The RSPB is working with local communities to protect an area of forest twice the size of the Isle of Wight.

Selling garri (a kind of tapioca) boosts the community's income and improves livelihoods.

Caroline Thomas (RSPB)





Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

Fanfare at the Farm

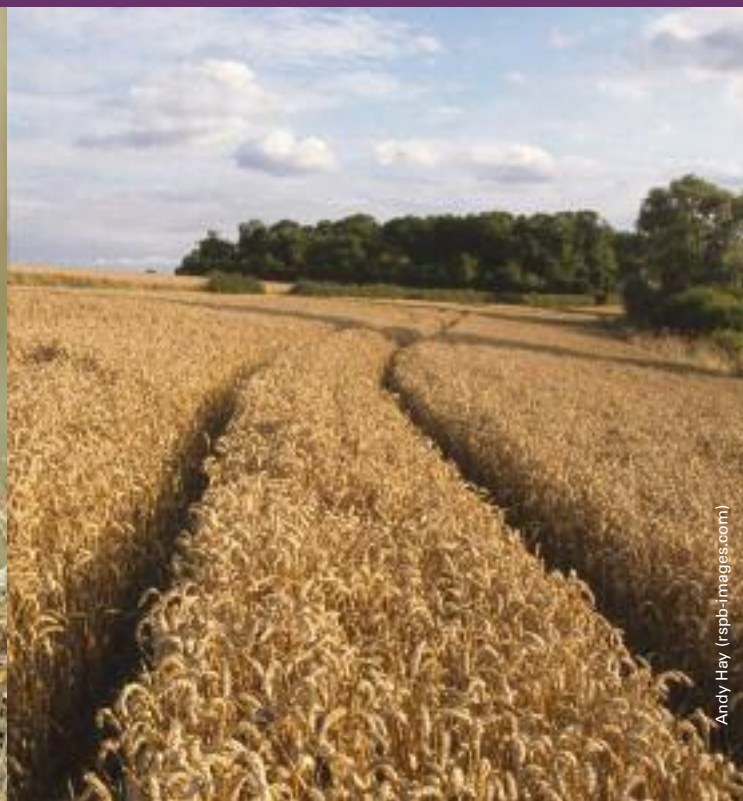
The RSPB celebrated the 10th anniversary of Hope Farm, Cambridgeshire, in style, with last summer's breeding season results showing a three-fold increase in the Farmland Bird Indicator since we arrived in 2000 – all without affecting farm profits.

The indicator is made up of 19 species that depend on farmland, and cannot thrive in other habitats. Species such as grey partridges, lapwings and yellow wagtails are now established on the farm. Skylarks, starlings, linnets and reed buntings have all at least quadrupled in number, and yellowhammers have more than doubled. We now plan to incorporate wider environmental objectives into our management, including the conservation of soil and water, and methods to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

This year we also developed the farmland bird advice package for farmers. This is the first time we have been able to quantify how much habitat is needed to reverse farmland bird declines. For arable farmland in the UK, this could be as little as 3–4% of the existing area if the highest quality environmental measures are used.



Edwin Kats (rspb-images.com)



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)



Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

CEMEX partnership

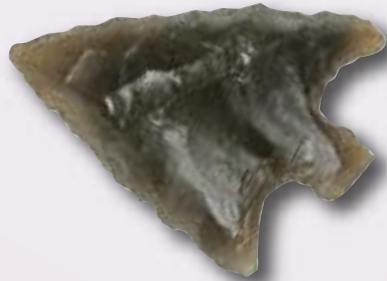
We continue our two-year partnership with CEMEX – one of the leading cement and aggregate production companies in the UK. A dedicated RSPB advisor is working with CEMEX to advise on biodiversity conservation. All of CEMEX's sites have exciting opportunities for wildlife habitat creation, including reedbeds, heathlands and wild flower meadows. Restoration and after-use plans for quarry sites have enormous potential. This year, CEMEX committed to creating 1,000 ha of new habitat by 2020.

Archaeology on RSPB reserves

We have completed a project about managing archaeological sites on our reserves and making them accessible to our visitors. Match-funded by English Heritage, this resulted in a database of sites that we will be able to conserve for perpetuity. At Arne in Dorset, for example, we are removing scrub and trees from Bronze Age burial mounds, built by farmers on the emerging heath over 3,000 years ago. We are now putting these monuments back into their original heathland landscape. Our work will be extended throughout the UK during 2011–12 with the appointment of Robin Stranding as Reserves Archaeologist.

Tana River Delta

We are still fighting the proposed biofuel developments in the Tana River Delta in Kenya. This 130,000 ha area is a rich mix of habitats supporting hippos, lions, elephants, buffaloes, many breeding fish and amphibians, two threatened primates found nowhere else in the world, and thousands of wetland birds. Right now, we are helping prepare a land-use plan for the area, and have challenged the proposed biofuel development at Dakatcha Woodlands.



Grahame Macdge (rspb-images.com)

RSPB reserves totals

On 1 April 2011, the RSPB managed 141,833 hectares on 211 reserves. During the 2010–2011 year, 8,446 ha were added – four new reserves plus 14 extensions. There has been a reduction in the area managed over the last year as the agreement at Haweswater, Cumbria, expired. We are negotiating a new agreement there.

IN BRIEF

The Indonesian Government awarded us the second management licence for **Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra**, finally giving us management control over nearly 100,000 ha of this stunning forest.

By invoking existing but unused legislation in Belarus with our BirdLife Partners, we have brought **14,000 ha of peatlands** under local protection for the first time.

We supported our **Tanzanian BirdLife Partner** to protect Lake Natron and the Serengeti National Park from commercial developments.

Working with **BirdLife Poland**, we helped get formal protection for all 140 of its Important Bird Areas.

RSPB Rainham Marshes in Greater London, celebrated its 10th birthday. The 200th bird species was also recorded there.

We acquired two new extensions to RSPB **Forsinard Flows**, Highland: Forsinain and Dyke plantations. Now begins the hard work of removing around 1.5 million trees so the bog trapped beneath can begin to restore itself.

RSPB lobbying finally led to the Government's publishing a policy for restoring heathland damaged by forestry plantations.

The third annual **Nature of Farming Award** was won by the Davison brothers in County Antrim – the second win in a row for Northern Ireland.

The new **Forestry Act** was passed in Northern Ireland, thanks to lobbying from the RSPB and Woodland Trust.

We acquired a **new 520-ha upland reserve** on Deeside: the Crannach.

We completed a five-year **LIFE Active Blanket Bogs in Wales project** in March 2011. As part of this pioneering and internationally acclaimed conservation project, we blocked over 486 km of drainage ditches on our reserve at Lake Vyrnwy, on Penarand and on private land – that's the equivalent of the distance from Lake Vyrnwy to London and back again! See page 43 for more.

In Northern Ireland, we are leading on a new **£1.6 million** Interreg-funded project to help Celtic species such as curlews, corncrakes, Irish damselflies and northern colletes bees.

In the Peak District National Park, on the hills above Sheffield, we are joining forces with the National Trust to manage over 2,000 ha of bog, heath and woodland at **Eastern Moors**. Here we will set up a new agreement with livestock farmers to establish a grazing system to benefit the wildlife living in this varied landscape.

Also in the Peak District National Park, we are now the managers of over **4,000 ha of upland habitats at Dove Stone**, in partnership with United Utilities. Here we are already meeting a growing number of the 1.5 million people who visit the park every year.

We co-ordinated one of the largest programmes of reedbed research, assessment, advice and knowledge-sharing for a decade: **Bringing Reedbeds to Life**. Intensive biodiversity research on three study sites, coupled with reedbed habitat and management audits across a further 30 sites, has enhanced our understanding of these vital places. We have shared this new knowledge with partners through a programme of training courses, workshops and a conference.

We led on promoting Wildlife and Countryside Link's 30th anniversary, drawing attention to the possible impact of **cuts** to Defra's budget on wildlife and habitats.

One of the finest birdwatching and wildlife experiences in Oxfordshire was unveiled in June at **RSPB Otmoor nature reserve**. The project, made possible by £1.3 million from a variety of funders, has created a viewpoint, water meadows, lagoons and dozens of shallow pools over the last three years. New interpretation is helping visitors get the most out of the site.

Solar panels and a wind turbine were installed on **Ramsey Island**, off the Pembrokeshire coast, providing power on demand there for the first time.

Many of the people who signed the RSPB's Letter to the Future told us why they'd signed it, too; one of my favourites, which sums up the campaign succinctly, was: "individually we want to make a difference, collectively we can make a difference."

Martin Harper
Director of Conservation



My role is to harness the collective brilliance of my teams across the UK to deliver the RSPB's conservation objectives.

This image is made from the names of just some of the people who signed our Letter to the Future.



Without pressure from our supporters, the Comprehensive Spending Review could have meant even more devastating cuts to nature conservation.

361,869 people signed the RSPB's Letter to the Future, demanding that more is done to protect nature.

If you're one of the 361,869 people who signed our Letter to the Future, thank you.

On 9 March 2011, we presented your signatures to the Prime Minister. This moment came at the end of a dramatic year in politics. The elections, and the Comprehensive Spending Review, meant huge challenges for securing nature's future, but also huge opportunities to raise nature's profile in the minds of our new MPs.

In the run-up to the General Election, we highlighted to the political parties the six areas where we thought better investment in nature was needed. And in Westminster Tube Station, we put up a series of posters asking MPs to "be a voice for nature." We succeeded in getting more than 400 parliamentary candidates to sign the Letter to the Future, more than 100 of whom went on to be elected as MPs – five of these in the cabinet.

After the election, we were pleased that the new coalition agreement stated more would be done to protect wildlife and restore biodiversity. The Prime Minister even declared that this would be "the greenest government ever." These were reassuring words.

But then on 22 June 2010, the Chancellor announced in his emergency budget that there would have to be a 20% cut in public spending to help address the budget deficit. It became immediately clear that if we didn't act fast, the Comprehensive Spending Review could set back nature conservation by decades.

We began a period of intense public campaigning, bombarding cabinet ministers with 90,000 e-mails from our supporters. We put huge banners saying "Don't cut the life from our countryside" within the constituencies of George Osborne and Oliver Letwin (members of the Star Chamber, which would decide where the budget axe would fall) and Secretary of State for the Environment, Caroline Spelman.

We also highlighted to Government the areas of public spending that would need to be defended most vigorously. Chief among these was the higher level stewardship (HLS) agri-environment scheme, which rewards farmers in England who carry out targeted work to help wildlife. Participants in this scheme (and in similar schemes in the devolved countries) are having a huge positive influence on wildlife, with species such as the turtle dove and curlew dependent on it. Cutting it would have been disastrous.

On 20 October, when the spending review was announced, there were worrying cuts to Defra's budget, but we were relieved to see that the UK Government had managed to maintain growth in the HLS scheme.

Despite this good news, there was still a £300 million shortfall between the UK Government's ambitions and the available funds, so we published our report *Innovative financing in an age of austerity*, which suggested ways new money could be found to protect nature without touching the public purse. The report explored options such as a biodiversity offset scheme, business partnerships, and payments for ecosystems services. It also pushed for peat use to be phased out by creating a peat levy, acting as a disincentive to compost suppliers while creating extra revenue for habitat restoration. In the run-up to the budget we pushed these suggestions, but unfortunately the peat levy was not adopted – although there is now greater acceptance that nature conservation isn't free and that new sources of revenue will have to be found to support it.

While all this was going on in Westminster, activity in the devolved administrations was intensifying in the run-up to their elections. The Westminster budget cuts had affected the money available to the devolved assemblies, so we worked hard in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast to raise the political profile of the need to invest in nature.

Now we must build on the success of the Letter to the Future campaign to help all the governments in the UK meet the targets agreed in Nagoya, which is what my colleague Alice Hardiman writes about on the next page."

For more info about our campaigns, visit www.rspb.org.uk/campaigns

To meet the 2020 biodiversity targets, we've all got to step up together – governments, businesses, individuals and communities. It's going to be hard, but the end results will be worth it: a healthier environment, richer in nature, with better natural services for us all.

Alice Hardiman
Acting Head of Planning
and Regional Policy



My job is to pull together the efforts of the different RSPB policy teams, to help advise the Westminster Government on how it can do more to help wildlife and meet its biodiversity targets. I have worked for the RSPB for nearly seven years.

In 2010, RSPB supporters helped us make a huge positive impact on the natural world by influencing the Westminster Government.

This was a year of hard lobbying. In the run-up to the Westminster General Election, we put pressure on the parties to commit to taking action for the natural environment. Elements of our *Challenge 2010: politicians must cut waste and invest in nature* report made it into the three main party manifestos. After the election, one of the first things that Defra announced was that the Coalition Government would begin developing a White Paper on the natural environment for England – something that we had pushed hard for, alongside other environmental NGOs.

In October, the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit was held. There was concern that these talks would go badly, after the poor outcomes of the Copenhagen climate change talks, and the global failure to meet the 2010 biodiversity targets. But thanks in part to Secretary of State Caroline Spelman's efforts, the attending countries walked out of the talks committed to some pretty ambitious targets – in some cases maybe even more ambitious than those for 2010.

The targets had to apply to a huge range of countries, so their wording was necessarily vague. The RSPB began work suggesting specific strategic goals which, if met, would mean that the UK could report back in 2020 with its head held high. Ideally, the UK Government's White Paper should both outline these goals for England, and provide the policy framework for meeting them.

A three-month consultation process began in July, during which we worked on an RSPB response. At the same time, we urged members and supporters to write to the UK Government to tell them how valuable the natural

world is to them. Defra received 15,000 responses to the Natural Environment White Paper consultation – the most it has ever received. Many of the responses from our members and supporters were very personal, and we know these were influential in persuading government to do the right thing for wildlife.

Near to the end of this process, I'd been working all hours for months preparing our response and I was absolutely exhausted. But then a colleague brought in a copy of a letter that a member had written to government about how important nature was to her. The letter was handwritten, and it was so moving. It inspired and re-energised me. Sometimes policy work can seem removed from the natural world we're trying to protect, but that letter reconnected me.

In March 2011, on the same day that we handed in the Letter to the Future signatures, we launched our Stepping Up For Nature campaign to Westminster politicians and presented them with a roadmap of targets that they'll need to meet if we're going to achieve our 2020 commitment.

Stepping Up For Nature recognises that if we're really going to stop biodiversity loss, we're all going to have to pull together and take steps to make it happen. The RSPB will gather millions of steps taken for nature – from feeding garden birds to digging ponds, campaigning or managing a farm for wildlife – and we will use these to demonstrate public commitment to biodiversity restoration. At the heart of the UK's approach to the decade ahead must be a contract between government, civil society and businesses. We will be doing more, and will expect others, including government, to do more, too.

At the time of writing, we're waiting for the Westminster Government's Natural Environment White Paper and are hoping it will firmly commit England to our 2020 obligations.

For more info about our campaigns, visit www.rspb.org.uk/campaigns

David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

The UK failed to meet the 2010 biodiversity targets.

With our supporters, we're working hard to help UK governments meet their obligations and to bring the life back to our cities, countryside and seas.





Geoff Simpson (rspb-images.com)

Making Space for Nature

Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network was published in September 2010.

The report was prepared for Defra by Professor Sir John Lawton and a panel of experts including ex-RSPB Chief Executive Sir Graham Wynne, and with significant contributions from RSPB staff. Its ambitious, but achievable, recommendations would take us a long way towards meeting our 2020 biodiversity targets. Sir John launched the report saying: "There is compelling evidence that England's collection of wildlife sites are generally too small

and too isolated, leading to declines in many of England's characteristic species. With climate change, the situation is likely to get worse. This is bad news for wildlife but also bad news for us, because the damage to nature also means our natural environment is less able to provide the many services upon which we depend. We need more space for nature. Our 24 recommendations in this report call for action which will benefit wildlife and people. They provide a repair manual to help re-build nature."

Caroline Spelman, Secretary of State for Defra, welcomed the report, saying; "Sir John is right to challenge us over what it takes to address the loss of biodiversity but he is also clear this cannot be done by Government alone. Everyone from farmers, wildlife groups, landowners and individuals can play a role in helping to create, manage and improve these areas, so if ever there was a time for the Big Society to protect our natural environment, this is it."

End of the barrage

On 18 October 2010, we were hugely relieved to hear that the Government had dropped its plans for a tidal power barrage across the Severn Estuary. We had been fighting alongside a consortium of environmental NGOs for this outcome.

Martin Harper, RSPB Director of Conservation, said of the announcement: "Climate change threatens an environmental catastrophe for humans and wildlife. Harnessing the huge tidal power of the Severn has to be right, but it cannot be right to trash the natural environment in the process. A barrage like the one proposed between Cardiff and Weston-super-Mare would not only destroy huge areas of estuary marsh and mudflats used by 69,000 birds each winter, and block the migration routes of countless fish, but, as confirmed by this report, it would dramatically increase risk of flooding to residential properties.

"The Government study needed to demonstrate that a big barrage could form a cost-effective part of a radical plan to tackle climate change. It is clear today that a barrage does not make economic sense. It's a great shame that we have been fixated on outdated environmentally destructive technology. The RSPB has consistently called for investment in more innovative and potentially less destructive schemes on the Severn which take environmental considerations into account in their design."

THE BIG PICTURE

This year, we have been involved in an unprecedented number of public inquiries, including Lydd airport and housing schemes affecting the Thames Basin and Dorset Heaths. For more on our casework, visit: www.rspb.org.uk/casework



David Kjaer (rspb-images.com)

Nature at the heart of planning

In 2010, the Westminster Government introduced radical proposals for the future of the planning system in England. The aim of the proposed Localism Bill and the National Planning Policy Framework is to stop planning from being a constraint to development and economic growth, but this could make it much harder to argue against developments that threaten special places for wildlife. We worked hard this year to influence the debate, and succeeded in helping to get the proposal changed, but the latest draft of the proposal contains a whole new set of challenges for us.

Hope for rainforest protection

In December 2010, the world moved closer to halting tropical deforestation by concluding an agreement reducing emissions from deforestation at the UN Climate Convention meeting in Cancun. The RSPB was closely involved in the negotiations and led international NGOs in this area. As a result, we successfully ensured that this agreement includes important biodiversity safeguards that will see the conservation of natural tropical forests prioritised. We also led ongoing NGO effort to ensure the rules agreed in a global climate deal will result in emissions from forestry and land-use being accurately accounted for.

An end to seabird deaths in sight?

After 10 years of lobbying by the RSPB, including a petition of 23,000 signatures presented to Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki in June 2010, the European Commission pledged to develop and propose an EU Seabird Plan of Action by the end of 2011. The RSPB and BirdLife International urged the Commissioner to deliver a robust plan to address the unacceptable toll (estimated at around 200,000 birds a year) that the fishing gears of EU vessels have on shearwaters and other species. The “shadow” plan we submitted has been highly influential in shaping the emerging framework of the plan, drawing attention to, notably, the Gran Sol longline fishery that accounts for the highest total annual deaths (including 40,000 great shearwaters) of any discrete global fishery, and the Baltic gillnet fisheries, which kill at least 100,000 ducks, divers, grebes and other birds every year.

IN BRIEF

We continue to campaign for a **Marine Bill in Northern Ireland**, while working to ensure that the new marine legislation in the rest of the UK is effectively implemented.

We hosted a stand at **Ecobuild 2010** to advise developers on how planning can be done with wildlife in mind.

We commissioned sand artist Jamie Wardley to create an enormous sand drawing on Irvine beach to raise awareness of our **Hunterston power station campaign**.

We contributed to the **Wildlife and Countryside Link** assessment of Government performance against the 2010 targets to halt biodiversity loss.

For the first time, RSPB Cymru used the Senedd’s (National Assembly for Wales) petitions process to convince Assembly Members to conduct an Inquiry into the missed **2010 biodiversity targets**. Wales was the only administration to do so (more on page 40).

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland awarded us a **new contract** to monitor the effects of the Countryside Management Scheme on key farmland bird populations. This adds to our ongoing monitoring programmes in England, Scotland and Wales.

We won a **public inquiry at Cliffe**, resulting in the removal of a neighbouring industrial site.

The RSPB, along with six project partners in five European countries, secured €2.2 million from the European Regional Development Fund for the Future of the Atlantic Marine Environment (**FAME**) project. The three-year project will use the latest electronic bird tagging technology to reveal important foraging areas of kittiwakes, shags, fulmars, guillemots and razorbills from colonies along the Atlantic coast of the UK. This information will help inform the designation of the new Marine Protected Areas – vital to the long-term well-being of marine life.



Nigel Blake (rspb-images.com)

At our Date With Nature events, we're meeting a different group of people. These aren't people who've made a decision to come to a reserve. They're people in town centres and parks who may have mistakenly thought that they weren't interested in nature at all.

Richard Bashford
Senior Project Manager,
People Engagement



I work at the RSPB headquarters as part of the 12-person People Engagement Team. The team makes sure that people get the most out of their encounters with wildlife, whether that's on our reserves, at a Date With Nature event, or by taking part in one of our surveys, such as Big Garden Birdwatch and Make Your Nature Count. I have worked for the RSPB for 22 years.



People feel more disconnected from nature than ever before. Some even fear the countryside.

This year, we gave nearly half a million people an unforgettable experience with wildlife at our Date With Nature events.

I love surprises – how about you? It's the element of surprise that makes our Date With Nature events such a big success.

You're walking through a busy city, your mind on a hundred different things, and then you practically bump into a lady standing beside a telescope on a tripod. "Want to see a peregrine?" she says. And you do. Everyone always does. And when you look through the telescope and see the peregrine perched on a ledge high up above the city, you can't quite believe that it's here, sharing the same space as you. For a moment all those things that had been jostling for attention in your mind fall away, and you have a moment of simple pleasure.

That's the magic that an unexpected encounter with nature can bring, and it's why this year, for the first time, we decided to bring our learnings from Date With Nature events to our nature reserves.

If you visited our Lodge reserve in Bedfordshire this summer, at the swimming pool you would have met a volunteer, there to point out to you the different species of dragonfly and damselfly zipping over the water, and explain a little of their fascinating lives. Then further down the path, you would have met another volunteer, there to point out the hole in the tree where the green woodpeckers were nesting, and if you waited a moment, you would have seen one of the adults return to the hole to feed them. Without the volunteer there, you might have walked straight past.

We did this at several of our reserves this year, to great success: at Lake Vyrnwy, Powys, and our new reserve at Dove Stone in the Peak District National Park, we pointed out peregrines; at Dunnet Head, Highland, we showed people the guillemots and razorbills that were nesting on

the UK mainland's most northerly cliffs; at Titchwell in Norfolk, we took families on nature trails and got them pond dipping and dissecting owl pellets; we helped people to see common terns bringing fish back for their chicks at Saltholme, Teesside; and at Sumburgh Head, Shetland, we gave people around the world views via a webcam that would otherwise be impossible – puffins inside their burrow. In all, our regional teams and volunteers organised 66 Date With Nature events, both on and off reserves.

Often, these events run year after year, wildlife faithfully returning to the same spot, such as the ospreys at Glaslyn, North Wales, but we also take advantage of surprise appearances, such as the breeding purple herons at RSPB Dungeness in Kent this year. This is the first time this species has bred in the UK, so we quickly set up a Date With Nature and attracted 1,000 visitors. This event also gathered hundreds of signatures for our petition against the expansion of Lydd Airport.

All of this is helped enormously by the support of Viking Optical Ltd, who make sure that people get the best views of the wildlife by supplying excellent optical equipment to our events. And of course we couldn't put on these events without our RSPB volunteers, who love nature and want to share their enthusiasm with other people. This enthusiasm, coupled with a spectacular encounter with wildlife, is an effective way to help people appreciate the value of nature. Our Date With Nature events have a big role in supporting our conservation work, recruiting thousands of new members (5,000 this year) and getting tens of thousands of signatures towards our campaigns, such as our bird of prey appeal and Letter to the Future.

The RSPB has been surprising and delighting people with stunning experiences of wildlife since the Loch Garten ospreys in the 1950s, and we'll continue to find more ways to do it, because every one of those surprised, delighted people is another possible voice for nature.

To find out about this year's Date With Nature events, visit www.rspb.org.uk/datewithnature

Wildlife Explorers, the RSPB's junior members, aren't just passive observers of nature, they're willing to do things to help it too. Wildlife Explorers have raised more than £200,000 in the last few years to support our work.

Jennie Bailey
Regional Youth Officer



This is my first year of working for the RSPB. As Regional Youth Officer for Northern England, I support the hundreds of volunteers running the 20 RSPB Wildlife Explorers and Phoenix (teenage) groups that exist in the area from Cheshire all the way up to Hadrian's Wall.

I light fires. That's my job, basically. And there's nothing like it. The moment when you see a child's face light up, their enthusiasm for nature kindled by an encounter with something wild, is magical.

I had a very special moment like that this year. A brand new Wildlife Explorers club had just started up in Malhamdale, North Yorkshire. For their first meeting, the children were going on a walk in a bluebell wood. It was pouring with rain, but 15 of them still turned up, got soaked, and had tremendous fun. They took 'Bird Bingo' sheets with them – laminated pictures of various wild creatures and plants, which they tick off every time they see the real thing. One girl had ticked off everything except for a sand martin, and she was looking round frantically for it. And then, one whizzed by, right in front of her. It was so close she was startled for a moment, and then her face changed as she realised what it was. That look is what I live for.

Experiences like this are so important for children, especially if they're living in an urban area. We have a club in Liverpool, and I'm sure that if we weren't there, the kinds of experiences we offer to children just wouldn't be available to them. They recently had a meeting where a herpetology student from Liverpool university brought in a boa constrictor and a coral snake – the children were thrilled to be able to touch these gorgeous beasts. The same group went out to a wood in the middle of Liverpool to do the Big Schools' Birdwatch, and were so excited to see a woodpecker for the first time. The group gets so much out of the varied range of activities, and the story is the same across all of our groups.

Once our younger members become teenagers, they begin to get really involved in actual hands-on conservation work. The Saltholme Phoenix group in Teesside is just one

year old, but already they've done lots of habitat management on the reserve, such as scrub clearing, all rewarded afterwards with a big bonfire and a hearty barbecued feast.

And, of course, our Wildlife Explorers clubs are just one part of how the RSPB connects children with wildlife. More than 6,000 children are now taking part in our Wildlife Action Awards, doing activities at home and school to help wildlife. This year we've also been putting our 36 outdoor classrooms through the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge to reassure schools that their pupils will be safe here as well as inspired and excited by nature.

They say that in the last 10 years, the 'home range' of children – that's the distance they're allowed to wander outside of their home – has shrunk from 800 metres to just 50 metres. With such a small area to explore, children just aren't going to regularly come across wild things they've never seen before. Those moments of discovery are so important. Not only do they enrich children's lives, and give them a real sense of their place in the world, but they are also essential to making sure that nature still has people willing to speak up for it in the future.

The girl that had the moment with the sand martin might be switched on to wildlife for the rest of her life. She might do things in her home and garden to protect it. She might work in conservation – you'd be amazed at how many RSPB staff began as junior members of the Young Ornithologists' Club (the forerunner of Wildlife Explorers). She might even run a group like this and switch other kids' lights on – it happens.

The Macclesfield Wildlife Explorers group has been running since 1986. They are a big group of more than 30 children, and are one of the most active and dedicated groups we have. They've won the RSPB Wildlife Explorers club of the year award several times. There are parent volunteers running the group now who were members when they were children. Here, that torch really is passed on from generation to generation. It's my job to help keep that torch alight, and I feel very lucky to be doing it.

For more info, visit www.rspb.org.uk/youth

Today's children are less connected with nature than ever before.

This year we celebrated our 200,000th member of RSPB Wildlife Explorers.



David McHugh (rspb-images.com)

Every child outdoors

We believe that every child should be entitled to regular contact with the natural environment, so in September 2010 we launched our *Every child outdoors* report at a parliamentary reception.

The report draws together findings from a wide range of research into the positive impacts that contact with nature has on children. These include the educational benefits, contributions to physical health and mental well-being, as well as the development of personal and social skills.

Every child outdoors also explores what happens when such experiences are reduced – the increasingly used term of Nature Deficit Disorder.

The report includes new independent research we commissioned from Ipsos MORI on the most remembered childhood experiences of nature amongst the general public. This discovered that 92% of people agree that these experiences are still important to children today, and that 82% agree that schools should play a role in providing them to all children.

You can read the full report at:

www.rspb.org.uk/childrenneednature

THE BIG PICTURE



Every child outdoors supports our policy objective for the Westminster Government to highlight to schools the benefits of learning outside the classroom.



Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)



Chris O'Reilly (rspb-images.com)

International school raptor project

Primary school pupils from Glasgow and Lahore in Pakistan have teamed up to learn about endangered birds of prey in a new project called "Raptors at Risk". The children will study the re-introduction of white-tailed eagles and red kites in Scotland, and the captive breeding project of white-backed vultures in Pakistan. Each school will learn about the birds from their own country and post a box of facts, poems, drawings and stories about the birds for the other children to see. The project has been funded by the Talk Talk Innovation in The Community Awards, and links the RSPB in Scotland with WWF.

Wild Place, Your Space

Wild Place, Your Space is a three-year social inclusion project connecting communities living in some of the south-east of England's most deprived boroughs to nature. In partnership with the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, staff also offer training for individuals who have dropped out of formal education, conduct outreach into local primary schools and deliver field teaching for secondary pupils. Its legacy will be an increase in people using the Lee Valley, and the creation of a national forum for social inclusion practitioners.

London sparrows

The London House Sparrow Parks Project is working with eight partners across 19 London Parks to create insect and seed-rich meadows. Researchers hope the food that these 25 new meadows will provide will benefit sparrows, which are declining nationally. Early indications have been encouraging. Some of the seed mixes and management techniques are being adopted by partners on other land-holdings. Funding is being sought to extend the project beyond August 2011.

RSPB-watch

The 2010 series of *Springwatch* on BBC TV was packed with RSPB mentions, most notably the live broadcasts from Arne, Dorset, which featured nightjars, wood ants and raft spiders. Other RSPB mentions included items on avocets, bitterns, Big Garden Birdwatch, a plug for Make Your Nature Count and RSPB staff in the *Springwatch* pub quiz. Later in the year, *Autumnwatch* devoted a programme to the Isle of Mull. RSPB staff and our partners on the island were closely involved in the preparations for the BBC crew. The programme celebrated the range and density of birds of prey on the island and in particular focused on hen harriers and the Mull Eagle Watch project, which sees the island community come together each year to protect the nesting eagles. More than 2 million people watched the programme.

IN BRIEF

53,000 children visited our reserves in **school groups**.

165,000 people are now taking part in **Homes For Wildlife**.

Just under half a million people visited our **Date With Nature projects**. The nine Welsh Date With Nature sites alone attracted 70,000 people – enough to fill the whole of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

190,000 new RSPB members joined, bringing the total at the start of April 2011 to **1,096,015**.

We had a **record-breaking** year for our citizen science surveys. More than 707,000 people took part in Big Garden Birdwatch and Make Your Nature Count combined.

Teenagers from RSPB Phoenix and the Ferrers Specialist Arts College (of which the RSPB is a trustee) took part in a **mock Select Committee Inquiry** in the House of Commons. RSPB President Kate Humble chaired the event. The teenagers quizzed politicians from the three main parties about their plans for the environment, including climate change, safeguarding our sealife, stopping extinction and how to engage young people with nature.

The RSPB is working with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation on a project to find a way of measuring the incidence and extent of **Nature Deficit Disorder** – a term which refers to the effects of the loss of connection with nature, particularly in young people.

The RSPB in Wales had its highest ever total of schools participating in our **Big Schools' Birdwatch** – a total of 132 taking part and reaching well over 4,500 children.

In 2010 we concluded a successful three-year environmental education partnership with the City of London Corporation on **Hampstead Heath**. This Heritage Lottery funded project engaged 7,670 children with nature, many from deprived areas.

We now have **30 reserves** with the Learning Outside The Classroom Quality Badge.

We launched RSPB **"Love nature" chocolate**. It contains no soya or palm oil, is organic and Fairtrade, and every penny of profit goes direct to our conservation work.

We are making great progress on the **Discover Nature project at Minsmere**, Suffolk, which will make the reserve accessible and appealing to as wide a range of people as possible.

We launched our new reserves pages on the RSPB website to give people a better idea of the range of experiences on offer. www.rspb.org.uk/reserves

Our stand at the 2010 **BBC Gardeners' World Live** won "Highly Commended". It showed the parallels between wildlife gardening and reserve management.

Sandwell Valley field teaching resumed at Sandwell Valley Country Park, West Midlands, after our reserve visitor centre was destroyed by fire.

A **red kite** from the Chilterns turned up at the Argaty Red Kites Date With Nature, Perthshire.

We began a **survey** of visitors at 34 of our reserves to find out how to make the experience even better for them.

More than half the schools in Northern Ireland have joined the **Breathing Places** programme.

We launched our **schools ladybird survey** – the seventh and last BBC Breathing Places Schools project.

The **Green Talent project**, in partnership with the Eden Project and Kew Gardens, gave more than 150 15-16-year-olds a unique two-day environmental learning experience, which combined technology, business and nature. Unfortunately, delivery was cut short due to partial withdrawal of Government funding.

We are working on three **international education programmes**, in Belarus, Bulgaria and Malta.



James Robinson
Director, Northern Ireland

NORTHERN
IRELAND

One of the highlights of the year for me was a trip to the wooded hillsides of County Down.

Just after lunchtime, on a baking hot day, my colleague and I crept round the edge of a plantation with a telescope to get a clear view of the nest high up in an oak tree. Sitting on the nest, and turning its beady eyes towards me as I looked through the scope, was one of the 80 red kites that we've re-introduced to Northern Ireland over the last three years with the help of the Golden Eagle Trust and the Welsh Kite Trust. What made this moment especially wonderful was that the behaviour of the male and female kites clearly showed that there were eggs in the nest. These were the first red kites to nest in Northern Ireland for 200 years. At the end of the breeding season, four pairs of red kites had fledged five young. A tremendous success after many years of hard work.

As I think back over this year, that seems to be a common theme – years of dedicated effort finally rewarded with success. In 2010, we got to see the Wildlife And Natural Environment Act passed through the Assembly – something I've been working towards since I started at the RSPB in 2004. Some of my colleagues have been working on it much longer than that, since the original, inadequate wildlife protection laws came out in 1985. For 25 years we have been working with civil servants and politicians, pressing for better laws to protect wildlife, and now we have them. We're a relentless bunch, but that's what's needed to get results. Thanks to our efforts, wildlife will fare better in Northern Ireland: there are now custodial sentences for wildlife crimes, providing a proper deterrent; the curlew has now been taken off the shooting list; and nests of birds of prey will now be protected all year round,

not just while they're sitting on the nest. Our newly introduced red kites will stand a much better chance of flourishing here with the legal framework in place to give them the protection they need.

Another place we've been working for years, and are seeing our efforts richly rewarded, is Lower Lough Erne in County Fermanagh where we look after 39 of the islands in the heart of Northern Ireland's Lake District. For decades we've been carrying cattle across the lough in flat-bottomed boats to the islands that we look after in the middle. There, the cattle munch away in the meadows, creating just the right conditions for wildlife. In spring, the islands are covered in orchids and other wild flowers, and the birds return to breed – this year, in greater numbers than ever before. We had 26 pairs of lapwings, 51 pairs of redshanks, 35 pairs of snipe, 34 pairs of curlews and the first pair of dunlins since 2003. You won't find these species in this great a quantity anywhere else in Northern Ireland.

And we've had other successes on our reserves this year. At the south-east corner of Lough Neagh (the largest lough in the UK), is our wetland reserve Portmore Lough, County Antrim, to which we added 12 hectares this year. When I first visited this place, there was a small lake here surrounded by fields infested with rushes. After years of focused management, we've transformed this place into one of the most important wetlands in the country, buzzing with dragonflies and damselflies in the summer. There really is nowhere else quite like it. We have lapwings increasing here, when elsewhere they are not faring so well. We have Irish hares – lovely creatures that are easy to spot in the winter when they turn white. It's also an important place now for whooper swans and great crested grebes. We've added more ditches and wetland features this year in the hope that the rare Irish damselfly, which is found nearby, will spread onto the reserve.

Thanks to our efforts, red kites bred in Northern Ireland for the first time in 200 years.





Excerpt from poet Seamus Heaney's foreword to the Lough Beg management plan:

"In the following pages, those names are to be found on a map showing the local wild life habitats, but for me and for anyone of my generation brought up in the Lough Beg area, they belong first and foremost in memory and imagination. They evoke a dream land that was once the real land, a shore at evening, quiet water, wind in the grass, the calls of birds, maybe a man or woman out in a back field just standing looking, counting cattle, listening.

"The Lough Beg Management Plan intends to make that country of the mind a reality once again. It wants to bring back a landscape where the peewit and the curlew and the whirring snipe are as common as they used to be on those 1940s evenings when I'd go with my father to check on our cattle on the strand."

Over at the north end of Lough Neagh, is Lough Beg, one of our Futurescapes projects, which my colleague Aidan wrote about earlier in the review. Here there are 500 ha of wet grassland on the banks of the River Bann, which floods in winter and makes this a really important habitat. The land is owned by livestock farmers, with whom we are working to make this place ideal for all sorts of wildlife, including huge numbers of wintering waterbirds and the rare Irish lady's tresses orchid and pennyroyal.

Together we make sure that the rushes (which can quickly grow up to shoulder height) are kept under control so that the cattle can still graze, and we're working with the Rivers Agency to make sure the flooding that occurs on the land doesn't happen during the breeding season, when chicks are in the nest and vulnerable. We want to see this achieved by restoring natural flood defences, such as peat bogs, and carefully managing the sluices that control water levels.

This year we published the management plan for Lough Beg, and were thrilled and honoured to have the wonderful Seamus Heaney, Nobel Prize-winning poet, write the foreword to it. He described what we're doing here far more eloquently than I'm able to (see left). The farmers here have such pride and affection for the place, and it's such a pleasure to work alongside them, advising on flood management and livestock grazing, to help make this

"country of the mind", as Seamus Heaney describes it, a reality once again. It's what I and the 50 colleagues and 300 volunteers I work with at the RSPB Northern Ireland office are trying to do at all of our sites – to create sustainable land-use for everyone, so that wildlife can flourish.

Another highlight of the year was one of our education projects. To mark the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, we worked with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and BBC Breathing Places on a schools project that promoted the biodiversity of Northern Ireland, highlighting the importance of the country as a geographic hub for migrating species. Young people in Northern Ireland carried out projects on migratory bird species and reported their findings at a special event at Belfast's Waterfront Hall using online digital images, videos and mobile phone technology.

One of the key parts of the project was the RSPB's ongoing education link with Ghana. Our common ground is the common tern – a bird that winters off west Africa before returning to Belfast Lough to breed in the spring. We video-linked with a school in Ghana when we presented all of the projects to the Environment Minister and a room full of other decision-makers in Northern Ireland.

This year has seen many years' work come to fruition, but another year is already underway and there is plenty more to be done!

For more info check out www.rspb.org.uk/northernireland



Stuart Housden
Director, Scotland

SCOTLAND



Scotland's amazing environment is renowned the world over, so it is important that we continue to protect and invest in its care – our global reputation is at stake. Although there is more to do and the road ahead is not easy, we have much to be proud of.

I was reminded of this during a visit last June to Balranald – one of our nature reserves situated on the beautiful Hebridean island of North Uist, which is run in partnership with the crofting community.

The machair habitat there is very rare and special, found only along the windswept coast of north-west Scotland and western Ireland where the sandy soil is uniquely composed of ground-up seashells. As we walked through the rich flower meadows searching for (and finding!) the rare Hebridean marsh orchid that grows here, the air was thick with birdsong – corncrakes, curlews, redshanks, dunlins and corn buntings. There was also the buzzing of many bees, including great yellow bumblebees – one of the 36 rare or declining Biodiversity Action Plan species on which the RSPB leads. The wildlife here would not be so rich without our work in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and the Scottish Crofting Federation.

We walked across to Vallay Island, a place that only becomes accessible on foot when the tide is out, to meet Angus MacDonald, a crofter with whom we're working. Angus rears organic beef cattle, grazing them on the machair to keep it in top condition for wildlife. He even uses seaweed he collects from the beach as a natural fertiliser. On the beach at Vallay Island, while we discussed conservation matters, Angus barbecued some of the most

delicious steaks I've ever tasted. And while we enjoyed this feast, we watched hundreds of bar-tailed godwits in the bay, and a hen harrier and an Arctic skua flying by us. But most heartening of all was the sound of corncrakes calling nearby.

When we first began work in this area in 1999, there were no corncrakes here, but now, thanks to the targeted management we've been doing with Angus and his traditional crofting techniques, there are now 14 calling males. We've enjoyed similar corncrake success across much of the country, which is a relief given the hard work and investment we have made. There are now an estimated 1,200 calling males – that's a rise of 66 on last year – proof indeed that great things come from great partnerships.

We were part of another partnership this year for an altogether different reason. We joined alongside a group of environmental NGOs to re-ignite the fight against a proposed coal-fired power station at Hunterston. In June 2010, a planning application for the development was submitted. Part of the proposed development includes building on 32 hectares of Southannan Sands – an SSSI and a vital place for wintering birds – one of the few remaining intertidal flats on the outer Firth of Clyde. If the Scottish Government were to give the go-ahead for this power station, the additional emissions from the plant would make a mockery of their commitments to sustainable development and CO₂ reduction. But equally important, the waders would lose vital feeding grounds.

To raise the profile of this campaign, we commissioned world-renowned sand and ice artist Jamie Wardley to create an artwork along the shoreline at Irvine beach. His sand drawings illustrated the effects of emissions on climate change and habitat loss, focusing a good deal of media attention on our fight, before being swept away by the sea. We hope the Scottish Government will sweep the development proposal away in a similar fashion.

We had a major success this year in helping influence the creation of new legislation to protect wildlife. At the end of last year, we went to Holyrood to present the 22,000



Forsinard Flows: a true
Scottish wilderness, and one
of our first Futurescapes.

signatures gathered in Scotland calling for better protection for our birds of prey. This was followed in June 2010 by the announcement of the Wildlife And Natural Environment (WANE) Bill, which provides the legal framework to help prevent wildlife crime affecting some of our most vulnerable species.

In particular I'm thinking about the prospects of hen harriers. A survey earlier in 2011 revealed that this species has declined by 23% in Scotland since 2004, leaving just 489 pairs, but this new legislation may help remedy that. Thanks to the WANE Act, employers are now liable if their employees commit wildlife crimes on their land. This should, we hope, help stop the instances of bird of prey persecution that occur on some driven grouse moors and allow hen harriers to begin to recover.

Wildlife can bring huge economic rewards, providing memorable personal experiences while contributing significant sums to the Scottish economy.

We've clearly demonstrated this year that birds of prey can thrive in Scotland, and that people enjoy having them around. Our Aberdeen red kites, re-introduced between 2007 and 2009 with the help of a whole host of partners, are now breeding well, this year rearing 15 young. It's wonderful to see the population become self-sustaining after so many staff and volunteers spent so many months hand-rearing those original 101 chicks, sometimes even taking rain-bedraggled chicks home in the evening to keep them warm overnight. It's that level of dedication that has helped this new Aberdeen population establish so well. If you're in Aberdeen, they're there for you to see right now.

Results of a recent economic analysis have shown just how valuable a sight like red kites can be for the local community. Since 2004, visitors to the red kite trail in Dumfries and Galloway have spent £21 million in the area. We're hoping the new Tollie red kite viewing centre that we opened this year at Brahan Estate near Inverness will be a hit with wildlife tourists, too.

In Scotland, the RSPB does everything it can to provide opportunities like this so that people can have memorable encounters with wildlife. This year, in partnership with Promote Shetland, we showed something that had never been seen before. Our puffin-cam at Sumburgh Head revealed the private lives of puffins for the first time ever, via a camera in a puffin burrow. There were a few shocking moments – when an adult came into the nest and attacked the chick, for instance – but there were moments of great tenderness, too, with the parent puffins preening their puffling. This was fascinating viewing, enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people from all around the world.

As well as inspiring people across the globe, we continue to make sure, through our education projects, that future generations remain passionate about wildlife. This year we teamed up with The Gannochy Trust and A & J Stephen (Builders) Ltd to launch an exciting new project called 'Growing Up With Quarrymill'. Designed to

encourage pupils and teachers to explore their natural environment and further their understanding of the value and beauty of local green spaces, the scheme saw schools in Perthshire take a trip out of the classroom to explore nature on their doorstep. Our hope is that this experience inspires young people to take an interest in the environment right through their life.

We share the same aspirations for our Wildlife Explorers. Around 500 young people in Scotland meet up every month as part of these clubs to get out and enjoy our reserves and other green spaces, and they do some pretty amazing activities to benefit wildlife. We now have Wildlife Explorer groups from as far north as Shetland, to the deepest south at Mersehead.

One of the biggest stories this year was the launch of Futurescapes. In Scotland, we have Futurescapes planned for more than 22 different areas, covering large swathes of diverse habitat, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas and RSPB nature reserves such as Forsinard Flows in Caithness and Sutherland. Thanks to our supporters, and with help from The Tubney Charitable Trust, we were able to acquire new extensions to Forsinard Flows reserve this year. The Forsinain and Dyke plantations add nearly 1,500 ha to this true Scottish wilderness. We have a huge task ahead of us – there are about 1.5 million trees to remove to help restore these areas to precious blanket bog. It'll take years, but we've done it before, and the curlews and greenshanks that now fill this place with their calls are proof that together we'll do it again.

Lastly, as the year ended, we completed the purchase of the Crannach, a new reserve on Deeside, home to black grouse and many other species. An exciting conclusion to the year!

For more info check out www.rspb.org.uk/scotland

This year I have experienced the value of nature in a more personal way than ever before.

Nature helped save the life of my two-year-old daughter, Carys. In March 2010, she was diagnosed with a very rare cancer. The RSPB kindly allowed me to take time off work – seconding Laurence Rose from the North of England Team and sharing out responsibilities amongst staff at the Wales Headquarters, who all rallied round and made this a hugely successful year for the RSPB in Wales.

I spent eight months at my daughter's side, going back and forth to hospitals, fighting for her life. I have just found out that her cancer is now in remission. I can't tell you how grateful I feel. And now that I'm back at work, I feel more galvanised than ever before to protect our natural world, because one of the key drugs that saved Carys was synthesised from a flower. It's a pretty pink flower called the Madagascan periwinkle. Most of the drugs that kill cancer cells also kill healthy cells, and are especially harmful to children, but this natural drug only targets the cancer cells. Now, thanks to this plant, many children survive cancer and get a chance at a full life; and one of them is my little girl.

The interconnectedness of human health and the natural world has never been clearer to me, and it's firmed my resolve to do everything I can to protect biodiversity, because who knows how many more life-saving drugs are out there right now, in some of the world's most threatened habitats.

It's been a year of highs and lows. This was supposed to be the year the world stopped biodiversity loss, but those targets were not met. And afterwards, Wales was the only country in the world that held an inquiry to find out why. And the reason the National Assembly for Wales held that inquiry was the RSPB. We used the new petition system and the voices of our members to demand one. Dozens of

people, including the Environment Minister, were called to give evidence at the inquiry, and at the end of it, 20 recommendations were made to help restore biodiversity in Wales. These should hopefully give us the traction we need to achieve the 2020 targets agreed at Nagoya. It's a clear demonstration that people can really make positive changes to the world when they speak in unison.

And in Wales, we really need some positive changes in the way the environment is managed. The latest *Birds of Conservation Concern* report, which we launched this year, shows that 45 of the bird species in Wales (representing almost one quarter of the total) are now on the red list, which means they're in big trouble. This year, 18 new species were added to the red list, seven of these species moving straight from green (low concern) to red.

But we've proved that it's possible to turn the fortunes of these species around. I have some great success stories to share with you.

It's been a fantastic year for black grouse in Wales. We've been working with the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Forestry Commission Wales (FCW), and many local authorities and landowners, including three shooting estates, to create ideal habitat and conditions for black grouse, and the work is really paying off. In 1997, when we first started our black grouse project, we had 126 lekking males. This year, we had 238. The populations in the areas where we're working are now stable.

In Wales, we have a great relationship with the owners of several shooting estates, who act as admirable custodians of the countryside. Free from the persecution found in some areas of Britain, hen harriers have done tremendously well here. On the North Wales Moors Futurescape area, we had 57 breeding hen harriers – the highest figures since the 1950s when hen harriers recolonised Wales. The work in Wales provides a model for upland partnerships, demonstrating that hen harrier recovery can co-exist alongside other moorland interests.



Katie-jo Luxton
Director, Wales

WALES

Where we're working in Wales, the black grouse population is now stable.





Another great success was the LIFE Blanket Bog Project, which we completed after years of hard work. In 2005, when we began, the 10,000-hectare upland moorland around the Lake Vyrnwy estate in Powys had been drained and was in a poor state. Restoring it looked like an impossible task. We would have to block 100 km of drains that were leaching the life from the bog, at a cost of half a million pounds – an amount we thought we'd never be able to raise. But in partnership with CCW, FCW, Snowdonia National Park, United Utilities and local landowners, and with EU LIFE funding, we actually managed to raise £3.23 million and have now blocked 486 km of drainage ditches – that's twice the distance from Vyrnwy to London.

We took 1,100 schoolchildren up onto the bog to show them this amazing place as part of our field teaching work here (which, incidentally, won the 'outstanding' grade in the Learning Outside The Classroom Quality Badge Scheme). These children had lived right by the bog all their lives and most had no idea

20,000 Girl Guides are stepping up for nature with the RSPB in Wales.

For more info check out www.rspb.org.uk/wales

of its value to wildlife or its important role in regulating the water and carbon cycles. One landowner got in contact with us and said that his daughter had just come back from a class visit to Vyrnwy and demanded that he do the same thing, so we helped him block the drains on his land too. And he wasn't the only one – 15 landowners in the area got in touch wanting to do their bit.

The restored bog at Vyrnwy is now absorbing carbon again and the water that comes off the mountain has less suspended sediment and is less coloured, meaning that the water company needs to spend less on cleaning it before it comes out of people's taps in Liverpool.

As part of our work to win more voices for nature, we asked more people to support our work by joining, and we are delighted that so many did: 3,800 new members signed up in Wales last year – that's a 20% rise and our best ever. One of these was our 10,000th Wildlife Explorer – an all-time high. A good number of these new members were recruited at a brand new RSPB café at South Stack in Anglesey. For years, there had been a greasy-spoon café right in the middle of one of Wales' most iconic landscapes – a place that's awash with gorse and pink sea thrift, with spectacular views of the Irish Sea and coughts wheeling above the cliffs. We'd been trying to acquire this café for ages, and finally the opportunity presented itself this year. We completely revamped the place in a matter of weeks, making it worthy of its wonderful surroundings, and created lots of new jobs for the local community at the same time. In its first year of opening, our South Stack café became one of the RSPB's top-grossing cafés. Quite a feat!

This year, we had 898 volunteers working in Wales – that's equivalent to more than 32 extra full-time staff. We're so grateful to them. The volunteers working on RSPB

Ramsey Island, off the Pembrokeshire coast, got quite a treat this summer – hot water! Up until now, the generator on the island only provided one hour's worth of power, as our diesel supply was so limited, it being so difficult to get fuel across one of the UK's fastest tidal currents. During this hour of power, the volunteers on Ramsey had to get all their cooking and washing done. Often they would miss out on hot water. We've now installed solar panels and a wind turbine on the island, so the volunteers can wash in luxury, and sustainably too.

It's been such a good year for the RSPB in Wales, you might wonder how we can match it next year, but I'm sure we're going to do even better. In 2011, the RSPB celebrates 100 years of working in Wales. We've already had lots of celebratory events, including an exciting new partnership with the Girl Guides movement.

Twenty-thousand Welsh Girl Guides – Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, will have the chance to *Step up for nature* by visiting one of our reserves or futurescapes, and taking part in Big Garden Birdwatch. We launched this new partnership at our Newport Wetlands reserve in autumn 2010, when 600 Girl Guides came for a day of pond dipping, nestbox-making and exploring on the reserve.

As part of our centenary, we've also created a special 'golden curlew' badge, which will be awarded to anyone who can raise £50 or more to support the RSPB's vital work on wader conservation in Wales. With only 600 golden curlew badges made, these are as rare as the real thing in Wales, which has seen declines in breeding curlews in recent years.

Do come along and help us celebrate the centenary at one of our Welsh reserves or Date With Nature events in 2011.



Katie-jo Luxton
Cyfarwyddwr, Cymru

CYMRU

Eleni rydw i wedi profi gwerth byd natur mewn ffordd fwy personol nag erioed o'r blaen.

Cynorthwyodd byd natur gydag achub bywyd fy merch dwy flwydd oed, Carys. Ym mis Mawrth 2010, canfuwyd ei bod yn dioddef o ganser prin iawn. Yn garedig iawn, cefais ganiatâd yr RSPB i roi'r gorau i'm gwaith dros dro. Yn fy lle daeth Laurence Rose o Dîm Gogledd Lloegr a rhannwyd cyfrifoldebau ymysg staff Pencadlys Cymru, a weithiodd yn ddygn i sicrhau bod hon yn flwyddyn hynod o lwyddiannus i'r RSPB yng Nghymru.

Treuliais wyth mis gyda fy merch, yn teithio'n ôl ac ymlaen i ysbytai, yn brwydro am ei bywyd. Rydw i newydd gael gwybod bod ei chanser erbyn hyn wedi cilio. Ni allaf gyfleu pa mor ddiolchgar ydw i. Bellach, a minnau'n ôl wrth fy ngwaith, rydw i'n fwy brwdfrydig nag erioed o'r blaen i warchod ein byd naturiol, oherwydd daeth un o'r prif gyffuriau a achubodd fywyd Carys o flodyn pinc tlws o'r enw perfagl Madagascar. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o gyffuriau sy'n lladd canser hefyd yn lladd celloedd iach, ac yn arbennig o niweidiol i blant, ond mae'r cyffur naturiol hwn yn targedu'r celloedd canser yn unig. Yn awr, diolch i'r planhigyn hwn, mae llawer o blant yn goroesi canser ac yn cael cyfle i fyw bywyd llawn; ac mae fy merch fach yn un ohonynt.

Ni fu'r cysylltiad agos rhwng iechyd dynol a'r byd naturiol erioed yn fwy amlwg i mi, ac mae hyn wedi atgyfnerthu fy mhenderfyniad i wneud popeth posibl i warchod bioamrywiaeth, oherwydd pwy a wŷyr faint o gyffuriau eraill a all achub bywydau sy'n bodoli'r eiliad hon, yn rhai o gynefinoedd mwyaf bregus y byd?

Bu'n flwyddyn o ennill a cholli. Y flwyddyn hon roedd y byd i fod i ddod â cholledion mewn bioamrywiaeth i ben, ond methwyd â gwredu'r targedau hynny. Yn dilyn hyn, Cymru oedd yr unig wlad yn y byd i gynnal ymholiad i ddarganfod pam. A'r rheswm y cynhaliodd Cynulliad

Cenedlaethol Cymru'r ymholiad hwn oedd yr RSPB. Defnyddiwyd y system ddeisebu newydd a lleisiau'n haelodau i fynnu bod ymholiad yn cael ei gynnal. Galwyd ar ddwsinau o bobl, yn cynnwys y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, i gyflwyno tystiolaeth yn yr ymholiad, ac ar ei ddiwedd, cyflwynwyd 20 o argymhellion i helpu i adfer bioamrywiaeth yng Nghymru. Rydym yn obeithiol y bydd y rhain yn rhoi inni'r grym i wireddu targedau 2020 a gytunwyd yn Nagoya. Mae hyn yn dangos yn glir bod pobl yn gallu sicrhau newidiadau positif i'r byd wrth ddod at ei gilydd.

Yma yng Nghymru, rydym wir angen newidiadau positif yn ein dulliau o reoli'r amgylchedd. Dengys adroddiad diweddaraf *Adar o Bryder Cadwraethol*, a lansiwyd gennym eleni, bod 45 o'r rhywogaethau o adar yng Nghymru (sy'n cynrychioli bron i chwarter o'r cyfanswm), bellach ar y rhestr goch, sy'n golygu eu bod mewn perygl mawr. Eleni, ychwanegwyd 18 o rywogaethau newydd at y rhestr goch, gyda saith o'r rhywogaethau hyn yn symud yn syth o'r rhestr werdd (pryder isel) i goch.

Ond rydym wedi profi ei bod yn bosibl sicrhau ffyniant y rhywogaethau hyn. Mae gennyf straeon gwych am lwyddiannau i'w rhannu gyda chi.

Bu'n flwyddyn ragorol i'r rugiar ddu yng Nghymru. Rydym wedi bod yn cydweithio gyda Chyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru (CCGC), Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru (CCC), a llawer o awdurdodau lleol a thirfeddianwyr, yn cynnwys tair stad saethu, i greu cynefin ac amodau delfrydol ar gyfer y rugiar ddu, ac mae'r gwaith yn talu ar ei ganfed. Ym 1997, pan roddwyd ein project y rugiar ddu ar waith, roedd 126 o geiliogod yn arddangos eu hunain. Eleni, roedd 238. Bellach mae'r poblogaethau wedi sefydlogi yn yr ardaloedd lle'r ydym yn gweithio.

Yng Nghymru, mae gennym berthynas arbennig gyda pherchnogion amryw o stadau saethu, sy'n gweithredu fel gwarchodwyr penigamp o gefn gwlad. Heb yr erledigaeth sy'n digwydd mewn rhai rhannau o Brydain, mae'r boda tinwyn wedi gwneud yn arbennig o dda yma. Yn ardal Tirlun

Mae Llyn Efyrnwy'n
ffynnu wedi inni gwblhau
ein project adfer.



i'r Dyfodol Rhostiroedd Gogledd Cymru roedd 57 o fodaod tinwyn yn nythu – y ffigur uchaf ers yr 1950au pan ddychwelodd y boda tinwyn i Gymru. Mae'r gwaith yng Nghymru yn darparu model i bartneriaethau ar ucheldiroedd, ac yn dangos bod modd sicrhau adferiad y boda tinwyn ochr yn ochr â buddion eraill y rhostir.

Llwyddiant arall oedd Project Gorgors Fyw LIFE, a gwblhawyd gennym ar ôl blynyddoedd o waith dygn.

Yn 2005, pan roddwyd y project ar waith, roedd y 10,000 hectar o rostir uwchben Llyn Efyrrwy wedi ei ddraenio ac roedd mewn cyflwr gwael. Roedd hi'n ymddangos yn orchwyl amhosibl i'w adfer. Byddai'n rhaid i ni gau oddeutu 100 cilometr o ffosydd a oedd yn cludo bywyd o'r orgors, ar gost o hanner miliwn o bunnoedd – swm nad oeddem yn credu bod modd ei sicrhau. Ond mewn partneriaeth gyda CCGC, CCC, Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri, United Utilities a thirfeddianwyr lleol, a gyda nawdd LIFE yr UE, llwyddwyd i godi £3.23 miliwn a bellach rydym wedi llenwi 486 cilometr o ffosydd draenio – dyna ddwywaith y pellter o Efyrrwy i Lundain.

Cludwyd 1,100 o blant ysgol i'r orgors i ddangos iddynt yr ardal anhygoel hon fel rhan o'n gwaith maes yma (gyda llaw, enillodd y gwaith hwn raddfa 'ragorol' yn y Cynllun Bathodyn Ansawdd Oddi Allan i'r Dosbarth). Roedd y plant yma wedi byw'n agos i'r orgors ar hyd eu hoes ac nid oedd gan y rhan fwyaf ohonynt unrhyw syniad am ei gwerth i fywyd gwyllt na'i rôl bwysig mewn rheoli cylchoedd dŵr a charbon. Cysylltodd un tirfeddianwr gyda ni gan ddweud bod ei ferch wedi dod yn ôl wedi ymweliad ag Efyrrwy gyda'i dosbarth a mynnu ei fod yn gwneud yr un peth, felly cafodd ein cymorth i lenwi ffosydd ar ei dir ef hefyd. Nid ef oedd yr unig un - cysylltodd 15 o dirfeddianwyr yr ardal â ni a oedd yn dymuno gwneud eu rhan.

Bellach mae'r orgors a adferwyd yn Efyrrwy unwaith

eto'n storio carbon ac mae llai o waddod mewn daliant yn y dŵr sydd hefyd yn oleuach ei liw. Golyga hyn bod y cwmni dŵr yn gwario llai ar ei lanhau cyn iddo lifo o dapiau pobl Lerpwl.

Fel rhan o'n gwaith i sicrhau mwy o leisiau dros fyf natur, gofynnwyd i fwy o bobl gefnogi ein gwaith drwy ymuno â ni, ac rydym yn falch iawn bod cymaint wedi gwneud: ymunodd 3,800 o aelodau newydd yng Nghymru'r llynedd - dyna gynnydd o 20% a'r canlyniad gorau eto. Un o'r rhain oedd y 10,000fed Fforiwr Bywyd Gwyllt - y rhif uchaf erioed. Ymaelododd nifer fawr o'r aelodau newydd yma mewn cafffi newydd sbon yn Ynys Lawd ar Ynys Môn.

Ers blynyddoedd, safai cafffi bwyd cyflym yng nghanol un o dirluniau mwyaf eiconig Cymru - man sy'n cynnal eithin a chlustog Fair, gyda golygfeydd godidog o Fôr Iwerddon a brain coesgoch yn chwyrlio uwchben y clogwyni. Roeddem wedi ceisio prynu'r cafffi hwn ers blynyddoedd, ac o'r diwedd daeth y cyfle eleni. Adnewyddwyd y lle'n gyfan gwbl mewn ychydig o wythnosau'n unig, a sicrhawyd ei fod yn haeddu ei leoliad hyfryd. Crëwyd llawer o swyddi newydd i'r gymuned leol yr un pryd. Yn ei flwyddyn gyntaf, daeth ein cafffi yn Ynys Lawd yn un o gaffis mwyaf proffidiol yr RSPB. Dipyn o gamp!

Eleni, gweithiodd 898 o wirfoddolwyr yng Nghymru - mae hynny gyfystyr â 32 o staff llawn amser ychwanegol. Rydym yn hynod o ddiolchgar iddynt. Cafodd y gwirfoddolwyr ar Ynys Dewi, oddi ar arfordir Sir Benfro, tipyn o hwb yr haf hwn - dŵr poeth! Hyd yma, roedd y cynhyrchydd trydan ymlaen am awr yn unig bob dydd, oherwydd ychydig o ddisel oedd ar gael gan ei bod yn anodd ei gludo ar draws y swnt sydd yn un o'r rhai cyflymaf yn y DU. Yn ystod yr awr yma o bŵer, roedd yn rhaid i holl wirfoddolwyr Ynys Dewi goginio a golchi eu dillad. Yn aml nid oedd digon o ddŵr poeth ar gael. Bellach rydym wedi gosod paneli haul a thyrbin gwynt ar yr ynys, felly mae'r gwirfoddolwyr yn gallu ymolchi mewn moethusrwydd, a

hynny'n gynaliadwy hefyd.

Gan ei bod wedi bod yn flwyddyn mor dda i'r RSPB yng Nghymru, efallai eich bod yn ystyried sut y gallwn sicrhau blwyddyn debyg y flwyddyn nesaf, ond rydw i'n siŵr y gallwn wneud yn well eto. Yn 2011, mae'r RSPB yn dathlu 100 mlynedd o weithio yng Nghymru. Eisoës rydym wedi cynnal lluo o ddigwyddiadau i ddathlu, yn cynnwys partneriaeth newydd gyffrous gyda Geidiau Cymru.

Bydd ugain mil o Geidiau Cymru – Rainbows, Brownies a Geidiau, yn cael cyfle i *Gamu 'Mlaen Dros Natur* drwy ymweld ag un o'n gwarchodfeydd neu dirlun i'r dyfodol, a chymryd rhan yn yr arolwg Gwylio Adar yr Ardd. Lanswyd y bartneriaeth newydd hon ar ein gwarchodfa ar Wlyptiroedd Casnewydd yn hydref 2010, pan ddaeth 600 o Geidiau Cymru draw am ddiwrnod i rwydo'r pwll, gwneud blychau nythu ac archwilio'r warchodfa.

Fel rhan o'n canmlwyddiant, rydym hefyd wedi creu bathodyn 'gylfinir aur' arbennig, a gyflwynir i unrhyw un sy'n codi £50 neu fwy i gefnogi gwaith hanfodol yr RSPB ar gadwraeth rhydwyr Cymru. Gan mai dim ond 600 o fathodynau gylfinir aur a grëwyd, mae'r rhain mor brin â'r gylfinir ei hun yng Nghymru, sydd wedi prinhaus cymaint fel aderyn sy'n nythu yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf.

Cofiwch ddod draw i'n helpu i ddathlu'r canmlwyddiant ar un o'n gwarchodfeydd yng Nghymru neu ddigwyddiadau Amser i Fyd Natur yn 2011.

Mae 20,000 o
Geidiau'n camu 'mlaen
dros natur gyda'r
RSPB yng Nghymru.

MONEY MATTERS

Overview for the year 2010–11

The year ended with a surplus of £4.7 million. With so much conservation work to be done, the RSPB generally likes to put its money to work straightaway, but that is not always possible or even desirable.

The surplus reflects, in part, the somewhat arbitrary timing of the year-end. For example, included in the £4.7 million, £1.2 million was received shortly before the year-end and was earmarked by the donor for a specific project: restoring Bowers Marsh in South Essex. In this case, poor weather prevented the work from being completed but the donor was good enough to endow funds to the RSPB so that work could progress towards completion in the new financial year.

Financial reserves

In fact, about half of the surplus is expected to have been spent before the 2011–12 year-end, still leaving a reasonable sum to add to financial reserves. It is an opportune time to replenish financial reserves a little because the ambitions in our new corporate strategy require investment. Trustees are also mindful of the continuing economic uncertainty and the threats to grant income as a result of the public sector expenditure cuts.

The trustees consider the current level of financial reserves – representing nine weeks' expenditure – to be adequate. There is a fine balance to be struck between holding sufficient to allow work to progress without fear of interruption and leaving money idle in the bank. Financial reserves are divided into those held for specific purposes, and "free reserves". Trustees focus on the latter and measure them in terms of the number of weeks' expenditure that they represent. The RSPB Council has set an acceptable range of 8–16 weeks.

The Charity Commission brought out new guidelines in 2010 (CC18 Charities and reserves) and this prompted the trustees to review RSPB practice and to make some modifications to designated reserves. The guidance recommends that reserves should only be designated where

there is a clear understanding of when and how the sum involved will be spent. As the designated nature reserves fund did not fit well with these criteria, the trustees resolved that the designated status be dropped. The trustees will continue to recognise the special long-term obligations that come with land ownership, but recent recessionary experience has shown that priorities will vary at such times. The trustees therefore wish to retain the flexibility to direct financial reserves to where the need is greatest, and to this end will earmark within unrestricted reserves a 'threat' fund. In view of the broader remit, the threat fund will be calculated by reference to income.

Income

Net income fell slightly compared with last year because we received a large corporate donation in the previous year. The underlying position is that income was flat in real terms – held up by the generosity of members who were kind enough to increase their contributions in spite of challenging economic circumstances. This has compensated for reductions elsewhere. As in 2009–10, we also benefited from significant grants towards our international work – not least from £2.5 million to fund the restoration of peatlands in the Ukraine and Belarus.

With unprecedented conservation challenges and opportunities, a sharply upward income curve would be desirable. But in the real world this is not realistic, so the trustees are both proud and grateful to have been able to sustain major work programmes in spite of the economic turmoil and will endeavour to steer a similar course through the grant cuts following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

In this report last year, concern was expressed about the prospects for legacy income, but so far, this has proved to be unfounded. It is fantastic that so many people want to help safeguard nature for the benefit of those who follow in their footsteps but, as legacy income is notoriously difficult to



Alan Martin
Honorary
Treasurer



Alan Sharpe
Director of Finance

forecast, committing to expenditure that we could not afford if legacy income fell must be avoided.

The importance of the RSPB's diversity of income can not be overstated. It continues to hold us in good stead but it can't be taken for granted. In previous reports we have mentioned the investment in a new approach to member recruitment and more recently, mail order has benefited from a customer service 'makeover'. We knew that our confidence in the Trading Team and in the RSPB's supporters had been completely justified when the annual budget was exceeded after just nine months and customers gave lots of positive feedback. People's expectations of organisations are rising all the time and that applies as much to supporters of charities as to customers of companies. We must continue to be prepared to invest to fulfil these expectations.

Expenditure

Turning to conservation expenditure, we felt that it was right to keep up our recessionary driven challenge to the organisation – that is, to continue to increase conservation without significantly increasing costs. Staff and volunteers have again responded magnificently and we are particularly proud of the RSPB support services, such as Human Resources, Finance and Information Systems, where costs as a proportion of overall expenditure fell for the fifth consecutive year.

In total, charitable expenditure fell by £2.9 million; almost entirely due to reduced land purchases. This is perhaps one of the first and most obvious consequences of grant reductions, although the high price of land is also playing a part. After a run of several years at a historically high rate of expenditure, a single year at a more modest level gives opportunity to draw breath. But we would quickly become concerned if this proved to be longer lasting. Acquiring land is the most enduring way of safeguarding habitat; it would be a disaster for nature

conservation if future generations were forced to witness further loss of biodiversity as a consequence of our generation's financial woes.

International work represents a modest proportion of our total expenditure at about 12%; albeit a very exciting 12%. Spending significant sums in far off places also brings a new dimension to financial control. We are particularly proud of our work on rainforests in Sierra Leone and Sumatra, on peat restoration in Belarus and the Ukraine and our work in the southern oceans in aid of the albatross. A new and bold initiative is about to get underway in the Pacific Ocean: the eradication of rats introduced by boats visiting Henderson Island. It is urgent that we halt the rat predation of ground-nesting birds that is happening on an alarming scale – but it is a costly business. Tribute must be paid to the perseverance of the team who refused to accept that funds could not be found for this project – just over £1.7 million. They and their fundraising colleagues applied themselves to finding new sources of income. This is just one example of the determination and ingenuity essential for all of our work – but especially on the international stage. And those supporters who gave so generously to this project can take enormous credit for making possible a project that looked likely to fall victim to economic circumstances.

Topical issues

The pension deficit fell broadly in line with our deficit recovery plan. An essential piece of the jigsaw fell into place in July 2010 when all active members of the final salary section accepted a reduction in the rate at which their benefits build and a sharing of the risk of increased longevity – and we would just like to acknowledge the constructive manner in which staff accepted these changes. Looking to the future there is another triennial review on the horizon as well as the Government's auto-enrolment into occupational pension schemes,

both of which will bring retirement benefit provision back into the spotlight.

Stock markets were reasonably kind to the pension fund and as a charity it is right and proper that we too hold a modest proportion of our financial reserves in the stock market. The rest is held in forms closer to cash, mainly bonds and bank deposits. Anybody who has savings will know that the returns from cash over the last couple of years has been low, so we have recently started putting a little more into equities and bonds – but rest assured we will always keep in cash sufficient to cover our likely requirements for the next two to three years.

Future prospects

2011 will see the publication of the first strategy produced under new Chief Executive, Mike Clarke, and it will contain challenges that add fresh impetus and focus to our work. Perhaps the most important is the need to increase membership because, quite simply, the more members we have, the more conservation we can achieve.

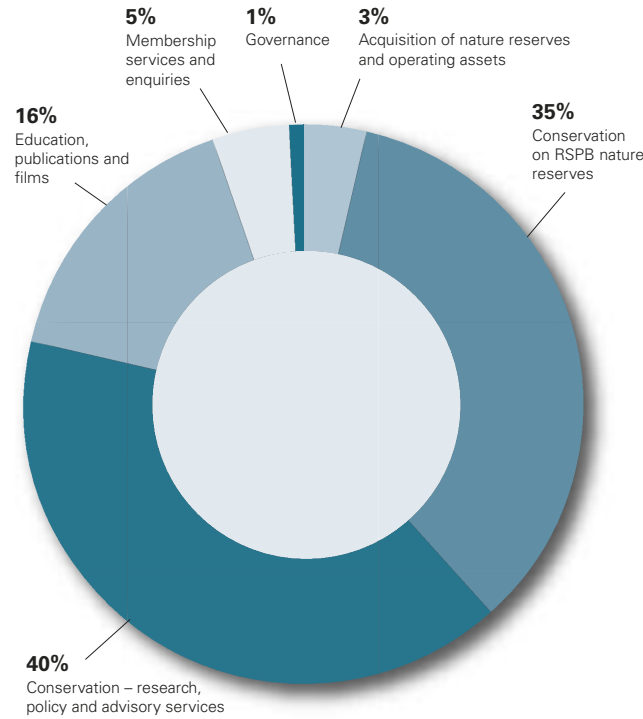
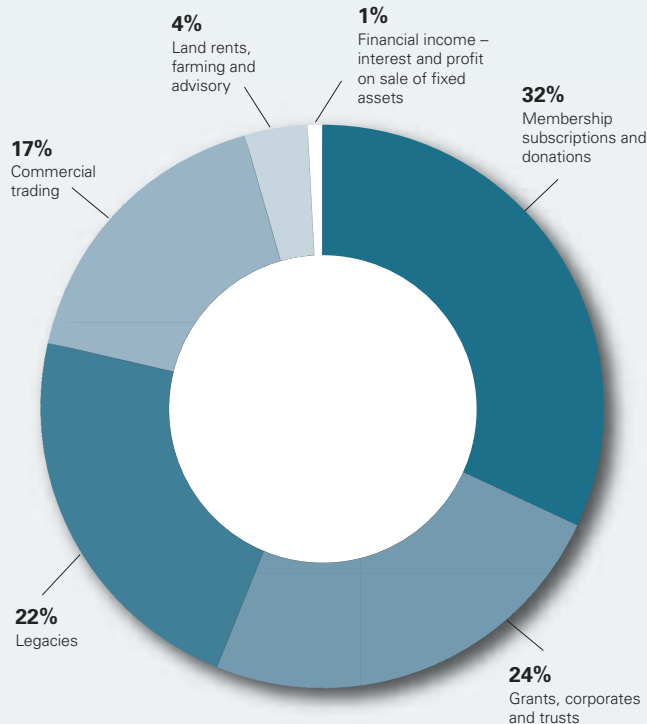
In the continuing economic doom and gloom, it would be easy to become downhearted – grants threatened, gift aid benefits reduced, some costs increasing ahead of inflation (for example, the postage cost of mailing to members is set to increase by almost 20%); each an elephant trap for the unwary. To succeed we must continually challenge ourselves to find new and more efficient ways to deliver our work programmes and to spread the income-generating net even wider.

The hard work and creativity of staff and volunteers, combined with the wonderful support that the RSPB enjoys, continues to serve well the interests of conservation and birds. The continued development of this potent mix is an essential part of the foundation on which the RSPB's next (and every) medium-term strategy must be built.

How we raised it

Money raised for conservation this year was similar to last year at £94.0 million. This sum is net of the £15.7 million cost of generating income and a further £12.8 million cost of goods for resale for our trading operation. The majority of products sold, such as bird food and feeders, optics, wildlife books and videos, relate directly to our charitable objectives.

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



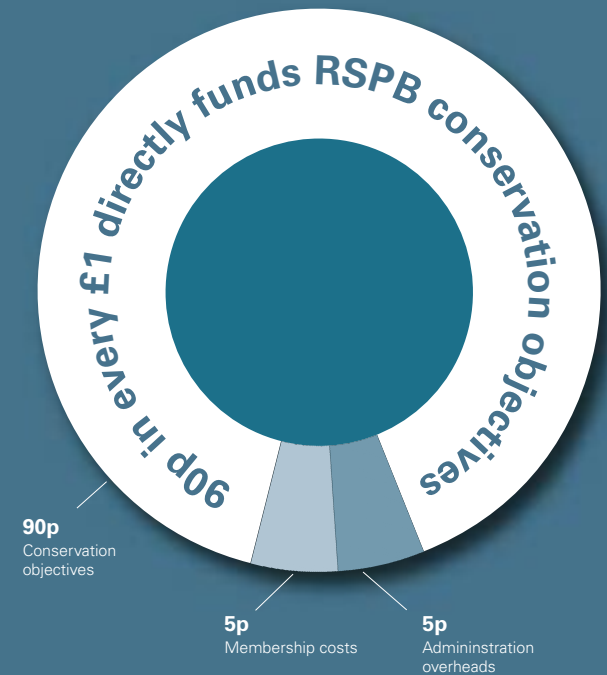
How we used it to save nature

This year we spent £83.4 million on our charitable activities, a fall of £2.9 million on last year. This was due to a £6.1 million reduction in the purchase of nature reserves following the exceptional acquisition of Wallasea in the previous year, and an increase of £3.2 million in spending to further nature conservation.

We deliberately maintain a modest level of free financial reserves to maximise the funds available for immediate conservation needs. These currently stand at £13.5 million and represent nine weeks' expenditure. This is towards the lower end of the range set by the trustees of between eight and sixteen weeks.

Where your £1 goes

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



THE FULL AUDITED ACCOUNTS were authorised for issue on 28 June 2011 and, together with the Annual Report, have been submitted to the Charity Commission. The opinion of the auditor was unqualified. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, the full accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted. Copies can be obtained, free of charge, from the Director of Finance, The RSPB, UK Headquarters, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL.

Signed on behalf of the Council:



Ian Darling
Chairman

28 June 2011

OPERATING STATEMENT

for the year ended 31 March 2011	2011	2010
	£m	£m
INCOME		
Membership subscriptions and donations	39.2	37.0
Grants, corporates and trusts	29.7	32.5
Legacies	27.5	27.9
Commercial trading	20.9	18.9
Land rents, farming and advisory services	4.5	4.6
Financial income – profit on sale of fixed assets and interest	0.7	1.0
TOTAL INCOME	122.5	121.9
COST OF GENERATING INCOME		
Cost of goods for resale	12.8	12.0
Other cost of generating income	15.7	15.2
TOTAL COST OF GENERATING INCOME	28.5	27.2
NET INCOME AVAILABLE FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES	94.0	94.7
EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE PURPOSES		
Acquisition of nature reserves and operating assets	3.0	9.2
Conservation on RSPB nature reserves	28.9	27.6
Conservation – research, policy and advisory services	33.7	32.0
Education, publications and films	13.3	13.3
Membership services and enquiries	4.0	3.8
Governance	0.5	0.4
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	83.4	86.3
NET OPERATING INCOME	10.6	8.4
OTHER MOVEMENTS		
Gain on investment assets	0.9	1.8
Pension scheme	(2.4)	(1.9)
Stock, debtors and creditors	(4.4)	1.1
TOTAL OTHER MOVEMENTS	(5.9)	1.0
MOVEMENT IN AVAILABLE CASH AND INVESTMENTS	4.7	9.4

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

as at 31 March 2011	2011	2010
	£m	£m
Nature reserves	121.7	118.8
Operating assets	4.3	4.2
Cash and investments	34.8	30.1
Stock, debtors and creditors	7.2	2.8
Pension liability	(33.5)	(34.7)
NET ASSETS	134.5	121.2

FINANCIAL RESERVES

as at 31 March 2011	2011	2010
	£m	£m
Available reserves	42.0	32.9
Held for specific purposes	(28.5)	(21.2)
FREE FINANCIAL RESERVES	13.5	11.7

Representing future expenditure cover of **9 weeks** 8 weeks

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out on page 52.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised statements' consistency with the full financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2011.

Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP

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

28 June 2011

Thank you

Our successes this year are not just our successes – they belong to the thousands of supporters, members, businesses, charities and landowners who've worked alongside us, for nature. Thank you all so much.

Members

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

Community groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked unstintingly over the year. Local groups provide a great focus for us in local communities, involve many people in our work, and this year raised over £274,000 for RSPB conservation projects. Wildlife Explorers (our junior members) raised more than £23,000 through their "I'm on the Sea's Side" annual fundraiser, to help protect the UK's marine life.

On behalf of the RSPB, RSPB local groups and Wildlife Explorer groups throughout the UK, we would like to thank Awards For All (supported by the

'good cause' Lottery distributors across the UK) for their continued support of local projects through their community grants scheme.

Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of over 16,775 volunteers this year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 916,998 hours. This is equivalent to an extra 536 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, more than 707,000 people participated in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch and our new Make Your Nature Count survey.

Legacies

Once again, we are deeply moved by the generosity of people who remember the RSPB in their wills. This income makes a tremendous difference to the amount of conservation work the RSPB is able to undertake. We are grateful to each and every one, and we would like to recognise them all by name, but this is not practicable. However, there are a few people who we would like to mention:

Diana Marie Alderson
Marjorie May Aylward
Audrey Louie May Butler
Mavis Gillian Chrystall
Jeannie Isabella Davidson
Rosa Warburton Davis
Alan Geoffrey Gillham
Esther Baird McAlpine Gray
Richard Martin Lee
Frances Eva Nickson
Helen Hermione Sandwith
Ruby Eileen (aka Girlie) Stimson
Herbert Henzell Kidson Wallace
Peter Warren
Violet Patricia Wolterson

Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund

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

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

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

A&K Philanthropy
Adessium Foundation
Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
H B Allen Charitable Trust
Arrowgrass Capital Partners LLP
A J H Ashby Will Trust
Mrs Mary Eileen Back Discretionary Trust

Geoff Ball
Basel Zoo – Across the River
BBC Wildlife Fund
BirdLife International
BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme Lost Species Fund
Boston Environmental Research
British Birdwatching Fair
British Trust for Ornithology
Cambridge Conservation Initiative
Care-for-Nature Trust
Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey
Cheshire Wildlife Trust
City Bridge Trust
Conservation International – Global Conservation Fund
Marjorie Cooper Discretionary Trust
Betty Cooper-Lane Discretionary Trust
Helen Jean Cope
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
Leslie Pamela Donovan Discretionary Trust
Dunard Fund
Ellem Foundation
The European Climate Foundation
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Frankfurt Zoological Society
Mr and Mrs C M Frood
The Gannochy Trust
The Helen and Horace Gillman Trusts
Mrs Bettine E Goldberg Discretionary Trust
David and Sarah Gordon
The Greensands Ridge Partnership
The Greensand Trust
The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Peter Harrison MBE
Miss Grizel R Hume Discretionary Trust
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) through Countdown 2010
Henry Kenner
Christopher and Alida Latham
Lenfest Ocean Program
The A G Leventis Foundation
The Charles Littlewood Hill Trust

Louisoder Foundation
The MacRobert Trust
Andy Maloney
Robert McCracken QC
The Elizabeth C.F. McGregor-Dziniak
Charitable Trust for Animals
Mrs Jean Mitchell Discretionary Trust
Mull and Iona Community Trust
Mull Eagle Watch
The Nature Trust (Sandy) Limited
Alan David Neate Discretionary Trust
Richard Newell
Norfolk Wildlife Trust
The Nutwell Trust
Oglesby Charitable Trust
Susan and Franklin Orr
The David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Paignton Zoo Environmental Park
The Peacock Charitable Trust
Pensthorpe Conservation Trust
People's Postcode Trust
Pew Charitable Trusts
Prince Albert of Monaco Foundation
Restore UK
Miss Joyce Ridding Discretionary Trust
The Robertson Trust
Rose Foundation
The Rufford Foundation
Scottish Agricultural College
Scottish Crofting Foundation
Scottish Environment LINK
Scottish Power Green Energy Trust
The Shears Foundation
Mr Mark Bjarne Sheperd Discretionary
Trust
Nick and Sarah Sherwin
Miss Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable
Trust
The Jessie Spencer Trust
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Nini Isabel Stewart Trust
Mr Eric & Mrs Pauline Stuttard
Discretionary Trust
Sussex Ornithological Society
The Tanner Trust
Teesside Environmental Trust
The Tree Council

The Tubney Charitable Trust
Ulster Garden Villages
University of Leeds
University of Zurich
Vodafone Foundation
Michael and Rosemary Warburg
Waterloo Foundation
Whitley Animal Protection Trust
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
John Young Charitable Settlement

Landfill Communities Fund

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

Angus Environmental Trust
Barr Environmental Ltd
Biffaward
County Durham Environmental Trust Ltd
Down District Council
Falkirk Environment Trust
Glasgow City Council
GrantScape
Highland Council
Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust
Million Ponds project in association with
Biffaward
Newport City Council Landfill
Communities Fund
Newry & Mourne District Council
Perth & Kinross Quality of Life Trust
Shanks First Fund and Argyll and Bute
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SITA Trust
Smith Skip Ltd
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South West Environmental Action Trust
(SWEAT)
Staffordshire Environmental Fund
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Ulster Wildlife Trust Landfill Communities
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Veolia Environmental Trust
Veolia Havering Riverside Trust

Veolia Pitsea Marshes Trust
Viridor Credits
Waste Recycling Group Ltd (WRG)
through Suffolk Environmental Trust
Waste Recycling Group Ltd (WRG)
through Waste Recycling
Environmental Ltd (WREN)

Business supporters and trading partners

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

A&C Black Ltd
AKA
Barclays
BP through the Scottish Forest Alliance
The Caravan Club
CEMEX UK Ltd
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Concept Research Ltd
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Woodmansterne Publications Ltd
Yorkshire Water
Zegrahm Expeditions
Zeon Ltd

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

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Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All
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Big Lottery Fund – Community
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Big Lottery Fund – Community
Wildlife Programme

Bonn Convention for Migratory Species (CMS)	Government and the European Commission	Woodlands for Wales grant)	Northumberland National Park Authority
Cairngorms National Park Authority	East of England Development Agency	Forest of Dean Local Action Group, through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), jointly funded and supported by Defra, Forest of Dean Partnership, Leader, South West Regional Development Agency, and EAFRD: Europe Investing in Rural Areas	Northwest Development Agency, through the RDPE
Cairngorms LEADER 2007-2013, jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission	Energy Saving Trust through the Low Carbon Buildings Programme		Orkney Islands Council
Central Bedfordshire Council	English Heritage		Peak District National Park Authority
Ceredigion County Council	Environment Agency		Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Sustainable Development Fund
CIM (Centre for International Migration and Development – a joint operation of GTZ and the German Federal Employment Agency)	Environment Agency Wales		Renfrewshire LEADER 2007–2013, jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission
Countryside Council for Wales	Environment Wales		Sandy Town Council
The Crown Estate’s Marine Communities Fund	Estyn Llaw		Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
Dartmoor National Park Authority	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)		Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Sustainable Development Fund	European Commission – DG Environment		Scottish Government Science Engagement Grants Scheme
Department for Education	European Commission – LIFE+		Scottish Government Third Sector Enterprise Fund
Department for International Development (DfID) – Civil Society Challenge Fund	European Commission – LIFE-Nature		Scottish Natural Heritage
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	European Commission – LIFE-Information and Communications		Snowdonia National Park Authority
Defra, through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by Natural England	European Commission (Seventh Framework Programme) – EuroGEOSS project		South Downs Joint Committee Sustainable Development Fund
Defra – Darwin Initiative	European Commission – Tropical Forests and Other Forests in Developing Countries budget line		South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
Defra / Flora & Fauna International Flagship Species Fund	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)		Staffordshire County Council through Defra’s Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)	ERDF – INTERREG IVA 2 Seas Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013		Strathclyde Police
Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	ERDF – INTERREG IVA administered by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB)		Suffolk County Council Corporate Regeneration Fund
DECC under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme Phase 2 E, distributed by BRE	ERDF – INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Transnational Programme 2007–2013		Teinbridge District Council
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland	ERDF – INTERREG IVB North Sea Region Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007–2013		USAID STEWARD Programme
Department of Environment in Northern Ireland	ERDF – INTERREG IVB North West Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007–2013		US Fish and Wildlife Service
Devon County Council	Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) / DfID – Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP)		Welsh Assembly Government
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Forestry Commission England		Welsh Assembly Government through the Department of Economy and Transport
Dumfries and Galloway LEADER 2007–2013, jointly funded by the Scottish	Forestry Commission Scotland		West Cornwall Local Action Group, through RDPE, jointly funded and supported by Defra, Cornwall Development Company, Leader, South West Regional Development Agency and EAFRD: Europe Investing in Rural Areas
	Forestry Commission Wales		Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
	Forestry Commission Wales (Better		

I CAMPAIGNED TO
STOP CLIMATE CHAOS



I VOLUNTEER AT MY
LOCAL RSPB RESERVE



We did the Big
Garden Birdwatch



I look after my
farm for wildlife

Please **step up** for nature.
Do **something small** today and be
part of **something big**.

Nature is in big trouble

The signs are everywhere, from our back gardens to the rainforests.

Stepping Up For Nature is your chance to help the RSPB save nature. There are simple steps each of us can take, which, when we act together, will help the UK's wildlife thrive once again. It's also about enjoying the wild outdoors, because it's great to be out in the fresh air, doing something to help the wildlife you love, isn't it?

www.rspb.org.uk/steppingup



**STEPPING UP
FOR NATURE** ✓

Campaigner by David Levenson, Big Garden Birdwatch participants by Eleanor Bentall, volunteer by Kaleel Zibe, farmer by Andrew Hay, great yellow bumblebee by Mike Edwards, turtle dove by Bob Glover, house sparrow by Ray Kennedy, water vole by Ben Hall (all rspb-images.com)

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

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



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

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

www.rspb.org.uk

Red Kite in Wales by Andrew Parkinson (rspb-images.com)
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity:
England & Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654 350-0608-10-11

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