



# *Our year for wildlife*

The Wildlife Trusts' impact report 2019/2020

# Together, we can do it

In these pages you'll see examples of what, together, we are able to achieve. That's together as a collection of Wildlife Trusts, together with our collective members, supporters, volunteers, funders and stakeholders. Together, with you.

From the places saved, to the wildlife protected or the people inspired and nurtured to become the next nature warriors, we couldn't do it without you. Yet, we know that our natural world continues to be in trouble, with wildlife disappearing at an alarming rate and the threat of climate catastrophe a constant worry. That is why The Wildlife Trusts are calling for at least 30% of land and sea to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030.

So these pages are testament to your support — and we thank you — but it is just the start; 2020 has been a difficult year, but the next ten years must be about renewal and rewilding our lives. We hope that you'll continue on this journey with us.



**Peta Foxall,**  
Chair



**Craig Bennett,**  
Chief Executive





# A year for wildlife

Some highlights from across the Wildlife Trusts



2019  
APRIL

**Sussex Wildlife Trust** and Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve joined forces to fundraise for a new Discovery Centre on the site. The centre will transform the experience of all that visit the Rye Harbour nature reserve, sharing the rich heritage of the place, as well as explaining more about the very special natural environment and wildlife found here.



2019  
MAY

After decades of campaigning by **The Wildlife Trusts** for protection at sea, a further 41 Marine Conservation Zones were announced by the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, marking the most significant expansion of England's 'Blue Belt' to date. Stretching from Cornwall to Northumberland, the new protections safeguard 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> of marine habitat. With 50 zones already designated in 2013 and 2016, this takes the total number up to 91.



2019  
JUNE

**Gwent Wildlife Trust** celebrated the scrapping of plans to build a new motorway over the Gwent Levels after years of standing up for the precious wildlife that live there. The area is Wales' equivalent of the Amazon rainforest in terms of sheer diversity and is like no other place in the UK. It was a long and hard-fought battle but goes to show that people can make a difference by standing together and speaking out for what is right for the future of people, wildlife and our planet.



2019  
JULY

Rare insect-eating plants were returned to a north-west nature reserve after a 150-year absence. Reintroductions of the fascinating sundew and bladderwort plants took place on Risley Moss and on Lancashire Wildlife Trust's Astley Moss as part of the £265,000 Manchester Mosslands Species Reintroduction project, of which both **The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside** and **Cheshire Wildlife Trust** are part.



2019  
AUGUST

284 water voles were released into streams that flow into the Kielder Reservoir by the team behind the *Restoring Ratty* project, which takes the total number reintroduced into the area up to 1,489 since June 2017. This fantastic project to boost numbers of this endangered animal is a partnership between **Northumberland Wildlife Trust**, Kielder Water and Forest Park, Forestry England and Tyne River Trust, and was made possible thanks to a £421,000 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



2019  
SEPTEMBER

**London Wildlife Trust**, Butterfly Conservation and the Natural History Museum launched *Brilliant Butterflies* with the aim of creating and restoring chalk grassland habitat, working with volunteers and local communities. Funded by the Dream Fund Award thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery, it provides an excellent opportunity for residents to work alongside specialists to learn new skills including surveying and identifying, as well as practical conservation skills; the newly created habitats should also burst into life with butterflies, wildflowers and insects in abundance in coming years.



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2019  
OCTOBER

18 pine martens were released into the Forest of Dean, thanks to the hard work of **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust** and partners on *Project Pine Marten*. Once common throughout the UK and Ireland, pine martens have undergone an extensive decline due to habitat loss and predator control in recent decades. This clever mustelid is not only a charismatic and attractive part of our British fauna, but also an important woodland predator, with its own unique role within the natural dynamics of woodland ecosystems.



2019  
NOVEMBER

**The Wildlife Trusts in south-west England** commissioned an important report into insect declines and why they matter, authored by expert Professor Dave Goulson. The report summarised the best available evidence of declines and proposed a set of actions that could be taken at all levels of society to recover both insect diversity and abundance. This kickstarted a new Wildlife Trust campaign, *Action for Insects*, which calls for change in policy and behaviour, whilst providing practical actions that we can all take.



2019  
DECEMBER

With the hugely popular Attenborough Nature Reserve near Nottingham up for sale, **Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust** launched an appeal to purchase it — and were blown away by the support they received! Donations flooded in thanks to none other than Sir David Attenborough giving it his backing, as well as a generous donation from long-term supporter Broxtowe Borough Council and a grant of £750,000 from Biffa Award.



2020  
JANUARY

With plans for HS2 forging ahead, **The Wildlife Trusts** published a report that revealed the vast scale of destruction the railway's route will cause to nature. The report, *What's the damage? Why HS2 will cost nature too much*, collated data from the 14 Wildlife Trusts, other charities and landowners affected by the plans to provide a comprehensive assessment of the broad range of impacts of HS2 on protected wildlife sites, species and landscape restoration projects. The publication culminated in a publicly backed campaign to ask the Prime Minister to *Stop and Rethink* the project.



2020  
FEBRUARY

**Scottish Wildlife Trust** welcomed the Scottish Government's decision to save protected wildlife site, Coul Links, from becoming a golf course after they refused permission for the damaging development plans to go ahead. The move to protect arguably Scotland's most important wetlands was the result of many months of hard work and campaigning, with thousands of people lending their voice and standing up for nature in support.



2020  
MARCH

The UK's first 'super' National Nature Reserve has been created on Purbeck Heaths, thanks to a collaboration between **Dorset Wildlife Trust** and six other neighbouring landowners. Comparable in size to Blackpool, this super site is home to rare and varied wildlife, which will benefit from the area being bigger and better joined up. Sand lizards, the Dartford warbler and silver-studded blue butterfly are just some of the wonderful and rare species that will stand a better chance of survival.

# *The Wildlife Trusts*



GREY SEAL © ALEXANDER MUSTARD/2020VISION

More than

**850,000**

members

More than

**42,500**

volunteers including corporate  
volunteers taking part in Wild Work days

**46**

Wildlife Trusts

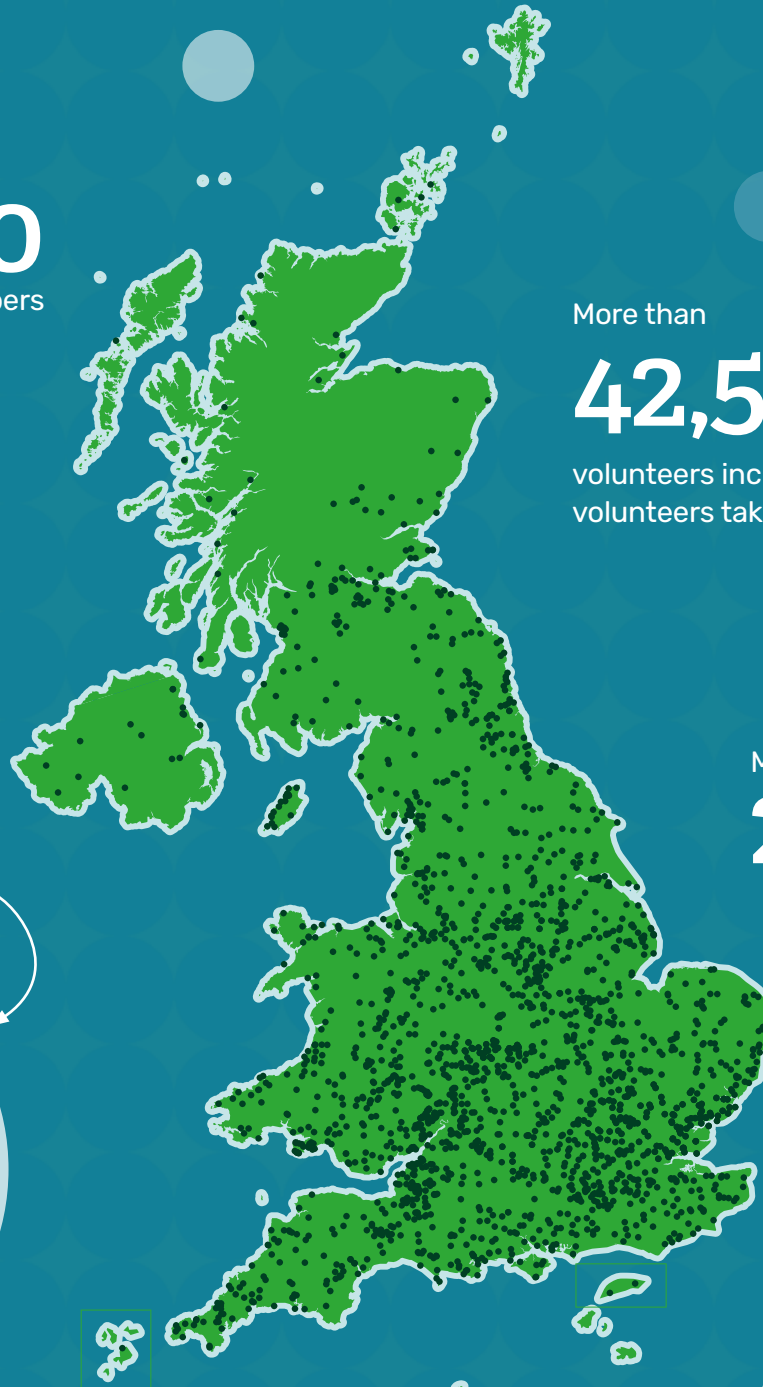
More than

**2,300**

nature reserves

**1**

Wildlife Trust  
movement



• = Wildlife Trust nature reserves



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a red polo shirt and sunglasses, is on the left. She has green and yellow face paint on her cheeks. In the center, a young boy in a light blue polo shirt is smiling and clapping his hands. He also has green face paint on his forehead. To his right, another boy is looking down, also with green face paint. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting.

# *Bringing wildlife to local communities*



# 12,736

people gained new skills  
on our training courses



# 94,442

people spoke up for nature  
through one of our campaigns

# 14.4 million

visits were made to our nature reserves,  
where people enjoyed and found solace in  
wild places cared for by the Wildlife Trusts

# 1.66 million

hours were given by 37,038  
volunteers with an additional

# 38,808

hours by 5,557  
corporate volunteers



# 388,000

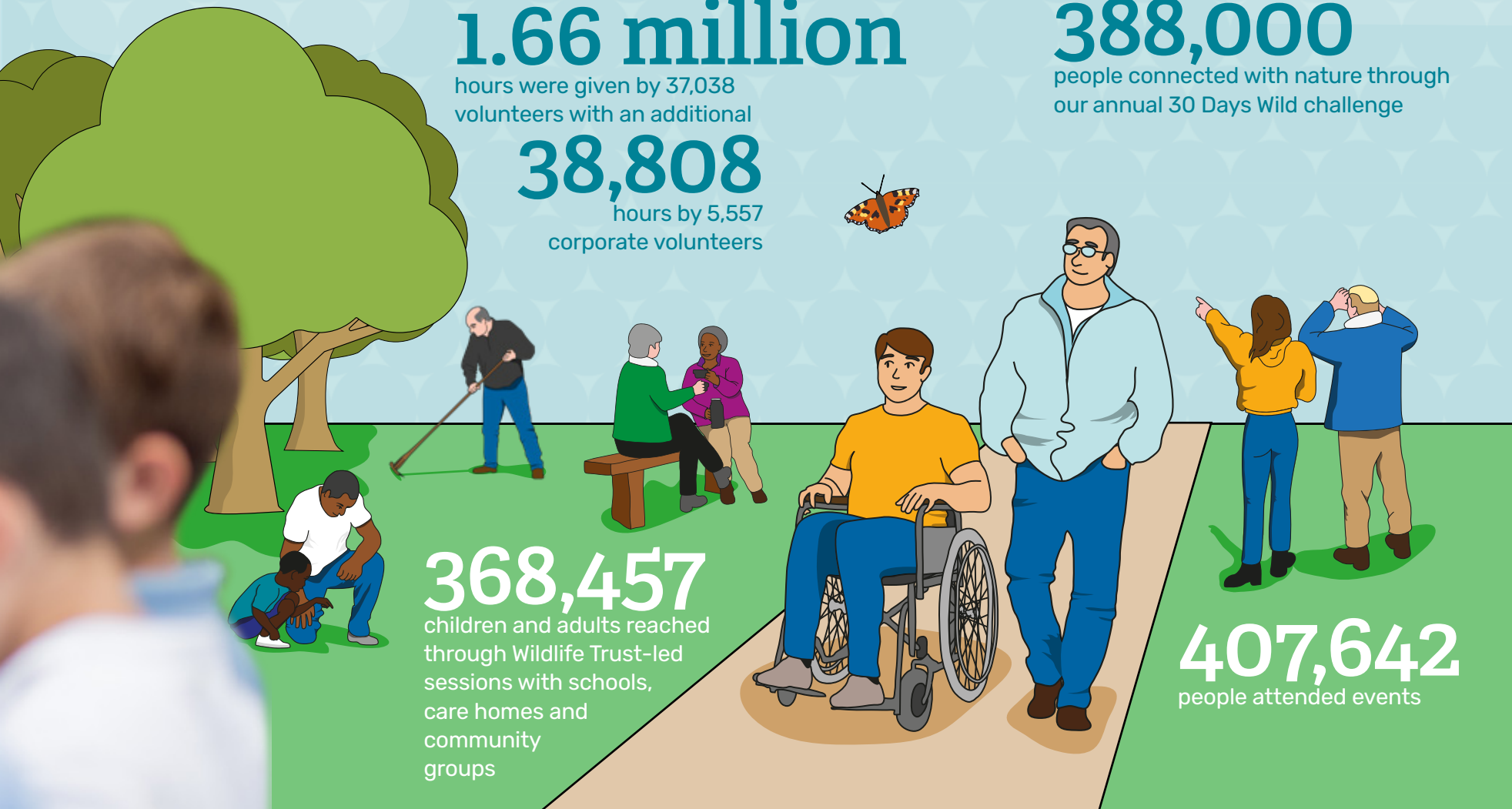
people connected with nature through  
our annual 30 Days Wild challenge

# 368,457

children and adults reached  
through Wildlife Trust-led  
sessions with schools,  
care homes and  
community  
groups

# 407,642

people attended events



*Bringing wildlife to local communities*

**Carrie** began volunteering at **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** in April 2019 as a full-time student, before going on to fulfil a summer internship with the Conservation Team.

During her time at Suffolk Wildlife Trust, she gained new skills and brushed up on her natural history knowledge, learning how to complete water vole, dormice, badger, bat and botany surveys. Carrie also gained experience of working in an office, where she wrote up surveys and gained insight into responding to planning applications, assessing the impact on wildlife of each individual case — a skill she could put towards her degree.

Whilst all these new skills were very valuable, Carrie felt that she gained the most through the outreach and engagement work she took part in — as no day or session was ever the same! Sessions changed with the seasons and there was always something new to learn, explore and discover with the children, to keep them interested and everyone on their toes! A Thursday morning could bring a Wild Tots session with a mud kitchen,



## Meet Carrie

afternoon tea, sweep netting for insects or even making butterfly wings and woodland creations using natural materials such as blackberries and leaves as decoration.

During the summer, Carrie grew to feel part of a community that included toddlers, primary school children, home-educated teenagers, mums, dads, aunties and grandparents — all within the greenspaces of Ipswich.

In fact she enjoyed her internship so much that she continues to be in touch with her Wildlife Trust colleague, Lucy, and has helped out over holiday periods alongside completing her dissertation on one of the nature reserves!

The majority of Wildlife Trusts offer traineeships and internships for young people. To find out what opportunities there are in your Trust, visit **[wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-trusts](https://wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-trusts)**





# Meet Northern Ireland's young environmentalists

A group of young, passionate environmentalists — including **Leah** — were quick to respond to a call from **Ulster Wildlife** for creative ideas to influence policy for a Green Recovery in Northern Ireland following the Covid-19 outbreak at the beginning of the year.

They started out by attending some training sessions led by campaign experts as part of the Our Bright Future programme, after which they began to meet with local political leaders including Edwin Poots, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, to share their ideas. At this particular meeting, Leah was able to demonstrate some of the practical steps she had taken on her own farm to make it more wildlife-

*Bringing wildlife to local communities*

friendly, showcasing how green recovery was possible — and with other members of the group is now planning a social media campaign and series of events around the changes needed.

Although Leah and other members of the group have been unable to meet face-to-face due to lockdown and a vast geographical spread, they quickly formed a great team, displaying both initiative and leadership in dealing with the challenging circumstances — and are supportive of each other and celebrate successes as they go. They communicate via WhatsApp and are also active in many other groups including Young Farmers Clubs and school eco groups and have been sharing their activities and training with their peers too, helping others to take action for a green recovery.

Wildlife Trusts across the movement have run similar projects through the Our Bright Future programme, working with 11-24 year olds to help them gain vital skills and experience. Find out more about Our Bright Future, which is led by The Wildlife Trusts and funded by The National Lottery Community Fund at [wildlifetrusts.org/our-bright-future](https://wildlifetrusts.org/our-bright-future)



# Looking after wildlife and wild places





New protections safeguard an additional

**12,000km<sup>2</sup>**

of marine habitat thanks to  
campaigning by The Wildlife Trusts



**103,999ha**  
of land cared for as Wildlife Trust  
nature reserves



**41**

new Marine Conservation Zones

**9,932km**

of rivers and streams looked after  
allowing freshwater wildlife to thrive  
and an additional

**7,776km**

of rivers and streams improved for  
wildlife after receiving advice from  
The Wildlife Trusts

**8,700ha**

of land improved for wildlife under  
our Biodiversity Benchmark scheme,  
working with corporates



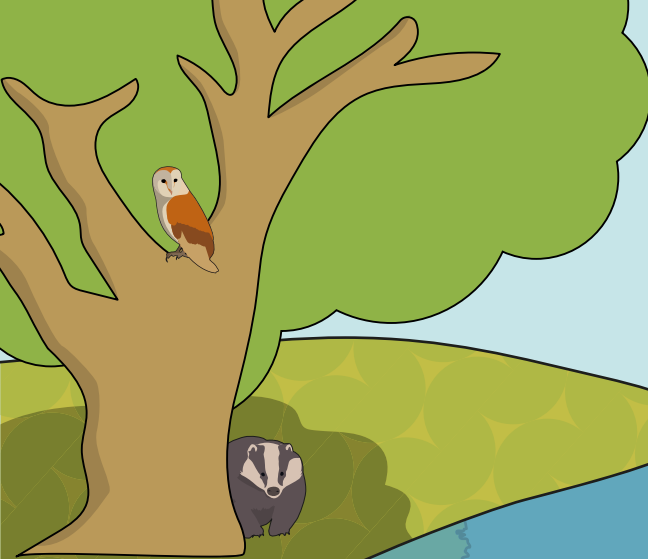
**197,433ha**

of private land improved for  
wildlife after receiving advice  
from The Wildlife Trusts

The future of

**17,531ha**

of land influenced by responding  
to planning applications



A nursery ground for young fish and safe haven for seahorses, our undersea meadows of seagrass are extremely important for marine wildlife, providing a space for them to forage for food, breed, grow into adults and hide from predators.

Perhaps less well known is the role this habitat plays in helping us fight climate change — acting just like our plants and trees above water, seagrasses photosynthesize, absorbing carbon dioxide to make their food — and then become food for other marine and coastal animals too, such as grazing crustaceans, molluscs and brent geese. That's not all either, their dense network of roots binds together the sand and mud on the seafloor, making it more stable and helping to reduce coastal erosion, as well as burying organic matter down in the seabed creating an important carbon bank.

Unsurprisingly, this 'super' habitat has become the focus of several projects around the Wildlife Trusts, especially as we have already lost around 92% of our seagrass beds in the last century.

One Wildlife Trust that has been particularly active is **Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust**, who first started monitoring seagrass beds in 2006. Conducting regular surveys and collecting and analysing historical records has allowed them to build up a good picture of where local seagrass beds are and how best to protect them. Their work has contributed to the banning of harmful fishing practices in the Solent and informed the designation of Marine Conservation Zones.

In turn by keeping this habitat healthy, fish numbers will improve in the area, which will help support the fishing industry. Currently, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is partnering up with others to see how they can reduce the negative impact of recreational activities on these lush underwater meadows so that we can save them for future generations.



## Seagrass in the Solent



Climate change is a huge issue facing us all, as today's young people are so articulately and passionately making clear.

On the ground, The Wildlife Trusts are taking action, with big and bold efforts underway to restore our peatlands.

Our peat bogs are hugely important in our attempt to combat climate change, as they store large amounts of carbon

in their soils — and in a healthy state actively capture additional carbon from the atmosphere. The role of peatlands as a natural solution to climate change — and their value for wildlife — has led several Wildlife Trusts to grow their expertise in peatland restoration.

One such Trust is **The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside**, who first took over the management of adjoining bogs, Winmarleigh and Cockerham Mosses, just outside Garstang in 2010 and 2012. With 98% of the region's lowland raised bogs already lost, the restoration of these remaining fragments is all the more important.

The endangered large heath butterfly is one of the rare wonders to behold on Winmarleigh Moss; one of only three sites in the region where it can be found. A breeding programme between the Wildlife Trust and Chester Zoo is helping to increase its fortunes and has seen the species reintroduced to nearby Heysham Moss and to the peatlands of Greater Manchester.

Restoration efforts include raising water levels so that the moss is wet (or boggy) once more, after which sphagnum moss, the 'building block' of peatlands will be grown — covering the precious peat soils and protecting it from erosion whilst taking carbon out of the atmosphere and locking it away for millennia, thus providing a vital natural resource in the fight against climate change.



YOUNG PROTESTERS © PENNY DIXIE

# Capturing carbon in Lancashire




LARGE HEATH BUTTERFLY © STEFAN JOHANSSON

# Partnerships

The Wildlife Trusts work with thousands of businesses locally across the UK.

Nationally, we are proud to have formal partnerships with a variety of companies helping us to work towards delivering a wilder future. From creating more space for nature in housing and infrastructure developments, to providing more opportunities for adults and children to learn about and connect with nature, as well as improving employee wellbeing and improving habitats for wildlife, these partnerships are crucial in helping us to address the nature crisis:

- Aggregate Industries
- Costain
- The Crown Estate
- Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC
- Hogan Lovells
- Jordans
- Landsec
- Network Rail
- Redrow
- Severn Trent
- Siemens
- TATA Consultancy Services
- Vine House Farm
- Waitrose
- Willmott Dixon



Opened in 2019, award winning Ripon City Wetlands, which attracts lapwings, reed bunting and Cetti's warbler to its reedbeds and meadows is a prime example of our long-term partnership with Aggregate Industries. From the restoration of quarried areas to create beautiful nature reserves for people to enjoy, like this one, which was created in partnership with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, to funding local action for wildlife in communities – this innovative partnership is helping nature to recover and connecting people with wildlife where they live.





# Biodiversity Benchmark

Land-owning businesses have a key role to play in turning around the nature crisis we live in, managing their land in a wildlife-friendly way that allows it to recover.

The Wildlife Trusts believe that the efforts of those organisations leading by example should be celebrated, which is why we developed the Biodiversity Benchmark. This certification has recognised the contribution of business landowners since 2007 and has been received by 12 organisations who manage 52 sites between them, covering 8,600 hectares. These organisations span across sectors including leisure, transport, energy and construction.

## Toyota GB

During the year we welcomed Toyota GB to the Biodiversity Benchmark family. The newly certified site at Burgh Heath in Surrey covers five hectares and is a rich mosaic of habitats cared for by a committed and skilful team, providing a great place for wildlife and the people that work there.







# Funders

Thanks to our members, donors and legators we are able to save wildlife and wild places, whilst bringing people closer to nature.

We are also grateful for the grants that make many of our individual projects possible. These are received from local authorities, statutory agencies, governments, charitable trusts, lotteries, and funds like the Landfill Communities Fund. Their support is vital to our efforts in making wildlife accessible to everybody.

## National Lottery

Transformational support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund allows us to continue our efforts to restore habitats and landscapes, protect endangered wildlife, connect people with nature and improve accessibility on our reserves.

This year, support has been awarded by **The National Lottery Heritage Fund** to restore heathlands across Worcestershire, treescapes in Devon and a section of Cumbria's precious seabed, as well as providing nearly £250,000 of funding for a volunteer-led project to enhance the red squirrel population in mid Wales.

Funding support from **The National Lottery Community Fund** includes nearly £300,000 to support small groups of people working together to conserve and enhance the environment across the Tees Valley. Somerset and Herefordshire Wildlife Trusts have also received just under £600,000 in funding to improve the health and wellbeing of people in their local communities experiencing mental ill health, by helping them connect with nature.

## People's Postcode Lottery

Thanks to the continued support of players of People's Postcode Lottery, The Wildlife Trusts have brought thousands of children closer to nature through Forest Schools and Nature Tots sessions in 11 major cities. Their support also helped us to look after precious wild places and educate and inspire people to take action for nature in their own lives.

## Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

In 2019, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation provided loans to help Worcestershire Wildlife Trust buy land at Green Farm and Romsley Manor Farm Meadows, home to huge numbers of insects and special wildflowers like the green-winged orchid.

# About us

***“The next ten years must be a time of renewal, of rewilding our lives, of green recovery. We all need nature more than ever and when we succeed, we’ll have wilder landscapes that store carbon and provide on-your-doorstep nature for people too.”***

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts

We are living in a nature and climate emergency. To turn things around, we need new, big and ambitious targets. That is why The Wildlife Trusts are calling for at least **30% of our land and sea to be connected and protected for nature’s recovery by 2030.**

Evidence suggests that 30% is the bare minimum that nature needs to start recovering, but we are far short of that so have our work cut out over the next decade.

With the help of others, we want to make more space for nature so that it can become abundant once more, giving our struggling wildlife the chance to recover. We will continue to

restore our beautiful wild places — the very places we love and enjoy but that also store carbon and can help us tackle climate change when functioning properly. From huge peatlands locking up carbon in their soils to healthy marine environments storing it in silty, muddy sediment on the sea floor.

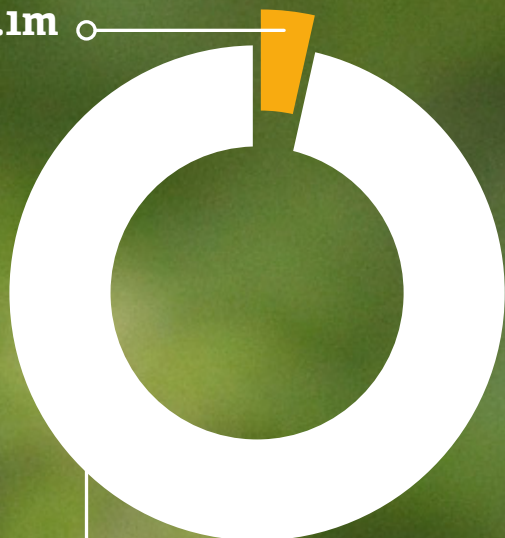
By being part of our mission for nature’s recovery, you are making a real difference to wildlife and our natural world. Nature has given us so much, it’s now our turn to give back.





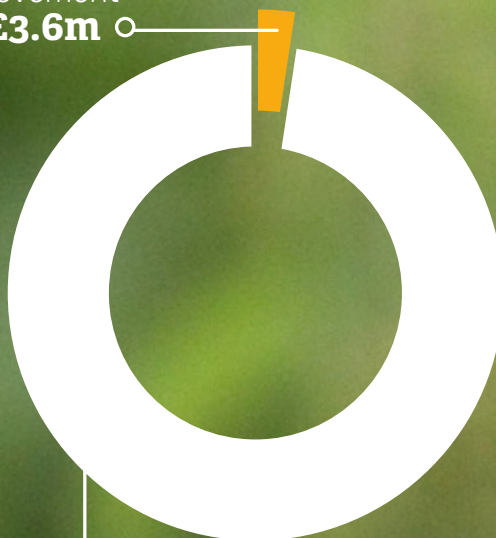
# Our collective finances

Central charity (RSWT) income  
**£6.1m**



Individual Trust income  
**£166.3m**

Central charity (RSWT) spend on behalf of the movement  
**£3.6m**



Individual Trust expenditure  
**£149.1m**

- \* Central charity income from charitable trusts and foundations, grants, donations, society lottery, legacies and corporates.
- \* Income for 2019-2020 does not include £4.4m for Biffa Award, £5.9m for Our Bright Future, £0.5m for Red Squirrels United and £1.2m for Nature Friendly Schools.
- \* Figures exclude inter-Trust grants and contribution.







# The Wildlife Trusts

## Key People and Supporters

### Patron

HRH The Prince of Wales

### President

Tony Juniper CBE (until Apr 2019)

### Presidents Emeritus

Sir David Attenborough OM CH CVO CBE FRS

Simon King OBE

Tony Juniper CBE (from Nov 2019)

### Vice Presidents

Prof Chris Baines

Nick Baker

Ellie Harrison

Prof David Macdonald CBE DSc FRS

Bill Oddie OBE

Julian Pettifer OBE

Sir Robert Worcester KBE DL

### Ambassadors

Dr Amir Khan

Sophie Pavelle

Alison Steadman

Richard Walker

### Chair

Peta Foxall

### Chief Executive

Craig Bennett (from Apr 2020)

Patience Thody (acting; Oct 2019-Apr 2020)

Stephanie Hilborne (until Oct 2019)



The Wildlife Trusts is a movement made up of 46 Wildlife Trusts and a central charity (RSWT); each is an independent charity with a shared mission.

**Help us to achieve our goal of 30% of our land and sea to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030.**

- Join us as a member
- Remember us in your will
- Speak up for wildlife
- Volunteer your time
- Partner with us

Find out more at  
**[wildlifetrusts.org/support-us](https://wildlifetrusts.org/support-us)**



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