The RSPB year
2005-2006
Highlights of last year

We encourage you to read these highlights if you want to know more about what the RSPB does and why, and how it is funded and supported. You may also wish to help our efforts to conserve wild birds and the places where they live: there are many ways in which you can do this. The continuing support of our members is the cornerstone of our work.

Van Jones
Chairman of Council

Graham Wynne
RSPB Chief Executive

Nature reserves consolidated
Aim: to increase the pace of acquiring and managing priority habitats.
Outcome: seven new nature reserves were acquired and some existing sites were extended to improve their effectiveness, after fewer opportunities in recent years. We acquired 2,023 ha, taking our total to 131,327 ha, across more than 190 reserves.

More sites in good condition
Aim: to improve the quality of special habitats on our nature reserves.
Outcome: we improved the status of designated sites on reserves. On English reserves, 82% of land of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) now meets the Government’s target. In Scotland, of 40 SSSI sites, 32% are now in favourable condition or recovering towards it. These percentages are ahead of national averages.

Rare birds recovering
Aim: to improve the fortunes of the UK’s threatened and vulnerable birds, such as the bittern and red kite.
Outcome: threatened species are recovering thanks to RSPB projects and the efforts of landowners. Stone-curlews, corncrakes, cirl buntings and red kites all increased. On our reserves, birds such as the lapwing did well despite declines elsewhere. Of 28 priority species with recovery targets set in 2002, we helped 24 to reach an improved status.

Helping farmland birds
Aim: to continue to help to reverse the dramatic declines in farmland birds such as skylarks.
Outcome: work at Hope Farm in Cambridgeshire continued to show how farmers can farm profitably while helping birds to thrive. We influenced the new English Environmental Stewardship Scheme, and helped increase the uptake of agri-environment schemes across the UK. We offered an extensive range of free advice and assist farmers in gaining access to such schemes.

More trading operations
Aim: to give supporters a better service and to generate more resources for conservation.
Outcome: setting up our trading operation was a highlight of the year and income for conservation activities strengthened across RSPB shops, mail order and retail outlets.

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How is the RSPB run?
The RSPB is governed by a Council of individuals elected for their expertise relevant to running a wildlife conservation charity.

The Council sets policy and is responsible for the conduct of the RSPB’s affairs and for ensuring that we operate in accordance with our constitution and the law.

The Council is answerable to the Charity Commission, which ensures that the RSPB uses its funds wisely.

Day-to-day management of the RSPB is delegated to a Management Board headed by a Chief Executive, who reports to the Chairman of Council.

For more information on the RSPB’s strategy, history, governance and membership, visit www.rspb.org.uk/about
Saving special places as nature reserves

Our nature reserves protect spectacular pieces of countryside for wildlife and people – for ever. They provide a wonderful opportunity for everyone to enjoy the benefits of being out in the natural world. Many host education visits for thousands of schoolchildren and help to boost tourism income for local communities.

We manage more than 190 nature reserves. Saving and improving the best wildlife sites as nature reserves is more important than ever in the face of intense pressures on the countryside. New nature reserves and extensions, costing £7 million, added 2,023 hectares to our reserves. This made up for fewer land acquisition opportunities in recent years.

In the past some habitats have been drastically altered or damaged by neglect, but not destroyed beyond repair. We have been able to step in and restore impressive areas of heathland (by removing planted conifers or bushes and trees), wetlands (reversing the tendencies for them to dry out), and the peatlands of northern Scotland on our Forsinard reserve (which had been extensively drained and planted with trees).

Working to restore chalk grassland has long been an RSPB ambition, and a chance arose in the shape of Manor Farm in Wiltshire. The Heritage Lottery Fund agreed a grant in record time and a membership appeal was marvellously supported. This will become a stunning place for stone-curlies and a wealth of downland wildlife.

‘Manor Farm is already great for wildlife and it will become so much better. Every week something new turns up. Stone-curlews are already nesting again. It is great to see all this going on – exciting times.’

Jane Brookhouse, Reserves Manager

Left: our nature reserves, such as Ramsey, Pembrokeshire, are rich in wildlife and often beautiful places.

‘The only bird you might expect that is missing is the tree sparrow. There are 40 pairs of skylarks, as well as corn buntings, whitethroats and lesser whitethroats, linnets and yellowhammers. Butterflies include marbled whites, small blues and dark green fritillaries and there are several species of orchids,’ says Jane Brookhouse, RSPB Reserves Manager.

Land added to The Lodge reserve, around our UK headquarters in Bedfordshire, allowed us to begin clearing large areas of dense conifers. This area is being returned to the wonderful heathland that used to be so widespread on the Cambridgeshire–Bedfordshire border. Almost all of it was ploughed or planted with conifers long ago. The open spaces will attract heathland birds and the work has already opened up panoramas not seen for decades.

At Wood of Cree, Dumfries and Galloway, one of the RSPB’s most beautiful reserves, we acquired 380 hectares of farmland between two stands of woodland, one on and one off the reserve, so that we create a continuous chain of high quality wildlife habitat, particularly for woodland birds.

A new reserve at Troup Head, Aberdeenshire, Scotland’s only mainland gannetry, has 150,000 breeding seabirds. We will develop suitable visitor facilities so that people can enjoy the spectacle, without compromising the wildness of the place.

For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk/reserves
Saving threatened birds

Many species we have been most concerned about are now increasing in numbers, in part thanks to our efforts. The stone-curlew, after a long decline, has recovered to more than 300 breeding pairs. Working closely with farmers and landowners, we helped the UK to hit its Biodiversity Action Plan target for this bird five years early. Black grouse declines can be stopped, as a small recovery in Wales shows, but more hard work by many people and organisations is needed to save them.

After a long-term, massive decline, in 2005 more than 1,100 corncrakes called in Scotland, compared with 470 in 1993. Their numbers have increased in response to conservation efforts and crofters’ and landowners’ co-operation, but there has, as yet, been no expansion of range. Nightjars have increased by more than a third since 1992, due to restoration of heaths, including our long-running projects in Dorset and Devon, and sensitive forestry management.

After annual increases since 1997 came a modest reversal to 46 male bitterns at 28 sites in 2005, although recovery remains on track and the number on our reserves increased from 16 to 17 (with 10 at Minmere, Suffolk). Progress is good, but there is more to do. Another recorded bird, the marsh harrier, has reached a 200-year high point of 360 nesting females, after being reduced to just one pair, nesting at Minmere nature reserve in the 1970s.

A black grouse survey revealed mixed fortunes. In Wales, the small population has increased, and in England the decline has stopped, but Scottish black grouse are in serious decline. We are doing a great deal of work, from research to practical partnership projects, to try to give this marvellous bird a boost.

The red kite reintroduction project has been spectacularly successful. We are putting wonderful birds back into places that have not seen them for a century or more. We are finding the time and the money to do this. Many species are still in decline, for example corncrakes.

Finding ways to help declining farmland wildlife is a tough proposition. It requires good science, good advocacy and tenacity to influence agriculture policy, and well-informed advice to help farmers who want to improve conditions for wildlife.

Studies of yellow wagtails, twites, corn buntings and spotted flycatchers are yielding crucial information to aid their recovery (they have all declined dramatically across the UK).

We were behind a good agri-environment scheme in Scotland to help corn buntings. The demise of this small bird, its repetitive song a symbol of summer in the countryside, seems set to replicate the decline and shrinkage of the range of the corncrake.

For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk. See The State of the UK’s Birds 2006 and the annual Conservation Review to the RSPB available from the RSPB UK Headquarters.
Why do bird numbers change?

While some wild species are increasing, others are in decline. Turning downward trends around depends on understanding the reasons behind them. RSPB research aims to identify problems and steer practical action.

Our research covers a wide range, with attention recently turning to the declines of woodland birds. We are working hard to find out why this is happening. It seems that those species that migrate to Africa in winter do less well, on the whole, than those that do not. It is, however, not so simple, as many year-round residents, such as the hawfinch, lesser spotted woodpecker and marsh tit, are also shrinking in numbers and range.

Farmland wildlife has been declining in the face of intensive farming for decades. Tree sparrows, having declined by 95% from 1970–1998, have become symbolic of this. Thanks in part to our work, numbers have started to recover over the last 10 years. Being able to find enough food is vital: enough seeds to see them through the winter and plenty of invertebrates to feed their chicks in the spring and summer.

Backed by our research, we have been pushing for government schemes for farmers to help tree sparrows and other farmland birds, many of which face similar problems. Farmers now have choices to help provide food for farmland birds year-round.

Birds such as tree sparrows, and more restricted species as varied as corncrakes and cirl buntings, do well when helped by well-designed agri-environment schemes. We have the means to help these birds; we just need to make sure that they are available and attractive to farmers.

Our researchers studied subjects as varied as dung insects (important food for insect-eating birds such as swallows) in relation to veterinary treatment of cattle; the effectiveness of bells and other devices on collars in reducing predation by cats and lead poisoning in birds of prey.

We are co-operating with BirdLife International Partners on many birds and habitats elsewhere in the world. We are finding ways to save a range of species from the Azores bullfinch to Asian vultures, and from sociable lapwings in Kazakhstan to Gurney’s pittas in South-east Asia.

We have examined the impact of forest fragmentation on threatened species in West Africa, the bird communities of oil palm and rubber plantations in Thailand (especially compared with those of undamaged rainforest) and the populations of spotted eagles in Belarus.

Guy Anderson, RSPB research scientist

‘Recent increases in tree sparrows are probably due to conservation projects and the various agri-environment options that are now available to farmers, thanks in no small part to our research and determined lobbying.’

For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk

Conservation Science in the RSPB 2005 is available from Conservation Science at the RSPB UK Headquarters

Left: some long-distance migrants, such as the spotted flycatcher, are declining more than resident birds.
Preventing damage to precious places
We work, with considerable success, to ensure that sites rich in wildlife are not destroyed by development. We negotiate so that damage is avoided, whenever possible. We oppose destructive proposals robustly, where necessary.

The RSPB seeks to influence developers and decision makers to protect and enhance biodiversity and to create sustainable development. We support renewable energy, so long as it does not damage wildlife. Some developers, however, continue to promote highly damaging schemes within protected areas. Proposals for a wind farm on Lewis in the Western Isles involve more than 100 turbines over a vast area, which would cause massive damage to protected peatland habitats and threatened birds such as divers and eagles. In many cases we are able to work constructively with developers. Between 2000 and 2005, the RSPB objected to only 84 wind farm proposals, 9% of the 933 windfarm cases that we dealt with. The lack of strategic planning to ensure wind farms are not proposed near sensitive areas remains a key issue, but progress has been made in Wales and the Highlands.

The Government gave an amber light for a port on the Thames, requiring a habitat compensation package. We argued that this, plus expansion at Felixstowe, would satisfy the national need for container port capacity and do least harm to wildlife. Nevertheless, the Government approved a further port at Bartlett Bay in Essex within the Scarbourough Estuary SSSI and Special Protection Area, for which we agreed a habitat compensation package. A recent government consultation on ports policy finally accepted our argument for a strategic assessment of national port capacity.

The Government is undertaking a limited review of options to dual the A303 at Stonehenge, as rising costs have cast doubt on a tunnel option, recommended at a public inquiry, to be re-examined. Several options would damage both the wildlife and the archaeological heritage of the area. One suggested route goes straight through our Normanton Down reserve. The RSPB is urging the Government to approve the tunnel option, which we consider the least damaging available for biodiversity and the cultural heritage of the area.

Increasing numbers of houses being built next to heathland, particularly in the Thames Basin, pose a risk that increased recreational use will cause disturbance to birds such as nightjars and woodlarks. We are working with English Nature and local authorities to ensure that alternative areas for recreation relieve the dependence on heaths, so that housing needs can be met and people can continue to enjoy this special landscape and its birds.

‘We really can tackle climate change without putting wind farms in highly sensitive places, such as the Lewis peatlands, and destroying wonderful species and habitats. This shouldn’t be beyond us.’

Anne McCall, Head of Planning and Development in Scotland

For more on the RSPB’s actions to protect irreplaceable sites visit www.rspb.org.uk/countryside/sites Get involved in local issues: for a Planning for Wildlife leaflet e-mail wildlife@rspb.org.uk

Left: we are fighting threats to internationally important areas of the peatlands of Lewis, shown from the air.
Climate change is the biggest threat, to wildlife and people alike. We focused on the UK chairmanship of the G8 and presidency of the EU, as climate change topped their agendas. We attended the international Kyoto Protocol and Climate Change Convention and talks in Montreal, where negotiations began on emission reductions after 2012. We helped found the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, to increase public pressure on politicians for urgent action. Energy saving and efficiency are top priorities. Renewable technologies have a major role to play, but we are alarmed that some proposals for green power threaten to destroy environments that renewables are intended to help save. We published a report to show how Scotland can meet its future energy needs by developing renewables in a wildlife-friendly way.

In Northern Ireland, we campaigned successfully for a review of environmental governance. Scotland's new Nature Conservation Act contains many ideas championed by the RSPB and focuses on SSSI management, biodiversity plans and wildlife crime. Our response to the threat of avian flu helped guide the Government and counter media excesses. A silver lining was a temporary ban on the wild bird trade – we will strive to make the ban permanent.

We made strong recommendations to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), particularly regarding agriculture. Trade rules shape markets and affect farmers' livelihoods, the way they manage their land and the well-being and economic prospects of 1.3 billion people who depend on farming worldwide. The expansion and intensification of agriculture is a major threat to global biodiversity. After recent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to favour environmentally-aware farming, the EU budget settlement, negotiated by the UK, was a backward step. The environment of southern and eastern Europe, in particular, will suffer.

Most UK seabirds have reared few young in recent summers. Climate change, re-shaping ocean currents and the distribution of fish on which seabirds feed, and overfishing, are probably implicated. We influenced the Scottish Executive's offshore fisheries strategy, with a commitment to safeguard marine habitats and the biodiversity of our seas. The EU Fisheries Council ignored scientific advice on UK fish quotas, however; rejecting, for example, a ban on cod fishing. Ministers did agree to continue the closure of the North Sea sandeel fishery, good news for seabirds, which suffer from sandeel shortages as stocks remain far below safe levels.

For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk
For details of the report on Scotland's energy, see www.rspb.org.uk/energy/policy/renewables

Paul Jefferiss, Head of Environmental Policy
Working for birds around the world

Saving albatrosses from extinction will take years of effort, but we now have people on vessels in the Southern Oceans helping fishermen to avoid killing albatrosses. Saving vultures in South Asia is another huge challenge we chose to take on with partner organisations. This work led the Prime Minister of India to announce a ban on the veterinary drug that kills vultures.

Albatross conservation continues to be a priority, as they are killed in horrifying numbers, day after day, caught and drowned on longline fishing hooks. A fundraising dinner, with Prince Charles and Dame Ellen MacArthur, highlighted the plight of the world’s albatrosses and allowed us to launch our Albatross Task Force, to work with fishermen to make longlining less lethal to birds.

The crucial conservation breeding programme to save Asian vultures from extinction was helped by an expansion of the Haryana centre, and new aviaries in Bengal. Once diclofenac is eliminated from the environment, captive-bred birds can safely be released to repopulate the region.

As our forest protection project gets underway in the Gola Forest, Sierra Leone, 50 people have been marking boundaries, enforcing legislation and surveying birds. The presence of elephants and pygmy hippos was confirmed.

‘Fantastic news: the Indian government has told drug companies to stop making diclofenac, which poisoned vultures, and instead sell a drug that we have helped prove is safe. This could be the turning point that saves the vultures.’

Chris Bowden, Vulture Programme Director

Visit www.vulturerescue.org

Read the Albatross Task Force diaries at: www.savethealbatross.net

Left: black-browed albatrosses are severely threatened by unnecessary mortality around fishing vessels.
Inspiring people

A record 480,000 people enjoyed Aren’t birds brilliant! events. Nesting ospreys in Gwynedd attracted more than 75,000 visits. In London, 32,000 visitors saw peregrines at Tate Modern in August. The BBC’s Springwatch brought white-tailed eagles and the RSPB’s work on Mull into the homes of millions of families, and helped illustrate the power of wildlife as a tourist attraction. Connecting people with nature helps build a passion for wildlife and support for conservation.

Some haven’t experienced anything like it. Even wet weather doesn’t dampen their enjoyment. A group of four year-olds on a pouring wet day didn’t mind a bit – fascinated by the colours and the sound of the rain!'

Malcolm Evans, Education Officer, Sandwell Valley

Our RSPB Wildlife Explorers membership for young people reached 155,000, catering for three age groups up to 16 years old. RSPB Phoenix membership is available to older teenagers: their conference sees 20 committed teenagers putting MPs and Ministers – including the Chancellor – on the spot about climate change.

Our reserves that welcome children on educational visits, such as Bye Meads in Worthingshire, Loshawhead in Renfrewshire and Conwy in North Wales, are hugely successful. Teaching on reserves continues to grow, against the UK trend, testifying to the quality of the experience: it was rated excellent or very good by 95% of visiting teachers, who accompanied 81,000 children, up by 20%. RSPB teachers visited thousands of children in schools.

Sandwell Valley, West Midlands, is an example of a reserve widely used by local communities and schools. More unusual courses on offer include a poetry day linked to literacy for primary children, and a science revision day for Year 8 children. Even recycling is not neglected. Children are encouraged to sort the rubbish from their packed lunches and recycle it.

For many children, ‘the Sandwell experience’ continues during school holidays. Financed by the local council, our field teachers run popular holiday

clubs for 5-7 and 8-11 year olds and, by special request, a more challenging club for 12-16s. Sandwell’s staff work imaginatively to involve the community. Groups that meet at the reserve include a parent and toddler group called Baby Birds, an over-50s group and RSPB Phoenix Explorers. Site manager Lee Coppolecstone speaks of his drive to encourage an ever-wider spectrum of the population to visit and learn from this wonderful green nature reserve, so close to the M5 and M6 and to Birmingham.

Away from our nature reserves, Aren’t birds brilliant! events went from strength to strength, attracting thousands of people to enjoy birds, from remote countryside sites and coastal cliffs to unexpectedly urban locations. Excellent working relationships with partners ensure the success of many schemes. Five Aren’t Welsh Birds Brilliant! schemes welcomed 113,000 visitors. Symondb Yat Rock, Herefordshire, is a long-running public viewpoint with RSPB staff and volunteers on hand. Here, 42,000 people enjoyed seeing Peregrines. At Rivington Forest, Northamptonshire, a camera relayed pictures of nesting kites to a public viewpoint.

To find out more about seeing birds near you, visit www.rspb.org.uk/brilliant

Left: encouraging people, especially children, to enjoy wildlife is vitally important.
Focus on Scotland

Scotland has many of the UK’s most exciting birds and wildlife places, which attract increasing numbers of people. Yet here we also face some of the UK’s greatest conservation challenges. The RSPB is working with others to protect and restore species and habitats, some of which are in serious decline. This work conserves and enriches Scotland’s assets for the future, while creating new opportunities for thousands of people to enjoy our spectacular wildlife today.

Farmers and crofters using corncrake-friendly techniques helped create a record year for corncrakes in Scotland – Coll enjoyed an 18% increase. Some older residents say the night-time rauc of this corncrake is almost matching childhood memories.

At least 75 pairs of red kites bred in 2005, including 12 in Dumfries and Galloway, where the Kite Trail has helped build support for the birds. Sadly, in the Black Isle, kites suffer poor survival and the population struggles to expand. In 2005, four young birds were killed and five went missing.

Our work to stem the capercaillie’s decline continues. While a survey of 75 capercaillie display sites found fewer males, more hens were seen than at any time in the last decade. Sadly, few chicks survived the wet June. We are working hard, too, to solve the problems faced by black grouse. Change is needed at a landscape scale if we are to reverse a 20% decline in 10 years in Scotland. We are collaborating closely with Forestry Commission Scotland and other landowners on this.

We are working harder to understand the impacts of climate change on birds, to help us adapt without losing familiar wildlife. Ring ouzels are declining fast, and changing climate patterns may partly be responsible, both in the UK and in North Africa.

‘From the crofter who stooks oats to help corn buntings, to the volunteer who explains the habits of ospreys to enthralled visitors, we depend on the support and enthusiasm of many people in our conservation work.’
Stuart Housden, Director, Scotland
Our work to protect Scotland’s wildlife sites includes monitoring and, when necessary, opposing development proposals. Wind farm proposals create a huge workload, as we offer guidance to developers to minimise impacts on wildlife. Overhauling this came the proposal for a huge wind farm on a designated site on Lewis, home to iconic species such as eagles and divers, and to breeding dunlins and golden plovers.

A strategy for the Flows of Caithness and Sutherland, developed with local people, farmers, crofters and other landowners, economic and community groups, aims to bring local benefits without damaging the peatland. We were deeply involved with developing the strategy and have already removed 1,800 ha of planted conifers in 10 years, restoring vast areas of precious habitats.

More than 11,500 children in Scotland enjoyed learning about nature with us, many benefiting from specialist field-teaching on our nature reserves. We also helped EcoSchools, which involves some 80% of Scotland’s schools, to develop a biodiversity learning module.

With Glasgow City Council, we installed displays in Glasgow, encouraging people to pause and look at wildlife around them. We reached 100,000 people through talks, events and activities, from projecting wildlife films on a city centre plasma screen to activities on our nature reserves. Many local people took advantage of our guided walks on Lewis, and we have extended these to the Uists. We do a huge range of work, from the practical such as new bird hides to the educational such as guided tours for schools and adults, all aimed at promoting Scotland’s wildlife.

‘Mull is the UK’s wildlife watching capital. White-tailed eagles are important to us. They are doing so well only thanks to local volunteers, the police, the farmers and land managers who all do so much to help.’

David Sexton, Mull Officer
Focus on Northern Ireland

In 2006, we celebrated 40 years of the RSPB in Northern Ireland, with a gala fundraising dinner and our 40th anniversary environment awards. Conservation work continued apace, amidst some major changes to the system of government in Northern Ireland. These, including a wide-ranging examination of wildlife and habitat protection, will affect our work in many ways.

When a review of environmental governance was announced, we called for an independent environment protection agency to be established. The public administration system in Northern Ireland is being streamlined, reducing the number of local councils from 26 to seven and handing some planning responsibility to them. We have been closely involved with these reviews, which have far-reaching implications for conservation.

We responded to a rural development plan consultation and to proposed new charity legislation. We were closely involved in creating Northern Ireland’s first sustainable development strategy. Our campaign to ensure the designation of nationally important sites as Areas of Special Scientific Interest – ASSIs – progressed as far, with just 202 of more than 400 qualifying sites designated. We brought together politicians, statutory agencies and schools in a unique event at Stormont to draw attention to the problem.

Our education work continued to develop and our partnership with the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has seen nearly 6,000 school children enjoying RSPB-led field-teaching sessions throughout the year.

We launched our vision for agriculture, A Living Countryside, which advocates profitable wildlife-friendly farming through the provision of public funds for biodiversity, clean water and clean air. Recovery projects were developed for breeding wading birds, especially lapwings, and for seed-eating farmyard birds, especially yellowhammers. A key species is the hen harrier, with nearly 60 breeding pairs. We are researching their lifestyles and requirements, co-operating with Quercus, at Queens University.

Our Rathlin Island nature reserve was extended by 23 ha (58 acres). This means that we can do an even better job for corncrakes in the future. At Castliford and Larne Loughs, we installed roseate tern nestboxes. Portmore Lough now has good breeding habitat: six nesting pairs were a first there.

Our members and volunteers are, as always, vital to our work, with an invaluable contribution by more than 160 volunteers and eight local groups. Nearly 130 members attended our annual members’ day in November and the Big Garden Birdwatch saw a 60% rise in the number of participants, to 6,200.

For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk/nireland

Our nature reserves are more important than ever as birds such as lapwings, snipe and curlews continue to decline in the countryside. Our reserves are home to nearly half of Northern Ireland’s breeding redshanks.”

Gregory Woulahan, Reserves Manager
Focus on Wales

Wales has breathtaking landscapes and evocative birds. Much of our effort was directed at the 27 species of highest conservation concern in Wales, including the hen harrier. Some, such as the black grouse, show what can be done when circumstances are right and partner organisations work closely together. Our work continues to attract essential support from members, dedicated staff and volunteers and from external funders and partners listed at the end of this Review.

Lapwings continued to decline across Wales but, at our Ynys-hir reserve, a healthy 81 pairs nested on areas managed specially for them. Black grouse are doing better in Wales than elsewhere in the UK, with a 30% increase since 1996-98, but even here their range has contracted.

At Lake Vyrnwy, five pairs of hen harriers, the most persecuted bird in the UK, raised 13 young, a record for the reserve. A partnership project to save the turtle dove as a breeding species in Wales recorded four singing males, in Monmouthshire, a faint glimmer of hope.

Arctic terns on The Skerries nature reserve off Anglesey reached a record 2,500 breeding pairs, excellent news for a species that has declined historically, and against a backdrop of seabird declines across the north of the UK.

Our Aren’t birds brilliant! schemes attracted a record number of visitors to see black grouse, red kites, peregrines, honey buzzards and the only nesting pair of ospreys in Wales, which reared two young in the Gwaen y Mynach valley. Our mobile cinema took wildlife spectacles to more than 25,000 people at shows and events across the country. More requests for radio and television interviews than ever gave more than 100 opportunities to see and hear about a broad spectrum of our work. In 2006, 25,000 people took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch, a record for Wales, counting 481,540 birds. House sparrows remained number one, despite declines in much of the UK.

After more than five years’ hard work, £3.2 million was secured for an education and visitor centre at Newport Wetlands. In north Wales, with the help of more than £113,000 of grant aid, we upgraded the visitor centre and teaching facilities at our Conwy nature reserve.

Sharing good practice with European neighbours, the RSPB hosted a four-day conference in Cardiff with BirdLife International colleagues from 13 countries. Delegates learned how European Union funding has helped conservation projects in Wales, including Aren’t Welsh Birds Brilliant! They visited the Newport Wetlands and attended an event at the new Assembly building, hosted by Sandy Mewies AM, Chair of the European External Affairs Committee, and Carwyn Jones AM, Minister for Environment Planning and Countryside.

Following several years of bilingual publications, the RSPB’s Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board. This represents a long-term commitment by the RSPB towards producing all of its communications bilingually in Wales.

‘Our new, detailed handbook shows how organic farming at our Lake Vyrnwy reserve can produce top quality beef and lamb, while helping birds of the farm to recover their numbers.’

Richard Farmer, Reserves Manager

Left: a record number of hen harrier chicks at Lake Vyrnwy is good news for a persecuted bird.
Volunteers make their mark in Wales

Volunteers in Wales contributed more than 34,000 hours of time – an increase of more than 6,000 hours over the past year. They performed everything from office-based tasks and letter-writing, to practical work on reserves and showing people birds at aren’t birds brilliant sites.

Community fundraising volunteers helped to raise a spectacular £63,000 through local collections and pin badge sales. Voluntary work is extremely valuable to the RSPB, in terms of the number of jobs completed, many of which we could not otherwise contemplate, but also financially.

For more information visit [www.rspb.org.uk/wales](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wales)

For more about organic farming at Lake Vyrnwy, go to [www.rspb.org.uk/wales/action/organic](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wales/action/organic)

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Golwg ar Gymru

Yng Nghymru mae tirluniau bendigedig ac adar rhagorol. Canolbwynt llawer o’r ymdechliwm oedd y 27 rhwygoedd o adar sy’n perffur tryder mwyafo o ran cadwraeth yng Nghymru, yn cynnwys y boda tinwyn.

Dengys aciosition fel yr ymdrech ar ran y rubig ddod modd cyfarnodi llawer pan fo’r angyliciadau yn laven a phan fo cyrff yn cydwethio’n agos mewn partneriaeth. Mae ein gwraith yn parhau i ddenu cefnogaeth hanfodol ein haelodau, staff a gwirfoddlyddion yr ymgyrcholyn yng Nghymru.

Parhodd y gornchiwmion i brenhau lledded Cymru o’r anghawddo yn Ynafa hir, mywyddodd 81 pâr ar lefnwedd o dir a reoli am eu cyfrebyddo, ac addysgu eu hollwedd y DU o ganlyniad i ddiogelwi, i fagu 13 o gwyllt, y nifer o gilydd o dir o’r DU, gyda chomh thos o 30% o’r erioed i 1995-96, ond hwyd yr oed yr ymhyr a gwyddonol y cyfleu o waith osod i eu amgylchynu.

Ar lannau Llyn Efyrnwy, swyddodd pum pâr o fodydd o’r DU o ganlyniad i ddiogelwi, i fag y 13 o gwyllt, y nifer o gilydd o dir o’r DU, gyda chomh thos o 30% o’r erioed i 1995-96, ond hwyd yr oed yr ymhyr a gwyddonol y cyfleu o waith osod i eu amgylchynu.

For more information visit [www.rspb.org.uk/wales](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wales)

For more about organic farming at Lake Vyrnwy, go to [www.rspb.org.uk/wales/action/organic](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wales/action/organic)
Chwili:
Ffynnodd y gornychlen ar warchodfeydd yr RSPB ond nid yn y cefn gwlad oddi allan iddynt.

31
Am ragor o wybodaeth, ewch i www.rspb.org.uk/wales
Am ragor o wybodaeth ar ffermio organig yn Llyn Efyrnwy, ewch i www.rspb.org.uk/wales/action/organic

Dengys ein llawlyfr newydd a manwl sut all ffermio organig ar ein gwarchodfa ar lan Llyn Efyrnwy gynhyrchu cig eidiona chig oen o’r ansawdd gorau, tra’n helpu adar y fferm i adfer eu niferroedd.’
Richard Farmer, Rheolwr Gwarchodfeydd

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Richard Farmer, Rheolwr Gwarchodfeydd

Gwirfoddolwyr yn gadael eu höl ar Gymru
Cyfrenodd gwirfoddolwyr yng Nghymru hefyd na 34,000 ac amser – cynnydd o hefyd na 8,000 ac
o drwy y Rheod o Rheolwyr. Bo’r gwirfoddolwyr yng
wynebodd am bethau ym atyn y amryviaid o
orchwylion mein weodydd da ac ygrimpheu llwythru i
swadl ymarferol ar warchodfeydd a disgwyliad ei tho
bod ar safleoedd Tywll Adda gan y wych!

Gyd y chwylall, gwirfoddolwyr codi ar un
Cymunedol Illywbydd i gaegrwr o emr anhygoel o
£3,000 drwy grwyf wsau gwlaethau lleol a thrawy
wethu bethod celf a oedd eu rhwydwaith hyd o’r
RSPB a ran y nod o
orschwylion y mae’n bosib ei eu cyfleu ond
dweud ni fydd efall ddi galu iawn o’r lleol eu llenwi o’r
rhain ar wasg, heb aôn am eu hawennu.

Am ragor o wybodaeth, ewch i www.rspb.org.uk/wales
Am ragor o wybodaeth ar ffermio organig yn Llyn Efyrnwy, ewch i www.rspb.org.uk/wales/action/organic

Cymaddebwyr a sut naeth arian gan yr Undeb
Eurpeaidd wedi helpu prysur eu casglu o’r
Nghymanu, yn cynnwys Adar Campus Gwarchodfeydd yng
Cymru, Trefnydd ym Meibion a Gwarchodfeydd ym
Gymru, a chynhyrchu boblogaeth adnabyddiad ym
achlysur ym Mhawdd yr Undeb Ewropeaidd.

Yn aml, fyddai eu hunan mor llawfufydd o’r
Cymru, a chynhyrchu boblogaeth adnabyddiad ym
achlysur ym Mhawdd yr Undeb Ewropeaidd yng
Cymru, a chynhyrchu boblogaeth adnabyddiad ym
achlysur ym Mhawdd yr Undeb Ewropeaidd.

Yn aml, fyddai eu hunan mor llawfufydd o’r
Cymru, a chynhyrchu boblogaeth adnabyddiad ym
achlysur ym Mhawdd yr Undeb Ewropeaidd.
The financial year
A summary of the financial highlights

For the RSPB, more income means more conservation work. We do not build up large financial reserves, and our conservation effort therefore depends on sustainable funding. We are extremely grateful for all the support from members and others that made our work possible during the year.

A doubling of expenditure is normally reported with some trepidation—but we are celebrating it. The RSPB spent £7 million on land for nature reserves last year, and more than £3 million on building facilities for visitors, field teaching and the host of other activities that form part of everyday life at an RSPB reserve.

The corresponding total in 2004–05 was £5 million. Acquisitions included both extensions to important existing reserves, such as Bradling Marshes, Isle of Wight and The Ledge, Bedfordshire, and brilliant new places, such as Manor Farm, Wiltshire.

Thinking big isn’t restricted to UK nature reserves. Plans to support Barung, our BirdLife International Partner in Indonesia, to protect a large tract of Sumatran rainforest, were well advanced by the end of the year. This visionary work is made possible by several organisations working together and the 2005–06 accounts include a significant part of the RSPB’s contribution.

But there is much more to the RSPB than these headline projects. Our work depends upon many people, on nature reserves and elsewhere, undertaking detailed analysis or seeking to persuade others to act in the interests of the environment. Projects large and small need paying for. As always, RSPB members provide the bulk of the income that enables us to embark on programmes with confidence. Most importantly, 90% of our one million members renew their subscriptions each year. And 75% (and rising) boost the value of their payments by allowing the RSPB to claim Gift Aid.

A glance at the ‘Incoming Resources’ in the financial report overleaf underlines the importance of membership subscriptions and legacies. But we particularly draw attention to a couple of captions below these. Gifts, commercial donations and trusts income grew by 27%, through support for projects and land purchases. General donations increased by 38%, mainly a result of increased fundraising in local communities, boosted considerably by the popularity of our pin badges.

Moving in the opposite direction, appeals income fell, following a good year in 2004–05. It would, however, be remiss not to mention the generous response from RSPB members to the Nature Trust, a charity established specifically to stimulate projects supported by the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. We were delighted by the response, which generated more than £260,000, including over £100,000 of Gift Aid. Combined with the contribution from landfill operators, this will enable conservation work to benefit by an impressive £3 million.

Another key development involves RSPB Trading. To improve our products and service in the growing bird care market, we have taken steps to manage this activity more closely. We achieved this in anticipation of generating increased funds for conservation.

Overall, cash and investments available for future activities fell by £8 million. This was largely budgeted for, in recognition of the land acquisition opportunities highlighted above. This leaves our free financial reserves at £12.6 million, representing eight weeks’ expenditure.

This year’s report includes our pension fund liability. Under previous guidelines, this information was included only as a note. We have previously drawn attention to a deficit amounting to approximately £1 million. A question at last October’s AGM reminded us that income should never be taken for granted. It was observed that we had ceased to highlight in our accounts the valuable contribution made every time someone uses an RSPB credit card. We are indebted to the questioner for giving us the opportunity to highlight the £458,000 income received last year from the Co-operative Bank.

This is an important source of income for us, but is just one of the many ways in which our members and supporters choose to support the RSPB.

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SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the year ended 31 March 2006

2006 £’000  2005 £’000

INCOMING RESOURCES

VOLUNTARY INCOME
Membership subscriptions 28,602  23,008
Grants, commercial donations & trusts 22,354  21,008
General donations & income from fees 3,681  2,147
Apologies 2,460  3,072
Local groups 365  365

TOTAL 56,402  49,432

ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE FUNDS
Mail order & shop income 18,534  16,607
Media advertising & events 1,902  1,929
Charitable capital expenditure 155  155
Commercial sponsorship 962  716

TOTAL 21,099  20,417

INVESTMENT INCOME AND INTEREST

Inland & Barnett income 1,156  1,245

TOTAL 1,156  1,245

ACTIVITIES TO FURTHER THE CHARITY'S OBJECTS

Costs & general expenses 1,085  1,086
Events & media sales 567  580

TOTAL 2,652  2,666

OTHER INCOME

Gifts given on disposal of fixed assets 120  186

TOTAL 120  186

TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES 58,281  52,484

RESOURCES EXPENDED

ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE FUNDS

Costs of generating voluntary income 8,769  9,140
Activities to generate funds including cost of goods 9,281  9,141
Rental expenses 73  75

TOTAL 18,433  17,156

NET RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE PURPOSES 40,848  35,328

CHARITABLE REVENUE EXPENDITURE

Conservation activities 28,728  22,081
Education, publications and films 18,352  16,516
Membership services and enquiries 3,817  3,298

TOTAL 50,897  41,895

GOVERNANCE COSTS

Net insolvency resources before loan/gains 5,569  2,046

Gains on investments 2,275  1,582

Actualised loan on defined benefit pension subs 5,158  5,130

TOTAL 2,275  1,582

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 58,872  48,809

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

as at 31 March 2006

2006 £’000  2005 £’000

CHARITABLE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 1,859  1,362

RESOURCES EXPENDED 58,872  48,809

DEFINING CHARITABLE CAPITAL 63,721  50,171

GAINS ON DISPOSALS OF FIXED ASSETS 3,687  1,616

CURRENT NET ASSETS 67,408  51,787

DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION SUBS 2,147  2,041

TOTAL NET ASSETS 69,555  55,828

APPLICATION OF NET FUNDS

for the year ended 31 March 2006

2006 £’000  2005 £’000

Net movement in funds brought forward 3,687  8,115

USE OF NET FUNDS

Voluntary capital expenditure 10,289  8,787
Other capital assets 1,744  965
Movement on stocks, debtors & creditors (including pension) 11,433  8,238
Movement in cash & investments available for future activities 8,168  3,658
Cash & Investments available at start of period 29,721  29,365
Total cash & investments available for future activities 27,674  25,721

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

as at 31 March 2006

2006 £’000  2005 £’000

CASUAL & INVESTMENTS AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES 6,769  6,250

Net resources available for charitable purposes 4,030  3,549
Reserves 2,983  2,640
Vacant land & buildings 6,000  668

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

as at 31 March 2006

2006 £’000  2005 £’000

EARNED NET ASSETS 16,890  15,621

Net assets 85,856  79,959


dated 5 July 2006

Dear Sirs,

We have audited the summarised financial statements of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds for the year ended 31 March 2006. Our audit included examining, on a risk based approach, evidence obtained from inspection, revaluation of accounts, and testing features of the accounting records. It included assessing the significant judgements made by the Trustees in the application of the accounting policies, and evaluating the overall adequacy of the summarised financial statements. We believe that our audit provides a basis for you to form a judgement on the summarised financial statements.

In our opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Trustees’ Annual Report of the RSPB for the year ended 31 March 2006.

We conducted our work having regard to Bulletin 1999/6, the Charities Act 2006 and the Charities Commission’s Guidance Notes.

Deloitte & Touche LLP
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
1 Little New Street, London EC4A 3TR

24 July 2006

The opinions expressed in this Report are those of the Trustees and are not to be regarded as the opinions of the Charities Commission.
**Acknowledgements**

**Charitable trusts and individual donors**

We are grateful for the support received from charitable trusts and individual donors, whose generosity has made possible so much of the RSPB’s work. The following list is by no means exhaustive and cannot claim to include all the organisations, foundations and individuals who have been generous to the RSPB. It is intended as a way of expressing our gratitude for their contributions.

- **Business supporters**
  - The RSPB enjoys business partnerships with many organisations. We are pleased to acknowledge our business supporters and thank them for their support.
  - We have also received support from a variety of other organisations.

- **Charitable trusts and individual donors**
  - We are grateful for the support received from charitable trusts and individual donors, whose generosity has made possible so much of the RSPB’s work. The following list is by no means exhaustive and cannot claim to include all the organisations, foundations and individuals who have been generous to the RSPB. It is intended as a way of expressing our gratitude for their contributions.

- **Support from statutory sector and other public bodies**
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- **Legacies**
  - Since 2004, when our reorganisation was announced, the RSPB has received a large number of legacies from our supporters. These legacies have made a significant impact on our work.

- **Heritage Lottery Fund**
  - The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided funding to the RSPB for projects to restore and secure natural heritage for current and future generations to enjoy. The RSPB is grateful for its continued support for our work.
You can help the RSPB: here’s how

People are important to us: your support is vital to our work. Here are some of the many ways you can help the RSPB’s work for wild birds – just find one that suits you. Thank you: we can’t save birds and the environment without you.

Join the RSPB
Whether you want membership for yourself or someone else, why not join today?

Campaigns and appeals
Support our campaigns and appeals and you can help our work to secure a healthy environment for birds and wildlife. We need your support to help wild birds and the wild places they live in – and to campaign for better laws to protect them.

Remember birds in your will
If you have had a lifetime’s pleasure from birds, why not help ensure their future by leaving a legacy to the RSPB in your will? Any amount, large or small, will be put to excellent use.

Get involved
Writing letters and e-mails direct to your MP and other decision-makers really can make a difference for birds and wildlife. Join other RSPB campaigners and make sure your voice is heard.

Fundraise for wildlife
Have fun and meet like-minded people. Learn new skills and put old ones to good use. And help birds and wildlife while you do it.

Local groups
Joining an RSPB local group is a great way to meet new friends and help the RSPB where you live. Groups are open to all and you are sure to receive a warm welcome.

Volunteering for the RSPB
Are you looking for an exciting and interesting way to make a difference for wild birds and the environment? Why not consider volunteering? You don’t have to know anything about birds to have something to offer to the RSPB.

Buying RSPB goods
Buy your gifts, birdfood, binoculars and a range of other products from the RSPB catalogue. Or support us through RSPB Energy, holidays, wine offers, the RSPB Visa card and more. All sales benefit the RSPB.

For more information on how you can support the RSPB, please visit our website www.rspb.org.uk or telephone Membership Services on 01767 680551.
The RSPB

UK Headquarters
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL Tel: 01767 680551

ENGLAND
Central England Regional Office
46 The Green, South Bar, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9AB Tel: 01295 253330

Eastern England Regional Office
Stalham House, 65 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1UD Tel: 01603 661662

London Area Office
Second Floor, 66 Petty France, London SW1H 9EU Tel: 020 7808 1240

Northern England Region
Westleigh Mews, Wakefield Road, Denby Dale, Huddersfield HD8 8QD Tel: 01484 861148
1 Sirius House, Amethyst Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YL Tel: 0191 256 8200

South East England Regional Office
2nd Floor, Frederick House, 42 Frederick Place, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 4EA Tel: 01273 775333

South West England Regional Office
Keble House, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter, Devon EX1 1NT Tel: 01392 432691

NORTHERN IRELAND
Northern Ireland Headquarters
Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast BT8 7QT Tel: 028 9049 1547

SCOTLAND
Scotland Headquarters
Dunedin House, 25 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh EH4 3TP Tel: 0131 311 8500

East Scotland Regional Office
10 Albyn Terrace, Aberdeen AB10 1YP Tel: 01224 624824

North Scotland Regional Office
Etive House, Beechwood Park, Inverness IV2 3BW Tel: 01463 715000

South and West Scotland Regional Office
10 Park Quadrant, Glasgow G3 6BS Tel: 0141 331 0993

WALES
Wales Headquarters
Sutherland House, Castlebridge, Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff CF11 9AB Tel: 029 2035 3000

North Wales Office
Maes y Ffynnon, Pentrebeirness, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2DW Tel: 01248 363800

The RSPB is the UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and wildlife, helping to create a better world for us all. We belong to BirdLife International, the global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

www.rspb.org.uk

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