



2024–25

Annual report

Restoring nature for wildlife, people and the planet



From restoring habitats to protecting species, everything we do aims to help create a world where wildlife and people can thrive.

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The front cover of the report depicts a peatland scene which has been created by illustrator Lucy Davey (lucydavey.co.uk). You can read more about the RSPB's work to restore peatland habitats to benefit birds and other wildlife on pages 34–37.

Welcome

Our Chair of Council and Chief Executive reflect on the events of the past year, as we continue our work to protect and restore nature.



I have been so inspired in my first 12 months as Chair of Council, visiting our reserves and meeting our staff and volunteers. Their expertise and enthusiasm, and the science underpinning all our work, is key to protecting and restoring bird species. Truly, the RSPB is an indispensable organisation.

It has been a testing time. The continuing cost of living crisis, a new government in Westminster and a global politics less committed to conservation and net zero, have all set challenges. The Council has had to take some difficult decisions. But I am confident we are in good shape and on the right track.

We undertook a review of our operations to ensure we are using our resources effectively and to strengthen the RSPB's ability to protect and restore nature across its network of reserves. We concluded that whilst we had to make some changes to our reserve operations, we are now better set up for long-term sustainability and to achieve our conservation objectives.

Adding to the land we manage is always exciting. This last year has seen major acquisitions which will be transformational. Thanks to the generosity of donors and supporters we added the final piece of the jigsaw at RSPB Geltsdale in Cumbria, which is now our largest reserve in England. This will become a flagship for what Britain's upland landscapes could look like.

In Essex, we added 100 hectares to RSPB Wallasea Island. Already a ground-breaking project and an extraordinary place for wildlife, the £2.2 million grant – the largest we have ever received from a trust – means we now own the whole island, which we can make an even more welcoming stop-off for migrating birds. It welcomed some 39,000 last winter.

"A big thank you. Your support is vital to our mission, and we could not achieve what we do without you."

And in Wiltshire, we are delighted to be taking over the management of Roundbarrow Farm. Over the coming years we will be transforming this former intensive dairy farm into a chalk grassland and woodland nature reserve, benefiting species such as the Stone-curlew and Chalkhill Blue butterfly.

Our work both at home and abroad has gained international recognition over the past year. For example, we won Prince William's Earthshot Prize in the 'Protect and Restore Nature' category for our work on the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative in Kazakhstan. Using the £1 million award we will be able to scale up our partnership work here to help wildlife, such as Steppe Eagles, across an area roughly the size of Turkey.

And in Scotland, the world's largest swathe of blanket bog, which includes RSPB Forsinard Flows, has been awarded World Heritage Site status. The Flow Country joins other iconic sites, such as the Great Barrier Reef, offering a brighter future for birds such as Greenshanks and Black-throated Divers. Now we need to get the same status for the UK's East Coast Wetlands.

We have also been holding governments to account on everything from farming support policy, to planning law, to nature conservation, and offshore wind infrastructure. Our public policy work is essential to get better decisions for the future of nature in the UK.

But without our members none of this would be possible. A big thank you. Your support is vital to our mission, and we could not achieve what we do without you.

Sir Andrew Cahn
Chair of Council

We live in tumultuous times and the past year has been dominated by global geo-political upheaval. But amidst all the challenges and noise the world faces, I firmly and passionately believe that with civil society organisations like the RSPB and our wonderful members, volunteers and supporters behind us, our wildlife and wild places do have a voice. You can read more about our policy and campaign work on page 24.

Above all, the RSPB offers hope, based on our many years of experience of understanding and reversing the fortunes of species. Hope that the downward trajectory of birds and the decline of landscapes can be bent upwards towards recovery. Every sinew of this organisation is striving for that, as you can read in the many examples brought to life in this *Annual Report*.

In 2021, we said we would measure our progress each year and conduct a fuller review at the midpoint of our 10-year strategy. True to that, we have been busy taking stock of our achievements to date, the new challenges and opportunities we face, and clarifying our direction for the remaining five years to 2030.

Are the outcomes we set ourselves in the midst of the pandemic still right today? Where are we at the RSPB uniquely placed to deliver impact? What can we really deliver with the resource that we have available to us?

We will share the results in the next Annual Report, but our mission remains the same. We want to see a shared world where wildlife, wild places and all people thrive. To achieve this we must advance the conservation of birds, wildlife and the natural world, and help end the nature and climate emergency.

We will continue to:

- save our 100 priority species, both in the four countries of the UK and around the world. These are species like the Puffin, Turtle Dove and Curlew, which are most in need of conservation action and where we are uniquely placed at the RSPB to deliver impact.



- transform 25 key landscapes for nature across the UK – delivering conservation at scale both on our own nature reserves, but also through partnerships and within the wider landscape.
- work in unison with our BirdLife International partner organisations to protect and restore species and landscapes around the world – particularly on global flyways for migratory birds and in the UK Overseas Territories.
- tackle the systemic drivers of nature loss, for example by advancing the cause of nature-friendly farming within our food system and tackling the pressures affecting seabirds in the marine environment.
- grow our supporter base to 1.5 million members, because we believe we can only achieve nature's recovery by coming together in our efforts.

"I passionately believe that with organisations like the RSPB and our wonderful members, volunteers and supporters behind us, our wildlife and wild places do have a voice."

To do this we will continue to use all of the skills, experience and perspectives that make this organisation such a unique force in saving nature: working across species, science, policy, places and people.

Together we fly.

Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

About the RSPB

The RSPB is a charity for the conservation of birds and nature. We bring people together who love and want to discover more about birds and other wildlife, and who want to take action to restore the natural world.



We were founded in 1889 by Emily Williamson, Eliza Phillips and Etta Lemon to fight against the fashion for feathers.

Our purpose

Our purpose is to advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world, by protecting and restoring habitats and landscapes, saving species and connecting people to nature, for public benefit.

We recognise that the health and resilience of individuals, our society and the economy is dependent on the health and sustainability of the planet's ecosystems. We know that birds, other wildlife and the habitats on which we all depend are interconnected.

Our vision

Our vision is a shared world where wildlife, wild places, and all people thrive. We believe we're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species and it has the right to flourish. We believe that the planet is facing a nature and climate emergency and that we have a moral duty to pass on the natural world in a better state to future generations.

How we deliver public benefit

We carry out conservation work that you can see from space, built from the ground up. We are effective because we bring the breadth of our capabilities to bear on the complex challenges facing species and ecosystems. The RSPB's strategy sets out how we meet those challenges to make a difference over the current decade. Find out more in the sections 'Our highlights' (pages 12–65), 'Our impact', (pages 66–77) and 'Looking to the future' (pages 78–79).

Royal Charter

Like many historic not-for-profit institutions, the RSPB was established by Royal Charter, which was originally granted in 1904. Together with the Statutes, the Charter defines the RSPB's purpose and powers, its operating rules and guidelines. As a Royal Charter non-statutory body, the RSPB was subsequently registered as a charity in 1962.

Objects of the RSPB

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

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

Governance

The RSPB is committed to the highest standards of governance, following the Charity Governance Code. How we apply the Code is described throughout this report, in particular on pages 86–97. By setting and reviewing strategic objectives, the RSPB's Trustees test, refine and account for the performance and delivery of the organisation and plan for new challenges as they emerge. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities.

Patron

His Majesty the King.

We advance the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and the natural world.

We protect and restore habitats and landscapes, save species and connect people to nature.

A shared world
where wildlife, wild places,
and all people thrive.

Protecting nature for over 130 years

We have a long history of protecting threatened wildlife and wild places, and we are determined to realise a world where nature can thrive alongside people.

What we do

We work locally in the UK and around the world protecting habitats, saving species and addressing the nature and climate emergency. We do this through five main work areas: **science, species, places, people** and **policy**.

We're proud that we can apply our broad capabilities to the many complex challenges facing species and ecosystems to make a positive difference.

Science

Our world-leading research allows us to take a 'bird's-eye view' of the overarching problems facing nature and the planet, and then identify the solutions that make a real difference. We establish the conservation interventions that will have the most impact, and then we monitor and test these actions to measure success.

Species

The survival of wildlife species is the best sign of whether conservation is working. We are an evidence-based conservation organisation working to protect species from a huge variety of threats like habitat loss, decline of food sources, and threats from introduced species.

Policy

To save nature, we must tackle the drivers of its decline, and put laws, policies and funding in place to help save it. All too often, political decisions don't consider nature. That's why we've been advocating, campaigning, influencing and successfully securing laws to protect nature for 135 years. Taking action will always be at the heart of what we do at the RSPB.

Places

Nature needs other nature to survive. That's why we work to create more, bigger, better and well-connected protected areas for nature on land and at sea. We manage more than 200 nature reserves in the UK from the Shetlands to the Suffolk coast.

People

We're all connected by the wonder of nature. The health of the natural world is fundamental to the survival of all species – including us. Together with our amazing members, volunteers, supporters and partners, as well as communities, farmers, campaigners, landowners, business leaders and many more, we all work to save nature.

How we do it

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

We act

Our evidence-based conservation work shows that birds and other wildlife will thrive if they're given a chance. We're intensifying our efforts to give nature more opportunities to recover, every single day. We carry out conservation across land- and sea-scapes, protect and restore habitats and save birds and other wildlife from extinction. We won't stop while the threat to nature persists.

We influence

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

We collaborate

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

We empower

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

We act,
we influence, we collaborate,
and we empower.

Our strategy

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

Six strategic shifts to increase our impact

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

- 1 Delivering conservation at greater scale, through deeper collaborations.**
As the UK's largest nature conservation organisation, we have a vital role to play in ensuring nature's recovery. But the challenge is too big to tackle alone, so we want to develop stronger partnerships with other organisations, businesses, governments and individuals to increase our collective impact.
- 2 Enabling more, and more diverse, people to act for nature.**
Nature is in crisis, and we all need to act to save it. But increasingly, people are disconnected from the natural world. That's why we will reach out to more people, of all ages and all backgrounds, to give them the opportunity to discover the joys of nature and act to save it.
- 3 Being a bolder and more influential campaigning organisation.**
We're in the midst of a nature and climate emergency, but it's clear that decision-makers are not going far or fast enough to tackle it. We'll be bolder, and campaign harder, to ensure the plight of nature is no longer ignored or side-lined. We need to turn warm words and pledges from government into legally-binding targets and well-funded actions to restore nature by 2030.
- 4 Becoming more relevant to the world we're trying to change.**
If we're to achieve our vision of creating a world richer in nature, we need as many people as possible on nature's side, taking action to protect the birds and other wildlife that they love. By becoming a more inclusive organisation that represents the diversity of the people and communities we work with, we can encourage more people to join our cause, creating a stronger force for nature.
- 5 Diversifying our income and opening up finance opportunities.**
Nature needs conservation work on a massive scale. To achieve this, we must find new ways to increase the funding for conservation work, both within the RSPB and the wider environmental sector.
- 6 Making the RSPB the best it can be.**
We must ensure we have the right structures, systems, values and people in place, to help us collectively perform at our best, and respond appropriately to a rapidly changing world. As the RSPB evolves, we will keep reviewing these elements to remain fit for purpose as an organisation.

Putting nature on the road to recovery

10 outcomes for nature's recovery

These are the changes we believe we all need to make happen to put nature on the road to recovery by 2030.

- Species recovery**
The future of 100 of the most threatened species of birds and other taxa will be more secure in the UK, UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), the East Atlantic migration route and in other selected areas around the world.
- UK Overseas Territories**
The conservation status of important terrestrial and marine wildlife sites in the UKOTs will be improved, environmental policy frameworks strengthened, and local partner capacity built, contributing to 30% of land and seas well-managed by 2030.
- People engagement**
More, and more diverse, people will be engaging with the RSPB, taking meaningful action for nature and helping embed nature- and climate-positive outcomes into social, political and economic behaviour.
- Food and farming**
The majority of UK productive agricultural land will be managed so that it is contributing positively to the recovery of nature and is supporting a net-zero economy (where the carbon emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by the carbon removed from it), as part of a vibrant domestic food economy.
- UK land**
At least 30% of land in each UK country will be managed primarily and effectively for nature and the climate, supported by nature positive management elsewhere, to place that 30% at the heart of resilient ecological networks.
- Nature positive economy**
The frameworks and standards that govern investment decisions will be nature positive, transforming public and private investment and increasing the direct investment in conservation available to the RSPB and the sector.
- Seas**
Threats to seabirds from unsustainable fisheries, marine development and invasive non-native species will have been minimised, and where possible eliminated, globally and in the UK.
- RSPB capabilities**
The RSPB's operating model, structures, systems, values, skills and behaviours will reflect the strategic need.
- Global land**
A network of site- and landscape-scale interventions along the East Atlantic Flyway, and in other key locations internationally, will be global exemplars of high-impact nature conservation, supporting lives and livelihoods, creating wider support for nature and helping to stabilise the climate.
- RSPB greening**
Not only will the RSPB be a nature positive organisation, we will progress towards delivering a net climate cooling impact, having both reduced our operational greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced net emission removals and reductions through our land management activities.

What we do between now and 2030 is vital. We have set clear measures against these outcomes, which we use to keep ourselves focused and to track the impact of our contribution. The following highlights on pages 12–65 demonstrate how our contribution is helping work toward achieving these outcomes.

Species recovery

We work across the UK and globally to improve the fortunes of threatened birds and other wildlife and set them on a path to recovery.

Saving Species on the Edge

We're part of Species on the Edge, an ambitious partnership programme of eight nature conservation organisations, all working to secure a brighter future for Scotland's most rare and vulnerable coastal wildlife.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project is based across seven areas and aims to improve the fortunes of 37 threatened coastal and island species, including Little Terns, Great Yellow Bumblebees, Twites and Natterjack Toads.

To help address the threats these species face, project partners deliver both practical action, such as monitoring and habitat improvement, and community engagement, to create more opportunities for people to get involved with protecting species. By engaging with people who live alongside these priority species the project is creating a lasting legacy to secure a brighter future for Scottish wildlife.

Here's a snapshot of what we've achieved together so far.



In 2024 90% of Little Tern colonies in Scotland were surveyed.

Surveying Little Terns

Species on the Edge takes action for Little Terns in four project areas, creating additional nesting habitat, protecting colonies from disturbance and engaging with communities to increase awareness of the threats they face and how people can help.

In 2024, the Little Tern survey was incredibly successful, with over 90% of Little Tern colonies in Scotland surveyed. Species on the Edge volunteers in Orkney dedicated over 80 hours to monitoring, protecting, and raising awareness to help Little Terns. In February 2025, the volunteers received recognition from NatureScot for their work.

Training the conservationists of tomorrow

The project will fund two new paid RSPB traineeships, designed to equip those at the beginning of their conservation career with the skills and experience needed to get their first paid role in conservation. This training will be largely practical, focusing on skills such as surveying, habitat management and engagement, and trainees will have the opportunity to gain certifications in different aspects of practical management.



Getting people involved to protect species.



RSPB conservation advisers work with farmers and landowners to help provide habitat for Turtle Doves.

New hope for Turtle Doves

Once the soundtrack of summer, the gentle purring of Turtle Doves is now missing from much of our countryside. But the future is looking brighter for these special summer visitors.



increase in the western European breeding population of Turtle Doves since 2021

For decades, the Turtle Dove has had the unenviable title of the UK's fastest declining species of bird. With its population reduced to just 1% of the number breeding here in the early 1970s, this has been a species in desperate need of concerted conservation action. And it's thanks to this action that there's now cause to hope that we're turning a corner for Turtle Doves.

Research has shown that a loss of breeding habitat and unsustainable levels of hunting were both key factors in the Turtle Dove's decline in western Europe. "Until recently, every autumn around one million Turtle Doves were legally hunted in France, Spain and Portugal – the countries through which all UK-breeding Turtle Doves migrate. The data showed that these losses were unsustainable," explains Guy Anderson, the RSPB's Migrants Recovery Programme Manager.

With urgent action needed, the RSPB led on the creation of an international conservation action plan, with recommendations on sustainable hunting, which the European Commission adopted. As a result, hunting was halted in all three countries between 2021 and 2024. In that time, the western European breeding population soared by 40% – that's 615,000 more breeding pairs.

Following the success of the first phase of the hunting management system, the European Commission has decided to allow hunting to recommence in autumn 2025, but at a limited level that will allow the rapid start to the birds' population recovery in Western Europe to continue.

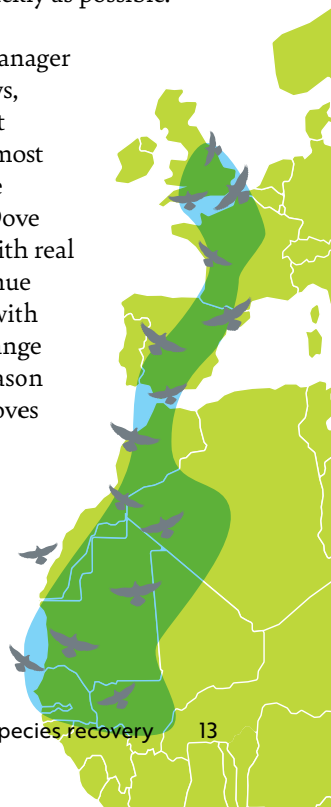
With action being taken on unsustainable hunting, the work of our Operation Turtle Dove project has never been more important

in addressing the other side of the conservation equation: creating breeding season habitats for the birds. In anticipation of more Turtle Doves reaching our shores, we've been accelerating our efforts to make sure the UK landscape is 'Turtle Dove ready' by providing the habitats these birds require. This was made possible by funding from our new partnership with Tesco (see page 56), as well as the Big Give campaign in December 2024, which raised over £107,000 and enabled us to expand our team of Turtle Dove conservation advisers – thank you to everyone who donated!

It was another record-breaking year for Operation Turtle Dove, with 442 farmers and land managers joining us to provide feeding and nesting habitat. In addition, specially formulated seed mix was provided at 425 supplementary feeding sites to ensure that returning birds could get back into breeding condition as quickly as possible.

Rick Bayne, Senior Project Manager for Operation Turtle Dove says, "Following years of worry that we might lose one of nature's most familiar summer sounds – the gentle purring of the Turtle Dove – we can finally look ahead with real optimism. Provided we continue our efforts working together with farmers across the breeding range here in the UK, there is no reason that we can't expect Turtle Doves to return once again to being a much more common sight in our countryside".

Find out more about Operation Turtle Dove at operationturtledove.org



Bringing back Beavers

Beavers were hunted to extinction in Britain in the 16th century, but we're working in partnership to return them to some of their former haunts.

Beavers are what's known as 'ecosystem engineers' because of their ability to create a variety of different habitats. For example, by gnawing through trees and dragging the branches into water, they can build dams, which provide shelter and spawning areas for fish. Their handiwork also creates complicated underwater structures that offer a home to a range of creatures, including dragonflies and other insects. These, in turn, are eaten by birds, mammals and amphibians.

Beavers can help to reduce downstream flooding too, as the structures they build hold water and release it very slowly. These industrious rodents are an integral part of healthy wetland ecosystems, so we're delighted that 2024 was another successful year in our work to re-establish Beaver populations in Britain.

In Scotland, we're part of a project to return Beavers to the Cairngorms National Park, which is being led by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, alongside partners, land managers and local communities. In spring 2024, three Beaver families were released into different areas of RSPB Insh Marshes. The Beavers continue to be seen regularly on trail cameras on and around Insh Marshes and their damming helped to maintain water levels in an unusually dry spring in 2025. Following the release of a family of Beavers at RSPB Loch Lomond in 2023, an additional pair was released in 2024.

After years of advocacy by the RSPB and others, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced the licensing of Beaver releases in the wild in England, in late February 2025. The first licensed release took place on the Isle of Purbeck and the RSPB is engaged with further projects in England that are now in the pipeline. In addition, Beavers that are already present in the wild are expanding their range, with some setting up home at a second RSPB nature reserve in southern England.

In Wales, we've continued to support the Welsh Beaver Project. Progress was made in September 2024, when the Welsh Government announced that it supports managed reintroductions and launched a consultation on proposed legislative changes to make the Eurasian Beaver a European Protected Species in Wales.



Beavers help to create vital habitats for other wildlife.

Drug ban boost for India's vultures

In a significant step forward for vulture conservation, India's government banned the use of nimesulide, a veterinary painkiller which research by the RSPB and our partners, the Indian Veterinary Research Institute and the Bombay Natural History Society, showed to be highly toxic to these threatened birds. As scavengers, vultures are vulnerable to poisoning if they eat dead cattle treated with the drug. The latest ban follows previous bans on three other drugs proven to be toxic to vultures.



The return of Wildcats

Wildcats were declared 'Functionally Extinct' in the UK in 2019, but now, work led by the Saving Wildcats partnership is aiming to reverse their fortunes.

Following previous releases in 2023, another nine Wildcats were released into the Cairngorms Connect landscape in 2024, where RSPB Scotland and other land managers are delivering an ambitious 200-year vision to enhance the area for nature and people. The landscape-scale restoration work taking place within the Cairngorms Connect area, including at RSPB Abernethy and Insh Marshes, is helping to provide Wildcats with a range of suitable habitats for hunting, creating dens and raising young. So we were delighted when, in 2024, the first kittens from released Wildcats were born, marking a significant milestone in the recovery of this species in the UK.

Together with other Cairngorms Connect partners, we work with Saving Wildcats to host release sites and facilitate the careful monitoring and tracking of the Wildcats using GPS-radio collars and camera traps. There is still a long journey ahead for Wildcats in Scotland, but these births and releases signal hope for the last remaining native feline in the UK.



Nine Wildcats were released in 2024.



Greenfinches are at risk from a disease called trichomonosis.

Making bird feeding better

The safety and welfare of birds is always our priority, and in 2024 we began an important scientific review into garden bird feeding.

We know that many people love feeding garden birds and some bird species really benefit from us putting out extra food for them, especially in winter. However, there is increasing evidence that for other bird species, especially finches, feeding can have some negative effects, such as the spread of disease.

We want to make bird feeding as safe as possible, so we have been working on a new study with the British Trust for Ornithology and Institute of Zoology, with funding from Natural England. This looks at the disease trichomonosis, which is caused by a protozoan parasite. The parasite develops in the throat of affected birds and causes problems with swallowing food and water. Finches, such as Greenfinches and Chaffinches, are seriously affected by the disease, which has led to severe population declines.

One way it is thought to spread is through contaminated food and water. RSPB scientists have visited gardens where finch trichomonosis has been found to collect data and samples that will tell us how the disease spreads, and to see whether certain methods of bird feeding can play a part.

While we await the findings of the review, we have suspended sales of all our bird tables and related products, Table Mix and Table Mix Extra, window feeders, and feeder guardians with trays. This is because there is evidence to suggest that some birds, particularly finches, can be more exposed to disease when fed on flat surfaces.

Suspending these products until we have a better understanding of how the disease spreads is our best option, as the safety of birds is paramount. In the meantime, there is guidance on our website on how to make sure feeders are kept clean: rspb.org.uk/keepbirdshealthy

In 2025, we will complete the scientific review and carefully consider its conclusions. We will then share updated guidance on how best to support and enjoy the birds in our gardens.

Making space for nature

After five years, the EU-funded LIFE on the Edge project came to an end in July 2025, leaving a legacy of new, improved and protected coastal habitats for wildlife.



From shingle beaches to saltmarshes, the UK's coastal habitats are internationally important for millions of birds that flock to our shores to feed, breed and spend the winter. But since 1945, we've lost 8,000 hectares of saltmarsh, as well as 46% of shingle and 18% of dune habitats. With increased coastal development, and sea levels rising due to climate change, wildlife is increasingly being squeezed out.

To tackle this, we've been working in partnership with the National Trust and others through the LIFE on the Edge (LOTE) project to protect, restore and create vital habitat at seven key sites across England. Here are just a few examples of what we've been up to.

Creating islands for Sandwich Terns

At RSPB Hodbarrow, in Cumbria, we've created five new islands, protected by predator-exclusion fencing, to provide more safe breeding habitat for terns and other nesting birds. These islands have been a huge success and in 2024 Sandwich Terns had their most productive breeding season at the reserve on record, with 332 pairs fledging 396 chicks.

Giving Little Terns a lift

Over in Essex, we've completed an ambitious project to raise the level of the eroding beach at Horsey Island, using almost 50,000 cubic metres of sand and shingle from harbour improvement works in Harwich. LOTE, Harwich Haven Authority and the Environment Agency all contributed funding to the project and as a result the eggs and chicks of the Little Terns and other birds that nest there should now be safely out of reach of high tides for years to come.

Little Terns were quick to move onto the new nesting habitat after its creation and in 2023 we celebrated a bumper year, with 42 chicks fledging from Horsey Island – the highest number since 2006.

Protecting nesting birds from disturbance

Disturbance by humans and dogs can be a big problem for beach-nesting birds, causing adults to abandon their eggs and chicks. That's why we've supported the creation of a network of protected sites for beach-nesting birds, including Ringed Plovers and Oystercatchers, across England.

At many of these sites, dedicated teams of staff and volunteers find nests and watch over the birds throughout the breeding season. Our beach wardens also do public engagement work to help raise awareness of the birds' plight, and put up temporary fencing to keep people and dogs away from the most sensitive areas.

Thanks to their hard work, and the support of visitors and local people, we've seen encouraging increases in nesting success, including three sites in the Solent recording their highest number of fledged birds during the project delivery phase.

An uncertain future

At a time when nature is under pressure, the brilliant results achieved by LOTE projects are an inspiring reminder of wildlife's ability to bounce back when given a helping hand.

However, now that the UK has left the EU, we are no longer able to access EU LIFE funding. With no equivalent UK fund set up to replace it, our ability to access sufficient funding to carry out important habitat protection and restoration projects like these in future remains uncertain.

Beach-nesting birds, like Ringed Plovers, have benefited from nest protection work.



Volunteers are helping Swifts to thrive in urban areas, such as Manchester.

608
volunteers

People-powered conservation

The RSPB's Species Volunteer Network puts volunteers at the heart of key conservation projects for some of the UK's most threatened species.

Ever since the RSPB was founded, volunteers have played a crucial role in our mission to save nature. The RSPB has more than 13,000 volunteers who generously give their time to the RSPB. They undertake 18,000 roles and make up 83% of our workforce by head count.

Some of these volunteers are part of the Species Volunteer Network (SVN), a community of over 600 volunteers who dedicate their time and skills to helping the populations of some of the UK's most vulnerable species recover. SVN is now operating in Wales and Scotland thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery. Here we highlight just four of the projects volunteers are helping to deliver.



Swifts declined by 62% between 1995 and 2021

Rallying the community for Swifts in Manchester

Swifts are some of our most iconic summer visitors, but they declined by 62% between 1995 and 2021 and urgently need our help. Volunteers form a key part of our plan to save Swifts by taking direct action, raising awareness, and working with their local communities to ensure that these birds have safe places to nest.

In Greater Manchester there are now over 30 volunteers taking action for Swifts through the Swift Champion network, supported by funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery. Natalia Curi Ayala (pictured above), Volunteer Coordinator for the Manchester project explains what the volunteers have been up to:

"Volunteers surveyed Swifts across Manchester during the summer, and reviewed planning applications to ensure Swift bricks and boxes were included in new developments.

We connected with diverse communities through events in parks, museums, and large-scale gatherings, sharing knowledge and enthusiasm for Swifts with families, students, environmentalists, and people from all walks of life. It's been heartening to see more homes installing Swift nestboxes and an ever-growing community rallying around Swift conservation.

This teamwork, alongside the incredible support from local communities, is truly making a difference, helping Swifts thrive in urban areas and enriching our shared environment."

"This teamwork, alongside the incredible support from local communities, is truly making a difference, helping Swifts thrive in urban areas and enriching our shared environment."

Monitoring Red Kites in Northern Ireland

In 2008, Red Kites were reintroduced to Northern Ireland. RSPB volunteers have been actively monitoring the Red Kite population and monitoring their nests during the breeding season, so that chicks can be tagged under licence.

In 2024, the volunteer team were able to identify 25 territorial pairs of Red Kites in County Down, with 19 active nests. One of these nests was found thanks to the keen observations of volunteer Maria (pictured right). Working alongside the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group, she witnessed the tagging of the chick, which she has watched grow and thrive. Thanks to the chick's satellite tag, we'll be able to follow his progress and discover more about the lives of Red Kites in Northern Ireland.

26
projects
supported
in the UK



Volunteer Maria watching a Red Kite chick being tagged.

Red Kites were reintroduced to Northern Ireland in

2008

Saving Dark-bordered Beauty moths in the Cairngorms

Dark-bordered Beauty moths are extremely rare and have been recorded at just three sites in Scotland and one in England. Pete Moore took on the role of Species Champion for these endangered moths as part of the Rare Invertebrates of the Cairngorms project and here he explains some of the work underway to help them:

"We are at an exciting stage in Dark-bordered Beauty moth conservation. The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland set up a conservation breeding facility at the Highland Wildlife Park. From an initial batch of eggs taken from RSPB Insh Marshes in 2021, this project rears enough moths to enable us to release them into new suitable sites. In 2024, monitoring at Insh Marshes found more than twice as many moths on site than had been recorded in any previous year! And there was also a record count near Balmoral in Deeside. Looking to the future, I'm working on building up a relationship with a local farmer to create more habitat for the moths."

Our thanks go to the Nature Restoration Fund, who funded habitat work for the Dark-bordered Beauty at Balmoral in 2021, as well the Cairngorms National Park Authority for their support.

Supporting Curlews in Wales

The SVN launched in Wales in September 2024, thanks to funding from People's Postcode Lottery, and one of the first projects to receive support was the Cri'r Glyfinir or Cry of the Curlew project. To kick-start project support and volunteer engagement, a winter social was organised in November 2024. Emily Hewison, the Curlew Project Officer reflects on the day:



33
species
helped

Dark-bordered Beauty moths are extremely rare.

"We headed out to a hotspot for Curlew activity and with the help of 12 fantastic volunteers we removed regenerating conifers that, if left to grow, would dry out the bog and create all sorts of issues, including providing potential nesting habitat for predators like Buzzards and Crows. By clearing these conifers, we're helping maintain the open, predator-free habitat Curlews need to breed successfully.

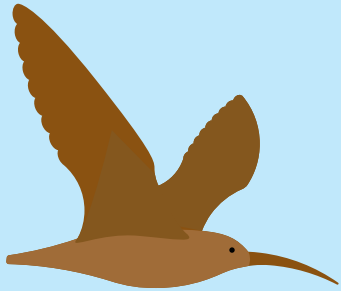
Afterwards, we crafted Christmas wreaths using the conifer cuttings, under the expert guidance of one of our wonderful farmers, who supports our habitat restoration efforts on their land.

It was a lovely opportunity to come together and thank our volunteers for all their hard work and a brilliant way to strengthen the growing relationships between volunteers and the farmers whose land they're surveying to support our nest protection efforts."

Volunteers have helped to create open, predator-free habitat for Curlews

Counting success!

We care for more than 200 nature reserves across the UK, with many of them providing habitats for rare and special wildlife. Here are just a few of the highlights from our nature reserves, and beyond, over the past year.

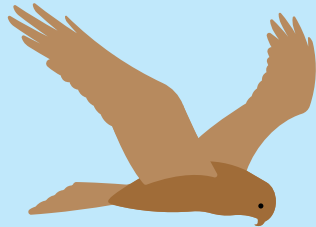


289%
increase

in Curlew nesting success
on Orkney, thanks to the Orkney
Native Wildlife project

29

lekking male Capercaillie were recorded at Abernethy
in the Highlands, the fourth yearly increase in succession

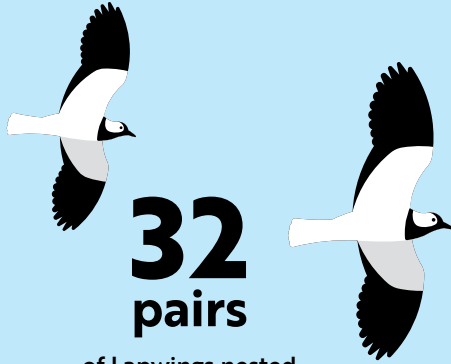


1st

Marsh Harriers to nest at Mersehead
in Dumfries, and Ynys-hir in Powys

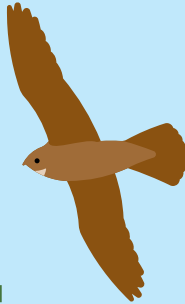
150

Endangered Southern Damselflies
were recorded at Aylesbeare Common in Devon
– up from 94 in 2023



32
pairs

of Lapwings nested
at Glenwherry in the Antrim Hills
– up from 22 in 2023



12

bird species were recorded for the first
time in Sumatra's Hutan Harapan Rainforest,
including Bonaparte's Nightjar,
bringing the total list of birds to 312

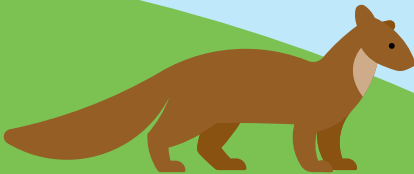


138

booming Bitterns were recorded
on RSPB nature reserves
– up from 116 in 2023

1st

time that Pine Martens
bred at Gwenffrwd-Dinas



175

Roseate Tern chicks fledged
from Coquet Island
off the Northumberland coast
– the highest number ever!



People engagement

People are more likely to take action to protect things they care about, so we engage with people from all backgrounds to help them discover the wonders of the natural world.

Over and out: final Winterwatch filmed at Arne

Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan, Iolo Williams and the team returned to RSPB Arne in January 2025 for BBC *Winterwatch*, the fourth and final series of the Watches to be filmed at the reserve since 2023.



Chris Packham helped to showcase Arne's wonderful wildlife.

RSPB Arne in Dorset nestles at the heart of the UK's first ever 'super National Nature Reserve' – Purbeck Heaths. With its spectacular mosaic of heathland, woodland and wetlands it's home to a huge array of wildlife, including all six of the UK's native reptiles, making it the perfect setting for the BBC's popular nature programme.

Each series required a temporary production village to be carefully built on the reserve, consisting of production trucks, marquees, catering facilities and presenter greenrooms, housing around 90 BBC staff. These were all powered by innovative hydrogen generators to minimise environmental impact.

RSPB staff and volunteers played a vital part in ensuring the series ran smoothly and were involved in all aspects of the project, from supplying stories and advising on the best places to find species, to marshalling the public and ensuring the local community felt part of the action.

Across the four series, viewers have been treated to some fantastic footage, showcasing the beauty of the reserve's landscapes as well as its wildlife, including White-tailed Eagles, Spoonbills and Sand Lizards. They also witnessed extraordinary nest-cam dramas – who could forget the world-first footage of a Nightjar eating its own chick!

Thanks to 'The Watches' effect, visitor footfall has increased at Arne and memberships are up too. Following the first Springwatch series in 2023 new members soared by 80% and visitor figures in January 2024 were 40% higher than the previous year.

As well as appearing live on BBC2 each night during the live series, as a result of the Watches, Arne also featured on BBC's *The One Show*, BBC Breakfast and in numerous national, regional, and local press articles and radio shows, helping to boost the profile of this fantastic nature reserve even further with a wide range of audiences.

Meet our new Ambassadors

Four new nature champions have joined the RSPB as Ambassadors, volunteering their voices to help raise awareness of the nature and climate crisis, and inspire people to take action.

We're delighted to announce that this year we welcomed four new additions to our team of RSPB Ambassadors: Sam Bentley, Rachel Bigsby, Mya-Rose Craig and Dave Sexton. They join our President, Dr Amir Khan, and nine existing Ambassadors who have been in place since our AGM in 2022. Our Ambassadors are passionate and dedicated volunteers, who make amazing contributions to our mission, and we are grateful to have their support.

When announcing our new Ambassadors, RSPB Chief Executive Beccy Speight said: "I'm thrilled to welcome our four new Ambassadors. Each of them brings a wealth of expertise and enthusiasm to support our mission in this crucial decade and beyond. They join our flock of incredible Ambassadors who already champion our causes, celebrate our achievements and importantly help us reach new and diverse audiences. Whether standing alongside us as we campaign or getting hands-on with conservation on one of our reserves, I can't wait to see the many ways our Ambassadors will support our work in the coming years."

To find out more about our President and Ambassadors, visit: rspb.org.uk/rspb-president-and-ambassadors



Sam Bentley

Sam is a content creator and sustainability advocate who creates videos making environmental progress accessible and inspiring. Sam's videos share good news stories from around the world and explain exciting sustainable solutions to his combined audience of nearly 3 million people on TikTok and Instagram.



Mya-Rose Craig

Mya-Rose is an environmental and diversity campaigner and charity founder. Mya-Rose began her blog 'Birdgirl' when she was 11 years old, writing about her love of birds and encouraging her followers to campaign about biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. Mya-Rose founded the charity Black2Nature to encourage equal access to nature.



Rachel Bigsby

Rachel is an award-winning wildlife photographer specialising in seabirds. Rachel has been a recipient of the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year award in the Natural Artistry category and the Portfolio Award in Bird Photographer of the Year. Rachel has also been contributing to the RSPB's image library for several years.



Dave Sexton

Dave is a conservation expert and has recently retired from a 36-year career with the RSPB. He was instrumental in the successful reintroduction of White-tailed Eagles to the UK and protected Mull's first White-tailed Eagle nests in 1984, as well as the first chick in 1985.

Puffin snaps provide vital data

The results are in for a ground-breaking citizen science project which invited members of the public – or 'Puffarazzi' – to submit photos of Puffins carrying food for their chicks. An incredible 602 people submitted 1,402 photos from 35 colonies and these images were analysed by a team of volunteers, dubbed 'Puffineers'. The results suggest a possible link between prey availability and Puffin population change: in regions where Puffin numbers are declining, adults collect more, but smaller, prey items for their chicks than those in successful colonies.



Chris Gomersall



Chantal Macleod-Nolan



Thousands take to the streets for Restore Nature Now march

On Saturday 22 June 2024, the RSPB joined 350 other organisations and more than 60,000 people in London to deliver a clear message ahead of the UK general election: **we must Restore Nature Now.**

In the largest ever march for nature, thousands of RSPB members, supporters, staff and volunteers flocked to the streets of London to show their support for nature. The RSPB stood shoulder-to-shoulder with other organisations, including WWF-UK, the National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts, and together we shared five joint asks with political parties and the public, outlining essential actions needed to protect our environment:

- Doubling the nature-friendly farming budget.
- Making polluters contribute to nature and climate recovery.
- Expanding and improving protected areas for nature.
- Introducing an Environmental Rights Bill giving people the right to a healthy environment.
- Fair and effective climate action.

With the UK Government that would be elected the following month responsible for ensuring that we meet legally binding targets for nature's recovery by 2030, it was a crucial time to speak up for nature and we delivered our message loud and clear. Every placard, every chant and every cheer showed that protecting and restoring our natural world must be a priority for the next UK Government.

Planning for the march began back in 2023, well before the general election was announced. The RSPB played a key role, working closely alongside Wildlife & Countryside Link and Chris Packham to organise the march and secure support from other NGOs in the sector. The march became the single biggest campaign action on any issue in the run-up to the general election and secured more than 200 pieces of media coverage, including on Sky News and BBC Breakfast, as well as over 20 national newspaper articles.

Celebrities, including Dame Emma Thompson and Steve Backshall, joined the family-friendly march, and live drumming and singing created a fun, festival atmosphere, with our giant Avocet puppets providing a unique focal point.

The rally held in Parliament Square at the end of the march was led by Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin, along with the RSPB's President Dr Amir Khan. The RSPB's Executive Director for Global Conservation, Katie-jo Luxton, explained to the crowd why she is so hopeful for the future of nature, while RSPB Ambassadors Indy Kiemel Greene and Nadeem Perera reminded attendees of the importance of unity in the fight to save nature.

Several times during the march, members of the crowd were treated to the sight of Peregrines soaring over Parliament Square. These flypasts, by a species that suffered severe declines in the 1960s, were a poignant reminder that, with our help, nature can make a remarkable recovery.

To support the RSPB's campaigning work, please visit: rspb.org.uk/action

Thousands of people of all ages attended the Restore Nature Now march.



Kirsty Martuccio

Vibrant Vyrnwy

Through our Vibrant Vyrnwy partnership project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, and in collaboration with Hafren Dyfrdwy and Llanwddyn Community Council, we've been working to support and develop a vibrant volunteering community in the heart of Wales.

Our aim is to build a brighter future for nature and people around Lake Vyrnwy, by bringing people together to celebrate and connect with the rich cultural and natural heritage of the area.

Since the project's launch in July 2021, we've worked closely with communities to break down barriers and provide over 3,000 people with opportunities to discover nature at events and volunteering days. Wellbeing has been a key focus, and we have helped empower people to take positive actions to improve not only natural habitats but also their own health and wellbeing, through events such as herbalism workshops, hedge laying and mindfulness walks.

We have also enabled six young farmers, between the ages of 18 and 25, to undertake a five-month residential traineeship in conservation farming techniques. Working alongside our farm and conservation team at RSPB Lake Vyrnwy provided them with a platform from which they could gain employment in the sector and make a positive impact for nature within the farming community. Four of the six trainees have gone on to secure jobs in agriculture.

Trainee Henry says: "My time at Vyrnwy has taught me that while it isn't always obvious, there's almost always an overlap between the goals of farmers and the goals of conservationists. And that, with a little compromise from both sides, farming can be done in a nature-friendly way, while the farm still remains a successful business from a production perspective."

The Vibrant Vyrnwy partnership project has involved a diverse range of local and national organisations who have contributed to the project, providing inspiration, expertise and training. These include The Game Changer Project, BTO Shropshire, Mencap Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Arts Connection and the local Men's Shed group, to name just a few. Together, we've built trust within the community and laid the foundations for doing more for nature and people through connections, collaboration and empowerment.



Kirsty Martuccio

Families enjoying an event at Lake Vyrnwy.

Putting communities at the heart of saving nature

The Nature Neighbourhoods initiative is helping community organisations across the UK to create people-powered plans to protect and restore nature on their doorsteps.

In March 2023, the People's Plan for Nature set out recommendations to reverse the UK's worrying declines in nature. Thousands of people contributed and one of the key messages to emerge was that people want to take action for nature in their own communities, and to hold themselves and others to account. As a result, Nature Neighbourhoods was born.

The project is a partnership between the RSPB, the National Trust and WWF, with funding and support from Co-op and the National Lottery Community Fund. Eighteen community organisations (Voluntary Community Social Enterprises) have received £25,000 and on-the-ground support and training to develop and bring to life plans for nature and climate action that centre around their neighbourhood's needs and priorities.

These communities are spread across the UK, with a particular focus on urban neighbourhoods where there are often barriers to accessing nature, along with higher social and economic inequalities.

So far, over 200 people have received in-depth training on a range of key skills, from fundraising and working with young people, to ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of their work. Thanks to support from RSPB

and National Trust staff at a fundraising workshop, groups like Hamiltonhill Claypits in Glasgow have gone on to successfully apply for funding for their projects.

Another collaborative workshop, which focused on local advocacy, brought community groups together with representatives from several councils to learn how best to work with local authorities. This approach is already bearing fruit. In Edinburgh, Granton Community Gardeners have had success in their campaign to get the City Council's procurement rules changed so that community organisations can bid to manage community green spaces.

Meanwhile, in Manchester, the Easy Come, Easy Grow group was formed with the aim of creating more green spaces and to connect people with nature. The group has set up monthly community conversations in their local library, where residents can share ideas about what they'd like to see happening for nature in their neighbourhood. In Birmingham, the Community Environment Trust used learnings from co-design training to develop accessible growing space with community members with mobility restrictions.



Hannah Bardsley



Hannah Bardsley

Using nature to boost wellbeing

RSPB Nature Prescriptions (NPs) are an innovative way for healthcare professionals to prescribe nature to their patients. Building on success in Scotland, we are now offering NPs in 15 counties in England, allowing thousands more people to experience the health benefits of connecting to nature. Thanks to funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery, we have also been able to launch NPs in urban areas, including Cardiff and Birmingham, and offer more accessible versions of the prescriptions, such as Easy Read and complementary resources for groups.



Gary Walsh (rspb-images.com)

UK land

Thanks to new land acquisitions and funding, we've made strides towards the Global Biodiversity Framework's goal of ensuring that 30% of UK land is well-managed for nature.

Creating a Pennines paradise for nature at Geltsdale

Following the purchase of the final third of the land at RSPB Geltsdale in Cumbria, we're embarking on a bold new restoration project.

Thanks to the generosity of philanthropic donors, supporters, partners and funders, we have purchased the final piece of formerly leased land at Geltsdale, making it the largest RSPB nature reserve in England. At a cost of £4.5 million, this is one of the most significant land purchases in our history and it will allow us to fully restore and protect the area's moorlands, wetlands and woodlands.

Describing our vision for the site, RSPB Geltsdale Reserve Manager Ian Ryding said: "Our plans are ambitious and, in a nutshell, mean bringing this North Pennines landscape fully back to life. From the bright carpets of wildflowers in the hay meadows to the gentle ripple of restored wetlands teeming with insects and birdlife, this vision is about bringing back the sounds, sights and vitality of England's truly wild Pennines. The pinnacle of success for me would be seeing Golden Eagles soaring across the moorlands of Geltsdale."

As well as providing much-needed habitat for wildlife, our ambitious restoration work will also create a healthier landscape that can better tackle and mitigate against climate change, as RSPB Area Manager David Morris explains:

"This work isn't just about protecting wildlife – it's about creating a more resilient landscape. Restored peatlands will lock away carbon, wetlands will reduce downstream flooding, and vibrant habitats will support species at every level of the food chain, from invertebrates to apex predators."

Our vision for Geltsdale builds on the success of ongoing conservation efforts here. Thanks to our supporters we've already restored areas

of blanket bog, created meadows and planted 110,000 native trees. Nature-friendly farming is reaping dividends too, helping to improve biodiversity and boost Curlew numbers.

Our work to naturalise Howgill Beck – the river running through Geltsdale – has even won the prestigious UK River Prize Project-scale Award 2025. Now the river's natural 'wiggles' have been restored, the flow of water has slowed, which has allowed gravel beds to form, supporting fish and invertebrates, which in turn provide food for birds and other wildlife.

During periods of high rainfall, river water can now spill out onto the surrounding floodplain meadows, helping to reduce the chance of flooding downstream and providing vital pools and damp patches for wading birds, like Lapwings and Redshanks, to feed on.

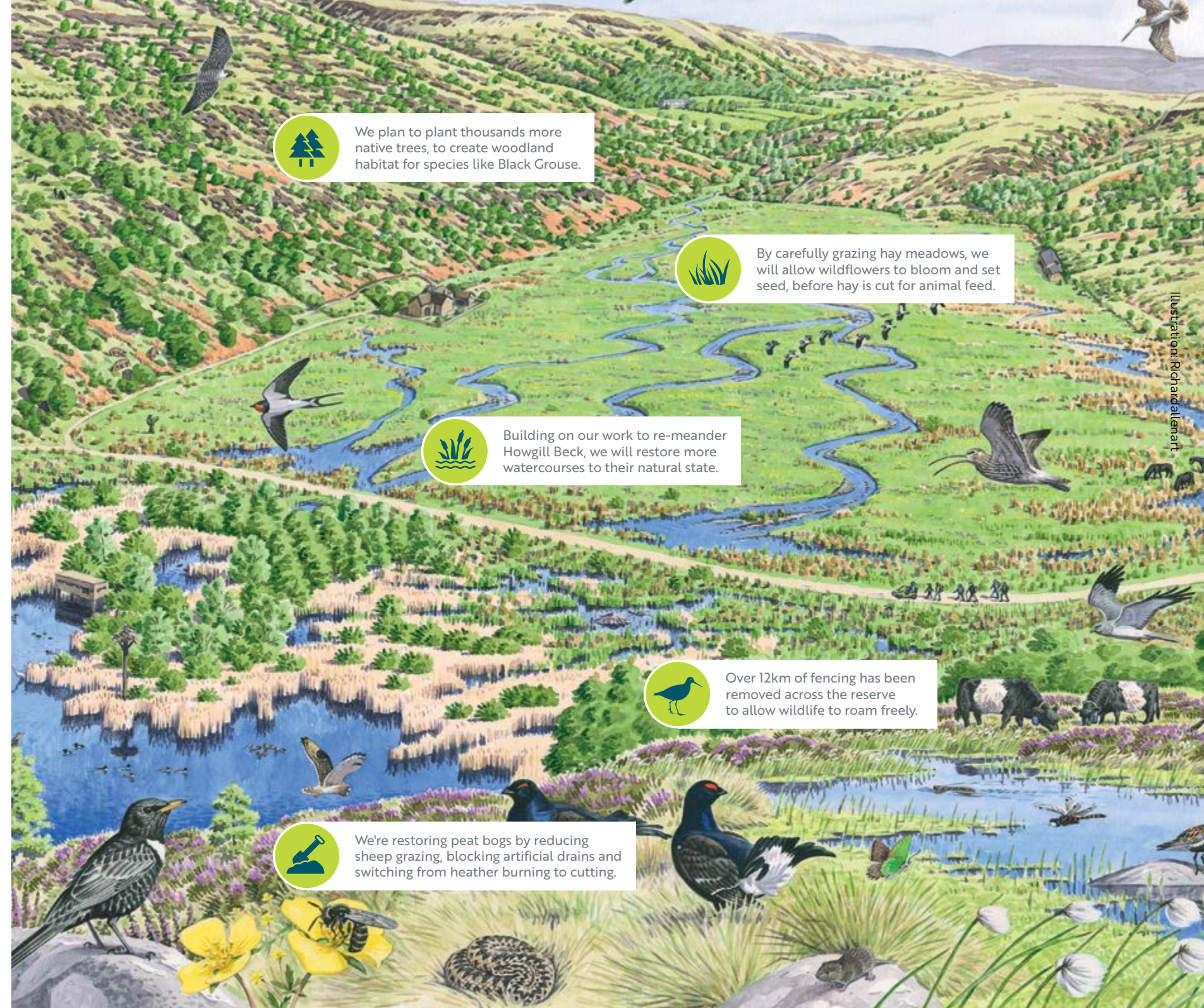
Using the success of these initiatives as a springboard, we have lots of exciting plans for the reserve over the next five years, including:

Revitalising moorlands and peatlands

We will restore peat bogs by raising the water level, allowing them to lock away climate-damaging carbon and creating ideal conditions for *Sphagnum* mosses and rare plants like Bog Rosemary.

Expanding and regenerating woodlands

By planting native tree species, like Aspen and Juniper, and encouraging natural regeneration, we'll help woodlands to flourish, providing habitat for Black Grouse, Cuckoos and other wildlife.



We plan to plant thousands more native trees, to create woodland habitat for species like Black Grouse.



By carefully grazing hay meadows, we will allow wildflowers to bloom and set seed, before hay is cut for animal feed.



Building on our work to re-meander Howgill Beck, we will restore more watercourses to their natural state.



Over 12km of fencing has been removed across the reserve to allow wildlife to roam freely.



We're restoring peat bogs by reducing sheep grazing, blocking artificial drains and switching from heather burning to cutting.



Work to re-wiggle Howgill Beck – the river running through Geltsdale – has won the UK River Prize Project-scale Award 2025

Restoring wetlands

Building on the work carried out at Howgill Beck, we plan to restore the natural meanders of streams and watercourses to slow the flow of water and allow pools and channels to form, supporting wildlife including Otters.

Creating wildflower hay meadows

We will spread cuttings from one of the region's most species-rich meadows on the newly acquired fields. In summer, they will be transformed into a colourful tapestry of blooms, creating a vast buffet for pollinators.

Protecting species

Our conservation efforts will safeguard iconic birds like Hen Harriers, and we hope to welcome species like Golden Eagles and Ospreys in the future.

Fenceless grazing

By using innovative solutions like Nofence technology, which alerts livestock as they approach a virtual boundary, we will create habitats for threatened ground-nesting wading birds, such as Lapwings and Redshanks.

Wallasea gets bigger and better!

Wallasea Island nature reserve, in Essex, is set to expand thanks to a transformative grant from the Ida Davis Family Foundation.

The £2.2 million grant – the largest single grant we have ever received from a trust – allowed us to purchase four fields to the west of the reserve, adding 100 hectares of land.

In one of the fields, we plan to create a six-hectare freshwater lagoon that will offer feeding opportunities for wading and water birds taking a pit stop while on migration, as well as species that spend the winter on our shores, such as Teals and Wigeons. This shallow lagoon will also provide prime habitat for wading birds, like Lapwings and Avocets, to raise their chicks.

Meanwhile, the other three fields will be developed into a mosaic of grassland and scrub, with additional wet areas, to provide extra habitat for birds, including Corn Buntings. Wallasea Island is already a stronghold for this farmland bird, which has declined dramatically across the UK.

Since we acquired the initial land at Wallasea Island in the mid-2000s, the landscape here has been completely transformed. With rising sea levels putting the reclaimed agricultural land at Wallasea at risk, we used 3.2 million tonnes of soil extracted by Crossrail from the creation of the Elizabeth Line in London to raise the eastern part of the reserve above sea level and help create a new area of marsh, mudflats and lagoons.

Spoonbills now sift through the saline lagoons in summer and autumn, Black-tailed Godwits use the mudflats to refuel while on migration and Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls can be seen hunting over the grassland in winter. Nine species are found here in nationally important numbers, while a further four species – the Grey Plover, Knot, Shoveler and Bar-tailed Godwit – are hosted in internationally important numbers.

This place has become such a haven for wildlife that 39,000 wildfowl and waders were recorded here in winter 2024/2025.

We've added 100 hectares of land to our Wallasea Island reserve, creating more space for nature.

Digging up the past: **Bronze Age** spade unearthed at RSPB Arne Moors

One of the oldest and most complete wooden tools ever discovered in Britain has been uncovered during habitat creation work for RSPB Arne Moors.



Bronze Age spade made of carved wood, c.3,400–3,500 years old, found near RSPB Arne in Dorset. 3D render by Wessex Archaeology

History and archaeology probably aren't the first things that spring to mind when you think about the RSPB. But there's much more to our work than you might imagine.

From prehistoric burial mounds to Second World War pillboxes, RSPB reserves are full of fascinating historic sites that offer an insight into our hidden past.

We have a responsibility to preserve the heritage on our reserves for future generations, and that's why we employ a small team of archaeologists. These archaeologists help our reserves staff to appropriately manage any historic features on the site, and they sometimes collaborate with external archaeologists on larger projects, such as habitat creation schemes.

It was during one of these habitat creation schemes, that an incredibly rare discovery was made.

Discovering hidden history
With rising sea levels threatening to destroy important wildlife habitat around Poole Harbour, we're working with our partners the Environment Agency, AtkinsRéalis, Natural England and UK construction company Kier, to transform 150 hectares of land close to our Arne nature reserve into vital wetlands for wildlife.

During excavation work for The Moors at Arne Project, archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology unearthed an extremely rare and almost complete prehistoric wooden spade.

Scientific analysis has revealed that it dates from the middle Bronze Age, between about 1500BC and 1400BC, making it one of the oldest wooden tools ever to be discovered in Britain. It's very rare for organic matter to survive this long in the ground, but the site's waterlogged conditions helped preserve the spade for more than 3,000 years.

Peter Robertson, Site Manager of the RSPB's Dorset nature reserves, said: "It's been amazing to learn about the history of the RSPB land at Arne Moors. The discovery of this incredible wooden spade really brings that history to life as you imagine someone fashioning and using it 3,500 years ago.

We have looked after the site, near to our RSPB Arne nature reserve, for more than 25 years and are excited for the project to help protect bird species including Redshanks, Avocets, Common Terns and Sandwich Terns. Without this work, this unique coastal landscape and its wealth of protected species could be lost in the future."



The spade is one of the oldest wooden tools ever discovered in Britain.



Nick Upton (rspb-images.com)

New land purchased at West Sedgemoor and Greylake

At West Sedgemoor and Greylake in Somerset, we have acquired 15 hectares of land, at a cost of £150,698. These wet grassland fields will allow us to manage water levels across a wider area of the existing nature reserve. This will benefit breeding Snipe and Curlews at one of their remaining strongholds in southern England, as well as winter visitors like Teals. We will also be helping to deliver a Landscape Recovery Project here, together with our partners, which will support nature-friendly farming alongside peat and floodplain restoration across 4,000 hectares of the wider Somerset Levels and Moors.

Making peatlands squelch again!

Often overlooked and underrated, peatlands are unsung heroes in the fight against the nature and climate emergency, so we're working to restore them across the UK.

At first glance, windswept expanses of peatland can look pretty desolate, but these landscapes are home to a vibrant tapestry of life, from tiny carnivorous sundew plants to majestic Hen Harriers. And beneath their soggy surface, they hide a superpower.

Despite covering just 3% of the Earth's land area, peatlands lock away more than twice the amount of carbon stored in all of the world's forests. As well as the vital role they play in fighting climate change, peatlands also help to protect against flooding, by absorbing and slowing the flow of rainwater, a bit like a giant sponge. Peatlands even help to filter the rainwater, reducing the amount of costly processing needed to get clean water to our taps, saving us money on our water bills.

But in the UK, more than 80% of peatlands are dry and degraded, as a result of drainage, forestry, overgrazing and burning, which means that they can't perform their vital functions and instead of storing carbon they actually emit it.

When it comes to peatlands, wetter is better, so we're carrying out work at a number of sites right across the UK to restore areas of peatland to their squelchy, carbon-storing glory. We've made great progress over the past year, with thousands of hectares of peatland restored and more in the pipeline – a handful of highlights are shown overleaf.



Sphagnum mosses are the building blocks of peat and can hold up to 20 times their weight in water. This helps to protect against flooding and wildfires.



Carnivorous sundew plants thrive on peatlands and ensnare their unsuspecting insect prey with the sticky, sweet droplets on their leaves.

Peat accumulates incredibly slowly, at a rate of about 1mm per year. This means that the deep peat in places like Forsinard Flows has taken thousands of years to form.



Curlews, Golden Plovers, Red-throated Divers and Hen Harriers are just some of the birds that breed on peatlands.



In summer, dragonflies perform spectacular aerial manoeuvres over bog pools as they dart and swerve in pursuit of their prey.

When at their healthy, **squelchy** best, peatlands can store a huge amount of carbon, helping in the fight against climate change.



Mossy milestone reached at Dove Stone

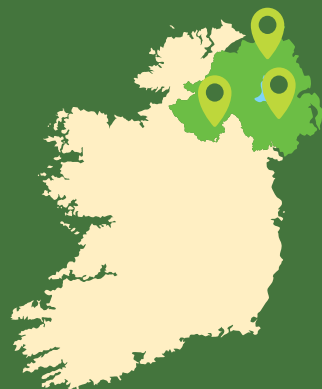
In 2024, we reached an important milestone in our peatland restoration work at RSPB Dove Stone, with the millionth *Sphagnum* moss plug planted by our fantastic team of dedicated volunteers, who have given an incredible 45,000 hours of their time to the project. *Sphagnum* plants are the building blocks of peatlands, so reaching this milestone is an incredible step forward in restoring healthy peat bog at the reserve.

Volunteers gave
45,000
hours of their time
planting
1,000,000
Sphagnum moss plugs



Ambitious restoration programme launched in Northern Ireland

As part of RSPB NI's peatland restoration programme, we've launched the Lowland Raised Bog Recovery Programme to restore raised bogs in the Bann Valley, South Lough Neagh and East Fermanagh. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and DAERA (The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) this ambitious initiative will create a pipeline of fully costed restoration projects to attract further investment and create new green jobs.



Lake Vyrnwy restoration wins national award

Our peatland restoration work at Lake Vyrnwy, in partnership with Hafren Dyfrdwy, won the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2024 Award for Best Practice Large-scale Practical Nature Conservation Project. In five years, we've rewetted more than 1,000 hectares of degraded peatland by blocking more than 200km of gullies and drainage ditches with over 40,000 peat dams.

Toasting a new peatland partnership in Scotland

It is estimated that more than 80% of Scotland's peatlands are degraded in some way and RSPB Scotland is leading efforts to restore these vital ecosystems. Over the past year, we've restored more than 500 hectares of peatland across our nature reserves, including at Abernethy and Loch Gruinart. At Airds Moss, drinks company Suntory Global Spirits have generously provided £435,000 of funding to help us restore 175 hectares of land we acquired in 2022 from a neighbouring sheep farm. This will benefit a range of wildlife, including Curlews and other breeding wading birds.

Turn to page 73, to read about another exciting development in our work to restore peatlands in Scotland.

£435,000

of funding from Suntory Global Spirits to help restore

175
hectares
of peatland



An Omazing boost for peatlands!

Our peatland restoration work has received an incredible £4.9 million funding boost, thanks to a record-breaking partnership with Omaze.

Since 2020, the Omaze community has raised more than £85 million for UK charities, through the famous Million Pound House Draws, and in 2024 it was the RSPB's turn to benefit.

This time, the house on offer was a stunning coastal property in Cornwall. Together with Omaze, we delivered a promotional campaign, supported by our ambassador Deborah Meaden, which not only increased entries into the Draw, but also allowed us to spread the word about the importance of peatlands to new audiences.

Through the generosity of everyone who entered the Draw, we were able to raise a staggering £4.9 million for our peatland work. This was the most money ever raised for a charity in Omaze history, so we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in the Draw!

How nature will benefit

All of the money raised from the Omaze campaign will fund the protection and restoration of precious peatlands across the UK. This includes supporting the people and infrastructure that enable the work, and also widening our impact through matching and maximising other funding sources.

In year one (2024-25) alone, the Omaze funding, alongside funding from other partners*, has supported four incredible peatland projects in Scotland, among other peatland projects.

One of these projects is Phase 1 of the restoration work at Bile Buidhe, an area of peatland at RSPB Abernethy in the Cairngorms National Park, which is home to some of the UK's most threatened wildlife, including Scottish Wildcats, Red Squirrels and Capercaillie.

Bile Buidhe is a remote site which sits 700m above sea level and can be covered in snow for up to five months of the year. It takes the RSPB team almost two hours just to reach it, by 4x4 and on foot, making restoration a difficult task.

But we're taking on the challenge to slow the flow of water here, to allow peat to form and help bog plants re-establish, reducing further erosion. This work will benefit many nationally important peatland species, such as the Golden Plover and Dunlin. It's also important for the local community, helping to attract visitors, create volunteering opportunities and provide jobs for the local workforce.

"We're going to be able to do so much more than we ever dreamed of. This is going to make a big, big difference to the work we can do on our important peatlands."

Deborah Meaden
RSPB Ambassador

*Additional funding partners include the Cairngorms National Park Authority through Cairngorms Peatland ACTION, Co-op and the Scottish Government's Peatland ACTION Fund delivered in partnership with NatureScot.

Seas

Seabirds are the most threatened group of birds in the world, so we work in the UK and globally to tackle the threats they face, from bycatch to marine developments.

Influencing offshore wind deployment in a nature positive way

Renewable energy is essential to avoid the dire impacts of climate change for people and nature.

The political changes in the UK in 2024 increased the urgency to develop offshore wind infrastructure at scale and pace. However this increases the risks of poorly planned infrastructure in the marine environment.

For seabirds already facing multiple threats, such as unsustainable fishing, invasive non-native species, and climate change, the expansion of offshore wind turbines at an unprecedented scale could have a drastic impact at a population level.

The RSPB continues to actively support and promote renewable technology deployment, however it's vital that the rapid expansion of these technologies is done in harmony with nature. With recent research demonstrating the continued decline of breeding seabirds in the UK, following decades of human pressure, the need for a 'nature positive' approach is clearer than ever. You can find out more about this approach at naturepositive.org.



Kittiwakes are vulnerable to wind developments.

We are now less than five years away from 2030, when the UK government has pledged to meet several energy, climate and nature targets. To set us on a course for success, we must embed nature at the forefront of decision-making and accelerate the deployment of renewables in a nature-sensitive way.

Currently, although 38% of the UK's seas are 'protected' on paper, in reality these Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) provide little actual protection for seabirds – most sites are designated to protect seabed habitats and few have effective management in place to prevent damaging activity. Although the protected area network protects breeding areas on land for seabirds, very few sites outside of Scotland exist to protect their feeding areas. As a result of these gaps in the protected area network, wind farms have been built in areas of crucial importance for seabirds, resulting in the need to compensate for impacts, rather than avoiding them in the first place.

Developing an effective protected area network would not only protect important areas for seabirds from future development, it would also reduce the need for complex compensation packages, reduce consent time and support the acceleration of offshore wind deployment. In addition, by delivering effective management of the wider protected area network, we would ensure our seas were in better condition and more resilient to future impacts, both from increasing development and a changing climate.

To help facilitate this, we have created a seabird data layer to visually demonstrate key areas of importance for seabirds across a UK map. This was invaluable in portraying the challenge ahead to The Crown Estate (TCE), as it clearly showed that even if all MPAs were avoided when constructing infrastructure there would still be a significant problem for Kittiwakes, who largely forage outside of these protected areas.

This led to us holding a workshop with TCE to get key areas for seabirds on the map and direct offshore wind leasing away from these highly sensitive areas. Influencing this work is a significant part for our policy work, as it will underpin decisions on how the UK Government will manage our seas.

Driving the development of Seabird Conservation Strategies

We've been working hard to influence the Seabird Conservation Strategies being developed by governments across the UK.

The four countries of the UK have each been in the process of developing their own Seabird Conservation Strategy for a number of years, with the aim of not only halting declines, but driving recovery. Over the past year we've successfully influenced the development of these strategies to ensure they include comprehensive policies and practical actions to help seabirds recover.

In Scotland, 4,500 RSPB supporters added their voices to our campaign calling on the Scottish Government to implement a strong, well-resourced and effective Scottish Seabird Conservation Action Plan, ensuring our recommendations were heard loud and clear.

We also ran a campaign in response to the public consultation on the Welsh Seabird Conservation Strategy, with hundreds of supporters showing their support for seabirds by signing the e-action. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland we have responded to the first consultation on their draft strategy.

In England, 2024 saw the publication of the England Seabird Conservation and Recovery Pathway, which is a significant step in the right direction, but it remains to be seen if it will be funded to deliver the scale of change required.

While the focus of the four countries' strategies is good, the perilous situation we have put seabirds in requires more ambitious and urgent action.

The past few years of avian flu have taken their toll and no one can know what the future holds. What is clear is that the threats seabirds face are not going away and we must continue to campaign for the protections they so desperately need – something brought into sharp focus when, in April 2024, the EU challenged the recently announced closure of sandeel fisheries in the English North Sea and Scottish waters.

Following this challenge, we continued to push for this lifeline for seabirds to be maintained and in May 2025 we were thrilled to hear that the challenge had been dismissed by the International Arbitration Panel. Beccy Speight, RSPB Chief Executive, said:

"We are absolutely delighted the panel has found the ecological case for the closure of industrial sandeel fishing is sound. Also, that UK Governments are within their rights to restrict sandeel fishing in UK waters to protect this valuable food source for declining seabirds.

"We now expect the UK Government and the EU to move forward and make this closure permanent. Safeguarding sandeel stocks is a key part of the jigsaw that will help set our Puffins, Kittiwakes and the wider marine environment on the path to recovery."

"Safeguarding sandeel stocks is a key part of the jigsaw that will help set our Puffins, Kittiwakes and the wider marine environment on the path to recovery."

The closure of sandeel fisheries is a vital lifeline for seabirds.



Brydon Thomason (rspb-images.com)

The Albatross Task Force has helped to save the lives of albatrosses in some of the world's deadliest fisheries.

Celebrating 20 years of the Albatross Task Force

2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Albatross Task Force (ATF), a project led by the RSPB, alongside BirdLife International partners, to help save the lives of albatrosses at sea.

Life on the open seas is tough, but albatrosses are used to towering waves and howling winds. The main problems they face come when they encounter humans while out fishing. Albatrosses mainly feed on fish and squid at the surface of the water, but bait on long fishing lines and discarded fish around boats is pretty tempting too.

When they try to grab an easy meal, many become caught on baited hooks and drown, while others are fatally injured when they collide with the cables used to tow nets. This 'bycatch' is the main reason that, in 2004, 19 out of 21 albatross species were at risk of extinction.

So in 2004, we joined forces with BirdLife International to assemble the Albatross Task Force: the world's first international team of bycatch mitigation experts who work directly with fishers and governments to research, develop and implement simple and effective ways to save albatrosses at sea.

Over the past 20 years, ATF teams have worked with more than 20 industrial and small-scale fisheries across eight countries to develop mitigation measures.

These include colourful streamers, which scare birds away from trawl cables, and hookpods, which prevent birds from becoming hooked and drowned.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of the ATF team and the fishers they work with, we've seen some staggering results. Where bycatch mitigation methods are used, in the South African trawl fleet there has been a 99% reduction in albatross bycatch, while in the Namibian longline fishery seabird deaths are down by 98%.

The ATF's efforts have helped to save tens of thousands of seabirds every year. Many albatross populations are still in dramatic decline, but some species are showing a strong recovery and are no longer threatened with extinction.

Mitigation measures have been included in fishing regulations in all but one of the countries where the ATF has been operating, so we are now turning our focus towards improving monitoring and compliance with the regulations.

Prestigious RSPB Medal awarded to Dr Euan Dunn MBE

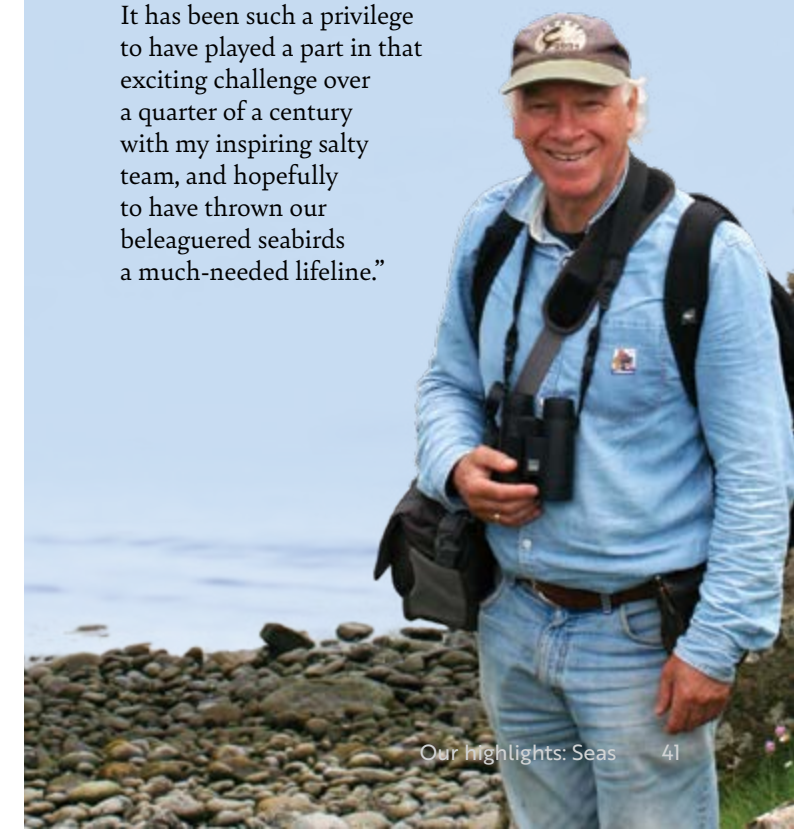
Retired RSPB conservationist Dr Euan Dunn received the RSPB's most prestigious award at the 2024 AGM, in recognition of his phenomenal contribution to marine conservation.

Euan joined the RSPB as a Marine Policy Officer in 1994 before eventually becoming Principal Marine Adviser, responsible for policy development and advocacy on both a national and international level.

Crucially, Euan played a significant role in the UK and Scottish Government's decision to close sandeel fisheries in the English waters of the North Sea and all Scottish waters in 2024. This was a historic moment that Euan set in motion in 1996 after attending a groundbreaking meeting in Norway where fisheries scientists concluded that Danish-led North Sea sandeel fishing was unsustainable.

Euan received an MBE in 2007 in recognition of his services to marine conservation, including helping to establish BirdLife International's 'Save the Albatross' campaign, showing what an important role he has played in seabird protection.

Reflecting on receiving the award, Euan said: "It was a wonderful surprise and pleasure to be honoured in this way. More than anything I am proud of how the RSPB has embraced the restoration of our marine environment and its wildlife, from the North Sea's Puffins to the Southern Ocean's albatrosses. It has been such a privilege to have played a part in that exciting challenge over a quarter of a century with my inspiring salty team, and hopefully to have thrown our beleaguered seabirds a much-needed lifeline."



Global land

We work alongside partners to deliver high-impact conservation projects in some of the most important places for nature across the globe, while helping to improve the livelihoods of local people.

Green shoots of recovery in the Forest of Hope

We're working alongside local people to restore one of the last remaining lowland rainforests in Indonesia.

Sumatra's Hutan Harapan rainforest – which means 'Forest of Hope' in Indonesian – is part of the Sundaland biodiversity hotspot, one of the most ecologically rich and threatened places in the world.

Here, more than 1,300 tree species create a lush green canopy, with some reaching 40 metres up into the sky. Long-tailed Macaques swing through the treetops in search of food, Sun Bears hunt for honey in the branches and Agile Gibbons provide a soundtrack of loud whooping calls.



Dartyo, a local farmer, points out a Resak seedling.

Harapan is a sanctuary for some of the world's most threatened wildlife, including Critically Endangered Sumatran Elephants and Tigers, as well as pangolins and Helmeted Hornbills.

In the late 2000s, the RSPB, along with BirdLife International and national partner Burung Indonesia, received a permit from the Government of Indonesia to turn this former logging concession into an ecosystem restoration concession. Since then, we've been working together to protect and restore Hutan Harapan, which stretches for more than 98,000 hectares – an area similar in size to Greater London.

Part of this work involves collecting seedlings of threatened native trees that characterise lowland rainforests, including trees from the Dipterocarpaceae family. Thirty-six different Dipterocarpaceae species have been recorded in the forest, including the Resak tree, and several feature on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. These seedlings are then nurtured, cultivated and replanted in areas which have been degraded by forest fires, or occupied by invasive species and illegal encroachment.

In the vast, dense jungle of Harapan, locating these seedlings can be a huge challenge, and so the involvement of the indigenous Batin Sembilan people, and other local communities, is vital. Their deep knowledge of the forest can help project staff to find target species far quicker than they could alone – in fact, one local farmer was able to point them to a Resak tree right outside his house! By working together, we can continue to protect and restore this precious forest for the wildlife and people that rely on it.

This project to enrich the forest at Hutan Harapan with Dipterocarpaceae species is supported by the Franklinia Foundation. Support for the project has been extended until 2027.

Using technology to help protect Harapan rainforest

New technology is helping our team to detect and respond to threats to the rainforest and its wildlife quicker than ever before.

Harapan rainforest's lowland location on the island of Sumatra makes it relatively accessible to people. As a result, it faces numerous threats, including encroachment for oil palm plantations and settlements, illegal logging and oil drilling, poaching, and forest fires.

To help the Hutan Harapan team monitor this vast forest more efficiently, a Forest Monitoring Dashboard has recently been developed, which utilises official government alerts and freely accessible satellite imagery to verify information.

Telegram, the messaging and social media platform, has also been integrated into the system to enable quicker alerts to reach more members of the team.

The dashboard can alert Harapan's Forest Protection Team of any land clearance or tree loss within the concession area up to two days faster than before. It also detects forest fires an hour earlier. This means that the team can respond more quickly and effectively to threats.

The use of the Forest Monitoring Dashboard is now being broadened to include biodiversity monitoring features, which will enhance the team's ability to protect the forest's flora and fauna and ensure that Harapan remains a sanctuary for threatened species, like Sumatran Tigers.



Our work in Harapan is helping to protect rare Sumatran Tigers.



This Storm's Stork in its nest is the first to be recorded in Sumatra since 1989.

Sumatran stork surprise!

During a bird survey in Harapan rainforest, the team discovered a Storm's Stork nest, complete with a juvenile. These birds are the **world's rarest storks** and the sighting marked the first known scientific record of a Storm's Stork nest in Sumatra since 1989, underscoring the importance of protecting this important rainforest.

Saving nature through people power in Gola

Together with our partners, we’ve launched new initiatives in the Gola Rainforest, to help protect the forest and its wildlife by improving the livelihoods of local people.

The Greater Gola Landscape is a vast 350,000-hectare expanse of lowland tropical rainforest that straddles the border of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Home to over 330 bird species, including the White-necked Picathartes, as well as endangered mammals like Pygmy Hippos and Forest Elephants, this special place is internationally important both for its incredible biodiversity and the millions of tonnes of carbon it stores.

Despite its biological richness, the communities living near the forest are some of the poorest in the world and often have little choice but to exploit the natural resources it offers, through damaging activities like timber extraction, mining and unsustainable hunting. That’s why working with local communities to develop sustainable sources of income is vital to safeguard the future of the forest and its wildlife.

Thanks to support from the Ecological Restoration Fund, we’re working with The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) to introduce a range of initiatives to allow local people to diversify their income.

In Lofa County, in north-west Liberia, SCNL has helped 1,400 farmers to cultivate cocoa. Unlike many crops, which require clear-cutting of the forest, cocoa loves shade and will happily grow beneath taller forest trees.

In order to help improve the quality of cocoa beans produced and allow farmers to secure a higher price at market, the project team have provided training and specialised equipment, including solar dryers, fermentation boxes and moisture meters. A nursery has also been set up, employing eight local people who tend to 100,000 cocoa seedlings that will be used to supply farmers.

Although forest-friendly, shade-grown cocoa is an important source of revenue for many people, after the harvest season is over it can be difficult for farmers to make ends meet, particularly as the global price of cocoa can fluctuate. So, the project team has also helped to train 100 farmers in beekeeping, to allow them to produce honey, another alternative source of income that does not require forest clearance.

Across the border in Sierra Leone, we’re working with not-for-profit company Gola Rainforest Conservation Limited by Guarantee on the Cocoa Sweet Spot project, which is funded by Jersey Overseas Aid. This project supports 128 farmers to trial new agroforestry approaches designed to combine cocoa and forest trees with other economic crops such as pineapples, bananas, plantains, kola nuts and coffee. This ‘mixed cropping’ can help to create a more sustainable income for farmers and therefore reduce the pressure on forest resources.

For Mariama Tarrawally, one of the farmers involved in the project, the opportunities provided by the additional income are clear: “the money will be beneficial to us, we will put it in savings for our



Rebecca S Borlay, Community Mobilisation Officer at SCNL, helps tend to thousands of cocoa seedlings to supply local farmers.

Nick Williams (RSPB)



Samuka J Konneh with some of his cocoa crop.

Nick Williams (RSPB)

“I have taken them on like my own sisters. If there is any benefit from the farm we will share it, if they have any benefit they will share with me.”

children’s welfare. I would invest in trading to get money for my children’s schooling”.

Another aspect of the project is to build partnerships between vulnerable community members and the participating farmers. So far, 640 vulnerable members of these communities – including people who have been widowed or have particular health conditions – have been paired with farmers. They work together to cultivate crops, sharing resources and any additional produce between them, as Mariama explains:

“I have taken them on like my own sisters. If there is any benefit from the farm we will share it, if they have any benefit they will share with me.”

Our partnerships to promote forest-friendly cocoa production in Sierra Leone have already supported more than 2,500 farmers and resulted in the export of over 130 tonnes of cocoa beans to international markets. Once scaled up, this new project has the potential to support another 3,000 cocoa farmers and their families in generating a more secure and sustainable income.

You can support this important work by treating yourself to our forest-friendly Gola Rainforest chocolate bars, truffles and drinking chocolate – available to buy from RSPB shops, catalogues and online at rspb.shop.org.uk



“The Earthshot Prize is a prestigious accolade that recognises just what can be achieved when governments and civil society organisations come together at the scale needed to create lasting positive impacts for nature, climate and people.”

Katie-jo Luxton
RSPB Global Conservation Director



Saiga-saving project wins the Earthshot Prize

The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was named the winner of the Protect and Restore Nature category of His Royal Highness Prince William’s Earthshot Prize 2024.

The RSPB co-founded the initiative back in 2005, alongside the Government of Kazakhstan, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, and other partners, with the aim of preventing the extinction of the Saiga Antelope. These ancient antelope would once have roamed alongside Sabre-toothed Tigers and Woolly Mammoths, but by the early 2000s their population was on the brink of collapse, because of habitat loss, poaching and disease.

As a result of research, anti-poaching and smuggling efforts, public education and the establishment of protected areas, Saiga numbers have rocketed from fewer than 40,000 to 2.8 million in 2024.

Thanks to the £1 million prize, we’ll be able to scale up our work to help species that live alongside the Saiga, including Steppe Eagles, Sociable Lapwings, Kulans (wild ass) and Przewalski’s Horses, across a 75-million hectare area – that’s roughly the size of Turkey!

UK Overseas Territories

We work to protect and restore nature on land and at sea in the UK's Overseas Territories, which are home to a staggering 94% of the UK's unique species.

Pitcairn Islands restoration planning takes a step forward

Fact-finding expeditions to the Pitcairn Islands are paving the way for a potential rat eradication programme to protect threatened seabirds.

The Pitcairn Islands, comprising Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno, are some of the most remote islands on the planet, situated more than 5,000km from the nearest land. Together, these islands are home to more than 95 species found nowhere else on Earth. Over 95% of the world's Henderson and Murphy's Petrels breed on the islands, alongside significant populations of other petrels and seabirds.

Unfortunately, these birds are under threat from invasive, non-native rats, which reached the islands with Polynesian settlers. Since the rats arrived, at least five bird species have gone extinct, and others are facing the same fate.

Evidence from fieldwork on Henderson has shown that 95% of petrel chicks are killed within just a week of hatching – that's more than 25,000 chicks a year. Since petrels lay a single egg per breeding season, this level of predation is simply unsustainable. Seabird numbers on Henderson

have dropped from an estimated 5 million pairs before rats arrived, to just 40,000 pairs today.

In 2011, the RSPB led a rat eradication attempt on Henderson, but despite removing more than 99% of the island's rats, the few remaining individuals quickly multiplied. We have always committed to returning to Henderson to fully eradicate rats and at the request of the Pitcairn Government and community we started planning in 2018 for a renewed eradication attempt on both Pitcairn and Henderson.

Thanks to funding from the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, together with UK International Development and Darwin Plus funding from the UK Government, we were able to visit Pitcairn and Henderson in 2023 to gather information and carry out preliminary bait trials. Then, from June to August 2024, another expedition allowed us to answer outstanding questions to advance our eradication planning. The lessons we've learned will be invaluable in decision-making and planning for a potential eradication attempt in future, to restore Pitcairn and Henderson to their former glory.



On Henderson Island, rats kill 95% of petrel chicks within a week of hatching.



St Helena's cloud forest provides most of the island's water through mist capture.

Protecting St Helena's cloud forest

Work to protect and restore St Helena's precious cloud forest for wildlife and people continues.

St Helena, a UK Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic, is home to a unique cloud forest of global importance. With over 250 unique species of plants and invertebrates found in just 16 hectares, the forest is one of the most critical wildlife sites by area on the planet.

Not only that, the unique trees, ferns and other plants in the cloud forest are biologically designed to capture mist, and this mist capture provides the majority of the island's water. As a result, the cloud forest is vital for St Helena's water security, particularly in the face of climate change, which is predicted to increase the chance of droughts on this already drought-prone island.

Although the cloud forest is protected within the Peaks National Park, it is still under threat as a result of fragmentation and the impacts of invasive species. Restoring it is therefore important not just for its unique biodiversity, but also for the community's long-term water security.

Thanks to funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), we're working through the St Helena Cloud Forest Project to remove invasive plant species, rejuvenate and restore areas of endemic cloud forest, connect isolated sections, and create new areas of habitat. This work is delivered in partnership with the St Helena Government, the St Helena National Trust and Connect Saint Helena (the island's water utility company), with additional support from international partners.

Through the project we have:

- Increased the area of cloud forest in active restoration by 14%.
- Planted over 40,000 plants.
- Discovered five spider species that are completely new to science.
- Collected pioneering mist, rainfall and soil moisture data which, in time, we expect to demonstrate the impact of cloud forest restoration for water security.
- Helped every child on the island to understand the global importance of the cloud forest for wildlife and their water supply, through our outreach work.

Trees take time to grow and the full fruits of our labour will take time to be realised. The greatest threat we are currently facing is that of emerging tree diseases, including *Phytophthora*. With so few native trees left, and no more anywhere else in the world, every single one matters. We are constantly adapting to new information and striving to find solutions.

Going forward, the FCDO has agreed a further £340,000 funding for 2025/26 through its Overseas Territories Climate Security Programme as a bridging grant until further funds are secured.



Blushing Snails are found nowhere else on Earth.



Sister Islands Rock Iguanas are only found on Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.

Saving Critically Endangered iguanas in the Caribbean

Sister Islands Rock Iguana numbers are on the rise thanks to a partnership project to control feral cats.

Known as the Sister Islands, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, in the UK Overseas Territory of the Cayman Islands, are home to an incredible array of species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. One such species is the Critically Endangered Sister Islands Rock Iguana.

Unfortunately, iguanas are one of the most threatened groups of reptiles on the planet, and they face many threats including loss of habitat, vehicle collisions and predation by invasive non-native species, such as feral cats. On the Sister Islands, native species like these rock iguanas evolved in the absence of mammalian predators, so when cats were brought to the islands, the iguanas had no defences against them. Although fully grown adults are safe from predation, cats will kill and eat hatchlings and sub-adults, and as a result, they have had a devastating impact on the iguana population – which reached a low of about 2,000 individuals in 2022 on Little Cayman.

3,500

Rock Iguanas were counted in 2025, surpassing the highest population estimate from 2014, when surveys first began



To help these endangered iguanas recover, a feral cat control programme is underway on Little Cayman, led by the Cayman Islands Government Department of Environment, in partnership with the National Trust of the Cayman Islands and the RSPB, with assistance from the Department of Agriculture and funding from Darwin Plus.

The Little Cayman community, local animal welfare groups and the partnership have also rallied together to register all pet cats on the island, ensuring they are microchipped, vaccinated and neutered. This will reduce the chance of people's



Brown Boobies are also benefiting from the removal of cats and rats.

David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

pets bolstering the remaining feral cat population and ensure they can be identified during feral cat control operations.

Following two years of control work on Little Cayman, we have already seen an incredible rise in the proportion of hatchling iguanas in the population. In 2020, before control work began, hatchlings made up about 4.5% of the population, whereas in 2023, a year after control work began, this jumped to 26%, with a further 8.2% increase in 2025. The proportion of sub-adults in the population has also increased by about 17%. Overall, the iguana population has risen to around 3,500 individuals in 2025, surpassing the highest population estimate from 2014, when population monitoring began.

Meanwhile on Cayman Brac, feral cat and rat control has reaped similar success for ground-nesting Brown Booby birds, which are vulnerable to disturbance and predation from these invasive mammals. Here, nesting success was at a low of 12.5%, but increased to 77.8% in the first breeding season after control operations began in 2023.

Tristan Marine Protection Zone wins prestigious award

Tristan da Cunha's Marine Protection Zone has won the Gold Blue Park Award at the 2024 Our Ocean conference, in recognition of the community's outstanding commitment to marine conservation.



Located over 2,000km from the nearest land, it takes longer to sail to the Tristan da Cunha archipelago than it took Apollo 11 to reach the Moon! The waters that surround this remote UK Overseas Territory are some of the richest in the world. Tens of millions of seabirds soar above the waves, penguins and seals cram onto the beaches, and sharks and whales feed offshore.

Recognising this precious marine heritage, the people of Tristan came together to campaign for greater protection for their islands and the surrounding ocean. Thanks to their hard work, ambition and persistence, supported by the RSPB and other partners, a Marine Protection Zone (MPZ) was designated in 2021, **protecting an area almost three times the size of the UK.** No mining,

drilling or any other harmful activity can take place here, and only limited sustainable fishing by the local community is allowed. It's what's known as a 'no take' zone and it's the largest of its kind in the Atlantic.

Following the MPZ's designation, the Atlantic Guardians project began, with the aim of building a strong foundation for this vast protected area. Funded by the Blue Nature Alliance, and implemented by the RSPB and Tristan da Cunha Government, the initiative focuses on scientific research, capacity building, community engagement and global outreach.

Janine Lavarello, Marine Protection Zone Officer employed by the project, has travelled to the UK to receive training to support her role, including learning how to track seabirds with

a team from the RSPB's Centre for Conservation Science. Her new skills are helping her to protect and study the islands' wildlife, by supporting Tristan's Conservation Department with work such as tagging sharks and monitoring cetaceans using acoustic equipment.

In 2024, Tristan's MPZ was awarded a Gold Blue Park Award at the Our Ocean conference in recognition of the work of the Tristan community, supported through Atlantic Guardians and other partnership work.

Celebrating this important award, Janine reflected: "We are thrilled that this award recognises our hard work over the last few years. We are committed to maintaining these high standards to ensure Tristan's waters are protected now, and for future generations."

Food and farming

Much of the UK's wildlife depends on farmland, so we're pushing for better funding for nature-friendly farming, and working with farmers to develop and share ways to help nature thrive.

New research shows solar farms can benefit nature

Research by the RSPB and Cambridge University shows how solar farms could help to boost bird numbers while delivering clean energy.

The UK is committed to reaching net zero by 2050, which means moving away from fossil fuels towards clean energy, such as solar and wind. Many solar farms are built on agricultural land, where farmland wildlife is already struggling, so scientists from the RSPB and the University of Cambridge set about determining what impact solar farms could have on nature.

This research found that – hectare for hectare – solar farms in The Fens that had been managed with nature in mind and contained a mix of habitats, such as hedgerows, were home to nearly three times as many birds as nearby intensively managed arable farmland. They supported a greater variety of species, including threatened birds such as Corn Buntings, too. Solar farms with a mix of habitats also performed better compared to those that were intensively managed, with sheep grazing or grass cutting.

These results suggest that nature-friendly management of solar farms could provide a significant boost for birds. RSPB Conservation Scientist and lead author of the study, Dr Joshua Copping, said: "With lots of demands on UK land, finding ways and space to reverse the long-term declines in a range of farmland birds is challenging. Species such as the Corn Bunting, Linnet and Yellowhammer have seen their populations dwindle and finding ways to help them is critical for their long-term survival.

"The results of this study suggest that solar farms managed well for nature could make an important contribution and could provide relief from the effects of agricultural intensification on these species and other wildlife in the surrounding landscape."

While these results offer hope that wildlife can thrive alongside solar farms, it's important that any new solar farms are not located in areas of ecological risk, on nature-protected sites and at other sites that are important for rare and declining species. These continue to be vital refuges for wildlife and restoring them is crucial for recovering nature and meeting the UK Government's legally binding nature recovery targets in England. It's also important that solar farms are not sited on highly productive farmland, which could adversely impact food production.



Dr Joshua Copping

When managed in a nature-friendly way, solar farms can help provide habitat for wildlife.

Bees are buzzzzzing at pesticide ban

After years of campaigning by the RSPB and other environmental organisations, the UK Government has upheld a ban on the emergency use of bee-killing pesticides in England.

The use of neonicotinoid pesticides was banned across the UK and Europe in 2018 after scientists confirmed they are extremely toxic to pollinators, such as bees. A single teaspoon of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam is enough to kill 1.25 billion bees, yet despite the ban on its use, the Government has repeatedly granted permission for farmers to apply the pesticide on sugar beet crops.

Along with other environmental organisations, we have been calling for a total ban to be enforced and alternative nature-friendly measures to be used instead, so we were delighted that in January 2025 the Government rejected the application for the pesticide's use this year.

It's a vital step in efforts to protect UK wildlife and the move comes after continued campaigns by the RSPB and others, including a sector-wide effort from The Pesticide Collaboration, of which we are a lead partner.

RSPB Director of Policy and Advocacy, Kevin Austin explains: "The Government made the only sensible choice and upheld the ban on the use of neonicotinoids, refusing the application for use on sugar beet in England. The science is clear that this bee-killing pesticide has no place in our countryside if we are to reverse nature's decline and secure our future food security.

"It is now absolutely vital that farmers are properly supported to access viable nature-friendly alternatives; our ability to produce food depends on nature, including pollinators, and we cannot leave our precious wildlife in freefall any longer."

"It is now absolutely vital that farmers are properly supported to access viable nature-friendly alternatives."



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Over 100,000 people stand up for nature-friendly farming

RSPB supporters stood shoulder to shoulder with farmers ahead of the UK Government's Spending Review to call for the nature-friendly farming budget to be protected.

Since 1970, farmland bird populations have plummeted by 61% in the UK. In many places the once-familiar purr of Turtle Doves, the cheery 'little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese' song of the Yellowhammer, and so many more sounds of the countryside are long gone.

And it's not just wildlife that's struggling – farmers are facing many challenges too. They're on the front line of the climate crisis, with increasingly unpredictable and severe weather, such as floods and scorching heat, piling more pressure onto a community that is already dealing with rising costs and markets that squeeze them from all sides.

At the moment, it's clear that how we produce most of our food isn't working for farmers or for nature. But it doesn't need to be this way. Nature-friendly farming keeps our soils healthy and our water clean, making farming as a business more resilient and profitable. It can reduce the need for insecticides and pesticides, saving farmers money and boosting the numbers of pollinators on which so much of our food relies. It can also reduce carbon emissions and help deal with the impacts of extreme weather caused by climate change. Not to mention the huge difference it can make to farmland wildlife!

Independent research commissioned by the RSPB, National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts suggests that to fully realise these benefits and achieve the UK's climate and nature targets, the agriculture budget needs to increase to £5.9 billion per year.

So, ahead of the UK Government's Autumn Budget in 2024, we launched our farming campaign with an e-petition calling for Chancellor Rachel Reeves to grow England's nature-friendly farming budget.

Initially, the farming budget was maintained, but with the Government under increasing pressure to balance the books ahead of its Comprehensive Spending Review in June 2025, it became clear that the farming budget was in the firing line. Some sources predicted it could be slashed by up to 20%, amounting to £500 million.

This would have been a disaster for nature, so we stepped up our campaign, pushing even harder for investment in nature-friendly farming and raising awareness of the importance of the farming budget through attention-grabbing social media content, as well as widespread media coverage.

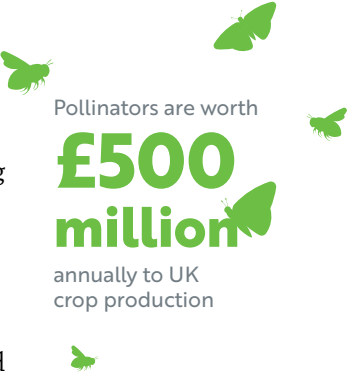
The e-petition was also supported and promoted by a wide range of farming organisations and environmental NGOs including the National Trust, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Pasture for Life, Landworkers' Alliance and WWT, helping it to reach a huge audience.

In total, 106,000 people signed the petition and on 20 May, we delivered it to Downing Street. Together, we showed the UK Government that there is a huge groundswell of support for a food and farming system that works both for nature and for people.

Thanks in part to this clear show of support, the Chancellor has committed to spending £2 billion a year on nature-friendly farming, and £400 million to plant trees and restore peatlands over the next three years. This is the biggest ever annual nature-friendly farming budget. It's a win for nature, for farmers, and for us all – thank you to everyone who added their voice.

Although it was a huge relief to hear that the farming budget would not be cut, we know that for wildlife to truly recover we need to see the budget grow, and for it to be spent efficiently, on high quality nature interventions, so we will continue to hold the Government to account.

To find out more about our farming work and how to play your part, visit: rspb.org.uk/farming



Campaigners outside the Houses of Parliament.



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Farmers help beleaguered buntings bounce back

Corn Buntings declined by 89% in the UK between 1970 and 2018, but recent monitoring reveals positive signs of recovery in England and Scotland.



David Slater (rspb-images.com)

426 Corn Bunting territories were recorded in Fife in 2024, up from 372 in 2022.

in eastern Scotland to provide safe nesting and foraging areas, as well as winter food, through a range of measures including growing wild bird seed plots.

Monitoring by Professor Will Cresswell at St Andrew's University recorded 426 Corn Bunting territories in Fife in 2024, up from only 118 in 2015. The monitoring also found new territories in north-east Fife, suggesting that the population in the East Neuk of Fife may now be acting as a source population for other local areas.

This success is also mirrored in south-west England, where our partnership work on the South-west Farmland Bird Initiative is almost certainly behind the 129% rise in Corn Bunting numbers seen in the region from 2012 to 2022.

Alongside Natural England, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, and Cranbourne Chase AONB, we advised and supported farmers to deliver measures that specifically provide the key habitats that Corn Buntings need to thrive, through agri-environment scheme management options.

These positive results are inspiring proof that, by working alongside farmers, we can help improve the fortunes of some of the UK's most threatened farmland birds.

The distinctive jangling song of the Corn Bunting was once a common sound on farmland across the UK, but like so many other farmland birds their numbers have plummeted. They've disappeared from Northern Ireland and Wales and now breed across a restricted range in England and just a handful of areas in Scotland.

To help bring these beleaguered birds back from the brink, we've been supporting farmers and landowners



Turtle Doves set to benefit from new partnership

We've teamed up with Tesco to help bring these iconic birds back from the brink, by working with farmers to create vital habitat.

Between 1967 and 2022, Turtle Dove numbers plummeted by 99%, with the birds hard hit by unsustainable hunting in south-west Europe and a lack of suitable food and habitat on their breeding grounds in the UK. As described on page 13, we've been working hard to tackle these threats, and our new partnership with Tesco will provide a welcome boost to these efforts.

We're working together to provide farmers and landowners in East Anglia with dedicated support to create Turtle Dove-friendly habitats that will provide the food and shelter they need to breed successfully.

As well as being a stronghold for Turtle Doves, East Anglia is one of Tesco's key sourcing regions and we're aiming to engage with 300 farmers and landowners, supporting them to create more than 1,800 hectares of wildlife-friendly habitats. And it's not just Turtle Doves that will benefit. Through our Fair to Nature scheme, farmers and landowners will also receive habitat advice to help them support other at-risk farmland birds, such as Lapwings and Stone-curlews, as well as to boost pollinator and insect numbers.

"The UK food industry relies on healthy soils, clean water supplies, and abundant biodiversity, so it's vital we play our part in protecting and restoring nature in our supply chain."

Ashwin Prasad
Tesco Chief Commercial Officer



Breeding birds are up 161% since we took on Hope Farm.

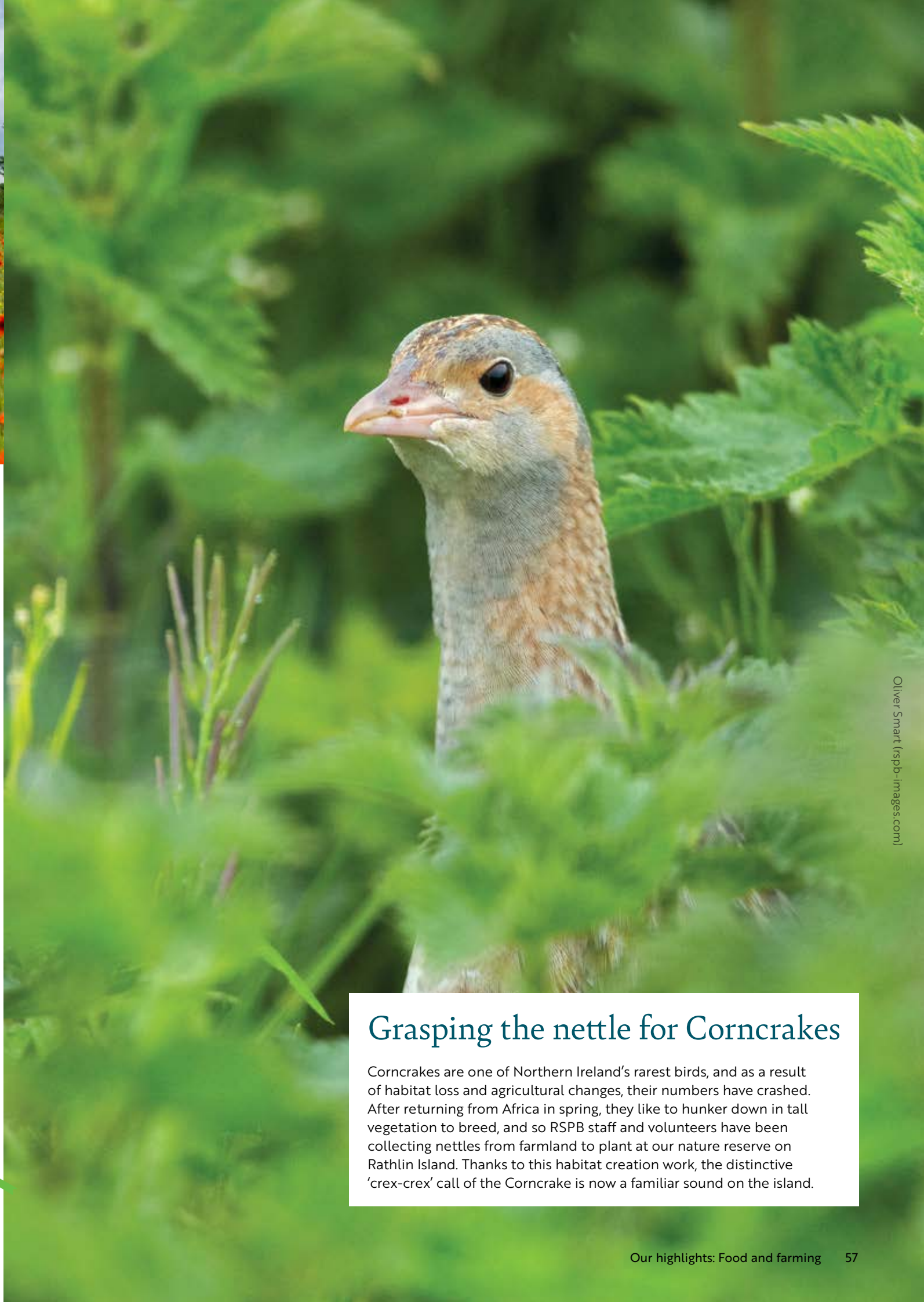
Happy birthday Hope Farm!

2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the RSPB's purchase of Hope Farm and since then wildlife numbers have soared, showing that nature conservation and food production can go hand-in-hand.

In 2000, with the help of generous donations from our supporters, the RSPB bought Hope Farm, a typical arable farm in Cambridgeshire. With farmland wildlife in serious decline, our aim was to research and demonstrate ways to farm in harmony with nature, while continuing to produce food in a profitable way. By taking on the farm, we wanted to learn more about farming and experience the ups and downs of running a farm business, to help us better understand the challenges that farmers face while producing our food and discover how to overcome them.

During our time managing the farm, we've learnt a huge amount from other wildlife-friendly farmers and together we've shared ideas to identify the best ways to balance running a farm business, growing food for the table and looking after wildlife. And the results have been truly astonishing.

Since we took on the farm, wildlife has not only recovered but flourished. Butterflies are up by 348%, we have 11 times more bumblebees than a nearby control farm and breeding bird numbers have soared by 161%. The number of wintering birds is up by a staggering 1,631% too. Meanwhile, we've been able to maintain farm profits, proving that it's possible to produce food profitably and restore nature at the same time.



Grasping the nettle for Corncrakes

Corncrakes are one of Northern Ireland's rarest birds, and as a result of habitat loss and agricultural changes, their numbers have crashed. After returning from Africa in spring, they like to hunker down in tall vegetation to breed, and so RSPB staff and volunteers have been collecting nettles from farmland to plant at our nature reserve on Rathlin Island. Thanks to this habitat creation work, the distinctive 'crex-crex' call of the Corncrake is now a familiar sound on the island.

Nature positive economy

We're working with a range of businesses to help them take more action for nature, and to encourage the transition to a nature positive economy.

Boosting funding for nature

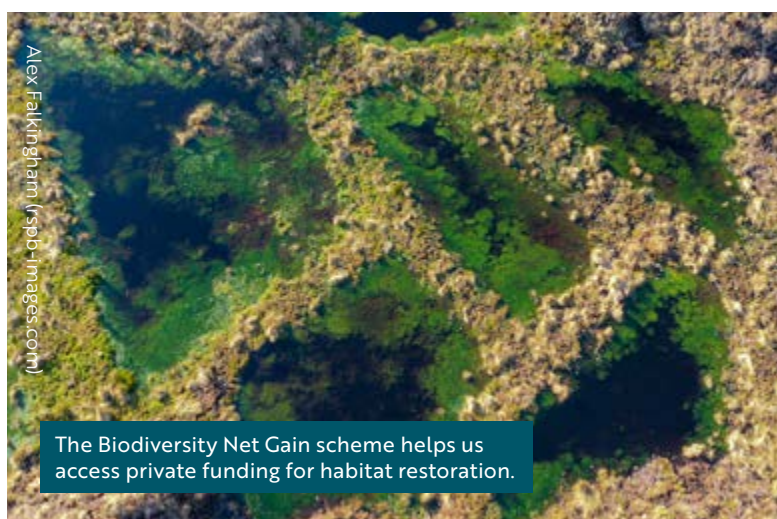
We're tapping into new funding opportunities to allow us to protect and restore more land for nature.

Nature markets are a relatively new and rapidly evolving area of finance, based on the sale and purchase of ecosystem services – that is, the services that nature provides to people, such as clean water and carbon storage. These nature markets create a way of unlocking new funding and finance options for nature restoration and so the RSPB has been actively looking at how best to work in these new markets.

One of the key means to do this in England is through the Biodiversity Net Gain scheme, which was launched by the UK Government in February 2024. In a nutshell, Biodiversity Net Gain means that for certain types of development, developers must enhance biodiversity by at least 10% beyond the pre-development state. It's delivered through the developers either providing nature-friendly features directly within their new developments or paying for others to deliver new places for nature as nearby as possible, for example by improving or extending local nature reserves.

900
hectares

of peatland
restored through
the Peatland Code
by March 2025



The Biodiversity Net Gain scheme helps us access private funding for habitat restoration.

At the RSPB, we are able to help developers achieve Biodiversity Net Gain on their sites by selling a variety of high-quality biodiversity units from our nature reserves across England. Funding generated from selling these units can help us create more habitat and manage more land with nature in mind, ensuring that there is meaningful 'net gain' for nature. Our green pipeline of Biodiversity Net Gain projects represents 145 hectares of potential habitat restoration, with a further 908 hectares in development.

Another aspect of nature markets that the RSPB is working on is the protection and restoration of peatlands, through what is known as the Peatland Code. The Peatland Code is a voluntary certification standard designed to attract private funding for peatland restoration projects in exchange for climate benefits. Put simply, landowners like the RSPB with degraded peatlands can sell carbon units to buyers who are looking to offset their carbon footprint. This money is then used to restore the peatland and allow it to lock away carbon from the atmosphere, helping in the fight against climate change.

Our work in Wales and Scotland has resulted in huge areas of peatland being restored under the Peatland Code. We have 13 registered Peatland Code sites on RSPB land, which aim to restore around 1,100 hectares of peatland, of which we had restored about 900 hectares by March 2025. We forecast that our current suite of Peatland Code-registered projects on RSPB land will deliver approximately 170,000 tCO₂e of emissions reductions over their lifetimes.



We're calling for new developments to be designed with nature in mind.

Let's put nature at the heart of the planning system

The RSPB's Chief Executive, Beccy Speight, spoke at the Future Homes Conference, setting out our vision for a planning system that works for people and nature.

The Future Homes Conference, held in London in December 2024, brought together housebuilders, planners, local government, energy companies and others from across the industry. Beccy Speight spoke at the event, calling for nature to be placed at the heart of the planning system, at a time when the UK Government is seeking to overhaul planning rules to help deliver on its promise to build 1.5 million new homes by 2029.

The RSPB's partnership with Barratt Redrow, the UK's largest homebuilder, demonstrates that it is possible to build new homes with people and nature in mind. From the flagship nature-friendly Kingsbrook development in Aylesbury (shown above) to the installation of Swift bricks and RSPB-approved show gardens, our collaboration is an important showcase for our advocacy work with the wider house building sector and government, and businesses more widely.

At the conference, Beccy stressed that any new building must happen in the right place and in the right way, to ensure our most important places for wildlife remain protected. Recognising the different demands on land in England – from the wild places we need for nature and people's wellbeing, to agriculture, renewable energy and home building – Beccy stressed that solutions do exist to tackle these complex problems together.

She also warned against pitching the debate as a conflict between environmentalists and developers, saying: "Our planning system should be the vehicle for managing these tensions. A long-term view means we can avert the damaging effects of continued climate change and nature loss, whilst helping our country, businesses, communities and wildlife to flourish. We can and must do both."

Beccy urged the Government to reform the planning system in a way that speeds up the restoration of nature and the rollout of new homes and renewable energy, outlining the RSPB's three key asks:

1

Plan ahead to protect more wild places

We're calling for the UK Government to develop a Spatial Plan, so there's a strategic approach to where we should develop and where we need to protect, helping to minimise harm to nature.

2

Support planning expertise

Funding should be increased to ensure local authorities and agencies, like Natural England, have the resources needed to speed up delivery, but always with nature in mind.

3

Make developments nature-friendly by design

We're urging the UK Government to ensure new housing developments and infrastructure have nature-filled greenspaces and wildlife-friendly features included by design, so communities can experience the proven benefits of nature, and wildlife can find a place to call home.

RSPB capabilities

To meet our ambitions for nature, we need to be the best we can be, with an operating structure and capabilities that help us achieve our strategic objectives.

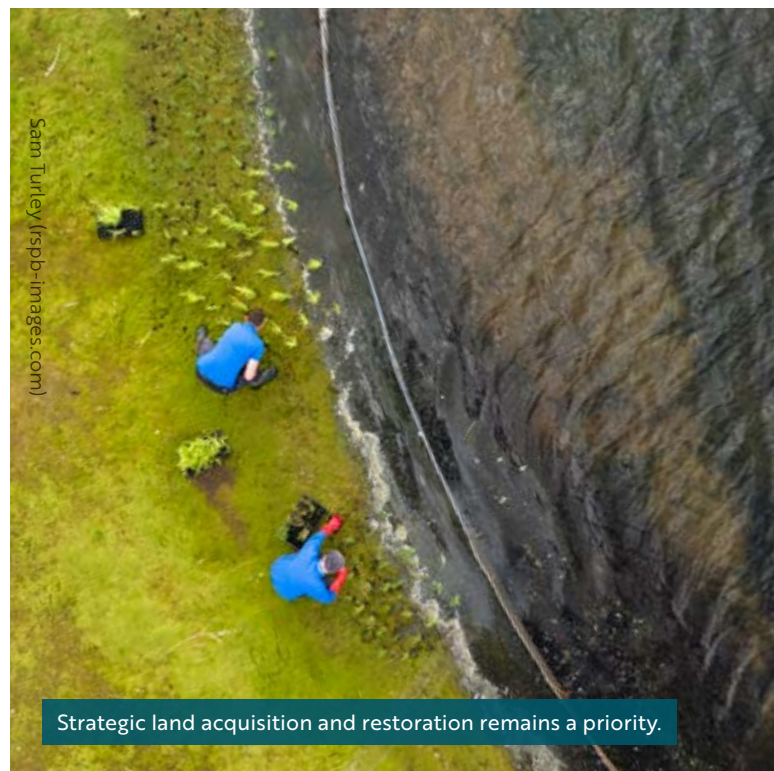
Changes on our nature reserves

We have been conducting a review of RSPB operations to ensure we can continue to tackle the challenges nature faces in the most effective way possible.

Like any responsible charity, the RSPB is committed to using the generous support of our members and donors in the most effective way to help nature. However, the recent economic climate – marked by inflation and the cost-of-living crisis – has posed significant challenges. Rising energy costs and supplier price increases have raised the cost of delivering our work by an estimated 10% in just two years.

The cost of delivering our work rose to

£165 million



Strategic land acquisition and restoration remains a priority.

In response, we have undertaken a thorough review of our operations to ensure long-term financial sustainability. This included evaluating how we work, how we procure goods and services, and how our land and reserves contribute to our mission and financial resilience. The focus remains on delivering the greatest impact for nature now and in the future.

Nature reserves account for the largest share of the RSPB's spending, and some operational changes are underway. These include the closure of a small number of shops, updated café offerings, new working practices for staff, and potential reductions in activity on less than 1% of RSPB land. In such cases, we will explore partnerships with community groups, other charities, or local councils to ensure continued stewardship of these places.

While some short-term disruption may occur as changes are implemented, the goal is to strengthen our ability to protect and restore nature across our network. Strategic land acquisitions remain a priority; since 2017, the RSPB has acquired over 8,500 hectares of new land to expand and connect habitats.

The RSPB is continuing to grow the land we conserve, while ensuring every site makes a clear and effective contribution to our mission. The dedication of RSPB staff and volunteers remains central to this effort.

With 135 years of conservation experience, the RSPB continues to lead the UK's efforts to protect wildlife. Going forward, we will concentrate our resources where they can have the greatest impact – boosting numbers of birds and other wildlife, restoring vital habitats, and inspiring more people to care for and take action for nature. This strategic approach will ensure that the RSPB remains a strong and effective force for nature in the years ahead.

Together We Fly campaign takes off

Our new campaign aims to inspire hope and action in the face of the ongoing threats to nature, and raise awareness of our work.

The RSPB's brand has been around since 1889, which makes us one of the most recognisable organisations in the charity sector. However, the downside is that the public often misunderstand the work we're doing today, and how and why we're doing it.

Since launching our new brand identity in 2022, we've still got some work to do to shift perceptions and that's why we've launched 'Together We Fly' – an exciting new brand campaign designed to change common misconceptions about the RSPB and inspire more people to act for nature.

Hannah Ranson, the RSPB's Head of Brand and Marketing, explains: "We want to create more emotional connections with our cause and encourage support, action and change. Together We Fly will help us do exactly this, and build on the community spirit we're achieving already with our 1.2 million members. The launch campaign aimed to really drive the message that we're in this together, every action for nature matters, however big or small, and that the RSPB is the nature charity for you, no matter who you are."

To kick off the campaign, adverts ran on TikTok, Instagram and Facebook across the whole of the UK, alongside TV and radio adverts in north-west and south-east England, and billboards in some London train stations. Our aim is that these adverts help us find a place in more people's hearts and minds as they see our hope, passion and action for nature brought to life. Going forward, the message behind 'Together We Fly' will be embedded into all communications.



Enabling more, and more diverse people, to act for nature

We've been taking steps to increase the representation of people of colour at the RSPB, but there's still a long way to go.

At the RSPB, we believe that nature's recovery demands everyone's voices, perspectives and skills. People and communities of colour are often most affected by environmental degradation and yet remain under-represented in conservation efforts.

We are one of 161 organisations in the environment sector to take part in the RACE (Radical Action for the Climate Emergency) Report, and in 2024/25 this showed that the sector is still one of the least diverse in the UK, with ethnic minority

representation at only 4.5%. That's far lower than the average of 16% across the UK workforce.

This year, at the RSPB we saw a positive shift: we improved self-identification rates, by promoting a more open and inclusive culture, which saw ethnic minority representation grow from 2.8% to 3.7%. Our staff network for people of colour, Beyond Differences, doubled in membership, strengthening our co-production approach.

However, challenges remain. There are still significantly more people of colour in temporary roles and they are also under-represented in leadership. This is not just a recruitment issue – it reflects deeper disparities in development and career progression across the sector. Addressing this requires significant changes, and we are committed to tackling these barriers head-on.

We know we have much more to do. By building trust, and growing genuine partnerships, we will continue working towards a future where more people – and more diverse people – can take meaningful action for nature.

RSPB greening

We are committed to being a nature positive organisation and ultimately aim to have a net climate cooling impact.

Greening initiatives power ahead

This year, our Greening Programme continued at pace, as we work to embed excellent environmental practice across the charity.

We have updated our Environmental Policy, published our Climate Change Adaptation Report, continued to work on our environmental and carbon monitoring, and implemented a wide variety of sustainability improvements on our nature reserves. We have also improved our climate change response planning, through the LARK programme (see pages 64–65).

Work to embed a full environmental management system (EMS) across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland really pushed ahead in the last 12 months. For the first time, we reached Level 4 of Green Dragon across the whole organisation – this accreditation is awarded to organisations taking steps to manage and reduce their environmental impact. We are now well on our way to achieving Level 5, the award’s highest level (equivalent to ISO 14001), in 2025.

The number of members opting to receive the digital magazine doubled this year, from 20,000 to 40,000. Meanwhile, for our print magazine, we switched to using paper with the world’s lowest production emissions. It is also lighter, saving around 12% of paper usage per issue. We’ve also moved to a centralised supply chain and stock management system for our food and beverage operation, allowing us to minimise food waste and simplify the sustainability assurance of suppliers.

In our commercial operations, environmental successes in 2024–25 include 100% Red Tractor certified meat and dairy in cafés, only certified sustainable palm oil in our cafés and retail, and the implementation of our new sustainability objectives. For products sold in our shops and online, we have phased out traditional cotton products in favour of recycled or organic, removed

polystyrene filler from some supplier products, and replaced all plastic with paper in our licensed jigsaws. We have also provided clearer recycling information on our delivery labels and now have liner-less labels for customer deliveries, which will save over 2 tonnes of plastic over the next five years. The rebrand of our suet products has removed an estimated 300kg of plastic a year.

Greening initiatives introduced on reserves this year include the first ever electric utility vehicle delivered to Sherwood Forest, upgraded pollution prevention planning, the continued reduction and electrification of our own fleet, and the installation of more electric vehicle (EV) charging points. As we move away from fossil fuel use, there are now more electric off-road vehicles in use for site maintenance work, helping to reduce exhaust emissions. At Corrimony, the EV is used to take visitors on nature safaris and has improved sightings as the quieter EV means less disturbance.

Energy audits have been carried out and efficiency measures implemented at sites including UKHQ, Loch Leven, Aylesbeare Common and Sandwell Valley. Solar panels with battery storage – funded by a grant from Dunbartonshire Council – have also been installed at Loch Lomond, providing power to the new visitor building and toilet block.

Several reserves are switching from petrol-fuelled equipment to electric alternatives. At Loch of Strathbeg, we have replaced several petrol chainsaws and brush cutters with electric models, which reduces fossil fuel consumption and direct emissions. It also leads to a reduction in fume production and lower noise impacts. Electric models also tend to have fewer maintenance requirements and a reduced risk of fuel leaks.

A number of reserves are now using GPS electric livestock collars, which allow staff to control where animals graze without having to use any fencing. This reduces the need for large batteries to power the electric fences, as well as the use of vehicles for livestock management, as staff can control where they graze remotely using a phone app.

	2024–25	2023–4	2022–23
Energy consumption (KWh)			
Electricity	3,583,699	3,501,268	3,238,498
Gas, LPG and oil	2,129,914	2,191,675*	2,668,771
Transport fuel – fleet cars	2,619,717	2,823,439*	2,908,171
Reserve machinery	2,090,961	2,162,175*	1,494,818
Woodfuel	929,594	1,202,977*	1,486,401
Renewables (PV and wind)	1,243,233	1,951,628	1,875,527
Total KWh	12,597,117	13,833,161	13,672,186
Emissions (tCO2e)			
SCOPE 1 (S1)			
Gas, LPG and oil for heating	399	464*	527
Fuel for reserve machinery	517	536*	367
Fuel for fleet transport	624	673*	700
Woodfuel for heating	10	12*	14
Fugitive emissions	5		
Total tCO2e (S1)	1,555	1,685*	1,608
SCOPE 2 (S2)			
Electricity (location based – LB)	634	708	626
Electricity (market based – MB)	92	80	115
Total tCO2e (S1/2 MB)	1,647	1,765*	1,723
Intensity ratio: Total tCO2e/staff (S1/S2 MB)	0.7	0.7	0.7
SCOPE 3 (S3) (relevant categories only)			
1. Purchased goods and services	20,771	20,699**	29,541**
2. Capital goods	1,399		
3. Fuel- and energy-related activities			
Transmission and distribution (MB)	8	7	11
Well to Tank (MB)	1,009	1,037*	696
5. Waste generated in operations			
Waste management	6	13*	4
Water supply and treatment	3	4	5
6. Business travel			
Grey fleet – Staff	331	368*	1021
Public transport – Staff	1,070	765*	818
Grey fleet – Volunteer	64	65*	
Public transport – Volunteer	4	3*	
7. Employee commuting			
Commuting – Staff	1,649	1,339	
Teleworking – Staff	784	528	405
8. Upstream leased assets	63	69	
9. Downstream transportation/distribution	296	234	221
10. Processing of sold products	458	610*	697
13. Downstream leased assets	5		
15. Investments	5,599		
Total tCO2e (S3)	33,520	25,740*	33,419*
Carbon offsets and carbon units tCO2e	0	0	0
Total annual emissions tCO2e (all scopes) LB	35,709	28,134*	35,653*
Total annual emissions tCO2e (all scopes) MB	35,167	27,506*	35,142*
Intensity ratio: total tCO2e/staff (All scopes) MB***	14.3	11.1*	13.9*

* Adjusted (more accurate) figures due to improved capture and processing of retrospective data as a result of automation.
** Recalculated figures due to switch from Quantis to DEFRA published conversion factors for ‘Purchased goods and services’.
*** Volunteer travel excluded from intensity ratio to ensure ratio data boundaries match.

Driving change through LARK

Under the acronym LARK, we have pulled together the key pillars of our climate change response to enable more holistic action planning. LARK (which stands for Land-Adaptation-Reduction-Knowledge) directly links to our Environmental Policy commitments and underpins all the projects that are improving the RSPB's internal response to climate change.

Land

How land is managed affects the climate, both positively and negatively, so it's crucial to understand the impacts of the land management work carried out by the RSPB. Significant habitat restoration and creation projects at various reserves, from Lakenheath Fen in south-east England to Yell in Shetland, are already reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our land. We estimate that our major restoration activities in 2023–24 increased the net climate cooling effect of land that the RSPB manages by around 16,200 tonnes of CO₂ per year (2024–25 figures not yet available).

We have historically only measured the impact of our major land intervention activities. So, in 2024–25 we established an exciting project which will account for the emissions and removal potential from all our land holdings in detail. This will enable us to set targets against our land use change and land management emissions. To that end, we are now working on improving the completeness and consistency of our habitat information. We are translating it into a common format (using the UKHab classification system) to express the latest available insight on the extent of, and changes to, habitats and consequently the greenhouse gas emissions on our reserves. As a result, we will have the habitat information we need to better quantify the aggregate climate consequences of the RSPB's UK-wide land management activities.

We have also started to gather more complete and accurate data on how our extensive use of conservation grazing affects the climate. This year, we have captured information on around 80% of the livestock – owned by us or by others – on our reserves in more detail. In 2024–25, emissions from animals including ponies, cattle, sheep, goats and pigs on our main grazing sites were

around 12,490 tonnes of CO₂e. Next year we will have information on the remaining 20%, giving us a complete and accurate assessment of the climate impact of the livestock on RSPB land.

Adaptation

The RSPB's Adaptation Working Group prepared and submitted its Climate Change Adaptation Report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), which described our level of climate change preparedness. The report will help inform the UK's understanding of climate risks and progress in adaptation. The Adaptation Report can be found on the RSPB website at rspb.org.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/approach-to-environmental-impacts

We are developing our internal adaptation programme and embedding adaptation considerations into different areas of the organisation. These include code of practice reviews, our environmental management system (EMS), acquisitions, commercial sourcing, and HR and wellbeing, among others.

On the ground, we are engaging in adaptive management on our reserves. For example, 2024–25 saw construction begin on an Environment Agency-led area of managed realignment at Arne Moors, in response to habitat loss from rising sea levels (see page 32). The area will be breached in 2026, which will create 120 hectares of intertidal habitat and 30 hectares of saline lagoons, and help protect freshwater habitats that grade into heathland and mire.

The RSPB is also engaged with Natural England in its Adaptive Delivery Plan project that aims to make the protected sites network fit for the future in a changing climate.

Reduction

This year saw the RSPB progress the development of our Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Plan. We are developing our 5- and 20-year targets which will better align with the globally recommended reductions needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as outlined in the Paris Agreement. The table on page 63 presents the annual energy use and associated GHG emissions from RSPB business operations in 2024–25.

This year we improved our GHG accounting methodology and captured more data, automating its collection where possible. The introduction of new categories, additional data, and some increases means that we are reporting a rise of 28% in GHG emissions compared to last year. Our Scope 3 emissions have increased by 30%; this was expected as we compiled our first full GHG inventory. If all newly introduced categories are ignored, the difference between the two years is only 2%. Our combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions have reduced by 7%. As we are now able to account for all relevant (non-land) sources of GHG, this 2024–25 footprint will be used as the RSPB's new baseline year moving forward.

Renewable energy generation in 2024–25 was down significantly compared to the previous year, due to a 46% reduction in generation from the wind turbine at The Lodge. This was a result of reduced wind resource during what was the second weakest wind year in the last decade. In addition, the turbine experienced a series of complex faults at the end of 2024.

Our GHG Reduction Plan includes a route map that covers all business emissions and includes actions for rapid and significant reductions

in our emissions from building energy use, electricity contracts, travel, reserves equipment, purchasing, and our supply chain. We are also developing ways to ensure that climate impacts are factored into decision-making at all levels, from governance and strategy, and programme and project management, to site operations and reserve management. A summarised version of our targets and plan will be available on our website in 2025.

Knowledge

Our interactive Climate and Environmental Dashboard has been developed over the last 12 months and will be launched to the organisation in 2025. This dashboard has streamlined and automated how we measure and report on our GHG emissions and will enable greater workforce engagement. Moving forward, the dashboard will be key to monitoring our emissions against the targets set as part of our GHG Reduction Plan.

This year, the dashboard helped us to include fugitive emissions from air conditioning, capital goods and downstream leased assets for the first time. The new 'investments' category includes emissions associated with equities and corporate bonds;

we don't include cash or government bonds as it is not possible to measure these. Our investment managers report our investments in tCO₂e in the Weighted Average Carbon Intensity (WACI), a point of time assessment at the end of each quarter. We do not include pensions.

This year's extensive employee commuting survey was improved to include homeworking and emissions from homeworking are now calculated using this survey data. This is more accurate and representative than our previous use of contract-based data, which was not always representative of individual working patterns.

Over the past year we have more explicitly recognised that those working within the conservation sector have a high risk of eco-distress. The RSPB is developing interventions to support workforce wellbeing, including workshops with external researchers and experts, online resources, and a peer listening space for people to share their feelings, called the Climate Café. We will evaluate these interventions to improve ongoing support and contribute RSPB knowledge to the wider field of eco-distress.

As well as embedding good environmental practice across our business operations, the RSPB has committed to do the same within our extensive knowledge (science and research) activities this year. We have signed the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. As a concordat signatory, we recognise the need to change how we conduct research and innovation, as well as promote wider solutions. We also agree to take shared action now, and in the future, to reduce and eliminate our own negative environmental impacts and emissions and achieve the transition to sustainable practices. Find out more at:

wellcome.org/who-we-are/positions-and-statements/environmental-sustainability-concordat



Wild Haweswater wins global sustainability award

Wild Haweswater, a partnership between the RSPB and landowner United Utilities, has won the Ashden Award for Nature Based Solutions, in recognition of our landscape restoration work. We've been busy re-wiggling Swindale Beck, re-wetting peat bogs, planting thousands of trees and much more in this beautiful part of the Lake District, to benefit wildlife, water and people, and improve resilience to the effects of climate change.

International

Taking action for nature at a global scale

Wildlife doesn't see borders, so we're committed to working globally, wherever nature needs us most.

As one of the world's largest conservation organisations, we operate internationally to play our part in finding solutions to the threats facing wildlife.

International work has long been a cornerstone of what we do and back in 1922 we helped to found BirdLife International, a global partnership of 123 conservation organisations.

Together, we protect some of the most threatened species and habitats in the world, while also helping to tackle the effects of climate change, by working alongside local communities.

The RSPB currently works across 25 countries and 10 UK Overseas Territories, on a huge range of projects.

These include:

- Researching and developing solutions to address the declines of migratory birds.
- Tackling the threat posed by invasive alien species.
- Protecting rainforests from deforestation through projects aimed at improving the livelihoods of local people.
- Preventing the needless deaths of seabirds through bycatch.

- On-the-ground conservation work alongside local partners to help restore habitats and save threatened species.

We also work across the East Atlantic Flyway, a bird migration route from Iceland to South Africa that passes through the UK. In spring and autumn, millions of birds move along this 'super-highway'. Some will take a pitstop in the UK to rest and refuel, while others will stay with us to breed or overwinter.

Many of these birds, including Swifts and Black-tailed Godwits, are in real trouble, with their numbers tumbling.

No amount of work by one organisation in one country can stop these declines – that's why we develop partnerships that mirror the epic journeys these birds make. By working together with our partners along the flyway, we aim to identify, protect and restore some of the most important places for the birds we all share.

As part of this, we're working with Fuglavernd/BirdLife Iceland to restore wetlands that are of international importance for birds using the East Atlantic Flyway, particularly geese and wading birds, such as Redshanks, that spend the winter on our coasts.

Then further south in Senegal, we're helping our BirdLife partner, Nature-Communities-Development, to strengthen their organisation, so they can advocate for protecting sites, such as the wooded areas supporting wintering Turtle Doves from the UK. In Ghana, we are working with Ghana Wildlife Society and rural communities to restore wooded savannah using native trees that provide a sustainable income, as well as habitat for migratory birds.

At the tip of the flyway, in South Africa, we're supporting BirdLife South Africa to restore the Berg River Estuary where important coastal wetland habitat has been lost to erosion.

Our impact

Our work across the globe has helped to save the lives of millions of birds, enabled the protection of about 5 million hectares of vital wildlife habitat, and supported the creation of a 69-million hectare Marine Protection Zone around Tristan da Cunha – the largest in the Atlantic Ocean.

With no let-up in the threats facing nature, there is still so much to do, but thanks to our supporters we're in it for the long-haul.



England



Seeing the recovery of species through enduring partnerships shows the importance of collaboration. This year's celebration of 40 years of working with farmers, other landowners and partners, to protect Stone-curlews, is testament to that. A year of highlights has also included our taking over the management of Wiltshire Council's Roundbarrow Farm, which will see us transform a former intensive dairy farm into a sheep- and cattle-grazed chalk grassland farm and woodland, providing a haven for chalkland species.

Michael Copleston
Director, RSPB England

Stone-curlew numbers soar thanks to 40 years of effort

150

pairs in 1985
to an estimated

343

pairs today

This year, we celebrated the 40-year anniversary of our Stone-curlew recovery projects, through which the efforts of farmers, landowners, and RSPB staff and volunteers have supported this bird's remarkable comeback.

With their knobbly knees and yellow-eyed stare, Stone-curlews have to be one of the weirdest looking birds in England – and they're also one of the rarest. They once bred on heathland and downland from Yorkshire to Dorset, but as a result of habitat loss only around 150 pairs remained by 1985, mostly in Wessex and the Norfolk and Suffolk Brecklands.

Something had to be done. So, in 1985, we started the RSPB Wessex Stone-curlew Project, and the RSPB Eastern England Stone-curlew Project, in partnership with Natural England (then English Nature). Since then, we have worked

with farmers, landowners and volunteers to monitor the population, protect nests and create safe nesting habitat, with the Stone-curlew population going from strength to strength.

207 farms and landowners now take part in the projects, providing around 305 nesting plots, many of which are monitored by RSPB volunteers. In Wessex, breeding pairs of Stone-curlews have increased from around 30 in 1985 to an estimated 120 pairs today, while in eastern England there are an estimated 223 breeding pairs, up from fewer than 100 in 1985. In addition, RSPB nature reserves now provide a home to about 10% of the breeding population.

The comeback of Stone-curlews highlights that wildlife can begin to recover if the UK Government supports farmers through agri-environment schemes. These schemes have proved crucial in supporting farmers to manage their land for Stone-curlews. As with other farmland birds, their continued recovery remains uncertain, which is why we will continue to push for an increase in investment in nature-friendly farming.

Blooms, bees, butterflies and birds to benefit from new nature reserve

A former dairy farm in Wiltshire is set to be transformed into a haven for wildlife, thanks to a new partnership between the RSPB and Wiltshire Council.

Following a competitive bidding process, we're delighted to be taking over the management of Wiltshire Council's Roundbarrow Farm, east of Salisbury. Over the coming years, we'll be transforming this former intensive dairy farm into a chalk grassland and woodland nature reserve.

By switching to a lower number of sheep and beef cattle, we aim to reduce nutrient run-off into the River Test, helping to protect this important chalk stream from pollution. This extensive management will lock away more carbon and there will be further opportunities for carbon storage via woodland regeneration and planting.

The RSPB's Site Manager for Wiltshire nature reserves, Patrick Cashman, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to put nature back in the countryside. We can now begin the process of creating flower-rich chalk grassland at scale, which in time will attract and support a cornucopia of chalk-loving blooms, bees, butterflies and birds."

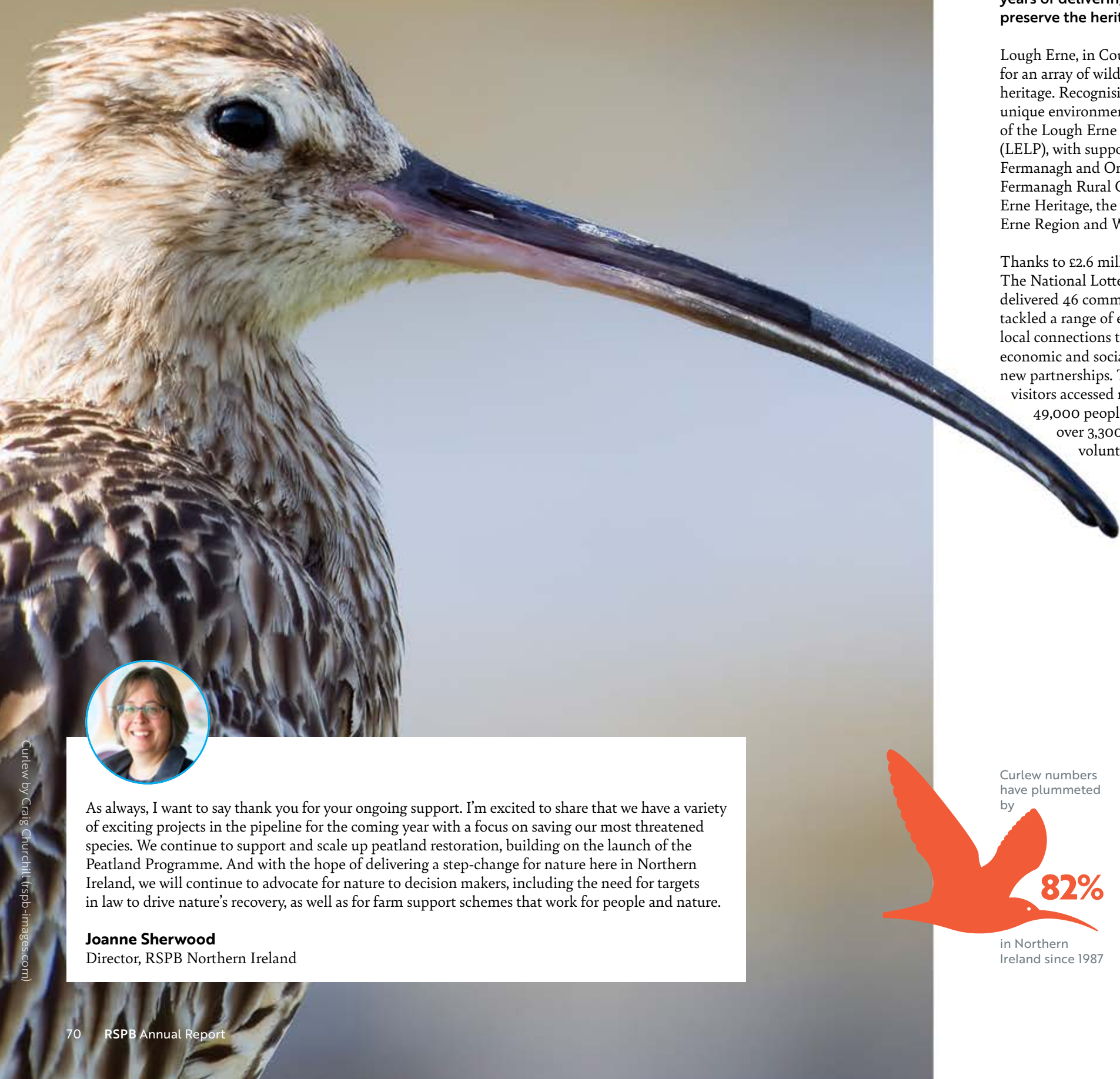
"This is a fantastic opportunity to put nature back in the countryside. We can now begin the process of creating flower-rich chalk grassland at scale"



Chalkhill Blue butterflies are set to benefit from the transformation of Roundbarrow Farm.

Oliver Smart (rspb-images.com)

Northern Ireland



As always, I want to say thank you for your ongoing support. I'm excited to share that we have a variety of exciting projects in the pipeline for the coming year with a focus on saving our most threatened species. We continue to support and scale up peatland restoration, building on the launch of the Peatland Programme. And with the hope of delivering a step-change for nature here in Northern Ireland, we will continue to advocate for nature to decision makers, including the need for targets in law to drive nature's recovery, as well as for farm support schemes that work for people and nature.

Joanne Sherwood

Director, RSPB Northern Ireland

Celebrating the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership came to a close in December 2024, after six years of delivering projects to promote and preserve the heritage of this special place.

Lough Erne, in County Fermanagh, is a haven for an array of wildlife and has a rich cultural heritage. Recognising the importance of this unique environment, RSPB NI led the creation of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP), with support from partners including Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Fermanagh Rural Community Network, Lough Erne Heritage, the National Trust, Upper Lough Erne Region and Waterways Ireland.

Thanks to £2.6 million of funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, LELP delivered 46 community-based projects that tackled a range of ecological issues, rekindled local connections to heritage, stimulated economic and social growth, and forged valuable new partnerships. Thanks to LELP, 87,000 visitors accessed new nature trails, more than 49,000 people engaged with events, and over 3,300 people got involved with volunteering across the landscape.



LELP events have helped children discover nature.

Seamus Burns (RSPB)

To mark the culmination of LELP, a week-long festival was held in autumn 2024. The event was a platform to celebrate the positive impact of LELP's initiatives on the landscape, nature and local communities, inspiring further involvement in preserving Fermanagh's heritage for future generations.

87,000
visitors

accessed new
nature trails

Curlews make a comeback

Once facing local extinction in Northern Ireland, Curlews are now on the road to recovery thanks to the efforts of RSPB NI staff and local farmers.

Curlew numbers have plummeted by 82% in Northern Ireland since 1987, as a result of habitat loss, low breeding productivity and predation. Through the EU-funded Curlew LIFE project, we've been working with local farmers to protect these threatened birds in their last remaining strongholds.

In 2024, the breeding population on the Antrim Plateau jumped from 37 pairs to 52 pairs – a 40% increase in just one year. The number of chicks successfully fledging has risen too. Over the course of the Curlew LIFE project, we've seen 202 chicks fledge, which is an incredible improvement compared to the 116 fledglings recorded between 2011 and 2020.

These brilliant results are thanks to four years of hands-on efforts, such as habitat management, predator control and installing nest protection fences. The successes we've seen give us real hope, and allow us to shift our focus from preventing extinction to managing a recovering population.

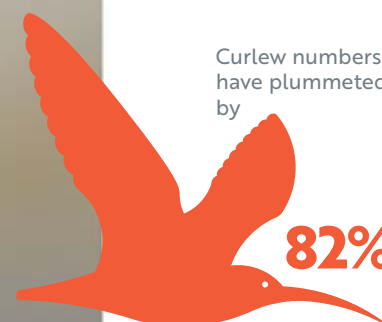
On the Lower Lough Erne Islands reserve, a steady 43 breeding pairs of Curlews were recorded again in 2024, however fledging success reached new heights, with 20 fledglings recorded. Our work on Lower Lough Erne's Trasna Island is paying dividends too, with the first breeding Curlews recorded here in living memory, following extensive habitat restoration.

Although the Curlew LIFE project has now come to an end, we will continue our work to maintain this Curlew comeback, with plans in the pipeline for more restoration work on Rabbit Island and Carr Island in Fermanagh, and in the Antrim Hills.

Curlew numbers
have plummeted
by

82%

in Northern
Ireland since 1987



Scotland



The RSPB is extraordinary because it does not shrink from embracing the difficult challenges – ones that might take decades to realise. That's why I'm so delighted that 2024 was marked with the highpoint of achieving World Heritage Site status for Forsinard – the culmination of work that RSPB Scotland began in 1995. Achievements like this wouldn't be possible without the incredibly generous support of multiple funders and the steadfast backing of our valued members – thank you for all that you do.

Anne McCall
Director, RSPB Scotland

Saving Scotland's rainforest



Restoring Scotland's rainforest will help threatened species, including Pied Flycatchers.

Richard Bowler (rspb-images.com)

Work has begun on an RSPB project in the west of Scotland that's aiming to restore and protect a large area of rare temperate rainforest.

These beautiful woodlands are home to a huge range of wildlife, including threatened species such as Pied Flycatchers and Chequered Skipper butterflies, and are internationally important for their mosses, liverworts and lichens. Temperate rainforests can only form under very specific

conditions, and while they're fast disappearing, west Scotland still hosts some of the biggest and most biodiverse rainforest woodlands in Europe.

One of the biggest threats to Scotland's rainforest is an invasive, non-native plant called *Rhododendron ponticum*. This smothers native plants, and can quickly take over woodlands and other habitats. An RSPB Scotland team on the Morvern peninsula, near Mull, is working to remove this rhododendron from the entire landscape, protecting rainforest woodlands, and allowing them to thrive.

A new tree nursery has also been created by the project using locally collected seeds. You can't plant a rainforest, but young trees from the nursery will be established in areas that are lacking their own seed source. The rainforest biodiversity will slowly spread into these new habitats, making the woodlands more resilient for the future.

The Saving Morvern's Rainforest project has received funding from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF), managed by NatureScot, with additional funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation, and private charitable trusts. It is one of 11 projects that are running as part of the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest, a voluntary partnership of organisations committed to collaborative action for the benefit of Scotland's rainforest.

World Heritage status for the Flow Country

The Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland, which includes RSPB Forsinard Flows, has become the first ever peat bog to be awarded World Heritage Site status.



King Charles III unveiled a plaque at Forsinard Flows.

Angus McKay (rspb-images.com)

Covering some 4,000 square kilometres, the Flow Country is the world's largest swathe of blanket bog. As well as providing habitat for a host of wildlife including Golden Plovers, Greenshanks, Hen Harriers, Water Voles and Otters, it stores more carbon than all the UK's forests combined.

RSPB Forsinard Flows sits at the heart of this landscape and we've been working to restore the peatland here for decades, alongside other members of the Flow Country Partnership, so we were delighted when UNESCO announced that the Flow Country would join the Great Barrier Reef and the Grand Canyon as a recognised World Heritage Site.

To celebrate the announcement, the RSPB's patron King Charles III paid a visit to Forsinard and unveiled a plaque commemorating the area's new status.

Wales



We recently launched two exciting projects with funding from the People's Postcode Lottery. In south Wales, we're working closely with healthcare professionals to encourage people to connect with nature through the RSPB's flagship Nature Prescriptions programme. In north Wales, the Species Volunteer Network will build teams of dedicated volunteers to help deliver Black Grouse, Chough and Curlew recovery projects. It has been a busy year, and I thank you once again for your passion and support.

Alun Prichard
Director, RSPB Cymru

Boosting biosecurity for Wales' seabirds

With the help of Conservation Detection Dog Jinx, we're working to keep Wales' islands predator-free for breeding seabirds.

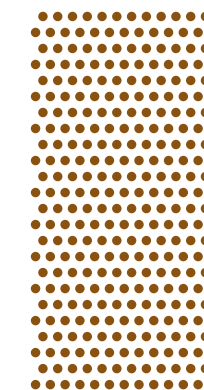
Many of Wales offshore islands are safe havens for breeding seabirds, thanks to the absence of ground predators. However, if invasive predators like rats reach these islands, the consequences could be catastrophic: seabirds have not evolved to defend themselves against these opportunistic hunters, and as a result rats can quickly wipe out entire breeding colonies by eating eggs, chicks and adult birds.

A single pregnant Brown Rat can produce a colony of 300 rats in just over eight months, so it's vital to stop them reaching islands where seabirds breed and ensure systems are in place to swiftly detect and remove any stowaways.

Through the EU LIFE funded Biosecurity for Life project, followed by the Nature Networks funded Biosecurity for Wales project, we've been safeguarding seabirds by working with island managers, boat owners and communities to prevent predators reaching 13 Welsh islands, from the tern-filled Skerries to Wales' biggest Gannet colony on RSPB Grassholm.

Our work has been assisted by Conservation Detection Dog Jinx (pictured left), who has been specially trained to sniff out signs of rats. Together with handler Greg Morgan, he checks for stowaways on boats and carries out routine checks on Wales' major seabird islands, as well as raising awareness of biosecurity in the local community. Thanks to his super-sensitive nose, Jinx allows us to investigate any signs of predators far quicker than we could without him.

Despite the end of the Biosecurity for Wales project in 2024, additional funding secured in 2025 means we can continue active surveillance of islands with the help of Jinx, while working with key stakeholders to help ensure effective, long-term biosecurity measures are established across Wales.



A single pregnant Brown Rat can produce a colony of 300 rats in just over eight months

Glimmer of hope for icon of the uplands



Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)

We're creating habitat for Black Grouse in north Wales.

Thanks to new project funding, we're working to secure the future of threatened Black Grouse in north Wales.

The sight of male Black Grouse strutting their stuff in the hope of impressing the ladies at leks is truly unforgettable. But it's a sight that's becoming all too rare as, like many upland birds, Black Grouse are in decline.

However, we know that targeted conservation management can boost Black Grouse numbers and so we're working to ensure the bubbling calls of Black Grouse can be heard echoing across the uplands of Wales for generations to come, thanks to funding received from the Nature Networks Fund in 2024, delivered by the Heritage Fund on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Through the project we're delivering sustainable upland management that will not only create vital habitat for Black Grouse and other wildlife, but also provide other benefits, such as carbon storage. Going forward, we will also continue to monitor Black Grouse numbers and work with landowners and stakeholders to create a landscape-scale conservation strategy.

Cymru



Yn ddiweddar rydym ni wedi lansio dau brosiect cyffrous gyda chyllid gan Loteri Cod Post y Bobl. Yn ne Cymru, rydym ni'n gweithio'n agos â gweithwyr gofal iechyd proffesiynol i annog pobl i gysylltu â byd natur drwy raglen flaenllaw Presgripsiynau Natur yr RSPB. Yng ngogledd Cymru, bydd y Rhwydwaith Gwirfoddolwyr Rhywogaethau yn creu timau o wirfoddolwyr pwrpasol i gyflawni prosiectau adfer ar gyfer y Rugiar Ddu, y Frân Goesgoch, a'r Gylfinir. Mae hi wedi bod yn flwyddyn brysur, a dyma ddiolch i chi un waith eto am eich brwdfrydedd a'ch cefnogaeth.

Alun Prichard
Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru

Gwella bioddiogelwch ar gyfer adar y môr yng Nghymru

Gyda chymorth Jinx, ein Ci Canfod Cadwraeth, rydym ni'n cadw ynysodd Cymru yn rhydd o ysglyfaethwyr er mwyn diogelu adar y môr sy'n magu.

Mae nifer o ynysodd arfordirol Cymru yn fannau diogel ar gyfer adar y môr sy'n magu, gan eu bod yn rhydd o ysglyfaethwyr ar y ddaear. Ond, petai ysglyfaethwyr goresgynnol fel llygod yn cyrraedd yr ynysodd hyn, gallai'r canlyniadau fod yn drychinebus: nid yw adar y môr wedi esblygu i allu amddiffyn eu hunain yn erbyn yr helwyr hyn, ac o ganlyniad, gallai llygod gael gwared ar nythfeydd magu cyfan drwy fwyta wyau, adar bach ac adar sy'n oedolion.

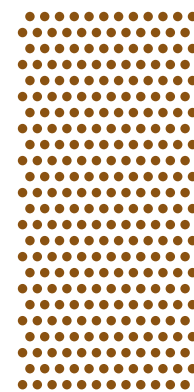
Mewn ychydig dros wyth mis, gallai un Llygoden Ffyrnig feichiog greu nythfa o 300 o lygod, felly mae hi'n hollbwysig ein bod yn eu rhwystro nhw rhag cyrraedd yr ynysodd lle mae adar y môr yn magu a'n bod yn sicrhau bod gennym systemau mewn lle i ganfod a chael gwared ar y creaduriaid sy'n cyrraedd, a hynny'n gyflym.

Mae prosiect Bioddiogelwch LIFE a ariennir gan raglen LIFE yr UE, yn ogystal â phrosiect Bioddiogelwch i Gymru a ariennir gan y Rhaglen

Rhwydweithiau Natur wedi ein galluogi ni i ddiogelu adar y môr drwy weithio â rheolwyr yr ynysodd, perchnogion cychod, a chymunedau i atal ysglyfaethwyr rhag cyrraedd 13 o ynysodd Cymru, gan gynnwys Ynysodd y Moelrhoniaid sy'n llawn Môr-wenoliaid ac ynys Gwales sy'n gartref i'r nythfa fwyaf o Huganod yng Nghymru.

Mae Jinx, ein Ci Canfod Cadwraeth wedi ei hyfforddi'n arbennig i ganfod arwyddion o lygod ac mae'n ein helpu gyda'r gwaith. Mae Jinx, a'i dywysydd Greg Morgan, yn sicrhau nad oes dim creaduriaid yn cuddio ar gychod, mae'n chwilota rhai o'r ynysodd yng Nghymru sy'n gartref i adar y môr sy'n magu, ac mae'n codi ymwybyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd bioddiogelwch yn y gymuned leol. Mae trwyn sensitif Jinx yn ein galluogi ni i ganfod unrhyw arwyddion o ysglyfaethwyr yn gynt.

Daeth y prosiect Bioddiogelwch yng Nghymru i ben yn 2024, ond fe gafwyd cyllid ychwanegol yn 2025 sy'n golygu bod modd i ni barhau i fonitro'r ynysodd hyn gyda help Jinx wrth weithio â rhanddeiliaid allweddol i sicrhau bod mesurau bioddiogelwch effeithiol a thymor hir yn cael eu sefydlu a'u rhoi ar waith ym mhob rhan o Gymru.



Mewn ychydig dros wyth mis, gallai un llygoden ffyrnig feichiog greu nythfa o 300 o lygod.

Llygedyn o obaith i eicon yr ucheldir

Mae cyllid newydd y prosiect wedi ein galluogi ni i sicrhau dyfodol y Rugiar Ddu yng ngogledd Cymru.

Mae gweld gwryw'r Rugiar Ddu yn dangos ei ddoniau er mwyn denu sylw'r menywod yn y man paru yn brofiad bythgofiadwy. Ond, mae'r olygfa honno'n mynd yn brin, ac fel nifer o adar yr ucheldir, mae niferoedd y Rugiar Ddu yn gostwng.

Wedi dweud hyn, rydym ni'n gwybod y gallwn gynyddu'r niferoedd drwy gynnal gwaith rheoli cadwraeth wedi'i dargedu. Felly rydym ni'n gweithio'n galed i sicrhau y bydd cri afieithus y Rugiar Ddu i'w chlywed yn atsain dros ucheldiroedd Cymru am genedlaethau i ddod. Ni fyddai'r gwaith yn bosibl oni bai am gyllid gan y Gronfa Rhwydweithiau Natur yn 2024 a ddarparwyd gan y Gronfa Dreftadaeth ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru.

Mae'r prosiect wedi rhoi cyfle i ni gyflawni gwaith rheoli cynaliadwy ar yr ucheldir i greu cynefin i'r Rugiar Ddu a bywyd gwyllt eraill, yn ogystal â darparu buddion eraill fel storio carbon. Wrth edrych tua'r dyfodol, byddwn ni'n dal ati i fonitro niferoedd y Rugiar Ddu ac yn gweithio gyda thirfeddianwyr a rhanddeiliaid i greu strategaeth gadwraethol ar gyfer y dirwedd.



Rydym ni'n creu cynefin ar gyfer y Rugiar Ddu yng ngogledd Cymru.

Looking to the future

Despite the challenging operating environment, over the past three years our achievements toward the delivery of the RSPB's 2030 targets for places, people, policy, species and science have been impressive.

Our annual review of performance in 2023–24 demanded that we deliver bigger, more joined up conservation to drive the pace and scale of change that nature so desperately needs. We used this review to inform our Corporate Plan, which spans the next two years.

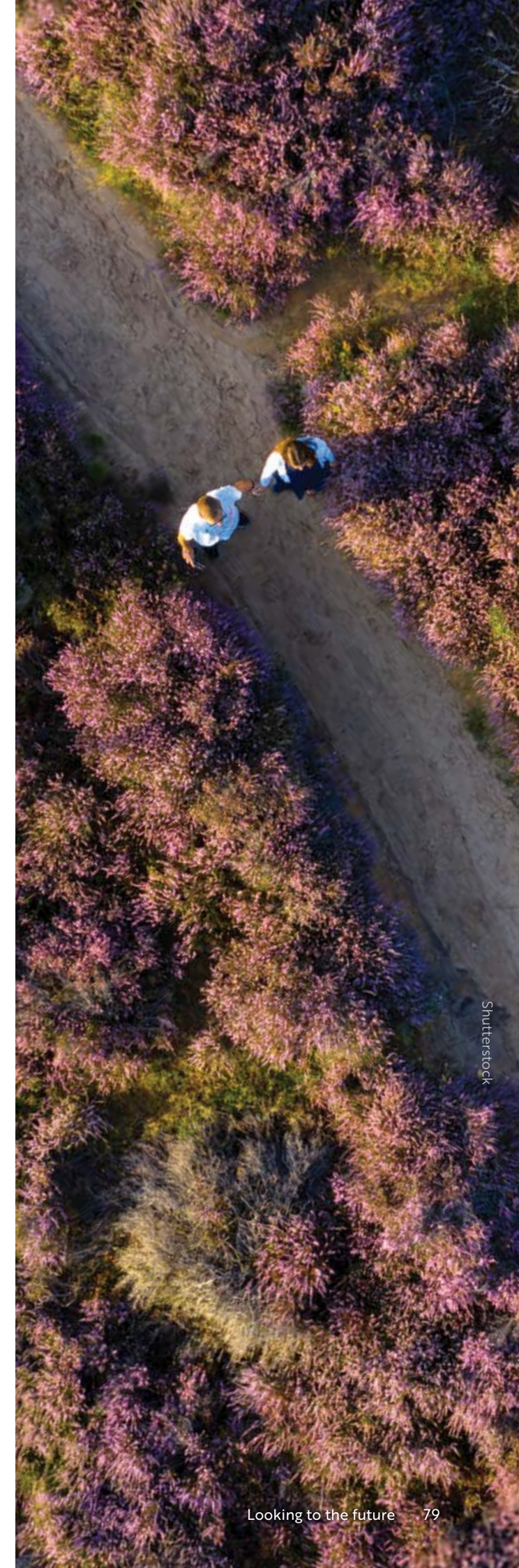
Over the next year we will continue to deliver world-class conservation both in the UK and internationally. To do this we will continue to:

- Focus on the opportunities to reshape frameworks and finances to enable the transition to low-carbon, nature-friendly farming and prioritise work that supports farmers to increase the proportion of farmland that is restored and managed sustainably for nature. For example, we will continue to test and trial new approaches demonstrating nature recovery and low carbon farming methods and use our farmed reserves, landscape-scale programmes, and species recovery projects to develop the evidence base.
- Build momentum and action for nature and climate through public campaigning, political advocacy and business engagement. This will be focused on the farming, fishing and energy sectors, and impacts on land and marine management. For example, through campaigning we will demonstrate to politicians and governments in each of the four UK countries the level of public support for well-designed, well-funded land management schemes to support the nature and climate transition.
- Deliver conservation impact at scale through a programme of UK and global landscape-scale partnerships, unlocking major funding to restore species and habitats, enabling communities to act for nature and inspiring hope that change is possible. For example, we will continue our advocacy for more private and public sector funding to be directed into nature, climate and livelihood projects.
- Extend our businesses engagement through a new business engagement strategy and work with new partnerships that enable greater delivery for nature on the ground. For example, we will implement the Valuing Nature Plan across the UK to secure nature-positive economy changes. We aim to establish a framework for businesses to move towards nature positive in key land-use sectors, through reviewing and influencing finance streams to ensure that both public and private funds work for nature.
- Develop research collaborations that help us to understand and provide evidence-based solutions to the nature and climate emergency. There is a key role for the RSPB and the Cambridge Conservation Initiative to ensure that the latest evidence and best practice is shared across this sector.
- Make change and evolution part of our DNA through people engagement and policy opportunities, to ensure we remain relevant to the increasingly uncertain world and manage risks as they arise. For example, we will defend the Habitats Regulations and make the case for essential improvements to site protection laws.
- Build capacity in our international partners, supporting them to lead and grow sustainably, working closely with the BirdLife Global Team to have global impact. For example, we will continue to provide on-the-job and specialist training for our programme implementation partners, in particular financial management, governance, planning and fundraising.
- Support the UK to deliver its contribution towards Global Biodiversity Framework targets through science, policy, species recovery and the restoration of land for nature and climate at a landscape scale. For example, we will adapt our advocacy strategies against a changing political environment.

The RSPB will continue to deliver impactful conservation projects wherever we work. To enable that, a significant focus of our plan is to ensure that we are set up to deliver our strategy sustainably through driving income growth, cost savings, and making continuous improvements to our ways of working.

We declared at the outset of the 2030 strategy that we would measure our progress each year and conduct a fuller review at the midpoint. So, we are conducting a mid-term strategy review to take stock of our achievements and challenges, and identify where our future opportunities lie to set our direction for the remaining five years of the strategy. We are asking ourselves, are the visionary outcomes we identified at the start of the 2030 strategy still right to achieve what nature needs?

This mid-term review is helping us prioritise our efforts and be clear on the contribution that the RSPB makes to deliver to the visionary outcomes for the next five years. We will share the conclusions of this review in the 2025–26 Annual Report.



Thank you and acknowledgements

We'd like to say a big thank you to all our members, volunteers, supporters, partners, donors and funders. We're constantly striving to do more for nature and couldn't achieve what we do without you.

President and Vice Presidents

Our President, Vice Presidents and Ambassadors all generously give their time and support freely to help make a positive difference to the natural world. Thank you to them all. You can read more about our new Ambassadors on page 23.

President

Dr Amir Khan

Vice Presidents

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

Ambassadors

- Sam Bentley
- Rachel Bigsby
- Steve Brown
- Mya-Rose Craig
- David Domoney
- Indy Kiemel Greene
- Lucy Hodson
- Megan McCubbin
- Deborah Meaden
- Ollie Olanipekun
- Nadeem Perera
- Dave Sexton
- Samuel West

Members and supporters

It would be impossible to deliver the successful projects highlighted in this report, and have the impact that we do, without the backing of our loyal members and supporters. Working together we can deliver outstanding conservation work at scale. We can connect more people to nature, bring species back from the brink of extinction, manage land and influence the policies that protect nature.

Members continue to support our mission to save nature by donating, giving their time and talents through volunteering, supporting RSPB campaigns, and by bringing RSPB projects to life out in the community. Our unified voice is crucial to helping save nature. We couldn't do it without you.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and are fundamental to our work today. Without their help we simply couldn't achieve what we do. Our amazing volunteers are highly valued and offer their support across the full range of the RSPB's activities, from practical conservation and project management to meeting and greeting visitors at reserves.

All the members of the RSPB Council are volunteers too. Volunteers enhance our work by bringing valuable skills, experience, energy and insight.

The RSPB has more than 13,000 volunteers who undertake 18,000 roles across the RSPB and make up 83% of our workforce by head count.

Thank you to every single one of our volunteers – your gift of time has a phenomenal impact.

Community groups

We have a network of community groups across the UK for both young people and adults alike – our Wildlife Explorer groups and our Local Groups.

These groups form a thriving, engaged and valued network that delivers impactful work in communities to save nature. Run by some of the RSPB's most loyal and passionate volunteers, our groups allow the RSPB to have an active presence across the UK.

Local Groups are an integral part of the organisation and members contribute their skills, time and energy to act for nature. Our Wildlife Explorer groups inspire and empower

hundreds of young people across the UK to become advocates for nature, both now and in the future. We are very grateful to the many volunteers inspiring young people.

Celebrities and influencers

Thank you to the following people who have supported our work and helped raise the profile of the RSPB:

- Jack Baddams
- Bill Bailey
- Mya Bambrick
- Bonner Black
- Hannah Bourne-Taylor
- Carl Bovis
- Henry Day
- Mike Dilger
- George Hassall aka Green Fingered George
- Aneeshwar Kunchala
- Sam Lee
- David Lindo aka The Urban Birder
- Kate MacRae
- April Mayne
- Dara McAnulty
- David Oakes
- Sophie Pavelle
- Tyler Smith
- Matt Spracklen aka Rock 'n Roll Birder
- Alison Steadman
- Hannah Stitfall
- Michaela Strachan
- Lira Valencia
- Cooper Wallace aka Seagull Boy
- Iolo Williams
- Hamza Yassin
- Ms Dori Lilian Andrew
- Dr Antony Robin Atherton
- Ms Barbara Anne Baines
- Mr Barry Boyle
- Mr Philip Charles Butt
- Ms Joan Olive Carter
- Ms Patricia Rest Collison
- Mr John Raymond Cooke
- Mr Brian William Curtis
- Mr Jonathan Mark Gregory
- Mrs Christina Barbara Hibberd
- Mrs Betty Gromett-Hough
- Miss Vivien Helen Johnson
- Mrs Joyce Kendrick
- Mr Michael Alec Littlejohn
- Mr Peter John Lomax
- Ms Margaret Ellen McPherson
- Mr Ian Mead & Mrs Julie Mead
- Miss J Monk
- Mrs Muriel Moore
- Mrs Heather Beatrice Richardson
- Mr Lindsay Mackwood Rowland
- Miss Jean Sainsbury
- Mr Timothy Charles Salisbury
- Mr Roy Schama & Mrs Patricia Wendy Schama
- Mrs Rosemary Violet Simmons
- Mr Alan Benjamin Sky
- Mrs Elizabeth Stewart
- Miss Paula Ann Thompson
- Mrs Joyce Annetta Villiers
- Mr John Christopher Woodward

Youth Council

Our Youth Council freely support the RSPB and ensure the views of young people are represented in our work and future plans. They are:

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| - Alfie | - Katie |
| - Chelsea | - Leona |
| - Cori | - Lisa |
| - Freddie | - Rhys |
| - Gruffudd | - Sennen |
| - Indy | - Tash |
| - Jamie | - Thomas |

Legacies

Gifts left to us in Wills make a lasting and vital difference to our work protecting nature. While we cannot thank every generous legator, we'd like to mention the following people:

- Ms Dori Lilian Andrew
- Dr Antony Robin Atherton
- Ms Barbara Anne Baines
- Mr Barry Boyle
- Mr Philip Charles Butt
- Ms Joan Olive Carter
- Ms Patricia Rest Collison
- Mr John Raymond Cooke
- Mr Brian William Curtis
- Mr Jonathan Mark Gregory
- Mrs Christina Barbara Hibberd
- Mrs Betty Gromett-Hough
- Miss Vivien Helen Johnson
- Mrs Joyce Kendrick
- Mr Michael Alec Littlejohn
- Mr Peter John Lomax
- Ms Margaret Ellen McPherson
- Mr Ian Mead & Mrs Julie Mead
- Miss J Monk
- Mrs Muriel Moore
- Mrs Heather Beatrice Richardson
- Mr Lindsay Mackwood Rowland
- Miss Jean Sainsbury
- Mr Timothy Charles Salisbury
- Mr Roy Schama & Mrs Patricia Wendy Schama
- Mrs Rosemary Violet Simmons
- Mr Alan Benjamin Sky
- Mrs Elizabeth Stewart
- Miss Paula Ann Thompson
- Mrs Joyce Annetta Villiers
- Mr John Christopher Woodward

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

We'd like to give a special mention to the Ida Davis Family Foundation and their transformational grant for purchasing 100 hectares of land in Essex. This has allowed the RSPB to complete our vision for Wallasea Island nature reserve, a vast new coastal wetland protecting communities and wildlife on the East Coast.

We'd also like to extend special thanks to Jersey Overseas Aid, partnering with the RSPB, Gola Rainforest Conservation Ltd and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) on a pioneering programme in Sierra Leone to blend cocoa farming with fruit, medicinal and indigenous trees to boost agroforestry livelihoods.

This year the Philanthropy Team ran its most successful appeal ever, raising over £1.6 million to help

acquire the final third of our stunning Geltsdale reserve in the North Pennines. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of the generous individuals who responded to our call to secure the future of our only freehold reserve in the English uplands. Thanks to them we can safeguard the transformative restoration that has already been achieved there and see Geltsdale, and the charismatic species that call it home, flourish in the future.

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

- Aberdeen Group Charitable Foundation
- Mr Robert Adkins
- Mr Alan Alderson and Ms Sandra Allen
- Paul M. Angell Family Foundation
- A J H Ashby Will Trust
- Lars Atkin
- The Joan Grace Bailey Charitable Trust
- The Banister Charitable Trust
- Caroline and William Barnes
- The Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation
- Mr D Benham
- The Bentley Family Trust
- The Big Give Trust
- BirdLife International
- Mr Gordon Blaikie
- Blue Nature Alliance
- Braham Trust
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- The Brown Source Trust
- CAF America
- CAF (Charities Aid Foundation)
- The Cairngorms Trust
- Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI)
- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Chabot Family Fund
- Chalk Cliff Trust
- Charities Trust
- Mark and Mo Constantine
- Donna and Kevin Cox
- Joy Croot
- The Crown Estate (through the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme)
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Czech Society for Ornithology
- Ida Davis Family Foundation
- Ms E Desmond
- The Earthshot Prize
- Ecological Restoration Fund

- John Ellerman Foundation
- Mrs Lynne Ellis
- Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme (ELSP)*
- Environmental Resources Management (ERM) Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- The European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA)
- The Ernest Cook Trust
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- The Finborough Foundation
- Ms Nic French
- Mr Royston Furley
- Mr Paul Gadd
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts
- Global Environment Facility (GEF) Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR)
- Helen Gordon
- Dr John Gowenlock
- Richard Hale
- The Daphne Hamilton Trust
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- The Helvellyn Foundation
- Henocq Law Trust
- The Corton Hill Trust
- The Reginald & Ena Hill Foundation
- Nicholas Hooper
- The Reta Lila Howard Foundation
- HSBC Bank Trust/HSBC Trust Company (UK) Limited
- The Ichthus Trust
- Jersey Overseas Aid
- Chiew Yuan Keng and Richard E Hale
- Mr Richard Kerr
- The Betty Lawes Foundation
- Robert and Elizabeth Lee
- Mr Peter Leppert
- A. G. Leventis Foundation
- The Lizandy Charitable Trust
- Ludlow Trust Co Ltd
- Lund Trust
- The Makin Family Trust
- Julia Maynard
- The Elizabeth C F McGregor-Dziniak Charitable Trust for Animals
- Gil and Julie McVean
- Mentor Mon Cyf
- Mr Mark Mills
- Ian Morrison
- Natural Encounters Conservation Fund

- The Nature Hubs Fund
- The Nature Trust (Sandy)
- Newby Trust
- NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation
- Nicola and Simon Oliver
- The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- PB Coffey & Family Charitable Trust
- Peacock Charitable Trust
- The Penchant Foundation
- Mr Michael Percival
- The Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
- The Planeterra Foundation
- The Players of People's Postcode Lottery
- Anne Reece
- The Reed Foundation
- Graham and Maureen Reid
- Roger and Evelyn Richardson
- Robin Rigg Community Fund
- The Rufford Foundation
- The Ryde Family
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature
- Derek and Clare Stevens Trust
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust and The Swire Charitable Trust
- Talbot Trust
- The TD Paton Trust
- Teesside Environmental Trust
- Gillian Tucker
- Mr K and Mrs C Turner
- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)
- University of Cambridge Centre for Landscape Regeneration
- University of Glasgow
- Christine and David Walmsley
- Rosemary Warburg
- Whitley Animal Protection Trust
- Colin Williams Charitable Trust
- J & J R Wilson Trust
- The Woodland Trust
- World Wildlife Fund
- Mr & Mrs Wrigley
- The Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust

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

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

Landfill Communities Fund and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund

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

- Biffa Award Partnerships Fund
- FCC Communities Foundation Ltd
- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- SUEZ Communities Fund
- SUEZ Communities Fund – Scotland
- Teesside Environmental Trust

Business supporters

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

- Aldermore Bank plc
- Anglian Water
- The Ardmere
- Baringa Partners LLP
- Barratt Redrow plc
- Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited
- Broadshore Offshore Wind Farm Ltd
- Buchan Offshore Wind Limited
- Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm Limited
- Campion Wind Limited
- The Carbon Trust
- Cemex UK Ltd
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Co-op
- The Co-operative Bank
- The Cotswold Outdoor Group
- DPDgroup UK
- Econergy Renewable Energy Ltd
- Edinburgh International Conference Centre Ltd
- Elements Green Limited
- Ella's Kitchen
- The Famous Grouse
- GreenPower
- Hafren Dyfrdwy
- HCR Hewitsons LLP

- holidaycottages.co.uk
- Hurtigruten Ltd
- The James Hutton Institute
- HX Group Ltd
- idverde UK
- Lancashire County Council
- Lightrock Power
- Lush Ltd
- Marks & Spencer
- MarramWind Limited
- Marshalls plc
- Medway Council
- Morven Offshore Wind Limited
- Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm Limited
- Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Ltd
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- Northumbrian Water Group
- Omaze UK Ltd
- Openreach Ltd
- Ørsted Wind Power A/S
- Ossian Offshore Wind Limited
- P. Keenan Quarries
- Portsmouth Water Ltd
- PwC
- R&A Championships Ltd
- Russell & Co
- RWE Renewables
- ScotRail
- Scottish Power Renewables
- Scottish Water
- Scotch Whisky Association
- Seagreen Wind Energy Ltd
- Severn Trent Water Ltd
- Southern Water Ltd
- SSE Renewables
- SSEN Transmission
- St Davids Gin & Kitchen
- Stromar Offshore Wind Farm Ltd
- Suntory Global Spirits
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Tesco
- Thistle Wind Partners Limited (Ayre)
- Thistle Wind Partners Limited (Bowdun)
- Turcan Connell
- UBS Optimus Foundation Singapore Ltd
- United Utilities Group Plc
- VisitScotland
- Weird Fish Limited

"Volunteers, members, supporters and donors – thank you so much for adding your voice to ours. Together, we fly."

Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

National Lottery Heritage Fund

The RSPB is indebted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for their generous and ongoing support of the Orkney Native Wildlife Project, helping to safeguard the internationally important native wildlife of Orkney.

Also for the funding provided for projects across all four UK countries, including the unique opportunity to extend our reserve at Ynys-hir and supporting the restoration of seabird colonies on Rathlin Ireland.

We would also like to thank NLHF for their exceptional administration of the Welsh Government-funded Nature Networks Fund which is supporting The Curlew's Call project – Sustaining our Uplands for Nature and People in Wales – as well as Black Grouse conservation work in north Wales.

We extend our sincere thanks to NLHF for their support through the Government's Species Survival Fund in England, developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies, and delivered in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

National Lottery Community Fund

We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) in the successful delivery of the Nature Neighbourhoods project; a partnership between the National Trust, RSPB and WWF. Funding from NLCF, together with the Co-op, is supporting 18 communities across the UK to stand up for nature in their neighbourhoods.

Also, for NLCF's support of Sporting Nature, a partnership with Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association and Northern Ireland Water which inspires action for climate and sustainability across sports clubs in Northern Ireland, and for supporting volunteering and engagement activities at Lake Vyrnwy through the Vibrant Vyrnwy project.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

We would like to thank Defra for their ongoing support through the Environmental Land Management Scheme – Landscape Recovery Round 1 and Round 2.

People's Postcode Lottery

We are incredibly grateful for the support provided by players of People's Postcode Lottery, who are funding a range of projects across the UK. They are supporting a mix of urban and rural initiatives, which benefit a variety of species, but all share the common goal of connecting communities to their local nature and greenspaces.

The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund

We are also very grateful to the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, which is helping to address the climate and biodiversity crises across Scotland, through a range of rural and urban projects. RSPB Scotland has benefited from both the competitive fund, managed by NatureScot, and direct funding to local authorities through the Edinburgh Process.

Orkney Native Wildlife Project appeal

We are incredibly grateful to our individual philanthropic supporters for their generous donations towards the Orkney Native Wildlife Project appeal, which raised over £200,000 towards our important work to save our native seabirds.

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

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

- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Peatland ACTION funding provided by the Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Ceredigion Nature Partnership
- Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
- Darwin Initiative – funded by the UK Government
- Darwin Plus – funded by the UK Government
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) – Animal & Plant Health Agency
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland (DAERA)
- Dorset Council
- Environment Agency
- Eryri National Park Authority
- European Commission – Communities For Climate (C4C)
- European Commission – LIFE
- European Commission – ProBio
- Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Forest Research
- Heriot-Watt University
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
- Investment Ready Nature Scotland – delivered through collaboration from NatureScot, Esmée Fairbairn and the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Jersey Overseas Aid Commission
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW, Credit Institute for Reconstruction), Germany
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
- The Marine Fund Scotland 2024–2025
- Monmouthshire County Council
- National Grid
- National Highways England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – Landscape Partnership Scheme
- National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP)
- Natural England
- Natural England – Action for Birds in England partnership
- Natural England – Conservation and Enhancement Scheme
- Natural England – Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme
- Natural England – Species Conservation Strategy
- Natural England – Species Recovery Programme Capital Grants Scheme
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Natural Flood Management Programme Grant from the Environment Agency
- Natural Resources Wales/ Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- NatureScot
- Nature Networks Programme – delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government
- North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Northern Pennines National Landscape
- Office for Environmental Protection
- Powys County Council
- Renfrewshire Council (Sustainable Communities Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund)

- Rialtas Na hÉireann/ Government of Ireland – Shared Island Initiative
- Ribbles Valley Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- Scottish Forestry – Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)
- Scottish Government's Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund distributed by tsiMoray and Money4Moray
- Scottish Government Marine Directorate
- The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot
- Scottish Government Offshore Wind Directorate
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- South Downs National Park Authority
- The Suffolk and Essex Coasts and Heath's National Landscape
- Suffolk County Council on behalf of Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Sussex Ornithological Society
- Tees Valley Combined Authority
- The United Nations Environment Programme/Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEPAEWA)
- USAID: West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED)
- The Welsh Government
- The Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA in partnership with Powys Nature Partnership and Powys County Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council Place Based Investment Programme – Community Grants

Together
we fly



Rewarding dedication at the volunteering 'Oscars'

Each year, our President's Awards acknowledge the amazing contributions made by RSPB volunteers. This year's winners were:

Best Volunteering Team
Abernethy Tree Nursery team

Community Champion
Mick Davis

Most Impactful Newcomer
Lucinda Dixon

Most Outstanding Volunteer
Jean Ward

Young Volunteer of the Year
Rhys Leighton

Best Urban Action
Worcester and Malvern Local Group

Inspirational Volunteer Leadership (Volunteer)
Claire Derbyshire

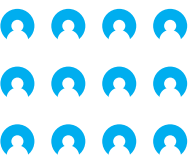
Inspirational Volunteer Leadership (Employee)
Claire Foot and Milly Revill-Hayward

You can hear our wonderful winners talk about their work at: rspb.org.uk/volunteerawards24



Governance

The RSPB has a clear and effective governance structure which demonstrates how we’re run – from how we make decisions to how we achieve our objectives.



The RSPB’s governing body is the RSPB Council, composed of 12 members.

Good governance is fundamental to a charity’s success. It enables and supports a charity’s compliance with the law and relevant regulations. It also promotes a culture in which everything works towards fulfilling the charity’s vision. Elements of governance include the charity’s purpose, its leadership, how it ensures integrity, equality, diversity and inclusion, its approach to decision making, risk and control, how it ensures its effectiveness and its measures to promote suitable openness and accountability.

Governing body

The RSPB’s overall governing body is the RSPB Council. In line with our most recent governance review, this is now composed of 12 Council members (Trustees). The RSPB Council has overall responsibility for the conduct of the RSPB. It also ensures that the RSPB operates in accordance with the Royal Charter, statutes, byelaws and the law. It is supported by several committees that all have specific roles, defined by their formal terms of reference.

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

Leadership and effectiveness

The RSPB Council operates and makes decisions collectively, working as a team, with a balance of skills, knowledge and experience, in order to be as effective as possible.

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



Day-to-day management is delegated to an executive board of six people, headed by the Chief Executive.

Information is provided about the RSPB and Trustees’ duties to people who express an interest in being a Trustee, before there is formal confirmation of a willingness to serve and a process of interview and due diligence to match the regulatory requirements for charity trustees. Trustees are nominated on the recommendation of Council and elected by members at the AGM.

New Trustees receive a briefing pack outlining their role, duties and accountabilities, with information about the RSPB and its policies, structure and work. We hold induction sessions for each new Trustee, to support them with understanding their roles and responsibilities and the RSPB’s strategy and operations. Trustees are also offered opportunities to learn more about the RSPB’s work, such as individual meetings with staff, visits to nature reserves and training on important work areas.

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

As part of the induction, continuing training and annual appraisal for all Trustees, staff and volunteers, information is provided on:

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



RSPB Council members from left to right: Judith Annett, Jim Lowther, Patrick Butcher, Jane Reeves, Professor William Sutherland, Susanna Dinnage, Catherine Dugmore, Sir Andrew Cahn, John Mason, Robert Cubbage and Kerry ten Kate.

RSPB Council

Sir Andrew Cahn

Chair of Council

- Nominations and People Committee (Chair)
- Finance Committee

Dr Ben Caldecott*

- Commercial and Partnership Committee

John Mason

- Scotland Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Audit and Risk Committee

Patrick Butcher

Co-opted member

- Finance Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Nominations and People Committee

Jane Reeves

- England Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Professor William Sutherland

- Conservation Advisory Committee

Robert Cubbage

Treasurer

- Finance Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Judith Annett

- Northern Ireland Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Conservation Advisory Committee

Kerry ten Kate

- Conservation Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Catherine Dugmore

- Audit and Risk Committee (Chair)
- Nominations and People Committee

Susanna Dinnage

- Communications and Engagement Committee (Chair)
- Scotland Advisory Committee

Jim Lowther

- Finance Committee

Council members who resigned or retired during 2024/25 are:

Kevin Cox (Chair of Council), Dr Vicki Nash, Veronica Pickering, Jim Sloane, Keith Jones and Lord John Randall. We thank them for their huge contributions to the RSPB.

* Not pictured above.

Supporting Committees

Council is supported by the following committees:

Scrutiny and stewardship

- **Finance Committee:** assures the integrity of financial plans, reporting and controls. Six members (of whom four are Council members).
- **Audit and Risk Committee:** provides scrutiny of the adequacy of the governance, risk and associated control framework, giving assurance that those arrangements are effective and comprehensive. Six members (of whom four are Council members).
- **Nominations and People Committee:** develops and maintains procedures for making recommendations on appointments to Council, to ensure a diverse membership and range of skills. Reviews succession plans for current members of Council, and seeks assurance of the good stewardship of the RSPB workforce. Six members (of whom all are Council members).

Support and advice

- **Conservation Advisory Committee:** provides independent insight, advice and guidance on conservation strategy approaches, policy and programmes, and advises Board and Council on positioning, risks and opportunities related to specific projects or policy issues.
- **Communications and Engagement Advisory Committee:** provides advice to Board and Council on matters pertaining to the RSPB’s communications, campaigning and engagement with stakeholders across all relevant channels.
- **Commercial and Partnerships Advisory Committee:** provides advice to Board and Council on matters pertaining to commercial and partnership opportunities and activity.
- **Country Advisory Committees** in each UK nation provide insight on the views and interests of stakeholders relevant to the current and future strategy and the work of the RSPB in the country. The committees advise and assist the country staff in the promotion of interest in the work of the Society, including membership and fundraising opportunities, and help develop and influence the policy agenda of the Society.
- In all cases, membership is eight members (two of whom are members of Council), plus up to four guests invited to support areas of strategic focus.

Youth Council members participate as members of advisory committees.

Statement of Trustees’ Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for overseeing that adequate accounts are kept that show and detail the RSPB’s transactions. It is a requirement that the accounts are available and make the charity’s financial position clear at any time. The Trustees also ensure that financial statements comply with reporting and legal regulations, and meet the charity’s constitution, as set out in the Charter and Statutes.

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

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

Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the RSPB’s assets, and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Oversight of remuneration

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

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

The Chief Executive works with the Nominations and People Committee to oversee the salaries of the Executive Board, in line with the same policy.



Executive Board

The Executive Board is responsible for the management of the RSPB, headed by the Chief Executive. It consists of Executive Directors who report to the Chief Executive and attend Council meetings, including the Executive Director of Operations; Global Conservation; Digital Technology and Communications; Income and Conservation Investment; and Finance, Governance and Strategy. The Executive Board tends to meet jointly with other senior leaders at the RSPB, in particular the directors of each of the four countries of the UK. The purpose of the Executive Board is to deliver the RSPB’s mission through proposing and delivering its strategy and through the careful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us.

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

Beccy Speight
Chief Executive

"I lead the RSPB’s mission to save species, protect habitats and restore landscapes. My team includes our core conservation specialisms in science, ecology, policy, species recovery and advisory. I also lead our International programme of work – working in the UK Overseas Territories and selected countries, and collaborating with the BirdLife International partnership on the East Atlantic Flyway and Marine programme. I’ve worked for the RSPB for over 25 years in a range of different roles and I’ve held my current position since November 2021."

Katie-jo Luxton
Executive Director,
Global Conservation

"I have been Chief Operating Officer since August 2023. I work with country teams to implement the RSPB’s strategy across the UK, lead organisational improvement and oversee the ways we support and motivate our staff and volunteers to meet our ambitions. My previous roles in the organisation include Country Director for RSPB Northern Ireland, Head of Nature Policy, and Regional Director for Eastern England."

James Robinson
Chief Operating Officer

"I lead the RSPB’s communications, campaigns, engagement and technology teams to enable the RSPB to effectively deliver our conservation strategy. Award-winning initiatives such as Urgent Conversation, Save Our Wild Isles as well as the incredible #BirdoftheWeek TikTok have transformed our ability to make the biggest possible difference for nature and people. I’ve worked for the RSPB for almost 10 years, my previous roles have been Regional Director for the Midlands and Director, RSPB England. I have been in my current role since August 2022."

Emma Marsh
Executive Director, Digital
Technology and Communications

"I joined the RSPB in May 2024. I work with colleagues across the RSPB to bring in funding and resources to deliver our strategy and help close the funding gap for nature more widely. This includes engaging and growing the RSPB’s membership; partnering with businesses to support our work and transition to a nature positive economy; running our commercial operations; and deploying conservation investment to achieve landscape-scale nature restoration."

Andrew Cook
Executive Director, Income
and Conservation Investment

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

Russell Powell
Executive Director,
Finance, Governance and Strategy

Integrity

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

- 1. **Beneficiaries first:**
the interests of our beneficiaries and the cause we work for should be at the heart of everything we do (page 90).
- 2. **Environment:**
nature needs us now more than ever. This means we continually need to adapt and change the way we work to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature (page 90).
- 3. **Integrity:**
we should always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct (page 91).
- 4. **Openness and accountability:**
we create a culture where our supporters, staff and volunteers, our institutional partners, as well as the public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds (page 91).
- 5. **Right to be safe:**
every person who volunteers with, works for, or comes into contact with us, should be treated with dignity and respect, and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (page 91).

1. Beneficiaries first

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

- Carry out our work to provide the greatest impact for people and nature with integrity, regardless of whether this might initially be deemed to have a negative impact on the RSPB’s reputation, leadership or operation.
- Encourage trust in the RSPB by considering scientific evidence as part of how we operate, and by listening and responding to our beneficiaries. This facilitates engagement and communication.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up with our beneficiaries in mind.
- Work with organisations and individuals whose goals and values are consistent with our work, while exercising due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of partners and individuals.

2. Environment

Our conservation work has a huge impact for nature. We preserve and restore natural habitats for people and wildlife. To ensure we have the greatest positive impact, we’re working to reduce the footprint of all our operations, through our systems and policies (see pages 64–67).

For environmental management we:

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

3. Integrity principle

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

- Ensure the appropriate systems are in place to ensure decisions are well-considered and free from any conflict of interest. This includes our decision-making, assurance and project management frameworks (see page 96).
- Ensure our resources are managed in a responsible way, and our funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for. This includes policies and procedures to combat bribery, fraud, corruption and extortion. We also ensure the systems and processes are in place to enable our expenditure to be audited, meaning that money, funding and grants can be tracked from receipt to expenditure.
- We work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (UN Compact principle 10).
- Anti-bribery and anti-money laundering policies are built into our procurement policies.

4. Openness and accountability

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

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

5. Right to be safe

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

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power, including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in all our activities. See also page 92.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of concerns about abuse or any kind of inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that anyone working or volunteering for us understands their expectations, and provide the relevant training to support them in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure that anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, raise a concern or make an allegation about the actions of others, or don’t feel safe.
- Stand against all forms of forced and compulsory labour and for the effective abolition of child labour (UN Compact principle 5).

Modern Slavery Act (2015) and the RSPB

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

Swift Mapper reaches a milestone

In 2024, we were thrilled to reach a total of **100,000** records submitted to Swift Mapper. These records help us understand where swift colonies and nest sites need to be protected across the UK and find the best places for new nesting sites to be created.

Inclusion

At the RSPB, we believe our ambition to save nature must involve everyone. We are committed to tackling barriers that prevent all people, including our supporters, volunteers, members and employees, from being able to act for nature.

While our inclusion work covers a number of intersections to break down barriers faced by marginalised people to working and enjoying nature, one of our big priorities has been focused on disability and access.

We know that in relation to accessibility, disabled people are at significantly higher risk of social isolation, which leads to high rates of poor mental health and exclusion from participating in the things they care about. Nature helps people feel well and creates opportunities to connect with other people who share that passion.

We need to act to remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing our nature reserves so that they can get involved in the important work of addressing the nature crisis. We've already had successes, two of which have been:

- the introduction of access maps, which are being created for reserves as part of our brand redesign. These maps equip our visitors with high-quality, consistent information in advance of their trip, to help them plan their visit.

- providing training for our workforce to give them more confidence in how they welcome visitors of all abilities.

However, we recognise that we need to do more. In 2023–24 we identified low levels of confidence in our workforce in their ability to welcome neurodivergent visitors, those with sensory disabilities, and people with access needs linked to old age. We also know our own workforce need easy and equitable access to reasonable adjustments to how they work. In looking at how we face into these challenges we will ensure we seek external expertise to inform our journey.

We will design and trial interventions to address gaps in our confidence to improve the experiences of disabled people who want to join us. We will continue to review our recruitment and management practices to make them more inclusive. And by working in partnership with organisations like RNIB and Sense, we're taking the steps we need to open our wonderful spaces to all and enable more people to act for nature.

For more information about our progress towards achieving race equity see page 61.

Sight loss awareness training

We joined forces with the RNIB to provide sight loss awareness training to staff and volunteers at our Belfast Window on Wildlife nature reserve. As part of this ongoing partnership, the training participants had the opportunity to gain an insight into the daily challenges of living with sight loss and how to create a more inclusive and accessible environment for all.

Caring for our supporters

Volunteers

At the RSPB, we believe that volunteering is one of the most powerful ways people support our mission to save nature. Every hour, every skill, every smile shared by our volunteers helps make a real difference – we simply couldn't do what we do without them.

That's why we're committed to making sure every volunteer feels valued, supported, and part of the RSPB family. We want everyone who volunteers with us to have such a positive experience that they'd happily recommend it to a friend – and many already do!

From day one, every volunteer has a named RSPB contact – someone they can turn to with questions, ideas, or just for a chat. We also run a yearly, confidential volunteer survey to hear directly from our volunteers about what's working well and where we can do better. All volunteers are subject to a Code of Conduct that sets out the behaviours expected from all of us to maintain the trust and confidence of our supporters, partners, and the general public.

We offer our volunteers a wide range of support, including:

- Reimbursed travel expenses.
- Relevant training to help volunteers feel confident in their role.
- Access to wellbeing and resilience resources.
- Careers advice and coaching for those volunteering as a stepping stone to a career in conservation.
- Annual volunteer-specific 'thank you' events, such as barbecues and dawn chorus walks.
- Long service awards and our annual President's Awards to celebrate outstanding contributions.
- A 'thank you' card, which entitles volunteers to discounts in our cafés and shops, as a small token of our appreciation for their work.

Volunteering with the RSPB is more than just giving your time and talents – it's about joining a community that cares deeply about nature and about each other. And we're striving to make sure our volunteers feel that every step of the way.

Members

We also provide services to our members and supporters, responding to more than 225,000 enquiries each year and sustaining our relationships with around two million members, supporters and volunteers. Members receive a quarterly magazine, and we send email newsletters to our supporters, including the fortnightly Notes on Nature email which reaches 1.2 million readers, and our regular campaigning newsletter, which is sent to 70,000 people. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the RSPB website was viewed by 4.5 million users, who looked at more than 18 million pages.

Safeguarding

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

- Our Safeguarding Policy, which is kept under review to ensure it is meeting the needs of the organisation.
- Safeguarding training for our workforce (including our volunteers) which is continually revised and updated.
- A comprehensive Speak-up Policy to protect our workforce.
- Our Whistleblowing Policy and independent helpline which is supported by an anonymous reporting capability.
- Our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Bespoke lone traveller training delivered via expert partners to those that work internationally, equipping them to operate in high-risk environments appropriately.
- Membership of external safeguarding groups to ensure we are doing the right things in the right way.

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

You can see our Safeguarding Policy at rspb.org.uk/safeguarding

How we generate funds to save nature

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

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

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

Protecting and restoring habitats, saving species and helping end the nature and climate emergency is the key motivation behind our work. We’re dedicated to inspiring every generation to have a lifelong commitment to the natural world. Our commitments to our members and supporters are:

- We always look to improve how we work, and we welcome your feedback.
- We fundraise in a fair and responsible way and ensure funds are spent in the most effective way to save birds, other wildlife, and the places they call home.
- We endeavour to always show our gratitude for your money, time and the action you take for nature.
- We also share the latest news of what we’re achieving thanks to you, and give you control over how you hear from us, whilst managing the cost of doing so.

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

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

As part of our promise, we ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that practices and procedures are in place and closely adhered to – particularly in protecting individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances. RSPB staff complete mandatory training including safeguarding and fundraising compliance. Our face-to-face fundraisers have full training in talking about the RSPB’s cause in a transparent and straightforward way to the members of the public they meet. The RSPB is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and the Data and Marketing Association. We are also signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out of receiving fundraising communications from us. Alongside our high standards, where possible, we look to go beyond the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice to ensure that supporters have the best possible experience in our fundraising efforts. We also encourage our fundraising service providers to sign up to the Code, and we ensure that they understand the RSPB’s promise to our supporters.

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

We endeavour to provide an exemplary service, to be transparent about our communication aims and to provide appropriate opportunities for engagement. Like others, we do not always get this right. We provide our complaints policy on our website and this clearly explains how a complaint can be made. Each complaint is fully addressed and improvements are made to allow us to retain supporter trust and improve our service. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 we received 336 complaints about our fundraising activities communicated by phone, post, email, SMS, face-to-face, and via TV or radio.

Professional advisers

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

Co-operative Bank PLC
4th Floor
9 Prescott Street
London E1 8BE

Investment adviser
Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

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

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

Pension actuary
Mercer Limited
1 Whitehall Quay
Whitehall Road
Leeds LS1 4HR

Pension administrator
Lane Clark Peacock LLP
95 Wigmore Street
London W1U 1DQ

Legal advisers
Withers LLP
16 Old Bailey
London EC4M 7EG

Hewitsons LLP
Shakespeare House
42 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8EP

Turcan Connell
Princes Exchange
1 Earl Grey Street
Edinburgh EH3 9EE

Good news for Critically Endangered Pine Hoverflies

After another year of successful captive breeding by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, 4,000 Pine Hoverfly larvae were released into three sites in Strathspey in spring 2024. Seven hundred larvae were retained for captive breeding and by autumn there were more than 15,000 larvae. The majority will be released as adults when they emerge in spring and early summer 2025.

Decision making, risk and control

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

Decision making

RSPB Council delegates authority for most activities to the Chief Executive and to the employees. There's a detailed schedule of delegation, and systems and policies are in place to monitor these delegations.

Risk

The Trustees are accountable for identifying and managing the major risks facing the charity, working with the Board. Risk management is considered in every aspect of the RSPB's work. In response to the recommendations set out in the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), Trustees regularly consider risk management in a broad and strategic manner, considering all relevant internal and external factors that might alter or undermine the capacity of the charity to fulfil its charitable objectives, its mission and its strategy. Risk registers, assurance mapping and internal audit provide comprehensive assurance of the following areas of risk and control:

- delivery of our strategy and projects, with a particular focus on environmental impact;
- our environmental footprint and credentials;
- our reputation;
- our responsibility to staff, volunteers, supporters and visitors, and, in particular, to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals;
- our compliance with relevant law and regulation;
- management of our financial, physical and intangible assets, including land, buildings, data and technological assets;
- retaining and building know-how delivering good governance and embodying a positive, inclusive and ethical organisational culture;
- protecting and growing our income.

Our risk review process assesses each of the major risks and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing them. The resulting report is scrutinised by Council via its Audit and Risk Committee every quarter, and in greater depth once each year. Following the most recent review in April 2025, the Trustees confirmed that they are satisfied with such arrangements and identified several strategic risks for the year ahead that represent, by their nature, both opportunity and challenge. The RSPB will work to limit the negative impact on the delivery of our charitable objectives and to secure all possible positive outcomes in line with our overall risk appetite.

Control

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

A huge win for migrant birds

The Portuguese Prime Minister has officially ruled out plans to build an airport on the Tagus Estuary near Lisbon, following a campaign by environmental organisations including the RSPB. The estuary is one of Europe's most important wetlands and a haven for thousands of migratory birds, including Black-tailed Godwits that breed in the UK.

Kevin Sawford (rspb-images.com)

Risk description		Risk response
Environmental challenges		
The global climate and biodiversity crisis is an existential threat to the future of life on this planet; yet the political response, globally and domestically, doesn't match the scale of action required. Nature recovery continues to be insufficiently prioritised in public debate and funding.	The RSPB's strategy, mission and purpose focus on tackling these issues. We will continue to address nature and climate as a single interlinked emergency, raising awareness of the importance of nature in tackling climate change, and promoting and delivering nature-based solutions for both mitigation and adaptation.	
Many people are disconnected from nature and are unaware that it's in crisis, while those who are aware often feel powerless or unclear about how they can take action. In some cases, relationships between people, nature and the climate lead to a real or perceived conflict between people's needs and nature's needs.	We carry out activities to help people connect with and take action for nature in lots of ways, including via our reserves network, events, education programmes, online activities, and wide-scale engagement activities, such as Big Garden Birdwatch and Wild Isles. We will help and empower our supporters to act for nature in their own lives, including through active participation in representative forums.	
The urgent need to decarbonise our energy systems, mitigate climate impacts, and stimulate economic growth in 'green sectors', is leading to a huge increase in proposals for offshore and onshore renewables and the expansion of intensive forestry. There is a risk that nature becomes collateral damage in this transition.	We focus our efforts on advocating for a strategic spatial approach to siting new renewables and forestry away from protected sites and important places for birds (including for foraging seabirds at sea). We work to ensure that sensitive areas are mapped and considered during decision making, and advocate for mitigation and compensation measures for species and habitats where necessary.	
A lack of commitment to long-term funding for farming in the UK may accelerate the loss of nature-friendly farming, with negative knock-on consequences for biodiversity.	We work alongside farmers and campaign with them for the nature-friendly farming budget to be maintained and increased. We advocate for effective schemes in all four UK countries, highlighting evidence from schemes that have helped nature recover.	
Constraints in our BirdLife partners, especially because of emerging major reductions in overseas aid programmes, reduce our ability to achieve our objectives for global land, species and marine programmes.	We will assess partner needs and, where practical and affordable, create integrated, tailored technical and financial assistance plans.	
The ever-increasing need for investment in conservation data management and curation, along with increasing demand, puts pressure on corporate reporting, conservation management decisions and income generation activities.	We have made a significant investment to address data gaps in our habitat mapping, which will support both income generation and the development of a first inventory baseline for carbon accounting. We will pilot digital platforms to drive greater workforce capability and compliance in following key processes for managing our conservation data and information.	
Risks to our income and sustainability		
A continued reduction in the public's disposable income and competition for funding amongst charities means that existing and emerging sources of income are subject to significant volatility in the current economic climate, particularly income from membership.	New income opportunities are continuously explored, with all new arrangements subject to review by our Ethical Gifts Board, and major changes reviewed by our Trustees.	
Following a period of considerable inflationary pressure, we may continue to experience greater uncertainty in the economic operating environment, resulting in adverse financial conditions that could increase operating costs.	Board and Trustees routinely monitor the operating environment for changes while regularly reviewing long-term financial projections. These are updated when the operating environment significantly changes.	
Internal factors (technology, cyber security, people and culture)		
The number and scale of the organisation's technology priorities overwhelm our capacity to deliver strategic priority systems to time, cost and quality, whilst also preventing the maintenance, upgrade or replacement of multiple existing core systems.	All technology requests will be assessed and prioritised to form a roadmap for the delivery of technology priorities, with clarity given when requests cannot be actioned. We will focus on simplifying and modernising core platforms within our cost base, and will carefully manage and prioritise any decisions to adopt new technology and retire outdated technology in tandem.	
If our data and information governance is not managed adequately, we will not be able to make the most of the opportunities emerging technologies present. If we do not continue to prioritise our cyber security then we would become open to attack.	Information governance and data will be fully coordinated and managed under one approach, to ensure our data is fit for purpose to allow us to adopt the full benefits of AI. We will continue to prioritise cyber security, both from external attacks and internal systems, and continue to implement Information Security training for all staff.	

Financial review

The RSPB's financial reserves exist to ensure we can cover the costs of running the organisation in case of loss of income, or an emergency. Following Covid, we deliberately chose to spend some of the financial reserves we had built up over the pandemic, and complete projects that had been put on hold.

But, as we approached the end of spending those additional financial reserves, we found ourselves facing huge inflationary pressures on our running costs. We also continue to see global economic uncertainty: primarily through the threats, consequences, and escalation of events stemming from international tensions, conflicts, and political instability, which are continuing to have a knock-on effect on the global economy.

Like all organisations, in every sector, the uncertain financial and external context has meant rapidly rising running costs. The cost of goods and services has continued to rise, and the National Insurance threshold change announced in the budget in October 2024 on its own means we now need to find over £2.0 million extra in our budget every year. This is impacting the whole charity sector, not just the RSPB.

The external volatility looks here to stay, and we must continue with careful financial management to maintain our financial sustainability for the future. We remain financially resilient, and are within our policy reserves range.

The support and commitment of our members and supporters remains strong and gives us a sound financial base to meet the challenges ahead in our mission to save nature.

Summary

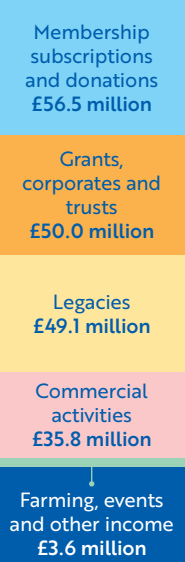
This year has seen excellent growth in income, up £25.1 million (14.8%) to a record £195.0 million. Charitable expenditure increased by £8.8 million (7.1%) and together with the costs of raising funds remaining flat and unrealised investment gains of £0.6 million, this led to a surplus for the year (before the actuarial gain in respect of the pension scheme) of £18.8 million.

There are two important considerations in how the £18.8 million surplus is spent. Firstly, there has been an increase in restricted funds during the year, including the very successful Omaze deal that raised £4.9 million to be spent on peatlands. This is recognised in-year as income and so contributes to the in-year surplus but is to be spent down in future years. Secondly, income has been received that significantly contributes to the cost of acquisitions at Geltsdale and Wallasea (see pages 28–29 and 30–31), the costs for which are capitalised and shown in fixed assets.

We finished the year with free financial reserves of £40.3 million, which represents 12 weeks' total expenditure cover and is at the middle of the range set by Council. We will continue to plan prudently and manage our reserves in the light of the current economic outlook, and be able to respond by taking tough decisions when required to ensure our financial stability. Total financial reserves increased by £29.9 million, being net income of £18.8 million and an actuarial gain in respect of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of £11.1 million. Cash and investments increased by £6.4 million to £59.3 million, which ensures that we have a good level of liquidity on which to run the organisation.

The £17.4 million decrease in the Pension Scheme liability reflects the RSPB's annual contribution to the deficit of £7.5 million, together with updates to the valuation assumptions used to calculate the liability. The main changes being a reduction in the scheme liability of £27.9 million, partially offset by a decrease in the value of scheme assets of £10.5 million. The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was closed in 2017 and changes to the liability reflect macro-economic changes outside our control. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees. The deficit recovery payments in respect of this liability are determined by triennial valuations undertaken by the pension trustees. The annual deficit payment for 2024–25 was £7.5 million.

Income



Charitable expenditure



Total income has increased by

£25.1 million

We manage **222** nature reserves

covering **158,651** hectares

providing a home for **18,700** species

Expenditure for managing nature reserves came to

£57.8 million

Income

Overall, total income increased by £25.1 million (14.8%) to £195.0 million which highlights the tremendous support we receive from our members and supporters.

Membership subscriptions and donations increased by £2.5 million to £56.5 million. £1.2 million was due to higher retention income, reflecting the strong retention rate of 90.6%, and an increased uptake of Gift Aid, whilst donations increased by £1.4 million. Total members at the end of the year increased to 1.16 million. RSPB membership is key to the RSPB's success, financial and otherwise. It has always been central to who we are, it provides unrestricted income and gives us the mandate we need to generate change in the world and save nature.

Legacy income had a record-breaking year, increasing by £6.6 million to £49.1 million. Legacies notified but not yet recognised also rose by £1.0 million over the year to £38.4 million. This reflects the trust our supporters have that we will use this income to invest in conservation for the benefit of future generations.

Grants, corporates and trusts income at £50.0 million was also a new high and £16.1 million better than last year. There were increases across all three income streams, with grants up £7.6 million, corporates up £4.9 million and trusts up £3.6 million. This has been used to support a wide range of large-scale projects, both in the UK and internationally, including the Orkney Native Wildlife project (£1.7 million), Rathlin Island restoration (£1.6 million), peatland restoration in Scotland (£1.2 million) and the African-Eurasian Flyway Project (£1.0 million).

Income from commercial activities increased by £0.8 million to £35.8 million. A £1.5 million increase in commercial conservation activities, largely consultancy and advice, was offset by a £1.2 million reduction in our commercial trading activities.

The cost of raising these funds was on a par with the prior year, at £42.7 million, and demonstrates the amount of work that has been put into managing costs while facing into the wider economic challenges that all organisations are facing.

Charitable expenditure

Total expenditure on charitable activities increased by £8.8 million (7.1%) to £134.1 million. £4.4 million of this relates directly to increased expenditure on major conservation projects for which we resourced our teams, but we also saw impacts from higher global prices.

Expenditure on managing our nature reserves was £4.6 million higher than last year, at £57.8 million.

Research, policy and advisory expenditure at £49.7 million was £3.6 million higher, showing additional project and operational expenditure, for projects and salary costs despite a staff reduction of 2%.

We work to educate and inspire support, whether through our members, volunteers, grant funders and partners or through political support. Over the past year we have worked together to protect some of the most important places for nature locally and globally. We have recovered and restored habitats. We have helped species climb up the recovery curve. We maintained a high level of spend in this area at £21.7 million, £0.5 million higher than last year.

Supporter care expenditure was £0.2 million higher than last year, at £4.9 million.

Reserves policy

The appropriate level of financial reserves is considered each year by the Trustees. They consider a sustained fall in income of 10–15% to be a reasonable basis for setting a minimum level. It is the intention of the Trustees to hold sufficient reserves to enable expenditure to be reduced in a managed fashion, should the need arise, avoiding the need to halt work abruptly. The Trustees have agreed that free reserves should normally be within a range of 8 to 16 weeks’ worth of expenditure. Free financial reserves at 31 March 2025 were £40.3 million representing 12 weeks' total expenditure, a reduction of one week’s cover against the previous year.

The RSPB holds financial reserves to support future activities in a number of categories (see note 21 on page 126):

- Total financial reserves at 31 March 2025 were £293.4 million, which is made up of:
 - Tangible and intangible fixed assets of £240.7 million
 - Cash and investments of £59.3 million
 - Working capital and long-term liabilities of £5.2 million
 - Pension liability of £11.8 million
- Unrestricted reserves, available to be applied, at the discretion of the Trustees, to any of the RSPB’s charitable purposes, at 31 March 2025 were £96.8 million, made up of:
 - General funds of £46.8 million, including £6.5 million of tangible and intangible fixed assets, and £40.3 million of free financial reserves, held as £20.3 million of investments and £20 million working capital and long-term liabilities
 - Designated funds of £61.8 million represented by nature reserves owned by the RSPB. There are no plans to dispose of these nature reserves.
 - Pension reserve liability of £11.8 million.
- Restricted reserves, to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor, at 31 March 2025 were £196.3 million, made up of:
 - Nature reserves of £170.8 million
 - Other tangible assets of £1.6 million
 - Investments of £18.1 million.
 - Working capital and long-term liabilities of £5.8 million.
- Endowment reserves are restricted funds that are to be retained for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments the capital may also be utilised. At 31 March 2025 endowment funds were £0.2 million.

Investment policy and powers

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

Approach

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

Responsible investment

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

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

We believe that taking account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues is an intrinsic part of being a good long-term investor, for both ethical and financial reasons. For example, through our investment managers, we minimise exposure to fossil fuels and had <0.1% exposure during the year under review.

Performance

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

Over the 3 years to 31 March 2025, investments returned 3.3% against a benchmark of 5.9%. Under performance was due primarily to the exclusion of oil and gas stocks from the portfolio during 2022 and not being invested in the Magnificent 7 US tech stocks during 2024. Both of these areas contributed to a high benchmark over the 3 year period. However, absolute performance was positive over each year. We continue to hold a proportion of our cash holdings in investment grade bonds, designed to increase the returns from our cash holdings without exposing them to the level of volatility associated with equity investment funds.



We invest in companies that make a positive contribution to society.



We use our influence as an investor to encourage best practice management of social responsibility issues.



We avoid investing in companies whose activities conflict strongly with RSPB objectives.



Membership gives us the mandate we need to generate change in the world and save nature

Fundraising activity

Investment in fundraising activity has continued to grow, which has helped secure a £25.1 million increase in voluntary income over the year. £14.6 million of this is restricted, including £4.9 million from the partnership with Omaze, £2.2 million from the Ida Davies family foundation and £7.1 million additional grant funds. £10.5 million is unrestricted, largely £6.6 million additional legacy income. We will continue to invest to help drive further income growth in 2025-26.

Grant making

The RSPB makes grants each year to important partners and organisations, at Trustees’ discretion, on a project basis where such projects meet the RSPB’s charitable objectives and contribute towards strategic outcomes. In making awards, consideration is given to the most effective and efficient use of resources.

Relationship with subsidiaries

The RSPB group includes a number of subsidiary companies and partnerships and holds interests in a number of other non-profit organisations as set out in Note 22 to the Accounts. The Trustees regularly check the value, performance and sustainability of these relationships, particularly the performance of the main trading subsidiary, and they are satisfied that the interests of the charity are well served by the relationships, all of which assist the RSPB in achieving its charitable objects for the public benefit.

Pension

The pension liability in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, that was closed to future accrual in 2017, has remained at a similar level to last year. The factors affecting this movement are largely outside our control: performance of the assets in the pension scheme and sensitivity to changes in discount and inflation rates. The Trustees continue to take steps to reduce the costs and risks of the pension scheme. In addition to closing the defined benefit scheme to new entrants and future accrual, the Trustees have agreed a deficit recovery plan with the Pension Trustees which both minimises the impact on our work but closes the deficit over a reasonable period. The annual employer contributions needed to fund this deficit are determined by reference to triennial valuations undertaken by the Pension Trustees.

The latest triennial valuation reflected the position as at 1 April 2024 and resulted in annual employer contributions of £6.0 million per annum with effect from 1 April 2024 for 3 years and £7.51 million for 10 months from 1 April 2028. This level

of contribution was calculated to eliminate the deficit in just under 4 years. The annual employer contributions will be reviewed during the next triennial valuation, which will reflect the funding position as at 1 April 2027. The deficit recovery plan is underpinned by an agreement with the Pension Trustees that, in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the scheme, land would be passed to the Pension Fund to cover the shortfall. The total fair value of specified land available to cover any shortfall is £69.4 million.

Outlook for the future

Last year, 2024–25, was a good year for income, and we should take a moment to celebrate the achievements for nature, habitats and species. A good year for income is a good year for wildlife.

This is thanks to a high level of income, allowing us to progress projects, land purchases and habitat restoration, all of which we are incredibly grateful for.

However, when this income is restricted, it allows us to progress projects or initiatives, such as the purchase of the final third of the land at Geltsdale in Cumbria, but doesn’t cover the cost of running the organisation or most of our staff costs. We must, therefore, focus on building unrestricted income to meet our increased costs in these areas.

Membership and your support remain key here. So, over the next three years, we will seek to grow our overall number of members to reinforce our income and mandate to operate.

We will continue to monitor our costs, utilising reserves in line with our reserves policy, whilst implementing continuous improvements and embedding the outcomes, to prioritise our efforts and be clear on the contribution that the RSPB makes to deliver its strategic outcomes for nature.

Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for your continued support of the RSPB.

Signed on behalf of Council

Sir Andrew Cahn,
Chair of Council
20 August 2025

Independent Auditor's report

to the Trustees of the RSPB

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ('the charity') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheets, the Group Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the group's income and receipt of endowments and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 91, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

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

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

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charity and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts

and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charity's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and employment legislation.

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

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

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards

would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

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

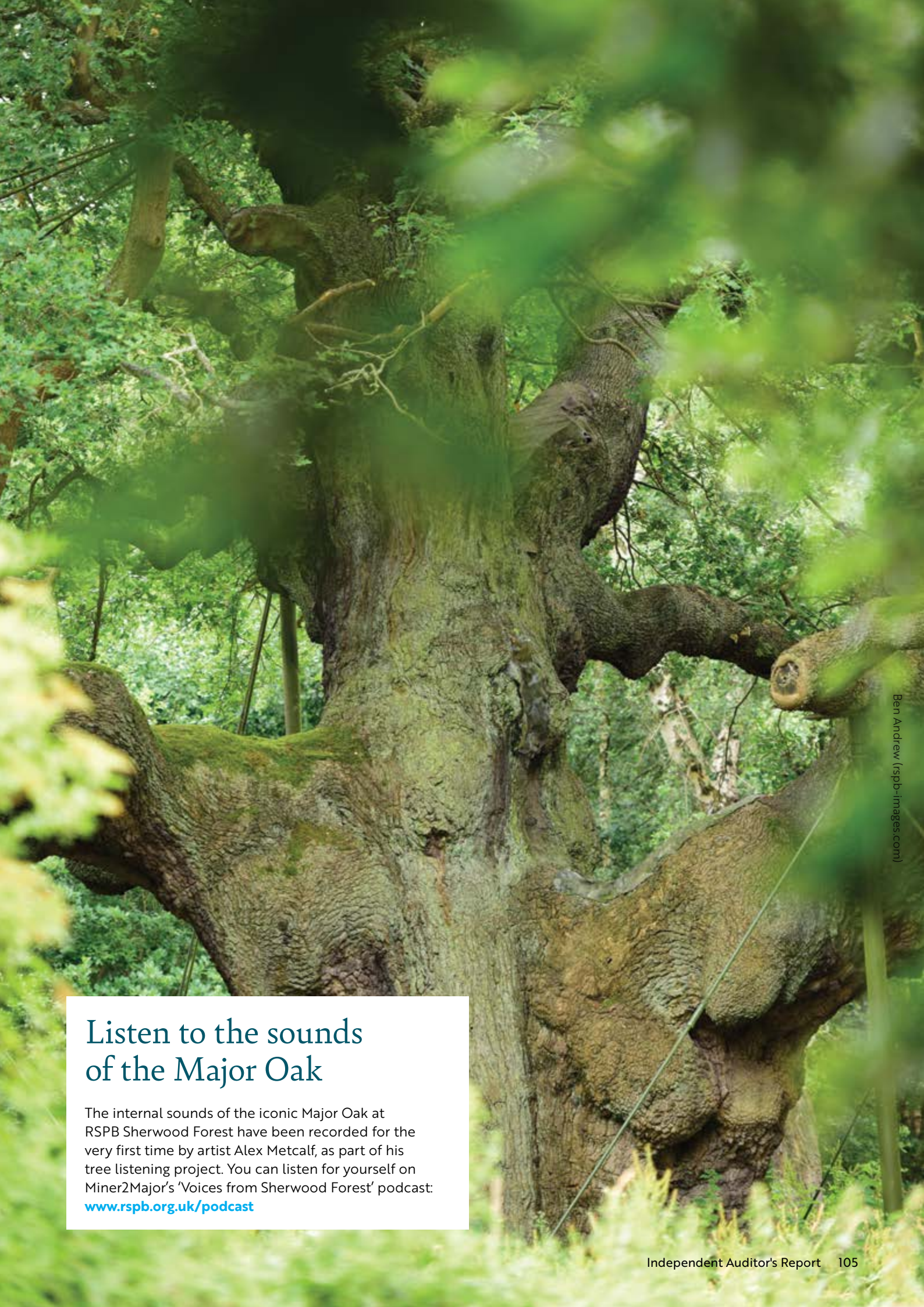
Crowe UK LLP

Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

21 August 2025

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

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



Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Listen to the sounds of the Major Oak

The internal sounds of the iconic Major Oak at RSPB Sherwood Forest have been recorded for the very first time by artist Alex Metcalf, as part of his tree listening project. You can listen for yourself on Miner2Major's 'Voices from Sherwood Forest' podcast: www.rspb.org.uk/podcast

Consolidated statement of financial activities
for the year ended 31 March 2025

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
	Note	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income and expenditure						
Income and endowments						
Voluntary income						
Membership subscriptions and donations	3	50,348	6,126	-	56,474	54,005
Legacies	4	43,204	5,893	-	49,097	42,541
Grants, corporates and trusts	5	4,925	45,055	-	49,980	33,911
Total voluntary income		98,477	57,074		155,551	130,457
Total income from commercial activities	6	35,810	-	-	35,810	35,039
Investment income and interest	7	1,728	-	-	1,728	1,717
Charitable activities						
Land and farming income		799	-	-	799	1,619
Events and media sales		889	-	-	889	646
Total income from charitable activities		1,688	-	-	1,688	2,265
Other income						
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	7	187	-	-	187	399
Total income		137,890	57,074	-	194,964	169,877
Expenditure on						
Cost of raising funds						
Costs of commercial activities	8	27,534	-	-	27,534	28,261
Costs of generating voluntary income	8	14,963	-	-	14,963	14,319
Investment management costs	8	172	-	-	172	134
Total cost of raising funds		42,669	-	-	42,669	42,714
Net resources available for charitable activities		95,221	57,074	-	152,295	127,163
Charitable activities						
Managing RSPB nature reserves	8	31,473	26,365	-	57,838	53,242
Research, policy and advisory	8	33,787	15,918	-	49,705	46,154
Education and inspiring support	8	21,474	213	-	21,687	21,184
Supporter care	8	4,892	-	-	4,892	4,700
Total expenditure on charitable activities		91,626	42,496	-	134,122	125,280
Total expenditure		134,295	42,496	-	176,791	167,994
Net gain on investments						
		622	-	-	622	2,857
Net income		4,217	14,578	-	18,795	4,740
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme						
		11,130	-	-	11,130	(11,588)
Net movement in funds		15,347	14,578	-	29,925	(6,848)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		81,504	181,718	244	263,466	270,314
Total funds carried forward		96,851	196,296	244	293,391	263,466

All the above results arise from continuing activities. Detailed comparative information is provided in note 25.
Notes 1 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts.

Charity and consolidated balance sheets
as at 31 March 2025

		2025 Consolidated total £'000	2024 Consolidated total £'000	2025 Charity £'000	2024 Charity £'000
	Note				
Fixed assets					
Nature reserves	12	232,515	224,137	231,592	223,214
Other tangible assets	12	6,698	7,389	6,698	7,389
Intangible assets	12a	1,465	1,317	1,465	1,317
Investments	13	38,681	40,940	38,681	40,940
Investment in subsidiary companies	13	-	-	3,801	3,801
		279,359	273,783	282,237	276,661
Current assets					
Stock		4,605	5,152	222	222
Debtors	14	26,564	26,462	30,075	29,045
Short-term cash		20,636	12,013	14,920	7,581
		51,805	43,627	45,217	36,848
Creditors amounts falling due within one year					
	15	(22,241)	(20,852)	(18,904)	(17,325)
Net current assets		29,564	22,775	26,313	19,523
Total assets less current liabilities					
		308,923	296,558	308,550	296,184
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year					
	15	(3,775)	(3,940)	(3,775)	(3,940)
Net assets excluding pension liability		305,148	292,618	304,775	292,244
Pension scheme liability					
	24	(11,757)	(29,152)	(11,757)	(29,152)
Net assets including pension liability		293,391	263,466	293,018	263,092
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		46,847	48,890	46,474	48,516
Designated funds		61,761	61,766	61,761	61,766
Pension reserve	24	(11,757)	(29,152)	(11,757)	(29,152)
		96,851	81,504	96,478	81,130
Restricted funds					
		196,296	181,718	196,296	181,718
Endowment funds					
		244	244	244	244
Total funds	20 & 21	293,391	263,466	293,018	263,092

Notes 1 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts.

Authorised for issue by RSPB Council on 20 August 2025 and signed on behalf of Council by:

Andrew Cahn
Chair of Council

Robert Cubbage
Treasurer

Application of net incoming resources

For the year ended 31 March 2025	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net resources available for charitable purposes	152,295	127,163
Less total expenditure on charitable activities	(134,122)	(125,280)
Net incoming resources before gains/(losses)	18,173	1,883
Gains/(losses) on investments and pension scheme	11,752	(8,731)
Net movement in funds as per Consolidated statement of financial activities	29,925	(6,848)
Application of net funds for charity use:		
Nature reserves	8,379	563
Other tangible assets	(692)	(269)
Intangible assets	148	1,317
Movement on stock, debtors and creditors	(1,669)	(12)
Movement on pension scheme	17,395	(5,074)
	23,561	(3,475)
Movement in cash and investments available for future activities	6,364	(3,373)
Cash and investments available at start of year	52,953	56,326
Cash and investments available at end of year	59,317	52,953

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2025	Note	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	23	19,849	900
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest and dividends received		1,728	1,717
Additions to nature reserves		(11,485)	(3,745)
Purchase of other tangible fixed assets		(3,573)	(3,641)
Additions to intangible fixed assets		(617)	(1,581)
Proceeds from disposal of fixed assets		232	491
Purchase of investments		(4,864)	(29)
Proceeds from disposal of investments		7,597	3,500
Net cash used for investing activities		(10,982)	(3,288)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Bank loan		(219)	(237)
Net cash used for financing activities		(219)	(237)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting periods		8,648	(2,625)
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year		12,493	15,118
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		21,141	12,493
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents			
Cash in hand		20,636	12,013
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		505	480
Cash and cash equivalents		21,141	12,493



Reedbed runways
help Cranes take flight

Cranes prefer to nest in shallow water in reedbeds, but due to their huge wingspans, they need clear areas to land and take off from. Reeds rapidly colonise in areas of shallow water, so the team at Lakenheath Fen cut ‘runway’ strips in the reeds, allowing the Cranes to land safely near their nests. In 2024, three chicks fledged from the reserve and we look forward to more success in the future.

Notes to the accounts

1) Charity information

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

2) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

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

The accounts have been prepared to give a ‘true and fair’ view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a ‘true and fair view’. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn.

The RSPB meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The Statement of financial activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate, on a line-by-line basis, the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The Charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to prepare a charity-only cash flow statement and certain disclosures about the Charity’s financial statements.

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

The RSPB’s commercial activities are undertaken by its wholly-owned trading subsidiaries, RSPB Sales Limited and RSPB Nature Regen Limited, and all distributable profits are donated under Gift Aid to the RSPB.

RSPB Sales Limited was incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1992 to conduct trading activities in support of the RSPB’s charitable objectives. The principal activities are the sale of goods by mail order and through retail outlets, consulting and advice, farming, publications, trade, catering and lottery. The company is registered under company number 02693778.

RSPB Nature Regen Limited was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2023 (registration number 14776951). The principal activities are the sale of ecosystem and land management services.

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

Farming for Nature, a company limited by guarantee (registration number 07982175), incorporated in 2012. This entity was being used in collaboration with United Utilities, from whom the company leased land on the Haweswater Estate in Cumbria, to deliver habitat restoration, drive improvements to water quality and benefit a range of upland wildlife while maintaining a viable farming enterprise. The entity ceased to trade on 30 September 2024 and the business was transferred to the RSPB.

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

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

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

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

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

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity’s accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

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

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

Retirement benefit liabilities – as disclosed in note 24, the RSPB has a Defined Benefit Scheme. Year-end recognition of the liabilities under this scheme and the valuation of assets to fund these liabilities require a number of significant assumptions to be made including key financial market indicators such as inflation, discount rate, expectations on future salary growth and asset returns. These assumptions are agreed by the scheme actuary and RSPB management. For each 0.1% change in the discount rate, the carrying amount of pension obligations would change by an estimated £3.7 million.

Income recognition of legacies – legacies are recognised on the settlement of the estate or receipt of payment, whichever is earlier. Management have accrued a portion of the legacy pipeline on a basis consistent with prior years which equates to legacy receipts in the month after year-end.

Grant income recognition – where a grant contains performance related conditions, income is recognised in line with achievement of those conditions. Management use total expenditure incurred to deliver the performance conditions at the end of each reporting period as a reasonable basis.

Donated assets – the value of donated land and buildings recognised within fixed assets is based on external surveyor valuations. This includes specific reports and also use of market valuations by internal surveyors.

Funds

Unrestricted funds

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

Designated funds are unrestricted funds, which have been applied or reserved by the Trustees for a specific purpose. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in note 21.

Restricted funds

Restricted funds are those which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions of the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The purpose for which restricted funds are held is analysed in note 21.

Endowment funds

Endowment funds are restricted funds that are held for the benefit of the Charity as a capital fund. Permanent endowments require the capital to be maintained and only the income and capital growth can be utilised. With expendable endowments, the capital may also be utilised. The purpose for which endowment funds are held is analysed in note 21.

Capital expenditure

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

Depreciation

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

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

Nature reserves – freeholding buildings:	
Buildings	50 years
Reserve infrastructure	4 years
Nature reserves – leasehold land and buildings with a fixed term	Period of lease or 50 years whichever is shorter
Other fixed assets	4 to 50 years depending on the nature of the asset
Intangible fixed assets	6 to 10 years

Going concern

We continue to see global economic uncertainty: primarily through the threats, consequences, and escalation of events stemming from international tensions, conflicts, and political instability, which are continuing to have a knock-on effect on the global economy. Trustees review and respond to financial projections that detail the potential financial impacts of this economic environment on the RSPB. They also undertake scenario planning to assess the potential short, medium, and longer-term financial implications of other risks and opportunities.

Looking forward to 2025–2026 we plan to utilise financial reserves to support the organisation and to invest in strategic priorities, whilst remaining within the 8–16 weeks cover policy range.

The financial outcome for 2024–2025 saw an operating net income of £18.8 million, £6.4 million of which increased our cash and investments holdings to £59.3 million. Much of this increase relates to restricted funds and we have seen a further £1.7 million reduction in free financial reserves, now at £40.3 million. We will continue to spend funds to support our strategic aims, utilising reserves in line with our reserves policy to do this. Given this position, and a careful approach to our financial planning, RSPB Council considers that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Investments

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

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

Stocks

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

Financial instruments

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

Income

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

The following specific policies apply to categories of income:

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

Expenditure

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

1. Costs of generating voluntary income do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of our charitable activities.
2. Commercial trading includes the cost of goods sold in mail order, retail and catering activities.
3. Costs of managing RSPB nature reserves are those incurred in managing our network of nature reserves including land management, habitat restoration and visitor facilities.
4. Research, policy and advisory includes the costs associated with scientific research and our advocacy work to influence public policy to benefit nature.
5. Education and inspiring support includes the costs of activities to inspire children, young people and families to connect with nature and to enable supporters to use their voice most effectively to benefit nature conservation.
6. Supporter care includes the costs of providing information to our members and supporters including a quarterly magazine providing information on the work being done by the RSPB and its partners.
7. Support costs have been allocated to the headings in the SOFA on the basis of salary percentage. This applies to office facilities and accommodation, finance, information technology, human resources, management and governance.
8. The RSPB makes grants to organisations that further our charitable objectives through:
 - ongoing support to the BirdLife International partnership which provides a coordinated global framework to secure the comprehensive international agreements needed for nature conservation and the environment.
 - the funding of specific projects that support the protection, creation or restoration of priority habitats or other work to protect critically endangered species.

Pensions

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

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

Defined benefit schemes are funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the group, in separate Trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. Full actuarial valuations are obtained triennially.

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

Redundancy and termination payments

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

Operating leases

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

Foreign currency

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

3) Membership subscriptions and donations

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Membership subscriptions	47,152	46,048
Donations	9,322	7,957
	56,474	54,005

4) Legacies

The estimated value of legacies notified, but neither received nor included in income, is £38,373,838 (2024: £37,387,871).

5) Grants, corporates and trusts

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Grants	35,866	28,271
Corporates	6,136	1,263
Trusts	7,978	4,377
	49,980	33,911
Amounts received from corporates during the year include the following donations		
Services	42	63
Goods	-	17
	42	80

Major grants received during the year include the following:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
UK		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*	11,787	8,604
Scottish Natural Heritage*	2,558	1,587
Natural England*	2,175	1,965
Scottish Government*	1,215	1,209
Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales*	1,017	1,367
Environment Agency*	791	118
Landfill Communities Fund	768	241
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*	101	262
Forestry Commission*	2	8
	20,414	15,361
International		
European Union	2,069	3,960
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund	3,944	2,948
Climate Action Fund Round 3	402	223
Local Councils and other	9,037	5,779
	35,866	28,271

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

Income from the Esmée Fairburn Foundation of £340,429 (2024: £192,796) is included within Grants, corporates and trusts and includes support for the following projects: Natur am Byth, Species on the Edge; Tir Canol; LELP Fermanagh; Pesticide Collaboration; Nature North: Thriving Northern Coasts & Estuaries; Accelerating Lowland Raised Bog Recovery in Northern Ireland; Curlew.

5) Grants, corporates and trusts (continued)

Grants received were for the following purposes:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Managing RSPB nature reserves	23,111	18,806
Research, policy and advisory	10,840	8,175
Education and inspiring support	1,245	1,129
	35,196	28,110
Acquisition of nature reserves	670	161
	35,866	28,271

6) Commercial activities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trading		
Retail, mail order and trade	18,125	19,514
Catering	5,121	4,886
Events	538	544
	23,784	24,944
Conservation		
Consultancy and advice	6,211	4,976
Land and farming income	1,681	1,392
	7,892	6,368
Fundraising		
Commercial	2,650	2,065
Lottery	1,007	951
	3,657	3,016
Publications, films and education		
Advertising	335	569
Promotional sales	142	142
	477	711
Total	35,810	35,039

Giving Sand Martins a home

Artificial Sand Martin nest banks created by the RSPB Worcester and Malvern Local Group, with help from the Canal and Rivers Trust, have been a huge hit, with 180 chicks successfully fledging in 2024.



7) Investment income and interest

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Income received from:		
Interest on cash	262	150
Listed Stock Exchange investments	1,466	1,567
	1,728	1,717
Other income:		
Net gain on disposals of fixed assets	187	399

8) Total expenditure

	Direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	2025 Total £'000	2024 Total £'000
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of generating voluntary income:				
Membership subscriptions and donations	10,116	937	11,053	10,814
Grants, corporates and trusts	1,878	370	2,248	1,844
Legacies	1,515	147	1,662	1,661
Total cost of generating voluntary income	13,509	1,454	14,963	14,319
Costs of commercial activities	26,550	984	27,534	28,261
Investment management costs	172	-	172	134
Total cost of raising funds	40,231	2,438	42,669	42,714
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	55,565	2,273	57,838	53,242
Research, policy and advisory	44,653	5,052	49,705	46,154
Education and inspiring support	19,381	2,306	21,687	21,184
Supporter care	4,842	50	4,892	4,700
Total expenditure on charitable activities	124,441	9,681	134,122	125,280
Total expenditure	164,672	12,119	176,791	167,994

Research, policy and advisory includes grant payments amounting to £6,895,336 with support costs of £472,674 (2024: £7,632,914; £510,858). Grants were awarded to 74 organisations (2024: 92); no grants were made to individuals. A full list is available on rspb.org.uk/grant-funding

Future commitments:

Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of the RSPB, amount to £7,053,238 (2024: £5,000,076). These represent contracts signed before 1 April 2025 for payments in future years.

9) Support costs

	Premises £'000	Finance and IT £'000	Human Resources £'000	Management and other £'000	Governance £'000	2025 Total £'000	2024 Total £'000
Generating incoming resources	404	641	732	552	109	2,438	2,293
Charitable expenditure:							
Managing RSPB nature reserves	376	598	682	515	102	2,273	2,136
Research, policy and advisory	836	1,329	1,517	1,143	227	5,052	4,634
Education and inspiring support	382	606	692	522	104	2,306	2,157
Supporter care	8	13	15	11	3	50	71
Total charitable expenditure	1,602	2,546	2,906	2,191	436	9,681	8,998
Total support costs	2,006	3,187	3,638	2,743	545	12,119	11,291

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

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

10) Audit fees

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
The total audit fees were:		
Statutory audit		
Charity	62	59
RSPB Sales Limited	37	36
RSPB Nature Regen Limited	5	5
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	5	4
Farming for Nature	-	4
Total audit fees	109	108

During the year there were £30,210 fees (2024: £9,270) for non-audit services provided by Crowe U.K. LLP.



11) Staff costs

The average number of employees during the year was 2,486 (2024: 2,517).

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Average staff numbers by activity:		
Generating incoming resources	628	594
Managing RSPB nature reserves	733	779
Research, policy and advisory	797	815
Education and inspiring support	288	286
Supporter care	40	43
	2,486	2,517

The nature of work undertaken by individual staff traverses the categories above; therefore, the allocation includes an element of judgement. In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice the average number of employees for 2025 represents the average number of staff employed each month.

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Remuneration	77,130	73,242
National Insurance	6,796	6,372
Pension contributions	4,547	4,354
	88,473	83,968

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Directors, including the Chief Executive, as detailed on page 89.

11) Staff costs (continued)

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

	2025 No.	2024 No.
£60,001 – £70,000	54	26
£70,001 – £80,000	15	5
£80,001 – £90,000	10	12
£90,001 – £100,000	-	2
£100,001 – £110,000	1	1
£110,001 – £120,000	3	-
£120,001 – £130,000	-	1
£130,001 – £140,000	1	-
£160,001 – £170,000	-	1
£170,001 – £180,000	1	-
	85	48

Under the RSPB’s pension scheme, which is open to all eligible staff, benefits are accruing for 83 (2024: 48) higher-paid employees including Directors. There are no enhanced pension benefits for any employees or Directors. No other benefits were paid during the year. Pension contributions are made in line with the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme rules. The highest amount of pension contributions paid to the scheme on behalf of one individual during the year was £12,467 (2024: £11,760).

Redundancy and termination payments of £638,228 (2024: £218,475) were made in the year.

The total employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance) of the six (2024: 8) Directors were £895,698 (2024: £848,970), of which £212,169 (2024: £200,069) was for the Chief Executive. The total travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses reimbursed to them was £30,660 (2024: £28,372).

The Trustees do not receive any employee benefits. The total reimbursement of travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred by 14 (2024: 15) Trustees on Council business amounted to £8,139 (2024: £15,558).

Indemnity insurance premiums paid by the RSPB amounted to £15,876 (2024: £17,640).

Ancient shrimp reintroduced to RSPB Mersehead

Together with staff from the NatureScot-backed Species on the Edge project, the team at RSPB Mersehead reintroduced Tadpole Shrimp eggs in summer 2024. Adults have successfully emerged, making the reserve one of just three sites in the UK where these tiny creatures, which date back to the Triassic Period, can be found.

12) Tangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Nature reserves		Other tangible assets				Total
	Freehold land	Leasehold land	Buildings	Other properties	Motor vehicles	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost							
At 1 April 2024	184,112	1,732	72,425	3,662	4,676	33,611	300,218
Additions	8,146	-	3,339	-	145	3,428	15,058
Disposals	(1)	(22)	(91)	-	(497)	(1,973)	(2,584)
At 31 March 2025	192,257	1,710	75,673	3,662	4,324	35,066	312,692
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2024	-	608	33,525	2,648	4,064	27,847	68,692
Charge for the year	-	18	3,077	87	327	3,817	7,326
Disposals	-	(22)	(81)	-	(488)	(1,948)	(2,539)
At 31 March 2025	-	604	36,521	2,735	3,903	29,716	73,479
Net book amount:							
At 31 March 2025	192,257	1,106	39,152	927	421	5,350	239,213
At 31 March 2024	184,112	1,124	38,900	1,014	612	5,764	231,526

Net book amount	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Nature reserves		
Freehold land	192,257	184,112
Leasehold land	1,106	1,124
Buildings	39,152	38,900
	232,515	224,136
Other tangible assets		
Other properties	927	1,014
Motor vehicles	421	612
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	5,350	5,764
	6,698	7,390
Total tangible fixed assets	239,213	231,526

The wholly owned subsidiary March Farmers (Washland) Limited holds leasehold land of £550,000 (2024: £550,000); the leases for this land are held in perpetuity and no depreciation arises. The wholly owned subsidiary RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Limited holds freehold land of £373,000 (2024: £373,000).

In 2013, the RSPB entered into a Contingent Asset Agreement with the RSPB Pension Scheme. Under this agreement, specified land and buildings, with a fair value of £69,370,000, would pass to the Pension Scheme in the unlikely event of the RSPB being unable to meet its obligations to the Scheme. The land selected is unencumbered by any legal charges or funding restrictions.

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

12a) Intangible fixed assets – charity and consolidated

	Website £'000	Total £'000
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	1,581	1,581
Additions	617	617
Disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2025	2,198	2,198
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	264	264
Charge for the year	469	469
Disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2025	733	733
Net book amount		
At 31 March 2025	1,465	1,465
At 31 March 2024	1,317	1,317

Intangible fixed assets relate to the costs to develop internal software including the RSPB website.

13) Investments – charity and consolidated

Investments at fair value	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Investment cash	505	480
Equities, bonds and other stocks		
Equities	13,059	12,696
Corporate bonds	21,689	24,622
Government bonds	1,623	1,586
Listed Stock Exchange investments	6	6
	36,377	38,910
Investment properties within the UK	1,799	1,550
	38,681	40,940

Equities, Corporate Bonds and Government Bonds are held in unit trusts

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

Movement during the year	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fair value at 1 April	40,940	41,664
Fees	(184)	(134)
Additions	4,860	22
Dividends reinvested	4	7
Disposals	(7,597)	(3,500)
Net gain on revaluation at 31 March	633	2,857
Movement in investment cash	25	24
Fair value at 31 March	38,681	40,940
Historical cost as at 31 March	30,686	30,363

13) Investments – charity and consolidated (continued)

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

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
RSPB Sales Limited	3,250	3,250
March Farmers (Washland) Limited	551	551
	3,801	3,801

14) Debtors – charity and consolidated

	2025 Consolidated £'000	2024 Consolidated £'000	2025 Charity £'000	2024 Charity £'000
Trade debtors	8,209	5,576	4,422	3,302
Other debtors	2,869	3,872	2,869	3,813
Legacies	4,663	3,181	4,663	3,181
Prepayments and accrued income	10,823	13,833	10,559	13,213
Amounts due from subsidiaries	-	-	7,562	5,581
	26,564	26,462	30,075	29,090

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated

Amounts falling due within one year	2025 Consolidated £'000	2024 Consolidated £'000	2025 Charity £'000	2024 Charity £'000
Trade creditors	4,334	4,136	3,929	3,795
Other creditors	3,937	5,269	3,937	5,268
Deferred income (see note 17)	7,463	6,493	4,951	3,739
Accruals	6,356	4,735	5,936	4,303
Bank loans	151	219	151	219
	22,241	20,852	18,904	17,324

Amounts falling due in more than one year	2025 Consolidated £'000	2024 Consolidated £'000	2025 Charity £'000	2024 Charity £'000
Deferred income – lease premium	711	725	711	725
Bank loans	3,064	3,215	3,064	3,215
	3,775	3,940	3,775	3,940

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

On 6 December 2019 the RSPB entered into a loan agreement with Lloyds Bank. This loan was for £0.5 million (fixed rate 2.506%) and was used to purchase land at Ash Hill to offset the loss of Cirl Bunting habitat to housing expansion in the area. The loan was repaid in full as at December 2024 using designated Section 106 funding from Teignbridge Council.

15) Creditors – charity and consolidated (continued)

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

There are two loans with funders, associated with grants received: £125,000 (3.0 % interest) with the People’s Postcode Lottery repayable over seven years to 2029; £46,000 (0.0 % interest) with the Welsh Government repayable over five years to 2027.

16) Commitments

Commitments for capital expenditure at 31 March 2025 not provided for in the accounts were £2,359,824 (2024: £77,811).

17) Deferred income – charity and consolidated

Movement during the year:	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Creditors amounts falling due in more than one year		
Balance at 1 April	725	740
Amount released to income	-	-
Amounts due within one year	(14)	(15)
Balance at 31 March	711	725
Creditors amounts falling due within one year		
Balance at 1 April	6,493	6,457
Amount released to income	(5,493)	(5,457)
Amounts due within one year	6,449	5,478
Amounts transferred from creditors due in more than one year	14	15
Balance at 31 March	7,463	6,493
Deferred income: balance at 31 March	8,174	7,218

Deferred income includes lease premiums of £725,000 (2024: £740,000) received and amortised over the life of the leases. Income of £6,449,000 (2024: £5,478,000) was deferred in the year. Deferred income comprised grants and other income of £4,937,000 (2024: £3,770,000) and commercial trading £2,512,000 (2024: £2,708,000).

Dormice set up home at Leighton Moss

Hazel Dormice were recorded at Leighton Moss for the first time in 2024. These little rodents have colonised the reserve naturally, following their reintroduction at the neighbouring Hawes Water/ Gait Barrows Site of Special Scientific Interest.

18) Operating leases – commitments and contracted income

Commitments: properties and equipment are leased by the RSPB for defined periods. The full cost of these over the lease period is shown below:

	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Less than 1 year	1,561	62	1,623	2,158
2 – 5 years	2,536	-	2,536	2,752
Over 5 years	6,242	-	6,242	6,456
	10,339	62	10,401	11,366

Lease payments of £2,534,164 (2024: £2,448,684) were charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year.

Contracted income:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Less than 1 year	755	930
2 – 5 years	1,349	976
Over 5 years	3,521	2,612
	5,625	4,518

Lease income of £801,190 (2024: £1,142,674) was credited to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities during the year. All lease income relates to land and buildings.

19) Contingent liabilities

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

20) Statements of funds – charity and consolidated

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

	Total funds 1 April 2024	Income	Expenditure	Other recognised gains/ (losses)	Transfers	Total funds 31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	48,890	137,890	(133,050)	622	(7,505)	46,847
Designated land fund	61,766	-	-	-	(5)	61,761
Pension liability	(29,152)	-	(1,245)	11,130	7,510	(11,757)
Total unrestricted funds	81,504	137,890	(134, 295)	11,752	-	96,851
Restricted funds						
Nature reserves	168,395	5,996	-	-	-	174,391
Other tangible assets	1,854	887	(1,134)	-	-	1,607
Managing RSPB nature reserves	3,101	32,837	(25,231)	-	-	10,707
Research, policy and advisory	8,197	17,176	(15,918)	-	-	9,455
Education and inspiring support	171	178	(213)	-	-	136
Total restricted funds	181,718	57,074	(42,496)	-	-	196,296
Endowment funds	244	-	-	-	-	244
Total funds	263,466	194,964	(176,791)	11,752	-	293,391

20) Statements of funds – charity and consolidated (continued)

A review of funds during the year resulted in the net transfer of £5,000 from the Designated Land Fund to the General Fund. A transfer of £7,510,000 from the General Fund to the Pension Liability Fund represents a pension deficit recovery payment in line with the triennial valuation as at 1 April 2021, see note 25.

Inter-company reconciliation

	RSPB Charity	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd	RSPB Sales Ltd	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd	RSPB Nature Regen Ltd	Elimination	RSPB Consolidated
	2025 £'000	2025 £'000	2025 £'000	2025 £'000	2025 £'000	2025 £'000	2025 £'000
Income	168,902	137	35,116	5	642	(9,838)	194,964
Expenditure	(150,729)	(122)	(26,156)	(5)	(504)	725	(176,791)
Other recognised gains	11,752	-	-	-	-	-	11,752
Profit/(loss)	29,925	15	8,960	-	138	(9,113)	29,925
Gift aided	-	(15)	(8,960)	-	(138)	9,113	-
Net movement in funds	29,925	-	-	-	-	-	29,925
Net Assets at 31 March 2024	263,093	551	3,250	373	-	(3,801)	263,466
Net Assets at 31 March 2025	293,018	551	3,250	373	-	(3,801)	293,391

The Charity holds a 33% joint venture interest in Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan, a non-profit organisation registered in Indonesia and established to facilitate the acquisition and management of the Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2025, the Charity’s share of the net assets, income and surplus were £305,711, £423,891 and £18,865 respectively (2024: £295,489, £438,878 and £66,569).

The Charity holds a 33% interest in Gola Rainforest Conservation LG, a non-profit company limited by guarantee registered in Sierra Leone and established to conserve and help fund the Gola Rainforest National Park. Based on the latest financial statements available for the year ending 31 March 2025, the Charity’s share of the net assets, income and drawdown were £6,184, £481,133 and £26,266 respectively (2024: £10,451, £404,064 and £42,599 surplus).

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

During the year ended 31 March 2025, the Charity paid £114,732 (2024: £318,047) to Yayasan Konservasi Ekosistem Hutan and £1,426,390 (2024: £1,364,840) to Gola Rainforest Conservation LG.

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

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

- Restricted funds comprise:
- The Nature Reserves Fund represents the historic cost of nature reserves acquired using restricted funds and a further £3,637,280 (2024: £6,024,695) held for future acquisitions.
 - The other funds held for charitable objectives include grants received of £11,006,523 (2024: £6,994,423) in advance of the associated work being carried out.

Endowment funds are comprised of permanent endowments.

21) Analysis of net assets between funds

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

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2025
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset type					
Nature reserves	-	61,761	170,754	-	232,515
Other tangible assets	5,091	-	1,607	-	6,698
Intangible assets	1,465	-	-	-	1,465
Investments	20,338	-	18,099	244	38,681
Current assets	40,307	-	11,498	-	51,805
Current liabilities	(17,290)	-	(4,951)	-	(22,241)
Long-term liabilities	(3,064)	-	(711)	-	(3,775)
Net assets excluding pension liability	46,847	61,761	196,296	244	305,148
Pension liability	(11,757)	-	-	-	(11,757)
Net assets	35,090	61,761	196,296	244	293,391

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

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2025
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net assets excluding pension liability	46,847	61,761	196,296	244	305,148
Less: Operating assets					
Nature reserves	-	(61,761)	(170,754)	-	(232,515)
Other tangible assets	(5,091)	-	(1,607)	-	(6,698)
Intangible assets	(1,465)	-	-	-	(1,465)
Available reserves	40,291	-	23,935	244	64,470
Less: Restricted and endowment	-	-	(23,935)	(244)	(24,179)
Free reserves	40,291	-	-	-	40,291

22) Connected charities and related party transactions

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

Transactions with subsidiaries during the year:

Subsidiaries	March Farmers (Washland) Ltd £'000	RSPB Sales Ltd £'000	RSPB Cayman Islands Nature Ltd £'000	RSPB Nature Regen Ltd £'000
Balance at 1 April 2024	141	4,995	-	143
Gift Aid paid	(30)	(6,138)	-	(40)
Gift Aid due	15	8,960	-	138
Grants received	-	-	(5)	-
Other inter-company transactions	20	(478)	5	(165)
Balance at 31 March 2025	146	7,339	-	76

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

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net income for the year	18,795	4,740
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on fixed assets	7,795	7,264
Gains on investments	(449)	(2,723)
Interest and dividends received	(1,728)	(1,717)
Profit on sale of tangible assets	(187)	(399)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	547	(225)
Increase in debtors	(102)	(827)
Increase in creditors	1,443	1,301
	26,114	7,414
Movement in pension scheme	(6,265)	(6,514)
Net cash provided by operating activities	19,849	900

Recording the sounds of the forest

In Sierra Leone’s Gola Rainforest, we’re deploying new technology funded by Foundation Prince Albert II de Monaco, to help build a picture of the animals that live here. Audio recorder units capture the sounds of the forest, and the sound files can then be analysed using AI-driven software to identify individual species’ calls and songs. You can listen to a Gola soundscape at: youtu.be/hRAWJ_SSrQQ

24) Pensions

The defined benefit scheme operated by the RSPB was closed in March 2017. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the RSPB, being invested by professional fund managers, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Trustees of the pension fund.

A full actuarial valuation is undertaken by the Pension Trustees and their advisers every three years. The latest triennial valuation reflects the position as at 1 April 2024 and has resulted in an annual employer contribution of £6.0 million per annum with effect from 1 April 2025 for three years and £7.51 million for 10 months from 1 April 2028. This level of contribution is calculated to eliminate the deficit over a period of 3 years 10 months. As part of the valuation, the Society’s contributions to the Scheme are agreed by the Trustees, certified by the Scheme Actuary and recorded in a Schedule of Contributions. The current Schedule of Contributions is dated 16 June 2025.

Changes in defined benefit obligation:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Defined benefit obligation at start of year	200,589	197,757
Interest expense	9,662	9,526
Remeasurements	(30,745)	(1)
Benefits paid	(6,824)	(6,693)
Defined benefit obligation at end of year	172,682	200,589

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial position:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	172,682	200,589
Fair value of scheme assets	(160,925)	(171,437)
Net defined benefit liability	11,757	29,152

Changes in scheme assets:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fair value of scheme assets at start of year	171,437	173,679
Interest income	8,417	8,530
Remeasurements	(19,615)	(11,589)
Employer contribution	7,510	7,510
Benefits paid	(6,824)	(6,693)
Fair value of scheme assets at end of year	160,925	171,437

24) Pensions (continued)

Cost relating to defined benefit plans:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Interest expense	9,662	9,526
Interest income	(8,417)	(8,530)
Cost relating to defined benefit plans included in SOFA	1,245	996
Total remeasurements included in SOFA	(11,130)	11,588
Total (income)/cost related to defined benefit plan recognised in SOFA	(9,885)	12,584

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

	2025	2024
Equities, hedge funds and commodities	40.6%	37.3%
Gilts and bonds (including LDI)	47.1%	52.7%
Property	7.7%	7.9%
Cash	4.6%	2.1%

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Actual return on the scheme assets during the year	(11,198)	(3,059)

Principle assumptions expressed as weighted averages:

	2025	2024
Discount rate	5.90%	4.90%
Rate of increase in salaries	1 April 2025: 2.0% (3.5%) 3.0% p.a. thereafter	1 April 2025: 3.0% (4.5%) 3.5% p.a. thereafter
% in brackets include a further allowance for salaries to align with benchmark pay bands over the short term		
Rate of increase in pensions in payment:		
Pre 97 (pre 97 excess over GMP)	3.00%	3.00%
Post 97/pre 07 pension	3.00%	3.00%
Post 07 pension	1.90%	1.90%
Rate of increase of pensions in deferment:		
Pre April 09 (CPI max 5.0%)	2.80%	2.80%
Post April 09 (CPI max 2.5%)	2.50%	2.50%
RPI inflation	3.10%	3.10%
CPI inflation	2.80%	2.80%

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

	2025 Years	2024 Years
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – male	21.8	22.2
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – male	23.1	23.6
Member aged 65 (current life expectancy) – female	24.0	24.2
Member aged 45 (life expectancy at 65) – female	25.5	25.8

25) Comparative statements

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	2024 Total £'000
Income and expenditure				
Income and endowments				
Voluntary income				
Membership subscriptions and donations	50,762	3,243	-	54,005
Legacies	36,567	5,974	-	42,541
Grants, corporates and trusts	649	33,262	-	33,911
Total voluntary income	87,978	42,479	-	130,457
Commercial trading	35,039	-	-	35,039
Investment income and interest	1,717	-	-	1,717
Charitable activities				
Land and farming income	1,619	-	-	1,619
Events and media sales	646	-	-	646
Total income from charitable activities	2,265	-	-	2,265
Other income				
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	399	-	-	399
Total income	127,398	42,479	-	169,877
Expenditure on				
Cost of raising funds				
Costs of commercial trading	28,261	-	-	28,261
Costs of generating voluntary income	14,319	-	-	14,319
Investment management costs	134	-	-	134
Total cost of raising funds	42,714	-	-	42,714
Net resources available for charitable activities	84,684	42,479	-	127,163
Charitable activities				
Managing RSPB nature reserves	30,262	22,980	-	53,242
Research, policy and advisory	33,303	12,851	-	46,154
Education and inspiring support	20,936	248	-	21,184
Supporter care	4,700	-	-	4,700
Total expenditure on charitable activities	89,201	36,079	-	125,280
Total expenditure	131,915	36,079	-	167,994
Net (losses)/gains on investments	2,857	-	-	2,857
Net income/(expenditure)	(1,660)	6,400	-	4,740
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension scheme				
	(11,588)	-	-	(11,588)
Net movement in funds	(13,248)	6,400	-	(6,848)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	94,752	175,318	244	270,314
Total funds carried forward	81,504	181,718	244	263,466

25) Comparative statements (continued)

Statement of funds – charity and consolidated for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Total funds 1 April 2023	Income	Expenditure	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers	Total funds 31 March 2024 £'000
Consolidated						
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	54,991	127,398	(130,919)	2,857	(5,437)	48,890
Designated land fund	63,839	-	-	-	(2,073)	61,766
Pension liability	(24,078)	-	(996)	(11,588)	7,510	(29,152)
Total unrestricted funds	94,752	127,398	(131,915)	(8,731)	-	81,504
Restricted funds						
Nature reserves	165,000	3,395	-	-	-	168,395
Other tangible assets	1,996	1,017	(1,159)	-	-	1,854
Managing RSPB nature reserves	2,116	22,806	(21,821)	-	-	3,101
Research, policy and advisory	6,135	14,913	(12,851)	-	-	8,197
Education and inspiring support	71	348	(248)	-	-	171
Total restricted funds	175,318	42,479	(36,079)	-	-	181,718
Endowment funds						
	244	-	-	-	-	244
Total funds	270,314	169,877	(167,994)	(8,731)	-	263,466

Analysis of net assets between funds for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 31 March 2024 £'000
	General £'000	Designated £'000	£'000	£'000	
Asset type:					
Nature reserves	-	61,766	162,370	-	224,136
Other tangible assets	5,536	-	1,854	-	7,390
Intangible assets	1,317	-	-	-	1,317
Investments	28,042	-	12,654	244	40,940
Current assets	31,614	-	12,013	-	43,627
Current liabilities	(14,404)	-	(6,448)	-	(20,852)
Long-term liabilities	(3,215)	-	(725)	-	(3,940)
Net assets excluding pension liability	48,890	61,766	181,718	244	292,618
Pension liability	(29,152)	-	-	-	(29,152)
Net (liabilities)/assets	19,738	61,766	181,718	244	263,466

Success for Spoonbills

Once a common sight in Eastern England, Spoonbills disappeared from our shores as a result of hunting and wetland drainage. But they're making a comeback! 2024 saw Spoonbills breeding in Cambridgeshire for the first time in 400 years, at RSPB Ouse Washes, where three pairs successfully fledged eight chicks. Spoonbills are doing well on other RSPB reserves too, such as Fairburn lngs, where they have bred successfully for eight consecutive years since their arrival in 2017.



Paul Sawyer (rspb-images.com)

Go a bit further for nature

Thank you for reading this year's Annual Report. We hope you enjoyed discovering the successes we have achieved together over the past year and feel inspired by the many ways in which your support is helping to protect and restore nature.

There's much to celebrate. But to reverse nature's decline and create a world where wildlife and all people thrive, we still have far more to do.

If you're able to go a bit further for nature by making a donation towards our work, please visit: rspb.org.uk/donate

Thank you.

Contact us

To find out more about the RSPB, please contact us at our UK headquarters or the relevant country headquarters. We welcome your questions and comments.

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