

Wild North Wales

Summer 2022

The member magazine for North Wales Wildlife Trust

BRILLIANT BEAVERS

... can restore and manage our river and wetland ecosystems

WARMING WORRIES

How climate change is affecting our seas

UNDERWATER WILDLIFE

River Roamers

An illustrated guide to freshwater fish



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Wildlife Trust

Welcome ... to all our members!

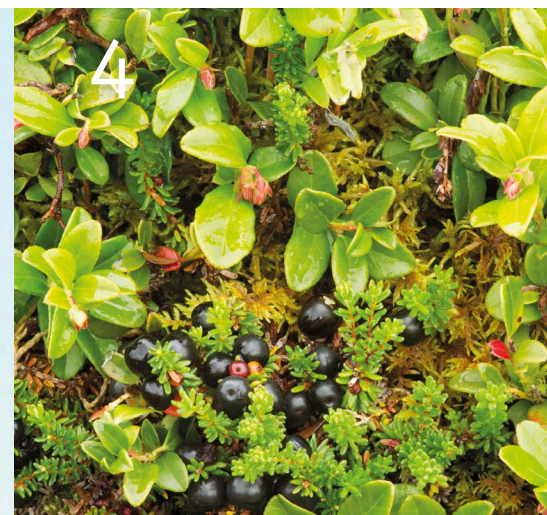


Its mid-May as I write, and screaming parties of swifts are returning to the Ceiriog Valley. Only a few days ago, over 68,000 were spotted heading north across the south coast of France: some destined for a North Wales summer after a journey of 6,000 miles. I am privileged to have nest sites under the eaves of my house, resulting in piercing wake up calls every summer morning: a regular reminder of the cycles of life, the interconnectedness of natural spaces, and the illusion of political boundaries.

Despite this yearly reminder of hope, there has been such a decline in swift numbers over my lifetime that they are now on the list of species threatened with extinction. This decline is, in part, linked to climate change, and we know that we cannot restore nature's abundance without addressing the climate crisis. Thankfully, in restoring nature, our chances of addressing climate change improve: a virtuous circle with which we can all engage.

This is recognised in *Bringing Nature Back*, The Wildlife Trusts' collective 'Strategy 2030'. It also highlights the value of local action to restore nature, much of which (for 2021-22) has been captured in North Wales Wildlife Trust's own impact report – links to both documents are found in this magazine (p.19). And, in turn, this work is only made possible through your support, whether through membership subscriptions, donations, practical help or legacies – thank you so much for all you do. With a concerted effort and wise choices, we can ensure the swifts continue to return.

Howard Davies
Chair, North Wales Wildlife Trust



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SWIFTS © NICK UPTON. BILBERIES © MARK HAMBLIN. GINA MILLS © NWWT. NIA HAF JONES. WHITE-BEAKED DOLPHIN © ESPEN BERGERSEN. NATUREPIL.COM

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Wherever you are in the UK, your Wildlife Trust is standing up for wildlife and wild places in your area and bringing people closer to nature.

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6 ways to get involved with your local Wildlife Trust

Volunteer

Could you donate your skills and time to look after wildlife? A wide range of indoor and outdoor tasks need doing. northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer

Campaigning

You can play a vital role in raising awareness, and lobbying, on local and national issues. northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/campaigns

Receive e-news

In a fast-changing world, receiving our weekly e-newsletter is more important than ever! Sign up today at northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/newsletter

Leave a legacy

Help protect local wildlife and wild places for future generations by leaving a gift in your Will. northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/legacy

Shop

Our online shop stocks a great range of nature-related items. All proceeds go to our conservation work. northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/shop

Events

We offer over 150 walks, talks and family-friendly events each year. Come and join us! northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/events

Your wild summer

The best of the season's wildlife and where to enjoy it in North Wales

SUMMER SPECTACLE

Wild foraging

For some of us, heading off to '*hel llus*' (gather bilberries) can bring back our earliest childhood memories of being in wild upland places. The backbreaking but enjoyable task of picking the berries is a summertime tradition – the moorland version of crabbing or rockpooling perhaps – with the best place to find them often remaining a family secret, never to be told ...

Bilberry is a low-growing, shrubby plant which grows either on wild, windswept slopes or in heathy woodland amongst heather and gorse. In spring and early summer it has bright green leaves with small, pink, bell-shaped flowers but, by the end of July and August, these have given way to dark purple berries which can be painstakingly handpicked and turned into a pie, jams or a sauce – with the inevitable result of purple-stained hands, mouths and tongues!

SEE THEM THIS SUMMER

- A bilberry-picker never gives out their best picking spot! However, if you see heather growing, there's a good chance that the habitat is right for bilberries too. But always be certain of identification and check with an expert if in doubt.
- Foraging in the uplands isn't just about the bilberries! Don't forget to listen for a singing skylark or pipit, and see if you can spot a stonechat family or hovering kestrel. And why not keep an eye out for the scarce bilberry bumblebee, too? Its Welsh name, *cachgi bwm llus*, trips brilliantly off the tongue!

Thank you

Your Wildlife Trust membership supports some heathland habitats where bilberries flourish – but we're not telling anyone where the best spots are!



Chicken-of-the-woods

Mushroom woods

From late summer onwards mushrooms and toadstools start to appear in our woodlands. Fungi are an important part of woodland ecology, helping to recycle nutrients from dead or decaying organic matter. North Wales Wildlife Trust look after many woodland sites, often leaving standing and fallen dead wood which supports fungi. You can help by having log piles and dead wood in your own garden. Here are a few of our favourite sites where you might discover fungi delights for yourself.

SEE THEM THIS SUMMER

- **Aberduna Nature Reserve, near Mold**
Look out for fungi among the woodland and coppiced areas as you wander around – and waxcaps in grassy areas, too.
- **Gwaith Powdwr Nature Reserve, Penrhyndeudraeth**
Woodland fungi – including the wonderfully named chicken-of-the-woods – begin to take over as our summer migrant birds depart.
- **Nantporth Nature Reserve, Bangor**
Search the woodland floor as you walk through this nature reserve on the edge of the Menai Strait.

© JIM HIGHAM



Red-tailed bumblebee on bird's foot trefoil

URBAN FIELDCRAFT

Life on the verge

Colourful road verges aren't remotely limited to country lanes in springtime, when bluebells, red campion and crosswort can turn these linear spaces into a view as rich as an artist's palette. Even the narrowest strip of grass in urban centres or suburban streets can host a plethora of wildflowers – and summer is the best time to look!

Taking great care of passing traffic and anything underfoot, kneel down to look closely – these species are some of simplest to identify, but blue speedwells, yellow hawkweeds and buttercups and tiny white scurvy grass can all live along even the busiest roads.

WHAT TO SPOT

- **Ox-eye daisies** are tolerant staples of road verges nationwide. Upright, robust versions of their ground-hugging, common cousins, their large flowers brighten any day.
- **Bird's-foot trefoil** takes its name from its claw-like seed pods ... unless you use one of its others! 'Granny's toenails', 'butter and eggs', eggs and bacon' and 'hen and chickens' are just some of those attached to this pretty pollinator.
- Don't dismiss a **dandelion**! There are around 250 species in the UK – why not play 'spot the difference'?



HEAR THIS

Take a summer stroll along a river and listen for the 'plop' of water voles disappearing underwater – it's much easier than seeing them in the flesh!

SEE THIS

Late summer is peak porpoise season – look for their small, triangular fin breaching the sea's surface. The North Anglesey coast is a particularly good spot for seawatching.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Our local sharks!

Our seas are home to some amazing shark species, including our native small-spotted catshark!

Many people – though perhaps not Wildlife Trust members! – find it hard to believe that sharks inhabit our British waters. In fact, our seas host over 40 species: 21 of which are residents, living with us all year round.

The small-spotted catshark, confusingly known to some as the lesser-spotted dogfish, is the UK's most common shark species and can be found across the country. Growing up to 1m in length, our friendly local is a benthic feeder, meaning that it spends much of its time on the seabed hunting for crabs and cephalopods, like octopus, squid and cuttlefish. (They have occasionally been found within deeper rockpools, too!) As with all sharks, the small-spotted catshark has very rough skin, covered in tiny teeth-like denticles – ideal for streamlining and offering some protection against being eaten by larger predators like seals.

Sharks in trouble

Unfortunately, over half of our British sharks are threatened. Over-fishing for meat, leather and squalene (a liver substance found in many of our household beauty products) has led to significant declines in numbers. And although our small-spotted catsharks are widespread, and currently categorised as being of least conservation concern, it's still important that we look after them and that they can continue to swim freely within our seas!

Small-spotted catshark

Dark grey upper body with small distinctive spots

Rough, teeth-like denticles cover the skin

1m long

© JIMARK THOMAS

5cm long

© NWWT DAEN THOMAS

Eggcase or 'mermaid's purse'

Mermaid's purses

The small-spotted catshark is one of several egg-laying British shark species. Shark eggcases have long, curly tendrils which the mother

wraps around something

sturdy (usually some algae) so that the eggcase is safe and doesn't float away with the tide. Made from the same substance as human hair and nails, each eggcase holds one baby shark which grows for up to 9 months before hatching! Once hatched, the empty eggcase makes its way to the shore, ready for us to collect.

Get involved

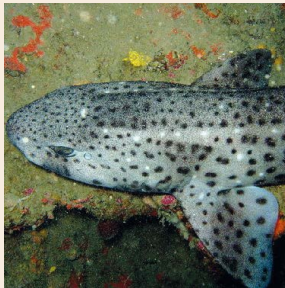
North Wales Wildlife Trust, as partners of Project SIARC, are bringing you a series of 'Great Shark Eggcase Hunts' throughout the summer and beyond – come along and continue learning all about our amazing local sharks whilst getting your eye in and searching for some eggcases yourself! You'll learn how to identify these fascinating finds; whilst the data you gather will help us find out which species inhabit different areas along our coastline.

To book onto an event, please visit northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/events – we look forward to seeing you!

Top tips ID-ING OTHER LOCAL SHARKS

Nursehound

A spotty, slender catshark with a stocky head, growing up to 1.6m in length.



Thornback ray

This species has a flattened, kite-shaped body with distinctive 'thorns' along its tail.



Spotted ray

A smaller shark growing to just 0.8m, with dark spots across its back.




NURSEHOUND © ALFIERO BRISOTTO LICENCED UNDER CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, THORNBARK RAY © PAUL NAYLOR: WWW.MARINEPHOTO.CO.UK, SPOTTED RAY, © NATURAL ENGLAND/ROSS BULLMORE




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Dave Goulson

@DaveGoulson @dave.goulson

Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse

Since I was a child I have been obsessed with insects; they are amazing, often beautiful, and with fascinating, peculiar lives. I grew up in the countryside, and spent my childhood roaming the lanes and meadows in search of caterpillars, butterflies, grasshoppers and beetles. My bedroom filled with jam jars, cages and tanks housing all manner of small beasts. I eventually came to learn that the world would not function without these tiny creatures. They pollinate; control pests; recycle all sorts of organic material from dung to corpses, tree trunks and leaves; they keep the soil healthy; disperse seeds; and provide food for many larger creatures such as birds, bats, lizards, amphibians and fish.

It should thus be of profound concern to all of us that insects appear to be undergoing massive declines. As a child, I vividly remember my parents having to stop the car on long summer journeys to scrub clear the windscreen, which quickly became crusted with splatted insects as we drove along. Today, our windscreens are disturbingly clean.

The causes of insect declines are many: habitat loss to intensive farming, housing and other developments; the ever-growing blizzard of pesticides used by farmers and gardeners; climate change; light pollution; impacts of invasive species and more. Our tidy, pesticide-infused world is largely hostile to insect life.

This may all seem terribly depressing, but do not despair. We may feel helpless in the face of many global environmental issues,

but as I explain in my book *Silent Earth*, we can all get involved in reversing insect declines. If you are lucky enough to have a garden, take some simple steps to invite insects and other wildlife in; it is astonishing how much life a small garden can support. If you have no garden, you might consider joining national and local campaigns to fill our urban greenspaces with wildflowers, or to have your town or village declared pesticide-free. Imagine every garden, park, cemetery, roundabout and road verge filled with swathes of wildflowers. We could create a national network of wildlife-rich habitat from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Of course we should not forget our farmland, which covers 70% of the UK. It is my view that the move towards ever-more intensive, pesticide-soaked monoculture farming is unsustainable; it has done terrible damage to our wildlife and soils, pollutes streams and rivers, and contributes a lot to greenhouse gas emissions. You can reduce your own impact and support more sustainable farming practices by buying and eating local, seasonal, organic produce, buying loose fruit and veg, and reducing your meat consumption. Better still, grow what food you can in your garden or an allotment.

Love them or loathe them, we all need insects. We have to learn to live in harmony with nature, seeing ourselves as part of it, not trying to rule and control it with an iron fist. Our survival depends upon it, as does that of the glorious array of life with which we share our planet.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As we live through a time of great uncertainty, food security is an important issue. But it's vital we consider nature in any plans. Industrial agriculture has destroyed wildlife on a grand scale. Further intensification will be a huge blow for nature and climate, but also jeopardise long-term food security.

Learn more:
wtru.st/energy-food

Dave Goulson is a professor of biology at the University of Sussex, one of the UK's leading insect experts, and an ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts. He champions insects in his latest book, *Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse*.

Get more tips on how to help insects at

wildlifetrusts.org/action-for-insects

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© TRAI ANFIELD

Lacey Lecture: "What is Progress?" Sat 26 November, 19:00 – 21:00 Rydal Penrhos School, Colwyn Bay

The Wildlife Trusts' inspirational leader, Craig Bennett, addresses the lazy heckle – "You can't stop progress!" – by challenging tired old assumptions about the environment and the economy.

£12 (£5 for U18s)

Book online at
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Full details on our website or contact
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ILLUSTRATION: DAWN COOPER

SHIFTING

APPA

SEAS

Bex Lynam explores the effects of the climate crisis on our underwater wildlife.

This spring, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its sixth assessment report, and it makes for deeply uncomfortable reading. The report, authored by the world's leading climate change scientists, outlines the damage being done to the planet from our continued release of greenhouse gases, as well as the action needed to slow down the rate of change.

The impacts of a rapidly changing climate are not only felt on land (where we see droughts, wildfires, and flooding after heavy rainfall) but in the ocean too, as our seas heat up, rise and become more acidic. Globally, across both land and sea we're witnessing increases in the frequency and intensity of climate and weather extremes. Coral bleaching is widespread and glaciers are retreating, changing the waters around them.

Closer to home we know that UK seas are getting warmer. The biggest changes in sea surface temperature have been recorded in the North Sea and north of Scotland. Since 2000, eight of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred. At the same time, UK sea levels have risen by an average of 12-16cm since 1900. This may sound like a small increase, but even seemingly small rises cause more erosion on the coast and increase the chances of flooding. The chemistry of our seas has also shifted; according to the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership, the North Atlantic Ocean contains more anthropogenic CO₂ than any other, causing it to become more acidic. So what does all this change mean for our marine wildlife?

New neighbours

Nature is constantly changing, so the effects of climate change can be difficult to discern. However, scientists are in agreement on some of the common effects seen across the world's seas. One of the most obvious trends is that wildlife is on the move. Long-term evidence shows shifts in the distribution of not only wildlife, but habitats too. As the seas around the UK warm, species that prefer cooler water are shifting northwards to seek a more suitable temperature. At the same time, some species from warmer waters to the south are moving into our seas, as conditions become more favourable for them.

Several kelp species (a type of brown seaweed) have declined because of warming sea temperatures. This has a knock-on effect on other wildlife, as so many animals rely on the kelp as a food source, hunting ground or shelter against predators. Many marine mammals, like the white-beaked dolphin, require cooler waters to live in. It's estimated around 80% of the European population of white-beaked dolphin is found in the UK, yet as our waters warm their range is getting smaller and they're being pushed

out of areas previously suitable for them. Whereas warm water fish species like northern hake, largely absent in UK waters for over 50 years, are increasing in number, cold water species like cod will move north. This will have consequences for our seas, but also for UK fishers and the availability of cod in our local fish and chip shops!

Seas out of sync

Ocean warming also affects the timing of animal lifecycles. There's evidence that grey seals are giving birth earlier in the year, and that climatic changes are part of the cause. In some cases, these timing shifts can lead to repercussions felt across the food web. One worrying example is the sandeel, a small, silvery fish that plays a big role in the UK's seas. It's an important prey item for many animals. Seabirds like Arctic terns, puffins and kittiwakes rely heavily on sandeels to feed themselves and their chicks. Warming seas have led to a mismatch between the timing of sandeels' spawning and the time when zooplankton, their favourite food, is available. As a result, sandeels have declined (exacerbated by overfishing),

which in turn has been linked to declines in UK seabird numbers.

Temperature isn't the only aspect of our seas that's shifting. Climate-driven changes in ocean chemistry have reduced the amount of carbonate available in sea water. This matters because carbonate is an important building block of the shells of many marine creatures, including crabs and lobsters. These shelled species are eaten by a variety of different animals, including us! Any impacts on their numbers could quickly affect the wildlife that relies on them, as well as many key fisheries across the UK.

The rise in sea level will impact coastal habitats like saltmarshes and sand dunes, as deeper water and bigger waves can reach them, increasing erosion. As these places are damaged and potentially even lost, we also lose the valuable services they provide such as capturing and storing carbon, or protecting coastal communities from flooding and erosion. Habitats like saltmarsh also have an important role to play for our wildlife, providing food for breeding and wintering wading birds and wildfowl, and acting as nursery sites for many fish and invertebrates.

Ocean optimism

Ultimately, we need to work hard to drastically reduce our carbon emissions. But whilst we do that, there are ways to help our seas cope in the meantime. The key step is to reduce the pressure from other human activities. This means ensuring we are fishing sustainably, making sure development is carried out in a sensitive way that minimises impacts on wildlife, significantly reducing marine pollution and noise in our oceans, and managing invasive species.

At The Wildlife Trusts we have been campaigning for the establishment and protection of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for decades. Well managed MPAs are a tried and tested tool for making space for nature. By restricting damaging activities, they can allow wildlife populations to rebuild and flourish. These healthy populations are better prepared to face other threats, like those introduced by climate change. While the UK has established a network of MPAs in its waters, we believe more are needed and with greater levels of protection (in the form of Highly Protected Marine Areas) to ensure we safeguard wildlife for the future.

Alongside the designation and proper management of MPAs, we're championing the use of nature-based solutions to combat climate change. This means protecting the habitats and wildlife that provide us with ecosystem services, like the saltmarshes and seagrass meadows that prevent flooding and take in carbon. The Wildlife Trusts lead many restoration projects around the UK, bringing these habitats back to areas of our coast where they have been lost. Using both of these tools together, we hope to tackle the dual climate and biodiversity crises we face, before it's too late.

We can turn the tide if we all take action now!



Bex Lynam is the marine advocacy officer for the North Sea Wildlife Trusts and her role focuses on policy development and implementation, particularly around Marine Protected Areas and their management.



White-beaked dolphins thrive in UK seas, but that could change as waters warm.



Some kelp species are in decline, threatening the wildlife that relies on them.

Species Spotlight

The **ringneck blenny**, also known as the variable blenny, is a small fish that thrives in the warm coastal waters of the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic. There were no UK records of this species until 2007, but in recent years it has become increasingly common along the southern coasts of Cornwall and Devon. Ringneck blennies live around rocky shores, reefs and maerl beds — a seaweed that forms hard skeletons, a bit like a coral reef.



Find out more about how you can help protect our seas at

 wtru.st/marine-mailing

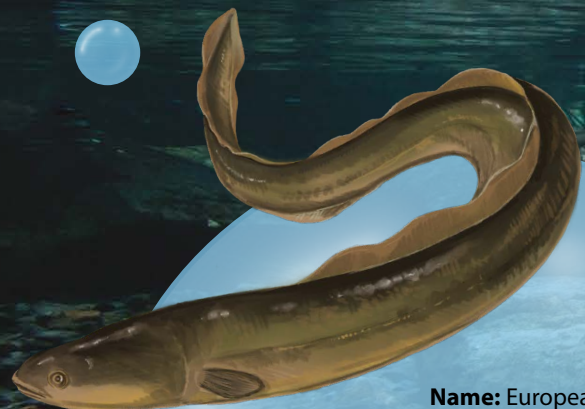
Fresh faces

There's a whole world of wildlife hidden beneath the surface of our streams, rivers and lakes. It's often out of sight and out of mind, but spend a while watching a still section of water and you could catch a glimpse of a whole host of fish. Perhaps a pike lurking in a shadowy stretch, poised to pounce on passing prey, or a raft of roach roaming near the surface. Here are six fantastic freshwater fish to look out for...



Name: Chub
Scientific name: *Squalius cephalus*
Size: Up to 60cm

This thick-set fish inspired the word chubby, possibly aided by its eclectic appetite. They're known to eat anything from plant debris and invertebrates to smaller fish and frogs. The large mouth is a key identification feature! Chub favour rivers and streams as they need flowing water to breed, but can sometimes be found in lakes.



Name: European eel
Scientific name: *Anguilla anguilla*
Size: Can be over 100cm

Eels have an extraordinary lifestyle, much of which remains a mystery. They breed in the sea, then their tiny larvae drift for two or three years on Gulf Stream currents to European and North African shores. Some remain in coastal waters whilst others migrate upstream into freshwater habitats, maturing and living long lives until spawning urges drive them to migrate back to sea. Although now critically endangered, eels can be found in almost any watery place, and can even wriggle across land in wet conditions.

This fearsome fish has a distinctive look, with a long, stretched-out green body splashed with yellowish markings. The fins are set far back on the body, perfect for a sudden burst of speed as they dash towards their prey — like a torpedo with teeth. Pike like to lurk amongst underwater plants, darting from their hiding place to ambush other fish, frogs, small mammals and even birds. They can be found in many canals, rivers, reservoirs and lakes.

Name: Pike
Scientific name: *Esox lucius*
Size: Up to 150cm



Name: Brown trout
Scientific name: *Salmo trutta*
Size: Usually up to 80cm

This adaptable fish can be found in waters across the UK, from Cornish rivers to Scottish lochs. Some brown trout live out their whole life in freshwater, whilst others known as 'sea trout' spawn in freshwater but migrate to coastal seas to grow. They eat a varied diet, including insects, crustaceans, and small fish.

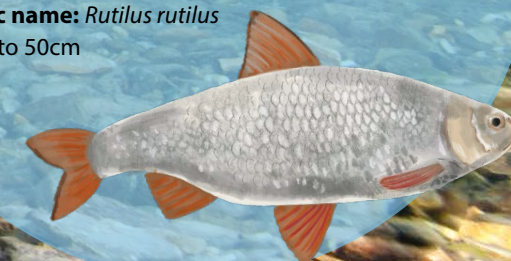


Name: Perch
Scientific name: *Perca fluviatilis*
Size: Up to 60cm

This green-tinged fish has the dark stripes of a tiger and an appetite to match. They're piscivorous predators that regularly feast on other fish, as well as invertebrates. Smaller perch are often found in schools close to the bank. They are one of our most widespread fish and can be found in almost any freshwater habitat.

The silvery, red-eyed roach is one of the UK's most common fish and can be found in almost any waterway. They can form large shoals, sometimes seen close to the surface but often lower down. To separate it from the similar looking rudd, look at the dorsal fin on its back: in the roach, this is level with the pelvic fin below the body; the rudd's dorsal fin is set further back.

Name: Roach
Scientific name: *Rutilus rutilus*
Size: Up to 50cm





Minera's magical mosaic

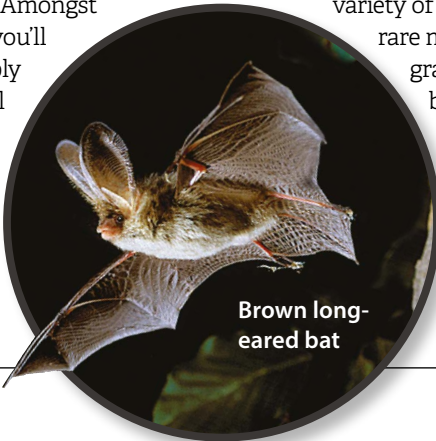
Industrial architecture and natural beauty mingle freely in this breathtaking, hidden haven: a former lead and limestone quarry guaranteed to leave you speechless.



Jordan Hurst is our Reserves Officer for North-East Wales, working alongside Paul Furnborough. In the summer months, he'll most likely be seen building on his T-shirt tan whilst scything our meadows!

Nestled to the north of the Llantysilio and Ruabon Mountains and to the east of Llandegla forest, this old industrial site is gradually being reclaimed by nature. With an industrial history spanning over 400 years – originally mined for lead and later quarried for valuable limestone – the quarry was active until 1994. North Wales Wildlife Trust took on the site in 2017 and, after making the area safe for people to enjoy, we are now working to maintain a mosaic of habitat showing different stages of re-colonisation.

From the easily accessible car park, you enter the oldest part of the quarry workings. Here, woodland has been established for a considerable time and you can now often hear the calls of cuckoo, redstart and blackcap. Amongst the dappled sunlight, you'll discover five remarkably intact kilns and several now-secured cave entrances: all used as roosts by lesser horseshoe, Natterer's and brown long-eared bats. Take an evening summer



Brown long-eared bat

stroll and you're sure to be accompanied by bats swooping through the air, feeding on flying insects – there's a good chance you'll hear the characteristic 'twit twoo' of tawny owls calling to one another, too!

Leaving the woodland shade behind also takes you on a journey forward in time – only as you enter the main, mostly recently worked area of the quarry does the enormity of its 50 hectares become apparent. Here, you are presented with an enormous expanse of grassland and bare ground. Every year, volunteers work tirelessly to prevent scrub encroaching onto this wildflower-rich habitat: in the summer months, the lime-rich grassland is filled with vibrant colours, including those of up to ten species of orchids. These flowers provide nectar for a staggering variety of insects, including the rare mountain bumblebee, grayling butterfly and belted clearwing moth. Many of these insects nest in the gravelly, bare ground and grassland of the quarry floor.

Walk into the heart of the reserve and you'll find a beautiful

pond, teeming with life. On sunny days throughout August, you are likely to be greeted by dazzling displays of dragonflies and damselflies, including the scarce blue-tailed damselfly. Looming overhead, the open quarry faces appear stark and lifeless, but provide nesting habitat for ravens and raptors; whilst, higher still, birds of prey spiral on the thermals. Buzzards, red kites, sparrowhawks, kestrels and even peregrine falcons can all be seen; whilst a meander to the highest point of the reserve along its western boundary brings panoramic views over the quarry and the surrounding landscape.

The next chapter in Minera Quarry's lifetime is starting now! Although some of the industrial architecture is feeling its age – visitors may have noticed a recent

DID YOU KNOW A network of caves extending over 5km has been discovered in the area around Minera Quarry. These caves were formed as groundwater dissolved soluble limestone over thousands of years and many have since been exposed by mining activity. They are made secure for human safety but remain accessible to bats!

partial collapse of one of the kilns – we are working with Minera Quarry Trust and Cadw to stabilise it and make it safe. In the longer term, we may be able to rebuild selected features and display their former glory. Meanwhile, thanks to our dedicated volunteers, we have created several woodland glades along the path of the old Berwig railway line, which connects the reserve to Minera village, and will soon be removing the non-native, looming *Leylandii* trees adjacent to the car park. Why not explore Minera Quarry this summer and witness the next chapter unfold?



Sparrowhawk



Brynau Clwyd a Dyffryn Dydrdwy
Clwydian Range and Dee Valley
Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

North Wales Wildlife Trust are delighted to be working with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB to deliver a substantial programme of work funded by National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI). Over the next three years, our 'Hidden from View' project will see a range of habitat management work, greater visibility of industrial architecture and access improvements for visitors – we hope you enjoy the results!

For more information on National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative, visit <https://lei.nationalgrid.com/>.

nationalgrid

PLAN YOUR VISIT

1 Minera Quarry

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Location: Minera, near Wrexham
How to get there: From the A483, just West of Wrexham, take the A525 toward Ruthin. Follow the road through Coedpoeth, then turn left onto the B5426 (signposted Minera/World's End). Turn right directly opposite Minera Aided Primary School, continue past St Mary's Church and take the first left onto Maes-y-Ffynnon Road, where you will come to the reserve's car park (SJ 258 519).
Opening times: All day, every day.
Access: The site is steep with gravelly slopes in places.
Phone: 01248 351541
Email: info@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk
Website: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/minera-quarry

TOP WILDLIFE TO SPOT

Autumn gentian: This late-flowering plant displays pretty, mauve, tube-like flowers atop its reddish stems.
Tawny owl: Listen out for the evocative 'twit twoo' of female and male tawny owls calling to one another during the evening.
Scarce blue-tailed damselfly: Preferring early successional habitats with minimal vegetation, this species enjoys exactly what we're managing at Minera Quarry!

THINGS TO DO

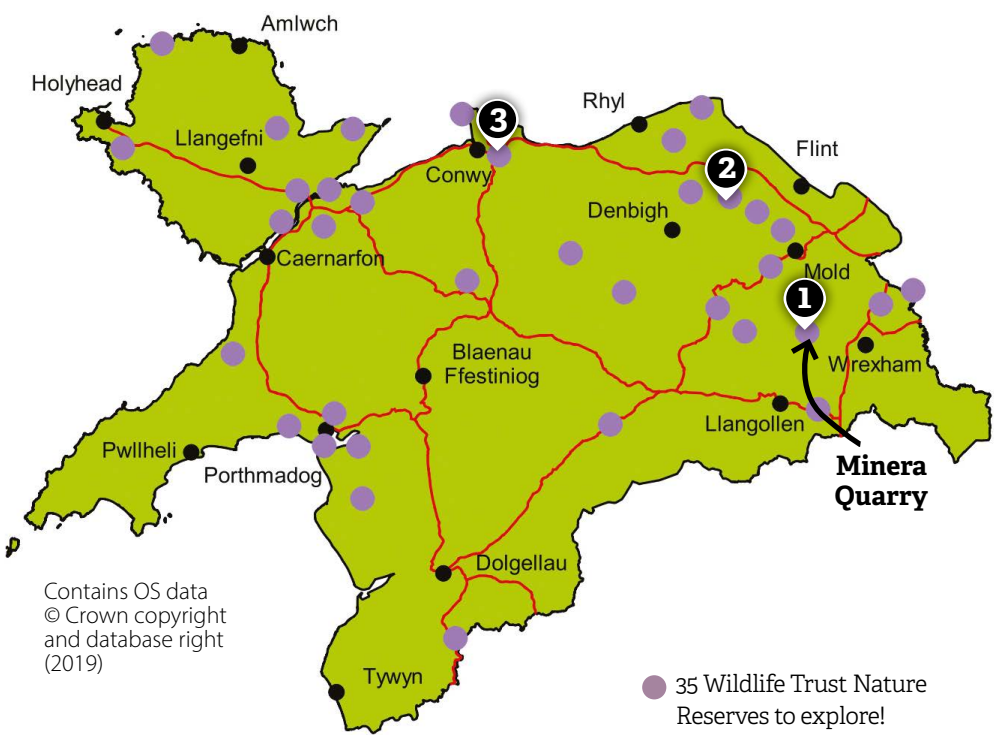
► Enjoy a gentle "Meander around Minera" with us on 25 August to find out more about the flora, fauna and history of this spectacular reserve! Book your place on our website.

► Use our **Wildlife Walks** book to explore the surrounding area. We've designed a 7.5-mile route that includes some lovely flower-rich grassland and panoramic views from Esclusham Mountain.

► Join or regular monthly **volunteer** team every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. Check our programme online for details before heading out.



More North Wales Wildlife Trust nature reserves for a great **summer day out**



PLAN YOUR VISIT

2 Ddôl Uchaf

Why now?
Summer at Ddôl Uchaf sees the wildflower colour shift from the now-shady woodland floor to the grassland area around the pond. Pink spikes of common spotted-orchids can be visible as late as August, when the jewel-like, white grass-of-parnassus is only just appearing!



Know before you go
Location: Afonwen, near Caerwys, Flintshire
Open: All day, every day
Wildlife to spot: (in summer) grass snake, common spotted-orchid, grass-of-parnassus; (at other times of year) lesser celandine, mayflies, blackcap, scarlet elf cup, blackcap, chiffchaff, tawny owl, nuthatch, wren.
Find out more: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/ddol-uchaf

The lowdown
Ddôl Uchaf is a wildlife-rich patchwork of woodland, grassland, ponds and river, incorporating an easy, short circular walk. The limestone-rich soils create perfect conditions for grassland wildflowers nestled amongst a lush, green woodland of sycamore, ash, willow, hawthorn, elder and hazel; whilst the unusual geological characteristics of the site help capture rainwater, forming ponds favoured by all three native species of newt – smooth, palmate and great crested – as well as grass snakes and many dragonflies.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

3 Bryn Pydew

Why now?
Choose a sunny summer day, bring some binoculars and head out on a butterfly-spotting expedition! Brown argus, common blue, small heath and grayling are easily found, especially in the grassy glades: themselves studded with colour as limestone-loving flowers come into bloom.



Know before you go
Location: Bryn Pydew, near Rhos-on-Sea
Open: All day, every day
Wildlife to spot: (in summer) brown argus, common blue, glow-worms, carline thistle, wild marjoram; (at other times of year) cowslips, rue-leaved saxifrage, orchids, goldcrest, spindle, juniper
Find out more: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/bryn-pydew

The lowdown
On a busy day, the hustle and bustle of life at Bryn Pydew re-creates the industrial toil of the site's former function as a limestone quarry. Limestone pavements punctuated with lush green ferns taper down into grassland filled with flowers and gorse scrub, which then gives way to ash and yew woodland. This variety of habitats in such a small geographical area supports a wealth of plant life, which in turn ensures that the site is home to a huge variety of invertebrates: over 20 species of butterfly and 500+ species of moth have been recorded here!

Plan your next great day out from all our nature reserves at:
northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves

FOCUS ON... Our wild year



Frances Cattnach
Chief Executive Officer



Howard Davies
Chair

We couldn't do any of our work without you – our members! We hope our Impact Report summarises what we achieve together.



2021-22 has, more than ever, highlighted the complexity within which we live. High on all our current concerns are the global energy and food markets – which, as we are now all-too aware, are inextricably linked with international diplomacy and the whims of the most powerful in society. Yet the ecological systems that provide

us with fresh water, clean air and healthy soils are still more complex, often invisible and more important. Their failure may go unnoticed until we wonder where the butterflies have gone, or why the curlew is silent. Protecting nature – and our role in doing so – has never been more vital. Our Impact Report, as ever,

highlights the Wildlife Trust's work and achievements over the past 12 months which have contributed to creating a thriving, natural North Wales. Please take just a few minutes to read it and take in how much your support matters – only together can we make a difference.



READ MORE ...

- **Download from our website:** northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/our-impact
- **Order a copy by post:** email info@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk and ask for it to be sent to you.
- **Collect a copy from our head office:** North Wales Wildlife Trust, Llys Garth, Garth Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT.
- **'Bringing Nature Back':** You can also download a copy of The Wildlife Trusts' 'Strategy 2030' (in Welsh or English) at wildlifetrusts.org/strategy-2030 Why not take a look – and share with others?

Summer Wildlife Gardening

The garden in summer is busy, as froglets and toadlets leave the pond for the first time, fledgling birds beg for food, and the whole garden buzzes with life.

In the sky, swallows, house martins and swifts gather insects to feed their young, and at night bats take their place, foraging among the treetops or swooping low over ponds.

If you haven't already, leave an area of grass to grow long, particularly around your pond. Long grass provides the perfect shelter for young amphibians and food for the caterpillars of several butterflies, including the ringlet, meadow brown and speckled wood. Here, you'll also find beetles and bugs, plentiful prey for a variety

of species further up the food chain, like hedgehogs. Later in the season, the grasses will seed and you may spot house sparrows stripping them for food. Avoid strimming your grass at all if you can, but if you must, be sure to check for hedgehogs and other wildlife first!

Being more tolerant of naturally occurring plants is also important in a wildlife garden. Anything from dandelions to nettles, dock and chickweed, provide food and shelter for a wide range of species. Let them flourish! Or at least leave a few around the edges.

It's also a good time to do an audit of flowering plants in your garden. Fill gaps with flowering annuals such as cosmos

and borage, which are magnets for bees and other pollinators. Towards the end of summer, add *Verbena bonariensis*, rudbeckias and echinaceas for insects still on the wing. You can also sow foxgloves and other biennials now, which will flower next year.

If conditions are dry, it's a good idea to water insect foodplants so they don't shrivel up, and ensure flowers continue to bear nectar. Use water from your water butt if you have one, and grey water from baths and washing up bowls if you don't — avoid using tap water as this is a precious resource. Leaving a dish of mud can help house martins fix and build their nests, and providing water — in a pond, bird bath or other container — will ensure foxes and hedgehogs have something to drink, while

birds can bathe and clean their feathers.

Take advantage of fine weather to construct that log pile you've been meaning to build, or start a large, open compost heap where wild things can live. There are always improvements to make in our gardens, and summer is a fine time to do them. What can you add?

Get more wildlife-friendly gardening tips at [wildlifetrusts.org/gardening](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/gardening)



Kate Bradbury is passionate about wildlife-friendly gardening and the author of *Wildlife Gardening for Everyone* and *Everything* in association with The Wildlife Trusts.



MY WILD LIFE



Gina Mills

Gina shares her story – about how and why she became involved with our work for Living Seas



As a newly retired environmental scientist with (suddenly!) time on my hands, I decided to do something I had long planned to do and start volunteering with North Wales Wildlife Trust. In my working life, I had been a specialist in the effects of air pollution and climate change on vegetation at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology – I was now keen to learn something new!

I've had a life-long interest in the coast and its ecology so I made my initial approach to the Wildlife Trust's Living Seas team. My first outing was to an 'eggcase hunt', where we searched the shoreline for these tell-tale signs of breeding sharks, skates and rays – commonly known as 'mermaid's purses'.

I've gained new friends with shared interests and feel a strong sense of being part of a team of like-minded people

Since then, I've often been out and about exploring the shore but the one memory that really stands out concerns an afternoon when we looked at some of the incredible local species of nudibranch (sea slugs) and other tiny creatures under the microscope. It opened my eyes to the unseen world of our seashores, and inspired me to want to help to protect our precious coastal and marine environments.

As I got more involved, I realised that the skills I had as an environmental scientist could help with the work of the Wildlife Trust. I had professional experience of working in a coordinating role at a large geographical scale, bringing networks of scientists and researchers together

– often translating science into policy and making large amounts of data and information easily digestible. I soon agreed to Chair the Trust's Marine Advisory Group (MAG), which provides guidance and context to our coastal and marine conservation work. The broad range of expertise that MAG members bring to the group has led to many interesting discussions and shared policy-related conservation activities. I've been particularly interested in offshore developments; the impacts that they may have on marine wildlife; and how the Wildlife Trust can influence change for the better. I'm now a Trustee, and aim to provide expertise and experience in environmental science, management and policy development.

What would I say to anyone thinking about volunteering with the Wildlife Trust? Well, "don't hesitate", of course! Everyone has something to offer that could benefit the Trust itself and the precious local environment we care for. I've gained new friends with shared interests and feel a strong sense of being part of a team of like-minded people. I've found it very stimulating that, whatever the activity (from counting organisms on the shore to Chairing MAG meetings), I'm always learning new and fascinating facts!



Nudibranch (sea slug)

© ALEXANDER MUSTARD 2020/VISION

Find out more about the wonderful people that work together for wildlife here at North Wales Wildlife Trust by visiting northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/about-us/our-people

Meet and greet

Gina is one of hundreds of amazing volunteers to work for wildlife as part of North Wales Wildlife Trust ...



Alasdair Forman, Trustee
I have always loved nature and cannot think of a better way to spend my time than helping to secure its future.

Born and bred in North Wales, I was keen to join a team that was dedicated to supporting the amazing wildlife and habitats that we have here – and am absolutely delighted to have recently become a North Wales Wildlife Trust trustee!



June Burrough, Facilitator
I moved to North Wales seeking involvement with local things and people! I was particularly inspired by

hearing a talk about the bats at Gwaith Powdwr Nature Reserve, and especially the building of a bat 'maternity unit' to encourage the breeding population! It's a joy to be volunteering for an organisation directly impacting on wildlife and meeting other people sharing similar enthusiasm.



Caitlin Howell-Williams, Student placement
I started volunteering with the Wildlife Trust to gain work experience and develop

my knowledge of conservation. Along the way, I've met some truly dedicated wildlife warriors from whom I've learned so much – and made many happy memories out in nature!

Volunteer. If you're thinking of volunteering but haven't taken the plunge yet, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact katy.haines@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk or complete the registration form on our website.

© NWWT NIA HAF JONES

Brilliant beavers!



Adrian Lloyd Jones is the Living Landscapes Manager for North Wales Wildlife Trust and manages the Welsh Beaver Project on behalf of all the Wildlife Trusts in Wales.

The Welsh Beaver Project has been working to orchestrate a managed reintroduction of Eurasian beaver to Wales since 2005 – and yes, it really has been that long! Despite all the challenges encountered along the way, the reason why we've never given up is quite simple: beavers are completely brilliant at restoring, enhancing and managing river and wetland ecosystems. It is imperative that we get them back, properly re-established and accepted as a fundamental feature of our natural landscape.

Beaver basics

Beavers are semi-aquatic rodents just over a metre long (including their tail) and typically weigh around 25kg. They tend to pair for life and live in family groups typically of 3-5 individuals, comprising a breeding pair and two generations of offspring within a 1-20km+ territory, which they defend against other beavers. As herbivores, they eat a wide range of aquatic and bankside vegetation including grass, docks, ferns, roots and leaves. They also feed on tree bark (especially in the winter when other food might not be available) and will fell trees to do so: aspen, willow and birch being their favourites. These felled trees tend to coppice and continually re-grow – which, in turn, helps the beavers easily reach the new shoots!

Beavers feel safe in or near freshwater bodies such as rivers, lakes and marshes and are reluctant to wander far from the water, with 95% of beaver activity occurring within just 10m of the water's edge. They like to live where water is slow-flowing and over 70cm deep so that they can swim around with ease, dive under the water when they feel threatened and keep the entrances to their dens (excavated bankside burrows or lodges constructed from sticks and mud) submerged. Where these conditions don't occur naturally, beavers build leaky dams on streams out of felled stems and sticks to create their preferred pools.

Awesome eco-engineering

Beavers' natural behaviour effectively delivers habitat management that restores and maintains river and wetland ecosystems for the benefit of all the species that they support – including humans.

On land, when beavers coppice bankside trees, they open up the riparian canopy. This allows more light to reach the ground, enabling bankside and aquatic plants to flourish and provide nectar and pollen for invertebrates, which in turn provide food for birds, bats and other small mammals. This coppiced riparian woodland habitat is excellent for bird species such as nightingale, willow warbler, chiffchaff and marsh tit; as well as reptiles, which have more sunlight to bask in and cover from new vegetation regrowth to hide in. The coppicing of bankside trees also stops trees getting top-heavy and falling into rivers, ripping out the bank and increasing erosion – in fact, coppicing causes the roots to grow further into the bank to help stabilise it. Furthermore, the increase in deadwood that beavers create provides a substrate for fungi; habitat for invertebrates; and food for all the species that feed upon them, such as treecreeper and woodpeckers.

And that's not all. Beaver dams are leaky and permeable but slow the water down enough for pools to develop behind them. The resulting pond mosaics are fabulous for wildlife such as dragonflies, amphibians, waterfowl, water vole and otter; and also provide excellent nurseries and resting sites for fish as they are able to evade avian predators in the deeper water and can



Beaver dam

© NWWT ALICIA LEOW-DYKE



Classic beaver feeding and coppicing on willow with new regrowth

© NWWT ALICIA LEOW-DYKE

Did you know?
... There are two species of beavers: North American (*Castor canadensis*) and Eurasian (*Castor fiber*). They are largely identical in appearance and behaviour but cannot interbreed as they have differing numbers of chromosomes.

find refuge from other predators within the dam structure. These environments also function as natural sponges which retain water and keep streams flowing during prolonged dry periods; dissipate and absorb sudden flows associated with sudden heavy rainfall, helping to reduce downstream flooding and bank erosion; and trap silt, cleaning rivers and improving them for many species including Atlantic salmon.

Helping beavers help us

Whilst beavers undertake wonderful work for wildlife, we know their presence isn't always completely straightforward for landowners and managers to handle. Beavers will sometimes cause localised problems – but there are always well-established solutions to all the issues that they might cause. For example:

- **Dams** can be built in the 'wrong' place, causing ponds to develop where they might be problematic or culverts to be blocked. However, dams can be modified or removed to reduce or negate flooding effects; and culverts can be protected by simple structures.
- Where absolutely necessary, **trees** can be protected from unwanted felling by placing wire grills around their trunks.

- Beavers can feed on **arable crops** if they are very close to the water's edge, but damage is usually highly localised and financially insignificant. It can also be prevented by standard stock or electric fencing if it becomes a concern.

- Beavers can **burrow into river embankments** but are less of an issue than more common burrowing animals such as rabbits and badgers, which pose a greater threat as they are not constrained to suitable stretches of nearby water. Measures can be taken to protect flood embankments from all animal burrowing – and, although this can be costly, the need for it is generally restricted to a very small proportion of any catchment.

The Welsh Beaver Project is in the process of establishing a network of trained beaver managers who will be available to deal with beaver-related problems. The aim is to ensure that landholders need not be significantly affected by beavers present on stretches of river passing through their land – and, if they *do* have a problem, the beaver team will deal with it without charge. In future, we hope that landholders will be able to receive financial rewards for allowing space for beavers – and the more space they have, the fewer problems they will cause.

© MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve
The Welsh Beaver Project is led by North Wales Wildlife Trust on behalf of all five Wildlife Trusts in Wales.
At Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve, owned by Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, the Project facilitated the release of a small beaver family into an enclosure to assist with habitat management. Although the enclosure is not open to the public, beaver-watching visits are planned for this summer: visit the Welsh Beaver Project webpage for further information about how to book: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/welshbeaverproject

Beavers mean business
Although beavers can require management, their reintroduction is well worth the investment. Wildlife-watching is increasingly popular – and beavers are a star attraction! As they come out at dawn and dusk, seeing them usually involves overnight stays, which helps local guesthouses, campsites, pubs, restaurants and other elements of local economies get a real boost. A report by the University of Oxford's WildCRU consultancy calculated that, including ecosystem services, the economic benefits of beavers can outweigh the costs of their management by as much as 100:1 – so beaver reintroduction makes good economic sense!

Beaver believers
If allowed to do so, beavers can restore and manage our river and wetland ecosystems and do it far better and far more cost effectively than humans ever could. Having read this article, I hope, if you weren't already, that you're now a committed beaver believer!



© CHRIS ROBBINS

Beavers beyond the border

Where Ham Fen, Kent
Who Kent Wildlife Trust
When In 2001 – the first project of its kind! – beaver families were released into a large enclosure to assist with restoring the last fenland in Kent.
Can I visit? By appointment only.
More information and bookings kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/safaris

Where Knapdale Forest, Argyll
Who Scottish Beaver Trial: a partnership project between Scottish Wildlife Trust, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and host partner Forestry Commission
When Five beaver families were translocated from Norway to their new home in 2009: the first beaver reintroduction in Britain! The trial finished in 2014 and, in 2019, the Scottish Government granted Eurasian beavers 'protected species' status. This also covers the significantly larger beaver population in the Tayside catchment, which was discovered after the start of the Scottish Beaver Trial.
Can I visit? Yes! There are lots of trails around Knapdale forest to explore and find evidence of beaver activity. You may even see beavers if you visit early in the morning or evening.
More information scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Where River Otter, Devon
Who River Otter Beaver Trial: Devon Wildlife Trust
When In 2015, soon after beavers were discovered living on the River Otter, Devon Wildlife Trust were granted a licence to develop this into the monitoring project which became known as the River Otter Beaver Trial. The trial finished in 2020 with the publication of the River Otter Beaver Trial: Science and Evidence Report, covering five years of scientific study. In 2020, the UK Government formally announced that the River Otter beavers could stay.
Can I visit? Yes! There is good public access along the River Otter where you might see beaver signs.
More information devonwildlifetrust.org

WILD NEWS

All the latest regional and national news from The Wildlife Trusts

Thank you
... to everyone who donated
to our appeal and made
the initial purchase
possible!

GIFTS IN WILLS

Birds at Brenig: a living legacy



SKYLARK © VAUGHN MATTHEWS

Gors Maen Llwyd, situated on the north shores of Llyn Brenig, high on the Denbigh Moors, is the largest of North Wales Wildlife Trust's 35 nature reserves. It's important for its rare blanket bog and dry heath habitats; its collection of bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts); and, perhaps most recognisably, for its breeding birds – for whom it is a key component of a wider protected landscape known as the Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI.


Sadly, the stories of many of these birds have, for some time, not made happy reading. Some of the most dramatic tell of steep twentieth-century declines (curlew, black grouse, skylark) or perilously low numbers, with fewer than 100 pairs of hen harrier remaining in Wales and the well-publicised return of ospreys still referencing a breeding population barely numbering more than single figures.

Today's turning point

Now, however, we hope to be able to turn the tide – both by improving the environmental condition of Gors Maen Llwyd for wildlife and by increasing awareness of why the area is important

amongst the thousands of people who visit the site each year.

We'll be removing invasive conifers; establishing fire-breaks; and initiating a heather-cutting regime: all creating a richer heathland mosaic which in turn benefits species such as skylarks, grouse and birds of prey. Meanwhile, we hope to provide pens, troughs and fencing to facilitate cattle grazing as the key, sustainable habitat management tool; improve visitor facilities (including re-surfacing the reserve's two small car parks, installing access infrastructure and improving the informal path network); and deliver guided walks, school visits, pond-dipping and mini-beast hunts. We're so looking forward to the transformation – and hearing about it from you!

 This copy of *Wild North Wales* is accompanied by a legacy-related flyer – please use the prepaid envelope to tell us if you'd like to know more about what Wills can do for wildlife. You don't need to have or donate £350,00, either! Every gift in every Will, however large or small, makes a difference.

A living legacy

All this work is only possible thanks to the generosity of one man – and those who have helped distribute his estate. In his Will, Idris Jones – a long-time teacher, born and raised in South Wales – established a charitable trust with specific provision for the care and protection of British wildlife. North Wales Wildlife Trust were very pleased to be invited to submit proposals through which Idris's vision might be achieved, and truly honoured to be awarded a total of £350,000 – the largest single donation that we have ever received from any source. We're incredibly grateful to Idris and his friends for entrusting us with his legacy.



RED GROUSE © MARGARET HOLLAND



Llyn Gwynant
Campsite

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Natural Partners: working for wildlife

Even in comparably rural North Wales, we know that businesses have a crucial part to play in combatting the climate and ecological emergencies. They can manage huge tracts of land, employ vast numbers of people and influence extensive supply chains – the corporate world must be part of the solution to the challenges facing the natural world. In fact, two of our most recent partnerships include ambitious plans to benefit wildlife over a combined 220+ hectares of land – that's more than 300 football pitches and bigger than all but one of our nature reserves!

One site – enfinium Parc Adfer, in Deeside – is heavily industrialised, yet contains an important portion of open mosaic habitat: important for invertebrates and reptiles alike. With our support, they will be proactively managing their ponds and wildflower meadows and taking their employees to visit examples of good practice off-site – we're very much looking forward to hosting them.

Meanwhile, Llyn Gwynant Campsite,



Llyn Gwynant
Campsite

managed by descendants of Clough Williams-Ellis, includes a beautiful tract of Celtic rainforest: rich in wildflowers, birds and lower plants (ferns lichens, mosses and so on). We hope to support the dedicated owners to take further steps to benefit biodiversity: undertaking a range of specialist surveys to inform a long-term management plan and making recommendations for the use/exclusion of grazing animals.

We are hugely grateful to both enfinium Parc Adfer and Llyn Gwynant Campsite both for their financial support and will to 'do the right thing'. Both have the potential to be amongst our most productive partnerships, where we establish common cause to achieve far more for wildlife together than we would on our own.



We would also like to welcome **GreenWood Family Park** and **Jewels Glassware** into our corporate fold! GreenWood have been helping us promote 30 Days Wild to their thousands of visitors and hosting some wildlife-themed activities on-site; whilst Jewels make a donation to the Wildlife Trust for each piece of glassware that they sell – thank you, both!



Together we're stronger

Here are some of the ways your support had an impact on local wildlife during 2021-22

19,400
volunteer hours

given by our 452 volunteers
northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer

29,411
followers

standing up for nature across our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram



Thank
you!

5,936
people

engaged with nature through our visits to schools and other groups

7,007
people

learnt more about wildlife at our events
northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/events



NATURE RESERVES

Counting at Cemlyn

Summer 2022 got off to a good start at Cemlyn Nature Reserve with large numbers of each of the three breeding tern species present. We estimate that around 2,000 pairs of Sandwich terns have nested on the islands in the lagoon – alongside more than 200 pairs of common terns and 100 pairs of Arctic terns!

For the latest updates, visit northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/cemlyn-terns



We bet you didn't know ...

Our staff have recently included a Eurovision and Britpop bassist; a multi-studio-album-releasing alternative rock artist; and an academically published classical musician. Guess who? – we're not telling!

LIVESTREAM

Meet our barn owls

If you've visited our website in recent months, you may have enjoyed getting to know our resident barn owl family via our livestreamed footage! Although the owlets have now left the nest box, the adults may return over the coming months – so please do continue to check in regularly. You can also watch some of the earlier activity at northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/owl-cam



SHOP FOR WILDLIFE



We're back in business!

After two years of closure, we're really excited to have re-opened our shop on the Great Orme. Open every day until the end of October, the shop sells a wide range of wildlife-themed goods, raising valuable funds for North Wales Wildlife Trust. We have an amazing team of volunteers who help us run the shop but we are currently looking for extra help with some of our weekday morning and afternoon shifts (10.30 to 1.30, or 1.30 to 4.30). If you live in the Llandudno area and could spare a few hours each week, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Peter.Kearton@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk or 07939 863889 if you would like to volunteer.

Operation Seabird!

During the early summer, our coast is a hive of activity – many of us flock there in the warmer weather to enjoy getting in, on or around the sea; whilst the season also boasts some of our most impressive wildlife spectacles. However, our behaviour – inadvertent or otherwise – can have devastating consequences for our wonderful coastal and offshore wildlife.

At this time of year, disturbance to coastal and marine habitats and species is at its highest. To help remedy this, we've been taking part in activities to raise awareness of the issue and help people to take simple steps to prevent it from happening. Led locally by North Wales Police, 'Operation Seabird' sees several partner organisations working together to promote responsible use of our seas – so don't be alarmed if you see our staff out and about alongside uniformed police officers!

You can read more about different kinds of disturbance; what we're doing to reduce it; and the legal context at bit.ly/3xOyqM3 – in the meantime, why not follow #OperationSeabirdCymru on social media?



UK NEWS

UK UPDATE

Nextdoor Nature



A ground-breaking new Wildlife Trusts initiative is bringing communities together to rewild their neighbourhoods. Nextdoor Nature will give people the skills, tools, and opportunity to take action for nature in the places where they live and work. The initiative was made possible by a £5 million investment from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, to leave a lasting natural legacy in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Nextdoor Nature will provide solutions to two of the most important issues that The Wildlife Trusts are working to address: the urgent need to create more space for nature, with a goal to restore 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030; and the need to make nature a part of everyone's daily life. We know that spending time in nature can bring huge benefits to our health and wellbeing, but we don't all have the same level of access to green or wild spaces.

Research shows that 85% of people in nature-deprived areas say more natural spaces would improve their quality of life. The importance of this was reinforced by the pandemic, which

demonstrated how vital it is to have access to nature in your local area. Nextdoor Nature will bring a wild touch to the places that need it most, improving the lives of people from some of the most disadvantaged areas across the UK. This could include establishing wild habitats and green corridors in areas of economic and nature deprivation, rewilding school grounds, or naturalising highly urbanised or unused areas. Most importantly, through Nextdoor Nature, it will be local communities that decide on what happens and drive the change in their neighbourhood.

The initiative will bring huge benefits for nature, too. One of the big problems facing our wildlife is fragmentation — wild places are isolated and disconnected, preventing plants and animals from moving freely across the landscape. By creating green corridors and wild patches in urbanised areas, we can reconnect our wild networks, creating pit-stops for pollinators, buffets for birds and bats, and highways for hedgehogs.

Liz Bonnin, President of The Wildlife Trusts, says: "We humans are key to

Here in North Wales ...

... we are aiming to work with four nature-deprived communities in two distinct regions; coastal Flintshire and South Denbighshire. Over the course of the next two years we will be helping people in these areas to re-discover and re-connect with the natural world around them, and hopefully turn their urban green spaces into thriving, healthy wildlife havens.

solving the climate crisis and restoring our natural heritage. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, but Nextdoor Nature is working to set that right, putting local communities at the heart of helping our wild places to recover, and making sure that no matter where we live, we can be part of this crucial endeavour."

Learn more about this inspiring new project at wildlifetrusts.org/nextdoor-nature

UK UPDATE

Full marks for new school subject

This April, the UK Government announced the introduction of a new GCSE in natural history. From 2025, secondary school students in England will have the opportunity to study the natural world, developing an in-depth knowledge of wildlife and wider ecosystems, as well as real-life experience of nature. The GCSE will teach transferable skills in observation, identification, classification and data gathering, and how to apply this knowledge to real world issues. The announcement follows years of campaigning to make nature part of the curriculum, led by naturalist and writer Mary Colwell.

Providing young people with the knowledge to protect the planet is

essential for the future of the natural world, as is inspiring a connection to nature. The new natural history GCSE is a great first step, but this journey needs to start sooner and involve all pupils in the UK, regardless of the subjects they study.

We want to see children given opportunities to spend at least an hour a day learning outside, and for nature and climate education to be embedded across all subjects and at all levels. This message has been championed by thousands of young people through the Our Bright Future programme, who want greater opportunities to learn in, and about, nature.

Read our full response to the new GCSE at wtru.st/new-GCSE



Sky-high ambitions

Wild About Gardens, an annual joint initiative between The Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society, is setting its sights sky-high as we go wild about our high-flying birds. This year, the focus is on swifts, swallows and martins — summer visitors that have suffered some serious declines. Plummeting insect populations and loss of nesting sites

have contributed to swifts and house martins joining the UK's red list, marking them as birds in dire need of help. The campaign is calling on the public to help by nurturing insect-friendly gardens and adding nest boxes to homes.

Find out more at wildaboutgardens.org.uk

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how
The Wildlife Trusts
are helping
wildlife across
the UK



1 Raptor real estate

A pair of peregrine falcons have nested for the first time on St Albans Cathedral, thanks to a nesting tray provided by the Wilder St Albans project — a collaboration between Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and St Albans City and District Council. The St Albans pair is one of only five pairs breeding in Hertfordshire.

wtru.st/st-albans-nest

2 Hope for hazel dormice

Surrey Wildlife Trust has trained more than 100 volunteers to help hedgerows flourish across Surrey's North Downs, giving hope to the iconic hazel dormice. Even small gaps in a hedgerow can be a barrier to dormice, isolating populations. The new volunteer task force is surveying, laying and planting hedgerows to help dormice populations expand.

wtru.st/dormice-hope



3 Scuttled cuttle

A rare pink cuttlefish was found on a Cornish beach, following late winter storms. This small species is more commonly seen in the Mediterranean, with only sporadic records from southern Britain. The discovery was made by Cornwall Wildlife Trust volunteers and recorded in the Trust's Marine Strandings Network.

wtru.st/pink-cuttlefish