



Ulster Wildlife Trust

**Annual Report &
Accounts 2020-21**



**Ulster
Wildlife**

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A message from our Chairman:

2020/21 was a very challenging period for all of us with the continuing Covid-19 restrictions. This has been no different at Ulster Wildlife. The lack of face to face events and shows impacted significantly on expected fundraising and membership growth.

Fortunately our membership base has remained extremely loyal and the staff team has worked innovatively on securing funding for both extended and new projects. Even with the extra challenges of working during restrictions and the pandemic, the charity made great progress in terms of work completed, ensuring financial stability and strengthening the team. Whilst we, as members, always value the work done at Ulster Wildlife, I would like to commend the staff team for making so much progress this year in very difficult circumstances. I would also like to thank the Board and our Honorary President for their dedication and guidance throughout the year.

Our project work continued to deliver very positive and tangible benefits and we continue to have success in our sharks and rays, barn owl and red squirrel conservation activities. Planning for restoration work on our new nature reserve at Glenullin Bog began in earnest and our Environmental Farming Scheme project continued to grow.

Climate change is such an important issue for all of us and Ulster Wildlife sees restoration of

our peatlands as a major influencer in Northern Ireland. We are now working on several peatland restoration projects as a major climate change initiative. We also continued our work in engaging young people through the 'Grassroots Challenge' especially the Young Farmers and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Participants.

Next year we look ahead to completing and launching a new strategy to 2030 and whilst we wish to preserve our past successes, issues such as climate change and nature recovery networks will now form key parts of our future.

A key risk for the organisation is the potential for a reduction in membership. Recruitment of new members has been very difficult during the pandemic, although we have had some success with digital membership promotion. You can help by encouraging friends and family to join us in caring for our natural world.

Ken Brundle



A message from our Chief Executive:

This was an important year for nature and for Ulster Wildlife and we would like to thank all our members and funders for their continuing contributions to the work of the charity.

The operating environment remains unstable with Covid-19 still impacting on income generation so we very much appreciate this support.

Despite the restrictions and challenges associated with the pandemic, we achieved the majority of our in-year targets and built a strong foundation for the coming year as we all adjust to a new way of working and living. The resilience, ingenuity and commitment of our staff team deserves a special mention along with the positivity, strategic focus and 'can do' attitude of our Board and volunteers.

During the year we saw a growing appreciation of nature. Nature is important for our health and well-being - it can be as simple as hearing birdsong outside a window, seeing butterflies dancing in the breeze or watching the wildflowers growing in your garden. One benefit of the pandemic has been that the personal benefits of nature have been valued as never before and the understanding and appreciation of environmental challenges has increased.

From a public policy perspective it has been a busy period and we have played an active role in shaping future policy through consultation

processes and proactive advocacy as post-Brexit legislation bedded in. During the year, we had the consultation on Environmental Governance and arranged an information session with the Chairperson of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), Dame Glenys Stacey. We look forward to welcoming the OEP to Northern Ireland in its role of holding government and public authorities to account against their commitments and environmental law.

Looking to the future there is much to achieve in Northern Ireland, as in many areas of environmental delivery, we are behind the rest of the UK. We have a vital opportunity in the two international Conference of Parties (COP) on biological diversity and climate change, where we hope that nature-based solutions will be front and centre. We have been developing our new Strategy to 2030, which will be launched at the next AGM, focusing on the nature and climate crises and our unique contribution through nature-based solutions working with partners and local communities to achieve our goals.

Jennifer Fulton

Nature's Recovery

For over 40 years Ulster Wildlife has been driven and supported by people who believe that wildlife and wild places are important. Nature brings a host of benefits for society - it is fundamental to human well-being and underpins a sustainable economy. We are a local charity that champions native wildlife. We work with local people to secure space for nature in our countryside, towns, coastlines and seas.

Our long-term vision is for a Northern Ireland with:

'...a healthy, well cared for natural environment which contributes to enjoyment, quality of life, prosperity, health & well-being'.

Ulster Wildlife's charitable objectives as set out in our Articles of Association are -

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| <p>(1) The advancement of environmental protection and improvement, in particular the conservation of all aspects of Northern Ireland and its adjacent areas' wildlife, biodiversity, geodiversity and associated natural beauty for the benefit of present and future generations by:</p> <p>(a) safeguarding, maintaining and enhancing natural biodiversity and geodiversity through the management of nature reserves (however entitled or however established);</p> <p>(b) practising, advocating, encouraging, influencing, advising and campaigning for best conservation practice involving land, sea and freshwater management practice in ways that favour biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystem health, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development;</p> <p>(c) undertaking action, independently or in partnership, to protect threatened habitats, sites of geodiversity or heritage significance, at local, national or international levels on or in water, land and adjacent seas;</p> | <p>(d) taking account of other aspects of the natural heritage on which wildlife is dependent or to which it contributes, including landforms and landscapes;</p> <p>(e) improving the quality of life of people through supporting a biodiversity, ecosystem, geodiversity and sustainability-led approach to the management and design of the natural and built environment.</p> <p>(2) The advancement of education by raising the public's awareness and knowledge of all aspects of the natural and built heritage, biodiversity and geodiversity of Northern Ireland and its adjacent areas by promoting, undertaking and co-operating in research and gathering and sharing information on these topics.</p> <p>(3) The advancement of citizenship through volunteering linked to natural heritage including the promotion of sustainable food production and sustainable lifestyles.</p> <p>(4) The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science linked to natural heritage through events and project-based action.</p> <p>(5) The advancement of health and well-being through activities linked to the natural environment.</p> |
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Our Charitable Objectives are delivered through the two Strategic Themes of Living Landscapes and Living Seas.

Our Living Landscapes work is about:

- Working with people and communities to restore damaged and fragmented habitats, reconnecting these and linking them to the green space in our cities, towns and villages.
- Securing a society where people are inspired by, and engaged in, protecting wildlife and where they recognise the economic and social value of nature, and the many ways in which it improves their quality of life.

Our Living Seas work is about:

- Helping wildlife and habitats to recover from past decline as our use of the seas' resources becomes environmentally sustainable.
- Inspiring people about marine wildlife and to value the sea for the many ways in which it supports our quality of life.
- Creating a network of marine protected areas as part of a long-term solution to the management of healthy seas.

Our work to achieve Living Landscapes and Seas is delivered annually focused around five strategic goals.

Our Priorities for 2020/21

- Due to the unprecedented circumstances caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic and the uncertainty and variability of income which could not be predicted, the decision was taken to delay the development of the new Strategic Plan. The existing strategy was extended for an additional year to 31 March 2022.

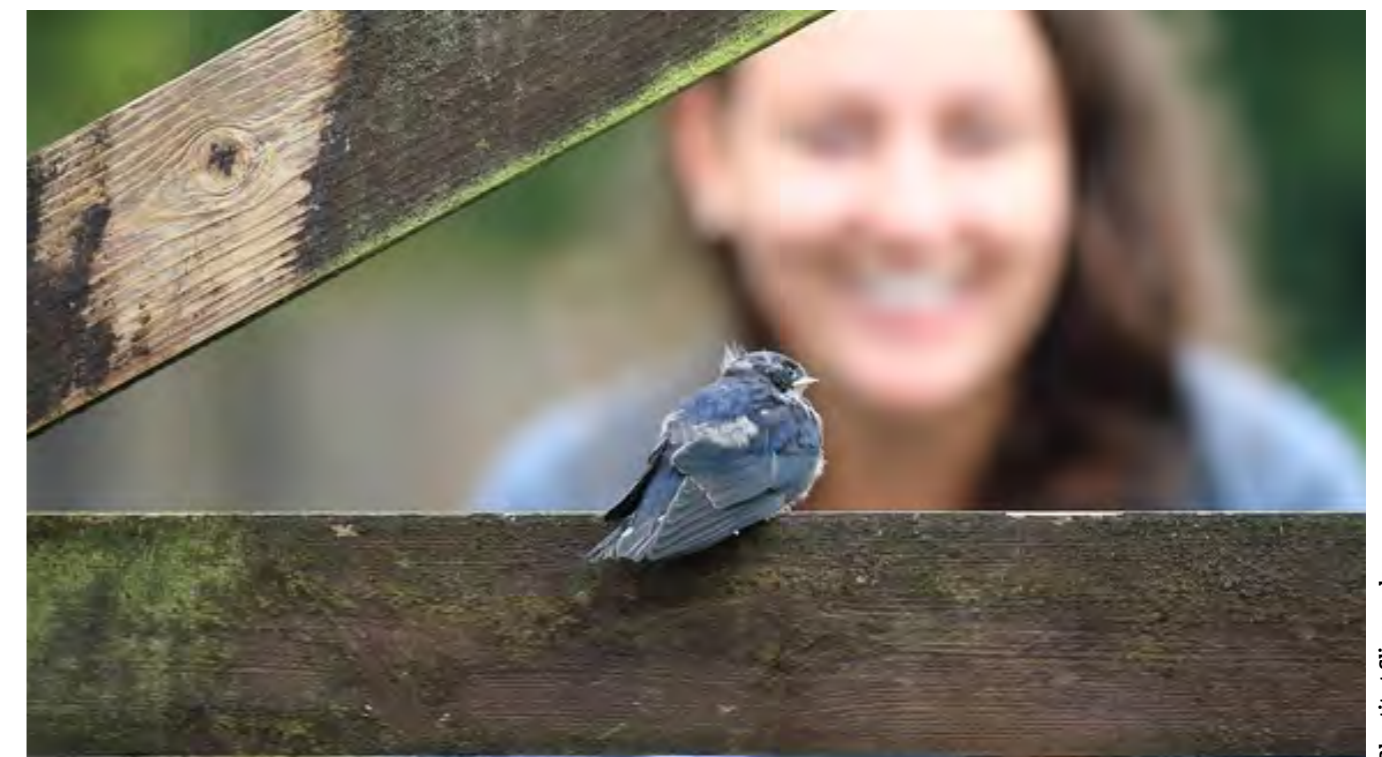
Our Fundraising targets for 2020/21 were to:

- > Maintain current levels of membership.
- > Secure £380,252 income from Membership including Gift-Aid contributions.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

This Trustees' Report shows how we performed against these Strategic Goals and Targets in 2020/21.



Blue tit at Slievenacloy

Inspire people to champion wildlife and value nature

We believe that in order to protect Northern Ireland's diverse landscapes and seas, and secure a future rich in wildlife, we must invest resources into re-engaging people with nature and educating our society to value the environment as a vital investment in our future health, well-being and economy.



Randalstown Young Farmers hedge planting

Education & Engagement

With home schooling and lockdowns in place for significant parts of the year, our education and engagement work evolved to mainly online delivery. Despite the challenges we engaged hundreds of children and young people with nature through this approach. This contact was important in helping to combat social isolation and to empower young people to take action for nature and climate.

Our Grassroots Challenge Project worked directly with 157 young people with special needs through post primary Special Schools and community projects helping them to improve their understanding of wildlife and to take action in their local environment. The young people completed 25 separate activities and projects. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, many sessions were held over Zoom and remote support and resources provided so that teachers and leaders could facilitate sessions with their young people themselves.

The Project also worked with 215 young people through the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster. Training courses in hedge planting and safe use of spraying were delivered to 59 young people, partly online but with some face to face sessions being possible when social distancing restrictions allowed. Participation continued with the Eco Club Award scheme with the first two Green Flag Awards issued to Lisnamurrigan and Randalstown Young Farmers Clubs. Awards were also presented to young people by Youth Forum members as part of the fourth Annual Grassroots Challenge Celebration event held for the first time online and including including special messages from a range of people including Minister Edwin Poots MLA and TV presenter Ben Fogle.

Our Grassroots Challenge Project continued to support Duke of Edinburgh's Award leaders and young people to engage in 21 local projects and online sessions benefiting wildlife and the environment. Unfortunately, our annual week-long Gold Award Residential had to be postponed because of Covid-19, as was use of our Wildlife Expedition Packs. However, 147 young people were still able to focus on environmental activities for their Bronze, Silver or Gold Award across the year.

Our Grassroots Challenge Youth Forum moved online during the year, meeting regularly and helping to plan and deliver the project's annual celebration event via Zoom. Two members also represented the project on the UK-wide 'Our Bright Future' Youth Forum.

Ulster Wildlife supports two Wildlife Watch Groups in Lisburn and Belfast, run by dedicated volunteer leaders, where children meet monthly. Unfortunately for much of 2020/21, the groups were only able to meet online, but were still able to engage the children with fun, nature-based activities over Zoom. There are also three active community wildlife groups that are connected to Ulster Wildlife - Cookstown Wildlife Trust, the Ballynahinch Branch of Ulster Wildlife and the Armagh Wildlife Society. Each group meets regularly and puts on a programme of talks and activities for members.

For much of the lockdown we were limited to delivering events online. We ran a series of informative talks for Members via Zoom. More than 600 people registered for 10 talks on topics ranging from dune conservation to the butterflies and moths of our Nature Reserves. We also held our Annual General Meeting online in 2020.



Our Nature Skills Trainees - 2021 at Balloo Nature Reserve

Training

Continuing the success of the Nature Skills Traineeship, in February 2020 we entered our final year of the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project and were able to welcome nine new trainees to join the Living Seas and Nature Reserves teams.

As with previous years, the project targeted engaging trainees from under-represented groups in the heritage sector including people from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with a disability and non-graduates under the age of 24.

Shortly after the programme commenced, lockdown hit as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and trainees found themselves learning from home. Although challenging, the Ulster Wildlife project delivery team ensured training continued by delivering sessions on Habitat and Species ID and Management via an online learning platform. When safe to do so, trainees and staff returned to practical work out on our nature reserves, developing skills in site maintenance, scrub control, invasive species control and biological monitoring.

As with previous years, trainees were able to benefit from a range of training courses that would help boost their job prospects upon completion of their traineeship. Courses such as Brush-cutters and Strimmers, Fencing, Marine Mammal Monitoring, Phase 1 Habitat Surveying and Use of Wood Chipper were delivered, along with offsite training sessions with our Nature Reserves and Living Seas Managers on flora and fauna identification. It was difficult to achieve work placements with other organisations for trainees due to ongoing restrictions, however all trainees availed of invaluable experience across other projects within Ulster Wildlife such as peatland restoration and shark egg case and shore surveying.

All trainees worked towards achieving a Lantra Award by completing the online training sessions and building a skills portfolio during the 12 month period. Each received a certificate and skills card at the end of year, presented at a small celebration event. Albeit not the year we had intended, we were delighted that our 2020/21 trainees did not miss out on all the practical experience or opportunities of previous cohorts. Four trainees progressed straight into employment upon completion, with the remaining continuing to build on their practical experience with further volunteering within the sector.

Protect and restore habitats and ecosystems through practical action and research

We continue to promote the restoration of natural systems to provide maximum benefit for native species, habitats and people. This work centres around the protection and good management of core, high-nature-value sites, and seeks to promote habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors to form the basis of ecological networks within our landscapes and seas. We use our local presence and knowledge to carry out practical habitat management work, and assist others in doing so.

Nature Reserves

Despite Covid, the majority of conservation targets on our 19 nature reserves across Northern Ireland were achieved in 2020/21 – this was in large part because we mostly work outdoors and in small groups. Managing over 700 hectares of land is not a simple task at the best of times and it is thanks to the commitment of our staff, volunteers and members that delivery continued during this past year conserving and protecting 19 NI Priority Habitats and over 100 NI Priority Species.

Ballynahone Bog, one of our largest nature reserves, is also one of the most studied with water-level monitoring, ammonia monitoring, weather stations and plans to install equipment to look at carbon and methane. The information gathered here will help inform the conservation of lowland raised bogs and efforts to combat climate change across Northern Ireland and further afield. Vegetation monitoring at Ballynahone Bog has revealed that our damming restoration works have been successful – the amount of active raised bog has increased nearly ten-fold in the last seven years. Our newest nature reserve, Glenullin Bog, availed of funding from the DAERA Challenge Fund to install water-level monitoring equipment and a weather station. This will provide baseline data for our planned restoration works at this site which will commence in 2021.

At the Isle of Muck, our ongoing programme of rat control was carried out during the winter months and was completed in record time. The site is now grazed annually with small numbers of sheep and this is having a noticeable effect on the grassland, which will benefit nesting bird species. As always with seabirds it can be a mixed result – record numbers of black guillemot were recorded in the Portmuck area and while initially kittiwakes looked to be doing well, breeding productivity was fairly low during 2020/21.

Several of our nature reserves are included in EFS (Environmental Farming Scheme) such as Slievenacloy, in the Belfast Hills, where several hectares of rushes were cut (with the help of a 'robo-cut' in difficult terrain) and 11km of replacement fencing was installed. At Umbra Nature Reserve, also in EFS, 2km of fencing works were completed. Numbers of small eggar moth webs were at their highest for several years and conservation tasks included control of non-native American skunk cabbage, scrub cutting and ragwort pulling. The blanket bog at the top of Glendun Hill Farm was included in EFS at the start of the year – works will include new fencing and bracken control, with the hope that more of the site can enter into the scheme in the future. The biodiversity value of this site continues to improve.

In recent years we have increasingly used livestock for sustainable management to achieve our goals such as Milford Cutting and Straidkilly. We would like to thank our conservation-minded graziers and some very obliging sheep.

In 2017/18 the Northern Ireland Environment Agency funded the removal of 30,000 non-native pines at Umbra – since then recent monitoring by the British Geological Survey shows that twice as much water is ending up in the ground than before. This boost to groundwater levels protects the important dune slack habitats at Umbra from the drying effects of climate change in the future.



Hay Meadow at Ballykinler

Protected Sites

During 2020/21, we continued our work in partnership with the Ministry of Defence to provide management of the Ballykinler and Magilligan Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Twelve hectares of gorse and blackthorn scrub cut in the previous three years were treated to prevent scrub regrowth, and a further four hectares of gorse and blackthorn were cut. We undertook a trial of using a bracken bruiser on flatter parts of the site that can be more easily accessed by a quad or tractor and we hope this will allow us to reduce our herbicide usage.

We completed surveys for a number of species including petalwort, marsh fritillary, scarce crimson and gold, northern colletes bee and small eggar moth. We recorded a number of marsh fritillary webs at Ballykinler and petalwort was still present at Magilligan. The rare northern colletes bee was recorded at Magilligan for the first time in many years, and it appears to be thinly spread across the site. The north and west coasts of Ireland are a global stronghold for this threatened species.

We supervised new fencing, gates and drinkers at both sites to enclose approximately another 20 hectares of species rich dune grassland that will be grazed for the first time benefitting the ecology and significantly reducing fire risk. We monitored the plant communities developing in the trial excavation in the humid dune slacks that was created in 2018. More typical dune slack species were seen including variegated horsetail, bog pimpernel, mats of cyanobacteria and some species of mosses and liverworts.

At Ballykinler, we sowed another two hectares of hay meadow. We worked in partnership with a local company that specialises in wildflower meadow habitats by preparing ground and sowing a locally sourced mix of wildflower seeds and with the grazier at Ballykinler to manage this habitat as traditionally as possible. As well as making a great contribution to the all-Ireland pollinator plan, we think it looks absolutely stunning!

The Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) Project continued to grow during the 2020/21 financial year with our core team and expert associates providing a high quality service to farmers who own and manage some of Northern Ireland's most valuable habitats. Whilst the core of the EFS Group remains in West Fermanagh, the reach has continued to widen.

The Higher Level Environmental Farming Scheme focuses on designated sites and priority habitats such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). It helps support farmers and land managers on protected sites to carry out environmentally beneficial land practices to move sites towards favourable condition.

Ulster Wildlife completed site-specific remedial management plans for 34 farm businesses during the summer of 2020, bringing the total number of plans completed over the first four years of the project to over 100 with 6,000+ ha of protected land now under EFS Higher management prescriptions.

The Group facilitation project, co-funded by DAERA and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development through the Rural Development Programme, now has a membership base of 331 individuals representing 245 farm businesses. High quality, professional support and guidance is provided to all members via a range of different platforms. The Covid-19 pandemic saw significant impact on delivery of services with staff working from home and cessation of public events, but the facilitators quickly re-established communication channels using online platforms in place of field events and in-person meetings. The use of technology further increased the expansion of the Group to a wider audience. Consequently, one of the challenges in the post-pandemic era will be resourcing the in-person events that are integral to the success of EFS Group across a wider area.



Drain Blocking at Cranny Bog

Protected Sites

Ulster Wildlife is one of the main delivery partners of the Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN), a cross-border environmental partnership led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

The project is funded by the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, co-funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, (DAERA) and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body. The environmental delivery strand aims to protect peatlands and wetlands in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland.

Ulster Wildlife's work on the 13 raised bogs for the project progressed well in 2020 despite the challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Drain blocking was completed on Claragh and Drumnafallow bogs (two of the four Fairy Water Bogs in Tyrone) and began at Armagh's Peatlands Park and Moneygal Bog, Tyrone.

Monitoring is an important part of our drain blocking programme and monthly measurements continued at all 13 bogs with only one month missed because of lockdowns. Preliminary results show that the drain blocking has worked as planned: water tables have risen and been maintained during summer.

CANN staff also continued their control of the invasive species across these bogs. Contractors made significant progress clearing rhododendron at Peatlands Park, while CANN staff - with great support from Ulster Wildlife's Nature Skills trainees, our European Solidarity Corps volunteers and Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership volunteers - cleared hectares of conifers and rhododendron during follow up visits to the bogs of Moneygal, Tully, Drumnafallow and Peatlands Park. We also removed South American pitcher plant from Peatlands Park - originally planted there intentionally in the bog garden, this carnivorous plant was turning up across the protected bogs in the Park.

Turmennan, near Downpatrick, is the only transition mire (put simply a wetland with both bog and fen) in the CANN project and rhododendron was also removed from an area to protect the fen and the endangered marsh fritillary. Engineers concluded their in-depth study of Turmennan's hydrology and all owners and those living in the Turmennan catchment attended an online presentation.

Surveys for marsh fritillary butterfly on Co Down's Lecale Fens concluded in late 2020 and results will inform conservation action plans for the four fens. An electric fence was installed at one fen to allow for a return of much-needed grazing whilst protecting the core habitat of the endangered Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) at its only location in Northern Ireland.

Ammonia is a form of aerial pollution, mainly from agriculture, that is particularly harmful to peatlands. In May 2020, we began monitoring ammonia levels each month at Moneygal, Garry, Curran, Peatlands Park and Turmennan. Again results will inform management of the bogs in the future.

Ulster Wildlife CANN staff submitted draft conservation action plans for all 10 Special Areas of Conservation to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency for consideration at end of March 2021.

2020 was also a busy year on Cuilcagh Mountain SAC and Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC. With restoration plans developed and finalised, blanket bog restoration works commenced. Ulster Wildlife staff trained local landowners to deliver over 2km of peat hag reprofiling, install over 450 coir logs in eroded gullies and build over 200 peat dams along 4.65km of drains. Ulster Wildlife continued to monitor the water levels and take fixed-point photographs to demonstrate the success of these works.

Restoration of the rare and sensitive montane heath on Cuilcagh's summit continued with great results. Highly skilled Scottish contractors worked with local volunteers and Geopark rangers to build experience and expertise in the local area. Ulster Wildlife has continued to liaise with all stakeholders in order to aim for sustainable management of the mountain.

The wildfire management plan for Cuilcagh and Cuilcagh-Anierin moved to the next stage with both fire and rescue services and environmental agencies on both sides of the border feeding into its development.

Bird surveys were delayed due to Covid-19 but still provided valuable information about the importance of these sites for hen harrier, golden plover, red grouse and snipe.

Ulster Wildlife has been working with consultants to research commonage management and develop an upland scorecard system. This is a system whereby farms are scored based on a number of criteria e.g. if there is damage to soil then you lose points or if you have important species you gain points. The higher the farm scores then the greater the payment the farmer receives. This upland score card will be used to assess upland habitats like blanket bog and heath and the score will give a good indication of the habitat quality.

Work on the scorecard was able to move forward in 2020 through research into other results-based agri-environment schemes such as the Hen Harrier programme and the Pearl Mussel project. Testing the scorecard on selected commonages and drop-in clinics with landowners was an excellent way for both Ulster Wildlife and landowners to gain more information on Cuilcagh-Anierin.



Small Copper Butterfly at Slievenacloy
Nature Reserve © R Surgenor

Nature Recovery Networks

In early 2020, we secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for an 18-month project to build capacity to deliver Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs) in Northern Ireland. Together with project partners RSPB NI, National Trust and Woodland Trust, the project will be exploring and putting in place mechanisms towards the adoption of this landscape-scale approach towards looking after our natural environment. As a part of our role in this project, we are hosting the project coordinator, who has been in post since September 2020.

It is clear that the current approach of simply conserving biodiversity at selected sites isn't enough to safeguard our ecosystems and the services they provide. The Lawton Report (Making Space for Nature) in 2010 set out that in order to achieve real change for nature we needed to do things differently and we needed to make spaces for nature that were 'More, Bigger, Better and more Joined-up'. This is essentially what a Nature Recovery Network is. It is a plan to stitch together and repair the broken and disconnected fabric of nature across a landscape.

Northern Ireland is currently setting its ambition post-Brexit and post-Covid. While the focus is to 'build back better', it is recognised that this also needs to be greener, making this project very timely.

With the support from staff from the four partner organisations and working closely with key stakeholders, such as NIEA, the project will be producing the first set of national habitat network maps for Northern Ireland. This will help us to better understand the current habitat cover and its level of connectivity and to identify opportunities for habitat restoration and creation in order to deliver towards the four Lawton-principles of more, bigger, better and more joined-up habitats. In addition, the project will be producing a set of case studies in order to portray how the NRN-approach, and these associated maps, can inform future policy and practice.

Eventually, we would like to see these maps used in decision-making by planners, as part of agri-environment support and by conservation organisations, to ensure investment and efforts are directed strategically where it will make the biggest impact for both wildlife and people.

In its first six months, the project has largely focused on developing capacity around the concept of Nature Recovery Networks. Through conducting an extensive literature review and holding a myriad of meetings with practitioners elsewhere in the UK, Ireland and Europe, a comprehensive review document was produced, highlighting the approaches that have been taken elsewhere, both in terms of mapping but also in terms of the policy supporting their use.

This research informed a webinar series which took place in April 2021, aimed at facilitating knowledge-sharing amongst the environmental sector in Northern Ireland. Following this, the knowledge acquired will be guiding the approach the project will be taking towards its individual objectives around mapping and advocacy work in particular.



Red squirrel at Straidkilly Nature Reserve

Species Action

Following completion of the 'Red Squirrels United' Project in 2019, we secured funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation and the NI Environment Agency to continue to develop our red squirrel conservation activities.

Our main aim for 2020 was to produce a Red Squirrel Conservation Strategy for Northern Ireland. This is an important piece of work which gathered all the evidence to ensure red squirrels continue to recover in Northern Ireland. Consultation on the draft strategy was launched in early 2020 with a variety of stakeholders and also with all the volunteer red squirrel groups across Northern Ireland. The document was prepared throughout 2020 and early 2021 and we hope this will be launched later in 2021.

Ulster Wildlife continues to raise awareness on the importance of grey squirrel control and accredited training was provided to two more groups in 2020. This ensures that grey squirrel control is carried out to the highest animal welfare standards. Awareness raising of red squirrels continues and a number of talks were delivered during the year to local groups.

The annual presence/absence survey of red squirrel, grey squirrel and pine marten was planned in early 2020. The programme of in-person volunteer engagement and training of new surveyors had commenced in February but was subsequently suspended with the advent of Covid-19 restrictions. During the initial weeks of lockdown from March 2020 onwards, all Forest Service properties were closed to the general public and all surveying was suspended as volunteers and Ulster Wildlife staff adhered to the stay-at-home guidance. Subsequent relaxation of the restrictions in late spring/summer permitted Ulster Wildlife staff, and those volunteers who were able to survey safely (whilst observing all relevant contemporary guidance), to undertake a programme of surveying. Additionally, Ulster Wildlife collaborated with Dr Joshua Twining's British Ecological Society-funded research which also took place in summer 2020, undertaking camera trap surveying of numerous woodlands and other habitat types across the six counties.

Despite Covid-19, the survey was a success and a total of 149 woodlands were covered. This was down to the collaboration with Dr Twining and the help from volunteers and Ulster Wildlife staff. The results were very positive and red squirrels were recorded in every local county. This species is continuing to recover because of the vital conservation work being carried out at a local level. We focused on survey gaps for grey squirrels and confirmed presence or absence in a number of areas. Fermanagh was again recorded as grey squirrel free. Pine martens are continuing to increase and were also recorded in every county. It seems highly likely that pine marten recovery is helping red squirrel recovery and grey squirrel populations are collapsing across Ireland as pine marten recolonise, with red squirrel reappearing in woodlands soon after the disappearance of greys.



Barn Owl at Crumlin - Spring 2020

Species Action

We estimate there are less than 30 pairs of barn owls left in Northern Ireland and our work aims to increase numbers, protect existing pairs, and increase our understanding of these birds in Northern Ireland. 2020 brought new challenges with the arrival of Covid-19. However, with the help of staff, trainees and volunteers, we still continued our conservation efforts for barn owls in NI.

Since the beginning of the year, 15 barn owl boxes have been erected throughout Northern Ireland. Due to the impacts of Covid-19 this number is lower than normal, however, the boxes are in prime locations and we hope to add to this number in 2021. We did carry out over 30 site visits to landowners where we provided advice on boxes and land management. More nest boxes have been erected at existing nest sites to increase the network of boxes in the area and to offer roosting or nesting opportunities for fledglings. This was only possible in 2020 with the help of Comber Rotary and Dromore Boys' Brigade who spent lockdown making barn owl boxes for us.

Our annual barn owl survey was carried out in 2020 with the help of our volunteers and nest box minders. We altered our methodology due to Covid-19 and had each landowner or volunteer check their own box. This led to 96 boxes being checked for barn owl activity and six new sites checked. Definitely a success during a global pandemic; thank you to all our volunteers, Ulster Wildlife staff, and volunteers from the NI Raptor Study Group who helped out.

In 2020, we monitored five active nest sites; an increase from three the previous year. Unfortunately, two of these sites failed but we had three successful broods of chicks in the summer of 2020. All of the chicks born in 2020 were born in nest boxes on trees. All of these sites are managed in a wildlife-friendly way and this shows how important land management is in supporting our local barn owl population. In total, there were 12 chicks fledged from three nests, with one pair in Co. Antrim having a second brood. We were able to ring chicks at these three nest sites which was carried out by BTO licenced ringers enabling us to identify these birds if they move on. With the help of our nest-minders and volunteers we hope that these nests will continue to thrive and new nests will be established in 2020 and beyond.

We are pleased to see support from the public continue with regular sightings of barn owls reported to us via phone call, email, social media or online through CEDaR's website (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording), and on iRecord. This allows us to target our efforts and investigate areas with numerous sightings. By the end of 2020 we had received 63 barn owl sightings and 24 long-eared owl sightings. Due to the dry weather it seems like long-eared owls have had a very good year. We also think that more people were noticing these birds due to the lockdown. Long-eared owls are actually more common than barn owls but they are not reported as frequently.

In 2020, we hosted an MSc student from Queen's University Belfast who completed a very worthwhile project, comparing prey items found in pellets at three different nest sites. All of this information is presented in more detail in an Ulster Wildlife report for barn owl conservation which can be downloaded from our website.



Tagging a juvenile Spurdog shark

Species Action

Due to Covid-19 restrictions this year, the Sea Deep project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, was limited in its ability to deliver face-to-face shark tagging training sessions.

We adapted to these unprecedented circumstances by carrying out online training sessions and, when possible, socially distanced outdoor tagging training sessions. In doing so we were able to train 43 members of the angling community in best practice handling, tagging and releasing techniques. This included the founding anglers of the 'Belfast Lough Angling and Conservation Group', many of whom credit their appreciation for shark conservation to the training they received through the Sea Deep project. This year, our volunteer anglers were also limited in the time they could spend at sea. However, from their dedicated volunteering, the project still received tag records. This included records on our most threatened species, including spurdog, tope, and 'common' skate, of which we received 56 tag records. This data offers an insight into the distribution of these animals, allowing for more effective management measures. In total, 163 sharks, skates and rays were successfully tagged in year three of the project.

As we were unable to run public egg case surveys this year, we encouraged the public to search for egg cases during their daily walks. This ensured valuable egg case data continued to be gathered, with Sea Deep receiving a total of 553 records this year. This included a particularly special find, the first 'Common' skate egg case for the project. This find was recorded by a volunteer along the North coast and is important as this species is critically endangered. Any evidence of the 'Common' skate's presence in our waters can help us understand how it is using the area around our coasts, allowing us to implement effective conservation measures to safeguard this critically endangered species for future generations.

During this challenging year, we continued to adapt by engaging with our followers through social media and other online platforms. Sea Deep took part in numerous online sessions, engaging on our local sharks and skates and the work of the project. Sessions included Ulster Wildlife's 'Wildlife Wednesdays', a weekly showcase of local wildlife and popular podcasts such as 'Water Women'. We also joined BBC presenter Barra Best in the socially distanced filming of, 'Barra on the Foyle'. During this recording we showcased the importance of the Sea Deep tagging programme and the effort taken by our dedicated anglers. This allowed the project to highlight core conservation work to a large audience during a restricted time for public engagement.

Because we couldn't go into schools this year, we made the Sea Deep education pack available online. This pack dives into the world of shark biology, ecology and conservation through four online sessions. Each session includes a pre-recorded lesson, quizzes and additional activities to captivate students on the amazing shark species that live in our local waters. The pack concludes with a session highlighting how pupils can take direct action for shark conservation in their local area through citizen science and involvement in shark and skate egg case hunts. Overall, although this year presented challenges, the project was able to adapt and ensure the importance of conserving local shark and skate conservation was highlighted.



Seagrass Meadow at
Kearney © P Wilkinson

Species Action

During Summer 2020, we launched Shore NI, our citizen science intertidal survey programme. Shore NI volunteers take part in a training course to gain marine and coastal species identification skills, then they can head to a rocky shore near them and start recording marine wildlife.

We developed this programme because knowing what marine wildlife lives on our shores helps us to better understand and look after our natural world. Without this knowledge, it is challenging to know which animals are rare, which animals shouldn't be there (invasive species) and which might need our help. Shore NI is open to everyone, including beginners, as the training course covers all you need to know to get started, from basic ID skills to top tips for surveying and how to use the iNaturalist app.

Shore NI was immediately popular. We trained 198 volunteers who carried out 67 surveys across Northern Ireland, submitting 3670 records. We shared all records with NI's local biodiversity records centre, CEDaR, and DAERA to inform marine conservation and management decision making. Many of our recorders were keen to improve their ID skills further, so we hosted specialised training courses on crustaceans, and we are planning further specialised training to focus on other groups of sea life.

One of the most exciting discoveries made by the Shore NI volunteers was a new seagrass bed at Kearney. Seagrass is the only flowering plant that lives fully submerged underwater. It provides a home for many small fish species and crustaceans, and it can absorb and lock away carbon! The Sea Search NI volunteer divers have been out to recce the seagrass bed and will return next summer to map its extent. Other notable records highlighting the value of Shore NI include the invasive bryozoan *Tricellaria inopinata* in Strangford Lough – a species which had only previously been recorded by the Ulster Museum Marine surveys between 2011-2013.

By taking part in this survey, our volunteers are helping to build up a more robust picture of the wildlife around our coast, providing crucial information to inform conservation and management decisions.

During National Marine Week, we challenged our supporters to get outside, experience their local rocky shore, and take pictures of what they found. The Big Rockpool Ramble Guide provided all the information needed to take part, including how to ramble in the rockpool, where the best local places are, spotter sheets so participants knew what they found, and tips on how to stay safe on the shore.

We were thrilled to see the fantastic response to our Big Rockpool Ramble. In total, 279 packs were downloaded and we received 286 records of over 79 different intertidal species.

Throughout Marine Week, the Living Seas team shared their experiences and favourite finds on our social media for motivation to keep looking for wildlife. Our social media content included species ID videos, a virtual rockpool ramble and talks on local species. We generated a reach of over 178,000 people across Facebook and Instagram.



Stand up for nature by influencing government policy

We believe that there is great urgency in achieving sustainability in how we use natural resources and in safeguarding biodiversity. Our work with politicians and decision makers seeks to get a better deal for nature. We will contribute to emerging government policy, raising awareness of biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural capital.

Young Farmers meeting Environment Minister - Edwin Poots

Policy (Terrestrial)

Over 2020/21, we worked with a group of young leaders across Northern Ireland, as part of the 'Our Bright Future' Programme, to drive forward three key policy asks of our Northern Ireland Government.

A range of online sessions was delivered to our group of young advocates to give training on political advocacy and campaigning, and then mentor them to run a campaign focusing on three key changes the young people wanted to see for the environment and themselves:

Ask 1: that young people get to spend more time learning in and about nature during school.

Ask 2: that young people receive support and training to get into environmental jobs.

Ask 3: that young people have a stronger voice with policy makers, and within the government system in Northern Ireland.

Despite being unable to meet in person, this dedicated group of young people worked extremely hard, met with many politicians over the year and delivered a social media campaign entitled 'Learn More Outdoors'.

Another key area of work was around a Climate Act for Northern Ireland. We are an active member of the NI Climate Coalition and continued to advocate for a Climate Act for Northern Ireland within the lifetime of this Assembly i.e. before May 2022. In February 2021, we responded to DAERA's consultation on a Climate Act for Northern Ireland. Over 600 of our supporters submitted a response to the department calling for robust and ambitious climate legislation with a net zero target.

A significant consultation, also in February, was DAERA's Environmental Plans, Principles and Governance public discussion document. We met with the Chair (Dame Glenys Stacey) and Interim CEO (Natalie Prosser) of the UK Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to clarify how the OEP could function in Northern Ireland. In our consultation response, we emphasised that we remain the only part of the UK and Ireland that does not have an independent Environmental Protection Agency and this is not a track record to be proud of. We called for robust environmental principles that are future-proofed, including:

- Net zero emissions
- Requirement to protect, restore, enhance and create natural capital assets with a recognition of Nature-Based Solutions to climate change
- Delivering Net biodiversity gain/Net environment gain
- Promoting habitat extent, condition and connectivity
- Provision of public goods for public money

Further notable consultations which we responded to included the Programme for Government draft framework, Peace Plus Programme (which is the follow on from the EU's INTERREG programme and provides significant funding for future environmental projects), and the National Economic and Social Council Shared Island Consultation: Climate and Biodiversity Challenges and Opportunities Draft Document Consultation.



Scallop © J Ryan

Policy (Marine)

Since 2013, Ulster Wildlife has been one of the lead organisations on the Northern Ireland Marine Task Force (NIMTF), a coalition of 10 NGOs working for better protection of our local seas. Over the past 12 months, NIMTF maximised opportunities to continue engaging on marine conservation, fisheries and sustainable development policy, with government officials and politicians, promoting the value of a coordinated and collective voice from the environmental NGO sector.

In December 2020, after many years of lobbying, DAERA began the process of introducing fishing management measures in Northern Ireland's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). We continue to actively engage on this important issue through formal consultations and direct liaison with DAERA, fishing industry representatives and by taking our seat on the Inshore Fisheries Partnership Group. This swathe of new protection represents a positive and significant step forward for some of our most vulnerable and important marine species.

Through NIMTF we sit on the advisory boards of the EU Interreg-funded projects MarPAMM and Compass, both of which feed into the monitoring and assessment of the state and health of our marine environment. MarPAMM is an environmental project aiming to develop tools for monitoring and managing a number of protected coastal marine environments in Northern Ireland. The outcomes of this project are integral to Northern Ireland designating and implementing an ecologically coherent network of MPAs.

In collaboration with Environment Link UK, NIMTF responded to the latest Marine Strategy UK (MSUK) consultation on the programme of monitoring needed to assess the UK's progress towards Good Environmental Status (GES). As 11 of 15 indicators are currently failing to achieve GES, the next Marine Strategy report is critical because it will lay out Government's plans to turn the state and health of our seas around. We will continue to work and collaborate with others to ensure an ambitious and effective Marine Strategy delivers for our seas and wildlife.

Together, the NIMTF members have developed a new vision, one that will lead to ocean recovery, setting out how we will face approaching challenges such as climate change and developments placing accelerating demands on our marine environment. Priority actions for achieving this vision are:

- **Biodiversity Recovery:** reversing species and habitat declines.
- **Sustainable Development and Fisheries:** progressing nature's recovery at sea.
- **Climate Action:** ensuring our seas provide nature-based solutions to climate change.
- **Raised Voices:** inspiring people of NI to act for recovery.

Further notable consultations which we responded to were the Fisheries Management Measures for Marine Protected Areas (including scallop enhancement sites) and the Islandmagee Gas Storage Consent to Discharge (which we continue to oppose on the grounds of potential impact to protected areas and priority habitats and species, as well as going against the strategy to decarbonise the energy sector.)

We also now hold a seat on the Fisheries Improvement Project for *Nephrops norvegicus* (Dublin Bay prawn/scampi) UK Steering Group, which aims to get fisheries to meet certifiable sustainability criteria, such as that of the Marine Stewardship Council. The *Nephrops* fishery is the most significant fishery in Northern Ireland, worth over £15.5 million in landings to NI ports in 2019.

We have called for increased attention and action for 'blue carbon' habitats in Northern Ireland, which are a nature-based solution to climate change. We held a workshop on coastal blue carbon habitat restoration feasibility in February, attended by over 80 from across NGOs, government and academia - this has led to an action plan for Northern Ireland to protect and restore these habitats.

Promote health and well-being through enjoyment of the natural environment

Access to, and enjoyment of, wild places and wildlife has been shown to have a positive impact on our physical and emotional well-being and is important for people of all ages both in terms of preventing illness and managing health conditions. Ulster Wildlife continues to provide opportunities to engage with nature and believes it is an important factor in achieving a healthy society.



St. Gall's Under 16s Girls volunteering at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve

Promoting Nature as a Tool to Improve Health

We continued to promote and improve our Nature Reserves as places to enjoy the well-being benefits of getting out into nature. We noticed a considerable increase in visitor numbers to our nature reserves during the period of the first lockdown and later in the summer, where people were accessing the sites more for their 'daily allowed exercise'.

There were over 100,000 visits to our nature reserves during 2020/21, with the nature reserves team, supported by volunteers, maintaining several kilometres of access routes every year.

Practical volunteer days which normally provide a chance for people to learn more about nature, learn new skills and take part in physical activity – all great ways to improve their health and well-being – were unfortunately limited during 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Bog Meadows is a true urban nature reserve – important not only for wildlife but also as a natural environment for the people of Belfast to enjoy. We were delighted in June 2020 to receive the news from the National Lottery Community Fund that our application for funding for the 'Our People, Our Places' project had been successful. This project will see Ulster Wildlife, St James Community Forum and Falls Community Council work in partnership to deliver a vibrant community hub centred around St James Community Farm and Bog Meadows Nature Reserve.

This four-year project will enable local people to enjoy the health and well-being benefits of working with animals, growing their own food at the St James Community Farm, as well as exploring, learning and relaxing in their extended garden – the wild, green space offered by Bog Meadows Nature Reserve. The project will strengthen social networks and skills by offering traineeships, volunteering, events and education programmes based around nature, conservation, animal husbandry and gardening.

The project was up and running from October 2020 and did face challenges due to Covid-19 Restrictions. However, we adapted and were able to deliver activities including providing resources for self-led activities, such as nature scavenger hunts and making St. Brigid's crosses from rushes.

Another major highlight of the year was the re-opening of Balloo Wetland after a long period of closure – the site now has a new path and bridge, a species-rich meadow has been sown and flower-rich areas for pollinators have been created. The site has been transformed and is once again available for all to enjoy, with future plans to make the site even more welcoming to both visitors and wildlife.

Grow our success and extend our reach

As a locally governed charity, we will develop our committed, skilled and knowledgeable staff and volunteer base. We will continue to extend our reach in terms of fundraising to deliver impacts for nature and ensure we make the most efficient and effective use of our resources.



Our ESC Volunteers at Glendun Nature Reserve

Teamwork for Wildlife

Ulster Wildlife's success is dependent on our dedicated staff, trainees and volunteers. In common with most organisations, 2020/21 was a challenging year for our staff team. We had to adapt quickly to working from home during the first lockdown and only a small number of staff were able to continue to work from our main office in Belfast. Our close-knit group had to change quickly to online meetings and get used to operating apart from each other for long periods of the year. Our staff team showed remarkable resilience, flexibility and commitment to ensure we continued to deliver for nature across Northern Ireland during the pandemic.

It has been a difficult year for volunteering as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, however our volunteers are still a crucial part of Ulster Wildlife and despite the disruption of the last 12 months, continued to help maximise the charity's impact during the year. From conducting shore surveys within their own locality, to assisting with research projects remotely from home, we are grateful for the continued support as each volunteer makes a unique and valued contribution helping the charity to make a difference for Northern Ireland's environment.

We were delighted to continue with the European Solidarity Corps scheme, welcoming six volunteers in September 2020 from France and Spain to live in Belfast and work with us at Ulster Wildlife. They have endured quarantine, isolation and working away from home, friends and family but continued to support our Nature Reserves and other teams with willingness, enthusiasm and always a smile on their faces.

At the end of 2020/21 we had 40 employed staff and over 100 registered volunteers all working together to achieve our vision.

Landfill Communities Fund

The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) is a grant award scheme which allows landfill operators to contribute a portion of their landfill tax to a fund which is used for community and environmental projects in the vicinity of a landfill site. Ulster Wildlife is registered as an Environmental Body with ENTRUST, the Government appointed regulator of the scheme to distribute monies on behalf of Landfill Operators. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are our two remaining contributors of funds as LCF activity continues to reduce as landfill tax achieves its objective of increased recycling and landfill sites close.

It has been a challenging year for the Landfill Communities Fund with the pandemic having an effect on the level of funds distributed during the twelve months to March 2021, with projects delayed during lock down. Funds of £202,000 were distributed in the twelve months to March 2021 in comparison to £337,000 to March 2020.

There were seven active projects at the end of March 2021. For the remaining lifespan of contributions from our landfill operators, Ulster Wildlife will continue to maximise the benefits of distributing funding to projects which are aligned with our own strategic goals of promoting health and wellbeing through enjoyment of the environment and rebuilding biodiversity.

Our Supporters

In 2020 the world turned upside down for everyone, but all of us here at Ulster Wildlife were so heartened to see the continued commitment of our members to local nature conservation. While many organisations and charities lost significant amounts of support during the pandemic due to changing circumstances, our members have sustained us through a very challenging year. Thank you to every member who continues to believe wildlife is worth protecting and to everyone who joined as members in 2020/21.

Membership

Despite an incredibly challenging year income from membership exceeded our projected targets for the year and generated, including gift aid, £408,454 for wildlife conservation here in Northern Ireland. We ended the year with 13,859 members and 6,575 memberships which is a reduction on the previous year due to fewer new memberships, but a 92% retention rate has meant that income has been very stable. Members responded with particular generosity to the Annual Appeal in December 2020, more than covering a £10k fundraising deficit for the year, through donations and increases to their membership subscription amounts. Our January Sale was also very successful in 2021, with 177 new members availing of the half-price for a year offer. Membership continues to be the cornerstone of our fundraising activity but we have broadened our fundraising tools to help us continue to generate much needed funds for wildlife.

Fundraising during a pandemic

Our operating environment changed in a very short space of time and Ulster Wildlife's traditional methods of engagement and fundraising - through personal interactions at events, shows and local venues - were no longer an option in 2020/21. We reshuffled and upskilled our small fundraising team and tried lots of new approaches, delivering a number of digital fundraising initiatives over the year including online membership advertising, fundraising challenges and launching 'Adopt an Animal' for some of the key species we work with. Animal adoptions generated almost £7k and we hope to continue this fundraising activity in the future. Our general donations totalled £10,433.

Legacies and In-Memory Gifts

Ms H M Alexander, a long-standing member, remembered Ulster Wildlife in her Will with a generous legacy of £19k. Friends of Dessie Cowan, a member and volunteer with Ulster Wildlife, gave in memory gifts during the year. A donation was also received, in memory of a loved one, from the Dawson Charitable Trust. These donations will be placed in our designated 'Fund for the Future' - to manage and purchase nature reserves, protect key species as well as educate and create future wildlife champions. In 2020 Ulster Wildlife was able to purchase Glenullin Bog, a raised bog near Garvagh, which had been extensively drained and burned for years. Thanks to the generosity of supporters leaving gifts in their wills (match funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) this bog will now be restored and brought back to life.

Corporate Members

In 2020/21 businesses continued to support Ulster Wildlife as members, but the pandemic made interactions and fundraising opportunities very difficult. The way we engage with businesses came under review this year and, moving forward, the category of corporate membership will be replaced with relationships based on partnership working and collaborations on specific areas of work. We are very grateful, over the years, to all the businesses that have provided financial support for nature in Northern Ireland through our Corporate Membership Scheme and look forward to new partnership working in the future.

Thank you...

Our conservation work is made possible by support from individuals and business. Grants from funders and Charitable Trusts play an important part in supplementing our income through sponsoring specific projects or areas of work.



Our new Nature Reserve, Glenullin Bog, purchased with the help of gifts in wills

Below are some of the organisations whose vital contributions helped to make a difference in 2020/2021:

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Aughrim Landfill Communities Fund (Groundwork NI)
Belfast City Council
Biffa Award
Comber Rotary
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland Environment Agency)
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

European Solidarity Corps
Garfield Weston Foundation
INTERREG VA
Ministry of Defence
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Neighbourly
Rees Jeffreys Road Fund

Financial Review at 31 March 2021

Ulster Wildlife's financial position remained stable during the year and a modest surplus on unrestricted activities was achieved.

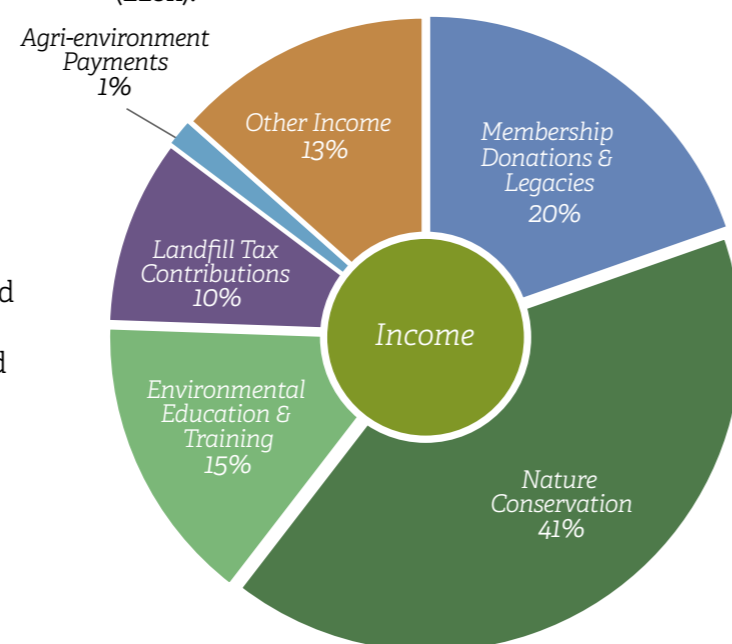
Sources of Income

Unrestricted income is revenue generated by the charity for its general purposes. It can be used at the discretion of the charity on any of the charity's objects and a substantial component is donations from our members and supporters. Unrestricted income was higher than in the previous year (+£123k), significant items in this increase were an additional grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (£37.5k) and income from the job retention scheme (£36.4K). Restricted income is income given to the charity for specific purposes. It may be a grant for a specific piece of conservation work or education activity or funds to be awarded as grants to third parties, in line with specific grant guidelines.

Ulster Wildlife's restricted income has two main components, grants for specific conservation and education activity which is delivered by the charity; and Landfill Communities Funds where grants are awarded by the charity to third parties for purposes defined under the Landfill Communities Fund guidelines.

Restricted income in 2020/21 was very similar to that in 2019/20 with an increase of £1.5k. Grants from third parties awarded to Ulster Wildlife for the direct delivery of specific conservation outcomes decreased by £108k in the year. This relates to the timing of project work and grant income claimed.

Contributions to the Landfill Communities Fund increased slightly (£14k). Other restricted income increased by £87k. A major part of this increase was a grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund to meet Covid-19 related costs (£46k) in addition to an increase in environmental consultancy (£28k).



	Income	Unrestricted Funds £k	Restricted Funds £k	Total Funds £k	Ratio
Note 3	Membership Donations & Legacies	456	29	485	20%
Note 4	Nature Conservation	-	1,008	1,008	41%
SOFA (EFS Income for nature reserves)	Agri-environment payments	32	-	32	1%
Note 5	Landfill Tax Contributions		240	240	10%
Note 6	Environmental Education & Training	6	367	373	15%
Note 7 & 8	Other Income	209	122	331	13%
	Total Income	703	1,766	2,469	100%

How the Charity spent its resources

Overall, expenditure in 2020/21 was higher than in 2019/20 (+£58k).

In line with the income split, a large part of the expenditure is on conservation and education activity.

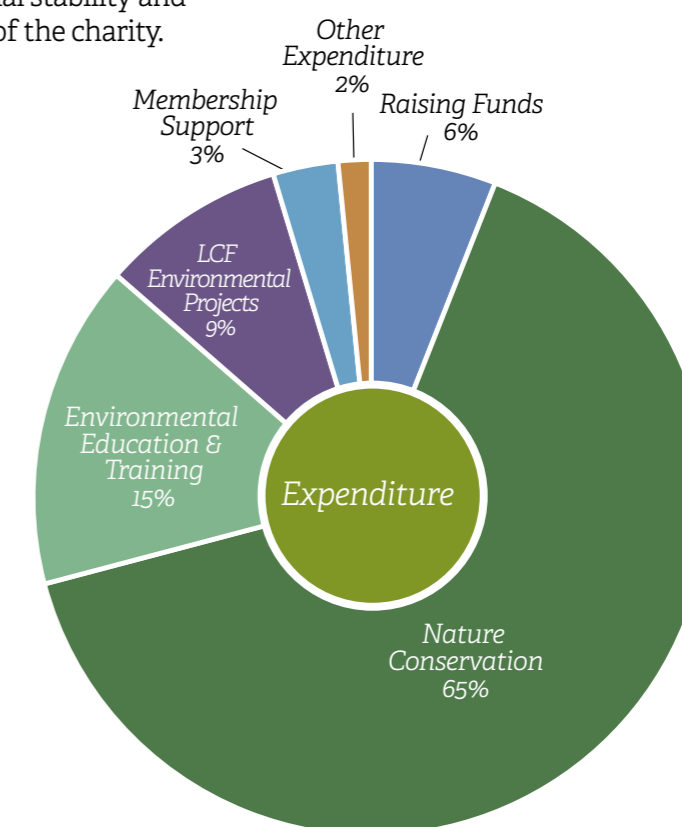
Restricted projects make a contribution to core overhead costs for time and expenses incurred in running the projects.

After taking this contribution into account an unrestricted surplus of £127k was generated.

The surplus is in keeping with the charity's objectives which are to deliver conservation outcomes rather than a surplus of income over expenditure. A modest surplus is, however, necessary in order to maintain financial stability and help to secure the long term viability of the charity.

After expenditure on restricted projects, the 'deficit' on restricted funds amounted to £194k. This 'deficit' represents expenditure on projects in the year to 31 March 2021 where the funds were received in prior years and was in line with expectations.

Restricted financial reserves cannot be utilised by the charity, except for the very specific purposes set out by the funder. These reserves are therefore not available to fund either general working capital requirements or any unexpected events.



Expenditure	Total Funds £k	Ratio
Raising Funds	152	6%
Nature Conservation	1,650	65%
Environmental Education & Training	395	15%
LCF Environmental Projects	226	9%
Membership Support	79	3%
Other Expenditure	40	2%
Total Expenditure	2,542	100%

Note:

Organisational support costs of £346k (Notes 10 & 11) have been allocated across the activities above on a proportional basis representing the resources expended to run all aspects of the charity.

Plans for the Future

2020 was due to be the last year of our current Strategy 'Wildlife in Trust'. However finalising our new Strategy was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and our existing Strategic Plan was extended by an additional year to run to the end of 2021/22 financial year.

1. **To inspire people** to champion wildlife and value nature.
2. **To protect and restore habitats and ecosystems** through practical action and research.
3. **To stand up for nature** by influencing government policy.
4. **To promote health and well-being** through enjoyment of the natural environment.
5. **To grow our success** and extend our reach.

With the Coronavirus Pandemic still impacting all charities and affecting our ability to secure new members through our normal methods we have had to shift our focus quickly to alternative sources of fundraising.

Our fundraising targets for 2021/22 are:

- > To maintain current levels of membership.
- > To secure £390,438 income from Membership including Gift-Aid contributions.

This will be the last year of our current Strategic Plan and significant time during the year will be spent on finalising our new Strategy to 2030.

The Covid-19 pandemic still presents significant short-term challenges for Ulster Wildlife, but we are looking ahead to identify how we can best play our part in ending the nature and climate emergencies.

We cannot solve one crisis without tackling the other – nature's recovery is vital for tackling climate change. It is also essential in building a green recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a platform for the Northern Ireland economy as it seeks a sustainable and ethical net zero carbon future.

To achieve nature's recovery, it is no longer enough to think about slowing the loss of the natural world and protecting what remains of our wildlife. We need to stop and reverse the declines, and put nature into recovery, at scale and at pace, to help restore biodiversity, stabilise the climate, ensure food security, protect the health and wellbeing of people, and much more besides.

Local people will be the key to success when supported and empowered to become agents of change. The recovery of nature must not be something that is done to people; it must be done by people - inclusive, welcoming, diverse, growing communities of people - if it is going to happen at the scale and pace required and if it is going to endure and deliver benefits for current and future generations.

This new Strategy to 2030 will provide the high-level framework of how we intend to go about achieving our aims. Over the last 40 years, Ulster Wildlife has worked to deliver impactful change for nature, protecting and enhancing habitats and species on land and sea. With our new strategy, we plan to accelerate progress and build on this foundation. We want to make an even greater difference and recognise that this needs to happen quickly.

Our challenge over the next ten years is significant. Our land and seas are in high demand - there is huge pressure for housing, food production and infrastructure with almost all our land and much of our seas now managed and modified in some way, which has led to an incredible loss of wildlife and habitats.

We will build partnerships with local communities, landowners, farmers and businesses to help ensure at least 30% of land and 30% of sea is positively managed for nature by 2030. We will support land managers and local councils to connect and create

wild places in both rural and urban environments and work with organisations, community groups, individuals and partners to ensure that nature thrives in their locality.

Our work on peatland restoration will continue, with a new focus on 'blue carbon' habitats and how our marine environment can be restored for both nature and carbon storage.

We plan to improve the integration of our nature reserves within the wider landscape, where they can play a strategic role in linking together habitats and species. Where possible we will restore, expand, and connect reserves which are small and isolated, so that they become platforms for nature's recovery rather than the last bastions of declining species.

We recognise that some species will require specific targeted action due to their threatened status or a lack of data or research, so we will deliver specific conservation actions for a range of key species over the next ten years.

We will work in partnership with communities, landowners, farmers, fishermen, businesses, and other organisations to ensure that nature is in recovery. With farmed land comprising over 70% of Northern Ireland's land area, we are strong advocates of working closely with the farming community and land use sectors to help achieve a viable sustainable future for Northern Ireland. We need a farmed landscape that can continue to produce safe and nutritious food whilst providing a home for wildlife and delivering ecosystem services such as flood alleviation and carbon sequestration.

As well as work engaging with others, we've also identified a number of 'internal transformations' that we need as a charity in order to build the organisational capabilities to achieve our outcomes. These include, building organisational capacity and capability for the future, particularly through undertaking a digital transformation, reframing our policy, influencing and advocacy work and financing the future - to achieve our ambition of nature's recovery across Northern Ireland, we will require financing beyond our current levels. We are committed to further exploring opportunities to secure additional unrestricted funding streams to support Ulster Wildlife enabling the charity to respond to the challenges we will face over the coming years.

Structure, governance and management

Ulster Wildlife Trust, (operating as Ulster Wildlife) is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC101848) and is a not-for-profit company incorporated in Northern Ireland, limited by guarantee (NI 12711). It is an independent body, locally governed, although affiliated to The Wildlife Trusts, a federated network of 46 charities across the UK.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees (Council) comprised of up to 16 members, nominated and elected from the membership of the organisation. Council members are elected at the AGM each year to serve up to a nine-year term.

The Ulster Wildlife Council is responsible for making strategic decisions in relation to policy and procedure within Ulster Wildlife, while day-to-day operational decisions and management is delegated to the Chief Executive, who in turn oversees the staff team of Ulster Wildlife.

All Board Members receive induction training in relation to their role and are provided with a Governance Handbook when they are elected to the Board.

Ulster Wildlife also has an Honorary President, Joe Furphy, who does not have a voting or decision-making role on the Board but contributes to discussions and carries out representation engagements for the Charity.

Details of the serving Council Members in 2020/21 can be found below:

<p>CHAIRMAN</p>  <p>Ken Brundle (Appointed on 17 September 2013, appointed Chairman 22 November 2017)</p>	<p>VICE-CHAIR</p>  <p>Stephen Aston (Appointed on 07 December 2017, appointed Vice Chairman on 27 September 2018) F & A</p>	<p>VICE CHAIR</p>  <p>Jim McAdam OBE (Appointed on 22 November 2017, resigned 23 June 2020) E</p>	<p>VICE CHAIR</p>  <p>John Wittchell (Appointed on 07 December 2017, appointed Vice Chair on 03 December 2020) E</p>
<p>HONORARY TREASURER</p>  <p>David Hendron (Appointed on 25 July 2018) F & A</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Gillian Allen (Appointed on 19 November 2015, resigned 18 March 2021) G</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Anna Barclay (Appointed 24 November 2020) E & G</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Bob Brown (Co-opted 16 October 2020) E</p>
<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Fiona Davey (Appointed on 19 November 2015) G</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Ian Garner (Appointed on 14 March 2019, resigned on 25 May 2021) E</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Ben Matson (Appointed on 05 September 2012, stood down 24 November 2020) G</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Lorraine McCourt (Appointed on 05 October 2016, resigned 24 November 2020) F</p>
<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Stephen Maginn (Co-opted 05 December 2019) F</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Craig McGuicken (Appointed on 07 October 2014, resigned 24 November 2020) F & A</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Seamus McKee (Co-opted 18 March 2021) F</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Doris Noe (Appointed on 05 September 2012, stood down 24 November 2020) E</p>
<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Catherine Thompson (Appointed on 14 March 2019) G</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Zoe Stevenson (Appointed 24 November 2020 - resigned on 12 August 2021) F</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Stephen Smith (Appointed 24 November 2020) F</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>David Sterling (Co-opted 16 October 2020) E and F&A</p>
	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Helen Surgenor (Appointed 24 November 2020) F</p>	<p>COUNCIL MEMBER</p>  <p>Ed Wright (Appointed on 07 October 2015) F</p>	

Changes to the Ulster Wildlife Council during 2020/2021

Prof Jim McAdam resigned from Council on 23 June 2020.

Sir David Sterling and Dr Bob Brown were co-opted to Council on 16 October 2020.

Ben Matson and Doris Noe stood down from Council on 24 November 2020, following eight years of service.

Lorraine McCourt and Craig McGuicken resigned from Council on 24 November 2020.

Helen Surgenor, Zoe Stevenson, Anna Barclay and Stephen Smith were appointed to Council on 24 November 2020.

Gillian Allen resigned from Council on 18 March 2021.

Seamus McKee was co-opted to Council on 18 March 2021.

The governance sub-structure is made up of four sub-committees - Governance, Finance & Audit, Environment and Fundraising. This governance framework is designed to ensure that we are an accountable, effective and efficient charity and to manage risk at a reasonable level.

- The Governance Committee (G)** ensures that the Ulster Wildlife Council fulfils its legal, ethical, and functional responsibilities through adequate governance policy development, skills audits, recruitment strategies for Council Members, training programmes, monitoring of Council activities and evaluation of Council's performance, human resources and health & safety management.
- The Finance & Audit Committee (F&A)** supports Council in ensuring that the effective governance of Ulster Wildlife is maintained in relation to: Financial and Physical Resources.
- The Environment Committee (E)** provides ongoing strategic input into the organisation's work linked to Living Landscapes and Living Seas. The remit of this Committee encompasses nature reserves, environmental projects linked to habitats and/or species and input into regional policy issues.
- The Fundraising Committee (F)** provides ongoing strategic input to the organisation's fundraising activities - with a focus on unrestricted fundraising.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Ulster Wildlife Trust) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company and charity law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements,
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Provision of Information to Auditors

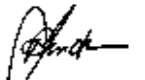
Each of the individuals who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditor

DNTCA Limited are deemed to be re-appointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006. This report was approved by the Board on 4 November 2021 and signed on its behalf by


Ken Brundle
Chairman


David Hendron
Honorary Treasurer

Key Policies and processes

Managing Risk

Ulster Wildlife Trustees are responsible for identifying and managing the risks facing the charity. They are responsible for ensuring that Ulster Wildlife has a system of internal control, management and audit to take advantage of opportunities and manage risk effectively.

Risk management is well established and is considered in every aspect of our work. We have an active risk management process in place to make sure that appropriate steps are taken to manage and mitigate risk across the organisation.

The Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team are clear that risk should be very carefully assessed in relation to the health, welfare and security of staff, volunteers and the public and in managing the reputation of Ulster Wildlife. Risks are also reviewed in the broadest sense and anything that might alter or impact on the charity's ability to fulfil its charitable objectives is considered.

Processes include:

- > Risk assessments are completed by all staff to identify, evaluate and manage risks.
- > Risk register with mitigation actions is reviewed at least quarterly by the Board.
- > A comprehensive risk management review is carried out once at year by the Governance and Resources Committees and reported to the Board Meeting.
- > Multi-year planning, with targets that are linked to delivery of Corporate Strategy.
- > Regular financial reporting and control which compares results with budget.
- > 'Value for Money' principles guide when and where we source goods and services.
- > Annual external audit.

The most significant risks identified in 2020/21 were:

- > Fundraising of unrestricted income with the new Covid-19 operating environment.
- > Cash flow and foreign exchange rate implications of EU funded projects.
- > Continuing uncertainty around Government funding.

- > Retention of skilled and experienced staff during this period of uncertainty.
- > The operational challenges presented by Covid-19 and the associated restrictions

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges but also reinforced the importance of the environment to local people which has helped to raise the environment up the agenda for the public. This has helped to raise awareness of the need for environmental action that delivers a tangible benefit for nature, climate and people.

A continuing area of risk for the charity is the ability of fundraisers to carry out face to face promotions to maintain and grow the charity's membership base which provides essential unrestricted income.

At a political level, whilst the environment has an increasing profile, a lack of appreciation remains amongst local politicians on key environmental challenges and in terms of investment priorities, health, education and the economy remain spending priorities. If progress is to be achieved for the environment, a long term strategic view needs to be taken and clear priorities and long term improvement plans put in place and implemented.

Staff turnover due to funding uncertainties remains a challenge. A fundraising strategy will be developed to increase the long-term sustainability of the charity, taking into account the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to move to more digital fundraising.

The most significant risks identified for 2021/22 are:

- > Loss of funding post Brexit which removes the ability to apply for EU funding programmes and funding uncertainties with Government.
- > Impacts of climate change and the need to move forward now to improve climate resilience.
- > Reframing of government policies post Brexit – this provides the opportunity to develop policies which are bespoke to the needs of Northern Ireland, however as in all policy development adverse impacts need to be anticipated and subjected to risk mitigation.

Our Promise to Our Supporters

Delivering our vision is only possible because of the generosity and enthusiasm of our supporters and therefore we hold our supporters and members in the highest possible regard.

We work hard to ensure that everyone who supports us has a positive experience in their involvement with Ulster Wildlife.

Our Fundraising Approach

Delivering our vision is only possible because of the generosity and enthusiasm of our supporters and funders. Therefore we hold our supporters and members in the highest possible regard. This has never been more evident than in this incredibly difficult year for all charity fundraising. Our members, through their loyal support, have seen the charity through a challenging year and have helped to mitigate the worst impacts of Covid-19.

How we fundraise

Ulster Wildlife fundraises primarily through offering membership of our charity to the general public. Membership promotion traditionally takes place at venues and events across Northern Ireland and membership staff are always branded and wear photographic ID. In 2020-21, where we were unable to fundraise in this way, we turned increasingly to digital platforms for much of our work – adhering at all times to the Fundraising Code of Practice for digital fundraising and operating under GDPR rules for electronic mail communications. In addition, we continue to contact our existing members on an annual basis to give them the option of increasing their financial contribution to our conservation work or giving a one-off donation for a particular appeal.

We rarely utilise external agencies for fundraising campaigns, but where we do, any external agencies who conduct this work on

our behalf are required to do so in a respectful manner and in accordance with fundraising standards and regulations.

How we use and protect data

Ulster Wildlife understands that our supporters have trusted us with their personal information and we will never sell our supporters' information to another organisation or individual. Our supporters have the opportunity to opt out of any existing communications by any method at any time. Opting out does not affect all membership mailings, some of which are a legal requirement (e.g. Direct Debit advance notice letters).

Our Privacy Notice for Members and Supporters is available on our website at www.ulsterwildlife.org/privacynotice

Our complaints policy

Any concerns about Ulster Wildlife's fundraising practices can be raised through our complaints procedure. Our complaints procedure is available on our website at www.ulsterwildlife.org/Complaints.



Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Ulster Wildlife aims to be an employer of choice, for people from different backgrounds and through our Equality in the Workplace policy, we promote respect for the individual and equality of opportunity.

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of the wider community and for each employee to feel respected and able to give of their best. Within Ulster Wildlife there is respect for promotion and protection of each individual's human rights.

Ulster Wildlife promotes being at ease with all aspects of diversity, built on fairness and respect for all. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit are made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Ulster Wildlife recognises that such a policy is not only good management practice, but that it also makes good sense. Our Equality in the Workplace policy helps all those who work for us to develop their full potential and ensure that the talents and resources of the workforce are utilised to fully maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Sustainability

We take sustainability very seriously and during the year we have calculated our baseline in terms of our carbon footprint and initiated the journey towards net zero for greenhouse gas emissions. We will now be developing a carbon reduction strategy for the charity. First steps on this journey has included the installation of chargers to enable a phased approach to changing to electric vehicles and the installation of LED lights.

The pandemic has accelerated our transition with reductions in travel and increasing home working. Our ambition is to reach net zero by 2030 and we will be working to achieve this goal.

Wider network

Ulster Wildlife is part of a collective of 46 Wildlife Trusts, represented nationally by The Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). The Wildlife Trusts collectively, act together where appropriate, in key policy areas and campaigns.

Financial Management Financial Reserves Policy

Why we hold financial reserves

The Trustees recognise there is a balance to be achieved between delivering our charitable objectives and managing the actual and potential risks of failing to meet our liabilities when they fall due. Consequently, the Trustees plan to hold a level of unrestricted financial reserves to provide the necessary resilience to manage these risks. These risks include, amongst others:

- Loss of funding sources
- Funding delays
- Costs associated with unforeseen closure

The Trustees, having assessed the likelihood of these risks occurring, consider that an unrestricted financial reserve level (excluding designated funds) equal to six months unrestricted payroll and support costs should be targeted. The balance on unrestricted reserves as at 31st March 2021, net of unrestricted fixed assets is £571k which meets our target

Designated Funds

In addition to the above the Trustees have designated certain unrestricted funds as the "Fund for the Future". This money is earmarked to help in furthering the charity's strategic objectives, including the acquisition of nature reserves.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Financial reserve levels are monitored on a quarterly basis throughout the year as a standing item on the Finance Committee's agenda. They also form a part of the finance pack presented to the Board on a quarterly basis.

Advisors, Senior Personnel and Administrative Details

Auditors	DNT Chartered Accountants Ormeau House 91-97 Ormeau Road Belfast BT7 1SH
Bankers	Danske Bank Belfast Finance Centre PO Box 183 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JS
Solicitors	Edwards & Co. 28 Hill Street Belfast BT1 2LA
Company Secretary	Jennifer Fulton Catherine Thompson (Appointed 18 March 2021)
Senior Management Team	Jennifer Fulton Chief Executive Dawn Miskelly Director of Development & Engagement Annika Clements Director of Nature, Climate & Environment Niamh Hart Finance Manager
Charity Registration Number	NIC 101848
Company Registration Number	NI12711
Registered Office and Operational Address	McClelland House 10 Heron Road Belfast BT3 9LE

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Ulster Wildlife Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Ulster Wildlife Trust Ltd (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account), statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' report has been prepared

in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern

basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- The engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- We identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with directors and other management,
- We focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company,

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- Performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- Investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- Agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- Reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Reviewing correspondence with HMRC, Companies House and the company's legal advisors.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.

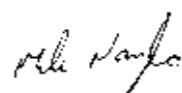
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Mr M Nangle (Senior Statutory Auditor) for and on behalf of **DNTCA Limited, Ormeau House, 91-97 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 1SH**



Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2021

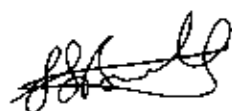
	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
INCOME FROM:					
Donations & Legacies	3	455,876	28,980	484,856	433,487
Conservation activities	4	0	1,008,153	1,008,153	1,072,533
Agri-environment payments		31,562	0	31,562	38,547
Charitable activities- landfill contributions	5		239,717	239,717	226,145
Education & training activities	6	6,532	366,731	373,263	415,756
Interest received	7	3,833	1,977	5,810	11,546
Other Income	8	205,667	120,518	326,185	147,266
TOTAL INCOME		703,470	1,766,076	2,469,546	2,345,280
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising Funds	9	116,924	11,853	128,777	117,076
Charitable Activities	10	618,286	1,794,746	2,413,032	2,366,726
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		735,210	1,806,599	2,541,809	2,483,802
NET INCOME / EXPENDITURE BEFORE TRANSFERS & FOREIGN EXCHANGE					
		(31,740)	(40,523)	(72,263)	(138,522)
Gains/(losses) from foreign exchange		5922	0	5,922	9,914
Transfers between funds	14	153,068	(153,068)	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		127,250	(193,591)	(66,341)	(128,608)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
Total funds at 1 April 2020		834,624	1,242,061	2,076,685	2,205,293
Transfer		258,244	(258,244)		
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2021		1,220,118	790,226	2,010,344	2,076,685

The notes on pages 54 to 62 form part of these financial statements. The Statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year. All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	16	371,116	526,786	897,902	923,716
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	17	91,084	243,346	334,430	358,703
Cash at bank and in hand		920,405	447,466	1,367,871	1,363,918
		1,011,489	690,812	1,702,301	1,722,621
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors	18	152,368	84,556	236,924	216,717
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		859,121	606,256	1,465,377	1,505,904
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		1,230,237	1,133,042	2,363,279	2,429,620
CREDITORS due in more than 1 year					
Capital Grants	19	10,119	342,816	352,935	352,935
		1,220,118	790,226	2,010,344	2,076,685
RESERVES					
General Fund	20	942,333	0	942,333	834,624
Fund for the Future	21	277,785	0	277,785	99,992
Restricted Funds	21	0	790,226	790,226	1,142,069
		1,220,118	790,226	2,010,344	2,076,685

These financial statements were approved and signed by the members of the Board and authorised for issue on 04 November 2021.



Ken Brundle, Chairman



David Hendron, Honorary Treasurer

The notes on pages 54 to 62 form part of these financial statements. Company Registration Number: NI 12711

Statement of Cash Flows for year ending 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash Flows from operating activities		
Net income/(expenditure)	(72,263)	(138,522)
<i>Adjustments for</i>		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	25,814	29,078
Release of deferred capital grant	0	29,277
(Increase)/Decrease in Trade and Other Debtors	24,273	(192,832)
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and other Creditors	20,207	(2,478)
Net cash (used in)/from operating activities	(1,969)	(275,477)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	0	(50,000)
Disposal of tangible asset		2,765
Net cash used in investing activities	0	(47,235)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(1,969)	(322,712)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	1,363,918	1,676,716
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents due to exchange rate movements	5,922	9,914
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	1,367,871	1,363,918

Notes to the Accounts

1 Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Charities Act 2008.

2 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use, at the discretion of the trustees, to further any of the charity's purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity; it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service.

These are classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it is regarded as restricted.

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities.

- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by the charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

Depreciation

Purchased assets, which individually exceed £1000 at cost are included in the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS 102.

Fixed Assets are depreciated over the period of their useful lives as follows:

Land	not depreciated
Buildings	2.5% straight line
Equipment	10% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Vehicles - cars and vans	15% straight line

Depreciation for specialist conservation equipment with limited resale value would normally be depreciated over the lifetime of the project in which they are used.

Grants

Government grants are recognised in the income statement under the accrual model in accordance with FRS 102. Grants for immediate financial support or to cover costs already incurred are recognised immediately in the income and expenditure account. Grants towards general activities of the organisation over a specific period are recognised in the income and expenditure account over that period. Covid-19 related grants will be recognised in the Income Statement as income and will not be offset against their related expense. Where an application for a grant under CJRS has been successful but it has not been received by the Statement of Financial Position date, the organisation records a debtors balance.

Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction.

Pensions

Ulster Wildlife operates a defined contribution pension scheme and contributes to the scheme at a maximum rate of 7% of salary.

Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity with HMRC and is therefore not liable for taxation to the extent that any surplus or gains arising are wholly applied to its charitable objects. The company is registered for VAT. Much of the income is either exempt or outside the scope of VAT. Consequently, it is not possible to recover most of the VAT incurred on expenditure. Income and expenditure are shown exclusive of recoverable VAT.

Notes to the Accounts

3 Donations & legacies

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Legacy & in memory giving	20,541	20,000		4,146
Membership contributions inc. gift aid	408,454		399,272	
Corporate support	8,217		14,953	
Other gifts & donations	18,664	8,980	6,610	8,506
	455,876	28,980	420,835	12,652

4 Conservation Grants

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Ards and North Down Borough Council				5,000
Biffa Award		11,733		
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts		10,000		
Capital grant credit			1,006	3,471
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht				7,119
Environmental Farming Scheme		151,396		100,344
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation		117,132		
EU- Interreg VA		286,438		423,340
EU - LIFE 14		57,501		
European Solidarity Corps		0		45,069
Garfield Weston Foundation				30,000
DAERA Environment Fund		278,120		250,631
Alpha Programme- Groundwork		546		5,705
National Lottery Heritage Fund		63,052		161,764
Landfill Communities Fund		7,146		9,212
Ministry of Defence		25,089		16,245
Other				3,660
Reese Jeffreys				9,967
	0	1,008,153	1,006	1,071,527

Notes to the Accounts

5 Landfill environmental projects

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Landfill contributions received		239,717	-	226,145
		239,717	-	226,145
Expenditure				
Entrust administration fee		5,011		6,023
Direct project expenditure		202,427		337,707
Direct Costs	18,837	-	19,002	-
	18,837	207,438	19,002	343,730

6 Education & Training Grants and Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
National Lottery Community Fund (Our Environment, Our Future)		199,427		208,803
National Lottery Community Fund (People and Communities)		31,023		
National Lottery Heritage Fund		130,319		118,335
Belfast City Council		5,962		83,614
Other	6,532	0	4,631	373
	6,532	366,731	4,631	411,125

7 Interest received

Interest received in Restricted Funds is the interest earned on landfill tax receipts held prior to disbursement and interest received which is used to fund expenditure on nature reserves. Interest received in unrestricted funds is bank interest earned on other cash balances.

Notes to the Accounts

8 Other Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Core Funding	112,500		75,000	-
National lottery Heritage Fund: Heritage Emergency Fund	-	46,202	-	-
Consultancy	9,700	51,917	17,250	23,542
JRS Income	36,351	-		-
Sundry income	47,116	22,399	21,784	9,690
	205,667	120,518	114,034	33,232

9 Expenditure on raising donations & legacies

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Travel	70	-	8,458	-
Venue Costs	0	-	4,370	-
Professional fees	970	10,904	1,268	2,900
Printed materials, misc	6,641	949	1,953	-
Wages & salary costs	109,243	-	98,127	-
	116,924	11,853	114,176	2,900

10 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Landfill environmental projects	18,837	207,438	226,275	362,732
Nature Conservation	216,163	1,187,683	1,403,846	1,247,520
Environmental Education & Training	17,251	318,985	336,236	353,274
Membership Support Costs	64,650	2,315	66,965	106,273
Organisation Support Costs	273,951	71,826	345,777	259,753
Depreciation	19,315	6,499	25,814	29,078
Bank Interest & Charges	4,339	-	4,339	4,316
Auditors remuneration	3,780	-	3,780	3,780
	618,286	1,794,746	2,413,032	2,366,726

Notes to the Accounts

11 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Other		2021	2020
	Staff Costs	direct costs		
	£	£	£	£
Landfill environmental projects	14,202	212,073	226,275	362,732
Nature Conservation	548,466	855,380	1,403,846	1,247,520
Environmental Education	174,424	161,812	336,236	353,274
Membership Support Costs	27,504	39,461	66,965	106,273
Organisation Support Costs	186,060	159,717	345,777	259,753
Other - depreciation, bank charges, audit.	-	33,933	33,933	37,174
	950,656	1,462,376	2,413,032	2,366,726

Other Direct Costs

	Landfill	Nature	Environmental	Membership &	Total
	Envir.			Conservation	
	Projects	£	£	Support	£
	£	£	£	Costs	£
Direct project costs	207,438	71,604	93,952	50,122	423,116
Premises costs	4,635	27,137	1,954	44,788	78,514
Postage, printing & stationery	-	11,639	552	33,057	45,248
Staff travel and vehicle costs	-	38,445	20,981	2,806	62,232
Contracted services	-	685,087	38,582	38,433	762,102
Staff training	-	6,495	2,184	1,846	10,525
Council Costs	-	-	-	383	383
Information Technology	-	14,973	3,607	27,743	46,323
	212,073	855,380	161,812	199,178	1,428,443

12 Depreciation

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2021	2021	2020	2020
	£	£	£	£
Motor vehicles	7,061	3,943	7,061	6,226
Equipment	6,548	-	6,548	1,188
Buildings	8,263	-	8,055	-
	21,872	3,943	21,664	7,414

Notes to the Accounts

13 Staff Costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries and wages	923,784	941,109
Social Security Costs	70,719	79,369
Pension Contributions	65,396	65,345
	1,059,899	1,085,823

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000. The average number of employees during the year, calculated on the basis of full time equivalents, was 33. (2020- 34).
The key management personnel comprise the trustees and the members of the senior management team. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel was £195,209. (2020: £157,488).

14 Transfer between Funds

	2021	2020
	£	£
Landfill contribution to organisation support costs	18,837	18,134
Project contribution to organisation support costs	134,231	123,269
Conservation work at Glendun	0	2,058
	153,068	143,461

15 Board remuneration and related party transactions

No members of the Board received any remuneration during the year in their capacity as Trustees. No travel and subsistence costs were paid on behalf of trustees during the year. (2020 £1762; 4 trustees). No travel and subsistence costs were paid to trustees during the year. (2020 £80; 3 trustees). No trustees received payment for professional services supplied to the charity (2020-£5292).

16 Fixed Assets

	Nature	Land &	Motor	Equipment	TOTAL
	Reserves	Buildings	Vehicles	& Computers	£
	£	£	£	£	£
COST OR VALUATION					
At 1 April 2020	399,372	596,522	110,993	90,468	1,197,355
Additions	0	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2021	399,372	596,522	110,993	90,468	1,197,355
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 April 2020	-	155,943	61,606	56,090	273,639
Charge for year	-	8,263	11,004	6,548	25,814
Disposals	-	-	-	-	0
At 31 March 2021	-	164,206	72,610	62,638	299,453
NBV at 31 March 2021	399,372	432,316	38,383	27,830	897,902
including restricted assets of	359,372	150,000	17,414	0	526,786

Glendun farm has been included at probate value of £150,000.

Notes to the Accounts

17 Debtors

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Debtors and prepayments	37,154	19,074	35,108	43,959
Grants	35,099	224,271	7,038	254,723
Tax refunds due	18,831		17,876	
	<u>91,084</u>	<u>243,346</u>	<u>60,022</u>	<u>298,681</u>

18 Creditors falling due within one year

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Sundry creditors and accrued expenditure	<u>152,368</u>	<u>84,556</u>	<u>100,585</u>	<u>116,132</u>

19 Creditors falling due after more than 1 year

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Capital grants	<u>10,119</u>	<u>342,816</u>	<u>10,119</u>	<u>342,816</u>

20 Movement on unrestricted funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £
Balance at 1 April 2020	834,624	769,881
Surplus for the year	127,250	64,743
Transfer to Fund for the Future	(19,541)	
Balance at 31 March 2021	<u>942,333</u>	<u>834,624</u>

21 Movement on restricted funds

	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £
Opening balance	1,142,069	1,323,316
Net (expenditure) for the year	(193,591)	(197,497)
Transfer to Fund for the Future	(158,252)	16,250
Closing balance	<u>790,226</u>	<u>1,142,069</u>

Some funders pay in advance and other funders issue payment only after the expenditure has been incurred. The movement on restricted funds in any year is a result of timing differences between receipts of grants for restricted projects and the related expenditure.

22 Movement on fund for the future

	Designated Funds for the future 2021 £	Restricted Funds for the future 2021 £	Restricted Funds for the future 2020 £
Opening balance		99,992	112,096
Transfer from unrestricted funds	19,541		
Transfer from restricted funds		158,252	4,146
Reclassification	258,244	(258,244)	
UW contribution to purchase of Glenuillin			(16,250)
Closing balance	<u>277,785</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>99,992</u>

Fund for the Future includes monies from gifts in wills and legacy donations and other donations, including restricted donations. It will be used to purchase and manage nature reserves, protect key species as well as educate and support future wildlife champions.

23 Contingent Liability

A portion of grants received may become repayable if the charity fails to comply with the terms of the relevant letters of offer.

24 Taxation

As a charity, Ulster Wildlife Trust is exempt from tax on income and gains to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. Ulster Wildlife is registered for VAT in relation to some specific taxable supplies. The net amount payable on taxable supplies was £649 in the period.

25 Company Status

Ulster Wildlife Trust Limited is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the company in the event of liquidation.

26 Covid-19 Post Balance Sheet Event


On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organisation announced Coronavirus as a global health emergency. On 11 March 2020, it announced that Coronavirus was a global pandemic. As the company has a year end of 31 March 2021, the pandemic is considered a current-period event that will also require ongoing evaluation for events after the balance sheet date. Significant judgement will be required to determine whether events related to Covid-19 are adjusting or non-adjusting post balance sheet events. There are no post balance sheet adjustments for the year ended 31 March 2021.



**Ulster
Wildlife**

part of
The Wildlife Trusts 

**For further information,
visit www.ulsterwildlife.org
or Email: info@ulsterwildlife.org**

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Cover Image - Guillemots at Isle of Muck Nature Reserve © R Surgenor
Back Cover - Common Frog at Balloo Woodland © E Fernandez

Ulster Wildlife Trust, (operating as Ulster Wildlife) is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC101848 and is a not-for-profit company incorporated in Northern Ireland, limited by guarantee NI 12711.