



The RSPB

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The RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.



As a charity, the RSPB is dependent on the goodwill and financial support of people like you. Please visit www.rspb.org.uk/supporting or call 01767 680551 to find out more.

Front cover by Geoff Robinson (rspb-images.com)
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together
we are a million voices for nature



Together we are the RSPB.

Wildlife has no voice: so we must
speak out for birds and other wildlife,
tackling the problems that threaten our environment.

We are a million voices for nature.

Nature is amazing and inspirational.

You can help us keep it that way.

Each day brings challenges and achievements, frustrations and celebrations for wildlife conservation. As the world warms, development pressures increase and human exploitation of the natural environment intensifies, our job will never diminish.



Ian Newton (top), RSPB Chairman, and Graham Wynne, RSPB Chief Executive, report on the RSPB year 2007–2008.



Speaking up for nature working for wildlife from Minsmere to Antarctica

Our 200 nature reserves across the UK help ensure that wildlife has a future and that people have the best possible opportunities to enjoy and appreciate the natural world. We added some excellent new reserves, from Caithness to Kent, and secured extensions to existing ones, to help us do this. New visitor centres, such as the excellent new facility at Newport Wetlands in South Wales, increased our face-to-face contact with people who are eager to experience wildlife and learn more about it.

Wild nature, however, cannot and should not be restricted to a network of individual sites, however secure and wonderful these may be. We are, therefore, continually involved in trying to enhance opportunities for wildlife across the countryside, working with an increasingly wide range of people and organisations to do so.

We work hard to protect special places from damaging development. Too often we have to re-argue the case for areas that already have national and international designations, that recognise their great ecological value, and theoretically already offer them protection.

Nevertheless, we had some great successes during the year, backed by excellent support from our members and the public: cases that made the

headlines, from Lewis to Stonehenge, are just the more visible tip of a very large body of work.

Our policy work ranged from advocacy to government urging more action on climate change issues, to seeking improvements to wildlife protection laws. In particular, we have been active in seeking effective protection for important wildlife areas at sea.

Alongside our work to protect sites, we continue intensive research on the specific needs of wild birds and advocate measures to enhance their numbers. For birds as varied as bitterns, red kites, skylarks and corn buntings, we have enjoyed great results from such efforts. Our programme of research and analysis is much broader than this, however, including such matters as the economics of agriculture, biofuels impacts and fishery policies. This gives the intellectual rigour that underpins our advocacy and advisory work, as well as the practical management of our nature reserves.

As it is ever more clear that wildlife is threatened on a global scale, we cannot pretend to insulate ourselves in our small group of islands. Working with our BirdLife International partners, we support projects all over Europe, many in Africa and some in India, Indonesia and even the Southern Oceans.



Sumatran tiger by Dave Watts (NHPA)

This was a big year for us in terms of international activity. We secured the first formal licence to operate in the Harapan Rainforest in Sumatra, as part of a partnership working to restore some of the richest wildlife habitat on earth. In Sierra Leone, our work in Gola Forest, built on solid foundations from many years of involvement, is leading to the protection of a superb tract of rainforest, rich in birdlife but also critically important for many mammals, including primates, pygmy hippopotamus and elephants.

In Poland, we continue long term projects to support our BirdLife partner in securing vital wetland habitats in the Biebrza Marshes, helping to protect vulnerable species including the globally threatened aquatic warbler.

Our efforts to prevent the extinction of three species of vultures in Asia began to produce tangible results, with chicks reared for the first time in captive breeding centres.

The Albatross Task Force is increasingly effective, as more fishing vessels adopt techniques to catch fish without killing thousands of threatened seabirds.

As ever, we strive to increase public support for wildlife, mainly through offering real experience of it. Once people realise the value of the natural world and how much excitement and enjoyment they derive from it, they begin to care deeply about it and strive to protect it.

Our network of Aren't birds brilliant! sites across the UK helped hundreds of thousands of people to enjoy birds as impressive as peregrines and ospreys, while our nature reserves received a fantastic 1.8 million visits. Many reserves, too, offer facilities for school

groups, taking wildlife education out of the classroom and enthusing thousands of children by letting them see and begin to understand fascinating creatures for themselves.

Financially, we depend very largely on individuals, through their membership and extra support, such as buying sales goods and raffle tickets and making donations to appeals. The legacies that people so generously leave in their wills have been particularly valuable.

This report includes a summary of our income and expenditure and a long list of acknowledgments. We offer our sincere thanks to all of those individuals and organisations who help us in so many ways.

We have invested in new membership recruitment techniques, with considerable success, and maintained our membership in excess of a million people who care about wildlife and support what we do. Our workload never diminishes, however. Its variety surprises even us. If you would like to help or become involved, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Ian Newton

Professor Ian Newton
RSPB Chairman

Graham Wynne

Graham Wynne
RSPB Chief Executive



Steve Kneill (rspb-images.com)

CHILDREN WILL CARE about wildlife if they become enthused about it. Our field teachers on nature reserves are great enthusiasts, as many children and teachers testify.

YELLOWHAMMERS and other farmland songbirds face a tough time in the face of intensive agriculture, but we can find ways to help them. Many farmers are proud to be doing great things for wildlife.



Yellowhammer by Terry Button (rspb-images.com)



“This is the right decision for Lewis, absolutely right for Scotland and right for the UK. We can and must meet ambitious, and welcome, targets for renewable energy, without sacrificing our most important environmental resources.”

George Campbell, RSPB Regional Director, North Scotland

Making a case Protecting special places

When the Scottish Government announced that a proposal for a huge wind farm on Lewis was refused, on environmental grounds, RSPB staff and members alike breathed a huge sigh of relief. The case against it was cast-iron – the area has all the conservation designations imaginable – but the pressure for it was intense.

Protecting such great places for wildlife from ill-considered, damaging development demands more work every year, but, with your support, we are effective. The pain has been sharpest in Scotland this year: staff working on the Lewis proposal particularly deserve great praise.

We continue our long-running campaign to defend the unique Dungeness peninsula in Kent from damaging plans to expand Lydd airport: plans that do nothing, either, to help combat climate change.

Road bypass schemes at Stonehenge, which would have cut swathes through the Wiltshire Downs, damaging RSPB reserves with sensitive birds such as stone-curlews, were dismissed. The RSPB's opposition, including thousands of letters from members, was cited as

one of the reasons. Our favoured tunnel option was put aside too, however, leaving the problem unresolved.

In more than 1,000 cases, the RSPB made sure that conservation arguments were fully aired and carried due weight. Nevertheless, the RSPB can't become involved in every planning case, even where conservation is an issue. You can act locally: to support people fighting planning issues affecting wildlife sites, we sent out 3,000 RSPB Wildlife Action Packs. You can download one from the RSPB website.

“Wild nature needs a new deal from developers, a recognition that well planned development should avoid unnecessary conflict with the natural world. Undue weight currently rests on the shoulders of commentators such as the RSPB to champion wildlife and persuade authorities to give due consideration to the environment.”

Brian Cleary
Head of Casework



PROTECT THE BEST and enhance the rest remains a useful mantra. We fight for the future of the finest wildlife sites, and work with local authorities and government agencies to encourage positive plans for the countryside.

GOLDEN EAGLES are among those birds that would have been affected by badly-sited wind farms on protected areas of Lewis. Now we have made the case for continued protection, our focus shifts from fighting damaging proposals to a positive future for the Outer Isles, including appropriately sited renewable energy schemes.

“It’s great when reports show how well we’ve been reversing declines or re-establishing birds that had disappeared. Many species face problems; for some we know what they are, for some we know what we have to do and for some we’re already putting things right. For others we’re still working out what’s gone wrong.”

Mark Avery, Director of Conservation

Constant effort

Protecting special birds



Lakenheath by Norman Sills (rsfb-images.com)

REEDBEDS are essential for much wildlife, from bearded tits and bitterns to special moths. Naturally, however, they dry out and disappear over time: to maintain them requires expensive management work.

BITTERNS have recovered well from a low point of just 11 males in the UK, but this upturn in numbers has relied too heavily on just a handful of breeding females in East Anglian reedbeds, which are threatened by rising sea levels.

We judge our efforts by results. A number of species obviously like what we do, including corncrakes and corn buntings in the Western Isles, bitterns (back above 50 males) and white-tailed eagles (42 pairs in western Scotland). Choughs nested on Rathlin Island, Co Antrim, for the first time for 19 years and red kites increased in all kinds of places.

Priority birds UK-wide had mixed fortunes. For migrants such as spotted flycatchers, we don’t yet know the relative importance of factors in breeding and wintering areas, and on migration routes: several declining species present us with similar puzzles.

Around 50 booming male bitterns in Britain is good, but even here we have to be careful, as their recovery largely stems from a few productive females on the Suffolk coast, including Minsmere, which is threatened by rising sea levels. A major surge in the North Sea resulted in increased erosion at Minsmere and saltwater flooding bittern breeding sites along

the coast. More and urgent action by the Government is needed to create safe compensatory habitats, to add to our own work at such places as Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk, and Ouse Fen, Cambridgeshire, to give a secure future for this remarkable bird.

Fifteen radio-tagged white-tailed eagles were released in Tayside. These birds came from Norway and excited great interest all the way up the east coast from Berwick upon Tweed to the Loch of Strathbeg.

“At Corrimony in the central highlands, we’ve planted new native woodland, restored wetlands and removed non-native trees – our fantastic black grouse have responded by bucking the national trend of continuing decline. From 16 cocks displaying when we first came here in 1997, numbers rose to 57 by 2007.”

Dan Tomes, Site Manager, Corrimony



Bittern by Richard Brooks (rsfb-images.com)



Polar bear by Jordi Bas Casas (nhpa)

“Climatic change and wildlife’s responses to it are difficult to forecast with precision, but our study helps us appreciate the magnitude of possible impacts and to identify species most at risk and in need of urgent help and protection.”

Professor Rhys Green, RSPB scientist

Changing times

What does the future hold?

A book co-authored by the RSPB, *A climatic atlas of European breeding birds*, maps the potential range of Europe’s breeding birds in the late 21st century. The results are worrying. The breeding area of an average species will shift 350 miles north-east and its range will be about a fifth smaller. Some species risk extinction, at least in Europe.

Government plans and programmes to tackle climate change are evolving, but still lack the urgency and coherence needed to tackle this unprecedented environmental crisis. Emissions in the UK have remained stable or increased slightly in most years of the last decade, but they need to fall dramatically if we are to achieve a 40% cut by 2020, which scientists tell us is necessary to avoid the worst impacts on wildlife and people.

We desperately need a bold plan, to move us away from dependence on fossil fuels towards more sustainable forms of energy. Yet the Government is defending policies that could see up to 10 new coal-fired power plants built in the UK, even though coal is the most climate-polluting fuel there is. It also clings to policies on renewable energy that fall short on delivery, yet risk needless harm to the environment. The UK has one of the worst records in Europe on renewable energy, in part due to the Government’s unwillingness to implement policies that will bring forward projects of the right kind, in the right places. Ill-sited wind farm

proposals and projects such as the Severn Barrage, which risk irreversible damage to habitats, are expensive distractions from the job of creating an efficient, streamlined, low-carbon economy based on sustainable sources of clean energy. The latter will involve a significant expansion of onshore and offshore wind farms, but these must be in appropriate locations.

Current biofuels policies are woeful: intended to reduce damaging emissions of greenhouse gases, some biofuels produce more emissions than the fossil fuels they are meant to replace. Vast areas of natural habitat have been turned over to biofuel production. Grasslands and rainforests are such important carbon stores that tearing them up for biofuels creates a carbon debt that takes years to pay back.

“Climate change is an international emergency which requires swift action in every country of the world. Our Government must demonstrate bold leadership and work to a clear and rational plan. It’s time we started concentrating on solutions that work, beginning with a green energy revolution that is delivered in harmony with the natural environment.”

Ruth Davis,
Head of Climate Change Policy



Wind turbines by Nigel Blake (rspb-images.com)

RENEWABLE ENERGY includes many new technologies and offers an abundance of opportunities for sustainable development, in the right places, with little damage. We have worked with suppliers and developers to identify areas on land and at sea where our urgent need for renewable energy can safely be met.

WILDLIFE IN THE FAR NORTH is especially threatened by climate change. Not only polar bears, but millions of breeding seabirds, wildfowl and wading birds, many of which come to the UK each winter, face an uncertain future.

“The Marine Bill mustn’t be just some flimsy bit of government paper; it has to be meaningful. It’s staggering that we take such good care of our nature reserves on land but so often ignore the sea.”

Kate Humble, RSPB Vice President

All at sea

Half the job still to do

Seabirds must come to land to breed, and we protect them at their colonies: RSPB nature reserves such as Bempton Cliffs, Fowlsheugh, Grassholm, Troup Head and Rathlin Island have the magnificent spectacle of thousands of birds crowding cliffs from spring to late summer.

But the job is only half done if we protect places where they nest but ignore seabirds’ other needs. Even in summer, they must find food in the sea. They spend the rest of their year over the oceans far from land. Pollution, development, overfishing and climate change all threaten the way the natural system works, often with dire consequences for seabirds.

The Safeguard Our SeaLife campaign calls for strong and effective marine legislation in both Westminster and Holyrood. It moved up a gear in 2007, with more than 300,000 pledges of support (more than 123,000 from supporters like you) submitted to the Prime Minister and the First Minister for Scotland.

Proposed legislation for protecting marine areas was weak: we wish to see Government legislation that is as strong as its promises.

The Scottish Government is looking to extend up to 31 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to give seabird feeding and resting areas close to their nesting colonies the same protection as on land. This is a good step forward for the marine environment, which has been left behind for much too long.

“We were very excited to see a draft UK Marine Bill finally published and hope for new, robust laws to protect the UK’s fabulous sea life. But there’s a real danger that, if it is not strengthened, the full UK Marine Bill will be a rehash of the current, ineffective legislation, that has seen just three marine nature reserves created in the last 27 years.”

*Sharon Thompson,
Senior Marine Policy Officer*



Bempton Cliffs by Ernie Janes (rspb-images.com)

📍 BEMPTON CLIFFS has long been famous for its magnificent seabird colonies, but seabirds here and elsewhere around the UK have been finding it hard to rear chicks in recent years, due to lack of food.

🐟 WHY BASKING SHARKS? They rely on plankton, as do the main fish foods of seabirds. Both these giant sharks and seabirds are vulnerable to growing pressure from human activity at sea. The RSPB’s marine work benefits all wildlife.



Basking shark by Alan Jones (naturepl.com)



“Rising grain prices and a move towards biofuels mean farmers are less interested in agri-environment schemes, and the payments are less attractive. We risk seeing much less wildlife in a more intensively farmed countryside.”

Sue Armstrong-Brown, Head of Countryside Conservation

Bad harvest

Recovering farmland birds need help

After years of work to help farmland birds, hit so hard by intensive agriculture, we could easily be disheartened by Government decisions that make their future more uncertain.

The recovery in numbers of birds such as lapwings, linnets, reed buntings and song thrushes depends on government agri-environment schemes, but the financial support for these is yet to be decided. Set-aside was abolished, bad news for stone-curlews and corn buntings as well as much other countryside wildlife – given the obvious need for environmental safeguards, we are pleased to see recent Government plans to help farmland wildlife.

There was better news from Hope Farm, our arable research and demonstration farm in Cambridgeshire. Here, farmland bird numbers were up by 89% since 2000, yellowhammer numbers doubled and skylarks tripled. Crop yields continue to be among the best in this area, so our demonstration farm shows it can be done!

Cirl buntings have disappeared from most of Britain to become restricted to Devon. With the help of enthusiastic farmers and agri-environment schemes, they are doing so well there that we have been able to move some to Cornwall. In this ground-breaking work, chicks are taken at six days old and hand reared by experts from Paignton Zoo, who feed them every two hours from 6 am to midnight.

“We started taking young cirl buntings from Devon to Cornwall in 2006, the first reintroduction of a songbird anywhere in Europe! It’s wonderful to have been involved in the whole process, from finding nests in Devon to taking chicks to Cornwall – and hard to believe that some of the chicks moved in 2006 are now grandparents!”

Nick Tomalin,
RSPB cirl bunting project



Hope Farm by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

FARMLAND must provide us with food and other essentials, but can be highly productive without being devoid of wildlife. We are developing techniques that are good for some farmland birds, such as skylarks, without reducing yields.

LAPWINGS cannot rear chicks in autumn-sown crops that grow too tall and dense by spring, or in fields that are too dry, or in huge areas of monoculture: they need a varied landscape with wet places included. Making sure they have a place in the future of our countryside requires real commitment and is a tough call.

“On our first visit to Conwy, the team there was fantastic: a warm welcome and eager to help, exactly what you need when you’re new to what nature has to offer. An amazing day: the team and the reserve have the wow factor.”

Elaine Day, RSPB member

Getting it right

Doing the right thing on our nature reserves

Where we can, we create the best conditions for wildlife, and for you, on our nature reserves. Our 203 nature reserves cover 140,441 hectares. During 2007–08, because of the generosity of members and grant funders, we were able to add 2,405 hectares, including new reserves at Lydden Valley and Seasalter Levels, Kent; and Broubster Leans and Dunnet Head, Caithness.

Buying and managing land for wildlife costs a great deal, and we are delighted that our ambitions coincide with those of many other people, who are willing to invest in our work as partners and supporters, making your membership support go so much further (see page 40).

We put our backs into habitat restoration with great results, especially at Hesketh Outmarsh beside the Ribble, Lancashire, with great help from the Environment Agency; at Bolton Ings in the Dearne Valley, South Yorkshire; Portmore Lough, Co Antrim and Leighton Moss, Lancashire.

A £1.1 million programme of habitat restoration and improvements for visitors at the Loch of Strathbeg was 90% funded by grants. Such financial support is essential if we are to tackle the large-scale work needed to help wildlife survive in a changing world. A nesting pair of cranes at Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk, gave a thumbs up for our efforts there in previous years.

An agreement to manage part of Wallasea Island, and an option to buy the rest, should lead to fantastic opportunities to recreate wild Essex coast, if we can raise the money.

Our nature reserves are wonderful places for people, as well as wildlife. Pride of place for new visitor facilities goes to the Newport Wetlands Centre in South Wales, opened in March 2008 (largely paid for by Objective 2 European funds via the Welsh European Funding Office), and the centre at Lakenheath, opened in May 2007, made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund, WREN and the Suffolk Development Agency.

“What a spectacular day at Dungeness: why most teenagers stay at home I’ll never know. It was absolutely fantastic; visits are a must!”
Benjamin Young, RSPB member

“On a brief visit to Leighton Moss and the saltmarshes every second was worthwhile. I can’t wait to come back in May. If you haven’t been yet – what are you waiting for?”
Scott Petrek, RSPB member

“I visited Minsmere for the first time. The staff were fantastic, and the other birdwatchers were fabulous. I’m going again, and soon.”
Carole Saberton, RSPB member



Newport wetlands by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

📍 **NEWPORT WETLANDS** in Wales provide great opportunities for people to see wild nature first hand. Inspiring children to care remains a top priority for the RSPB.

🦋 **OUR NATURE RESERVES** have great value for many kinds of wildlife apart from birds: the rare and spectacular swallowtail butterfly can be found at Strumpshaw Fen and Sutton Fen, in the Norfolk Broads, for example.



Swallowtail by Roger Wilmshurst (rspb-images.com)



Seven-spot ladybird by David Norton (rspb-images.com)

“Surveys on RSPB nature reserves are constantly discovering more rare and threatened plants and animals. ‘The more you look the more you find’ certainly applies here.”

Jane Sears, ecologist, RSPB reserves department

Not just birds

Helping other wildlife

RSPB nature reserves are home to at least 95% of the UK's species of dragonfly, 76% of spiders, 60% of our moths and 65% of our ground beetles. Reserves have around 400 of the 1,149 wildlife species in need of urgent action, listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It would be possible to damage the special conditions needed by certain wild flowers, butterflies, reptiles, and less well known groups, while creating perfect places for birds. We work hard to avoid this by identifying the most important species on our reserves and integrating their needs with those of birds, through careful habitat management.

The internationally endangered southern damselfly benefits from our heathland conservation in Devon and Dorset. Its decline reflects reduced grazing and the drainage of breeding sites. Numbers were low at our Aylesbeare Common reserve, Devon, from 1956 until 1990, when grazing opened up rank vegetation, resulting in a marked increase.

At Dungeness, Kent, the oldest RSPB nature reserve, management is helping species such as the Jersey cudweed, great crested newt, medicinal leech and some fascinating beetles. We are working closely with Natural England to help re-establish an endangered plant, stinking hawksbeard. The reserve also has 11 of the 16 species of true bumblebee in Britain, including three threatened carder-bees. A long

flowering season of plants in the pea family, especially clovers, is important for the survival of these long-tongued bumblebees and we have managed the area for this.

More than 60% of the 2,400 UK moths have been recorded at our reserves. Our wide-ranging efforts to provide breeding habitat for bitterns have helped reed-dwelling moths including Fenn's, flame and white-mantled wainscots, specialities of our East Anglian coastal reserves, and the reed dagger. Wet reed swamp is good for the twin-spotted wainscot, but the reed leopard requires reed cut on a long rotation, because its larva spends at least two years feeding within reed stems. Our management aims to provide a range from open water to wet reed and dry reed, to cater for this range of needs. The very local marsh carpet moth was discovered in 2002 at Lakenheath Fen (Suffolk) where the caterpillars feed among seed-heads of meadow-rue.

Hazel coppicing for dormice at Garston Wood, Dorset, not only helps them, but encourages wood spurge, the food-plant of the rare drab looper moth. A reserve in eastern England is one of very few British sites for the olive crescent moth, whose caterpillars feed on withered leaves of sweet chestnut. We found that most larvae feed among dead branches at chest height, but in high forest rather than coppice, so we do our best to provide such conditions.



Hazel coppicing by Mike Read (rspb-images.com)

HAZEL COPPICING has long been out of fashion, but remains an invaluable management technique for creating the right conditions for wildlife as varied as dormice, butterflies and nightingales.

GOOD MANAGEMENT for birds usually results in good conditions for other wildlife, too, but we must always be careful that actions for birds do not risk damaging other wildlife interests.

“Internationally, we were busier than ever. We’ve a long way to go to save vultures in Asia, and albatrosses in the southern oceans, but both projects made good progress.”

Alistair Gammell, Director of International Operations

A global reach

Protecting birds and habitats worldwide



Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra by Marco Lambertini (rsrb-images.com)

SUMATRAN RAINFOREST is extraordinary: some of the very finest wildlife habitat in the world. Harapan Rainforest has been damaged but is capable of restoration, given time, money, and a lot of hard work.

ALBATROSSES remain severely threatened by unacceptably damaging fishing practices. With partners worldwide, we are helping fishermen to catch fish with more sensitive methods that kill far fewer birds.

In Sumatra we (Burung Indonesia, BirdLife International and the RSPB) now have a great team on the ground to protect and manage Harapan Forest. In Sierra Leone, the new government committed to making Gola Forest a National Park. There is no better illustration of conservation’s need for tenacity: the RSPB and our partner in Sierra Leone set out to save Gola in the 1980s and we never gave up, despite long periods of war and unrest.

With your support, we expanded the Albatross Task Force to 14 stalwarts in six countries, a heartening effort that is essential to influence fishing vessel owners and skippers to reduce the number of seabirds they kill. Our discovery that 12,000 albatrosses are killed every year in the South African trawl fishery led to the adoption of mandatory streamer lines, which should reduce this by 75%. Albatross populations continue to decline relentlessly on South Georgia (a UK Overseas Territory for which our government has responsibility) despite seabird-friendly fisheries around South Georgia itself.

In December, the Bulgarian Government accepted all 114 IBAs proposed by BSPB (BirdLife in Bulgaria) as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under Natura 2000, an astonishing achievement for BSPB, only three months after a EC legal complaint against poor designation. A remarkable 20% of Bulgaria will now be protected

under the Birds Directive. However, massive investments for potentially devastating tourism and wind farm developments along the Black Sea coast became the focus for intense action. In Romania, the European Commission opened legal proceedings against the government for failing to submit a list of candidate Natura 2000 sites. When initial designations eventually came, 109 out of 134 (81%) of the IBAs were proposed as SPAs, superficially good news: however, all but 38 were significantly reduced in size.

After 20 years’ work in Morocco, we saw the critically endangered bald ibis reach 106 pairs. Successful tracking of bald ibises from a minute population in Syria to wintering grounds in Ethiopia and back was an exciting development.

“Our hearts were in our mouths because these fragile bald ibises set out to cross the Red Sea at its widest point, between Sudan and Saudi Arabia, quite late in the morning and were still far offshore when night fell. These birds have been surprising us from the outset but we are determined to save them. The technology has worked superbly and the tags have lasted far longer than we expected.”

Jeremy Lindsell,
Research Biologist



Black-browed albatrosses by David Osborn (rsrb-images.com)



“Threats to fantastic wildlife sites crop up all over the world. Our BirdLife International Partner organisations are impressive but some are new and still small. We do our best to support them and help them grow, and the shared experiences and backing of the whole partnership add strength where it’s needed.”

Paul Buckley, Global Programmes

Supporting our partners

Working with BirdLife International

In 2007, the BirdLife International Partnership stopped developments that most people thought unstoppable. Nature Uganda’s fight against a plan to destroy a large part of the Mabira Forest for biofuel appears to have been won. The proposed development of a soda ash plant at Lake Natron in northern Tanzania (the last regular breeding ground for lesser flamingos in East Africa) has been “put on hold.” In Poland, construction of the most destructive part of the Via Baltica expressway has been halted until the European Court of Justice considers the case, and the Polish authorities may be considering alternative routes.

We continued work to protect the aquatic warbler, Europe’s rarest migratory songbird. An expedition, co-organised by the RSPB, discovered the species’ wintering site in Senegal and we helped our partner, OTOP–BirdLife Poland, to set up three new reserves in the Biebrza valley, the aquatic warbler’s most important breeding site in the EU. Landscape scale habitat management is resulting in increased numbers of aquatic warblers and other species such as black tailed godwits, redshanks and corncrakes.

In Cyprus, we found an alarming rise in illegal bird trapping compared with previous years: bad news for migratory birds. We put increased pressure on the UK and Cyprus governments to crack down on this, backed up by a campaign led by BirdLife Cyprus against illegal trapping and killing.

Malta remained in breach of the EU Birds Directive, but progress has been strong, primarily due to the EU’s “final written warning” followed by an order to Malta not to open the 2008 spring hunting season. The first year without sanctioned spring hunting is a milestone that illustrates the power of lobbying by BirdLife International partners, but was met by a worrying increase in intimidation and attacks on BirdLife Malta property, staff and volunteers.

We scaled up our vulture breeding programme in India, in a last-ditch effort to stop three species going extinct, and thanks to these efforts, chicks were hatched for the first time. Until the veterinary drug, diclofenac, which is lethal to these vultures, is removed from the environment, captive breeding is the only viable way to save these birds, which have undergone declines of more than 99% in just 10 years.

“After seven hot and bumpy hours of poor roads and traffic jams, our vulture convoy of two pickups and a lorry pulled in to the Chitwan National Park headquarters. Three weeks after capturing them, we safely passed 14 chicks over to the staff at Nepal’s new vulture centre; huge relief all round and about time for a long cool drink.”

Richard Cuthbert,
RSPB vulture programme scientist



Chris Bowden (RSPB)

WE HAVE BUILT captive breeding centres for endangered vultures at suitable sites in India and Pakistan. Already, even though the captive birds are young and inexperienced, the first chicks have been reared.

LESSER FLAMINGOS in East Africa have not bred anywhere except Lake Natron in Tanzania for more than 40 years, but their future remains threatened by industrial development proposals.

“People will fight to protect things they care deeply about, often connected with experiences in childhood. Children are excited by nature: we aim to give children and adults genuine, meaningful and lasting experiences that create a deeper commitment to conservation.”

Andy Simpson, Head of Youth and Education

Inspiring people to care Enthusiasm into conservation

We managed to bring 1.8 million people closer to nature on our nature reserves and through projects such as Homes for Wildlife, aimed at giving people advice on improving their homes and gardens for wildlife.

Each year we wonder whether January's Big Garden Birdwatch needs a boost: but we are always knocked out by the response. Almost **400,000** people counted more than **six million** birds in 2008.

Nothing beats seeing exciting birds and you can do just that at scores of Aren't birds brilliant! projects around the UK. In 2007 we welcomed more than **500,000** visitors and recruited **3,300** members.

Our fantastic volunteers continue to bring a great range of skills and enthusiasm to the RSPB. They completed **527** farm bird surveys through the Volunteer & Farmer Alliance scheme, making a total of **3,858** since the project began in 1999.

Many volunteers raise funds or recruit members, and all of them give generously of their time and expertise. Around **14,000** people, the equivalent of **430** full-time staff, contributed more than **774,000** hours.

If you're one of these wonderful people, thank you.

We sparked enthusiasm for wildlife in many ways. Each issue of *Birds*, our members' magazine, reached more than **2 million** readers and more than **1.8 million** people enjoyed a day out on our nature reserves.

A steady stream of quality stories in the media plays a crucial part in building support for the RSPB, among decision makers and potential members. It is a measure, too, of how much people are listening to what we have to say. In 2007, we hit new heights. We generated nearly **14,000** press cuttings, over **500** television interviews and nearly **1,200** radio interviews. We worked closely with the BBC on *Saving Planet Earth* and *Springwatch*. Thanks to our country and regional teams, we enjoyed a very high profile right across the UK.

“Around the river, the children are in their element. If anyone dares build on their playground when they grow up, I hope they will fight with a passion to save it, aware of what they stand to lose. Their childhoods seem all too brief; vital as the source of a river, as golden, as ephemeral, as a mayfly rising from the water.”

Nicola Chester, RSPB member,
Berkshire



AREN'T BIRDS BRILLIANT! is more a statement of fact than a question, and hundreds of thousands of people agree after visiting sites across the UK and seeing amazing birds for themselves.

MORE THAN 500 schools joined the Bird Friendly Schools pilot programme, linking volunteers to schools, giving us the confidence to widen the scope of this project and get children looking at birds and understanding more about their needs as part of their daily lives.





Osprey by Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)

“In Wales we have some of the most spectacular birds and breathtaking landscapes in the UK. RSPB members are vital in helping us to fund our work here and we enjoy more support than ever in Wales. RSPB membership passed 50,000 – a ringing endorsement of our commitment to the conservation of wild birds.”

Ellen Perry, Membership Development Officer

Saving wildlife in Wales

Enhancing the nation's wildlife riches

There was good news from our nature reserves. Black grouse at Lake Vyrnwy remained at a record high of 18 lekking males and curlews increased from two to six breeding pairs. Two pairs of lapwings nested at one of our newest sites, Morfa Dinlle, managed especially for these birds.

Nearby, work on an EU funded project for blanket bog continued, with an education programme for local schools. Jane Hutt, the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, launched the Welsh Assembly Government's guidance for out-of-classroom learning, along with pupils from Goetre Infants School, Merthyr Tydfil. We helped put the guide together as part of our Lifelong Learning activities.

We helped protect wildlife in north Wales with an objection to a dredging application for the Port of Mostyn that could potentially damage protected sites within the Dee Estuary. With Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, we negotiated a safe breeding site for lapwings in south Wales that was threatened by development.

The political landscape changed with the signing of the “One Wales” agreement and a new coalition Government. We represent Wales Environment Link on the Welsh Assembly Government's Climate Change Commission, advising on climate change policy.

We are working with partners on Wales Environment Link's campaign for a new Marine Bill.

As part of the “Sustainable Farming and Environment: Action towards 2020” group, we ensured that wildlife was considered in a vision for Welsh agriculture and that targeted action for farmland birds remains at the centre of an ongoing review of agri-environment schemes. More than 2,000 Welsh members and supporters showed their support through a postcard campaign to the First Minister about these schemes.

Our wonderful new environmental education and visitor centre opened at Newport Wetlands, after many years of hard work, tireless support from funders and volunteers, and pioneering partnership working with the Countryside Council for Wales and Newport City Council.

Our nature reserve at Conwy was named as the Crown Estate's Marine Business Award winner for 2007: a prime example of an innovative and sustainable business that demonstrates environmental care. The £5,000 prize money was used to develop the education programme at the reserve.

We were delighted when an RSPB volunteer won the Wales Council for Voluntary Action Wales Volunteer of the Year award – more than 700 volunteers in Wales is a fantastic testament to the support we enjoy.



Lake Vyrnwy by Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)

AT LAKE VYRNWY black grouse are doing better than for many years and curlew numbers show signs of recovering.

OSPREYS at Glaslyn returned for the fourth year in a row and two more chicks fledged. More than 200,000 visitors have now been thrilled by seeing ospreys at this breathtaking location in Snowdonia.



“Yma yng Nghymru mae rhai o’r adar mwyaf trawiadol a’r tirluniau mwyaf bendigedig yn y DU. Mae cymorth aelodau’r RSPB yn hanfodol o ran ariannu ein gwaith yma ac rydym yn derbyn mwy o gefnogaeth nag erioed yng Nghymru, gyda dros 50,000 o aelodau. Dyma gadarnhad o’n hymrwymiad i warchodaeth adar gwyllt.”

Ellen Perry, Swyddog Datblygu Aelodaeth

Gweithio yng Nghymru Gwella cyfoeth y genedl o ran bywyd gwyllt

Cafwyd newyddion da o’n gwarchodfeydd natur. Cofnodwyd mwy nag erioed o rugieir duon yn Llyn Efyrmwy gyda deunaw o geiliogod yn arddangos eu hunain a chynyddodd y nifer o ylfinirod sy’n nythu o ddau i chwe phâr. Nythodd dau bâr o gornchwilogol ar un o’n safleoedd newydd, Morfa Dinlle, sy’n cael ei reoli’n arbennig ar gyfer yr adar yma.

Parhaodd y gwaith ar broiect yr orgors a ariennir gan yr UE, gyda rhaglen addysg ar gyfer ysgolion lleol. Lanswyd arweinyfr Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru ar gyfer dysgu y tu allan i’r dosbarth gan Jane Hutt, y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu a Medrau Gydol Oes, ynghyd â disgyblion o Ysgol Fabanod Goetre, Merthyr Tudful. Bu’r RSPB yn cynorthwyo gyda llunio’r arweinyfr hwn fel rhan o’n gweithgareddau Dysgu Gydol Oes.

Cawsom gyfle i helpu i warchod bywyd gwyllt Gogledd Cymru gyda gwrthwynebiad i gais am garthu Porthladd Mostyn a fyddai’n peri bygythiad i safleoedd gwarchoddedig o fewn Aber Dyfrdwy. Ynghyd â Chyngor Bwrdeistref Nedd Port Talbot, cytunwyd ar safle nythu diogel ar gyfer y gornchwilog yn ne Cymru a oedd dan fygythiad oherwydd datblygiadau.

Newidiodd y tirlun gwleidyddol wrth arwyddo’r cytundeb “Un Gymru” a chreu Llywodraeth glymblaid newydd. Rydym yn cynrychioli Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru ar Gomisïwn Newid Hinsawdd Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, gan gynghori ar bolisi newid hinsawdd.

Rydym yn gweithio gyda phartneriaid ar ymgyrch Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru am Fesur Morol newydd i helpu i wella gwarchodaeth ar gyfer bywyd gwyllt morol.

Fel rhan o’r grŵp “Ffermio ac Amgylchedd Cynaliadwy: Gweithredu ar gyfer 2020”, cafwyd cyfle i sicrhau bod bywyd gwyllt yn cael ei ystyried mewn gwledigaeth ar gyfer amaethyddiaeth Cymru a bod gweithredu wedi ei dargedu ar ran adar ffermdir yn parhau i fod yn ganolog yn yr adolygiad parhaol o gynlluniau amaeth-amgylcheddol. Dangosodd dros 2,000 o aelodau a chefnogwyr Cymreig eu cefnogaeth drwy’r ymgyrch cerdyn post at y Gweinidog Cyntaf am y cynlluniau hyn.

Agorwyd ein canolfan addysg amgylcheddol ac ymwelwyr newydd bendigedig ar Wlyptiroedd Casnewydd wedi blynyddoedd o waith dygn, cefnogaeth ddiplino gan noddwyr a gwirfoddolwyr, a chydweithio mentrus mewn partneriaeth gyda CCGC a Chyngor Dinas Casnewydd.

Cyhoeddwyd mai ein gwarchodfa natur yng Nghonwy oedd enillydd Gwobr Busnes Morol Stad y Goron 2007: enghraifft arbennig o fusnes mentrus a chynaliadwy sy’n arddangos gofal amgylcheddol. Defnyddiwyd y wobr o £5,000 i ddatblygu rhaglen addysg y warchodfa.

Roeddem yn falch iawn o glywed mai gwirfoddolwr gyda’r RSPB a enillodd wobwr Gwirfoddolwr y Flwyddyn CCGG Cymru – cynyddodd y nifer o wirfoddolwyr i dros 700, sy’n brawf o’r gefnogaeth anghoel yma yng Nghymru.



Llyn Eferwry Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)

YN LLYN EFYRNWY mae’r rugier ddu yn parhau i ffynnu a gwelwyd adferiad yn y nifer o ylfinirod.

Dychwelodd GWEILCH Y PYSGOD y Glaslyn am y bedwaredd flwyddyn yn olynol a llwyddodd dau gyw arall i adael y nyth. **Bellach** mae dros 200,000 o ymwelwyr wedi mwynhau gweld y gweilch y pysgod yn lleoliad hyfryd hwn yn Eryri.

“Restoration of devolution in May 2007 brought great opportunities for the RSPB in Northern Ireland. We worked closely with the new Assembly, Executive and Committees to influence priority issues for the RSPB and to keep environmental matters at the top of the government agenda.”

Aidan Lonergan, RSPB Director, Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

Saving Northern Ireland’s wildlife heritage



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

WET GRASSLAND is an old-fashioned kind of habitat, easily removed from the countryside by drainage and intensification of farming. Its value to wildlife can hardly be overstated and we do all we can to restore it.

REDSHANKS sadly joined the list of endangered birds in Northern Ireland, one of several species that rely on wet places to survive.

With colleagues in BirdWatch Ireland, we assessed the status of all bird species in Ireland in *The Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2008-2013*. Happily, both the roseate tern and the hen harrier came off the Red list of endangered birds, following years of declines.

Other species did not fare so well. The golden plover and redshank joined curlew and lapwing on the Red list. Wintering waterfowl and breeding seabirds declined alarmingly. Shoveler, pintail, herring gull and black-headed gull all joined the Red list but the greatest disappointment was the extinction of the corn bunting since the first analysis in 1999. Many other farmland birds are struggling.

We completed work to restore blanket bog as part of a project to create the largest continuous block of this scarce and fabulous habitat – it sounds dull but it is really important stuff – in the north west of Ireland.

At Portmore Lough nature reserve we restored fen marsh and wet grassland – also the biggest project of this kind in Northern Ireland to date – with help from Polish ponies brought in from the Netherlands, which happily chomp their way through very wet vegetation.

The previous Minister for the Environment in Northern Ireland, Arlene Foster MLA, said her four key priorities were tackling climate change, halting biodiversity loss, managing waste and improving water management.

Following pressure from nine environmental organisations, including the RSPB, the Government published *Foundations for the Future: The Review of Environmental Governance*. An excellent examination of the problems facing environmental governance in Northern Ireland, it presents clear recommendations for improvement.

“Rathlin Island is a shining star among our reserves. A pair of choughs reared three healthy fledglings, the first successful nesting in Northern Ireland for three years and the first on Rathlin since 1989. And the improved Seabird Centre gives the most spectacular view of a seabird colony you’ll ever see in the UK – almost 14,000 people came over last summer and were overwhelmed by the experience.”

Liam McFaul,
Rathlin Island Warden



Redshank by Nigel Blake (rspb-images.com)



“The past year has been a clear demonstration of why our work in Scotland is so crucial – and why we must be resolute in our actions. Birds and the places where they live are under constant threat, as the shocking picture of a poisoned golden eagle found in the Scottish Borders reminds us. We are doing much to protect all birds and other wildlife but it is often in the face of enormous pressure for development on our wild places.”

Stuart Housden, RSPB Director, Scotland

The RSPB in Scotland

Great birds, great places

The fight to protect the peatlands of Lewis against poorly-sited wind farms is described earlier in this review. The decision to refuse the application for massive wind farms across protected areas of high wildlife importance was entirely right. We continue to promote renewable energy in Scotland, but we believe that targets can and must be met without wrecking the very wildlife that such innovative developments are supposed to protect.

New Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for hen harriers (Renfrewshire Heights) and for choughs and corncrakes (Colonsay and Oronsay) were created by the Scottish Government, using data gathered by our conservation staff and local volunteers. We warmly welcomed these, the first SPAs created by the new administration.

We acquired Broubster Leans and Dunnet Head as new nature reserves in north Scotland and acquired a substantial extension to the Rendall Flows on Orkney. Broubster Leans was a long haul, taking nearly 11 years of negotiations. Plans are underway to start restoring wetland habitat in partnership with local farmers.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Nadair funded agreements in the Argyll islands, for choughs and corncrakes, have been converted to reserve agreements with longer term benefits. We successfully completed a £1.1 million programme of restoration and visitor improvement works at our Loch

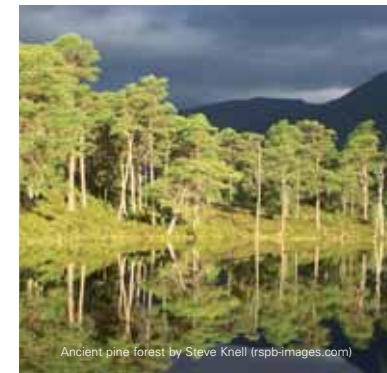
of Strathbeg reserve in Aberdeenshire – which was 90% funded from grant giving bodies including the HLF. The habitat work has been an immediate success with waders and nesting terns.

We concluded two Area Partnership Framework Agreements with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) covering Tayside & Fife, and Vane Farm. Elsewhere, Area Framework Grant funding from SNH increased significantly; an extremely welcome development in our partnership with SNH, making a big difference to the work we can do, for which we are very grateful.

Our corncrake programme in Orkney resulted in the return of birds to our Onziebust reserve on Egilsay and to keeping numbers stable, at seven males, on Papa Vestray, where we also have a reserve.

Our two biggest nature reserves, Abernethy and Forsinard, were both awarded National Nature Reserve status by SNH, an accolade which reflects positively on our management, and the excellence of the reserves.

Funding from HLF for a joint project with the local authority at Baron’s Haugh reserve in Lanarkshire has allowed us to upgrade visitor facilities, employ a community ranger and restore the wetland. This has resulted in much reduced anti-social behaviour at the site and is the first step in a three phase project to enhance the reserve for wildlife, visitors and the community.



Ancient pine forest by Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)

OLD SCOTS PINE FOREST is one of the richest habitats in mainland Scotland and home to the only bird species unique to Britain, the Scottish crossbill. Our Abernethy reserve, now a National Nature Reserve, has extensive tracts of brilliant forest.

MANY PARTS OF THE Scottish uplands are managed to benefit red grouse. These areas can be good for other birds too, as our research has shown. Sadly, though, some moorland managers are still turning a blind eye to the illegal killing of birds of prey such as hen harriers.

The second EU Life peatlands project was completed on time and accepted with much complimentary comment by the European Commission. More than 14,000 ha of land in the Caithness and Sutherland flows benefited, and 8,000 dams were constructed over 12,000 ha of land to help restore the peat and secure this important store of carbon.

In the Western Isles, corn buntings increased modestly in numbers. This isolated population is vulnerable to the abandonment of cropping and the use of crops for silage, and has steadily declined, so any improvement is a cause for celebration.

Two new management agreements for corncrakes and choughs on Colonsay were established and a further 250 ha of land secured for choughs through an extension to the Oa reserve on Islay.

A project was established to link native woods in the Loch Katrine/Inversnaid areas, funded largely by BP through the Scottish Forest Alliance (BP Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and the RSPB). This Great Trossachs Forest Project, covering 14,000 ha in the heart of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, is one of the UK's largest habitat enhancement schemes.

We received excellent profile for our work on Islay when BBC *Springwatch* featured our work on and off reserves. Funding allowed us to employ an information officer on Islay, boosting our profile with visitors and increasing membership recruitment on Islay to around five times previous levels.

The RSPB was represented in the reference group advising the Scottish Government on its new National Planning Framework. Now issued for consultation, it contains strong and positive references to biodiversity, important habitats and site protection.

Illegal killing of our birds of prey has been one of the most heartbreaking areas of work. Indeed, 2007 was the worst year for red kite poisoning since reintroductions began in Scotland in 1989: 12 birds were illegally poisoned. A golden eagle was poisoned in the Scottish Borders; a reintroduced white-tailed eagle is suspected to have been shot in the Angus Glens and another was found poisoned in this area.

Thirty red kites were released near Aberdeen, beginning a five-year

programme. Strong links are being built with local schools and community groups. Fifteen white-tailed eagles were released in the east of Scotland.

Supplied by the Norwegian authorities, these birds excited great interest from Berwick-upon-Tweed to the Loch of Strathbeg all the way up the east coast.

North-East Raptorwatch, involving the Police, SNH, Cairngorms National Park and the RSPB in Scotland expanded to cover 20 estates in rural Aberdeenshire.

Our work to involve and enthuse the public in birds and wildlife continued to increase, with a particular success in the heart of Glasgow, where a field teaching project was launched at Kelvingrove Museum in October. In Edinburgh, we established a *Homes for Wildlife* project. With the Royal Botanic Gardens and the City Council, amongst others, we began a roadshow of events round Scotland's capital city to bring our ideas to new people.

We secured a great deal with *The Famous Grouse* in which the company has launched a new premium whisky, Black Grouse: 50p a bottle is to be donated to our work for the species.

All of this extensive programme of work would not be possible without the support of our growing membership in Scotland and encouragement from our many partner organisations and sponsors. We are extremely grateful for this, and remain optimistic that together we can make a difference for Scotland's wildlife, and help local economies benefit from sustainable development that protects this wonderful resource.

"After two months of feeding and watching them develop it was time for the release. I was terrified. Would they be ready? What if they just fell on the ground? What if they didn't go at all? The first bird looked me straight in the eye as I lowered the hatch. I had to duck as he flapped past my head and just had time to see him clear the spruce thicket and pause as he tried to glide – or was he just losing his nerve? Then he was up and away, the first sea eagle flying free over Fife for a very long time."

Claire Smith
East Scotland Sea Eagle Officer



📍 ONE OF THE single pair of golden eagles in the Scottish Borders was illegally poisoned in 2007: fortunately, a new bird has since appeared and a chick was reared in 2008.

➡️ GUILLEMOTS AND PUFFINS are not the only Scottish seabirds that are feeling the pinch: as sea temperatures rise, so some of our most magnificent seabird colonies have begun to decline after years of reduced breeding success. In Orkney, some arctic tern and kittiwake colonies are empty in the summer as the birds simply give up and leave.



Puffin and guillemot by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

“Was 2007 the beginning of a pivotal period for RSPB finances? It feels like it. In particular, changes to the way we recruit new members brought encouraging progress.”

Alan Sharpe, Finance Director

Money matters

The RSPB's financial year

Recruiting members has long been a key activity for the RSPB. With paper-based recruitment methods no longer working as well as they did, our focus has had to shift towards face-to-face opportunities. In spite of our investment in this area, we were able to continue our conservation programme with an increase of 4% in charitable revenue expenditure. A further £3.8 million was spent on buying land, less than the record levels in the previous couple of years but sufficient to enable us to acquire such gems as extensions to the Nene and Ouse Washes and a holding on the Dee estuary, and new reserves at Broubster Leans and Dunnet Head in Caithness and Lydden Valley in Kent.

Much of our annual income is spent on activities of a recurring nature, such as land management, research and monitoring. High levels of grant and legacy income enabled us to also progress a wide range of work of a project nature. The list is long but visitor facilities feature strongly (for example at Newport Wetlands, Gwent, and the Teesside International Nature Reserve at Saltholme) as does our international work, notably in the rainforests of Indonesia and Sierra Leone.

Some project expenditure appears more mundane, such as upgrading our computer facilities – but our conservation work would be severely hampered without access to modern

analysis, recording, mapping and communication facilities.

Returning to the income side of the story, all eyes have been on member recruitment and how it responded to the changing methods. We recruited more members face-to-face than ever before and with more than 80,000 recruited in total, we achieved our highest level for 10 years. Almost inevitably, recruitment costs rose as we fine-tuned new methods. However, this represents a sound investment in our future and we are confident that these channels will become at least as cost effective as those they replace.

Recruitment is only part of the story (albeit a large and important part). Not for the first time, legacy income exceeded expectations making a huge £27 million contribution to our work – particularly to the project work mentioned above. Indeed, most of our funding streams showed growth, but we single out just three others for specific mention here.

Lotteries: after several years of little or no growth, members and supporters responded fantastically to a slightly new approach to our quarterly raffles and this led to income growth of 38%.

Trading: it is only a little over two years since we grasped the bull by the horns and took our trading operation in-house. To have now reached £13 million turnover, contributing around £1 million



Ouse Washes by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

📌 **THE OUSE WASHES** remain of huge value for wintering wildfowl, but increased summer flooding, outside our control, means few birds nest successfully on the meadows. We have established new areas alongside, beyond the reach of the floodwater.

📌 **SIGNING UP MEMBERS** does not just expand the RSPB's financial support. We have, for the last 10 years, had more than a million members, giving nature a voice. Increasing this passionate support for the protection of wildlife and wild places is vital to our conservation work.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

to conservation, is very satisfying. Thanks to everyone who supported us.

Stick pins: it is amazing how something so small as a pin badge can do so much for conservation. Additions to the range helped boost the contribution in the year to £700,000 – a total of £2.4 million since RSPB pin badges were first introduced.

So, drawing all the threads together, we see a £3 million surplus that could be added to financial reserves.

We aim to keep financial reserves at the lowest level possible – free financial reserves typically represent around three months' expenditure. In recent years we have chosen to draw upon those reserves to help us to maintain momentum on our conservation work,

whilst investing in the changes to member recruitment methods mentioned above. The balance held in reserves is therefore currently at the lower end of their target range.

Last year's significant increase in income gave rise to a modest surplus and hence an increase in financial reserves. On the strength of this, we hope to be able to complete the programme of investment in member recruitment without interruption to our mainstream conservation work and whilst maintaining financial reserves at an acceptable level.

Finally, some good news came from a surprising source – the tax man! Whilst a reduction in the basic rate of income tax is generally received favourably, for charities, the change announced last

year could have meant a reduction in the value of Gift Aid benefit, costing the RSPB alone some £650,000 each year. Charities breathed a collective sigh of relief when the Chancellor announced in March that the Treasury would make good the loss – if only for three years.

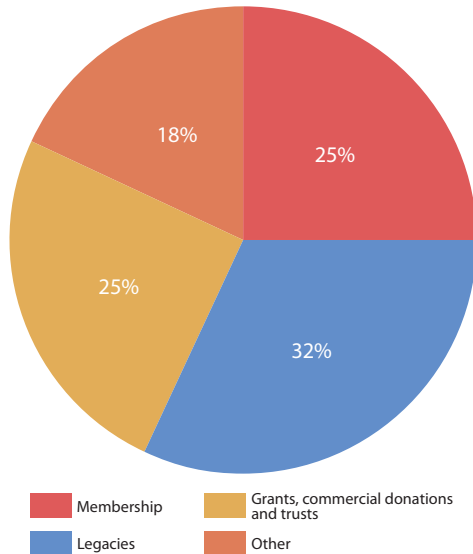
Whether 2007 proves to be a pivotal year or not, it is great to be able to report encouraging progress on a wide range of fronts. If you are one of the many who joined during the past year, you are very welcome and we hope that you too come to regard 2007 as a pivotal year! To everybody else, thank you for your support over the years and should you feel moved to recommend membership to friends or family, we (and hopefully they) would be most appreciative.

“We recruited more members face-to-face than ever before and with more than 80,000 recruited in total, we achieved our highest level for 10 years.”

Gerda Flumm, community marketing

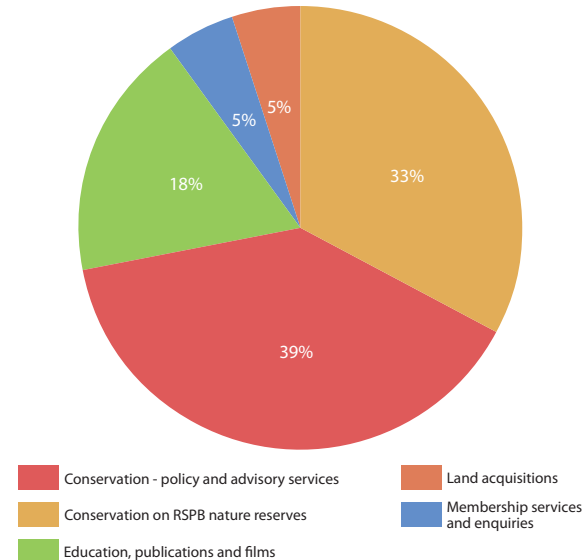
Main income streams 2008

Support from individuals, through membership and their generous legacies, remains vital to the RSPB.



Charitable expenditure

Research, policy work, giving advice to landowners and managing our nature reserves for wildlife add up to the great majority of our expenditure.



Financial Activities

Year ended
31 March 2008

Summary Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities Year ended 31 March 2008

	2008 £'000	2007 £'000
INCOMING RESOURCES		
VOLUNTARY INCOME		
Membership subscriptions	26,304	25,278
Legacies	26,948	24,076
Grants, commercial donations & trusts	21,698	24,103
General donations & reserve entry fees	3,237	3,499
Appeals	3,943	3,234
Local groups	319	321
	82,449	80,511
ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE FUNDS		
Mail order & shop income	13,029	11,588
Media advertising & inserts	1,243	1,283
Lotteries	1,245	900
Commercial sponsorship	603	636
	16,120	14,407
INVESTMENT INCOME & INTEREST	918	798
ACTIVITIES TO FURTHER THE CHARITY'S OBJECTS		
Land & farming income	1,608	1,671
Fees & grants for services	1,520	1,290
Events & media sales	676	679
	3,804	3,640
OTHER INCOME		
Net gains on disposals of fixed assets	613	332
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	103,904	99,688
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
COST OF GENERATING FUNDS		
Costs of generating voluntary income	10,047	8,539
Costs of goods & activities to generate funds	13,535	12,490
Investment management costs	33	63
	23,615	21,092
Net resources available for charitable purposes	80,289	78,596
CHARITABLE REVENUE EXPENDITURE		
Conservation on RSPB nature reserves	24,120	23,740
Conservation – research, policy & advisory services	29,014	28,037
Education, publications & films	12,959	11,687
Membership services & enquiries	3,893	3,705
Total charitable revenue expenditure	69,986	67,169
GOVERNANCE COSTS		
	422	398
Net incoming resources before (losses)/gains	9,881	11,029
(Loss)/gain on investment assets	(1,119)	1,215
Actuarial (loss)/gain on pension scheme	(2,618)	10,003
Net movement in funds	6,144	22,247

Application of net funds year ended 31 March 2008

	2008 £'000	2007 £'000
Net movement in funds brought forward	6,144	22,247
CHARITABLE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		
Nature reserves	7,348	14,838
Other tangible assets	(465)	(169)
Movement on stock, debtors & creditors	(2,200)	2,605
Movement on pension scheme	(1,535)	10,371
Sub total	3,148	27,645
Movement in cash & investments available for future	2,996	(5,398)
Cash & investments available at start of period	16,178	21,576
Total cash & investments available for future activities	19,174	16,178

Statement of net assets at 31 March 2008

CASH & INVESTMENTS AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES		
General purposes	7,159	4,309
Designated	6,729	6,584
Restricted	3,191	2,911
Endowment	2,095	2,374
Total cash & investments available for future activities	19,174	16,178
Nature reserves	100,302	92,954
Other tangible assets	4,130	4,595
Stock, debtors & creditors	4,435	6,635
Net assets excluding pension liability	128,041	120,362
Pension liability	(10,964)	(9,429)
Net assets	117,077	110,933

AUDITORS' STATEMENT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE RSPB

We have examined the summary financial statements which comprise the summary consolidated statement of financial activities, application of net funds and statement of net assets.

This report is made solely to the Charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with *Accounting and reporting by charities: a statement of recommended practice 2005*. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors
The trustees are responsible for preparing the summary financial statements in accordance with the recommendations of *Accounting and reporting by charities: a statement of recommended practice*. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statements with the full financial statements and Trustees' Annual Report.

We also read the other information contained in the summarised annual report as described in the contents section and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work having regard to Bulletin 1999/6 *The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement and Practice Note 11 The audit of charities* issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom. Our report on the charity's full financial statements describes the basis of our audit opinion on those financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of the RSPB for the year ended 31 March 2008.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
2 New Street Square, London EC4A 3BZ

1 July 2008

THE FULL AUDITED ACCOUNTS were approved on 1 July 2008 and, together with the Annual Report, have been submitted to the Charity Commission. The opinion of the auditor was unqualified. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted. Copies can be obtained, free of charge, from the Director of Finance, The RSPB, UK Headquarters, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL

Signed on behalf of the Council:



Ian Newton, Chairman, 1 July 2008

Acknowledgments 2007–2008

Thank you for supporting us

Members

The support and loyalty of our members is critical to the success and achievements of the RSPB. Meeting the rigorous conservation targets that we set would not be possible without the enormous contributions that members make. Members help in many ways, all of them equally important: financially, through volunteering, by supporting RSPB campaigns through letter writing and by helping to deliver RSPB projects on the ground through local groups.

Community Groups

RSPB local groups, RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups and RSPB Phoenix groups worked unstintingly over the year. Local groups provide a great focus for us in local communities, involve many people in our work and raised over £309,000 for RSPB conservation projects. Wildlife Explorers (our young members) raised more than £47,000 to help Save the Albatross.

On behalf of RSPB local groups and Wildlife Explorer groups throughout the UK, we would like to thank Awards for All (supported by the “good cause” Lottery distributors across the UK) for their continued support of local projects through their community grants scheme.

Volunteers

The RSPB enjoyed the support of over 14,000 volunteers last year, giving the RSPB a gift of time of 774,000 hours. This is equivalent to an extra 430 full-time staff working for nature conservation. These volunteers helped with virtually every aspect of the RSPB’s work, and we cannot thank them enough for their generous support. Additionally, 395,000 people gave an hour of their

time to participate in the RSPB’s Big Garden Birdwatch.

Legacies

Once again, we are deeply impressed by the generosity of people who remember the RSPB in their wills. This income makes a tremendous difference to the amount of conservation work the RSPB is able to undertake. Our posthumous thanks go to each and every one. We would like to recognise them all by name, but this is not possible. However, there are a few people that we would like to mention:

Jean Batten
Mair Huberta Bonnell Bonnell-Lewis
Sidney George Cox
Anne Caroline Davies
Clara Maria Kahn
Ernest Albert Lodge
Frank Anthony Moss
John Paul Penney
Dorothy Mary Phillips
Selwyn Roberts
Frank Taylor
George William Cresswell Turner and
Joyce Mary Pemberton (formerly
Turner)
Anita Agnes Unsworth

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided essential support for RSPB projects to restore and secure natural heritage for current and future generations to enjoy. The RSPB is indebted to HLF for its continued support for our work.

Charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations and individual donors

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

H B Allen Charitable Trust

A J H Ashby Will Trust
Mrs Edith May Austin Discretionary Trust
BBC Wildlife Fund
BirdLife International
The Lilian Browse Charitable Trust
The Geoffrey Burton Charitable Trust
Cemlyn-Jones Trust
City Bridge Trust
Conservation International – Global Conservation Fund
Ernest Cook Trust
Helen Jean Cope Trust
The Estate of Ella de Gray Jones
Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Etty’s Trust
Doris Field Charitable Trust
Friends of Strathbeg
The Gannochy Trust
The Garfield Weston Foundation
Gatwick Airport Community Trust
The Helen and Horace Gillman Trusts
Douglas Glanfield Memorial Trust
Glasgow Natural History Society
The A B Grace Charitable Trust
The Greenham Common Trust
The Ernest Kleinwort Foundation
The Kulika Charitable Trust 1981
The Lacey Foundation
The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation
The Audrey Emma Lamb Charitable Trust
Miss W E Lawrence 1973 Charitable Settlement
A G Leventis Foundation
The Michael Marks Charitable Trust
The Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust
The National Trust
The Nature Trust (Sandy)
Miss Norah Loughton North (deceased)
Northern Rock Foundation
North of England Zoological Society
The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
Michael Otto Stiftung
David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Paignton Zoo Environmental Park
The Jack Patston Charitable Trust
Restore UK

The Robertson Trust
Helen Roll Charity
Royal Navy Birdwatching Society
Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation
The Shears Foundation
Teesside Environmental Trust
The Tubney Charitable Trust
US National Marine Fisheries
The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
The Wildlife Trusts
Mrs Mollie Willis Will Trust
WWF
John Young Charitable Settlement

Landfill Communities Fund

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

Aberdeen Countryside Project
Aberdeenshire Council
Augean Landfill
Belfast City Council
Better Belfast Landfill Communities Fund
Biffaward
Brett Environment Trust
CEMEX Community Fund
Cory Environmental Trust in Britain
County Durham Environment Trust Ltd
Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust
Down District Council
Essex Environmental Trust
Gloucestershire Environmental Trust
GrantScape
Green Leeds Limited
Hanson Environment Fund
The Highland Council
Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust
LaFarge Aggregates Ltd
Lancashire Environmental Fund
Mersey Waste Holdings Ltd
Newport City Council Landfill Communities Fund
Newry & Mourne District Council
Perth & Kinross Quality of Life Trust
Premier Waste Management
RWEmpower
SITA Trust
Solway Heritage
Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment with funds from Viridor Credits’

Oxfordshire Fund
Ulster Wildlife Trust Landfill Communities Fund
Veolia Environmental Trust
Veolia ES Cleanaway Havering Riverside Trust
Veolia ES Cleanaway Mardyke Trust
Veolia ES Cleanaway Pitsea Marshes Trust
Viridor Credits
Viridor Credits via Suffolk Environmental Trust
Waste Recycling Group Ltd (WRG) through GrantScape’s Biodiversity Challenge Fund
Waste Recycling Group Ltd (WRG) through Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN)

Business Supporters and Trading Partners

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

A&C Black (Publishers) Ltd
ADAS
Alton Garden Centre
ATH Resources
Aylett Nurseries Ltd
Bemrose Promotional Products
Bents Garden Centre
The Blue Diamond Group
Boehringer Ingelheim
BP through the Scottish Forest Alliance
British Airways Assisting Conservation Scheme
Burston Garden Centre
The Caravan Club
CEMEX Poland
Chevron
Clive Mattock Fundraising Ltd
Concept Research Ltd
The Co-operative Bank plc
Co-operative Retail
Creagh Concrete
Creative Approach Marketing
D J Squire & Co, Ltd
Dorling Kindersley Ltd
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
The Famous Grouse
Fulham Heating Merchants Ltd

Fundraising Initiatives Ltd
Garden Bird Supplies
Goldman Sachs
Greene King plc
Hanson Aggregates Ltd
Haskins Garden Centres
Highway Garden & Leisure
Homebase
The Independent Newspaper
Jarrod Calendars
Jordans
Lisnaskea Community Enterprises Ltd
Lochcarron of Scotland
Lush Retail Ltd
Nikon
Northumbrian Water
Notcutts Garden Centres
Pets at Home
The Puppet Company
RBS
Redeem plc
RWE Thames Water plc
Sabic Petrochemicals Ltd
Sainsbury’s
Scottish and Southern Energy plc
Sembcorp Utilities plc
Severn Trent Water plc
Southern Water
Support Direct Ltd
Suttons Consumer Products Ltd
Swarovski Optik KG
Talisman Energy
Tesco Stores Ltd
Turcan Connell
United Utilities
The Van Hage Garden Company
Viking Optical Ltd
Walkers Snacks Ltd
Webbs of Wychbold
Welsh Power
Wessex Water
WHSmith
Wild Republic (UK) Ltd
Woodmansterne Publications Ltd
Zeon Ltd

Support from statutory sector and other public bodies

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

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Environmental Development Fund) for Anglesey

BIG Lottery Fund
 Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme jointly supported by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Natural Heritage
 Bonn Convention for Migratory Species (CMS)
 Broxbourne Borough Council
 Cairngorms National Park Authority
 Cherwell District Council
 Communities and Local Government (CLG)
 CLG via Cambridgeshire County Council
 CLG via Gravesham Borough Council and Kent Thameside Delivery Board
 Community Environmental Renewal Scheme managed by Forward Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Executive
 Countryside Council for Wales
 The Crown Estate through the Marine Stewardship Fund
 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
 Defra through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by ACRE (through the COMMA Fund)
 Defra through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by the Minerals Industry Research Organisation (MIRO)
 Defra through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by Natural England
 Defra – Darwin Initiative
 Defra – Partnership for Environment Cooperation in Europe Fund
 Department for International Development (DfID) – Civil Society Challenge Fund
 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
 Dumfries and Galloway LEADER+
 East of England Development Agency
 East of England Regional Assembly
 East Herts Council
 East Midlands Development Agency
 Enfys Grant Scheme funded by the BIG Lottery Fund, administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)
 English Heritage
 Environment Agency
 Environment Agency Wales

Environment & Heritage Service
 Environment Wales
 European Commission – DG Environment Direct Grant
 European Commission – DG Research
 European Commission – European Development Fund
 European Commission – Tropical Forests and Other Forests in Developing Countries budget line
 European Commission – LIFE-Nature
 European LEADER+ Fund (delivered by the Mid Kent partnership)
 European LEADER+ Fund (delivered by the WARR partnership)
 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
 ERDF through the Eastern Scotland European Partnership
 EU Objective 1 programme through the Welsh Assembly Government (European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF))
 EU Objective 2 programme through the Welsh Assembly Government (WEFO)
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office / DfID – Overseas Territories Environment Programme
 Forestry Commission England
 Forestry Commission Scotland
 Forestry Commission Wales
 French Government's Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)
 Gateshead Council
 German Government's Centrum für Internationale Migration und Entwicklung
 Global Environment Facility
 Government Office for the North East
 Heritage Lottery Fund
 High Weald AONB Sustainable Development Fund
 Isle of Anglesey County Council
 Lancashire County Council
 LEADER+ in the East Riding of Yorkshire
 LEADER+ in the Somerset Levels and Moors
 Local Regeneration Fund through Newport City Council
 Lomond and Rural Stirling LEADER+
 London Thames Gateway Development Corporation

Mid Bedfordshire District Council
 National Assembly for Wales
 National Parks & Wildlife Service
 Natural England
 Natural England – Countdown 2010
 Biodiversity Action Fund
 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, managed by the Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership
 New Forest National Park Authority
 Sustainable Development Fund
 North East Lincolnshire Council
 Northern Ireland Tourist Board
 North Pennines AONB Partnership
 North Pennines LEADER+ Programme
 Northwest Regional Development Agency
 Orkney Islands Council
 Rail Link Countryside Initiative
 River Nene Regional Park through the Green Infrastructure grant scheme
 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
 Scottish Executive
 Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
 Scottish Government Science Engagement Grants Scheme
 Scottish Natural Heritage
 South Downs Joint Committee
 Sustainable Development Fund
 South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
 Staffordshire County Council
 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
 Suffolk County Council
 Suffolk Development Agency
 Surrey Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund
 Tees Valley Partnership
 Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation
 The Welsh Assembly Government
 The Welsh Assembly Government Department of Economy and Transport
 The Welsh Assembly Government through the Department of Economy and Transport (Visit Wales)
 The Welsh Assembly Government through the Department of Rural Affairs

Looking ahead

The work you've been reading about is only possible thanks to your support.

Every year the challenges are greater, as is the cost of meeting them. Saving nature's most threatened wildlife and special places is an expensive business. The cost of failing to do so – especially for the generations that follow us – is far greater.

You can help ensure that we don't fail future generations by making a donation. Or, if you are not already a member, please add your voice by joining us from just £3 a month.

Call us now on 01767 680551. Thank you.

Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.