



Ulster Wildlife Trust

**Annual Report &
Accounts 2021-22**



**Ulster
Wildlife**



Elephant Hawk Moth at Turmennan Fen

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A message from our Chairman:

2021/22 was a challenging but rewarding year for Ulster Wildlife. We had to continue to operate with Covid restrictions which significantly reduced face to face meetings between ourselves, our partners and our supporters. Membership recruitment was significantly affected but thanks to the loyalty and generosity of our members we managed to hold onto the gains of recent years. I am so pleased with our staff, trustees and volunteers in turning these difficulties into one of the best years yet for the Charity.

It seems we have many TV personalities in the Team who have featured on many programmes covering our work on red squirrels, oysters, skates and rays, and barn owls. We have been able to strengthen our Team under our Chief Executive, Jennifer Fulton. We have expanded our work with Government, farmers, land owners and the fishing industry and are continuously developing new relationships. Our work with young people including our Youth Forum, Young Farmers and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme has continued to grow.

During the year, we significantly expanded our Slievenacloy Nature Reserve by acquiring adjacent lands to provide our first landscape-scale nature reserve. The Charity is receiving not only local but also national and international attention for our work on peatland restoration including at Glenullin and Ballynahone Bogs. We will of course be seeking to build on efforts to combat the impact of climate change both on land and in the sea. We also continue our efforts to protect healthy badgers in Northern Ireland.

The Team has also been working over the past year to develop the new Ulster Wildlife Strategy and has delivered remarkable work. This will be formally presented at our AGM later this year. I must express my gratitude to the Honorary

President, the Board of Trustees who have been tremendous in giving support to the staff team, and the individual members who enable Ulster Wildlife to be heard. However as we know the key players are Jennifer and the entire staff team without whom none of the above would happen.

We have so many challenges ahead of us on nature recovery, climate change, species protection and environmental well-being so we must increase our membership and funding levels. Please do whatever you can to encourage your friends to join and we are extremely grateful for those that have increased their financial contributions in these difficult economic times.

I urge you to carefully read the Annual Report and please consider coming to our face to face AGM in October 2022.

Ken Brundle



A message from our Chief Executive:

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to influence the charity's operating environment during the past year, however, thanks to the flexibility and dedication of our staff and volunteer team we have been able to make significant progress.

Two landmark events occurred during the year which will set the strategic direction on a global basis and locally here in Northern Ireland.

In June 2021, G7 leaders announced that “our world must not only become net zero, but also nature positive, for the benefit of both people and the planet.” A nature positive approach enriches biodiversity, stores carbon, purifies water and reduces pandemic risk, enhancing the resilience of our planet and our societies. The race is on to achieve ‘Nature Positive’ and the DAERA Minister, Edwin Poots commended the UK report and signed up to the Leaders Pledge for Nature committing to reversing nature loss by 2030. Nature Positive was endorsed by heads of state and government from 93 countries and the President of the EU. We look forward to seeing this aspiration become a reality supported through adequate investment by the Northern Ireland Assembly and targeted programmes of action.

In November 2021 at COP 26 in Glasgow, the extent to which we urgently need to adapt to protect both the natural environment and people from climate change was made very clear. In many parts of the world people and nature are living with the devastating effects of climate change and the impact on those at the frontline is becoming

increasingly apparent. We all need to play our part in making sure that the world can adapt to climate change and as far as possible avoid the worst potential impacts.

In Northern Ireland we need to move forward with both mitigation and adaptation strategies as a matter of urgency and it was encouraging to see the Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill move forward during the year. This will set the legislative and moral imperative for action.

Contributing to climate change through nature based solutions and bedding in the concept of ‘Nature Positive’ are core components of Ulster Wildlife’s new Strategy to 2030 developed during the year. Our intention is to maximise our contribution and scale up activities in coming years.

Thank you for your continuing support and we look forward to achieving positive outcomes together moving forward.

Jennifer Fulton

Nature's Recovery

For nearly 45 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:

- (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:
 - (a) safeguarding, maintaining and enhancing natural biodiversity and geodiversity through the management of nature reserves (however entitled or however established);
 - (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;
 - (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;
 - (d) taking account of other aspects of the natural heritage on which wildlife is dependent or to which it contributes, including landforms and landscapes;
 - (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.
- (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.
- (3) The advancement of citizenship through volunteering linked to natural heritage including the promotion of sustainable food production and sustainable lifestyles.
- (4) The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science linked to natural heritage through events and project-based action.
- (5) The advancement of health and well-being through activities linked to the natural environment.

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.



Damselfly at Ballynahone Bog Nature Reserve

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

Our Priorities for 2021/22

This was the final year of delivery under our Corporate Strategy 'Wildlife in Trust' which runs until the end of March 2022.

Our five strategic goals are to:

1. Inspire people to champion wildlife and value nature.
2. Protect and restore habitats and ecosystems through practical action and research.
3. Stand up for nature by influencing government policy.
4. Promote health and well-being through enjoyment of the natural environment.
5. Grow our success and extend our reach.

Our Fundraising targets for 2021/22 were:

- > To maintain current levels of Membership.
- > To secure £390,438 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 2021/22.

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.





Education & Engagement

In August 2021, we celebrated five years of youth engagement through our Grassroots Challenge initiative. Over 9000 young people have now done their bit to help the natural world through this partnership programme. Funding from the National Lottery Community Fund through the Our Bright Future programme for this flagship initiative came to an end during the year but thanks to support from DAERA's Environmental Challenge Fund, project activities were able to continue through to the end of March 2022.

This meant five more Young Farmers Clubs were able to gain Eco Club Awards, pupils from six secondary schools took part in environmental education and school grounds improvement works as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Holy Cross Boy's Primary School in Belfast engaged in a 'learn more outdoors' pilot scheme.

In a separate development for the last year, Ulster Wildlife has been working with the Education Authority Youth Service to develop a new youth work curriculum model for the environment and sustainability called 'Sustainable Youth'. This was piloted with six youth groups. Associated youth worker training courses are currently being delivered across Northern Ireland.

Thanks to the support of the Binevenagh Landscape Partnership Scheme and Magilligan Field Centre, we were able to run two week-long wildlife residentials for young people giving them the opportunity to learn more about our Umbra Nature Reserve and the surrounding countryside and coastline. The other exciting development this year has been the establishment of the Ulster Wildlife Youth Forum. As part of our work supporting the UK Our Bright Future initiative, youth forum members have continued to be involved in promoting three key policy issues regarding outdoor learning, green jobs and the voice of young people.

Ulster Wildlife supports dedicated volunteers to run local Wildlife Watch groups. These groups allow children to get together, usually once a month, to explore their local natural environment, take part in wildlife-themed activities and meet new friends. There are two active groups in Lisburn and East Belfast and a third has been launched at our Bog Meadows Nature Reserve in West Belfast.

The 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 - met regularly and put on a programme of talks and activities for their members.

We ran 47 in-person wildlife events, with more than 2000 registered attendees. Events included snorkel safaris, squirrel walks, rockpool rambles and guided nature reserves walks. In addition, we ran 13 information webinars and online training sessions. Our virtual talks had proved popular during lockdown, so we introduced our Winter Talks Series covering subjects ranging from hedgehogs to sharks, climate change to crustaceans. Almost 800 people registered for the 11 talks in the series.

We also continued to deliver our 'Let Nature In' campaign to encourage people to make space for nature in their gardens. Over 1200 people have signed up to 'Let Nature In' so far. More than 220 people attended our eight online talks and we had almost 120 images submitted for the 'Let Nature In' calendar competition.



Nature Skills Trainees with their final awards



Training

Due to the disruption of the Nature Skills traineeship as a result of the pandemic, we extended the programme by three months to ensure trainees received their full year of practical natural heritage experience.

This enabled further training courses to run as restrictions eased, for trainees to mix with more teams within the organisation and for them to experience habitat management during the spring/early summer months which had been lost from the year before. Albeit still operating under moderated restrictions, the project completed in June 2022 with seven trainees successfully obtaining their Lantra accreditation and four trainees progressing straight into employment within the sector.

Despite some challenging times, we were delighted that throughout the three years trainees completed more than 160 hours of Lantra learning, 40 certificates for short accredited courses were achieved and 12 trainees progressed into employment within the conservation sector.

In December 2021, we secured funding from the Department for Communities through the Job Start Scheme. This is a new initiative aimed to help create new job opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds who are at risk of long term unemployment after the pandemic. Six new positions were created across our Nature Reserves, Fundraising and Communications and Community Engagement teams where successful applicants would gain key employability and occupational skills along with accreditation in specific courses to help them progress within their career path.

Through the development of specific Individual Training Plans upon commencement of employment, Job Start staff members to date have received training in First Aid at Work, Brushcutters and Strimmers and Safe Use of Woodchippers. Other training courses availed of also include Leave No Trace, Online Content Planning, Google Analytics and Job Application and Interview Techniques as well as on-the-job practical training.

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 nature, habitats and people. This work centres around the protection and good management of core, high value sites, and seeks to promote habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors to form the basis of networks within our landscapes and seas. We use our local presence and knowledge to carry out habitat management work, and assist others in doing so.



Nature Reserves

Ulster Wildlife now manages nearly 850 hectares of land across 19 nature reserves that vary in size from a single field all the way up to landscape scale. Through our nature reserves we protect key habitats such as native woodland, species-rich grassland and bog - each comes with their own unique characteristics and challenges. Some of Northern Ireland's rarest and most threatened species are found on our sites and we're working hard to make sure they thrive.

The biggest news came late in the year with the purchase of 133 hectares of upland grassland and peatland that more than doubled the size of Slievenacloy Nature Reserve. This was made possible through grant-funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Environment Fund, gifts in Wills from Ulster Wildlife supporters, a donation from Moy Park, and philanthropic loans including from Nick Marple, Andrew MacKay, Peter Solly and Julia Davies. This makes it our largest nature reserve by far. A sizeable piece of the Belfast Hills is now permanently protected and future plans include increasing habitat restoration through conservation grazing, increasing public access and species monitoring.

Our Ballynahone Bog Nature Reserve is a vital living laboratory in the fight against climate change. We know that blocking bog drains will raise the water table dramatically and active raised bog action kicks in. This year we installed hundreds of dams there which really accelerated large-scale recovery all across Ballynahone Bog.

Staying on the bog theme, major restoration works were completed at Glenullin Bog thanks to the DAERA Environmental Challenge Fund. Using the appropriately named 'bog-master' digger, hundreds of peat and plastic dams, as well as several miles of peat bunding (a form of raised peat trench) were installed over the winter and the results are already visible with large amounts of water being retained on the high bog.

Umbra Nature Reserve is in many ways the 'classic' sand dune system and with the easing of restrictions school study groups are again visiting here. The battle continued against particularly persistent non-native species like sea buckthorn. But it's well worth the effort as at stake are some of Northern Ireland's rarest species. Happily, a record number of small eggar larval webs were recorded at Umbra last summer and the scarce crimson & gold moth is still found there.

The Isle of Muck Nature Reserve may be only 250m off the Islandmagee Peninsula but it's not an easy place to get to, especially in winter. However our staff, volunteers and boatmen ensured the island is rat-free for another year, which will lead to another successful seabird breeding season. The most obvious signs of success are an increase in the local black guillemot population and the changing appearance of the island after several years of conservation grazing.



Butterfly Orchid on an EFS Farm in Lough Navar, Co. Fermanagh

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).

We shifted focus with our scrub management this year, temporarily halting cutting of blackthorn at Magilligan to concentrate on an accelerating gorse problem at Ballykinler. Scrub cut in the previous three years at both sites was treated to prevent regrowth. We use a bracken roller on the more even ground and herbicide where rollers can't be used to continue our programme of bracken control.

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.

We supervised installation of new grazing infrastructure including new water troughs and a number of pasture pumps, which enable us to provide water supplies for the cows in the more remote parts of the site. A new fence was installed to allow grazing on a part of the site where that has not been possible before. Grazing has significant benefits by removing thick dead vegetation, which reduces fire risk, improves the site for training and allows the community of dune grassland plants to recover and thrive.

We also completed an experimental project to create the conditions for the rare plant smooth cat's-ear at Magilligan by removing turf from an area of dune grassland. Smooth cat's-ear requires sparsely vegetated ground with fine sand blowing across it to reduce competition from other plants species. We are monitoring the plot to see if sand blows onto the surrounding habitat, and if the conditions are correct, we will sow plug plants grown from seed in cold storage to provide a better future for this very rare species.

The Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) Group facilitation project, co-funded by DAERA and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) through the Rural Development Programme continued to grow its membership through 2021/22, ending the year with over 440 farmer members.

The traditional core of West Fermanagh has expanded to encompass hotspots in Tyrone around the Drumquin area and the Carn-Glenshane SAC in Co. L'derry. The most recent swell of numbers has been in the Glens of Antrim around Cushendun. This expansion of Group to a wider audience was achieved, in part, though the pandemic enforced switch to online communications. Consequently, one of the challenges in the post-pandemic era will be resourcing the in-person events that are integral to the success of Group across a wider area.

The Higher Level Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) 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). EFS supports farmers on protected sites by paying them to carry out prescriptive management to move sites towards 'favourable condition'.

Staff changes saw the arrival of our Director of Land Management in May 2021 to oversee the project and support its delivery as a third facilitator. Ulster Wildlife facilitators and selected Associates provide a wide range of support for farmer members to ensure they comply with the requirements of the EFS Agreement and have a better understanding of the wildlife and habitats on their farms. Through reducing scheme breaches and appreciating their farm biodiversity, Group members have a better experience of EFS and a higher retention rate than farmers who do not have Group membership. A cautious return to in-person activities in summer 2021 complemented the ongoing use of online platforms, which are expected to continue to feature as an effective and efficient method of Group delivery.

Ulster Wildlife also provide an EFS Planning service, separate to the delivery of the Group Programme. This provides the technical support to farmers to make an application to the scheme and delivers a site-specific plan in conjunction with the farmer. We completed plans for 22 farm businesses during the summer of 2021, and in conjunction with other EFS Planners added over 110 EFS (H) Agreements through the Ulster Wildlife Group.



Installing dams at Garry Bog

Protected Sites

Ulster Wildlife is one of the main delivery partners of the Collaborative Action for the Natura Network Project (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 and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body. The environmental delivery strand aims to protect peatlands and wetlands in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland.

During the year, good progress was made in developing Conservation Action Plans for eight raised bog SAC's, two fen SAC's and the two cross-border blanket bog SACs making up the Cuilcagh and Sliabh Anierin Uplands. Final plans for Fairy Water Bogs, Cranny Bogs, Moneygal Bog, Garry Bog and Turmennan Fen were completed in early 2022.

Stakeholder and landowner engagement has continued across all sites, from landowner walks on Cranny Bogs to online talks about the Fairy Water Bogs. Online and in-person consultations were held for landowners and the public on the Cuilcagh Mountain SAC, with an online questionnaire also launched to gather feedback. Ulster Wildlife continued to bring together stakeholders on a cross-border basis, chairing forums for the access and environmental management of the Cuilcagh and Sliabh Anierin Uplands. We also hosted a wildfire awareness day on Cuilcagh Mountain in partnership with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the NI Environment Agency, showcasing the techniques and equipment used to manage and respond to wildfire.

Hydrological monitoring across all sites continued to assess the impact of drain blocking. Early analysis has shown a move in the right direction. In some areas the water table in summer 2021 was higher than winter 2019/20. This will really help peat-forming species to survive and thrive.

Ulster Wildlife continued to assess atmospheric ammonia levels across a number of CANN sites and results have shown that

out of six sites all but one were well over the critical threshold for impacting active raised bogs.

Works to control invasive rhododendron at Peatlands Park, Fairy Water Bogs and Tully Bog continued with third year follow up control really showing signs of the threat being eradicated in some areas. New areas of dense rhododendron have been tackled for the first time at Peatlands Park with several hectares being cut, treated and removed from the site.

Further drain blocking works took place across five sites. A further 700 new dams were installed along drainage channels on Ballynahone Bog, 90 plastic dams on the Fairy Water Bogs, nearly 100 peat and timber dams on Garry Bog and the final 20 plastic dams on Cuilcagh Mountain. All of these works will help raise the water table and move these sites towards favourable condition.

Through DAERA's Environmental Challenge Fund, a further 300 peat dams were installed on Moneygal Bog SAC. This will positively impact this heavily drained side of the site and improve peat-forming conditions. Over 7ha of scrub were also removed from key areas of habitat on Tully Bog SAC, alongside historical drain blocking this will make the site more resilient.

To help kickstart revegetation on eroding blanket bog on Cuilcagh Mountain SAC, we trialled heather brush and handmade heather bales as restoration materials. We also trialled locally-sourced wool as an alternative to traditional coir rolls (made from coconut fibre), with a small pilot area used to assess if wool will stay in place long enough to trap eroding peat and rewet the area, allowing peat-forming species to return. If successful, using local wool could further improve the sustainability and carbon offsetting potential of bare peat restoration works. We hosted a workshop for representatives from the conservation sector to learn about wool as a restoration material, and have been supporting local farmers assessing the business potential of this material for peatland restoration through InvestNI.



Cuilcagh Legnabrocky Trail

Ulster Jack Cans Global Geopark

It's your responsibility...
 Please don't smoke
 Please don't drink alcohol
 Please don't litter
 Please don't feed the animals
 Please don't pick the flowers

It's yours to preserve...
 Leave the tracks

Get the Peatlands Strategy

Peatland
 Peatlands are the largest natural carbon store in the world. They store more carbon than all the forests in the world combined. They are also a vital part of the landscape and provide many benefits to people and wildlife.

Cuilcagh Wetland
 The Cuilcagh Wetland is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is one of the largest and most important peatlands in Ireland. It is a vital part of the landscape and provides many benefits to people and wildlife.

Wildlife
 The Cuilcagh Wetland is home to many rare and important species of wildlife. It is a vital part of the landscape and provides many benefits to people and wildlife.

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DAERA Minister, Edwin Poots with Ulster Wildlife staff and landowner, John Sheridan at Cuilcagh - launching the Peatlands Strategy Consultation - July 2021



Planning for Peatland Restoration

Our peatlands and peatland soils cover 18% of Northern Ireland's land area and it is estimated that 85% of these areas are in a degraded state. This is leading to our peatlands contributing 6.5% of our national greenhouse gas emissions. Peatlands are vital resources and an extensive feature of Northern Ireland that must be protected and managed, for both climate change mitigation and the prevention and reversal of biodiversity loss.

The UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) in its June 2021 report to Parliament highlighted the urgent need to prevent further peatland loss, to restore degraded and damaged peatlands and review the policy approaches to future land use and land use change, to manage climate change and retain the value of peatlands and peat soils. For Northern Ireland specifically, the CCC stated in its March 2022 letter to the DAERA Minister that to meet the now legislated target for greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reaching net zero by 2050, 50% of Northern Ireland's affected peatlands need to be restored by 2050. That would equate to approximately 3,700 ha being restored annually over the 28 years to 2050 and this is not the scale of restoration at present.

In supporting this call for action and working with our partners, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, DAERA and the James Hutton Institute, we commenced a new and pivotal project on peatlands - Accelerating Peatlands Restoration – in June 2021, with its first phase running to March 2022.

The 'Accelerating Peatland Restoration' project produced two key reports for our funders and stakeholders, collectively providing a strong evidence base and indicative plan for addressing this need to better understand the condition and location of our peatlands and peat soils, and then help develop long-term plans to restore, conserve, manage and enhance Northern Ireland's peatlands as a vital resource and climate asset.

A new series of peatland maps for Northern Ireland was produced by the James Hutton Institute – who are experts in modelling peatland and peat soils. These maps describe the extent, condition and type of peatland and peat soils in Northern Ireland, updating the Northern Ireland data on peatlands and peat soils. These maps will be key in guiding and shaping future policy and plans for restoration – targeting and prioritising the peatlands which can be restored to give the best outcomes for GHG emission reduction and biodiversity.

A review and analysis of key aspects for the development of peatland restoration activity in Northern Ireland was undertaken including the opportunities, challenges, and barriers. From evidence drawn from the research and experience of peatland restoration and policy, in other nations in the UK and Ireland, we proposed approaches, pathways and mechanisms for developing and delivering an effective long-term peatland restoration programme in Northern Ireland which is capable of accelerating progress.



Visit to Fingal County Council to learn about their work on implementing ecological networks



Nature Recovery Networks

Since September 2020, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have been working on a partnership project to build capacity to deliver Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs) in Northern Ireland. Together with project partners RSPB NI, National Trust and Woodland Trust, we have identified ways to adopt this landscape-scale approach to restore nature in Northern Ireland. Ulster Wildlife hosts the project coordinator, who, with the support of key staff from the four partner organisations, has been leading on the project delivery.

The nature and climate crises are detrimentally impacting nature and people across Northern Ireland. With 11% of species at risk of extinction, we need a step change in how we protect and look after our natural environment. One of the key actions needed, is the protection, restoration, enhancement, creation and connection of places for nature through Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs), as was recently recognised by the UK's five statutory nature conservation bodies' Nature Positive 2030 Report (published in 2021). Working with the 'Lawton principles' of more, bigger, better and more joined-up spaces for nature, NRNs bring together a wide range of insights and actions to recover nature, where habitat area, habitat quality and connectivity between places are key ingredients. Basically, it is a plan to stitch together and repair the broken and disconnected fabric of nature across a landscape.

Progress has been made in the past year with Northern Ireland's own Climate Change legislation and it's vital that biodiversity, and nature's recovery, is brought on a par with its own ambitious targets and tangible action. A national NI Nature Recovery Network could not only help to safeguard nature into the future, but also help deliver wide-ranging social and economic benefits – and we have the opportunity now to make this a reality.

In the past year, the project has been building on the extensive research and dialogue of the first six months. Firstly, a knowledge-sharing webinar series was held in April 2021 and was attended by over 150 people. With the support of staff from the four partner organisations and working closely with key stakeholders, the project has now produced Northern Ireland's first ever set of national habitat network maps. These help us better understand our current habitat cover and where there is potential to deliver more, bigger, better and more joined-up habitats. The project has also continued to engage with stakeholders, including NIEA, and collated and shared learnings - for example through the production of briefing notes, support with policy consultation responses and through social media channels. In addition to this, the project has been working towards a set of case studies to show how the NRN approach, and these associated maps, could inform future decision-making, namely by local authorities and as part of future agri-environment schemes. This has been supported by a range of meetings and field visits by partners to inform their eventual appearance, as they continue to shape up throughout the remaining months of the project.



Red Squirrel at Castle Archdale
© A Gerrard



Species Action

The main aim of our red squirrel work over the last two years was to complete the Red Squirrel Conservation Strategy for Northern Ireland.

This is a 10-year document setting out aims and actions to ensure that red squirrel conservation is a priority locally in the long term, and to identify the actions to secure their future. This document is for any stakeholder across Northern Ireland that wants to take conservation action for red squirrels. The aims are to maintain red squirrel populations across their current range; support red squirrel recovery across their former range; seek removal of grey squirrels by human control and by the support of pine marten recovery; and support appropriate habitat management to aid red squirrel conservation. We liaised closely with a number of stakeholders and all of the red squirrel volunteer groups to address any issues they might have or include any recommendations. This strategy was launched in April of 2022.

Ulster Wildlife continues to raise awareness of the importance of red squirrels and the devastating impacts grey squirrels can have. Two more Lantra accredited training courses were provided to red squirrel volunteers. We held a number of talks and events and updated the UK Squirrel Accord on the situation in Northern Ireland. We continue to work closely with organisations across the UK and Ireland to share information and knowledge. We participated in both Red Squirrel Awareness Week and Red Squirrel Appreciation Day and led a red squirrel walk at our nature reserve in Glenarm. We also featured on local TV, as well as in articles in the UK news.

Over the winter of 2021 we received money through the DAERA Environmental Challenge Fund to create a database to make recording squirrel and pine marten sightings easier. We also developed a way for the volunteer groups to record grey squirrel control numbers and effort from their local areas. This will be launched in 2022 and we hope that this will allow data collection to be simpler and will allow more detailed analysis of the data we collect.

We did not carry out a presence/absence survey this year as this will be undertaken every other year going forward. Local groups continue to monitor in their areas. Over the winter however, we planned the 2022 survey so that we were prepared for its launch in spring. This survey is carried out by staff and volunteers and provides us with valuable information on the distribution of red squirrels, grey squirrels and pine martens. This is one of the most complete data sets in Northern Ireland and continues to allow us to target conservation as well as add data to science and research.



Barn owl chick being ringed in south Down - Sept 2021



Species Action

Our barn owl work has continued in order to help with the protection of this much-loved farmland bird. 2021 was a difficult year for our struggling barn owl population. The mix of the wet and cold spring, along with periods of extreme heat in the summer, meant that the majority of our nests failed to fledge any young.

This was devastating news as birds abandoned nests. However, we did have positive news in September when two of our nest sites successfully fledged chicks. One of these was at a new site at Finnebrogue. Boxes had been placed at the site in the winter of 2020 so this was great news to have a pair settle so quickly. These chicks were ringed under licence from the British Trust for Ornithology. We continue to raise awareness and were pleased to feature on BBC's *Winterwatch* as well as *The Chronicles of Strangford* which documented our barn owl journey.

We had estimated there were fewer than 30 pairs of barn owls left in Northern Ireland. However, we wanted a more accurate assessment so worked with the BTO over the winter of 2021 to establish an up-to-date population estimate. The results of this will be available soon and will help us to target our conservation action more effectively.

One of the main problems barn owls face in Northern Ireland is lack of suitable habitat to hunt over. In 2021/22 we carried out 48 landowner visits where we offered advice on land management for barn owls and assessed the sites for nest boxes. We have worked closely with a number of other organisations including RSPB NI to do this. After assessing sites, we erected 21 barn owl boxes across Northern Ireland. We focused on priority areas where we knew barn owls were present; and also areas of suitable foraging habitat. More nest boxes were also erected at existing nest sites to increase the network of boxes in the area and to offer roosting or nesting opportunities for fledglings. We have a number of organisations and volunteers making nesting boxes for us. Our thanks to all the groups, young people, and volunteers who helped make this happen. Our annual barn owl survey was carried out with the help of our volunteers. In total 99 boxes were checked for signs of barn owl activity throughout July and August. We also carried out a total of 12 surveys at potential sites. We were limited in the number of surveys we could do in 2021 due to Covid-19. The work completed was 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. During the surveys, adult barn owls were seen at two different sites, along with a number of long-eared owls. There were also pellets and feathers found in a small number of previously unoccupied boxes. These sightings will be followed up in 2022.

We continue to receive sightings from the public. In 2021 we received 56 barn owl sightings which have been shared with the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording. We are also pushing for more sightings of both long-eared owl and short-eared owl. This information is very important as it gives us an insight into where the birds might be nesting or roosting. This year, in collaboration with BirdWatch Ireland, we produced a combined map of sightings across the island of Ireland. This gives us a new insight into barn owl distribution across Ireland and allows us to target conservation effort and also look at possible recording gaps.



Hedgehog Survey Tunnel at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve

Species Action

Ulster Wildlife teamed up with the National University of Ireland, Galway to become a partner in the Irish Hedgehog Survey. Hedgehogs are classed as 'least concern' due to the fact that they are data deficient across Ireland. This exciting citizen science project was launched to better understand how hedgehogs are doing across Ireland, with Ulster Wildlife leading the survey in Northern Ireland. This was the first year of the survey and we were seeking hedgehog champions across Northern Ireland to get involved.

There were various ways in which people could get involved; submit hedgehog sightings, carry out a garden survey with a footprint tunnel or camera trap, or carry out a local area survey with footprint tunnels out over a larger area. Volunteers were invited to conduct a survey in their local area between May and September.

Estimates suggest that for every 30 hedgehogs in the UK in 1950, there is only 1 left in 2020. Tidy, fenced-in gardens in urban areas and loss of hedgerows and intensification of agriculture in rural areas are just some of the factors contributing to this decline. We know that hedgehogs are in trouble across Britain and Europe and we believe the situation is similar here. Many of us have noticed how little we see of them these days, especially in rural areas. However, one of the biggest issues we face in Northern Ireland is the lack of data on hedgehogs. By working together with NUI Galway, we hope to build a better picture of their numbers and distribution so, in turn, we can work to secure their future.

We had an amazing response in the first year of launching the survey with over 600 people signing up. Hedgehogs are one of our most loved mammals and this survey has had a very positive response from the public. They are a great tool in engaging the public and encouraging people to manage their habitats for hedgehogs and

biodiversity in general. Hedgehogs played a large part in our 'Let Nature In' campaign. We carried out several events and talks across the year including survey workshops at a number of sites including some of our nature reserves. We featured on BBC's *Winterwatch* as well as Colin Stafford-Johnson's show *The Wild Gardener*.

We had a huge number of people submit sightings and carry out surveys in 2021 and received results from NUI Galway in early 2022. We saw a similar pattern to what was happening in England, Scotland and Wales with hedgehogs being more common now in urban areas. Just over a third of surveys conducted in rural landscapes found hedgehogs while 70% of urban surveys recorded them. We know from recent reports from the UK that rural hedgehogs have suffered a greater decline than their urban cousins who have made their homes in gardens and parks. The hedgehog was the most recorded of all plant and animal species in 2021. In total, across the 32 counties on the island, 1,977 individual recorders submitted 3043 sightings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. This is a phenomenal level of recording activity and shows the importance of targeted projects and recording initiatives.

In 2021, the team sought volunteers to conduct a more detailed hedgehog survey in their local area using footprint tunnels. Between June and September, 112 local area surveys were carried out by volunteers across the whole country with hedgehogs recorded in 45% of sites. To help researchers understand how hedgehogs use gardens in Ireland, more than 500 householders also volunteered to participate in the Garden Hedgehog Survey, reporting findings via an online questionnaire. Early results indicate that urban and rural gardens are a very important habitat for hedgehogs. We are still in the early days of our research and we are looking to deepen our understanding of hedgehog habitats. The survey will be running again in 2022.



Shark Egg Cases at Benone Beach



Species Action

The support of a conservation-minded angling community in Northern Ireland has been critical to the success of the ‘Sea Deep’ Project. So far, we have trained over 80 anglers in best practice handling, tagging and data recording techniques for sharks, skates and rays.

This dedicated volunteer group has tagged 640 individual sharks, skates and rays of 11 different species around our coast. Using this data, we have identified hotspots for species, including the Flapper Skate. Before the ‘Sea Deep’ Project, there was very little data on local endangered sharks, skates and rays; therefore, the information the anglers are collecting is vital evidence needed to inform effective conservation and management measures.

This year we trained our Tagging Champions, anglers that are leaders in their community, demonstrating a commitment to the tagging programme and encouraging others to participate in the training. Tagging Champions can deliver the tagging training themselves, which supports the future of the tagging programme, and embeds it further into the angling community.

We incorporated a life-size 3D Flapper Skate model into the training. Licensed anglers must be cautious when tagging such a large and critically endangered species. Practising on a life-size model attempts to replicate the reality of handling the species and has become a vital tool in our training. We have also designed a poster demonstrating best practice, available to all anglers, charter skippers and other sea-users.

Excitingly, we have received eight Flapper Skate egg case records this year! All the records came from the north coast region, raising the question of whether Flapper Skate may be laying eggs in NI seas. Very little is known about local shark and skate nursery habitats, so recording egg cases and working with SeasearchNI divers to explore the seabed is essential.

As part of the Binevenagh youth residential, the Grassroots Challenge Team joined us for an egg case survey on Benone Beach. The young people had great fun recording over 20 Blonde Ray egg cases and learning about the local sharks, skates and rays in NI seas.

This year, you may have spotted the project on television — the BBC’s *Chronicles of Strangford Lough* and *Barra Best’s Wild Days Out* joined the project for egg case surveys and tagging trips at sea.

Our education pack is now freely available and can be downloaded from the Ulster Wildlife website. The package contains presentations, videos, activities and experiments geared toward key-stage 3 students. It will teach students shark biology, ecology and conservation, explain the concept of marine protected areas (MPAs) through games, and support students in taking action to safeguard the future of our local shark populations.



Our Marine Conservation Manager with oysters and nursery cages at Bangor Marina

Species Action

Ulster Wildlife has established the first native oyster nursery in Northern Ireland to support the natural recovery of native oysters in Belfast Lough.

A native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) nursery is a micro-habitat housing 27 oyster cages that will reproduce and release the next generation of oyster larvae to settle out on the seabed. An individual oyster produces lots of larvae to ensure that some survive to adulthood – one oyster can release up to 1 million larvae per year. They can change sex, so there is always the correct ratio of males to females, and by housing oysters close together in the nursery cage it encourages them to spawn. In total, Ulster Wildlife has deployed ~700 oysters.

Each nursery cage is hung underneath a pontoon fully submerged in the water but kept off the seafloor. This protects the oysters from predation, and the pontoon keeps them sheltered from sunlight.

Belfast Lough once supported a prolific native oyster fishery. However, by 1903, the fishery closed and the oyster was considered locally extinct in the Lough. The key driver behind this colossal decline was overfishing in the 1800s, but habitat loss, disease, pollution and invasive non-native species all played a part. Over the last 100 years, numerous ecological surveys of the Lough have failed to document one living specimen, and so the native oyster was considered extinct, until, in the summer of 2020, a century on from the closure of the native oyster fishery, a total of 42 live oysters were discovered by researchers at six intertidal sites around Belfast Lough. The recurrence of native oysters to the shores of Belfast Lough is unexpected, and we are still unsure how or why they returned. However, it indicates that the environmental conditions are right for them to establish there again.

Bonamiosis is a disease of the native oyster caused by the infestation of a parasite which can significantly decrease populations if infected. There is no treatment for the disease, so the only effective measure is to prevent its introduction. As this disease is not present in Loch Ryan in Scotland, we sourced our oysters from an oyster fishery there.

When the oysters arrived at Bangor Marina, volunteers counted, cleaned and measured each oyster before putting it into the nursery cage. Once the nursery cage was complete, it was lowered down through a hatch in the pontoon. The nursery was left undisturbed for four weeks so the oysters could acclimatise to their new environment.

We conduct 'health checks' every week to ensure the oysters are thriving in their new home. Monthly biodiversity surveys will track changes in marine life in and around the nursery. We plan to bring schools and community groups to the nursery to help with the surveys, get hands-on experience in a marine restoration project, and raise awareness of the marine life found in an urban environment.

Strangford Lough is home to a native oyster population. In partnership with the University of Bangor, we conducted intertidal and subtidal surveys to assess the population status and dynamics and produced proactive management recommendations for the species. Worryingly, our report found that intertidal hand-gathering has severely depleted the intertidal populations. We have shared the findings and the management recommendations with DAERA. We will be responding strongly to the Intertidal Shellfish Gathering consultation expected in June 2022 and will be advocating for the inclusion of the native oyster as a protected feature in the site designation.



Rockpooling at Pan's Rock, Ballycastle

Species Action

Our ShoreNI Survey has remained a popular citizen science project, surveying the rocky shore habitats around our coasts - attracting 75 active volunteers from across Northern Ireland. These volunteers have recorded over 2,200 observations of 274 species this year.

This year, we held three public intertidal surveys for ShoreNI volunteers. In addition, we collaborated with Ulster University to introduce ShoreNI to undergraduate students during their fieldwork. Two marine 'bio blitzes' were arranged to focus volunteer effort in two areas – Cushendall and Portballintrae. These 'bio blitzes' engaged 20 adults and 14 children, and contributed 286 observations of 139 intertidal species.

To improve volunteers' surveying skills, we ran several online training sessions. All ShoreNI volunteers must take part in a beginner's training course - this year, 45 people have attended. We have provided additional training to 42 volunteers, particularly in identifying intertidal molluscs and crustaceans. A partnership with CEDaR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording), has enabled us to expand these training sessions from online presentations to interactive in-person talks.

Our summer highlight for the second time around was the Big Rockpool Ramble. We held three live rockpool rambles, engaging 46 children and 38 adults to partake in citizen science, while exploring their local shore. The event yielded 249 records over 45 different intertidal species! Amongst the top ten this year were the Shore crab, Edible periwinkles and Common cushion stars.

Ulster Wildlife, in partnership with the Belfast Food Network, has taken the leading role in bringing Sustainable Fish Cities Campaign to Northern Ireland, starting with Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. The project is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Sustainable Fish Cities has been a successful campaign across the UK, encouraging businesses and organisations to commit to serving sustainable seafood. It goes beyond just fish and chip shops and restaurants, engaging local councils, hospitals, schools and caterers to review their menu and commit to serving more sustainable seafood options.

Ulster Wildlife has been recruiting organisations by delivering information sessions, workshops and meeting with businesses face to face to support them with their menu audit. Among the first to sign the pledge was the Fish City restaurant in Belfast; followed by Soda and Starch pantry and grill in Derry/Londonderry and now we have 10 organisations in total committing to the campaign. You can find a list of the businesses and restaurants that have taken the SFC pledge on the Ulster Wildlife website.

If you would like to choose more sustainable seafood options, the Marine Conservation Society's 'Good Fish Guide' is a user-friendly website where you can check the sustainability rating of the seafood you are buying.

With the support of our funder, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we have delivered a programme of marine educational sessions for the coastal communities in Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie. These sessions, aimed at primary schools and community groups, provide a complete toolkit for individuals, families and communities to take action for marine conservation and species.

During the past year, we have engaged with St. Colman's Primary School (Kilkeel), St. Nicholas School (Ardglass) and Portavogie Primary School (Portavogie). Over 180 children and 12 staff members took part in the 11 interactive sessions, which included an indoor component, followed by an outdoor activity. The sessions focus on our local marine biodiversity, marine litter and climate change.

The sessions teach children about the amazing animals, seaweeds, plants and habitats in our local seas, followed by a rockpooling discovery session and games on the beach. The marine litter session is run in partnership with the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbours Authority (NIFHA), where children learn about the sources of marine litter, how it affects marine wildlife, recycling and the circular economy model. The children also conduct a beach clean as part of the session and are given ideas on what they can do in their everyday lives to reduce the amount of litter in their household. The final session explains climate change, how it affects the sea, what are blue carbon habitats and what we can all do to mitigate the effects of climate change.

To help embed what the children learnt, Ulster Wildlife invited the school pupils to bring their parents along for an outdoor education session for all the family.

We also delivered a series of four online sessions in collaboration with NIFHA, titled 'Know Your Coast' for community groups. This series of talks covers a wide range of topics, similar to the school educational material, but geared towards adults. In early 2022, once most Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, we were able to restart our delivery of in-person education sessions for youth groups in Kilkeel, Glassdrumman and Portavogie.

The Marine Conservation Team has also been delivering a wide range of public events throughout the year. Events were spread out around Northern Ireland's coast with a focus on citizen science and exploring the marine environment up close. We delivered snorkel safaris, rockpool rambles and marine biodiversity talks throughout the summer.



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.

Policy (Terrestrial)

2021/22 was a very busy year for environmental policy consultations, as our Government rapidly pushed through as much legislation as possible during the Assembly's mandate.

We responded to a number of critical consultations, including the Energy Strategy (which makes reference to targets for renewable energy projects, both on land and at sea), the Peatland Strategy, the Bovine TB Eradication Strategy, the Green Growth Strategy, the Environment Strategy and Future Agricultural Policy proposals – copies of our full consultation responses are available on our website.

We actively campaigned around our position against badger culling, linking in with the USPCA and NI Badger Group to promote public responses to the Bovine TB Eradication consultation objecting to a non-selective cull of this priority species. We strongly advocated that wildlife intervention needs to be proportionate, humane and must provide long-term sustainable solutions.

The Environment Strategy had been long awaited, and we had fed into the development of this through previous consultations. We joined voices with a number of eNGOs calling to raise the ambition of the Environment Strategy, with specific, measurable targets, legislation to make targets legally binding, improved resourcing to deliver the targets and incentives to enable the actions required to implement the strategy. The draft Strategy relies on a number of 'daughter strategies' to provide the detail, much of which we have yet to see, and many of the targets fell short of expert recommendations such as those from the UK's Climate Change Committee. We will be working closely with policy-makers and wider partners to scrutinise the final Environment Strategy once published and its subsequent implementation plan and daughter strategies. With the passing of the UK's Environment Act and its Commencement Order in Northern Ireland in February 2022, the Environment Strategy will become our first official 'Environmental Improvement Plan' under the Environment Act. The Environment Act's Commencement Order also legally

extended the remit of the new UK Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to Northern Ireland, and we will work closely with this body going forward.

The Green Growth Strategy is a further vital piece of Executive-level, cross-cutting policy, and while we welcomed the overall direction of this to recognise the many opportunities in becoming a low-carbon economy, we called for further attention and investment in the role nature can play in this transition, including nature-based solutions to climate change, nature recovery networks for reversing biodiversity decline, the role of blue carbon (both marine and freshwater) and integration of land use and land use change - with particular reference to the potential for carbon gains from peatland restoration and tree planting.

The biggest win of the year by far was the passing of Northern Ireland's first Climate Change Bill – we provided oral and written evidence to the NI Assembly's Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee in 2021, calling for ambitious net zero greenhouse gas targets and inclusion of a climate commissioner, just transition principles and formal recognition of nature-based solutions to climate change. We ran a strong communications campaign throughout the UN Climate Convention's Conference of the Parties (COP) 26 in November 2021, which served to highlight the urgent need for an ambitious Northern Ireland Climate Change Act and engaged our supporter base. As part of the NI Climate Coalition, we campaigned throughout the legislative process and the final Bill's headline target is now net zero by 2050 - a great result. There's much work to be done developing the first carbon budgets and sectoral plans - but at least we now have the legislative framework to make action a reality.

Also during the year, our Youth Forum produced its own 'Manifesto for Nature and the Environment' which was circulated to all MLAs in February 2022 in advance of the Assembly Elections.



Policy (Marine)

Since 2013, Ulster Wildlife has been one of the lead organisations in the Northern Ireland Marine Task Force (NIMTF), a coalition of 10 NGOs working towards healthy, productive and resilient seas for Northern Ireland.

This year was a busy legislative period, with critical marine environmental legislation considered, such as the UK Marine Strategy Part Three: Programme of Measures and the new fisheries management measures for marine protected areas (MPAs). Through our consultation response, we supported the proposed fisheries management measures published by DAERA. We expect them to be implemented in 2022, and we will be part of the group overseeing the implementation. The new proposals will prohibit bottom-towed fishing gear across nine MPAs in Northern Ireland, protecting ~10% of the current MPA network from this activity.

While these MPA fisheries management proposals are welcome, overall, the lack of effective management for Northern Ireland's MPAs, which address all threats and pressures, not just fishing, is still a concern for NIMTF. This year, we actively engaged in the EU funded 'MarPAMM' project, which aims to deliver two regional and site-specific management plans for Northern Ireland MPAs before September 2023. We advocated for ambitious and comprehensive management plans. We are also members of the newly formed Strangford Lough MPA management group.

Positively, the DAERA Minister committed to co-developing the new MPA Strategy following a joint letter from NIMTF and the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation calling for a co-design process. We must ensure the new strategy aids in achieving an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs, contributes to the Convention on Biodiversity targets (30 x 30), and is pushing us towards being Nature Positive by 2030.

Disappointingly, DAERA granted marine licences to the Islandmagee gas storage project. Ulster Wildlife objected to the project during the initial public consultation and, together with the Northern Ireland Marine Task Force, has responded strongly to several consultations relating to this development. The local community group, 'No Gas Caverns', teamed up

with Friends of the Earth to launch a judicial review into granting marine licenses by DAERA for the development. We now know the judicial review (which is focused on the process of granting the marine license only) will proceed, with a hearing likely in the High Court this winter. In this case, Ulster Wildlife was asked to be an expert witness, and we have provided an affidavit. We are pleased to see the case proceeding.

The Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland Action Plan (The Path to Net Zero) was published this year and commits Northern Ireland to delivering 1GW of offshore wind by 2030. To upskill NIMTF members, we hosted a virtual event with a guest speaker to discuss the potential environmental impacts of offshore wind energy development. We support actions to tackle climate change and recognise that climate change poses one of the biggest threats to wildlife and will push species to their ecological limits. To avoid damage to wildlife, future development at sea must use the right technology in the right location.

In the past year we have been proactively engaging with the Northern Ireland fishing industry, primarily through quarterly meetings with the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation (NIFF). Together, we submitted a joint response to the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) consultation, highlighting shared concerns as well as the aspects of the draft JFS we both welcome. This new approach to communicating and working with the fishing industry has been a strategically important change, helping to form a strong and productive relationship.

Building on the 'Blue Carbon' Habitat Restoration Feasibility study from the previous year, we continued to work with the National Oceanography Centre and the University of Hull to improve our understanding of Northern Ireland's 'Blue Carbon' potential. In January 2022, we were invited to Castle Espie to discuss our Blue Carbon research with the DAERA Minister. We were pleased that he requested to learn more about this topic and the benefits marine habitat restoration can bring to nature and climate. Following the visit, Minister Poots announced his commitment to co-developing a Blue Carbon Action Plan.

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

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



Launch of the Wild Youth Project

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Promoting Nature as a Tool to Improve Health

Working jointly with the Belfast Hills Partnership, in January 2022 we launched a new four-year initiative called 'Wild Youth'. Funded locally by the National Lottery Community Fund's Empowering Young People Programme, 'Wild Youth' is all about promoting positive mental health and wellbeing amongst young people from North and West Belfast through connecting with nature.

We continued to promote and improve our Nature Reserves as places to enjoy the well-being benefits of getting out into nature. The increase in visitor numbers sustained with well over 100,000 visits to our nature reserves during 2021/22. The nature reserves team, supported by volunteers, continued their ongoing work maintaining several kilometres of access routes every year.

Practical volunteer days, which 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 able to start up again after a long period of restrictions and we welcomed several new volunteers to the team.

Our community engagement project at Bog Meadows continued into its second year during 2021/22. With the easing of restrictions over the summer last year we were able to run a full programme of activities and events to get people and families out into their local green space. A highlight was the week-long summer scheme for local children to get back outside and acquainted with their local wild space and wildlife.

This project sees 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. The project will strengthen social networks and skills by offering traineeships, volunteering, events and education programmes based around nature, conservation, animal husbandry and gardening.

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.



Teamwork for Wildlife

Ulster Wildlife's success is dependent on our dedicated staff, trainees and volunteers. In common with most organisations, 2021/22 was another challenging year for our staff team, due to the pandemic.

We have fully transitioned to hybrid working, where most staff worked part of the week at home and part in the office. We carried out a staff-wide survey during the year to assess the impact of this new way of working on the connectedness and effectiveness of the team, and now plan to develop and trial a formal Hybrid Working Policy and an Internal Communications Plan to ensure that we retain what worked during the pandemic and are able to mitigate any of the negative consequences for staff and volunteers. At the end of March 2022, we had 45 members of staff in the organisation.

2021 marked the final year Ulster Wildlife would play host to the European Solidarity Corps funding, with six volunteers from Spain and France spending a year here through quarantine and lockdown to complete their work experience in August 2021. During their year with Ulster Wildlife they helped the Nature Reserves, Communications and Conservation teams with their day-to-day work, learning on-the-job skills in practical habitat management, biological surveys and fundraising and communications within a charity environment. We were able to provide additional training in use of tools and machinery within nature reserves work, species identification including training in invasive species and conducting Phase One Habitat Surveys. We also integrated the volunteers into project work across other areas of Ulster Wildlife to widen their experience and knowledge, including visiting Fermanagh to assist the Peatlands team, attending Shore NI events and learning to conduct shark egg case surveys with the Marine team, and work online to assist with Nature Recovery Network webinars. We are so grateful for the hard work and effort by all volunteers and wish them well on their future career paths.

By September we were delighted to welcome back out on site corporate volunteers from

Danske Bank, Jacobs and Energia. Groups availed of a break from their normal day-to-day office jobs and enjoyed visiting our nature reserves and helping teams with site maintenance work, fence repairs and painting and scrub management. At the same time, staff took the opportunity to provide volunteers with information on the nature reserve to better inform them of the work we do.

The easing of restrictions has enabled us to open up more volunteer opportunities to help our Nature Reserves team, within the Marine team and in other projects. Volunteer 'taster sessions', student engagement and work experience have brought over 70 volunteers through our door from July to March 2022.

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 another challenging year for the Landfill Communities Fund with the pandemic having an ongoing effect on the level of funds distributed with some project delays due to lockdowns and difficulties in sourcing materials. Funds of £239,000 were distributed in the twelve months to March 2022. There were twelve active projects at the end of March 2022. 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

Despite the challenges during the pandemic, Ulster Wildlife is in a stable financial position today thanks to members, supporters, donors, funders, corporate supporters and, in particular, some very special people who left gifts in their wills to Ulster Wildlife. Those gifts will help us protect the wildlife and wild places they so dearly loved.

Moving forward as a charity in our new Strategy we will be focusing on trying new and innovative ways to generate the essential funds for nature conservation.

Thank you to everyone who joined us this year and who continues to support local nature conservation as a member of Ulster Wildlife.

Membership

Despite the challenges all charities faced again over the last year, Ulster Wildlife membership grew very slightly by 0.23% following on from a reduction in membership the year before. In addition, our income from membership, including Gift Aid, exceeded targets at £420,319. This was thanks to members remaining with us at a 93.92% retention rate, new members joining especially during the January half-price sale and many members choosing to increase their monthly donations as part of our Annual Appeal in December 2021. In-person member events took place once again on our nature reserves and other locations; engagement on our Members Facebook Group increased; and a series of online Winter Talks were well attended, receiving some fantastic feedback from members.

Going Digital

The Covid-19 pandemic affected all areas of society and Ulster Wildlife, like many organisations, had to change the way we worked practically overnight. Much of our usual engagement activity was put on hold and other areas went online to enable us to continue to reach people with our messages about the importance of bringing nature back. We are continuing to advertise for new members online and our online sales of the Adopt an Animal fundraising initiative have raised over £10k, before costs, to date. We are also part of wider Wildlife Trusts membership promotions across the UK, which aim to encourage more people to join their local Wildlife Trust.

Legacies and In-Memory Gifts

Gifts in Wills and in-memory donations, no matter the size, allow a person's passion for nature to live on and ensure those following in their footsteps can experience the amazing wildlife that calls Northern Ireland home. Every gift in a will allows us to protect and buy more nature reserves, save more species, help support new nature champions and ensure that future generations can experience nature.

Robert Simon Harper, Principal of Portadown College, made a significant donation to Ulster Wildlife in his will, when he passed away suddenly. Friends and family of RM Martin, NE Murray, Steven Snowdon, Elaine Byrne and Ronan Heenan all made donations in memory of their loved one to our local nature conservation work.

Corporate Supporters

We are now working on developing more focused and strategic relationships with corporate partners. Ulster Wildlife began working with several businesses in 2021/22. PowerNI made a significant donation to our peatlands restoration work and are helping build awareness of the importance of peatlands among their staff and customers, as well as raising additional funds. We continued to support Jordan's Cereals - where each farm works with an advisor from Ulster Wildlife to manage at least 10% of their land for wildlife. Biodiversity Audits & Biodiversity Action Plans were created or are underway for several businesses including Belfast Harbour, Encirc, Mannok, and Finnebrogue. Businesses including Moy Park, Ulster Carpets, Trek NI and Giraffe Associates made annual donations to our work. Spirit Aerosystems very kindly once again sponsored the production of our annual Wildlife Calendar in 2022.

Thank you...

Along with support from members and donors, below are some of the organisations whose vital grant contributions helped to make a difference in 2021/22:

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Comber Rotary
Department of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs
(Northern Ireland Environment Agency)
Education Authority Regional
Development Fund
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
European Solidarity Corps

Garfield Weston Foundation
INTERREG VA
Kreitman Foundation
Marine Institute
Ministry of Defence
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Save our Seas Foundation



Ulster Wildlife staff with NIEA CEO Paul Donnelly, at Cuilcagh

Financial Review at 31 March 2022

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

Sources of Income

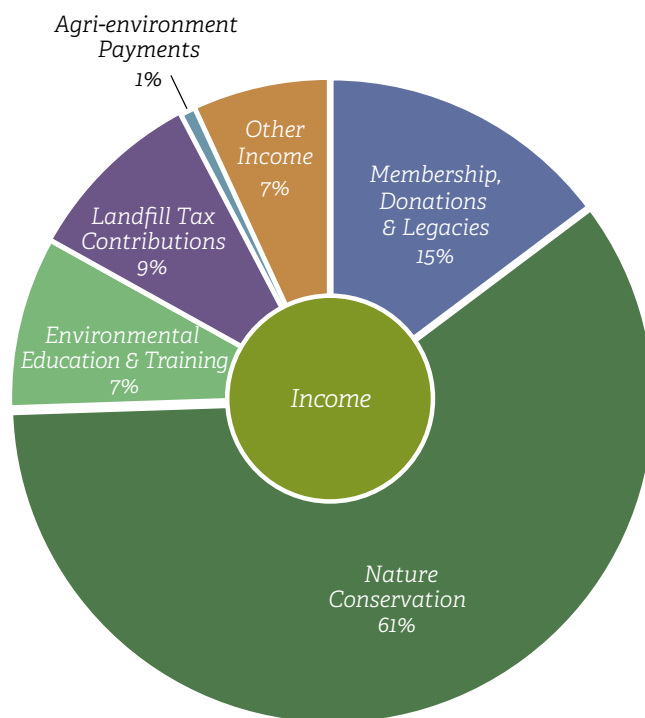
Unrestricted income is revenue generated by the charity for its general purposes. It can be used at the discretion of the charity on any of the charity's objects and a substantial component is donations from our members and supporters. Unrestricted income was at a similar level to the previous year (+£4k). Donations and legacies increased (+£62k) as did consultancy income (+£25k). In the prior year additional grant income was received from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (-£37.5k) along with income from the job retention scheme (-£29k). The absence of these partially offset the gains noted.

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.

Grants from third parties awarded to Ulster Wildlife for the direct delivery of specific conservation outcomes increased by £1.2m in the year. DAERA contributed £594k towards the purchase of additional lands at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve. DAERA also awarded Environmental Challenge Fund income of £457k for conservation work on peatlands, our marine environment, priority species and nature reserves.

Other grants received in the year are outlined in Note 4 to the Financial Statements.



Income	Unrestricted Funds £k	Restricted Funds £k	Total Funds £k	Ratio
Membership Donations & Legacies	518	20	538	15%
Nature Conservation	-	2,178	2,178	61%
Agri-environment payments	29	-	29	1%
Landfill Tax Contributions	-	337	337	9%
Environmental Education & Training	-	314	314	7%
Other Income	161	90	251	7%
Total Income	708	2,939	3,647	100%

How the Charity spent its resources

Overall expenditure was £446k higher in the year to 31 March 2022 than in the previous year.

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

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

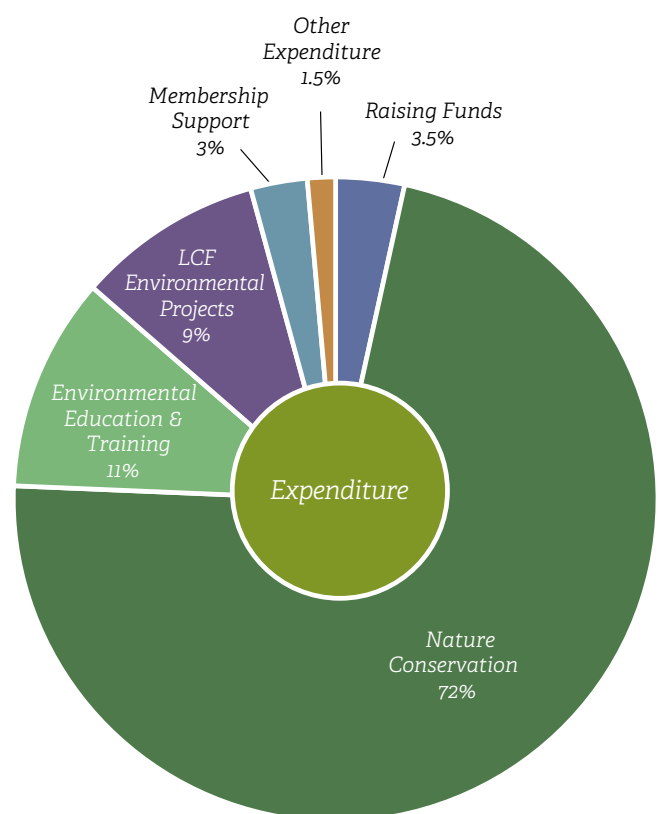
After taking this contribution into account an unrestricted surplus of £127k was generated. £81k of this relates to donations and legacies which form part of our designated Fund for the Future.

The surplus is in keeping with the charity's objectives which are to deliver nature 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 – especially in relation to providing adequate cashflow for projects.

After expenditure on restricted projects, the 'surplus' on restricted funds amounted to £527k.

This 'surplus' mostly represents income received from DAERA for the purchase of additional lands for nature conservation purposes at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve where the expenditure has been capitalised on the balance sheet.

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



Expenditure	Total Funds £k	Ratio
Raising Funds	103	3.5%
Nature Conservation	2,158	72%
Environmental Education & Training	321	11%
LCF Environmental Projects	279	9%
Membership Support	85	3%
Other Expenditure	42	1.5%
Total Expenditure	2,988	100%

Note:

Organisational support costs of £308k (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

2021/22 was the last year of delivery under our strategy 'Wildlife in Trust'. Our new Strategy to 2030 – Bring Nature Back – will form the basis for our work from April 2022 onwards. Our new Strategic Outcomes for 2030 from this new Strategy are:

Outcome 1: Nature is in recovery and wildlife is thriving across Northern Ireland.

Outcome 2: More people are taking positive action for nature and climate and are benefitting from time spent in nature.

Outcome 3: Nature-based solutions are playing a central role in addressing climate change.

The Covid-19 pandemic is still impacting on our ability to carry out our normal fundraising activity and, during the year 2022/23, we will be developing a new fundraising and marketing strategy to support our new organisational strategy to 2030.

Our fundraising targets for 2022/23 are:

- > To at least maintain current levels of membership.
- > To secure £424,023 income from Membership including Gift-Aid contributions.



Large Heath Butterfly at Tully Bog

We are now entering the first year of our new Strategy to 2030 – Bring Nature Back. This new Strategy to 2030 will provide the high-level framework of how we intend to go about achieving our aims.

In 2022/23 significant time will be spent scoping out plans and costing this strategy in order for us to prepare more detailed delivery plans for the next number of years.

The Covid-19 pandemic still presents significant short-term challenges for Ulster Wildlife, but we are looking ahead with optimism and are looking forward to playing our part in ending the nature and climate emergencies.

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 up to 2030 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.

Outcome 1:

Nature is in recovery and wildlife is thriving across Northern Ireland.

Our aim is to ensure that Northern Ireland's ecosystems are healthy, functioning, and support abundant and diverse wildlife and that the natural resources we rely on for our economy and our health are managed sustainably. Fundamental to achieving this outcome will be the development and establishment of a national 'Nature Recovery Network' for Northern Ireland - a strategic approach to targeted creation, restoration and enhancement of habitats.

We'll also be looking at how our nature reserves can contribute to this nature recovery network approach while also recognising that certain species will require specific conservation actions.

Our work engaging farmers and landowners will be critical and we also plan to work more closely with the fishing industry to ensure our seas are well managed for nature.

Outcome 2:

More people are taking positive action for nature and climate and are benefitting from time spent in nature.

As a society, we have unknowingly accepted a creeping decline of our natural world. Wildlife is

actually in freefall and yet, for many, the present dearth of nature is seen as normal. We want to see a Northern Ireland where nature and people are thriving together. We want wildlife returning and natural systems restored, enriching and sustaining the lives of people as a result.

We will engage, empower and amplify the voice of people across Northern Ireland to speak up for and take action for nature. All our work in engaging local people with nature will aim to move people through a continuum from inspiring to empowering to taking action.

It is vital that we engage younger generations in issues that will impact their future. We have the opportunity to support the next generation to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to combat the dual climate and ecological emergencies and reconnect with nature for their health and wellbeing.

Maintaining and strengthening our membership and supporter network will also be key to delivering on the ambition of this Strategy.

Outcome 3:

Nature-based solutions are playing a central role in addressing climate change.

Biodiversity loss and climate change are both driven by human economic activities and mutually reinforce each other. Neither will be successfully resolved unless both are tackled together. Over the next number of years, we will work on solutions that tackle both the climate and biodiversity crises at a local level, recognising the vital role of nature in addressing the climate emergency. We will restore habitats like peatland and sea grass that can provide long-term carbon sequestration and storage while also promoting diverse and resilient wildlife.

As well as our 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, reframing our policy, influencing and advocacy work and financing the future. We will take these areas of work forward in the next few years to allow us to become the most effective and efficient we can be in achieving our outcomes and objectives and having a staff that has the tools and skills needed to achieve this.

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.

An EGM was held on 13 May 2021 to approve updated Articles of Association for the Charity – they are available to view here: www.ulsterwildlife.org/how-we-are-run.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees (Council) comprised of up to 17 members who 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 appointed 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 for the Charity.

See below for details of serving Trustees during 2021/22:

CHAIRMAN



Ken Brundle
(Appointed on 17 September 2013, appointed Chairman 22 November 2017)

VICE-CHAIR



Stephen Aston
(Appointed on 07 December 2017, appointed Vice Chairman on 27 September 2018)
F & A

VICE CHAIR



David Sterling
(Appointed 16 October 2020, appointed Vice Chair 02 December 2021)
E, F & A

VICE CHAIR



John Witchell
(Appointed on 07 December 2017, stood down as Vice Chair on 02 December 2021)
E

HONORARY TREASURER



David Hendron
(Appointed on 25 July 2018, appointed Treasurer on 27 September 2018)
F & A

COUNCIL MEMBER



Anna Barclay
(Appointed 24 November 2020)
E, G

COUNCIL MEMBER



Bob Brown
Appointed 16 October 2020
E

COUNCIL MEMBER



Fiona Davey
(Appointed on 19 November 2015)
G

COUNCIL MEMBER



Ian Garner
(Appointed on 14 March 2019, resigned on 25 May 2021)
E

COUNCIL MEMBER



Stephen Maginn
(Appointed 05 December 2019)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Seamus McKee
(Appointed 18 March 2021)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Catherine Thompson
(Appointed on 14 March 2019, appointed Company Secretary on 18 March 2021)
G

COUNCIL MEMBER



Zoe Stevenson
(Appointed 24 November 2020 - resigned on 12 August 2021)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Stephen Smith
(Appointed 24 November 2020)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Helen Surgenor
(Appointed 24 November 2020)
E, G

COUNCIL MEMBER



Ed Wright
(Appointed on 07 October 2015)
F

Changes to the Ulster Wildlife Council during 2021/22

Ian Garner resigned from Council on 25 May 2021.

Zoe Stevenson resigned from Council on 12 August 2021.

Seamus McKee was confirmed at the AGM on 24 November 2021 after co-option on 18 March 2021.

John Witchell stood down as Vice Chair on 02 December 2021.

David Sterling was appointed Vice Chair on 02 December 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.

- 1. 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.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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.
- 3. 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 Statement of Recommended Practice,
- 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.

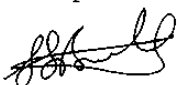
Provision of Information to Auditors


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 01 September 2022 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 overseeing risk management by the charity. They are responsible for ensuring that Ulster Wildlife has an effective system of internal control, management and audit to enable the charity to take advantage of opportunities whilst ensuring that the charity remains protected.

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 risk assessments are completed and controls are in place to manage and mitigate risk across the organisation.

The Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team work together to ensure that risk is very carefully assessed in relation to the health, welfare and security of staff, volunteers and the public. As such risk management is supported by an external consultant.

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.
- Health & Safety management system including phone app is used to facilitate management and record key information
- Risk register with mitigation actions is reviewed at least quarterly by the Board.
- Health & Safety is a key factor in selecting external contractors and Health & Safety obligations are included in awarded external contracts.
- Comprehensive risk management reviews are carried out once a year by all sub-committees and are reported to the Board Meeting.
- Multi-year planning, with targets that are linked to delivery of organisational strategy.
- 'Value for Money' principles guide when and where we source goods and services.
- Annual external audit.

The most significant risks identified in 2021/22 were:

- Loss of funding post-Brexit particularly the LIFE Programme and funding uncertainties and the short term nature of funding allocations by Government.
- Impacts of climate change on the environment, people and economy.
- Reframing of government policies post-Brexit.
- The operational challenges presented by Covid-19 and the associated restrictions.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges for the organisation. The level of understanding on environmental issues amongst the general public is still limited especially in regard to the challenges that lie ahead. Climate change is the number one risk for the world (Global Risk Report, World Economic Forum 2022) and there are significant health implications as assessed by the World Health Organisation.

The need and demand for the charity's services are growing, however, as yet additional funding for key deliverables remains difficult to secure particularly to resource the strategic action required to accelerate progress. It is hoped that the commitments made within the frameworks of COP 26 and Nature Positive strategy will lead to increased targeted investment.

A continuing area of risk for the charity is the ability of fundraisers to carry out face to face promotions due to Covid 19. During the year, digital fundraising has helped to recruit members but this does not fully replace face to face recruitment.

Staff turnover due to funding uncertainties and projects coming to an end remains a key issue. A fundraising strategy will be developed to increase the long-term sustainability of the charity aligned with the organisational strategy to 2030.

The most significant risks identified for 2022/23 are:

- Climate change impacts on the environment, economy and people.
- The cost of living crisis which could impact on fundraising.
- Staff retention and recruitment.

Our Promise to Our Supporters

At Ulster Wildlife our members, supporters and funders are at the heart of everything we do to help wildlife and wild places thrive in Northern Ireland. That is why, as a registered charity (NIC101848), we are part of the Fundraising Regulator's self-regulatory scheme.

As members of the scheme, we follow the Institute of Fundraising's Codes of Fundraising Practice and comply with the key principles embodied in the Codes. This means when supporters make a donation to us they can be assured that our fundraising is legal, open, honest and respectful.

Our Fundraising Approach

- We are committed to high standards.
- We do all we can to ensure that staff, fundraisers, volunteers and fundraising contractors working with us to raise funds comply with the Code and with this Promise.
- We comply with the law including those that apply to data protection, health and safety and the environment.
- We are honest and open. We tell the truth and do not exaggerate; we do what we say we are going to do.
- We answer all reasonable questions about our fundraising activities and costs.

We are clear

- We are clear about who we are, what we do and how donations are used.
- Where we have a promotional agreement with a commercial company, we make clear how much of the purchase price we receive.
- We give a clear explanation of how a donation can be made and how to amend a regular commitment.

We are respectful

- We respect the rights, dignities and privacy of our supporters and beneficiaries.
- We will not put undue pressure on anyone to make a gift, and if a person does not want to give or wishes to cease giving we will respect that decision.
- If someone tells us that they don't want us to contact them in a particular way we will not do so - our Privacy Notice for Members and Supporters is available on our website at ulsterwildlife.org/privacynotice

We are accountable

- If anyone is unhappy with anything we have done whilst fundraising, they can contact us to make a complaint at complaints@ulsterwildlife.org. For further information, read our complaints policy.
- If we cannot resolve a complaint, we accept the authority of the Fundraising Regulator to make a final adjudication.

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



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 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

Ulster Wildlife has set a target to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 and we take sustainability very seriously. During the year we developed an initial draft of our net zero strategy and we will be refining this further during 2022/23 and also calculating the carbon stocks and sequestration on the land that we own and/or manage. We have already commenced the net zero journey which will be an integral part of all organisational and project planning. Research is underway on electric vehicles. We are waiting on improved models coming on to the market before beginning a phased investment programme to convert the charity's fleet to low emission alternatives. Energy supplies are renewable and a phased conversion of machinery is planned for coming years.

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 31 March 2022, net of unrestricted fixed assets is £642k 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	Catherine Thompson
Senior Management Team	Jennifer Fulton Chief Executive Dawn Miskelly Director of Development & Engagement Annika Clements Director of Nature, Climate & Environment Niamh Hart Finance Director Peter McEvoy Director of Land Use – Environmental Farming Scheme Ian Garner Peatlands Innovation Lead
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 2022 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 2022 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.

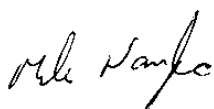
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

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 2022

		Unrestricted	Restricted	2022 Total	2021 Total
	Notes	Fund	Fund	Funds	Funds
		£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:					
Donations & Legacies	3	517,904	20,201	538,105	484,856
Conservation Activities	4	-	2,178,277	2,178,277	1,008,153
Agri-environment Payments		29,034	-	29,034	31,561
Charitable activities- Landfill Contributions	5	-	337,392	337,392	239,717
Education & Training Activities	6	150	313,530	313,680	373,264
Interest Received	7	1,819	1,165	2,984	5,811
Other Income	8	159,088	88,862	247,950	326,185
TOTAL INCOME		707,995	2,939,427	3,647,422	2,469,546
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising Funds	9	90,732	-	90,732	128,777
Charitable Activities	10	657,173	2,239,918	2,897,091	2,413,032
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		747,905	2,239,918	2,987,823	2,541,809
NET INCOME / EXPENDITURE BEFORE TRANSFERS & FOREIGN EXCHANGE					
		(39,910)	699,509	659,599	(72,264)
Gains/(Losses) from Foreign Exchange		(5,237)	-	(5,237)	5,923
Transfers Between Funds	14	172,394	(172,394)	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		127,247	527,115	654,362	(66,341)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
Total Funds at 1 April 2021		1,220,118	790,226	2,010,344	2,076,685
Transfer (from)/to Designated Fund for the Future		(168,594)	168,594		
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2022		1,178,771	1,485,935	2,664,706	2,010,344

The notes on pages 57 to 68 form part of these financial statements.

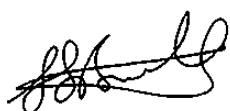
The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities. £594k of the restricted income above was received from DAERA towards the purchase of additional land at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve. This was match funded with £168k from our designated Fund for the Future. This additional land has been capitalised within restricted assets on our Statement of Financial Position.

Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £	2021 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	16	346,102	1,323,909	1,670,011	897,902
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	17	207,991	509,924	717,915	334,430
Cash at bank and in hand		711,164	992,096	1,703,260	1,367,871
		919,155	1,502,020	2,421,175	1,702,301
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors	18	77,373	997,178	1,074,551	236,924
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		841,782	504,842	1,346,624	1,465,377
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		1,187,884	1,828,751	3,016,635	2,363,279
CREDITORS due in more than 1 year					
Capital Grants	19	9,113	342,816	351,929	352,935
		1,178,771	1,485,935	2,664,706	2,010,344
RESERVES					
General Fund	20	988,414	-	988,414	942,333
Fund for the Future	21	190,357	-	190,357	277,785
Restricted Funds	21	-	1,485,935	1,485,935	790,226
		1,178,771	1,485,935	2,664,706	2,010,344

These financial statements were approved and signed by the members of the Board and authorised for issue on 01 September 2022.



Ken Brundle, Chairman



David Hendron, Honorary Treasurer

The notes on pages 57 to 68 form part of these financial statements. Company Registration Number: NI 12711

Statement of Cash Flows for year ending 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Net Income/(Expenditure)	659,599	(72,264)
<i>Adjustments for</i>		
Depreciation of Tangible Fixed Assets	7,995	25,814
Release of Deferred Capital Grant	(1,006)	-
(Increase)/decrease in Trade and Other Debtors	(383,485)	24,273
Increase/(decrease) in Trade and Other Creditors	837,627	20,207
Net Cash (used in)/from Operating Activities	1,120,730	(1,969)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Purchase of Tangible Assets	(801,065)	-
Disposal of Tangible Asset	20,961	-
Net Cash used in Investing Activities	(780,104)	-
Net increase / (decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	340,626	(1,969)
Cash and cash Equivalents at beginning of the year	1,367,871	1,363,918
Net increase / (decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents due to Exchange Rate Movements	(5,237)	5,922
Cash and Cash Equivalents at End of the Year	1,703,260	1,367,871

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	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
Legacy & In Memory Giving	61,166	-	20,541	20,000
Membership Contributions inc. Gift Aid	420,319	-	408,454	-
Corporate Support	7,500	10,000	8,217	-
Other Gifts & Donations	28,919	10,201	18,665	8,980
	<u>517,904</u>	<u>20,201</u>	<u>455,876</u>	<u>28,980</u>

4 Conservation Grants

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
Biffa Award	-	-	-	11,734
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts	-	-	-	10,000
Environmental Farming Scheme	-	195,673	-	151,396
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	150,000	-	117,132
EU- Interreg VA	-	410,941	-	286,438
EU - LIFE 14	-	-	-	57,501
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	30,000	-	-
DAERA Environment Fund	-	1,257,842	-	278,120
Alpha Programme- Groundwork	-	-	-	546
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	92,307	-	63,052
Landfill Communities Fund	-	4,419	-	7,146
Ministry of Defence	-	17,684	-	25,089
Save Our Seas Foundation	-	2,794	-	-
Kreitman Foundation	-	15,000	-	-
Marine Institute	-	1,617	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>2,178,277</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,008,153</u>

Notes to the Accounts

5 Landfill Environmental Projects

	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £
Landfill Contributions Received	-	337,392	-	239,717
	-	337,392	-	239,717
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Entrust Administration Fee	-	9,818	-	5,011
Direct Project Expenditure	-	238,944	-	202,427
Direct Costs	30,490	-	18,837	-
	30,490	248,762	18,837	207,438

6 Education & Training Grants and Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £
National Lottery Community Fund (Our Environment, Our Future)	-	74,124	-	199,427
National Lottery Community Fund (People and Communities)	-	60,263	-	31,023
National Lottery Heritage Fund (Empowering Young People 3)	-	31,226	-	-
National Lottery Heritage Fund Belfast City Council	-	58,829	-	130,319
Other	150	10,000	6,532	-
Department for Communities	-	12,012	-	-
Education Authority	-	31,332	-	-
DAERA Environment Fund	-	35,744	-	-
	150	313,530	6,532	366,731

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	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2022	2022	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Core Funding	75,000	-	112,500	-
National Lottery Heritage Fund: Heritage Emergency Fund	-	-	-	46,202
Consultancy	34,495	63,891	9,700	51,917
Furlough Income	7,312	-	36,351	-
Sundry income	42,281	24,971	47,116	22,399
	<u>159,088</u>	<u>88,862</u>	<u>205,667</u>	<u>120,518</u>

9 Expenditure on Raising Donations & Legacies

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
Travel	-	-	70	-
Professional Fees	-	-	970	10,904
Printed Materials, Misc	10,369	-	6,641	949
Wages & Salary Costs	80,363	-	109,243	-
	<u>90,732</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>116,924</u>	<u>11,853</u>

10 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
Landfill environmental projects	30,490	248,762	279,252	226,276
Nature Conservation	224,820	1,688,071	1,912,891	1,403,844
Environmental Education & Training	34,751	250,585	285,336	336,236
Membership Support Costs	75,251	-	75,251	66,965
Organisation Support Costs	261,846	46,001	307,847	345,778
Depreciation	18,292	6,499	24,791	25,814
Bank Interest & Charges	4,784	-	4,784	4,339
Auditors remuneration	3,780	-	3,780	3,780
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset	3,159	-	3,159	-
	<u>657,173</u>	<u>2,239,918</u>	<u>2,897,091</u>	<u>2,413,032</u>

Notes to the Account

11 Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Staff Costs	Other Direct Costs	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Landfill Environmental Projects	18,349	260,903	279,252	226,275
Nature Conservation	675,358	1,237,533	1,912,891	1,403,846
Environmental Education	200,489	84,847	285,336	336,236
Membership Support Costs	30,061	45,190	75,251	66,965
Organisation Support Costs	193,701	114,146	307,847	345,777
Other - Depreciation, Bank Charges, Audit.	-	36,514	36,514	33,933
	1,117,958	1,779,133	2,897,091	2,413,032

Other Direct Costs	Landfill Envir. Projects	Nature Conservation	Environmental Education	Membership & Organisation Support Costs	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Direct Project Costs	248,762	103,834	38,198	7,106	397,900
Premises Costs	12,141	27,549	3,084	50,106	92,880
Postage, Printing & Stationery	-	4,123	604	41,501	46,228
Staff Travel and Vehicle Costs	-	67,216	9,012	4,790	81,018
Contracted Services	-	1,020,748	22,468	24,722	1,067,938
Staff Training	-	5,408	7,876	1,151	14,435
Council Costs	-	-	-	40	40
Information Technology	-	11,211	3,604	29,919	44,734
	260,903	1,240,089	84,846	159,335	1,745,173

12 Depreciation

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds
	2022	2022	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£
Motor Vehicles	3,499	6,499	7,061	3,943
Equipment	6,548	-	6,548	-
Buildings	8,245	-	8,263	-
	18,292	6,499	21,872	3,943

Notes to the Accounts

13 Staff Costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	1,033,452	923,784
Social Security Costs	91,548	70,719
Pension Contributions	73,321	65,396
	<u>1,198,321</u>	<u>1,059,899</u>

One 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 36.5. (2021- 33).
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 £271,838. (2021: £195,209).

14 Transfer between Funds

	2022	2021
	£	£
Landfill fund administration costs	30,490	18,837
Project contribution to organisation support costs	160,530	134,231
Conservation work at Glendun	2,107	-
Match Funding for DAERA Challenge Fund	(20,733)	-
	<u>172,394</u>	<u>153,068</u>

15 Board remuneration and related party transactions

Helen Surgenor was appointed to the Board in the year to 31 March 2021. She is the spouse of a current staff member.

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. (2021 £NIL).

No travel and subsistence costs were paid to Trustees during the year. (2021 £NIL).

No Trustees received payment for professional services supplied to the charity (2021 £NIL).

No balances are owed to Trustees at 31st March 2022.

16 Fixed Assets

	Nature Reserves	Land & Buildings	Motor Vehicles	Equipment & Computers	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£
COST OR VALUATION					
At 1 April 2021	399,372	596,522	110,993	90,468	1,197,355
Additions	762,594	-	38,471	-	801,065
Disposals	-	7,167	-	13,794	20,961
At 31 March 2022	<u>1,161,966</u>	<u>589,355</u>	<u>149,464</u>	<u>76,674</u>	<u>1,977,459</u>
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 April 2021	-	164,206	72,610	62,637	299,453
Charge for year	-	8,245	11,003	6,548	25,797
Disposals	-	7,167	-	10,635	17,802
At 31 March 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>165,284</u>	<u>83,613</u>	<u>58,550</u>	<u>307,448</u>
NBV at 31 March 2022	1,161,966	424,071	65,851	18,124	1,670,011
<i>including restricted assets of</i>	1,121,966	150,000	51,943	-	1,323,909
Glendun farm has been included at probate value of £150,000.					

Notes to the Account

17 Debtors

	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £
Debtors and Prepayments	68,901	10,349	37,154	19,074
Grants	118,405	499,575	35,099	224,271
Tax Refunds Due	20,685	-	18,831	-
	<u>207,991</u>	<u>509,924</u>	<u>91,084</u>	<u>243,346</u>

18 Creditors falling due within one year

	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £
Sundry Creditors and Accrued Expenditure	<u>77,373</u>	<u>997,178</u>	<u>152,368</u>	<u>84,556</u>

19 Creditors falling due after more than 1 year

	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £
Capital Grants	<u>9,113</u>	<u>342,816</u>	<u>10,119</u>	<u>342,816</u>

20 Movement on unrestricted funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £
Balance at 1 April 2021	942,333	834,624
Surplus for the year	127,247	127,250
Transfer to Fund for the Future	(81,166)	(19,541)
Balance at 31 March 2022	<u>988,414</u>	<u>942,333</u>

21 Movement on restricted funds

	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £
Opening Balance	790,226	1,142,069
Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year	600,158	(193,591)
Transfer from/(to) Fund for the Future	168,594	(158,252)
Closing balance	<u>1,485,935</u>	<u>790,226</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.

£594k of restricted income was received from DAERA towards the purchase of additional land at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve. This was match funded with £168k from our designated Fund for the Future. This additional land has been capitalised within restricted assets on our Statement of Financial Position.

22 Movement on fund for the future

	Designated Funds for the future 2022 £	Designated Funds for the future 2021 £	Restricted Fund for the future 2021 £
Opening balance	277,785	-	99,992
Transfer from unrestricted funds	-	19,541	-
Transfer from restricted funds	-	-	158,252
Reclassification	-	258,244	(258,244)
Income from donations and legacies	81,166	-	-
UW contribution to the purchase of lands at Slievenacloy	(168,594)	-	-
Closing balance	<u>190,357</u>	<u>277,785</u>	-

Fund for the Future includes monies from gifts in wills and legacy donations and other 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 £13,750 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 2022, 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 2022.



**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 - Grey seal near Copeland Islands © R Surgenor
Back Cover - Ragged Robin at Balloo Wetland Nature Reserve

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.