



Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire

Annual Review

2019 - 2020

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire,
Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

www.wildlifebcn.org

Company Registration No 2534145 (England and Wales)
Registered Charity No. 1000412

Chair's Introduction

It is hard now to cast our minds back to the time before our lives were upended by the coronavirus, but that affected the work of the Trust only at the end of the period covered by this review. Most of the year saw good progress in achieving our aims of conserving and restoring nature and helping people to enjoy it and learn about it.

At national level, lobbying by the Wildlife Trusts persuaded the government to improve the Environment Bill and other draft legislation, especially by including both a requirement to create Local Nature Recovery Strategies for the whole of England and a requirement for developers to achieve a net biodiversity gain of 10% through the planning system.

With our neighbours, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, we continued to press for the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Arc to take proper account of environmental impacts, and we produced a map showing how the whole area could become a network for Nature Recovery. At all levels of the planning system we continued our efforts to secure the best possible outcomes for wildlife.

In the Great Fen we began work on the Water Works project following our success in March 2019 in winning a grant of £1 million from the People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund. This enables us and our partners to carry out trials of possible new crops in wet peatland soils and explore the potential for a more sustainable kind of agriculture in the fens which would preserve the peat for future generations. The other aim is to pursue an application for the Fens to become a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

This report describes the many other activities carried out by the Trust throughout the year, ranging from the control of scrub on our Chilterns chalk reserves to the growth of our education activities through Forest Schools and Youth Rangers and our surveys of grassland and other habitats. In all this we received tremendous support from members, volunteers and donors. Generous legacies placed our finances on a sounder footing with funds at last available for overdue investment. Our membership increased, and volunteers contributed thousands of hours of time and effort in all three counties.

Unfortunately, most of this came to a grinding halt in the spring of 2020 as a result of the lockdown. We had temporarily to close our education centres and our visitor centre at Rushden Lakes, to cancel planned events, to suspend most membership recruitment and to stand down our volunteers. Instead, we have developed new and imaginative ways of attracting new supporters and providing information and activities about wildlife via the internet. Many people say that the lockdown has made them more aware of nature, and this may be a crucial opportunity to build on that interest for the future.

What is certain is that the Trust will need all the support and help it can get as life gradually returns to normal. We went into the crisis with sound finances, but even so the Trust will suffer a severe financial blow. On our reserves we are performing the necessary minimum of maintenance, but a big effort will be needed to bring them back into favourable condition. Our internet-based programmes are successful, but as soon as possible we need to organise events again so that we can introduce both children and adults to real nature outdoors.

As always, we will rely on our members, volunteers and other supporters, whom I thank for all the good work they have done.



Sir Graham Fry,
Chair of the Council

Graham Fry

Cover Image: Rebecca Fulcher

STRATEGIC REPORT

Our Vision

People close to nature, in a land rich in wildlife

"The Trust aims to protect and restore the natural environment in our three counties and enable people to learn about it and enjoy it."

Sir Graham Fry, Chair of the Council

What do we do?



Nature conservation on our nature reserves

We manage over 100 nature reserves including some of Britain's rarest habitats such as ancient woodlands, wild fen, and wildflower meadows.



Inspire a love of nature

We support people to learn more about local nature through our events, training workshops and school programmes and we help them reap the benefits of simply connecting with nature.



Provide nature conservation advice and support to landowners

We work beyond the boundaries of our nature reserves by advising landowners who own and manage important sites for wildlife.



Advocate for wildlife

We campaign for a Wilder Future by lobbying local and national government for better protection of wildlife, and we review and respond to local development plans, ensuring we can achieve the biggest impacts possible.



Monitor and research wildlife

We carry out surveys to enable us to monitor population trends and assess the success of our practical habitat management.

We do all of this work with a Nature Recovery Network in mind, because we believe that a well-connected landscape is better for wildlife and for people.

Why is our work important?

Nature has an intrinsic value, but healthy green spaces also provide ecosystem services like:

- Climate regulation
- Mental and physical health improvements
- Pollination of food crops
- Flood alleviation
- Healthy soils

Pressures such as agricultural intensification, urbanisation and climate change are affecting our wildlife

41% of UK species have seen numbers decline since 1970*

15% are under the threat of extinction*



Matthew Hazelton

*State of Nature Report 2019

ADVOCATING FOR WILDLIFE

Campaign for a Wilder Future

With high profile support from Sir David Attenborough and Stephen Fry, we joined forces with the Wildlife Trust movement to launch the Campaign for a Wilder Future.

Rooted in the need for 'Nature Recovery Networks' which are legally protected, this important campaign seeks to address the enormous scale of the challenge of protecting wildlife for the future. Advocating for political change, we also started asking people to take small personal actions where they live, in order to help build these networks for wildlife. These individual actions, combined with our ongoing work, add up to something much bigger across the country. And the political action creates a framework for much larger change and a shift in public opinion.

Our new monthly campaign update e-news gained over 1,200 subscribers, and prompted engagement with wider campaigns including a drive for a government rethink of the HS2 project and responses to local planning consultations and proposals.

On the 26th of June, we encouraged our supporters to join us in London to lobby MPs at Parliament as part of the national "The Time is Now" mass lobby. We talked to four local MPs directly, and a further two via a representative.

The level of awareness around environmental issues has increased significantly in the last year, and our community work can help direct this increased enthusiasm into support for nature. The campaign acknowledges that to achieve our ambitions for wildlife we need to inspire a significantly larger and broader group of people to take action.



77 letters to **6** MPs written by families who attended Wilder Future events at Paxton Pits



30 Days Wild

The Wildlife Trusts' annual challenge to do one wild thing every day for the month of June saw 3,026 sign ups across our counties. This included families, individuals, schools, businesses and, for the first time, local care homes, who received tailored resources to help their residents get closer to nature. Participants did everything from writing a daily nature journal to wiggling their toes in the grass, and much of the love and enthusiasm for the natural world was shared on social media, allowing us to reach a wide audience and inspire a love of nature.



Pyramidal orchid and dyer's greenweed at Collyweston Quarries, Northants

Cambourne to be Wild festival

We held our first local family festival, inspiring those living in or near Cambourne to get outdoors and to learn more about wildlife whilst enjoying some family-friendly entertainment. We learnt a lot about connecting and inspiring a new audience, and about working in a different way with corporate supporters. A rainy Saturday was followed by a scorching Sunday and we received lots of encouraging feedback.



Planning

Though often occurring behind the scenes, our work creating maps of habitat opportunity areas and working with local authorities and politicians to ensure wildlife is considered in planning and development decisions is vital to protect wildlife and wild places.

- Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping originally undertaken in the Nene Valley, and subsequently expanded to the whole of Northamptonshire, has now been replicated in Cambridgeshire and plans are underway for Bedfordshire. These maps will be used by a wide range of organisations including the Environment Agency to inform where development can (and can't) take place in a way that will positively affect wildlife, and where habitats need to be enhanced or connected together to create a cohesive Nature Recovery Network.

- We have been working closely with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to stand up for wildlife by opposing the Ox-Cam expressway and challenging the associated million homes proposed in the area with its already fragile water resource. We supported BBOWT to bring a legal challenge to the High Court on the government's failure to hold a proper environmental consultation.

- We helped create the '100 Miles Wilder' vision, showing how it is possible for people to live comfortably alongside wildlife if development is undertaken in the areas that aren't of high importance to wildlife.

- We have continued to pressure government on the East-West Rail route between Bedford and Cambridge. The most damaging routes for wildlife have been avoided, but we believe alternative routes are not being explored.

- We reviewed and gave input to the Bedford Borough Local Plan which was adopted in January 2020, with its new policy requiring all new residential developments to generate a net gain for wildlife

- In Bedfordshire, we have screened 3,318 planning applications, officially commented on 55 and objected to a further three.

- In Northamptonshire, we have officially commented on 107 planning applications and objected to a further ten to protect and enhance wildlife habitats across the county. This has included successfully defending our own nature reserve at Collyweston Quarry from a potentially damaging housing development.

BEDFORDSHIRE HIGHLIGHTS

Nature reserve management

Our chalk grassland reserves in the North Chilterns Chalk Living Landscape are a unique habitat, supporting unusual wildlife such as fairy flax, frog orchid, and the Duke of Burgundy butterfly. People have managed this landscape in a similar way for hundreds of years, and in order to maintain the fragile ecosystem, we carry out conservation grazing, and have an ongoing scrub-clearance programme. This year we have managed to control the larger scrub and have started to tackle smaller patches of re-growth and coarser vegetation by cutting and raking, and making use of a new “tree popper” (a specialist tool for pulling out roots). This work is only possible because of the dedication of our volunteers on regular work parties. Our volunteers have contributed 9,000 hours towards looking after our reserves and some even came along to a work party on Christmas Day!



Brian Eversham

We've been working to protect the declining Duke of Burgundy



Conservation advice

Our Conservation team continue to provide advice and support to landowners of key wildlife sites in the North Chilterns Chalk Living Landscape. Many of these sites have been surveyed, and management plans have been produced in conjunction with the landowner to help wildlife flourish. This year, we teamed up with the Chiltern Society and their roving volunteer group to carry out practical habitat management work on some of these sites. So far, three sites have benefited from this arrangement, which extends from hedgerow planting to grass cutting and scrub clearance. This work has led to much needed habitat restoration work and helps continue our mission of providing ongoing advice and support to these landowners.



Wild experiences to inspire

Our Communities and Wildlife team has launched a new outreach package for primary schools in the North Chilterns Chalk area. We responded to feedback from teachers that visits to our reserves could be tricky for schools, and so have created “Tiny Creatures of the Big Hills” and “Fossils under your Feet” to bring the chalk to them instead. The latter programme, for upper primary children, takes them on a time-travelling adventure, to look at the North Chilterns 100 million years ago when it was under the sea. Using clues and fossils, children look at how the landscape has changed, and then discuss the wildlife that can be found on our nature reserves today. Another aspect of the new programme looks at the ‘science behind the story’. This focusses on a study by a team of researchers from the University of Cambridge.

Monitoring and Research

We've been taking the temperature of butterflies this year (yes, really!) as part of a pioneering research project run by the University of Cambridge on Totternhoe, Pegsdon Hills and Blows Downs nature reserves looking at how different species might respond to climate change. It aims to provide practical advice on habitat management to ensure species continue to thrive, or are enabled to find stepping-stones to more suitable areas as our climate warms. Staff, students and volunteers took part in monthly surveys, recording species, air temperature and butterfly behaviour. A subset of butterflies was caught to take their temperature. The data was then linked to information on habitat, some of which was gathered using drone imagery.



Countryfile filmed our work protecting butterflies and slow worms at Totternhoe

At Cooper's Hill, our heathland restoration monitoring has shown the techniques we have been trialling are working. Our report was published in the Conservation Evidence journal, used by professionals nationwide to share best practice.



New interpretation was installed at Cooper's Hill thanks to funding from the Greensand Country Partnership

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HIGHLIGHTS

Nature reserves management

In the past, our woodlands were valued as an important resource; grown and harvested for timber, firewood and poles. This management created structurally diverse areas of light and shade, which benefited flowers and invertebrates. We treasure our woods for wildlife now, and recreate these micro-habitats through felling and rotational coppicing. Wistow Wood is an area of ancient woodland that may be thousands of years old. In order to open areas up to promote the growth of new trees and woodland flora, several hectares of selected ash trees were felled this year. Wildlife is benefiting already. The silver washed fritillary butterfly feeds from flowers in sunny clearings, and lays its eggs on violets, and has now returned to the wood. It is hoped that early purple orchids will also benefit from increased light to the ground. A larger area than would normally be cleared in a wood this size has been removed, with particular attention to areas close to paths, because many of the ash trees are showing signs of ash die-back disease. The majority of remaining ash trees across the wood (and across our woodland sites) will continue to decline and die over the coming years. A challenge for the future.



Bluebell at Wistow Woods, Cambs

Rebecca Neal

Wild experiences to inspire

Our Paxton Pits Youth Rangers have grown in number, and in Peterborough we set up a new group thanks to a successful partnership, to enable practical tasks suitable for teenagers to be identified across the city. We also hosted a large number of successful school visits at Paxton Pits.

'As with every year the children had a fabulous day and were so focused. They grew from hesitant and closed learners to bold and inquisitive explorers in just a few short hours. You create such a safe place for them to learn.'

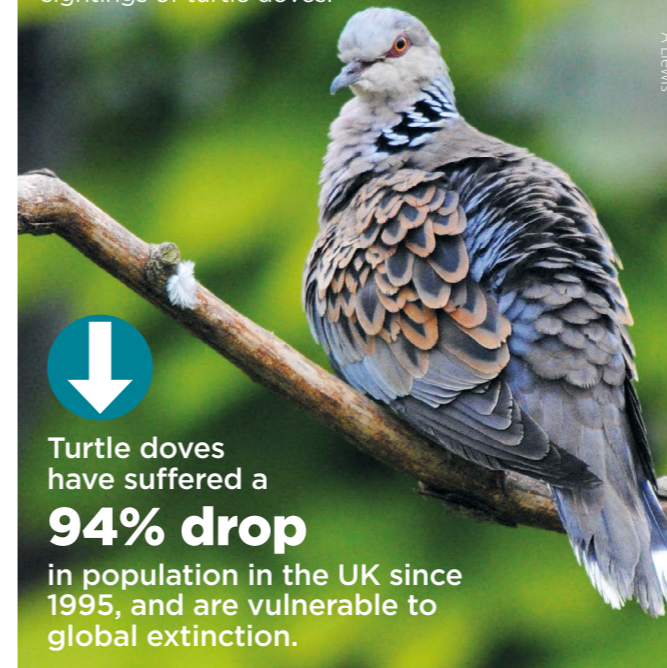
Health and wellbeing has been a big part of our outreach programme, with the introduction of mindfulness walks and sessions at Trumpington Meadows and the Great Fen and nature journaling at Paxton Pits. We have expanded our reach yet further in the Great Fen, running Nature Connections sessions for care homes and recovery groups, bringing the benefits of a connection to nature to those who find it difficult to get out and about.



Rebecca Neal

Conservation advice

At Trumpington Meadows, we have been working with Operation Turtle Dove to set up a corner of the reserve with low cover, bare patches, and arable weeds: farmland bird utopia! We invited ten local landowners for a talk, and showed them our turtle dove plot where we had rotavated a 5m by 30m foraging area and were providing regular food. The group took some of these ideas back to their own plots, and some members reported subsequent sightings of turtle doves.



A. Lewis



Turtle doves have suffered a **94% drop** in population in the UK since 1995, and are vulnerable to global extinction.

Monitoring and Research

Every year a dedicated team of volunteers support our Monitoring and Research staff, surveying dormice at Brampton Wood where 'the sleepy ones' were reintroduced in 1993. Volunteers have conducted annual surveys there ever since. At other sites, volunteers have also been trialling a new technique to check for dormouse presence using footprint tunnels.

In October 2019, Ellie Bladon, a PhD candidate from the University of Cambridge, won the People and Nature category at the Back from the Brink/Wildscreen Awards with her film 'Dormice: Conserving Brampton's Indicator'. Her film features the staff and volunteers who support the habitat management and survey work required to keep this endangered animal thriving.



Stuart Esom



450 dormouse boxes in and around Brampton Wood checked every month from May to October

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HIGHLIGHTS

Nature reserves management

Summer Leys nature reserve received a facelift this year. Over the winter, major scrub clearance was undertaken in front of the viewing screen to expand the grassland habitat, and new ditches were created with a rotary ditcher. Re-profiling of the shallow scrapes created perfect habitat for wading birds who voted with their wings and returned in March. Redshank, little ringed plover, oystercatcher and lapwing made the most of their upgraded summer home and chose the reserve to raise a family.

Great crested grebes at Felmersham Gravel Pits, Beds - a winning image from our annual photography competition



Simon Wantling

Conservation advice

Churchyards may be the only fragments of wildlife-rich grassland remaining locally that has not been ploughed or developed. As such, they can be an important refuge for the wildlife of these habitats, as well as a haven and stepping-stone for others moving or spreading through the landscape. We have run the Churchyard Conservation Awards scheme in Northamptonshire for many years to support communities to manage their churchyards with wildlife in mind. Churches receive an advisory visit to assess the potential of their site, and support to write a management plan. Volunteer judges assess their progress against set criteria for Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards. In 2019, we undertook five advisory visits, had five new entrants into the scheme and 35 people attend the annual forum. By early 2020, ten further churches had entered. The success of this project led us to launch the scheme in Cambridgeshire this year.



Lisa Rowley

Monitoring and Research

This year saw the completion of the WILDside Project, led by the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre which is hosted by the Trust. The project aimed to reinvigorate biological recording in Northamptonshire by encouraging new recorders, and upskilling those who already submit wildlife records. Over the course of the three-year project, WILDside generated over 12,000 records of over 2,500 species, and received records from more than 150 new recorders. The project focussed on key locations such as Local Wildlife Sites, and filled in gaps in locations where there were no previous records. The project leaves behind a legacy of a committed community of knowledgeable volunteers and a library of resources to support identification.



Mark Hamblin/2020 Vision



Your support has helped to designate 8 new Local Wildlife Sites in Northamptonshire

Wild experiences to inspire

From the Nene Wetlands Visitors Centre this year, we held our first ever overnight wildlife event, 'Climb, Camp, Canoe', which offered families a totally immersive wildlife experience in partnership with RockUp and Canoe2. Combining more traditional outdoor pursuits like climbing and canoeing with our exciting wildlife activities enabled us to reach a new audience.

"We have had an absolutely wonderful experience. Thank you! We loved the bat walk, learning about the kelly kettle and toasting marshmallows. Hopefully we'll be back next year! The staff were incredibly knowledgeable and made the activities so enjoyable. Thanks again."



Katie King



2,946 children engaged through our Nene Wetlands Visitors Centre

LIVING LANDSCAPES HIGHLIGHTS

Our nine Living Landscapes are areas where we are focussing on connecting habitat, to enable wildlife to move more freely across our region. Verges, hedgerows, field margins, rivers, streams and gardens all form part of a wider network incorporating and linking our nature reserves. Our projects in these locations often cross county borders and combine different aspects of our charitable work.



Cuckoos have been present in many parts of the Great Fen

Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

Focus on... the Great Fen

In 2019 work started on our ground breaking Water Works project, creating field scale trials (the first in the UK) of wet farming testing new crops for food, healthcare and industry as well as protecting peat soils, locking in carbon, cleaning water and supporting wildlife. A large part of the project is sharing our learning with farmers, growers and producers so that environmental and financial benefits can ripple out. Supported by the People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund, the project is also working to achieve UNESCO Biosphere status for the Cambridgeshire Fens; project partners Cambridgeshire ACRE launched a new website to engage the local community.

Elsewhere in the Great Fen wetland creation progresses well. Water levels at Rymes Reedbed, New Decoy and Old Decoy farms kept high well into the year despite dry weather and wildlife benefited. At Rymes Reedbed reed warblers are breeding in the expanding reedbed and lapwing in the more open areas. At Old Decoy, the higher water table is creating wet grassland - ideal habitat for overwintering waders and birds.

The wild flower meadows at Engine Farm are also showing great promise, with yellow rattle spreading and problem species coming under control. Turtle doves are doing well against a backdrop of severe national decline, and corn bunting have been recorded in a number of locations, breeding in the specially protected field margins. There have also been some very promising sightings of wheatear.



It was our Great Fen website's turn to get a revamp. Just over **50,000** people used the site to find out more about this ground-breaking restoration project.



Pages on our main website were viewed **100,000** more times than last year, going that bit further to inspire a love of wildlife.

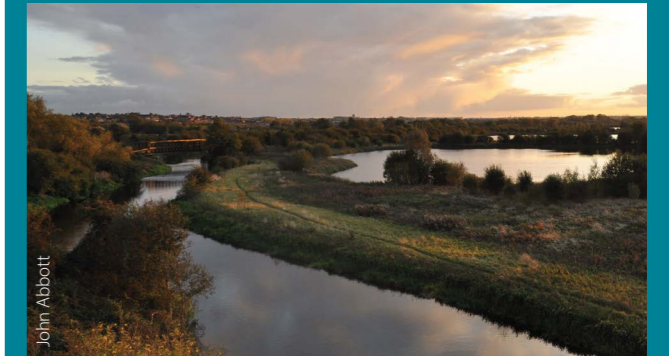


Wildlife Trust BCN

Greater Knapweed and oxeye daisy at Engine Farm

Other Living Landscapes Highlights

- **Nene Valley** - Studies across key locations in the Nene Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) have identified 28 potential projects to reduce recreational disturbance impacts on overwintering birds for which the area is designated.



John Abbott

- **Rockingham Forest** - We have worked with partners including the Back from the Brink project and funders on work at Old Sulehay to improve habitats for wildflowers and butterflies. The woodland rides have been widened, and new fencing has allowed additional areas to be grazed for the first time.



Wildlife Trust BCN

- **North Chilterns Chalk** - We have been involved in a partnership application for £2.8 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This Chalkscapes project would greatly enhance our ability to protect and improve wildlife habitats in the area and promote the creation of Nature Recovery Networks.



Robert Penderby

LIVING LANDSCAPES: MAKING CONNECTIONS

Water for Wildlife

We have three Water for Wildlife projects connected to our Ouse Valley, Nene Valley, and West Cambridgeshire Hundreds Living Landscapes. The projects aim to restore waterways for the benefit of people and nature, because healthy watercourses not only support more wildlife and act as connecting corridors, but also help reduce flooding, and improve water quality by intercepting nutrients and trapping sediment.

We work with landowners to carry out restoration projects in river catchments, and interventions include re-profiling riverbanks, removing invasive species, and fencing watercourses and installing cattle drinks to reduce erosion. We also monitor river wildlife as an indicator of the health of the river, by supporting volunteers to carry out invertebrate studies, and surveys on priority species such as water voles.



BBC's The One Show and Look East helped us highlight the difficulties faced by Cambridgeshire's chalk streams

Ouse Valley

- We supported volunteers to regularly monitor seven sites for invertebrates on the Great Ouse, Renhold Brook, and Ravenden Brook
- We recruited ten new Volunteer River Wardens to carry out further wildlife surveys on stretches of river

Nene Valley

- We welcomed a new member of staff to work in this region
- We trained 20 volunteers on how to survey for water vole, mink and otter, and they will be using their new skills at Summer Leys Nature Reserve, the Nene Wetlands, and Barnwell Country Park.

West Cambridgeshire Hundreds

- We completed survey work on Bourn Brook and now have improved information on water voles, and the presence of invasive non-native species such as Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed. We used this to identify areas for wetland enhancement.
- We led 24 work parties at Bourne Brook, significantly reducing the presence Himalayan balsam in the upper reaches of the river. This amounted to 473 hours of volunteer time!

River Cam

- We supported volunteers to regularly monitor invertebrates on eleven sites across the River Cam, contributed to a manifesto for the Cam produced through the Cam Valley Forum and secured media coverage to raise the profile of the challenges facing our chalk streams.
- Surveys contributed to our understanding of our local rivers. Data from The Rush at Sheep's Green in Cambridge showed the recovery of the food chain after a period of low flow takes longer than expected.



Your support has helped us discover a water vole population in Colmworth Brook, Beds

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE

Part of the Nenescape Landscape Partnership Scheme in our Nene Valley Living Landscape, our Farming for the Future project brings together partners from along the River Nene between Northampton and Peterborough to celebrate, protect and conserve the natural and built heritage of the landscape. Our project offers grants and support to landowners to encourage the restoration and creation of meadows and wetlands alongside the river. These habitats provide a haven for wildlife, connect the landscape, and help provide a buffer between the river and the land, by storing floodwater, and absorbing pollutants from farmland.

Highlights from this year:



We contracted the only **rotary ditcher** in the UK in August 2019 to create over **7km of shallow scrapes** and ditches ideal for wading birds, on **six different sites**, working with **seven landowners**



We ran **scything and hedge-laying** training courses, and meadow management workshops for the **general public** and **volunteers**



We awarded **15 grants** to farmers across the Nene Valley to restore meadow and wetland habitats, and improve water quality and public access



We supported delivery of **18 courses** on safe and environmentally-friendly pesticide use for landowners across the valley



We discovered a **new floodplain meadow** at Earls Barton



We supported two landowners to enter **Countryside Stewardship schemes**, ensuring land will be managed positively for the environment for years to come



Matt Johnson

CROSS-COUNTY CASE STUDIES

Grassland surveys

After five years of hard work, we have completed the first stage of an ambitious grassland project. The study involves vegetation surveys for 57 of our reserves that contain grassland habitat 'units', using a standard method to survey across the three counties. The team has now assessed the condition of the reserves, set targets specific to each location, and, with repeat visits done every four years, will use this information to monitor change over time in order to understand the impact of our management.

So far, 88% of the units surveyed have met at least six out of 10 of the targets for good condition (47% have met eight or more). Some of the units are near the beginning of grassland restoration management, so we expect even more targets to be met in future years.

Cowslips at Fulbourn Fen, Cambs

Highlights include:



Lancot Meadow, Sallowsprings, and Ox Meadow in Fulbourn Fen meeting all **10 targets** for good condition



finding good numbers of flowering **great pignut** at Barton Gravel Pits



recording **36** different positive indicator species at Shepreth L-Moor



a repeat survey at Mill Crook showing that **positive indicator species** have increased and more targets are being met than at the first survey

Training Workshops

Run by enthusiastic local naturalists and specialists in their field, our Wildlife Training Workshops enthuse and inform people about their local wildlife. We held 37 workshops with 434 places, with attendees made up of members of the public, professionals, volunteers and staff. Some go on to volunteer for us, others gain enough confidence to submit valuable wildlife records. Subjects range from wildflower identification, to more specialist areas like bat sonogram analysis.



"The role of a trainer for the Wildlife Trust is sheer fun for me, and, I hope, for the people in groups that I lead."

Owen Mountford, life-long naturalist and trainer for the Wildlife Training Workshops programme.

Orange-tip butterfly at Granta Park



Forest School

Forest School is a way of working with young people using nature, the outdoors, and practical activities to develop confidence, self-esteem and a sense of achievement.

Many of our Communities and Wildlife team are trained to deliver Forest School sessions, and over the past year, we have been expanding our programme. In Dunstable we trialled sessions with four and five-year olds in their school grounds, and we ran family sessions during the holidays in the Nene Wetlands Education Area. Ramsey Heights in the Great Fen is an ideal reserve for child-led adventures, and we worked with several local schools to bring some of their most vulnerable children on a Forest School programme.

Now, more than ever, our children need natural spaces to help relieve stress and improve mental and physical health, and we are well-placed to provide this. Sessions also benefit accompanying adults, who often look forward to them as much as the children.

"It was lovely to see the children relax and enjoy themselves...given the opportunity and freedom to stamp in puddles and climb trees." Teacher



Wildlife Gardening at Work Awards

Our Wildlife Gardening at Work Awards encourage and recognise companies and their employees who make a difference for wildlife. They celebrate wildlife gardening and the impact it has on nature.



Downing College, Cambridge won overall Best Garden for their impressive efforts and use of recycled materials for a wonderful bug hotel



Jesus College, Cambridge won Best Wildlife Sighting for their fabulous video of a water vole taken right in the city centre!



Granta Park sponsored their own category for Best Wildlife Sighting which went to Darren Bast for his lovely photo of an orange tip butterfly.



FINANCE

Total income: £6,765,990

£2,126,666

Donations, legacies and corporate sponsorship

We remember with gratitude our generous supporters from whom we received a gift in their Will during this year. These include: Hubert Bean, Jack Brown, Jacqueline Hawkins, Mary Jackson, Lilian Oakey and George Woods.

£1,422,768

Membership (and Gift Aid)

Our members and corporate members not only provide substantial unrestricted funds that can be used where the need is greatest, they also give strength to our voice when advocating and campaigning for wildlife.

£1,113,840

Grants

We are delighted to have seen a slight increase in the grants we were awarded to support our work this year. However, the number of grants available remain low and competition for these is high.

£573,954

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

Payments made by DEFRA for the environmental stewardship and management of land.

£908,092

Land advice, advocacy and management contracts

Income resulting from partnerships with land owners such as councils and property developers where an improvement for wildlife can be obtained.

£620,670

Business activities

Income from products and services we sell - including from our Rushden Lakes and online shop - land rents, and event fees charged and other activities helping to create a sustainable income.

Total expenditure: £5,232,334

£2,213,155

Nature reserve management

With over 100 nature reserves in our care, we continue to spend the majority of our income on maintaining and improving these precious habitats for wildlife.

£1,382,765

Conservation outside our reserves

Key to building strong Living Landscapes and to creating a Nature Recovery Network, this work encompasses our advocacy and advice for land managers, work on our waterways and partnership projects.

£1,091,530

Fundraising & Income Generation

Costs invested in generating financial support, including shop costs.

£544,884

Education and community engagement

Inspiring a love of nature is central to our mission. People will not protect what they do not love.



Celebrity Talks
We held our first two fundraising events with celebrities from the wildlife world, with **Gordon Buchanan, Iolo Williams and Martin Hughes-Games** giving two sold-out events to enthusiastic audiences.

Alistair Grant/Bokah Photographic

SUPPORTERS

We are proud to have financial and in-kind support from such a wide range of individuals and organisations in our community. These include our 34,000+ individual, family and Wildlife Watch members, and many local businesses and grant-making organisations who are supporting us in our work to secure a Wilder Future. Thanks to all those that have supported us, including:

Amey, The Animal Experience, Aqdot, Ark House, Aveva Solutions, Blinds in Harmony, Buckles Solicitors, Cambridge Building Society, Cambridge Cheese Co, Cambridge Fencing, Cambridge Grandscapes Ltd, Cambridge Organics, Cambridge Rambling Club, Cambridge Safety, Cambridge Science Park, Canoe2, Carter Jonas, Charles River, ClickASkip DoraMouse, Elsworth Community Shop, Emmanuel College, Force36, Foxley Kingham, FujiFilm UK, Gap Group, Global Graphics, Granta Park, GreenAir Cars, GUR Sewing, HomeSense/TK Maxx, Howdens, Hydrock Consultants, InSync Creative, KM Packaging, M-Fire, Opticron, RPC Containers, Siemens, St Neots St Mary's Rotary Club, Taylor Wimpey, Trinity College, U&I, Vinci Construction Ltd, Vine House Farm, Waresley Garden Centre, Winvic, Wildlife Travel, The Willow Tree and 77

Funders

We are grateful to be supported by a large number of funders, trusts and grant-making organisations who have given money for a wide range of projects in the past year.

Amey Community Fund, Anson Charitable Trust, Augean Community Fund, Barbara Price Charitable Trust, Benham Charitable Settlement, Biffa Award, Cambridge Water Company, Central Bedfordshire Council, Constance Travis Charitable Trust, Douglas Compton James Charitable Trust, Dovehouse Trust, FCC Communities Fund, Ginpat Charitable Trust, IBC Employees Charity Fund, Mick George Community Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Northwick Trust, Postcode Dream Trust, Robin & Henrietta Woods Charitable Trust, Robert Kiln Charitable Trust, Spear Charitable Trust, Wadlow Wind Farm Community Fund, William Haddon Charitable Trust

Corporate Members

Corporate Partners

- Arm Ltd
- The Biodiversity Consultancy
- Prologis UK Ltd

Corporate Investors

Anglian Water Services Ltd, Arqiva Ltd, Colpac Ltd, Gardenworks Tree Surgery, The Gonville Hotel, Hewitsons, Levin Sources, Orton Hall Hotel and Spa, Scott Bader, Scudamore's Punting Company, Tata Consultancy Services, UK Power Networks, Unilever Research Colworth, Vauxhall Motors Ltd, ZEISS UK

Corporate Supporters

Alpro Soya, Athene Communications, Cambridge Econometrics Ltd, Cambridge Steiner School, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Water Company, Campkins Cameras, Cemex, Center Parcs Woburn Forest, Centrica (Peterborough Power Station), Ciconi Ltd, Cranfield University, Dojima Sake Brewery, Downing College Cambridge, Enchanted Cinema, Granta Park, Greens of Soham Ltd, Highgate House, Holidaycottages.co.uk, Hunts Wildlife Landscapes, Jesus College Cambridge, The Jordans & Ryvita Company Ltd, Lockhart Garratt Ltd, The Marshall Group of Companies, NFU Mutual Cambridge, PalmerSport, Perkins Engines Co Ltd, Richard Buxton Environmental & Public Law, RPS Group, Rutland Cycling, RWE Generation UK, South Cambs District Council, Spendlove Contracting, Tarmac, University of Northampton, Wellcome Genome Campus, Wesley Coe, Whittlebury Park, Willowbrook Construction



HIGHLIGHTS IN NUMBERS



2,763
new members
supporting our work



92
new records of swift
nesting sites from our
citizen science survey



75,000
Total number of
volunteer hours across
the organisation



**1 blue underwing
moth** (*Clifden nonpareil*)
found at Pitsford Water and
12 others across Northants.



50 years
taking care of
Pitsford Water



£9,000
income from our bat safari
punts run in partnership
with Scudamore's Punting
Company in Cambridge



A record **22**
grasshopper
warbler territories
on the Great Fen



A record **432**
man orchids in and
around Totternhoe
Nature Reserve



Juvenile red kite, Northants

Thank you



Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

www.wildlifebcn.org

Company Registration No 2534145 (England and Wales)
Registered Charity No. 1000412