



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Making Suffolk wilder

April 2022 to March 2023



For Wildlife • For Suffolk • For Everyone



Thank you!

As members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, we share a commitment to the natural world and to playing our part in securing a wilder future.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust's ambition to make the decade to 2030 the one in which we bring nature back underpins the decisions made by your Board of Trustees about where to focus the charity's resources.

We want our county to once again bask in the abundance of wildlife which enriches and brightens all our lives. Over the course of the year, through events, magazines and e-newsletters, Trust Members will have seen our ambition and determination to succeed.

The purchase of Martlesham Wilds was a highlight of the year, bringing this wonderful stretch of the Deben estuary into the Trust's protective ownership, and the anticipation of seeing nature reclaim the landscape.

As we look to bring nature back across Suffolk, our nature reserves are more precious than ever. Priceless in their own right, in our wilder future they will have a renewed sense of purpose as the ecological hotspots that can seed nature's recovery into the countryside around them.

Our investment in advice, support and advocacy will help to bring nature back, piece by piece, creating connectivity across the landscape and the wildness nature craves. Your support makes this possible and roots us in the communities we live in. Thank you.

James Alexander, Chair





Making Suffolk wilder

The natural world of our county is a shadow of what it once was. Suffolk Wildlife Trust's vision is for a wilder future:

A wilder Suffolk, where nature is thriving and abundant, because everyone is doing more to help.

This year we introduced our bold new strategy 'Bringing Nature Back' to move us towards this. It focuses our efforts to 2030 on mobilising our county to scale-up the pace of change in wildlife's favour. To protect the wildlife we still have and bring back what we've lost.

We have three goals to steer us.

The **first** is for more of Suffolk's land and seas to be connected and well looked after for nature by 2030. Ecological science indicates we need to restore a minimum of 30% of the world's land and seas to enable nature to recover and thrive.

We are uniquely placed to empower local action for nature in our county and will champion 30% as a collective target for Suffolk, which every sector of society must help to achieve. We estimate Suffolk has only half of the habitat needed for an

effective nature recovery network. The scale and pace of change society must commit to is unprecedented, but vital.

The **second** of our big goals is to get more people in Suffolk acting for nature & climate. Social science suggests we need to get 1 in 4 people taking action for nature to drive a societal shift towards choices which favour nature becoming the norm.

There are so many ways to make Suffolk wilder again if enough of us care. Our 2030 strategy puts more emphasis on supporting community-led activities and developing training networks, so we create ripples of activity which build their own momentum across the county.

Our **third** goal is all about those ripples. If we are to drive positive change for nature at scale and pace, then we need to empower our volunteers and supporters to lead that change. We need our people to fund new ways to enable other people, and crucially a new generation of nature activists, to take the baton from us and make it theirs.



SEA HOLLY: ADORBE STOCK; BLUE TIT: NATUREPL.COM; BEES: ADORBE STOCK; REDSHANK: ALAMY; CHILDREN: ADORBE STOCK; LITTLE OWL/OTTER: NATUREPL.COM; SILVER-WASHED FRITILLARY: ALAMY; WOMAN: JOHN FERGUSON; FRONT COVER: BLACK-TAILED GODWIT: NATUREPL.COM

A year for wildlife



Putting water back into the landscape

At our wetland nature reserves, the seasonal cycle of habitat management is geared to provide areas of open water and fresh, wet mud for waders and wildfowl.

New shallow water scrapes created at Snape Marshes during the winter months showed the almost instant impact of water with black-tailed godwit, teal and wigeon assembling over winter and lapwing, oystercatcher and redshank chicks feeding around the soft, muddy edges this spring.

Of course, it's not just birds that benefit from keeping the marshes wet. Snape Marshes is known for its displays of southern marsh orchid and this year there were thousands of flower spikes across the marshes.



A spectacular spring on our meadows

Spring 2022 saw the best show of early purple orchids at Martins' Meadow for two decades. The botanical spectacle was recreated later in the year with the autumn flowering of meadow saffron.

Our meadow reserves are precious fragments of a Suffolk that has long disappeared, when every farm had flower-rich hay meadows to feed their livestock in the winter months.

We will continue to manage these botanically rich meadows in the traditional way, with a hay cut and grazing. As we work with others to bring nature back, the green hay from Suffolk's ancient meadows is a precious local seed source for enriching new sites. We now have 47 landowners on our green hay register, with 14 donor sites.



Championing ambitious nature recovery targets

Two members of our Youth Board joined a small delegation of Wildlife Trust youth ambassadors to Downing Street. They handed in a 60,000-strong petition calling for more ambitious Government targets to halt and reverse nature's decline, ahead of their publication in December.

Megan, aged 17, said "In my area of Suffolk, the destruction of habitats and loss of endangered species continues. I'm proud to represent the voices of everyone concerned about the future of our natural environment and hope the Government will take action now to recover biodiversity before it becomes too late."

In the face of frightening predictions about nature and climate, many young people are understandably anxious. Our Youth Board is helping to channel this concern into meaningful action.

APRIL
2022

MAY
2022

JUNE
2022



Standing up for nature

After working for over a decade to stand up for nature on the Suffolk coast, we were deeply disappointed that the Government approved plans for Sizewell C. Whilst we secured some significant improvements for wildlife, the landscape will be irreversibly changed.

Across Suffolk we remain relentless in trying to positively influence planning policy and fighting nature's corner. 89% of our responses to planning applications resulted in improved outcomes for wildlife, with applications refused, changed to avoid impacts, or measures included to replace lost habitat.

We focus our efforts on developments that pose the greatest risk to wildlife and those where the outcomes will set precedents for how planning and development consider and protect wildlife.



Rare wasps recorded at Lackford Lakes

Whilst known for wetland birds on its flooded gravel pits, Lackford Lakes is within the Brecks. With this comes the specialist plants and invertebrates which can tolerate the parched conditions, often with fascinating life-cycles, like these rare wasps found by our hawk-eyed Lackford team.

The first, a species of *Podalonia* nests in the sandy, dry soil typical of the Brecks and is a parasite of moth caterpillars. The second, last recorded at Lackford 98 years ago, was a yellow-spotted sapyga wasp (*Monosapyga clavicornis*).

And finally, the UK's rarest wasp, *Mischocyttarus bicolor* (pictured). This was only the 4th record for the UK, all in Suffolk. These wasps prey on spiders, although exactly which spider species remains a mystery.



Global travellers at our coastal wetlands

A black-tailed godwit spotted at Hen Reedbeds in September, gave a glimpse into the extraordinary lives of the waders and wildfowl that we see on the mudflats, marshes and reedbeds of our coastal nature reserves. Since 2008 it has been spotted 68 times and has travelled from Iceland to Suffolk multiple times.

Our Suffolk wetlands are part of a vital network of habitat along the east coast from the Humber to the Thames. They provide breeding sites in spring and summer, staging points to fatten in spring and autumn, moulting areas in autumn and wintering havens for birds from colder climes.

The arrivals and departures of these extraordinary travellers mark the passing of the seasons and remind us of our role within a global conservation movement.

JULY
2022

AUGUST
2022

SEPTEMBER
2022

A year for wildlife



Wall browns thriving on the marshes

Butterfly recording at Carlton Marshes provided welcome evidence that wall browns are breeding on the reserve. For the first time, three generations of butterfly were on the wing – the first generation emerging in May having overwintered as caterpillars, the second in August and the third in October.

This local population is likely to be the most significant left in Suffolk and is one of the few places in the county where wall brown is not declining. In fact, it is almost certainly expanding its range across the reserve.

Wall browns, as well as meadow brown, gatekeeper, small heath and ringlet, overwinter in grass stems and so need areas of longer grass left uncut. Like so many species, they are vulnerable to society's seeming obsession for mowing and tidying.



New County Wildlife Sites

This year, thanks to our surveys, 1040 acres (421ha) of new County Wildlife Site have been designated in Suffolk.

County Wildlife Sites are areas of private or publicly owned land which are of county or regional importance for wildlife. They range from small meadows, green lanes, road verges, dykes and hedges to much larger areas of ancient woodland, heathland, greens, commons and marsh.

With 950 sites amounting to over 27,000 acres (11,000ha) covering almost 5% of the county, they provide stepping stones of connectivity across Suffolk and are a refuge for some of our rarest species.

We work with landowners to help them understand the importance and needs of the species and habitats on their land, often with the support of local volunteer groups.



Helping businesses make good decisions for nature

One of the ways we safeguard wildlife sites and protected species, and to create new opportunities for nature, is to work with businesses to help them make better decisions for nature, based on expert ecological advice. Much of this work is led by our ecological consultancy, Wilder Ecology.

In December Wilder Ecology gained the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management Registered Practice status.

Our Wilder Ecology team choose to only work with clients who genuinely care about nature and are committed to using our expertise and advice for good. With their specialist knowledge of Suffolk's species and habitats and leadership in dormouse and water vole conservation, they can help businesses to play their part in creating the wilder, more connected landscape that nature so urgently needs.

OCTOBER
2022

NOVEMBER
2022

DECEMBER
2022



Wildlife friendly farming

Our Farm Wildlife Advisers are helping to inspire and support the step change in the Trust's impact outside our nature reserves, championing landscape-scale approaches to nature's recovery.

This year we have grown the team and are now working with landowners and managers of 41 of the county's larger landholdings (50 ha and over) to support land management decisions which benefit nature. As a county with nationally significant populations of great crested newt, we often start with pond creation and have now created or restored well over 200 ponds.

In January we launched the Waveney and Little Ouse headwaters landscape recovery project. Working in partnership with farmers and other landowners to develop new approaches to sustainable landscape change across the valley.



Protecting the North Sea

Thanks to years of campaigning by The Wildlife Trusts and others, the UK has a chain of Marine Protected Areas around our coast, including Orford Inshore in Suffolk. These protect a wide range of marine wildlife and habitats, but do not prevent all damaging activities.

Along the east coast, Wildlife Trusts work together to champion the North Sea. In February, Government announced the designation of England's first three Highly Protected Marine Areas. In the North Sea, this includes North-East of Farnes Deep, an area of offshore sediments teeming with life.

Highly Protected Marine Areas have full protection, from the seabed to the water surface. As the abundance of life returns to these areas, the spillover of fish into surrounding waters will help restock our seas.



Working with dog walkers

Each March, the team at Knettishall Heath are up early counting skylark territories – settling in on cold foggy mornings, first listening to the birds and then sighting them when the fog clears. Skylarks are ground-nesting and highly sensitive to disturbance from visitors and from their dogs.

Dogs bring love and laughter into our lives, but they can also have a detrimental impact on wildlife when not managed responsibly. So at busy reserves like Knettishall Heath and Carlton Marshes, and across the county, we have been working closely with visitors to build understanding of the impact dogs can have on wildlife. Through this ongoing awareness raising campaign we aim to give clear, consistent guidance to help visitors avoid impacting the wildlife they have come to enjoy.

JANUARY
2023

FEBRUARY
2023

MARCH
2023

More people on nature's side

As we step up to the challenge of bringing wildlife back to our towns and countryside, it will be the power of locally-led action that drives the change.

This year we have shifted the focus of our learning and engagement activity towards enabling others to take the lead in their community. We want everyone to be able to 'do their bit' where they live or work or go to school – and we can give groups and individuals the confidence to do this by sharing our experience and ecological expertise.

Our community advisors have worked with 31 community groups and parish councils to support improvements for wildlife on 178 acres (72ha) of land, 29 churchyards and burial grounds totalling 54 acres (22ha) and 6 businesses covering 27 acres (11ha). We have also increased the number and range of training days and accredited courses we offer for adults at our centres and community venues as well as our programme of wildlife webinars.

By increasing our commitment to training and supporting individuals, teachers and

community groups, we can reach more people and empower more action for nature.

Launched this year, we now have 20 fledgling Wilder Schools partnerships around the county. These are new, three year programmes of activity and training to help schools make nature a regular part of their school day. Working with staff and children, the programme includes surveying their school grounds and harnessing the support of the wider school community to make them wilder.

A shift to longer grass, patches of thistles or bramble spilling from hedges can sometimes be challenging to introduce. So every school, churchyard, sports club, village hall or business that welcomes wildlife is also helping society become more accepting of public and community spaces that look and feel wilder. They are the trailblazers for a wilder Suffolk.



JOHN FERGUSON; ISTOCK: EMMA KERRIDGE; ISTOCK



Families can learn about nature together at our centres.



National Lottery Heritage Fund have supported Nextdoor Nature projects in every Wildlife Trust. Our project is working with communities in Ipswich.





We offer a wide programme of courses for adults such as mammal surveying, pictured here.



Thank you to our business supporters

Partners

Harwich Haven Authority
Suffolk Building Society
Axter

Platinum

Buchi UK Ltd
Essex & Suffolk Water
Herrco Cosmetics
Treatt Plc
UK Power Networks

Gold

Abellio
Anglian Water
Bauder Ltd
Breedon
CJB Scaffolding
Climax Molybdenum
Parc Civils Ltd
Realise Futures
Styne Group Ltd
Somerleyton Hall & Gardens
Suffolk Hideaways
Tyson Cooper

Silver

Atwells Solicitors
Birketts
Barnes Construction
Notcutts
Process Instrument Sales
Roger Balmer Design
Smart Meter Assets
Tailor Made Joinery

Bronze

Our Bronze supporters 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 Charitable Trust
DEFRA (Landscape Recovery Scheme)
Essex and Suffolk Water
Geoffrey Burton Charitable Trust
Leslie Mary Carter Trust
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Saxham Trust
Suffolk Coast & Heath AONB
Suffolk County Council
The Banister Charitable Trust
The Grimwade Charitable Trust
The Lord Belstead Charitable Settlement
The Mulberry Trust

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

Legacies unlock the wilder, nature-rich landscape we want for Suffolk. A legacy gift from Pam and George Ford put the purchase of Martlesham Wilds within our reach.

This year we remember with thanks:

David Albon
Inez Benham
Olive Bennett
Winston Briggs
Stella Bunn
Hazel Cawston

John Chaplin
Elizabeth Durand
William Fowler
Richard Gornall
Richard 'Gus' Govett

Vera Hockaday
Jennifer Johnson
Shirley Key Stone
Wendy Kinch
Roy Miles
Jean Rochester

Anthony Stacey
Fraser Sutherland
Terence Taylor
Mary Thompson



JOHN FERGUSON, EMMA KERRIDGE, JAY ALAMY

Financial summary

For the year to 31 March 2023

INCOME

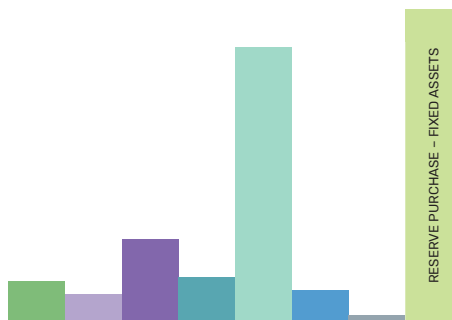


Incoming resources

£000s

Members' subscriptions & donations	1649
Fundraising & grants	1907
SWT Trading company income	896
Learning & other income	283
Legacies	1211
Investment income	56
Total incoming resources	6002

EXPENDITURE



Resources expended

£000s

Membership	441
Fundraising & grants	297
SWT Trading company costs	880
Learning activities	482
Nature reserves & conservation	2914
Support, management & admin	337
Unrealised loss on investments	44
Total resources expended*	5395

Analysis of group net assets

Fixed assets

Nature reserves (1 April 2022)	15728
Nature reserves acquired this year	3309
Tangible assets incl visitor centres	3790
Net current assets**	6075

28902

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

** Includes designated, unrestricted and restricted funds

The timing of grant and legacy income is often before expenditure, and therefore 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

The figures above are extracted from the audited annual accounts of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. For a full understanding of the financial affairs please view the audited accounts which are available on our website or can be requested from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Brooke House, Ashbocking, Ipswich IP6 9JY or are available from the Charity Commission or the Registrar of Companies.

At the beginning of each year the Trustees calculate a target level of free reserves equating to 6 months of the budgeted establishment and core staff costs for the coming year. For the current year the target free reserves equate to £2003k. Reserves above the previous year's target were maintained throughout the year. Funds above this level can be designated to specific projects, particularly our advice and advocacy teams, the fulfilment of our carbon neutral targets and the acquisition of land as nature reserves.

Calum Thomson, Hon Treasurer



522
acres
(211ha) valley
fen

CURLIN: ADOBE STOCK; MARTLESHAM WILDS: STEVE AYWARD; PEOPLE: JOHN FERGUSON



Wilds is an old Suffolk term for a rough, wildlife rich landscape. It echoes our vision for the new reserve.



Martlesham Wilds

This year we seized the opportunity to establish a new nature reserve for Suffolk – Martlesham Wilds. At a time when even once common species are struggling in the wider countryside, our nature reserves will have a renewed sense of purpose where populations of birds, insects and other animals can recover and help repopulate the surrounding landscape – indeed they are vital to achieving 30 by 30. Martlesham Wilds illustrates this vision perfectly.

At over 290 acres (117ha), adjoining the Deben estuary and close to Martlesham and Woodbridge, the chance to buy Martlesham Wilds was an exceptional opportunity to create a wild place of immense value to wildlife and people. The Deben estuary is an extraordinary setting for this new nature reserve – nationally and internationally important for its waders and wildfowl, and within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Wildlife desperately needs wilder landscapes that are bigger, better and more joined-up. Martlesham Wilds will be such a place.



Buying Martlesham Wilds was an ambitious move, reflecting our mission to act now to turn around the fortunes of nature by 2030. Thanks to its stewardship as an organic farm it is already home to a wonderful array of plants and invertebrates.

Under our ownership, the patchwork of hedge-lined fields that roll gently down to the river will gradually 'wild' into an intricate mosaic of natural habitats maintained by grazing. The emergence of this new pastoral landscape will be thrilling to watch.

Buying Martlesham Wilds has been a county effort, with over 2,300 donations. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

We care for 6821 acres (2761 ha) of Suffolk across our 51 nature reserves



**585
acres**

(237ha) ancient
woodland



**2416
acres**

(978ha) wetland
& reedbed



**693
acres**

(281ha) coastal
& intertidal



**179
acres**

(73ha) species
rich grassland



**942
acres**

(381ha) heathland
& acid grassland



**478
acres**

(193ha) other
habitats



**1006
acres**

(407ha)
rewilding

Thank you to our 1,640 volunteers

Action for Suffolk's wildlife, led by local people, is Suffolk Wildlife Trust's great strength. Our volunteers play a vital role in delivering our mission to bring nature back.

Every aspect of our work for wildlife is enriched and enhanced by volunteers. Collectively volunteers gave over 70,000 hours last year, in every corner of the county – managing nature reserves, monitoring habitats, welcoming visitors, leading walks, checking livestock, sharing their love of nature with children, delivering magazines, championing species recovery, giving wildlife advice or fundraising.

The scale and breadth of volunteer activity across the Trust is simply magnificent.

From our Board of Trustees to our teenage Young Wardens and our local Wildlife Groups, our volunteers bring integrity and community to everything we do and make Suffolk Wildlife Trust the vibrant, ambitious, grounded charity that nature needs us to be.



Each year we recognise a volunteer or group who have made an outstanding contribution for wildlife.

**SOS
SWIFTS**

Volunteer of the year: SOS Swifts

This year, we were delighted to present our **Volunteer of the Year** award to the **SOS Swifts** team. SOS Swifts is a project partnership between Suffolk Bird Group and Suffolk Wildlife Trust. It has captured the imaginations of communities across the county and, as well as providing the nesting sites swifts need, is building a new and motivated network of community advocates for nature.

SOS Swifts epitomises the 'everyone playing their part in bringing nature back' philosophy of the Trust. With more than 1,000 swift boxes up in Suffolk already, it's an outstanding example of the impact for nature a small group of dedicated volunteers can have, and what our Team Wilder approach aims to inspire more of.

PHOTOS: JOHN FERGUSON



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

Registered charity no 262777

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Brooke House

Ashbocking, Ipswich IP6 9JY

01473 890089

teamwilder@suffolkwildlifetrust.org

suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Thank you all

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