

Wild North Wales

Summer 2023

COMMUNITY AND NATURE

Good neighbours at Bryn Ifan,
our newest land acquisition

BOUNCING BACK

Iolo Williams shares his views
on reintroducing wildlife



SEA SLUGS

Skinny-dipping slugs

Discover what puts
the nude in nudibranch



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Wildlife Trust

Welcome ... to all our members!



At the top of my mind at the moment are the complex problems facing the farmed landscape in Wales. Extending to over 85% of the land, what happens here has massive potential to influence how wildlife can return from its perilous state.

The Welsh Government is developing the Sustainable Farming Scheme and the Agriculture Bill – but both are taking time to become realities, and are being chipped away at by competing parties. Yet the prize of getting it right remains as huge as ever: high-quality, affordable and local food production reducing the prevalence of poor health; thriving farm businesses, employing more and younger farmers; and, of course, well-managed land, soils and waterways supporting the return of wildlife.

The Wildlife Trust has recently risen to the challenge of contributing to a workable future by investing in the acquisition of Bryn Ifan, where we aim to showcase practical solutions to the challenges before us – including understanding how best to support farmers to be the guardians of a future for wildlife across North Wales. If you were part of the overwhelming response to our appeal, thank you so much! I so look forward to sharing more about this with you as it progresses.

In the meantime, I'm also delighted to tell you that, in our 60th year, we'll have over 10,000 magnificent members for the very first time. And what a resounding statement that is, demonstrating significant public concern for nature – as well as enabling us to act proactively and gainfully on your behalf. Thank you for your support.

Frances Cattnach

Chief Executive Officer, North Wales Wildlife Trust



Would you like a free Will? Perhaps you've already kindly remembered us in your Will? Please let us know using the enclosed flyer and envelope!



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KESTREL © RUSSELL SAVORY, HAIRY DRAGONFLY © DAVID MARTIN, OCEAN RESCUE CHAMPIONS © DILYS THOMPSON, SEA SLUG © ALEX MUSTARD NATUREPL

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Our Wild Year

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

■ **Read more or 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.



Spectacular salmon

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

Thank you

Your Wildlife Trust membership supports our efforts to keep North Wales's freshwater streams, lakes and rivers clean – and full of wildlife!

From as early as September, Atlantic salmon return to their native rivers to breed – and the great salmon run begins!

These single-minded, determined fish battle heroically against the fast-flowing water and can be seen leaping up waterfalls to reach their gravel-bed spawning grounds – which, amazingly, may be the exact stretches of river where they hatched. Atlantic salmon can leap over 3.5 metres high but negotiating the trickiest obstacles can still require many attempts, so waterfalls can be a great place to sit and watch this incredible spectacle of nature.

At the spawning grounds, the females create gravel depressions known as 'redds' and lay their eggs in them. Nearby adult males (who can be identified by their hooked lower jaw, called a 'kype') fertilise them immediately, before the females cover the fertilised eggs with gravel. Around 90 to 95% of the adults will die soon afterwards, but those few that survive return to the ocean and can spawn again.

The young salmon 'parr' hatch the following spring and, after living for up to four years in rivers and lakes, become 'smolts'; turning a silvery-white in colour and undergoing physiological changes that enable salt-water living. During spring, they swim downstream to the oceans where they mature for up to four years – all in preparation for making the arduous salmon run themselves.

SEE THEM THIS AUTUMN

➤ **Conwy Falls and Swallow Falls** Both located near to Betws-y-coed with parking available off the A5 – a small fee may be necessary to enter the best viewing areas.

Sundew



Sticky and snappy

Venus flytraps and pitcher plants are famous world-over and aren't native to the UK – but did you know that our wetlands play host to our own, local carnivorous plants? Nutrients can be pretty hard to come by in these boggy habitats, so the residents have come up with a grizzly way to get their 'five-a-day' ...

All three types of UK insect-eaters are easily overlooked, even during their spring-summer flowering period. Look for the delicate purple blooms and distinctive, curling rosettes of common butterwort; the small, vivid-red hairs on the leaves of sundews (covered in sticky translucent 'dew'); and the other-worldly spires of yellow bladderwort flowers emerging directly from the water – you won't see the sneaky, bug-catching 'bladders' beneath the surface unless you're far too close!

SEE THEM THIS SUMMER

- **Cors Goch Nature Reserve** Perhaps the finest of all North Wales Wildlife Trust's wetlands, this reserve allows visitors to get up close and personal with sticky sundew from the safety of its boardwalk.
- **Minera Quarry Nature Reserve** Although better-known for showier orchids, diminutive common butterwort can be found in areas of damp grassland.
- **Cors Bodgynydd Nature Reserve** Species of all three types of carnivorous plant can be found here, including water-dwelling lesser bladderwort – but don't put yourself at risk by entering the mire!

URBAN FIELDCRAFT

Super seagulls

Did you know that there are several different species of gull which breed in the UK – and many more occasional visitors? However, for most people, it's probably the herring gull which springs to mind – indeed, there's no sound more synonymous with the seaside than its repetitive display call, reminiscent of the maniacal laughter of a TV villain.

Herring gulls have made the most of human habits and have been nesting on rooftops in urban environments since the 1920s. And whilst they may display behaviour which challenges us – particularly swooping in close, either to protect their young or steal some chips – it is truly unfortunate that this much-maligned bird is suffering the

troubling population decline which has led to it being red-listed as UK Bird of Conservation Concern.

Look and listen

- Some herring gulls have learnt to crack open shells, such as mussels, by dropping them from a height onto a hard surface. Watch out for this behaviour by jetties, slipways and promenades.
- Herring gulls have a whole suite of calls. Listen carefully – the low 'gagagag' sound is a sign that the bird is anxious.
- Watch a herring gull's nest carefully and you may see the chicks pecking at the red blotch on their parent's beak to encourage them to regurgitate food.

Learn more about wildlife in North Wales at **northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer**



HEAR THIS

In summer, male grasshoppers display to females by rubbing their legs against their wings to create a 'song'. Did you know that each species has its own 'voice'?

SEE THIS

'Fairy rings' of field mushrooms appear where conditions are right – but don't pick or eat them unless accompanied by an expert!

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Harbour porpoise

Humans have always felt a strong affinity with the large marine mammals that inhabit our seas

Several species of whales, dolphins and porpoises, collectively known as cetaceans, can be seen from the North Wales coastline – with rocky outcrops and headlands being particularly good spotting spots.

Tell-tale signs

Harbour porpoises, the most common cetacean seen here, are affectionately known as 'puffing pigs' – so called due to the explosive noise they make whilst surfacing to breathe; sometimes audible from the shore if you listen carefully on a calm day. They have an affinity with the strong tidal races and currents that hug our coastline, and these are often the best areas in which you should keep an eye out for them, even if their tendency to roll at the surface and small dorsal fin can make them hard to see in rougher seas. In fact, one of the best indicators of their presence is actually the sight of another creature altogether: feeding seabirds. Tens of gannets diving vertically at speeds of up to 60mph whilst porpoises surface gasping for breath in a feeding frenzy is truly a spectacular sight.

At home beneath the waves

Like all cetaceans (and marine mammals in general), harbour porpoises are well adapted to life in the water. Their thick layer of insulating blubber helps them to keep warm in the cold sea; whilst their torpedo-shaped body enables them to glide effortlessly through the water. They also have an amazing ability to sense their environment using a process known as echolocation: using the echo of a series of squeaks and clicks



that they produce to create a mental picture of their surroundings.

SEE THEM THIS SUMMER

- **Great Orme** Head halfway around Marine Drive – there's a great seawatching spot by the 'Rest and be thankful' café.
- **Bull Bay** You don't have to go far North from Amlwch on the Wales Coast Path to enjoy porpoises surfacing.
- **Uwchmynydd** At the very tip of the Llŷn Peninsula, there's always spectacular views and great seawatching!



Celebrate our 60th anniversary in style by making porpoise-watching one of your 60 seaside shore-nanigans!

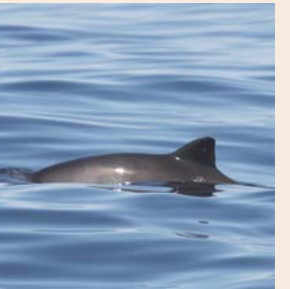
Download our all-new family friendly marine pack!

northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/livingseas

Top tips SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Harbour porpoise

Look out for a small, triangular dorsal fin, surfacing in a rolling motion.



Risso's dolphin

Big splashes, tall dorsal fins and white, paintbrush-like patterning are all identifying features.



Bottlenose dolphin

Typical behaviour includes playful jumps and bow-riding with boats.



Isaac Daniel Hooson (1880–1948) was a Welsh-language poet from Rhosllannerchrugog. His body of work about nature and the landscape includes ‘The Red Kestrel’ – **Iolo Williams** favourite nature poem!



© RUSSELL SAVORY

In this the moment of interaction between a raptor and a songbird, Hooson makes the hunting kestrel into a ‘grim watching bird’ ‘hatching woe’ for the linnet or the blackbird. Writers often anthropomorphise – attribute human qualities to the non-human – but do you question the legitimacy of transforming an animal into a humanesque predator?

The Red Kestrel

A sudden shadow fell o’er the lea,
Cry, commotion where song had been,
The blackbird’s wild, frenzied pipe,
Timorous chirp of linnet green,
And two long pinions wide outspread
Hovering in the clear sky o’erhead.

The poem asks the reader whether they favour predator or prey. Do you feel sympathy for the ‘frenzied blackbird’ and the ‘timorous linnet’, or are you caught ‘spellbound’ (as the poem’s speaker is) in the kestrel’s ‘clutch of steel’?

The thicket stands wakeful, and the sound
Of a wild, flurried host was heard
Flying for refuge towards the wood
In dread of the grim watching bird;
And he above them hatching woe,
Death’s shadow o’er the field below.

And I there gazing, in an instant -
The two long wings, ‘neath my gaze spellbound
Changed suddenly to a pointed dart,
And that plunging straight to the ground;
And then, one with a piercing squeal,
Is the Red Kestrel’s clutch of steel.

from I.D. Hooson: *Y Casgliad Cyflawn* (Gomer)
English translation:
Blodwen Edwards

There are three behaviours attributed to the kestrel: ‘hovering in the clear sky’, ‘changing to a pointed dart’ and ‘the clutch of steel’. Hooson admired the soaring kestrel for two of the three stanzas. Do you believe the third stanza hurries the attack unnecessarily, or does it make the kill suitably clinical?



Glyn Edwards is a poet, teacher and PhD Researcher. His second book, *In Orbit*, is published by Seren.
Wild Words is seeking your responses to ‘The Red Kestrel’, with a view to publishing a selection on the Wild Words page on the AM website (amam.cymru/north-wales-wildlife-trust-wild-words). Glyn is looking forward to reading any poems that indulge a similar ‘wakeful’ ‘gazing’ at the natural world.
Glyn and North Wales Wildlife Trust would like to thank the kind people at Gomer Press for permission to use this poem, and Sara Louise Wheeler (who is preparing an entry on I.D. Hooson for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*) and Sian Northey for their help with research.



Iolo Williams

@loloWilliams2

From beyond the brink



Reintroduction is a hot topic in conservation. It’s essentially bringing a species back to an area from which it has been lost. In my opinion, reintroduction should be a last resort. We should be working hard to hold on to what we’ve got without letting it get to that stage. We should have a government doing an awful lot more to stop wildlife from being lost, and to help threatened species recover.
But our wildlife is in a sorry state. It’s been said many times that we are one of the most nature depleted countries in the world – when I look around now and think about what we’ve lost since I was a young lad walking the fields of mid Wales, I can believe it. Curlews, lapwings, yellowhammers, linnets; pools full of frogs, toads, and newts – so many have now disappeared. It’s not too late to save these species, but for others, last resorts are all we have left.

Where species have gone extinct from an area because of human activity, I think reintroducing them is very much justified. Especially so when species have a hugely positive impact on the environment, bringing benefits for a whole host of other plants and animals. Take beavers, for example. They create and maintain incredible wetland habitats, providing ideal conditions for many species, from water plants to amphibians to fish. This habitat creation is more important than ever as hot, dry summers become more frequent.
Thanks to reintroductions, there are now wild beavers back in Scotland, with a few in England too. But Wales is lagging behind. Beavers are back in Wales, but legally only

in enclosures. I was privileged enough to be there when they arrived. It was an amazing feeling to be a small part of this event, but imagine how much better it would be to see them in the wild.

I’ve been quite shocked at the opposition to reintroducing beavers. I think a lot of it comes from a lack of understanding of beaver behaviour, and how many benefits they bring. Yes, there may be one or two areas of conflict, but there are plenty of measures to mitigate this. It’s already been done successfully in countries across Europe, where people now live happily alongside beavers. Any mention of reintroducing lynx raises even more opposition in some places, but I also think there’s a place for lynx in the UK. We have big problems with overgrazing as a result of high deer populations, and lynx could help with that. I’d be very interested to see them return and what effect they would have.

I’m obviously concerned about wildlife across the whole of the UK, but as a Welshman what I would really love to see is the reintroduction of both beavers and golden eagles to Wales. We had an escaped golden eagle set up home here for over 10 years and it had a fantastic reception from the local community, including farmers. Some were overawed by the beauty and the sheer size of her. It would be fantastic to see golden eagles back in Wales for good.

Find out all about Wildlife Trust reintroduction projects:
wildlifetrusts.org/reintroductions

TRIED AND TRUSTED

The Wildlife Trusts have been involved in many successful reintroduction projects across the UK, including the return of beavers. We’ve also helped bring back water voles, pine martens, dragonflies, and butterflies to parts of the UK from which they’ve been lost.

Iolo Williams is a Welsh ornithologist, conservationist, and popular wildlife presenter, known for programmes including BBC’s *Springwatch* and *Wild Wales*. He has been supportive of the Wildlife Trusts for a long time and in 2021 took on the role of vice president of The Wildlife Trusts.

ILLUSTRATION © KIRSTY “CROWARTIST” YEOMANS



Tales from the WESTERN WOODS

The British Lichen Society's **April Windle** explores a precious habitat that has long been overlooked by many of us – the British Isles' very own rainforests...

When you hear the word rainforest, your mind probably wanders to exotic lands thousands of miles overseas, to places such as the Amazon or Borneo, but unbeknown to most people, we have our very own rainforests right here on our doorstep.

Along the western seaboard of the British Isles, we have a network of internationally important woodlands, elegantly termed Atlantic woodlands. These are typically ancient woods, in clean-air situations that are strongly influenced by the oceanic (wet and mild) to hyper-oceanic (very wet and mild) climate. Some of these woods are remnants of the ancient wildwood that started appearing across the landscape after the last ice-age, making them some of the oldest living ecosystems found in the UK.

This series of woodlands, from western Scotland down and through to the south-west of England, is a spectrum of forested habitats, where Atlantic woodlands can be categorised into temperate rainforests and oceanic woodlands. This wooded landscape is of huge global significance and supports an exceptional diversity of wildlife, most notably the lichens, bryophytes, and ferns.

These rainforests are a world unto themselves and have such a mystical and enchanted feel to them. They are dramatic and prehistoric, with twisted and gnarled trees growing amongst the craggy terrain, with rivers that cut through the ancient treescapes and broadleaf canopies locking in humidity as a result of the high rainfall. The age of the forests and the high rainfall has resulted in spectacular habitats which are absolutely teeming with wildlife.

Restoring Britain's Rainforests

in partnership with Aviva

The Wildlife Trusts care for a network of Atlantic rainforest nature reserves. These beautiful sites, from the Dart Valley in Devon to Pengelli Woods in Pembrokeshire, or Shian Wood near Oban, Scotland, are incredibly important for wildlife, but also for people. We know that the simple enjoyment of wonderful greenspace is more than just fun – it has a medical value, reducing stress and increasing exercise, in turn reducing cost to the NHS. This is an ecosystem service of immense value. Another valuable ecosystem service is carbon, and that's where The Wildlife Trusts' new rainforest programme comes in.

Aviva are on a journey to net zero that they hope to achieve in the 2040s. They are making great strides to reduce their direct emissions, but also want to reduce their indirect emissions within their investment portfolio. They have strong plans but struggle to identify the last part of the journey – the technical solutions are not quite in place. For this, they aim to insure themselves by investing in a nature-based way to suck carbon out of the atmosphere and put it back into nature over the next few decades, counter-balancing any remaining indirect emissions in the 2040s. By donating funds to The Wildlife Trusts to establish new Atlantic rainforest nature reserves in the 2020s, Aviva is investing in both climate solutions and the many other benefits of nature reserves.

This represents a ratchet up of ambition for The Wildlife Trusts as we focus on the intensifying climate and nature emergency before us. We know our marginal soil farmers are going to struggle as agricultural subsidies reduce and new trading relationships allow importation of lamb and beef that is cheaper to produce elsewhere. Planting new rainforests might be part of the answer as we seek a just transition for farming on the western fringe. If meat production is no longer economic, agro-forestry (very low intensity grazing producing conservation grade meat) tied to nature tourism and carbon payments might provide a better prospect for the next generation of farmers.

By working with partners – farmers and other nature conservation bodies, especially Plantlife and the Woodland Trust in this case, we can create a grand alliance to restore the lost rainforests of the west. This April, we announced the first two sites to benefit from this programme. Creg y Cowin on the Isle of Man will see over 70 acres planted with native tree species, with around 20 acres allowed to regenerate naturally. Manx Wildlife

Trust anticipates the return of redstarts and other oakwood birds, whilst the rainforest will also increase water purity for a nearby reservoir and help with flood prevention.

At Bryn Ifan in Gwynedd, North Wales Wildlife Trust aims to establish over 100 acres of rainforest, through a mix of sympathetic native planting and natural regeneration.

Find out more about this special habitat at

wildlifetrusts.org/rainforest



Tumbling kittens (*Hypotrachyna taylorensis*), a lichen of acid, leached bark in high rainfall situations



Read more about our vision for Bryn Ifan at northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/bryn-ifan

Temperate rainforests are the perfect habitat for many species, including treecreepers

Lichens are a symbiotic organism composed of a fungus and a photosynthetic partner (algae and/or cyanobacteria)

Lichen the location

What truly defines these rainforests (alongside the rain of course), are the lichens, bryophytes and ferns that make these woodlands so special. When you walk into these woods, the first thing that you notice is every available surface is covered in life. The rocks are carpeted in mosses and the trees cloaked in lichens. Many of the species found here are as rare, if not rarer than the habitat in which they grow. Lichens and bryophytes are fantastic indicators of temperate rainforest, because they have a distinct geographic shift from east to west as a result of the wet and mild climatic conditions. This isn't necessarily witnessed with other groups such as flowering plants, trees, or animals.

Lichens are among the most bewildering lifeforms on the planet. Despite their plant-like appearance, lichens sit within the biological kingdom Fungi, where genetic studies show that fungi are more closely related to humans

than they are to plants. Within our rainforests, lichens can be encountered as mosaics of hieroglyphics on the ancient hazel stems, or as rich, leafy tapestries covering the twisted oak trunks.

This lichen diversity is complemented by a medley of plant life. The rocks and trees are laden with a luxuriance of mosses and liverworts (collectively referred to as bryophytes) and ferns. Bryophytes are non-vascular plants, meaning they lack "true" roots and a vascular system. The bryophyte diversity in temperate rainforests is claimed to rival that found in the cloud forests of their tropical counterparts.

Lichens and bryophytes are a beautiful and important component of these wooded ecosystems, where species, communities and climatic conditions bridge our British and Irish rainforests with other temperate rainforest habitats across the globe. It is these bespoke bioclimatic features that make our rainforests... rainforests.

A rainforest resurgence

Temperate rainforest and oceanic woodlands more widely are an extraordinary aspect of our British and Irish countryside, and they are right here on our doorstep waiting to be explored. These woodlands are habitats of great conservation value, yet are subject to a variety of threats, ranging from habitat loss and degradation to tree pests and diseases, inappropriate management, and climate change to name a few. Over the years, there have been concerted efforts from various individuals and conservation organisations to raise the public profile and ensure the conservation of these globally significant woodlands.

The British Lichen Society (BLS) has a long history of working with charitable and government organisations, using the collective of expertise to generate evidence-bases that underpin management and decision-making. Collecting biological information is at the heart of the Society, with a national lichen database of over two million records and over a thousand survey reports listed on our literature inventory, many offering appropriate management

advice. A significant proportion of this data has been generated in these western woodlands of Britain and Ireland.

In February 2023, the Wildlife Trust announced their exciting and ambitious 100-year project to restore and expand temperate rainforests along the western seaboard of Britain and Ireland. The BLS would like to thank The Wildlife Trusts for taking lead on this important initiative and looks forward to collaborating with the Trusts in driving forward these important works.



April Windle is a naturalist with a particular interest in lichens, especially those occupying the temperate rainforest habitats of Britain and Ireland. She also Chairs the Education & Promotions Committee for the British Lichen Society.

[@aprilwindle](https://twitter.com/aprilwindle) [@aprilwindle.nature](https://www.instagram.com/aprilwindle.nature)



Yellow Slug-marine

Sea slugs add a spectacular splash of colour to our rockpools.



Delicate, vibrant, enchanting: these might not be words you normally associate with slugs, but sea slugs have no respect for normal. There are several groups that you may come across on UK shores and even the most familiar looking of these, the sea hares, are quirky. These plump brown slugs have tall ear-like rhinophores (scent-sensitive tentacles) and a hidden shell. They lay a tangle of eggs that resemble pink spaghetti and produce a 'smoke-screen' of violet ink if disturbed. The solar powered sea slug, on the other hand, belongs to the sap-suckers group. It eats seaweed, retaining the photosynthesising parts – the chloroplasts – in its body, where they supplement the slug's diet with sugars, like a built-in snack bar.

The largest group of sea slugs, the nudibranchs, are the strangest and most visually stunning of all. With dozens of species to be found in our rock pools and shallow seas, they have become my delight and obsession.



Heather Buttivant is a Cornwall Wildlife Trust volunteer, proud 'nudi' fanatic and author of the award-winning blog, cornishrockpools.com. She has published two books: *Rock Pool* and *Beach Explorer*.



Gills and frills

Nudibranchs, or 'nudis', as they are affectionately known by their ever-growing fan club, are shell-less sea slugs. Their name comes from the Latin, nudus branchia, meaning 'naked gill'. Nudibranchs are a flamboyant bunch, so they turn their gills into stylish accessories.

One of our most common rocky shore nudibranchs, the sea lemon (*Doris pseudoargus*), is a case in point. When underwater, this bumpy yellow animal unfurls a glamorous, feathery circle of honey-yellow gills on its back. Other nudibranchs, like the bright purple *Edmundsella pedata*, have spiky projections called 'cerata', providing a large surface area through which they breathe in oxygen.

Tiny *Doto* spp. slugs win my prize for the craziest body shape. Their white cerata, shaped like towering jelly moulds adorned with cherry-red spots, are so high that they wobble precariously. Their heads sport two

tall rhinophores sheathed in a wide dish, as though they are trying to detect alien radio signals.

Amphorina spp. slugs inflate and deflate their cerata, *Facelina* spp. have ringed rhinophores like unicorn horns, while *Polycera* spp. slugs' heads are fringed with colourful tentacles. Anything goes when you're a nudibranch.

You are what you eat

If you are used to peaceable garden slugs, it can be unsettling to discover that nudibranchs are devout carnivores. While each species has a preferred diet, between them they eat sponges, barnacles, hydroids, anemones, bryozoans, sea squirts and more.

Some nudibranchs change colour. The sea lemon, for instance, turns into a 'sea orange' after eating orange sponges. Great grey sea slugs (*Aeolidia* spp.) dive in headfirst to feed among the treacherous stinging tentacles of anemones, their pale grey bodies and cerata often turning bright pink as they eat. Inside their cerata, great grey slugs retain the anemone's stinging cells, which fire toxic harpoons at any predator that tries to bite them. Other slugs, like *Geitodoris planata*, have acid glands that burn attackers.

Most incredible of all are the *Calma* slugs. The vivid blue and yellow *Calma glaucoides* feeds on clingfish eggs, while its relation, *Calma gobioophaga* has

cerata the shape of goby eggs, allowing it to evade the male goby's efforts to guard its brood. The fish eggs are so efficiently digested that *Calma* slugs have no anus and never poo.

Slug safari

For the best chance of finding sea slugs, join an organised event or Shoresearch survey, where experts will be on hand to help you discover more. Look for pale spirals of sea slug spawn on rocks and seaweeds in spring and summer. Sea slugs are hermaphrodites, meaning that they are both male and female at once, so they all lay eggs.



Nudibranchs are often found on their favourite foods, but even the brightest slugs can be well camouflaged. If possible, place your nudibranch in water and watch it magically puff up. Be gentle as sea slugs are delicate. Always put the nudibranch back where it came from, leave everything as you found it and watch the tides.

Finding your first nudibranch is like discovering a sparkling gem. Their exquisite colours and eye-catching shapes make them true treasures of the rock pools.





If you come down to the fen today ...

Tired of Anglesey's breathtaking beaches and coastal walks? Well, even if you aren't, why not try something new! Come and explore one of Anglesey's hidden, inland gems ...



Matt Cole is one of our reserves officers in North-West Wales, working alongside Luke Jones. He enjoys tramping in the hills and is a keen musician. At this time of year, when not scything bracken, he can be found tending his veg patch!

You've probably heard by now that, this year, North Wales Wildlife Trust is celebrating its sixtieth birthday – and the fact that, shortly after being formally established, the organisation took on its first reserve – Cors Goch. Indeed, were it not for the visionary naturalists present at that first meeting, the land may well have ended up as the landfill site that it had been earmarked to become – isn't it astonishing to think that a habitat so special that it's now covered by multiple national and international designations could so easily instead have been buried under metres of household detritus?

Today's Cors Goch National Nature Reserve totals some 92 hectares and comprises a shallow valley and the land adjacent to it. The underlying rock – an interesting mixture of limestone and coarse sandstone – gives rise to an unusual mix of both alkaline- and acid-loving plant communities and a diverse range of associated habitats, with alkaline fen in the valley base

merging into heathland and grassland on its edges and escarpments and hazel woodland on the valley side.

This variety of habitat in turn supports an enormous variety of plants and animals – who sometimes find their names overlapping, as seen in the rare and elusive frog orchid which sometimes puts in an appearance



Hairy dragonfly

before disappearing from view for years at a time. In fact, Cors Goch boasts twelve species of orchid in total; all three UK species groups of carnivorous plant (sundew and bladderwort in the fen; butterwort in the damp areas surrounding it); and the very uncommon marsh gentian: a midnight-blue, torpedo-shaped flower which begins to bloom in late June and is often visible as late as September – if you know where to look!

Meanwhile, a summer stroll and alert senses will enable you to see many of the reserve's 28 species of butterfly and 17 species of *Odonata* (damselflies and dragonflies); hear the 'rattling/churring' of grasshopper warblers; and wonder at the sight of as many as four buzzard or red kite wheeling on the thermals. There

DID YOU KNOW At Cors Goch there can be up to **10 metres** of peat beneath your feet – the deposits have been developing for over **12,000 years!**

are any number of routes across the site, but a walk from one end to the other (from 'Bryn Golau' to 'Penllyn') will take in a variety of habitats and give you a feel for how people have been shaping the land for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The grazing animals and stone walls that criss-cross the reserve are perhaps the most obvious signs – you may spot a basking lizard or get an irate wren shouting out to warn you off its nesting site – but there were times when reed was cut for thatch, stone was quarried to make millstones and peat cut for fuel.

Grasshopper warbler

Cors Goch so diverse for wildlife – and the Wildlife Trust continue to actively manage the reserve to keep it in tip-top condition. Conservation grazing is key to keeping the process of ecological succession at bay – the fen being grazed extensively by cattle from late spring till autumn and the grassland heath grazed by cattle and ponies in the autumn and winter. To assist the grazers, a willing band of volunteers cut back unwanted vegetation: each week throughout the year, come rain and shine, a diverse group of like-minded souls can be found cutting areas of the fen in the late summer; cutting fire breaks in the heathland in autumn; clearing bracken and overgrown paths; and coppicing hazel, willow and hedgerows. If we can tempt you to come and join our merry band, you'll be welcomed with outstretched arms – one offering a scythe and the other a rake!

Thank you

Our members and volunteers are both key to helping us keep Cors Goch special. We couldn't do it without you!

PLAN YOUR VISIT

1 Cors Goch

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Location: Llanbedrgoch, Anglesey
How to get there: Follow the A5025 from Pentraeth for about 1.5 miles until you reach a junction, turning L towards Llanbedrgoch. About 1 mile beyond Llanbedrgoch there's a signpost for the reserve, and a lay-by on the L where you can park (off which is a track leading to the reserve). Other access routes and parking are also available – see website for more information.
Opening times: All day, every day
Access: Wellies are strongly advised! The reserve includes steep, uneven ground in some places, and narrow boardwalks that can be slippery after heavy rain. Avoid areas of deep mud and open water away from the boardwalk.
Phone: 01248 351541
Email: info@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk
Website: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/cors-goch

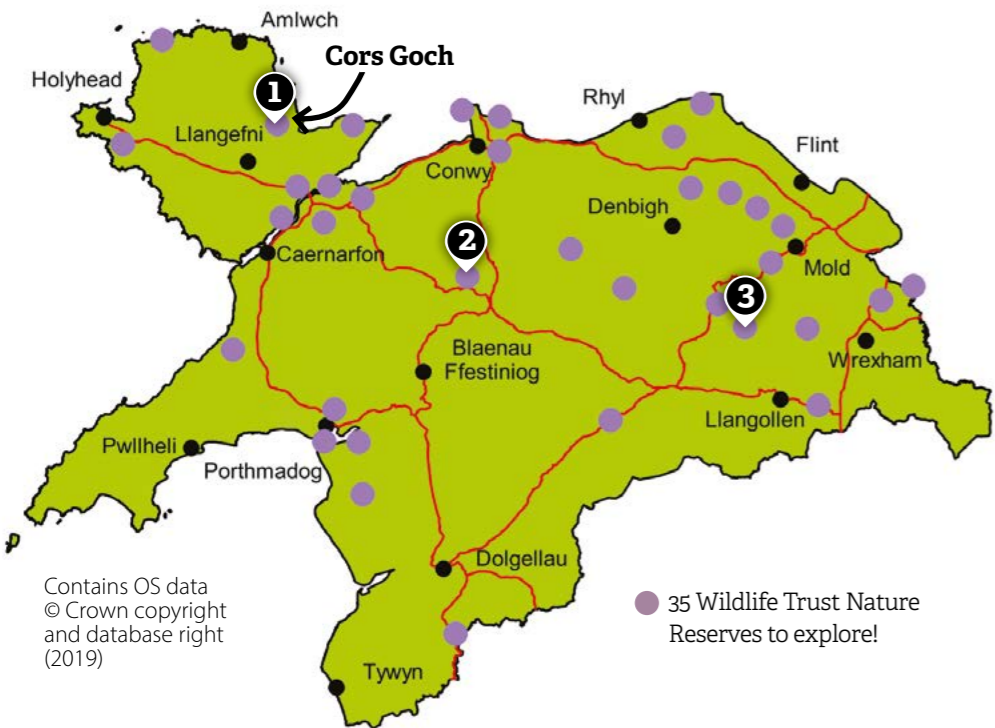
TOP WILDLIFE TO SPOT

Stonechat: These perky little birds can often be seen perched on top of the abundant gorse bushes. Listen out for their distinctive call, sounding much like two stones being clapped together.
Hairy dragonfly: These beautiful, streamlined and, yes, hairy insects favour clean, well-vegetated water bodies – Cors Goch is perfect for them! But if you want to see them this summer, be quick – their flight period will soon be over.
Heathers and heaths: August and September are peak months for a stunning purple display.

THINGS TO DO

➤ Go on a **bug hunt!** There are loads of invertebrates to see at Cors Goch, and many stay still for longer than dragonflies and damselflies!
 ➤ In August, look for the beautiful blue-purple trumpets of **marsh gentians** in the heathland amongst orange seed-heads of bog asphodel.
 ➤ Use our **Wildlife Walks** book to explore the surrounding area. We've designed a 5-mile route that includes some lovely insect- and flower-rich habitats.

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



PLAN YOUR VISIT

2 Cors Bodgynydd

Why now?
Summer sees Cors Bodgynydd at its most colourful, with yellow asphodel flowerheads and sticky red sundew leaves in the wetland below dryer ridges of purple heather. The dragonflies are glorious, too – if they'll sit still for long enough!



Know before you go
Location: Gwydir Forest, near Betws-y-Coed
Open: All day, every day
Wildlife to spot: (in summer) scarce blue-tailed damselfly, keeled skimmer, carnivorous plants; (at other times of year) nightjar, cuckoo, royal fern, sphagnum mosses, snipe, woodcock, adder
Find out more: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/cors-bodgynydd

The lowdown
The wide variety of wetland habitats at this remote, upland nature reserve were created when water levels were raised artificially in the nineteenth century to supply water for the mining industry. Lead and zinc were first mined here in 1625, whilst the more recent damming of the lakes has created areas of open water, mire, fen and bog, and many scarce species have been recorded here, including small chocolate-tip moth, lesser horseshoe bats, the insect-eating lesser bladderwort and an impressive sixteen different dragonflies and damselflies!

PLAN YOUR VISIT

3 Graig Wylt

Why now?
The views from Graig Wylt over the Vale of Clwyd are stunning at any time of year, but the summer sun brings out the reserve's butterflies – see if you can spot shimmering, iridescent purple hairstreak and cryptically camouflaged grayling.



Know before you go
Location: Graigfechan, near Ruthin
Open: All day, every day
Wildlife to spot: (in summer) greater butterfly-orchid, ringlet, grayling, purple hairstreak, tawny owl chicks; (at other times of year) bluebell, wild garlic, early purple orchid, deer, fox, bullfinch, linnet, great spotted and green woodpeckers
Find out more: northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/grraig-wyllt

The lowdown
Oak- and ash-filled ancient woodland covers the craggy slopes of this rocky outcrop and former quarry. However, as you climb, the canopy gradually opens overhead before you eventually reach the reserve's grassland summit and panoramic views. The charming mixture of deciduous woodland, sheltered scrub areas and grassland make the whole site a great place for spring flowers – which, in turn, support a wide range of invertebrates, including scarce butterfly species.

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

FOCUS ON... Invasive species



Thank you
This project is being co-led with Coventry University and funded by Natural Resources Wales – thanks for your support!



Both globally and here in Wales, ornamental plants spreading from gardens are one of the main sources of invasive species. Whilst the majority of such species don't cause any problems, a small number have escaped from gardens into the wild, where they can impact the environment, economy, our health and the way we live. These are what we term invasive species, with examples including Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), montbretia (*Crocsmia x crocosmiflora*) and butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*).

We need your help!
We're engaging with gardeners to identify and prevent 'future invaders'. We'll be looking at which ornamental plants are spreading in gardens and can also be found beyond the fence – such as in neighbouring protected areas. Species which are not currently invasive but have invasive potential include chocolate vine (*Akebia quinata*), Himalayan honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*), Japanese anemone (*Anemone*

Invasive (non-native) species have been recognised globally as one of the top five threats to nature

x *hybrida*) and heart-leaved houttuniya (*Houttuniya cordata*) – amongst many others! You can help us explore this potential so that we can better prevent additional ornamental plants escaping and becoming invasive in the wild.

How to make a difference
We'll be focussing on six specific locations: Bangor, Menai Bridge, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Penrhyndeudraeth and Porthmadog. If you live in or near any of these locations, have a garden and have an enthusiasm for gardening, we'd love to hear from you – and visit your garden! We'll explore

what ornamentals you've got; ask which are spreading too much; and hopefully give you some advice to stop any inadvertent spreading in the future ...
Wherever you live, you can attend one of our free 'Garden Escapers' events – and record invasive species in your garden by using an easy-to-use website called 'Plant Alert'. All the details and contact information are on our website.



Lisa Toth, Garden Escapers Project Officer

To get involved, help prevent garden escapers and find out how to contact the project team, go to northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/garden-escapers



Gourmet Gardening for wildlife

Grow a garden full of food that both you and your wild neighbours can enjoy.

Traditionally, fruit and veg growers view wildlife as something that should be prevented from eating the food we grow for ourselves. We net berries to protect them from birds, remove 'cabbage white' caterpillars from our brassicas. We lay traps for things like earwigs and expose soil grubs so that birds might feast on them before they can do any damage. Some growers haven't got the memo about insect declines and still use harmful bug sprays.

But what if we learned to share, or even deliberately planted crops that could be used by us and wildlife? I realise I may be in the minority here, but one of my favourite things about growing food is sharing it. I'm happy to share my soft fruit with the birds – my cherry trees produce more than I would know what to do with, and there are enough blackberries, raspberries and tayberries to go around. I laugh at the caterpillars eating my brassicas and I always leave some to flower, along with some 'spare' parsnips and onions, so there's food for pollinators

in spring. If I cut only half of my herbs such as mint, oregano, chives and thyme, I can encourage flowers to grow for bees and butterflies, and if I avoid cutting back the mildewed leaves of my courgettes I provide food for 22-spot ladybirds.

There is a line between providing food for wildlife and having your crop destroyed, and only you can decide where that line sits. For me, there's not really a line. I'm happy for other species to enjoy the food I grow and I go out of my way to provide a little bit more for them. I may have a reduced crop, but I never lose a crop – one of the great things about gardening for wildlife is knowing the ecosystem will take care of itself. This means there's always something for everyone.

Get more tips for helping nature at home from 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.

1



Brassicas
Varieties like broccoli and kale will flower after harvesting, providing food for early spring mining bees. Many varieties can be sown or planted out in summer – plant in rich soil and firm well.

2



Courgettes
Buy ready-grown plants and plant into rich soil in early summer, and keep well watered. 22-spot ladybirds are very polite, leaving the fruit for you and eating only the leaf mildew.

3



Oregano
Plant from spring to autumn in pots or the ground. Leave some unharvested so it flowers for butterflies and bees.

4



Raspberries
Buy canes in spring or autumn and plant in rich, moist soil. The blackbirds will leave you some, I promise!

5



Broad beans
Avoid removing aphids and you'll provide food not just for them but for the ladybirds, lacewings and hoverfly larva that eat them. Sow direct in autumn or spring. Stake taller varieties.

6



Rosemary
Flowering in spring, rosemary provides nectar and pollen for queen bumblebees. Plant at any time of year in moist but well-drained soil.

7



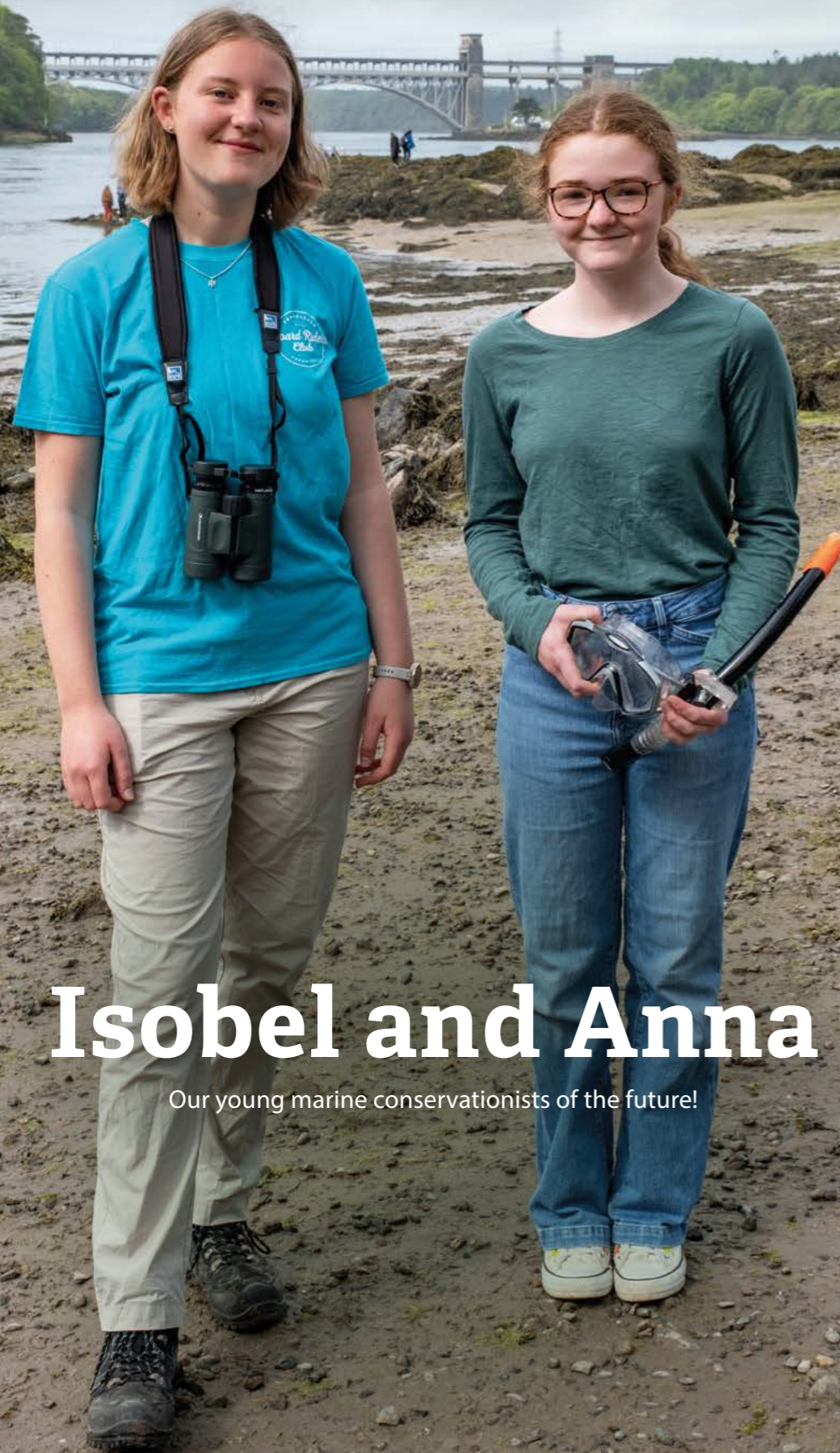
Carrots
Sow direct in pots or the ground from spring to late summer. Leave some to flower for pollinators.

8



Nasturtiums
Sow from spring to summer for a crop of fiery leaves and sweet flowers. Leave a crop for 'cabbage white' butterflies to feast on – you can move caterpillars from brassicas onto nasturtium leaves to protect them.

MY WILD LIFE



Isobel and Anna

Our young marine conservationists of the future!



Anna Williams, 16

I took part in a seagrass workshop with North Wales Wildlife Trust in 2021 and I really, really enjoyed it! When I found out about the Ocean Rescue Champions programme, I wanted to be a part of it because the original workshop was so good.

The best thing I've done as an Ocean Rescue Champion, I'd say, is learning about seagrass and taking part in seagrass conservation. I had no idea what seagrass was before – I'd never even heard of it – and then I realised how important it was. By the end of the programme, I was really shocked that most other people didn't know about seagrass either.

The whole experience has made me a lot more confident with speaking to people and sharing my knowledge. It's also inspired me to do loads of different things in school about the ocean and helped me decide what I want to do in the future – now I want to do something marine-focussed!

I'm now a mentor for the next Ocean Rescue Champions group, and I'm really looking forward to seeing all the new Champions learn new things – just as I loved it when people shared their knowledge with me. It just made me really happy and excited, and I'm really excited to be able to share my knowledge with others – it's why I wanted to become a mentor! I think that everyone should take part in conservation in any way possible. It doesn't have to be something big – even something little, like looking after your garden and making it good for wildlife, can help the environment.

Isobel Lomax, 16

I'd heard from Anna how good the workshop was that she went to and I wanted to be a part of the Ocean Rescue Champions programme myself. We've always been an outdoorsy family, interested in looking after the planet and nature, and it was good to have the opportunity to do something hands-on.

Learning to snorkel has been the best thing I've done as a Champion. I

discovered a whole new world under the water that I'd never seen before – I knew we had amazing coastlines here but there are just so many things I never even knew about! Learning about seagrass has also opened my eyes to a way of looking after the planet that many people have never really heard of before – everyone knows you need to recycle, and that kind of thing is really important, but there are so many other ways to make a difference.

We were writing a newsletter for school about climate change a while ago and it felt a lot like no-one else actually cares – it's just really nice to be part of the Champions programme where everyone genuinely does. I've learned that there's lots of people who are trying to help the planet – there's hope after all!

I'm really looking forward to being a mentor for this year's Ocean Rescue Champions – meeting more people like me, with the same interests, who want to do something positive. They're all so knowledgeable and interested in what they're doing: it's really refreshing and hopeful.

We all need to make sure that we're telling everyone about nature and conservation – not just the people who we think are going to be interested. There are so many people who have no interest in any of this – nature, conservation, that sort of thing – but those are the very people who need to hear about it! Please help to spread the message to everyone about how great wildlife is and how we all need to do our bit to help look after the planet.



Ocean Rescue Champions

Our ORC programme began in April 2022, aiming to support a group of Anglesey's budding young marine conservationists over a twelve-month period.



2022-23 highlights for our young participants have included:

- **Collecting and re-planting seagrass seeds on the Llŷn Peninsula** – including a starring role in the 'Let It Grow' episode of Blue Peter, for which the Wildlife Trust received a green Blue Peter badge in our 60th anniversary year!
- **Making valuable contributions to various citizen science projects**, including taking part in eggcase hunts, a nurdle hunt, Shoresearch surveys, a sea-watch and being shown how to use the 'Seagrass Spotter' app.
- **Learning the basics of snorkelling** in a swimming pool before taking safely to the sea to put their skills into practice. They even learned how to take underwater photos and videos with a professional videographer!
- **Attending events to talk to members of the public** about what they've been up to as Ocean Rescue Champions and spread awareness about the importance of seagrass and marine conservation in general. They also took an active role in 'Plast Off!': our annual big beach clean.



Did you know that the UK has lost up to 90% of its seagrass meadows in the past century? Find out how we're helping to turn the tide at northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/seagrass-ocean-rescue

Jenny and Matt Swarbrick
of Henbant Permaculture
Farm with Chris Wynne,
Senior Reserves Manager,
North Wales Wildlife Trust

Community and nature: good neighbours at Bryn Ifan

The acquisition of Bryn Ifan is a huge moment for North Wales Wildlife Trust. **James Robertson** gives a personal view of the challenges and opportunities it presents.

Bryn Ifan

How can you own land? It is surely the birth-right of everyone and of the natural world?

Those are philosophical questions. The practical reality is that land can be legally owned, giving the owner the power to determine what is done with it. The priority for most farmers will be to make as good a living as possible. As things stand, this is unlikely to deliver a multitude of benefits, for people, nature and the planet. One way to address the steady elimination of nature from our environment is to buy land with the express purpose of farming with and for nature.

More than 30 years ago, my wife Joanna and I bought a small, productive grass farm, to which we added an additional 30 wilder acres a few years later. Twice I have experienced the awe that comes with owning land, a mix of emotions – the extraordinary privilege of having land, the thrill of the land itself, excitement at the possibilities that open up, and, at the back of my mind, awareness of the responsibilities which accompany it. What I never thought about (but, looking back, I see as the greatest prize of all) has been how much the challenges of caring for land and getting to know other farmers and land managers have taught me. Owning land is the best way to allow wildlife back into the frame, and it also offers the best education.

Ownership brings opportunities

The purchase of Bryn Ifan means that all Wildlife Trust members can share in the excitement which this wonderful opportunity brings. I am convinced that the Trust will grow immeasurably as a result of its courageous decision to acquire Bryn Ifan's rich mosaic of meadows, rough heathy grassland, marsh and open hill, which divides into lower-lying farmland and the upland *ffridd* of Bwlch Mawr and adjacent wetland. I hope the benefits will spread beyond the Trust's traditional domain, touching on food production, livestock management, archaeology and history; and that the relationships built up with neighbouring farmers and members of the local community will enrich both parties.

Two measurable goals lie at the heart of this experiment. One is the challenge of making Bryn Ifan's 450 acres richer in all manner of wildlife; the second is to develop a substantial reservoir of carbon, through careful management of its marshland and development of tree cover. This calls for careful regulation of the water table to increase and retain water levels and sensitive tree-planting and subsequent management to increase tree cover. Both goals need to be achieved together.



A former Trustee of NWWT, **James Robertson** has a background in nature conservation, writing and editing, farming and land management. His interests include wood-pasture, places where habitats meet; and historical ecology, where human and natural history meet.



Discovering who knows what about Bryn Ifan will take time – this is a long-term project. Mapping out its future will need to be a gradual evolution without a single end point.

Practicalities

This will require the Trust to focus on practicalities, as we had to when we first took on a farm. You have to get the right equipment and employ people with the necessary skills. This is so important. You also have to get the right funding in place – if Welsh Government’s Sustainable Farming Scheme delivers for nature what it originally promised, this will help enormously. Negotiating between competing interests, particularly the economic drivers of ‘trees for carbon capture’ and the practicalities of managing land without compromising the interests of nature will not be easy. This is where the unique skills of the Trust should pay dividends.

As a former field-scale vegetable-grower, I love the idea that as a result of this purchase the land will produce more good healthy food to satisfy local appetites. It can be grown with a fraction of the carbon used for the vegetables available in the nearest supermarket in Caernarfon, where the most tempting purchases are ultra-processed food.

Henry Dimbleby’s *Ravenous* has chapter and verse on this, written in the clearest possible language. Producing good affordable food is easy to write, harder to deliver. If the true cost of food were paid at the check-out, it would not be such a

challenge. Farmers could then re-learn the wisdoms of the past and embrace new technology to meet the human and environmental needs in the future. It should also help towards another ambition – that more people make a livelihood from the land. There should be more feet and fewer hooves on parts of the farm in the future than there were in the recent past.

Maps past and future

In the early 19th century, much of the land around Bryn Ifan was owned by Thomas Assheton Smith, quarry owner of Parc Vaynol outside Bangor, and by Lord Newborough of the Wynn family, owner of Plas Glynllifon. (I find it significant than the current Lord Newborough runs the very successful organic farm on Rhug Estate.) Farming, then as now, was in constant flux, from the agricultural boom years of the Napoleonic wars to recessions following the repeal of the Corn Laws and the importation of food from Australia and the Americas. Fine detail can be found in land tax registers and tithe maps, Welsh field names often revealing geographic features. The memories and knowledge of local people can be even more valuable.

I remember a conversation I once had with an elderly farm worker who was

helping me with a difficult calving. With his strong arm, good technique and a bit of old rope, we managed to pull a healthy calf when I was at a loss. He talked about working on the farm as a 12-year-old, and remembered Italian prisoners of war harvesting carrots from what is today waxcap-rich pasture. The way I viewed that field, and the interrelationships between people and nature on our small farm, shifted with that conversation.

Discovering who knows what about Bryn Ifan will take time – this is a long-term project. Mapping out its future will need to be a gradual evolution without a single end point.

Planting trees needs thinking through

Now back to those two measurable goals: carbon sequestration and an upsurge in biodiversity. Much of the funding, secured by The Wildlife Trusts centrally under a long-term partnership with Aviva, was donated to both improve biodiversity and climate resilience as part of Aviva’s efforts to be a Net Zero company by 2040. Looking down from Bryn Ifan’s rolling upland acres, across wonderful marshland, the vista is plastered with dark conifers. When they were planted, it seemed to make economic sense to take marginal wet land, drain it, build timber extraction



Devil's-bit scabious is the main foodplant for threatened marsh fritillaries.

Who knows what might come from greater mutual understanding between neighbours?

roads and grow thousands of Sitka spruce trees. With hindsight, it was a hugely destructive development which eliminated an oasis of nature and has had an impact on the adjacent marshland SSSI and its marsh fritillary butterflies. It was of its time, and times change. In the vital process of building relationships, Wildlife Trust and forestry company will, I hope, get to know and understand each other. Who knows what might come from greater mutual understanding between neighbours?

Not long ago I visited a 1600-acre valley in the Moffat Hills in south-west Scotland called Carrifran. It had been bought by a community group to restore to ‘wildwood’. This involved planting many hundreds of thousands of trees. I was nervous about what I would discover as I set off along a narrow path from the

small car park, through a dense jungle of vegetation. The path rose up above the wood, revealing a three-dimensional landscape from miniature bog-gardens to tall trees and everything in between. Tree-planting had provided much of the funding for the work but it had not dictated or limited the plants and animals which could find a home there, as those conifer plantations had done. I relaxed.

A vision for the future

I have no doubt that, in the Trust’s care, Bryn Ifan will become a much more biodiverse place. Trees will be grown and will grow themselves. Where they are needed, grazing animals will be included in the mix, with some tree-covered ground becoming an intricate mix of heathy wood-pasture. The outcome, which should include vastly richer upland heath, is what matters. Carbon will be sequestered. Natural marshland will become wetter and will retain more carbon. The community should benefit as well, and this will involve a steady trickle (rather than a flood) of visitors to boost the local economy – as well as an increase in the profitable production of local food.

Sixty years ago the Trust came into being to save the wonderful site which is now Cors Goch National Nature Reserve.

Though it is still a work in progress, its acquisition was a giant leap around which the Trust was built. Bryn Ifan, I hope, will launch another phase in the Trust’s vital work of restoring the fractured relationship between people and nature.

North Wales Wildlife Trust’s ongoing work at Bryn Ifan is only possible thanks to your support – to date, you have helped us raise almost £100,000! Thank you so much.

Missed our match-funding appeal? You can still support our work at Bryn Ifan – visit northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/bryn-ifan-appeal to find out how.

WILD NEWS

All the latest local and national news from The Wildlife Trusts



Spring and summer bring with them returning birds, migrating vast distances across the planet, and colourful displays of wildflowers. On several of our nature reserves, the wildlife has recently been joined by a few additions – all designed to make a visit even more enjoyable and encourage moments of reflection; whether on the diversity of life or on the changing connections between humans and the landscape.

Gwaith Powdwr

Barely a quarter mile from the centre of Penrhyndeudraeth, this peaceful site is a haven for several bat species, sheltering amongst disused buildings; the nightjars which glide and churr over its heathlands; and pied flycatchers breeding in its woodlands. But once, not too long ago, it hummed with a different life – it's only recently that wildlife has bounced back.

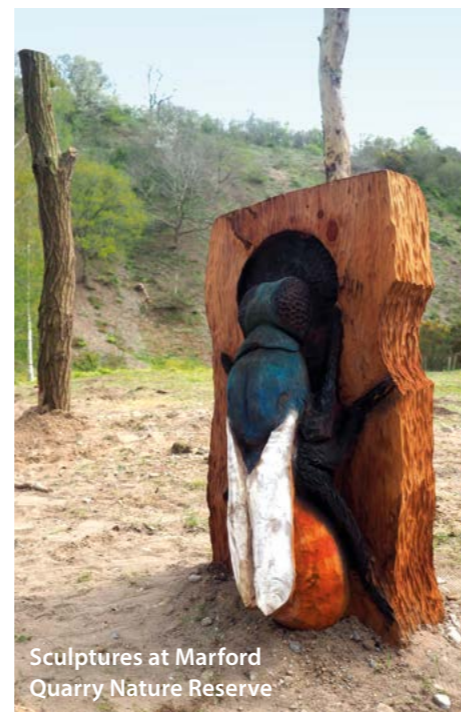
Before being donated to the Wildlife Trust, Gwaith Powdwr was home to one of the most advanced explosives factories in the world: Cooke's Explosives Ltd. In recent months, a memorial to the former factory and its workers has been unveiled, commemorating the site's industrial

past while welcoming its transition back to being a haven for nature. Created by local artist Howard Bowcott, the sculpture has, in part, been inspired by the nitroglycerine mixing vats that were once present on site and incorporates stone leaves dotted around the edge and a large slate leaf bursting out of the centre. It sits in an open setting which, together with the nearby young woodland, provides a peaceful environment to reflect on the past while enjoying the sights and sounds of the present.

Marford Quarry

Artistic interpretation can also provide us with the opportunity to explore things that we rarely or only fleetingly see – a subject newly explored at Marford Quarry; nationally important for its diverse population of minibeasts and, in particular, bees, wasps and ants. These creatures – as the word 'minibeasts' suggests – are small and often elusive ...

This former sand and gravel quarry provides bountiful opportunities for these species to nest, including standing and fallen dead wood; bare, sandy soils; and sun-catching, south-facing slopes.



To showcase just a small selection of the magnificent minibeasts that live here, we've recreated them in grand style! Five large wooden sculptures from the studio of local master-chainsaw-carver Simon O'Rourke have recently been installed – from a glistening, emerald-coloured beetle to a stripy, burrowing bee. Now everyone can take a peek at the spectacular creatures that live here, just out of sight!

Spinnies Aberogwen

Taking a peek at the visiting bird life at this peaceful sanctuary on the edge of bustling Bangor – perhaps a dazzling kingfisher or more secretive reed warbler – has recently got a bit easier thanks to a new screen on the approach to the 'Viley Hide'. However, this is no normal screen! Instead, it has been specially designed as a vertical habitat pile, made from brash from habitat management work, which will provide ample opportunities for a wide range of wildlife to use for shelter.



Plan your next great day out from all our nature reserves at:

northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves



NATURAL PARTNERS

Working for wildlife

This summer, we're delighted to welcome not one, not two but three businesses into our Natural Partners fold! We're hugely grateful to each of them for their support of our work.

P&A Group comprises Zest, a leading sustainable timber garden products brand, P&A Pallets, and The Woodworks Garden Centre and Café, Mold. If you pay Woodworks a visit in the months ahead, you may notice various aspects of their drive for sustainability, including solar panels, rainwater harvesting and stocking native hedging plants grown by North Wales Wildlife Trust's own tree nursery at Aberduna Nature Reserve!



LIVING LANDSCAPES

Our Living Landscape team have recently been working alongside Asylum Link Merseyside to create a better-connected landscape across North-East Wales. Groups of 25 to 40 asylum seekers have been involved with riparian tree-planting in Mold; gorse clearance and hedgerow planting along the Offa's Dyke Path at Tremeirchion; and rhododendron clearance in Nercwys. It's been wonderful to create crucial wildlife corridors with people who are truly inspiring – and incredibly passionate about improving the environment.



Find out more about this partnership project by watching this uplifting video! bit.ly/3rgyc0I

Together we're stronger

Your ongoing support makes a huge difference for wildlife at Cemlyn Nature Reserve

At least 1,100 pairs

of nesting Sandwich terns ...

... raising at least

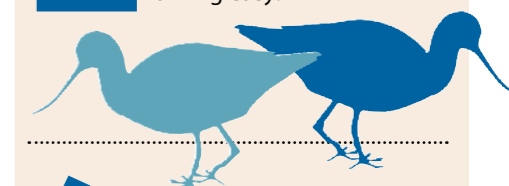
650 chicks

– so far!

Thank you!

1 pair of avocets

– only the third breeding site in Wales and the first for Anglesey!



4 wardens and 6 volunteers





In February, the proposal to construct the Deeside Corridor 'Red Route' was scrapped by the Welsh Government, which supported the independent Road Review Panel's recommendation to abandon the plans. The proposed 13km dual carriageway would have damaged and destroyed wildlife habitats in its path, including Leadbrook Wood (an ancient woodland Local Wildlife Site), surrounding wildflower meadows and centuries-old hedgerows – in turn impacting on species including bats, barn owls and badgers.

We are hugely grateful to everyone who took part in our joint campaign with 'Stamp Out The Red Route' local

action group throughout 2020 and 2021. With your help, we succeeded in getting our message to the Welsh Government, elected representatives and all Senedd election candidates.

We are confident that our campaign contributed significantly to the Welsh Government's decision to hold the Road Review and support its recommendations, which not only resulted in the Red Route proposal being scrapped, but also mean that considerably more stringent climate and environmental conditions need to be satisfied for the building of any new roads in Wales.

Determined action to save wildlife really can work!

MEDIA

BBC Springwatch


You may have seen us on BBC Springwatch recently, with live broadcasts from two of our star reserves – Gwaith Powdwr and Cemlyn.

Presenter Gillian Burke took a three-week adventure into the habitats and species that call North Wales home. At Gwaith Powdwr Nature Reserve, which Gillian described as 'an incredible place', we saw how nature has reclaimed this post-industrial landscape since we took it over in the late 1990s, and how it has become a haven for bats, reptiles, butterflies and many more species.

At Cemlyn Nature Reserve, we saw Arctic terns fending off a peregrine falcon, the fascinating courtship and mating rituals of the terns and a finale of baby Sandwich tern chicks born on the day

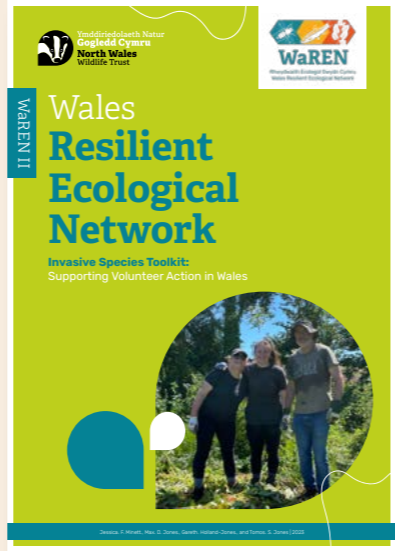


of the live broadcast. Plus the first ever nesting avocet at the reserve, making this one of just three breeding sites in Wales!

 **Catch up on BBC iPlayer** Links at northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/bbc-springwatch

New tools to tackle invasive species

Over the last year, the Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) team have been working hard to support groups of volunteers across the country to tackle invasive species in their local areas. Part of their work has involved developing an 'Invasive Species Toolkit' – which is now ready for you to download, use and share!



The toolkit provides the main resources you need to get started – and links to many more. It breaks down this information into four simple sections: best-practice management, project planning (including help to set up your own 'Local Action Group'), biosecurity and awareness raising. It also covers the basics – explaining what an invasive species is and why they are a concern, and providing details on how to identify and report their presence.

Download our toolkit to find out how you can help protect our environment by tackling invasive species! <https://bit.ly/3p6XPAk>

Or, if you represent a Local Action Group or other volunteer team, you can contact us to request a hard copy: tomos.jones@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

UK NEWS



More than 100,000 people have signed The Wildlife Trusts' open letter to the UK Government about HS2, after our latest report into the project highlighted major errors in HS2 Ltd's calculations – meaning more nature will be lost along the line than was agreed by the Government, and attempts to repair the damage the scheme is causing will be inadequate. The letter urges the Government to oblige HS2 Ltd to accurately recalculate its figures, providing a more realistic picture of the scale of the damage.

Our new report, *HS2 double jeopardy*, was the result of an almost year-long audit of HS2's official nature loss calculations. The report revealed a number of errors and causes for concern, including inconsistent mapping and modelling, wild spaces and habitats being undervalued, and huge numbers of trees entirely missing from the calculations.

HS2 Ltd promised that nature would not lose out when much-loved natural areas and important habitats were destroyed to make way for construction of the high-speed rail line. Our report found that HS2 Ltd's 'accounting tool' for assessing impacts

on nature is untested, out of date and fundamentally flawed.

Construction on HS2 has already caused irreparable damage to precious wildlife sites; it's vital that HS2 Ltd and the Government listen to our concerns and act accordingly. Now is the time to reflect on the failings of the scheme so far and rethink the next steps, to prevent further excessive damage to our natural world. The Government needs to learn from HS2 to ensure that future 'green' infrastructure truly can support nature's recovery rather than exacerbating its loss. Find out more at wildlifetrusts.org/hs2

Our open letter called for HS2 to:

Re-map existing habitats along Phases 1 and 2a, correcting mapping errors, applying the correct nature values to habitats, and ensuring no habitats are excluded.

Immediately pause all construction and enabling works and halt the passage of the Phase 2b Hybrid Bill while these latest audit findings are assessed by the Government.

Recalculate the total impacts to nature, by using an up to date and proven methodology, such as one directly comparable to the government's current Biodiversity Metric 3.1. If changes to the methodology are made these should be transparent and evidence based. It is critical that HS2 Ltd ensure all data is made publicly available at the point the figures are released to facilitate transparency and enable independent scrutiny.

Change the scheme's design and delivery to limit the adverse impacts and enhance biodiversity in a way that is commensurate with the scale of the damage i.e. by achieving a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain for replaceable habitats for each phase of the scheme. Once impacts have first been avoided, limited and compensated for, Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was before the development took place by 'delivering more for nature than is lost'.

UK UPDATE

Wild Isles on location with Wildlife Trusts

This spring, viewers were captivated by Sir David Attenborough's latest documentary, *Wild Isles*. The show celebrated the wildlife of the British Isles, demonstrating to an audience of millions that the UK is home to incredible animals, dramatic battles for survival, and internationally important wild places. Many of the spectacular scenes shown in the documentary were captured on Wildlife Trust nature reserves.

The cameras revealed the incredible lifecycle of the large blue butterfly at Daneway Banks in Gloucestershire, where caterpillars trick ants into accepting them into their nest. At Wiltshire's Langford Lakes they filmed hobbies hawking for dragonflies, snatching them from the air with lightning reflexes,

whilst at Lackford Lakes in Suffolk they revealed rabbits being hunted by buzzards. Flowers featured strongly as well, from buzzing meadows to the fly-fooling lords-and-ladies, with visits to Avon's Prior's Wood and Hutton Woods, Gloucestershire's Lower Woods, and Wiltshire's Clattinger Meadows.

Sir David himself travelled to Skomer Island in Pembrokeshire, to marvel at Manx shearwaters and sit amongst the puffins as he reflected on the threats facing our wild isles. The show didn't shy away from discussing the worrying declines in our wildlife, or the actions that have led to them.



Wildflower meadows are essential habitats for pollinators

Long may they bloom

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Coronation Meadows, a restoration project launched in 2013 to celebrate 60 years since the coronation of Elizabeth II. As part of the project, many Wildlife Trusts provided seeds from their own meadows to create or restore meadows in other parts of their region. Wildlife Trusts

also took on custodianship of some of the new meadows, helping wildlife flourish. A new audit has revealed the success of the project, with 101 new wildflower meadows created or restored over the last decade.

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK

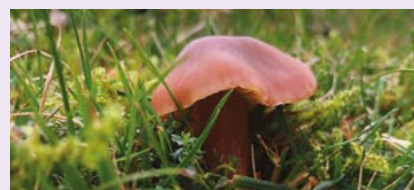


1 Birds not birdies

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is part of a coalition of seven environmental organisations fighting to save rare coastal dunes from the construction of a golf course. Proposals to develop Coull Links in East Sutherland threaten irreparable harm to a vital and protected habitat. The proposals come just three years after a previous application was turned down due to the damage it would cause nature. wtru.st/coull-links-proposal

2 Fungi find

An incredibly rare fungus has been discovered in a survey by Manx Wildlife Trust and the Isle of Man Fungus Group, working with Manx farmers. The butterscotch waxcap, *Gliophorus europerplexus*, had never been recorded on the island before, with only 70 specimens of the species recorded worldwide. wtru.st/new-waxcap



3 Healing nature

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has launched a new 10-week nature-based-therapy programme for veterans and service leavers living with mental health issues. Wild Transitions will take place at the Trust's Green Lane Wood nature reserve, providing a space for veterans to connect with nature and learn skills to help them transition into new employment or volunteer roles. wtru.st/WildTransitions