

OUR WILD YEAR 2024/25

Impact report



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Wildlife Trust





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Our year in numbers



9,762
members



Engagements with **52** schools, colleges, universities and youth groups, reaching **3,541** children and young people



1,204 volunteers
giving **35,509**
hours of time



50 full-time
equivalent employees



83 landowners
given advice about
their own landholdings,
amounting to almost
500 hectares of land



248 outreach events
and on-site visits
organised by staff and
volunteers, reaching
3,665 people



18,237
subscribers to
our e-newsletter



951 hectares of
land across **36**
sites owned and
managed for people
and wildlife

Welcome

Looking back over a year of weather extremes, our nature and biodiversity are clearly under unprecedented threat. Storms Bert and Darragh hit Wales in late 2024, bringing flooding and very strong winds; we had an unusually dry spring and the following summer was the hottest on record in the UK.

The impacts of weather extremes on nature are manyfold. When a mature oak tree falls in strong winds, the lives of hundreds of dependent species are disrupted. Spring and summer droughts limit flower availability for pollinators; wildfires become more prevalent with devastating effects, predator-prey relationships become out of sync, food availability is limited and crucial wetlands dry out.

When these conditions are set against a backdrop of increased pressure on nature from pollution, urbanisation, development and food production, it is more crucial than ever that North Wales Wildlife Trust deliver our Strategy 2030: *Bringing Nature Back*.

Working together with our wonderful volunteers, we protect and improve resilience in our nature reserves, monitor sensitive habitats to provide warnings of

change and provide nature-based advice to landowners, managers and developers. We also contribute to the North Wales Nature Coordination Initiative and policy discussions with Welsh Government, and our impacts are felt locally, nationally and globally.

People remain at the heart of everything we do. We have nearly 10,000 members; we train our young people to be future leaders in conservation; we are supported by a wide range of funders and partners; and gifts in Wills represent a vital income stream that we turn into direct action for wildlife.

Thank you for supporting us.



Frances Cattnach
Chief Executive Officer



Howard Davies
Chair

Bringing Nature Back

Our **vision** is of a thriving natural world, with wildlife and natural habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and people inspired and empowered to take action for nature.

Our **purpose** is to bring wildlife back, to empower people to take action for nature, and to create a society where nature matters.

Our **strategy** and its **three goals** set out what we believe needs to happen by 2030 in pursuit of our longer-term vision for nature's recovery.



GOAL 1

Nature in North Wales is in recovery, with abundant, diverse wildlife and natural processes creating wilder land and seascapes where people and nature thrive.



GOAL 2

People in North Wales are taking action for nature and the climate, resulting in better decision-making for the environment.



GOAL 3

Nature is playing a central, valued role in helping to address local and global problems.

GOAL 1

Nature in recovery

18% of species in Wales face extinction – and the future of once-common wildlife is uncertain.

It has become clear that protecting what we have left is no longer enough. We need to create new spaces for nature by connecting habitats, restoring landscapes and reintroducing ‘keystone’ species.

Our aim is for at least 30% of land in Wales to be protected, connected and positively managed for nature. Our aim for the recovery of our seas is to seek an ecosystem-based approach to build resilience against increased pressures. Only Marine Protected Areas that are recovering will form part of the 30% target.

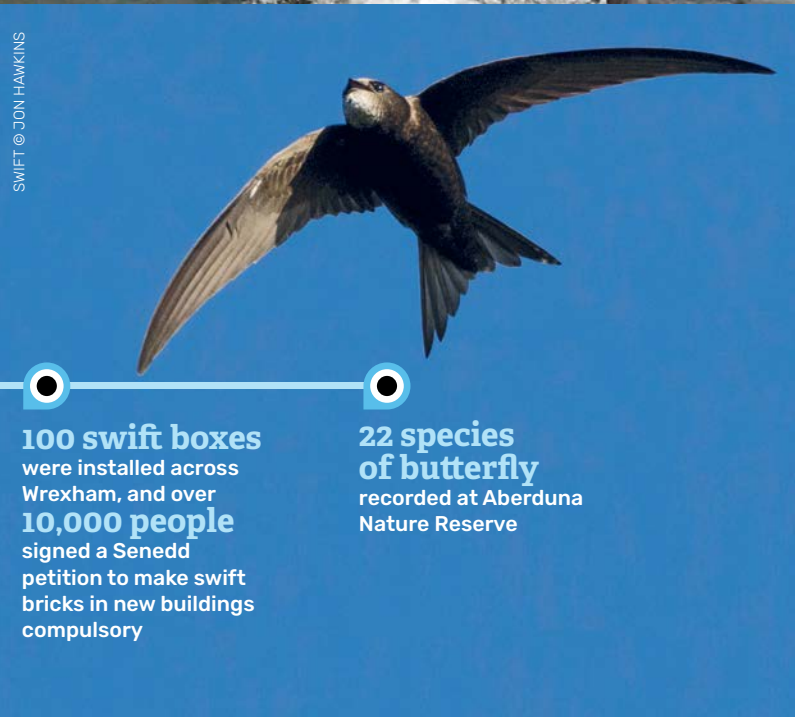
NATURE IN NUMBERS

Over **500 hours**
spent surveying the
shore recording **214
species**

Surveying over **130km
of Public Rights
of Way** in the Dee
basin for invasive
plants and managing
over **30km of
riverbank**

100 swift boxes
were installed across
Wrexham, and over
10,000 people
signed a Senedd
petition to make swift
bricks in new buildings
compulsory

**22 species
of butterfly**
recorded at Aberduna
Nature Reserve



Scaling up to ‘30 by 30’

The Trust played a full role as a member of the North Wales Nature Co-ordination Initiative, including hosting the Programme Manager and making influential contributions to the development of monitoring and reporting standards for nature in Wales. The Initiative has developed profiles that establish shared goals for nature and delivery strategies that create benefits for society: jobs, cultural heritage and ecosystem services, and is starting to fulfil its members’ ambitions, including greater collaboration amongst ourselves and improved engagement with the representatives of farmers and landowners on whom nature depends.

Plans were also finalised for our Land Management Advisory Service, ‘Galwad’, which will launch in full in 2025-26. We were commissioned by Farming Connect to produce a training video for farm advisors on arable habitats; secured funding to recruit a farm advisor and to support our training and demonstration programme; and developed project plans for delivery under Welsh Government’s Integrated Natural Resources Scheme: our Eryri-based ‘Porfeydd Unigryw’ project is expected to involve eight farm businesses across nine landholdings totalling 1,200ha.



Landscape-scale conservation

We continued to dedicate particular resource to our own, targeted Living Landscape areas and efforts to eradicate invasive non-native species (INNS). Highlights included:

- Working with farmers in the Alun catchment to scope out work to benefit wildlife and improvements to farmyard infrastructure to help improve water quality
- Managing significant sites on the Wrexham Industrial Estate to benefit grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts and other threatened species
- Collaborating with creative practitioners, organisations, communities, individuals and specialists to explore the River Conwy's powerful influence on culture, society and the environment
- Establishing a farmer and landowner group in the Anglesey Fens and agreeing an approach to survey work with Soil Association Exchange. Preparing and trialling new INNS eradication methods, including Himalayan balsam rust fungus and a novel, pesticide-free means of controlling Japanese Knotweed.

Nature reserves

Our own nature reserves remain some of the most important sites for wildlife in North Wales. Particular highlights included:

- Recording water voles at Cors Bodgynydd – the first records for the site since the 1990s!

- Recording a very successful tern season at Cemlyn after the ravages of avian influenza in 2023, with high numbers of Sandwich terns and fledglings; chicks appearing to fledge rapidly; and sand eels large and plentiful
- Restoring peatlands on former conifer plantations at Cors y Sarnau: the first sighting of a black darter dragonfly representing a small sign of success
- Creating artificially 'veteranised' trees and undertaking supplementary tree planting at Graig Wylt to provide structural diversity
- Improving woodland habitats for dormouse at Ddôl Uchaf to encourage their return from nearby sites
- Continuing to build close links with Eithinog's neighbours at Ysgol Garneidd to develop their Forest School provision
- Reintroducing grazing by Carneddau ponies at Caeau Tan y Bwlch, helping to restore the rhôs pasture and boost floral diversity
- Halo thinning of birch trees around veteran oaks at Coed Crafnant to improve light conditions for their resident rare lichens and bryophytes.
- Removing towering leylandii and re-surfacing the car park at Minera Quarry to improve visitor experience, with improved grassland management reaping botanical benefits (most notably in the diversity of orchids)
- Undertaking extensive removal of non-native cotoneaster at Marford Quarry, Gogarth, Rhiwledyn and Bryn Pydew

Bryn Ifan

Work continued on our contribution to The Wildlife Trusts' Atlantic Rainforest Restoration Programme: a long-term commitment to nature-based solutions by Aviva. Whilst the consent process for common land progresses slowly, our volunteers have taken huge strides at Cors y Wlad (a wetland SSSI for marsh fritillary butterflies), improving access across the site by installing bridges, new gates, interpretation and way markers and cutting areas to improve habitat condition. Meanwhile, we have been working with partners to develop a plan to manage the farm in a way that will benefit both nature and the local economy in the years ahead.

Action for our seas and coast

Our Marine Futures Internships provided two young people the opportunity to take their first steps into careers in the maritime sector through a paid six-month internship, whilst we continued to encourage young people and local communities to restore valuable marine habitats through 'Seagrass Ocean Rescue' – with potential planting sites successfully trialled in the Holyhead area. Through our work with the Welsh Ocean Literacy Coalition, we saw the launch of the *Y Môr a Ni*: an ocean literacy strategy for Wales and the first of its kind in Europe. Meanwhile, a wonderful team of volunteers continued to monitor our shores through the 'Nature Counts' project, which incorporates 'Shoresearch', 'Project SIARC' egg case monitoring and various other citizen science surveys.



GOAL 2

Meaningful action

Without people power, the fight to protect nature and tackle the climate crisis seems an insurmountable task.

North Wales Wildlife Trust have a clear remit to engage and empower people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to grow the ranks of those willing to take action and stand up for nature, or simply re-engage with and understand wild places and green spaces.

By increasing the number of people who can speak up and take action for wildlife, and diversifying the mix of individuals who step into our sector as staff, members or activists, our voice will be louder and reach further than ever before.

NATURE IN NUMBERS



35,509 hours
of time was given by our
amazing volunteers
– a 24% increase on last
year's figures!



We engaged with
more than
**50 schools,
colleges and
universities**



Over **150 people**
took part in our annual
Plast Off beach clean



Our social media posts
have been seen over
2.8 million times



Supporting communities

The conclusion of the 'Nextdoor Nature' project saw our accredited Community Organisers train our wider staff team in applying the community organising approach, which helps ensure longer-term, more sustainable pro-environmental behaviours: 'best practice' methodology which is starting to inform various areas of our work. Meanwhile, we began work on developing a new 'Community Hub' on our website, which will include guides and resources for individuals and groups who want to kick-start nature's recovery in their own communities, as well as a library of inspirational stories and accounts from people who are already doing it.

Nurturing young leaders

Our youth development work across Anglesey and Bangor continued to flourish under our 'Stand for Nature Wales' programme, with the highlight of the year undoubtedly being members of our Môn Gwyrdd youth forum, alongside fifty other young people from across Wales, presenting their updated 'Youth Manifesto for Nature' to the Deputy First Minister at the Senedd. We also look forward to expanding our efforts to inspire the next generation into north-east Wales in 2025-26, where we'll be establishing a new youth forum; developing links with FE colleges to support young people onto environmental courses; and encouraging pathways into green careers.

Volunteering

The volunteering element of our work continued to thrive throughout 2024-25. Over 1,200 people contributed an invaluable 35,509 hours of their time – an impressive 24% increase on our 2023-24 figures. We are incredibly grateful to all our volunteers: whether protecting the ospreys at Llyn Brenig, serving customers in our shops, doing habitat management work on our nature reserves or surveying the North Wales shores, we really can't thank you enough!



Spreading the word

Our communications and marketing team delivered consistently high-quality and engaging content to support our strategic goals, including a notable increase in our campaign activity (such as the Senedd petition calling for legislation to make swift bricks mandatory in all new buildings across Wales – a campaign that gathered 10,930 signatures). Digital channels remained key to connecting with and growing our audiences: subscribers to our e-newsletters, *Wild Weekly* and *Wythnos Wylt*, rose to 18,237; our social media following grew by 12% year-on-year to exceed 40,000; whilst our website attracted more than 509,000 visitors.

GOAL 3

Nature-based solutions

The loss of nature in North Wales is having a clear and measurable impact on both wildlife and people.

Threatened species are suffering from habitat loss; mental and physical wellbeing is declining with fewer high-quality greenspaces for people to explore and enjoy; soil erosion is increasing and soil fertility decreasing; and we're seeing ever-more frequent extreme weather events.

Thankfully, the natural world can provide its own solutions to combat and reverse these dangers. North Wales Wildlife Trust use our influence to encourage and guide society and decision-makers to look towards nature-based solutions to address the nature and climate crises.

NATURE IN NUMBERS

150,000+ people visited one of our nature reserves – wild places benefitting wildlife and human health and wellbeing alike

331* tCO₂e emitted by North Wales Wildlife Trust across Scope 1–3 – a figure we're actively working to reduce

*In 2023/24 – most recent figure available



Seagrass planting and monitoring at Penrhyn and Penrhos, Anglesey



163 times/year People in North Wales access nature and green spaces around – we hope to increase this figure by 2030

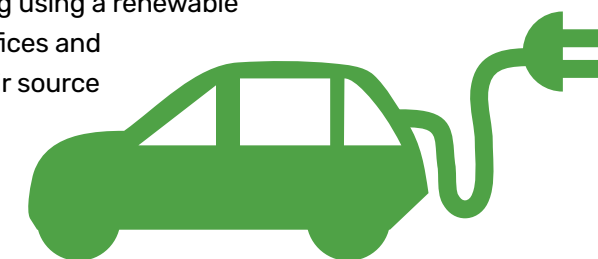
1.5 million seagrass seeds were collected to be planted in 2025

Restoration to sequestration

All our work to improve and expand wildlife habitats on land and at sea is helping to restore ecosystems, so that natural habitats can sequester carbon, help prevent flooding, reduce soil erosion, improve soil fertility, stabilise global temperatures, provide pollination services and improve human health and well-being. Wildlife restoration projects which are also especially valuable in sequestering carbon include peatland restoration at Cors y Sarnau Nature Reserve, seagrass habitat expansion through our Living Seas work, and woodland restoration, most notably at Bryn Ifan.

Getting our own house in order

Our most recently calculated annual emissions of 331 tCO₂e are approximately equivalent to one year's carbon absorption of 15,000 mature trees: a significant reduction from 2022–23 figures founded in decreases associated with purchased services, fleet and equipment fuel, volunteer travel, staff commuting and working from home emissions. We continue to do what we can to reduce our carbon footprint, including using a renewable energy supplier for our offices and investigating moving to air source heat pumps and electric vehicles.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The diversity of people is central to our mission, and staff and volunteers understand and appreciate the inherent value of involving a wider cross-section of society in our work, and we aim to ensure that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a way of being. Society's problems require innovative thinking, and this will only come from bringing people together with different backgrounds, beliefs, experiences, ideas, and outlooks.

Our newly established EDI Development Group started to deliver on our action plan, and we agreed a new EDI policy. Adjustments have been made to the way we present on-line information, including adding an accessibility widget to our website, subtitles to videos and basic accessibility information to events listings. Meanwhile, our Conwy Valley-based 'Gofod Glas' project gives us and our partners an opportunity to deliver a people-centred approach that holistically embeds diversity and inclusion through its creative process. We will build our understanding of communities' experiences,

connections and ideas about freshwater, and their hopes for a future cleaner Conwy catchment.

Financial review

North Wales Wildlife Trust had a stable financial year and we continue to be grateful to our members, supporters and benefactors for their generosity.

Annual income for the Trust on a standalone basis was £3.3m: down £726k compared with prior year, chiefly from lower grant receipts. The Trust generated a net deficit of £55k, compared with a £170k surplus prior year, which the Trustees had pre-approved. The Balance Sheet included cash of £1.7m at the year end: a £377k reduction from prior year. Trustees continue to review the cash balance and liquidity ratio each month to ensure that the covenant levels are maintained.

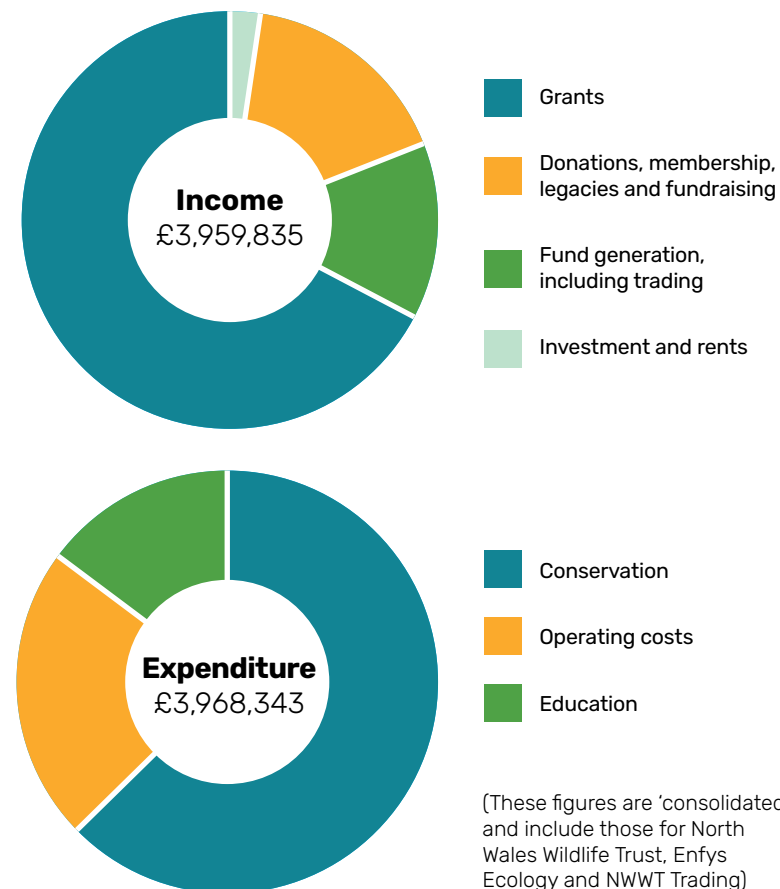
Turnover was £4.0 million when trading subsidiary companies are included (a £0.6m reduction from prior year): they generated a small net deficit of £9k, compared with a £127k contribution prior year. Enfys Ecology was much improved compared with previous challenging years, generating turnover of £613k (up £122k on prior year) and a profit of £48k following the implementation of a turnaround plan, compared with a prior-year loss. NWWT Trading had a stable year with similar levels of turnover at £112k.

Year-end unrestricted funds decreased by £49k to £1.9m, whilst restricted funds increased by £40k to £2.9m. Restricted funds include funds relating to Bryn Ifan (£1.5m) and nature reserves at Cors Goch (£193k) and Cors y Sarnau (£112k), which could only be realised by disposing of these assets.

Staff, volunteers and supporters deserve congratulations and thanks for all that has been achieved – onwards and upwards!



Alex Lord
Treasurer



Looking ahead: 2025-26

The three interlinked goals of our Strategy 2030, *Bringing Nature Back*, guide us in taking our crucial local role in tackling the climate and nature crises. We're putting nature into recovery by helping people take meaningful action to support it, including by adopting nature-based solutions to society's challenges.

GOAL 1

In 2025-26, our work to put nature in recovery will include:

- Launching and staffing our land management advisory service, 'Galwad'
- Enabling beavers to be released into the wild as part of a population reinforcement
- Using our 'Shoresearch' data to inform decision-making at priority marine and coastal sites
- Playing a key role in the North Wales Nature Co-ordination Initiative, including agreeing a portfolio of priorities and actions for nature that will build resilient ecological networks and influencing the targets and policies of other bodies

BEAVER © LAURIE CAMPBELL



GOAL 2

In 2025-26, our efforts to help people in North Wales take meaningful action for nature will include:

- Supporting groups of local people to take actions for nature through our online 'Community Hub'
- Focusing on relationships with key audiences, including farming communities, first-language Welsh speakers, young people and families
- Developing the next generation of environmental leaders by establishing a North-East Wales youth forum and NWWT Youth Council



GOAL 3

In 2025-26, our work to embed nature-based solutions into society's problem-solving will include:

- Securing funding for our initial blue carbon priorities and peatland restoration projects
- Working with partners to identify shared goals for climate change adaptation and mitigation in North Wales
- Implementing our own carbon reduction strategy, including switching to electric vehicles and heat pumps



CORS-Y-SARNAU NATURE RESERVE © RICHARD CUTTS

Our Natural Partners

We're proud to work for wildlife with businesses throughout North Wales.

Our Natural Partners help us work for a wilder North Wales – whether through sponsoring our projects; creating valuable wildlife habitats on their own land; or sharing their subject-specific expertise. Together, we're demonstrating that biodiversity can mean business!



Remember us in your Will

Help protect local wildlife and wild places for future generations by leaving a gift in your Will.

Once you have provided for your loved ones, remembering North Wales Wildlife Trust in your Will helps keep your memories of our wildlife alive for future generations.

22% of our voluntary income comes from gifts in Wills, which enables us to continue to protect the wildlife and wild places of North Wales.

Every gift in every Will, however large or small, makes a difference.

Would you like a free Will? We have entered into a number of partnerships that enable our supporters to write their Wills for free – without any obligations whatsoever. Please visit northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/legacy or contact us for more information.





Thank you to our supporters

We are incredibly grateful to our members, staff, volunteers, donors, legacy-leavers, partners, funders and investors for their commitment to supporting nature's recovery. Your continued generosity, support and dedication is crucial in helping to create a wilder North Wales for the benefit of people and wildlife alike.

Thank you!



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