

A celebration of the year

April 2020 to March 2021

For Wildlife • For Suffolk • For Everyone

Thank you!

During this most challenging year for society, the nature on our doorsteps has nurtured and sustained us.

Your Board of Trustees is immensely proud that Suffolk Wildlife Trust has played our part in supporting our county through the coronavirus crisis. Our nature reserves remained open throughout, providing solace or a joyful escape into the natural world for the communities they are rooted in.

This year, as we celebrate our 60th anniversary, the vitality and determination of the Trust which comes from our Members, is stronger than ever. In this decade of biodiversity and climate crisis, society faces many more challenges and the collective impact of our individual actions will underpin the positive change for nature that we need.

As a grassroots nature charity, this is Suffolk Wildlife Trust's great strength and our vision 'for a wilder Suffolk, where nature is thriving and abundant, because everyone is doing more to help' reflects this. Our team of skilled wildlife advisors, advocates and educators will help create this shift and inspire a countywide movement for nature, which we are calling Team Wilder.

The way the charity operates is set out in our Articles of Association and as a responsible and well-run charity, your Board of Trustees have reviewed these this year. Your Trust is in good heart, sustained by the support and commitment of our members. Thank you.

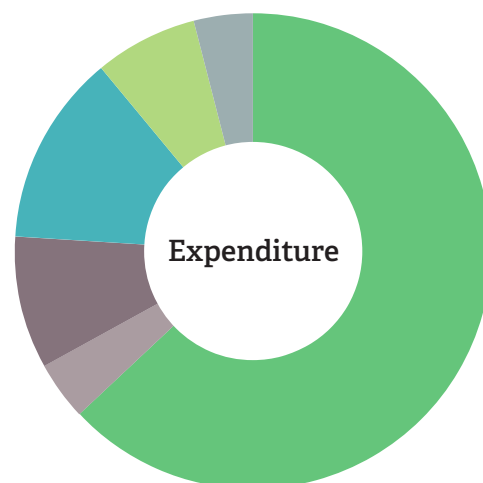
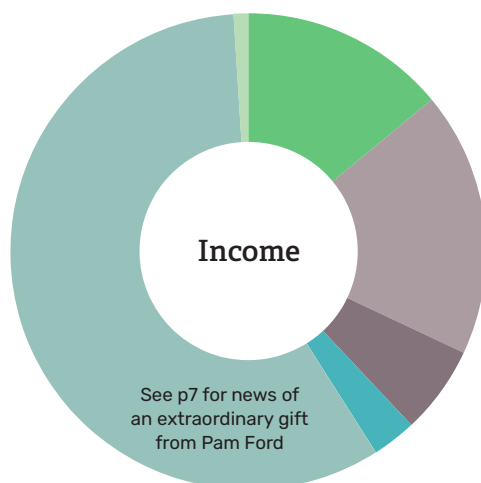
Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to Julian Roughton, who retired in May 2020 after leading the Trust for 20 exceptional years. We welcome Christine Luxton as the Charity's new CEO.

Nigel Farthing, Chair



Financial summary

Financial summary for the year to March 2021. Thank you to all our members and supporters for your commitment to the Trust.



Incoming resources	£000s
● Members' subscriptions & donations	984
● Fundraising & grants	1327
● SWT Trading company income	406
● Learning activities & other	214
● Legacies	4189
● Investment income	78
Total incoming resources	7198

Net incoming resources	3971
Fund balances brought forward	20756
Fund balances carried forward	24727

*Expenditure excludes funds spent on land and centres, which is shown in fixed assets

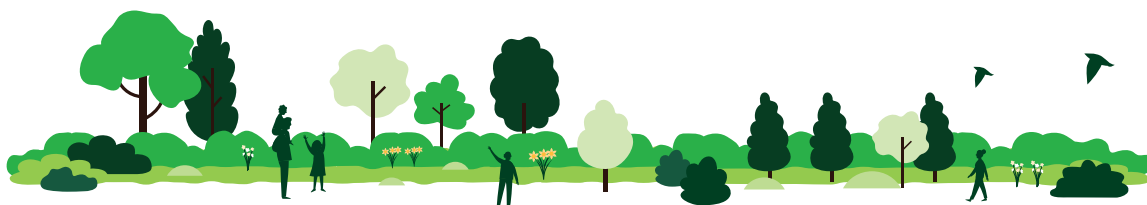
** Includes designated, unrestricted and restricted funds

Resources expended	£000s
● Nature reserves & conservation	2099
● Fundraising & grants	120
● SWT Trading company costs	305
● Learning activities	435
● Membership	227
● Support, management & admin	118
Total resources expended*	3304

Analysis of group net assets between funds

Fixed assets	
Nature reserves	12833
Nature reserves purchased this year	163
Tangible assets incl visitor centres	3433
Tangible assets purchased this year	495
Net current assets**	7803
	24727

The timing of grant and legacy income is often before expenditure, therefore income and expenditure are not always in the same financial year. For larger projects, expenditure can span multiple years. Legacy gifts are set aside for significant projects and land purchase.



Trustees' statement

These are the summarised accounts. For a full understanding of the financial affairs of Suffolk Wildlife Trust you can view the full audited annual accounts on our website or request a copy from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Brooke House, Ashbocking, Ipswich IP6 9JY.

The annual accounts have been audited by Larking Gowen and received an unqualified opinion. They were approved by Trustees on 22 July 2021 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and Registrar of Companies.

The Trustees' target level of free reserves, equating to 3-6 months establishment and core staff costs, currently equates to £650k. Funds above this level are designated to specific projects, particularly the acquisition of land as nature reserves.

James Alexander, Hon Treasurer

Auditor's statement

In our opinion these summarised accounts are consistent with the full statutory accounts on which we have reported with an unqualified opinion. Approved 22 July 2021.



Cherishing our nature reserves



Arger Fen

Wilding the former arable fields is creating ideal conditions for reptiles, with increasing sightings of common lizard, slow worm and grass snake. Patchy plant cover on the thin free-draining soils creates insect-rich feeding areas whilst large brash piles near the ponds and in the open fields offer cover and hibernation sites.



Black Bourn Valley

The wet autumn reaped the benefit of river channel restoration work, with the river able to function more naturally. The high rainfall quickly brought the river to life, creating meanders, depositing silts on slack water areas and over-topping to leave wet flushes on the flood plain for wintering wildfowl.



Blaxhall Common and Blaxhall-Tunstall Link

Encouraging news from the heaths, with silver-studded blue butterfly continuing to increase their range on the southern half of the common and both nightjar and woodlark holding territories on the Link – the first surveys to confirm they are using the site.



Bonny Wood

Thanks to woodland ride management by the weekend volunteer team, butterflies are booming. Dozens of silver-washed fritillaries were recorded, purple hairstreak is common in the oak canopy, white admiral numbers are increasing and purple emperor have been recorded for the last six summers.



Bradfield Woods NNR

Dormice continue to thrive, nesting in the thick bramble along the ride edges. Isolated populations are vulnerable and it is heartening that our nest-tube surveys show they are also doing well in the surrounding hedgerows, using them as tramlines to spread from the wood into the wider landscape.



Castle Marshes

Surveys of the dyke system show fen raft spiders are thriving following the 2010 introduction. Coronavirus restricted the activities of the volunteer surveyors, so it was a tremendous boost to get photographic evidence from a local visitor of a spider on the River Waveney, over 500m from the original release site.

Amidst the challenges facing society, nature's calendar prevailed. With the restrictions on travel for much of the year, we took to the digital world with a weekly wildlife update from our reserve staff across Suffolk. We are delighted to retrace our steps around the county and share some of the year's highlights with you.



Church Farm Marshes

A chorus of migrant birds, including garden warbler, whitethroat, chiffchaff and blackcap echoed through the hedgerows, and a nightingale held territory for the first time in over a decade. An indication of the value of the patches of dense bramble scrub and a wilder, less 'tidy' landscape.



Combs Wood

The spring display of oxlips, early-purple orchids and ransoms was soothing balm during the early weeks of lockdown. Oxlip, the county flower of Suffolk was thought to be a cowslip/primrose hybrid until the botanist Henry Doubleday proved otherwise in 1842, enlisting Charles Darwin to verify his work.



Darsham Marshes

This year we added a bumblebee survey to the reserve monitoring programme. 292 individual bees from 10 species were recorded across 6 monthly walks. The most numerous were buff-tailed bumblebee and white-tailed bumblebee, followed by large red-tailed, common carder and tree bumblebee.



Foxburrow Farm

In a curious twist, an antlion colony has established in the sandy soil under the steps to the reserve office. A speciality of the Suffolk Sandlings, the antlion larva makes a pit in the sand to trap ants, woodlice and other invertebrates which are killed and the nutrients sucked from their body.



Hen Reedbeds

Timed beautifully to coincide with the easing of coronavirus restrictions, autumn visitors were enthralled as starlings congregated each evening from sites around the Blyth Estuary – flocking into a murmuration of up to 35,000 individuals before flowing spectacularly down into the reeds.



Knettishall Heath

Large colonies of heather bee *Colletes succinctus* and other solitary wasps have been found within scrapes and banks. Ground disturbance from rabbits and especially the Exmoor ponies' dust baths help to keep these areas of bare ground open and are a vital part of the Breckland ecosystem.

Increasing both diversity and abundance is vital to reducing the vulnerability of our wildlife. Nature reserves have a key role to play in this.



Lound Lakes

Suffolk's most northerly point offered a dazzling display of common spotted and heath spotted orchids. But it was the northward march of wasp spider, a relatively recent arrival in the UK from continental Europe, that marked the summer, with females on their large orb webs found in grassland areas across the reserve.



Martins' Meadows

This lovely reserve is quintessential old Suffolk with traditional orchards enveloped by flower-rich hay meadows. Of the three meadows, Church Meadow is the most botanically rich. Seed from green hay has given the other two a floristic boost, with both green-winged orchid and dyer's greenweed now increasing in number.



Redgrave & Lopham Fen

Four marsh harrier chicks fledged on the fen, to the delight of local volunteers who had been following the adults' behaviour. Their spectacular 'sky dancing' courtship display sees the male circling at height before diving towards the ground, and the female inverting her flight and locking talons with the male.



Snape Marshes

Southern marsh orchids flowered in profusion in early June, with well over 1000 spikes counted. 11 European white-fronted geese and a Tundra bean goose dropped by in December. These are new records for the reserve and were a splinter group of birds arriving en masse, headed for North Warren reserve a few miles north east.



Trimley Marshes

On 11 October, a lucky few witnessed the arrival of over 15,000 redwings which briefly settled overnight at Trimley Marshes. Part of a wave of winter thrushes that made landfall in October, these were a spectacular reminder of the sheer scale of bird movements that happen along our coast.



Winks Meadow

It was a good year for orchids with pyramidal orchid, bee orchid, green-winged orchid, common spotted-orchid and twayblade as well as several frog orchids. Another highlight is sulphur clover, a nationally scarce plant that has a stronghold on the chalky clay soils of high Suffolk.



An enduring gift for nature

Over the Trust's 60 years, many of the county's most precious wild places have been saved as nature reserves. The generosity of people who have remembered the Trust in their Will have made this possible. Their support is etched into the history of these special places.

Pam and George Ford were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust for 35 years and we got to know them well. They loved their Walberswick home and the wild beauty of the Blyth estuary. Both keen naturalists, they supported many reserve purchases, but the place that captured their hearts was Captain's Wood. When George died, Pam helped us buy the adjacent meadows in his memory and then, when she died in early 2020, left their home and life savings to the Trust.

Pam and George had shared their intention to remember the Trust in their Will with us, but we were truly humbled to discover the scale of their generosity. Their gift of over £3 million is by far the largest legacy the Trust has ever received and, like all legacies, comes with the responsibility to use it wisely, to create exciting and ambitious opportunities for the nature of Suffolk that they cared so deeply about.



George Ford



Pam Ford

The generosity of nature lovers who remembered Suffolk Wildlife Trust in their Will has underpinned every reserve purchase in recent years.

Legacy gifts are recorded in our Book of Remembrance to commemorate the generosity of those who remember the Trust in their Wills. This year we remember, with thanks:

Geoffrey Crabb
Betty Gooden
Brian Goodwin
Pamela Ford
Mary Hall
Eric Holton

Vincent Horton
Cyril Matthews
Kathleen Meadows
Monica Mellor
Margaret Metson
Jean Moscrop

John Pemberton
Peter Rogerson
Jane Sherwood
Gordon Simpkin
Sylvia Small
William Smith

Eleanor Stinson
Lorna Turner
Anthony Venison
Jeanne Walker
Anne Walton
Betty Wisbey

Speaking up for nature

At a time of climate and biodiversity emergency we have raised our voice for nature, in Suffolk and collectively with The Wildlife Trusts.



Long awaited Environment Bill

One of the frustrations of the year, was the delay to the Environment Bill, the pivotal piece of legislation to put the Prime Minister's commitment to turn around nature's decline by 2030 into law.

In May 2021, the Environment Bill was included in the third successive Queen's Speech and must now be a legislative priority. A clear, legally-binding target to reverse the loss of nature within a decade would ensure every part of Government takes urgent action to help bring nature back. We and our partners in conservation will continue to push for this and feed into the Bill to secure the legal framework needed for nature's recovery.

Your Guide to Taking Action for Insects can be downloaded from our website.



Action for Insects

Throughout the year, The Wildlife Trusts UK-wide Action for Insects campaign kept the spotlight on the urgent need to reverse decades of population declines in insects.

The causes of insect declines are much debated, but almost certainly include habitat loss, chronic exposure to mixtures of pesticides and climate change. The consequences are clear; if insect declines are not halted, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems will collapse, with profound consequences for human wellbeing.

Fortunately, it is not too late; few insects have gone extinct so far, and populations can rapidly recover. We urgently need to stop all routine and unnecessary use of pesticides and create more, and better connected, insect friendly habitat in our gardens, towns, cities and countryside, as part of a nature recovery network.

In spring 2020 we launched a new practical guide to encourage everyone do their bit to help the UK's struggling bees, butterflies, moths, bugs and beetles.

The loss of the abundance of our everyday insects must be a rallying call to society to act.



In our challenge to Sizewell C, we have pushed hard for better mitigation for rare species including natterjack toad.



A new Wildbelt

The collapse in the abundance of nature means many of our ecosystems are not functioning as they should. Lack of wild places and fragmentation of those that remain has had a disastrous effect.

During lockdown people across the country reconnected with the natural world around them, appreciating the positive impact nature had on their health and wellbeing. Now, as we start to recover, society needs to put nature at the heart of our plans.

This year, The Wildlife Trusts called on Government to introduce a new landscape designation for England called 'Wildbelt.' A way to recognise land that individuals, communities, businesses or farmers have dedicated to nature's recovery, from the creation of wildlife corridors through towns to natural regeneration of woodland, restoration of rivers and rewilding.

Challenging Sizewell C proposals

Defending the unique and precious nature of the Suffolk coast from the devastation that the construction of Sizewell C threatens to wreak has been endlessly frustratingly, with proposals changing and emerging at every turn.

This year we partnered with the RSPB to create a stronger, unified, voice for nature and in November, Springwatch presenters Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin launched our joint 'Love Minsmere' e-action.

In just over 12 weeks, 104,836 people signed to say they share the RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust's concerns about the impact on nature of the proposals for the construction of Sizewell C. This was presented as part of our evidence to the Planning Inspectorate – eclipsing the number of signatures and responses to all previous Sizewell C consultations and campaigns.



One of our main concerns about the proposals for Sizewell C is that we do not believe that EDF have justified the loss of such a large area of Sizewell Marshes SSSI.

Carlton Marshes

This year saw the long years of planning, preparation and fundraising for Carlton Marshes come to fruition – both for wildlife and for people.

Carlton Marshes has been transformed into a magnificent landscape for nature, with the water-filled patchwork of pools, dykes, scrapes and sluices recreating the sense of Broadland that had been lost in the decades of cultivation.

From rafts of wintering duck to the elegant flypast of spoonbills, the tottering steps of tiny lapwing chicks to the squadrons of swifts, Carlton Marshes shows what can be achieved for nature when we have ambition and the backing of thousands of like-minded supporters.

In this first year since the new wetland habitats were created, Carlton Marshes has offered a glimpse of what's to come. It has been the most productive site on the Suffolk coast for breeding waders, including redshank, lapwing and avocet, 7 marsh harrier chicks were fledged, great white egrets have been present all year, common crane have dropped by, snipe, wigeon, teal, pintail, gadwall and lapwing overwintered on the scrapes and the 27 species of

dragonfly and damselfly that have been recorded here are gradually tracing their way through the network of new dykes that criss-cross the marshes.

Marsh sow-thistle, yellow loosestrife and milk parsley (the caterpillar foodplant of swallowtail the iconic Broadland butterfly) were recorded throughout the tall herb fen along with cotton-grass, southern marsh orchid and Devil's-bit scabious.



JOHN FERGUSON; LAPWING CHICKS: ALAMY; COUNTRYFILE: SARAH GROVES



Lapwing chicks are a heartening indication of the new opportunities for nature this vast new wetland has created.

The team from Countryfile filming in August 2020.



The new visitor facilities opened gradually through the year as coronavirus restrictions eased.

The Tower Viewpoint is dedicated to Jane Margaret Forbes.



Thank you to our project partners & the thousands of individuals & funders that helped us.



Thank you to our business supporters

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UK Power Networks

Gold Investors

Abellio
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Roger Balmer Design

Bronze Investors

Our Bronze Investors are listed on our website.

And our funders

We are grateful to the many individuals, Charitable Trusts, grant-making bodies and statutory organisations that support us, including:

Alfred Williams CT
Anglian Water
D C Moncrieff CT
Dedham Vale AONB
D'Oyly Carte CT
Environment Agency
Ganzoni CT
Geoffrey Watling Charity
Green Recovery Challenge Fund
People's Postcode Lottery
Saxham Trust
Stuart Heath Charitable Settlement
Suffolk Secrets
Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
Swire CT

Thanks to their commitment, we can keep doing more for nature across Suffolk.



Local children were thrilled when the wild playscape opened.

A landscape for wildlife and people

In this year of coronavirus, the enormous value to society of creating a landscape-scale nature reserve close to where people live has become obvious. With acres of space, wildlife can thrive alongside the many thousands of visitors who have savoured the freedom of the big skies and open space during lockdown – in all there are 16km of trails around the reserve.

As Sir David Attenborough observed, “No one will protect what they don’t care about;

and no one will care about what they have never experienced”.

Creating opportunities for everyone to get close to and learn about nature is central to the Trust’s mission to bring nature back. So it was a great sadness that so many of our learning activities at Carlton Marshes and our other centres were curtailed by coronavirus – and a great joy when we were able to open eyes and minds to the natural world once again.

Thank you to all our volunteers

Volunteers make it possible for the Trust to achieve so much for nature. From our Board of Trustees to our teenage Young Wardens, volunteers bring integrity and community to everything we do and make the Trust the vibrant, ambitious, grounded charity that we are.

For the Trust, one of the many adaptations to coronavirus over the past year was learning to cope without many of our volunteers – and we really missed you!

The enforced hiatus to social contact meant volunteering in its many forms came to a halt... reserve work parties, Wildlife

Group events, school visits, guided walks, magazine delivery, wildlife surveys.

The friendships and opportunities to learn from fellow wildlife enthusiasts are part of what make volunteering so rewarding. It is a great relief that much of this activity has now been able to resume.



Volunteer of the year 2020 – Paul Holness

Paul is a well known face at Lackford Lakes where he has been volunteering for eighteen years.

A highly respected bird expert with a passion for all wildlife, Paul is an outstanding mentor to many. He is generous with his knowledge and time and able to see the intrinsic magic in nature. The Lackford Lakes team and countless others have learnt so much from him over the years. Through his guided walks and courses, he has inspired many to discover 'the conservationist within' – and play their part in securing a better future for nature.



JOHN FERGUSON, KINGFISHER: JOHN GOODAY ALAMY



Registered charity no 262777

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Thank you all!

We are proud to be part of a UK-wide network of Wildlife Trusts, working together to bring nature back.

