Annual Report 2013-14
The State of Nature

Our wildlife is in trouble. That was the conclusion of The State of Nature report, published by a coalition of leading conservation and research organisations this year.

About 60% of the species studied have reduced over the past 50 years and about half of those have declined strongly – national trends that are probably reflected in Sussex. Rare species are becoming threatened and once common species have become rare. The general pattern seems to be that the specialist species are doing badly and they are being replaced by generalists. We are losing the special and gaining the ordinary.

There are many pressures on our Sussex wildlife. Development is a constant issue, with new roads being threatened, a possible second runway at Gatwick and the implications of oil and gas exploration in the Weald of Sussex. Responding to these challenges is a major part of what we do.

However, Sir David Attenborough, who launched the report in the Natural History Museum, said ‘This ground-breaking report is a stark warning – but it is also a sign of hope.’

The general picture of decline is partly countered by many good special cases. On one estate in Sussex nightingales have increased from 9 to 34 pairs in just ten years, on another, grey partridge is making a comeback and a butterfly haven built by a school in Brighton has now attracted 12 species of butterfly – including some that are not “supposed” to colonise quickly.

At Sussex Wildlife Trust we are helping to buck the national trend of decline by raising awareness of the wonder of nature, through our conservation projects, educational projects and by working with others. For example, partnership projects like Arun and Rother Connections (ARC) and Trees on the River Uck (TrUck) are wetland projects aiming to help restore
river catchments to benefit of wildlife
whilst also contributing to flood risk
management – a major consideration after
the wettest winter on record. Restored
wetlands can slow river flows, reducing
the peak in times of flood.

Much of our wildlife actually lives in the
sea so we should not forget the importance
of our marine environment. We are there-
fore pleased that we were successful in
gaining three Marine Conservation Zones
off the coast of Sussex, but disappointed
that a further seven proposed sites have
not yet been designated. Our Marine
Officer is working hard to win the case
for stronger protection of marine wildlife
and our Wild Beach initiative for schools
has proved successful in stimulating
children’s interest in marine and coastal
habitats and wildlife.

Keeping the Trust in a position to be able
to respond to all these issues is a major
undertaking. We need to ensure that our
fundraising and financial management
systems are up to the task of gaining and
managing funds in order to protect nature.
A difficult proposition in current economic
climes, but with our loyal supporters and
members we are confident that we will
continue to be a major voice for wildlife
in Sussex.
In an economic environment which has not been easy for charities we have had another successful year and the requests for guidance and advice keep growing as other organisations radically trim their budgets and change their commitments. This, of course, is happening at the same time as habitats and wildlife in Sussex are under greater pressure than ever from development. There are many conflicting demands on our time and Sussex Wildlife Trust has to carefully focus its efforts and prioritise those demands for maximum effect.

During the year, three Marine Conservation Zones were designated in Sussex by the Government and these help to secure our ‘Living Seas’ for the future. We hope that more will be designated in the reasonably near future.

Our ‘Living Landscapes’ work continues in accordance with our strategy although it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain funding for some projects as this is a very competitive area.

Members have been steadfast and as loyal as ever and the number has held steady throughout the year. This is so important to us as membership income accounts for a considerable amount of our core income and thus enables the Trust to function effectively and speak up for wildlife in Sussex. Thank you all very much and please do continue to support us.

Our Chief Executive and senior management have continued to review our operations to ensure that we are able to deliver the services required in an efficient and sustainable manner. This has not been easy but I would like to thank the staff for the positive way in which they have continued to promote and embrace changes.

In addition to core membership income we are very grateful to have received more than £389k in legacies from members and supporters. This is such a valuable source of income and we are especially grateful to those who make provision for the Trust in their Will.

Looking to the future I am delighted that, once again, more than 23,000 children spent a day with the Trust learning about nature as we aim to inspire some of the future guardians of the natural environment.

I would like to thank you all, members and supporters, for your continuing interest and help as well as volunteers and staff, who have such a wonderful breadth and depth of knowledge, all of which is much appreciated and helps to strengthen the voice of the Trust when we speak up for wildlife in Sussex.

The above information is extracted from the full annual audited accounts and its purpose is to highlight visually the different segments of the Trust’s Income and Expenditure for the year. To view a full set of these accounts please visit www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/annualreport

If you require a printed copy please tel: 01273 497523.

Chris Warne
Chairman
Supporters

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Weather Lottery

Other Supporters
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Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Crawley Borough Council
Eastbourne Borough Council
East Sussex County Council
Ecological Consultancy
Environment Agency
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve
Horsham District Council
Lewes District Council
Mid Sussex District Council
Natural England
Portsmouth Water
Rother District Council
South Downs National Park Authority
Southern Water
Sussex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority
Thames Water
Wealden District Council
West Sussex County Council
Worthing Borough Council

Lottery Funding
Big Lottery Fund
Heritage Lottery Fund

Charitable Trusts
A I Hawksee Charitable Trust
Arcadia, the charitable foundation of Libet Rauning and Peter Baldwin
Bramham Trust
British Mountaineering Council Access & Conservation Trust
Caroline Agnes Joan Hervey Trust
Carpenter Box Charitable Foundation
Joseph Levy Foundation
South Downs National Park Authority
Sustainable Communities Fund
The Egremont Charitable Trust
The Hamanelis Trust
The Irene Newman Charitable Trust
The J.H.F Green Trust
The Prince’s Countryside Fund
The Tubney Charitable Trust
Various anonymous Trusts
We are grateful to our Wildlife Guardians who generously support our Living Landscape conservation work.

Legacies
Mrs P J Anderson
Evelyn Joyce Apps
Lady L M Baillie
Mr P Bellamy
Mrs M J Berwick
Mr E F Blundon
Mrs D M Cornish
Mr H L Davies
Mrs C E Davis
Mr R H Fox
Miss J E Garnett
Mrs A J Wels
Miss C Wilson
Mrs M A Wirthmiller
A total of £398k has been received in legacies and bequests during the year. This is a valuable source of income and we are especially grateful to those who make provision for the Trust in their Will.

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Continuing our ‘green initiative’, the Trustees Report and a full set of audited annual accounts are available from our website www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

Go to About Us section and click on Annual Report.

To receive a printed copy please telephone 01273 497523.

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