



Our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Commitment: An Overview

Working towards a better future for nature and people





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1 Introduction

As the largest nature conservation charity in the UK, we at the RSPB are committed to more sustainable ways of delivering our valuable work. We are working to minimise negative environmental impacts and integrate environmental best practice across our business operations.

This overview describes our commitments and targets, and the measures that we will take, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that result from our operations.

We have set reduction targets covering the short-term, up to 2030, and long-term, up to 2045.

Our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Commitment relates to our business emissions and forms the 'reduction' element of 'LARK', the RSPB's wider response to climate change (**L**and, **A**daptation, **R**eduction and **K**nowledge).

The following sections outline:

- our **commitment** to reduce the impact of our operations and resulting effect on climate change
- our **base year emissions** and **reduction targets** from 2025 to 2045
- **actions and progress** to date
- our **planned greenhouse gas reduction measures**
- a **reduction route map** showing our proposed timescales and our forecast reductions
- how we will **implement this commitment and secure the resources to ensure success**
- how our commitment contributes to **wider climate goals and agreements**
- and finally, our **action and planning**.



2 Our commitment

Our Strategy to 2030 includes 'RSPB Greening' as one of ten strategic outcomes. We also have Strategic Results directly associated with Greening, one of which is greenhouse gas reduction from our business operations, with targets for 2030 and an aspiration to 2045.

We have a Greening Programme that ensures we assess and reduce environmental impacts across the whole organisation.

We have an Environmental Management System (EMS) demonstrating our commitment to continual improvement, seeking to reduce our negative impact and maximise our positive impact on the environment.

We are committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from our operations, which forms part of our wider climate change response.

3 The starting line – our baseline emissions

We have been calculating our annual greenhouse gas emissions for several years and publish these in our annual reports. We have significantly improved our emissions calculation methods and expanded the range of our reported emissions to include previously unavailable data in several categories to give a more complete picture of our impact. As a result, we are using the financial year ending March 2025 as the baseline year against which our new targets have been set and future progress will be tracked.

Improving our emissions reporting and the available data sources is an ongoing process and we will continually reassess and recalculate our baseline values if significant changes in methodology or conversion factors occur. We will be transparent and explain any necessary changes to our reporting methods and data sources.

What do we report on?

Emissions reporting, or an organisation's 'carbon footprint', is typically split into three main categories or 'scopes'.



Scope 1

These emissions are 'direct' emissions – the greenhouse gases are emitted directly from a site, piece of equipment, or vehicle. They are the result of using fuels to provide heat and hot water for buildings, using vehicles in our fleet and using fuel-powered machinery. These fuels typically include natural gas, heating oil, petrol and diesel, LPG and woodfuels, which emit greenhouse gases when burnt.



Scope 2

These emissions result from our use of purchased electricity. They are 'indirect' emissions in that they are not produced at the point of use, but at another location, typically a power station.

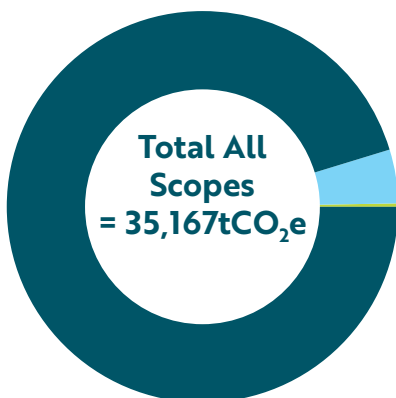


Scope 3

These indirect emissions include those from purchased goods and services, waste generated in operations, business travel, employee commuting and homeworking, leased buildings, distribution and processing of retail and commercial products. These are sometimes described as 'upstream' and 'downstream' operational emissions.

Baseline (2025)

All Emissions by Scope (tCO₂e)



- **Scope 1**
1,555
4.42%
- **Scope 2**
92
0.26%
- **Scope 3**
33,520
95%

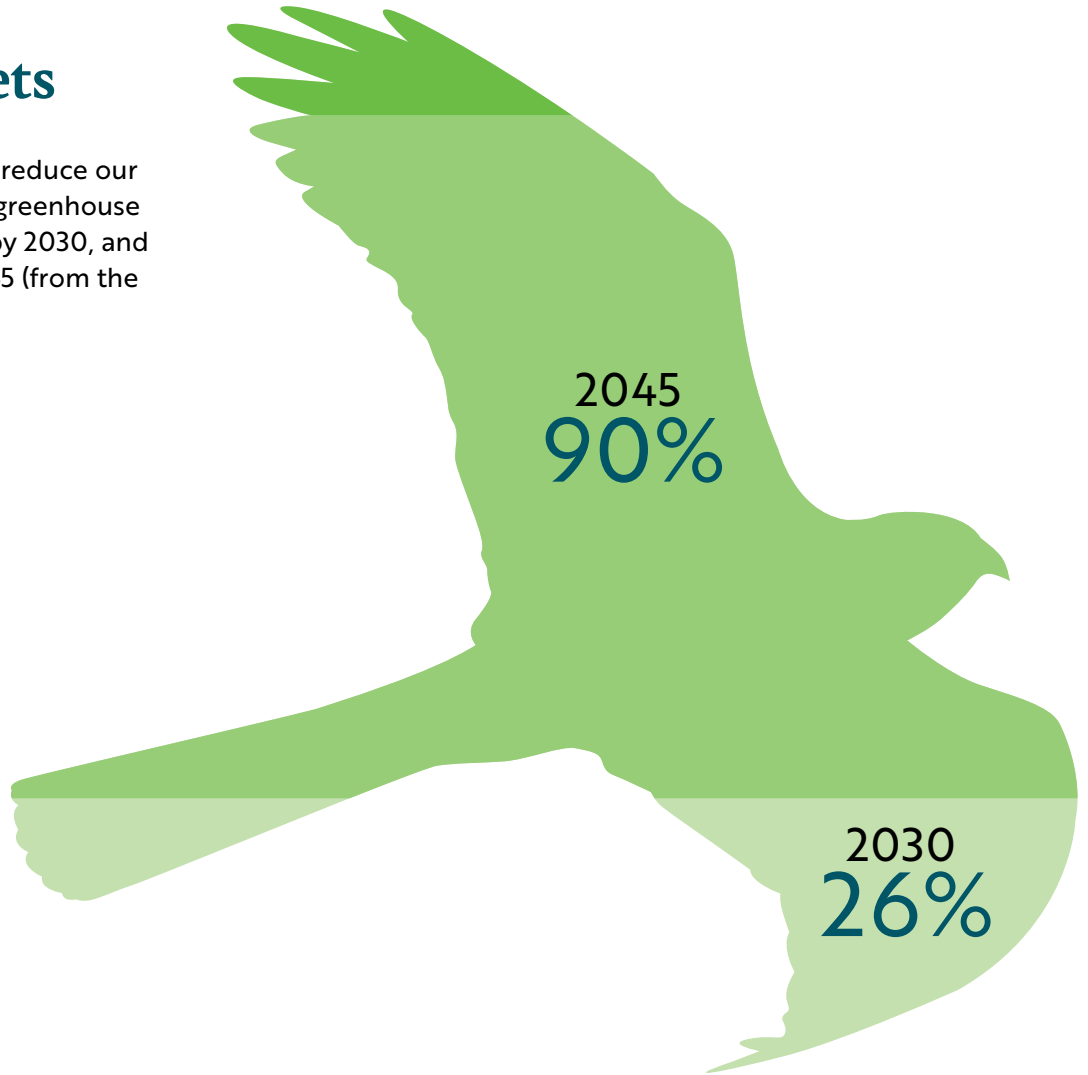
Emissions

Emissions are calculated in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

A breakdown and further details of our annual emissions are provided in our annual report.

4 Our targets

We have set targets to reduce our business emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 26% by 2030, and by at least 90% by 2045 (from the 2025 baseline figure).



Scope	Baseline emissions 2025 (tCO ₂ e)	Target reduction by 2030 (% of baseline)	Target reduction by 2030 (tCO ₂ e)	Target reduction by 2045 (% of baseline)	Target reduction by 2045 (tCO ₂ e)
Scope 1	1,555	50%	778	100%	1,555
Scope 2	92	100%	92	100%	92
Scope 3	33,520	25%	8,380	90%	30,168
Combined Total (Scope 1,2 & 3)	35,167	26%	9,249	90%	31,815
Total (Scope 1 & 2)	1,647	53%	870	100%	1,647

We have set targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions for each scope, as shown in the table above. Our 100% target for scope 2 reflects our goal to source all our electricity through ‘zero-emissions’ sources by 2030. The scope 3 category has the largest baseline emissions; our goal is for these to be reduced by at least 90% by 2045.

5 Progress to date

We have already delivered a wide range of emissions reduction measures, some of which are detailed below.

- **Wind turbine at Sandy, Bedfordshire**

In 2016, through a partnership-funded project, we installed an 800kW wind turbine at our UK head office in Sandy. In an average year, the turbine generates around 1,600MWh of electricity – the equivalent of 50% of our total electricity requirements across all our UK sites.

- **Solar PV installations**

We have been installing solar photovoltaic (PV) systems at our sites since 2004 and now have over 50 systems with a total capacity of over 500kWp. These generate over 300MWh of electricity per year – equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of over 120 typical houses.

- **Building energy efficiency**

We have an ongoing maintenance programme for all buildings at our sites and have installed

many energy efficiency improvements. These include better insulation, glazing, lighting and heating systems, reducing our energy demand.

- **Fleet and business travel**

Our business travel and fleet vehicles are a significant area where we can reduce emissions and costs. We have installed telematics in the majority of our vehicles, which is helping us understand travel patterns and driving efficiency and will inform future improvement decisions. We have also begun replacing petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles (EV) and installed EV charge points at several of our reserves for the use of both our staff and visitors. We have an established Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which guides staff to prioritise the most sustainable travel methods when planning business trips. In the 10 years to 2021, emissions from our business travel reduced by over 30%.

Section 11 provides some more detailed case studies of emissions reductions across the RSPB.



Solar panels at RSPB Minsmere

6 Our commitment to further emissions reductions

With the publication of this overview, we are scaling up and prioritising emissions reductions. Actions are underway in many areas and plans are being honed across all areas of the RSPB's operations:

- **Building energy use**

We will focus on our buildings to really drive down their emissions, setting high energy efficiency standards for any refurbishment and new build. Our focus is on reducing heat loss and improving heating controls, changing to energy efficient lighting and using improved energy monitoring to target where our investment can make the biggest difference.

- **Energy supply and management**

Most of our electricity is currently purchased through a 'zero-emissions' contract. We will extend this to ensure all remaining sites are on zero emissions supplies. We will reduce and replace remaining fossil fuels used for heating and equipment with electricity or renewable energy sources.

- **Business travel and transport**

We have projects underway to reduce the impact of our travel and our fleet vehicles. The focus is on reducing and replacing across our fleet. We will phase in the replacement of petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles. Telematics and driver training are being implemented to maximise driving efficiency. We will continue to address emissions from business miles through our Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and other initiatives, such as online meetings and training. We monitor and will seek to reduce commuting and home working emissions, which also affect building energy usage.

- **Purchased goods and services**

A large proportion of our baseline emissions result from this scope 3 category. These are indirect emissions from the goods and services we buy and use. Our procurement team are working to improve environmental performance

as a key factor in contractor and supplier selection to drive down these emissions. We will require more suppliers to provide emissions data to improve the accuracy of our emissions reporting and enable us to make ever greener purchasing decisions.

- **Governance, management and behaviour change**

We will ensure that decision-making at all levels of the organisation is informed by our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Commitment. At the RSPB, all projects and programmes undertake environmental impact assessments. Our Environmental Management System and Climate and Environmental Dashboard enable us to monitor, implement and track the progress of emissions reduction measures. We will promote best practice amongst our staff and volunteers, including behaviour change initiatives.

- **Digital technology**

As digital technology plays an ever-increasing role in our operations, we will seek ways to minimise the emissions impacts from this area. We will implement data efficiency and storage solutions to reduce energy demand and the quantity of redundant data storage.

- **Logistics and distribution**

We will continue to drive down emissions from the distribution and logistics operations that we contract to deliver our products and services. Like our purchased goods and services plans, we will source improved data from our logistics partners and identify lower emission alternatives.

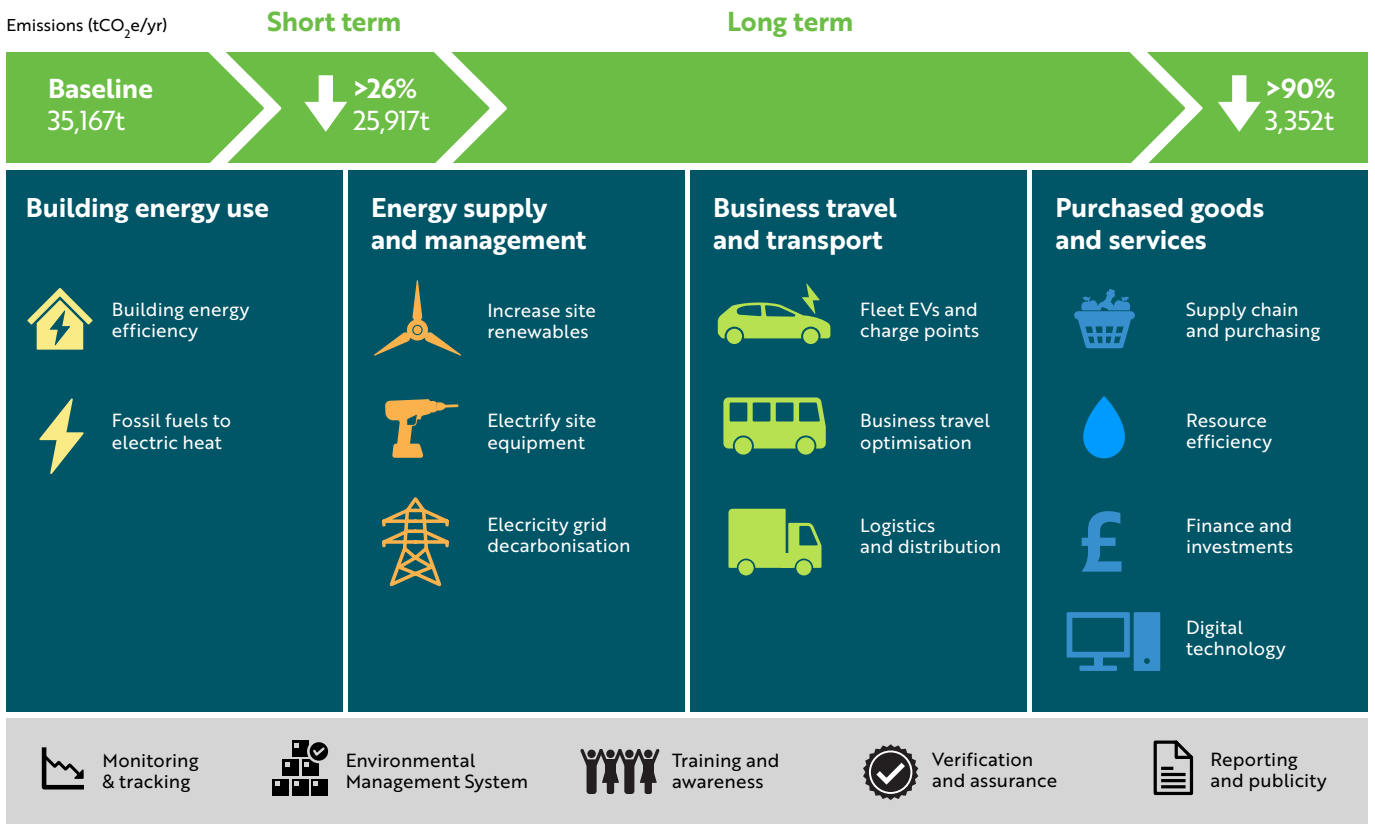
- **Resource use**

We have well-established waste management practices and have a project seeking to further reduce waste from all operations and increase our resource efficiency. We will also implement water efficiency measures at our sites to reduce our consumption and with a focus on sustainable drainage.

7 Our reduction route map

Our reduction route map sets out our targets and areas for action concisely and visually. This will guide our more detailed action plans and help us keep on track and keep the bigger picture in view. The tonnages stated in the route map are reductions of at least 26% and at least 90%, but they are not exact percentages of the baseline.

Reduction route map



Enablers

8 Achieving the targets – our enablers

Leadership and communications

Our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Commitment has been approved by our Executive Board, and the environment team is communicating its aims and targets to all staff, volunteers and external stakeholders.

Evidence-based action

The measures we have identified as steps to reduce emissions will be analysed and prioritised to ensure that we make informed decisions and prioritise those that are most effective. We are committed to implementing measures using evidence-based decision-making and weighing potential 'trade-offs'. For example, when moving from petrol or diesel vehicles to electric, we will aim to charge vehicles using electricity from zero or low-carbon sources whenever possible.

Management system

We have a well-established Environmental Management System (EMS) across the RSPB. This has continuous improvement at its core with targeted objectives and improvement plans. This system will be used to manage the implementation of emissions reduction measures and monitoring of progress. It also drives forward our external accreditation, currently Groundwork's Green Dragon standard.

Monitoring and tracking

Our Climate and Environmental Dashboard provides automation of data collection and clear ongoing information on our emissions and other impacts. The dashboard will allow us to track and monitor the impacts of our reduction measures faster and take actions with better evidence to back our decisions. We will recalculate our emissions baseline if significant changes to our operations occur or if new data or calculation methods become available; we will explain these changes in our emissions reports.

Resourcing the measures

The RSPB has earmarked funds for initial investment in emissions reduction. In many cases these investments will reduce both emissions and operating costs. We will explore options for the most viable funding mechanisms, such as grants and partnership programmes, alongside ongoing core expenditure. Many of the measures will require specific skills, staff and time resources. We have a specialist environment team that drives change and works with colleagues across the organisation. We work with and create synergies with a range of existing projects and operations across the RSPB to maximise emissions reductions.





Our staff and volunteers are encouraged to travel sustainably

9 Alignment with wider climate goals

We have developed our reduction targets and timescales to align with the levels and rates of global emissions reductions that are required to keep global warming within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. When reporting our greenhouse gas emissions and setting reduction targets, we use methods recommended by the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#).

The RSPB is a signatory of the UN Global Compact. This commits us to ensure we look at our internal operations through the cross-cutting lens of environmental, social and governance (ESG)

performance. This Greenhouse Gas Reduction Commitment specifically supports the following compact principles: Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Our greenhouse gas reductions will also contribute to country-wide, UK and global targets and we will continue to advocate externally for vital action.

10 Reduction taskforce – action and planning

We have convened a taskforce to plan and drive actions to meet the commitments set out in this overview. This team will work with key stakeholders and extend actions to reduce emissions across every part of the RSPB. Greening is everybody's responsibility.

We will continually monitor progress against our targets and review and adapt our reduction measures as our activities or external factors change, and as new technologies and reduction opportunities arise.

We will conduct a wider review of our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Commitment at 5-year intervals to ensure we remain on track to meet our targets.

We are currently assessing our land use change and land management emissions in detail. As soon as we have a full inventory of these emissions and removals, we will be able to incorporate them fully into our reduction actions. This will ensure the RSPB has a comprehensive climate change response plan, incorporating the business emissions set out fully in this commitment



11 Case studies – reducing business emissions



Replacing petrol-fuelled tools with electric alternatives not only reduces direct scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions, but also means less fumes, smoke and noise

Electrification of reserve equipment

We have begun replacing petrol-fuelled equipment used for our conservation work with rechargeable battery alternatives. As we continue to purchase electricity through approved zero-emissions contracts, these replacements effectively eliminate the direct scope 1 emissions from combustion of fuels for these items.

RSPB Bempton Cliffs has replaced several site tools with electric versions. These tools not only reduce the emissions from burning petrol but also mean operators are not exposed to petrol fumes and smoke. The electric versions also typically have lower noise and vibration levels, require less maintenance and servicing and reduce the risk of pollution from fuel spills.



The electric off-road vehicle at Corrimony reduces our use of diesel and the associated emissions, as well as reducing noise impacts

Electrification of reserve vehicles

We have been trialling an electric all-terrain vehicle at RSPB Corrimony. The vehicle has zero direct emissions and operates with significantly lower noise. It has been successfully used to transport equipment and staff to remote parts of the reserve across some very rough ground.

Reserve staff also use the vehicle to take visitors on wildlife safaris and to visit Black Grouse leks. The much quieter vehicle creates far less disturbance for the birds, which results in better views and more sightings and less impact on their behaviour.

Moving to electric machinery on reserves also reduces the need to store and carry fuel, which reduces the risk of spills and pollution of land and water.



Forsinard Field Centre was constructed to ensure high levels of energy efficiency and achieved an Energy Performance Certificate 'A' rating.

Building energy efficiency

In 2016, we constructed the Flows Field Centre at RSPB Forsinard Flows to provide a vital workspace for staff and accommodation for visiting volunteers. We incorporated many energy efficient aspects into the design and construction, including high-specification double glazing, roof, wall and floor insulation as well as energy efficient LED lighting and underfloor heating. The building's heat and hot water is provided using a woodchip boiler system which reduces the requirement for fossil fuels or electric heating. The building achieved a grade 'A' Energy Performance Certificate.

At UK Headquarters, other hub offices and our bigger visitor centres we have replaced older lighting with low energy alternatives. At UKHQ this resulted in a 65% reduction in electricity use and the cost savings provided a payback on the initial cost of around two years. At Newport Wetlands, lighting replacements reduced consumption by 56%, an energy saving of 10,800kWh per year.



We have installed charging points at Minsmere, which improves the ability for staff and visitors to move to electric vehicles

Electrification of fleet

We have already replaced around 40 diesel vans with electric versions and have installed charging facilities at several of our offices and sites. The charging points allow staff and visitors to recharge vehicles while at work or visiting our reserves. Our move to electric vehicles will continue and expand as we improve our fleet travel efficiency.



Move to e-magazine

We have been encouraging our members to move from our paper-based magazine to our digital 'e-magazine'. This avoids the need for significant energy, paper and ink used in the printing and production process. There is also no waste when members have finished reading their magazine and there are further emissions reductions from avoided transport and distribution.

We doubled the number of memberships that took up the digital magazine option in the 2024-25 period, moving from around 20,000 to 40,000 members. Our remaining paper magazines switched to using paper that has the lowest production emissions in the world; it is also lighter in weight, saving around 12% of paper usage per issue.



RSPB South Stack has replaced oil-fired heating with heat pumps – this minimises electricity consumption when moving away from fossil-fuel heating systems

Low carbon heat

At RSPB South Stack in Wales, we installed three air-source heat pumps, with a total power output of 42kW, to replace oil-fired heating when the visitor centre was rebuilt in 2020. The heat pumps operate in conjunction with roof-mounted solar panels, which further reduce the demand for purchased electricity.

As we move away from fossil-fuelled heating systems to electric, the use of heat pumps ensures we also minimise the new demand for electricity. We have installed several heat pumps to provide space heating and hot water at our sites and will continue to do so as we replace more of our oil and gas systems.



Solar panels at RSPB Belfast Window on Wildlife reduce our purchased electricity demands and lower running costs

Renewable energy

We installed solar panels on the roof of the visitor centre at Belfast Window on Wildlife in 2014. The 1kWp system generates approximately 2,800kWh of electricity per year that helps reduce our demand for grid electricity and reduces running costs.

We now have over 50 solar photovoltaic (PV) systems across our reserves and buildings. In 2019 we installed carports with integrated solar panels at nine of our reserves. We will continue to consider and install renewable energy options across our sites and when carrying out refurbishments or new building work.

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