



**Our Year for Nature,
People and Climate**

Ulster Wildlife Trust

**Annual Report &
Accounts 22-23**



Contents

Foreword	3	Thank you to our supporters	24
Highlights of our year for wildlife	4	Plans for the future	27
Bringing nature back	6	Financial review at 31 March 2023	28
Outcome 1: Nature is in Recovery	7	Structure and Governance	30
Reversing the decline of key species		Articles of Association	32
Restoring and connecting spaces for nature		Key policies and processes	33
Advocating for nature's recovery		Advisors, Senior Personnel and Administrative Details	35
Case Study: Barn owl success at Ballycruttle Farm		Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Ulster Wildlife Trust	36
Outcome 2: More people are taking positive action for nature and are benefitting from time spent in nature	13	Financial Statements	39
Engaging young people with nature			
Inspiring and empowering people to take action for nature			
Strengthening our membership and volunteer network			
Case Study: Youth action for nature			
Outcome 3: Nature-based solutions are playing a critical role in addressing the impacts of climate change in Northern Ireland	20		
Restoring peatlands for nature and climate			
Restoring blue carbon habitats and species			
Case Study: Bringing back native oysters			



Wildflowers at the Umbria Nature Reserve © Ronald Sugden

Foreword

During 2022-23, as a charity, we have overcome great challenges to produce extremely positive results for nature, people and climate.

With the introduction of our bold new strategy to 2030 to tackle the nature and climate crises and meet local, regional and international targets, our top priority has been to explore new and innovative ways to scale up our work for nature's recovery, taking a lead from international best practice and research. From launching our second native oyster nursery at Glenarm and purchasing a peatland restoration demonstration site in Co. Tyrone to securing long-term funding from DAERA to scale up peatland restoration in Northern Ireland – we have started to lay the groundwork for achieving our ambition. This work also allows us to showcase, educate and collaborate on the benefits of nature-based solutions and the role our natural habitats can play in addressing climate change, and benefitting people's health and wellbeing.

Our work to bring wildlife back gained momentum as we celebrated a successful breeding year for our most iconic farmland bird the barn owl, played a role in introducing red squirrels to Castle Ward Estate, and conducted research showing the phenomenal expansion of pine martens across Northern Ireland. These 'good news' stories received widespread media coverage and captured people's hearts and minds, helping to raise our profile and grow our supporter base – more essential than ever if we are to make a real difference.

Despite another turbulent year for politics, our campaigning and advocacy work witnessed several notable successes including the historic passing of Northern Ireland's Climate Change Act, thanks to campaigning by our supporters and fellow environmental charities. We also responded to a procession of consultations and key threats affecting nature, most notably the UK Retained EU Law Bill.

Mobilising and empowering communities to take meaningful action for nature and climate was lifted to new heights with the launch of the 'Nextdoor Nature' project in south and east Belfast. Our Youth Forum also continues to grow from strength to strength with public engagement campaigns such as 'Let Nature In' helping us achieve our goal of one in four people taking action for nature.

Of course, none of this work would be possible without the dedication and unstinting efforts of the staff and volunteer team, and our skilled Board Members along with the continued and vital support from our loyal members, supporters, businesses, partners, and funders.

Thank you!



Jennifer Fulton

Jennifer Fulton
Chief Executive Officer of Ulster Wildlife



Ken Brundle

Ken Brundle
Chair of Ulster Wildlife

Highlights of our year for wildlife



© Ronald Surgenor

April 22

Launched new Strategy to 2030 to 'bring nature back'

Nature is in crisis and declining at rates unprecedented in human history. Our new strategy for a wilder future by 2030 sets out our vision of a thriving natural world with nature in recovery, where everyone is inspired to get involved, and where wildlife plays a key role in addressing the nature and climate emergencies. Together, and with the support of local communities, businesses, farmers, landowners and our members who stand with us, we are in the best place possible to turn our vision into a reality – and ensure the recovery of our natural world. Read our strategy: ulsterwildlife.org/publications



May 22

Nextdoor Nature launched to empower local communities to help nature flourish

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Nextdoor Nature is bringing people together in south and east Belfast to help nature flourish. We are supporting communities to put their ideas into action and make small changes on their doorsteps that will help put nature into recovery. Micro-projects are being brought to life in places where green spaces and access to nature have eroded over time, driven by galvanised communities who are finding a new passion for wildlife.



June 22

Climate Change Act becomes law

After years of campaigning with other environmental organisations, our Youth Forum, the public, and with support from our members, Northern Ireland finally has a Climate Change Act. This was a historic moment – just over two years after the Assembly declared a 'Climate Emergency' – and is the first-ever legislation in Northern Ireland to drive forward action to tackle the climate and nature crises. The Act includes a target of net-zero by 2050, 'Just Transition' principles including a fund to support agriculture, a nature-based solutions amendment, and provision for a Climate Commissioner.



© Scottish Shark Tagging Programme

July 22

Four years of shark conservation celebrated

Our four-year project to safeguard the future of endangered sharks, skates and rays (elasmobranchs) ended with some fantastic achievements. We trained and supported dedicated anglers to become tagging champions. We also trained 80 anglers in best practice handling techniques with over 640 shark, skates, and rays tagged and recorded. This tagging data, alongside over 4,000 eggcase records submitted by the public, provides vital information needed to protect important elasmobranch nursery and pupping grounds.



© Philip McErlean

August 22

Record lizard sightings at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve

Our Slievenacloy Nature Reserve, in the Belfast Hills, is the perfect hotspot for the common lizard – Ireland's only native reptile – where it can be seen basking on old fence posts, paths and rocks on warm days. Last summer, lizard surveyor Philip McErlean, spotted a total of 48 common lizards – 18 adults and 30 neonates – a record for one day.



© Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography

September 22

New online sightings portal goes live

We launched a new online recording facility so that the public can submit their sightings of red squirrel, barn owl, and pine marten – three key Northern Ireland priority species we are focusing our conservation efforts on to help reverse their fortunes. Sightings of these three key species, along with grey squirrels and long-eared owls, will help us build a better picture of their distribution across Northern Ireland, so we can target our work more effectively. Record your sightings: ulsterwildlife.org/record-sightings

Highlights of our year for wildlife



© Ronald Sargenor

October 22

Turning the tide to save the Irish Sea

We joined forces with other conservation bodies in the Irish Sea region to find solutions to the challenges nature is facing across the Irish Sea. The Irish Sea is incredibly rich in wildlife but heavily used with limited protection and proper management. Together, we produced a Review of the Irish Sea 2022 which laid down our vision and calls to action to protect and improve its health. We want to see collaboration across national borders to achieve a well-managed and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas and truly sustainable fisheries.



© Mark Hamblin 2020 VISION

November 22

Defend Nature campaign launched

The introduction of the proposed Retained EU Law Bill, which could see vital pieces of environmental legislation of EU-origin scrapped, required a rapid response to ensure decades of wins for wildlife and wild places were not lost. We joined forces with fellow environmental charities to send a joint letter to NI Ministers as well as engaging with key local politicians to speak out against this Bill. We also worked with The Wildlife Trusts to mobilise public support in the form of letters and a postcard campaign to MP constituency offices.



© Ronald Sargenor

December 22

Launch of annual appeal for seabird conservation

To help match-fund the purchase of a new boat for our seabird conservation on our Isle of Muck Nature Reserve, off Islandmagee, we appealed to our members and supporters to raise £5,000. This natural treasure is home to the third largest colony of cliff nesting seabirds in Northern Ireland, from razorbills to kittiwakes. Owning our own vessel enables us to step-up essential conservation work when it's needed the most, respond to incidents quickly, and undertake more regular seabird monitoring. We were thrilled to raise over £10,000, thanks to our supporters. 'Tystie' made its maiden voyage in February with the additional funds raised helping to purchase essential boat equipment.



© Adam Gerrard

January 23

Red squirrel release at Castle Ward sparks hope for iconic mammal

Four red squirrels were successfully introduced to Castle Ward estate, outside Strangford, in a bid to establish a new population of this key native species. The introduction was part of an ongoing effort between the National Trust, Ulster Wildlife, Belfast Zoo, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Heart of Down Red Squirrel Group to secure the long-term future of this iconic mammal. The location was carefully chosen as it has ample woodland habitat and, most importantly, it is free from invasive grey squirrels – the biggest threat to the red squirrels' survival.



© Giles Knight

February 23

Collaboration with farmers in Leitrim

Our Fermanagh Environmental Farming Scheme Group collaborated with Leitrim Sustainable Agriculture Group including a series of reciprocal farm visits. This helped improve understanding of the importance and challenges of farming wet species-rich grasslands that deliver for nature and are unique to this border region. The collaboration also resulted in good sharing of ideas and joint bids for Shared Island funding of which we await the outcome.



March 23

Positive breeding year celebrated for barn owls

One of our most vulnerable farmland birds, the barn owl, had a positive breeding year in 2022. Twenty-four barn owl chicks fledged from eight known breeding pairs – a significant increase in chicks from 2021. Two new nest sites were also discovered in Co Down helping to boost the bird's fragile population, which is estimated to be less than 30 breeding pairs. Barn owls were badly hit in 2021, as the wet spring and hot summer resulted in a poor breeding season, so this is welcome news for our struggling population. Read the 2022 barn owl report: ulsterwildlife.org/barn-owls



Small heath butterfly at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor

Bringing nature back

Our new strategy to put nature into recovery by 2030 has ambitious goals and builds upon our work over the last 45 years to deliver impactful change for nature. It drives us towards our vision of a wilder future, where everyone is inspired to get involved in nature's recovery, and where wildlife plays a key role in addressing the nature and climate emergencies. Although it is a bold and complex challenge, it is a necessity – and the solution to the very real and present dangers that nature and people face in the midst of a climate and nature emergency.

Our ability to galvanize people to take action, to work collaboratively to achieve the greatest impact for nature, and our knowledge, experience, 'localness' and innovative ways of working, are our core strengths. Together, and with the support of local communities, farmers, landowners, businesses, and our members who stand with us, we are in the best place possible to turn our vision into a reality – and ensure the recovery of our natural world.

Public Benefit

- The Trustees of Ulster Wildlife have taken into account the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit, and consider it fully when planning and reviewing the charity's actions and outcomes and in planning our future activities.
- This Trustees' Report shows how we performed against our strategic outcomes in 2022/23.
- Ulster Wildlife's charitable objectives as set out in our Articles of Association can be found on page 32.

Our Vision

A wilder future where people and nature are thriving together

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to protect and restore nature on land and at sea. We will play our part in ending the climate and ecological emergencies, creating a society where nature is valued and is part of our daily lives.

Our Strategic Outcomes for 2030

- 1. NATURE** - Nature is in recovery and wildlife is thriving across Northern Ireland.
- 2. PEOPLE** - More people are taking positive action for nature and climate and are benefiting from time spent in nature.
- 3. CLIMATE** - Nature-based solutions are playing a central role in addressing climate change.

Outcome 1 Nature

Nature is in recovery and wildlife is thriving across Northern Ireland

With one in ten species at risk of extinction here, we need to reverse the decline and bring nature back. It has become clear that protecting what we have left is no longer enough. It is our aim to create new spaces for nature by connecting habitats and restoring landscapes, and by working collaboratively to help species and habitats recover.

857 hectares of land managed for wildlife (equivalent to 2,116 football pitches)

400 farmers and landowners received advice

40k ha of farms whose management we influenced.

108 gardens surveyed by the public for hedgehogs



Barn owl chick, Co Down

Barn Owls

With fewer than 30 breeding pairs of barn owls in Northern Ireland, we continued to carry out a range of conservation actions to help this iconic farmland bird recover.

Barn owls faced a challenging breeding season in 2021, so we were delighted to receive more positive news in 2022. Across Northern Ireland, at known nest sites, there were eight broods, resulting in 24 chicks fledging – a considerable increase compared to the previous year. A number of new nest sites were also discovered in nest boxes that we had previously erected, in collaboration with volunteers and partners.

Twenty additional nest boxes were installed in strategic locations during the winter to help barn owls from existing nests expand their range to these newly established sites. Our aim is to create a network of nest boxes and suitable barn owl habitats across the country, which will enable this priority species to recover, spread and ultimately thrive using the 'Nature Recovery Network' approach.

We received substantial interest from landowners eager to help and conducted 34 on-site visits to assess farms for their suitability as barn owl habitats, providing valuable land management advice in the process.

Additionally, we received a considerable number of barn owl and long-eared owl sightings and launched a new sightings database to help streamline the recording process.



Red squirrel © Ronald Surgenor

Red Squirrels

Following the launch of our Red Squirrel Conservation Strategy for Northern Ireland, we have been actively supporting local red squirrel groups in their conservation efforts. We have also been collaborating with local councils to assist them in implementing measures to safeguard this priority species.

To ensure the long-term monitoring of red squirrels, pine martens, and grey squirrels, our dedicated staff, volunteers, and external partners conducted a comprehensive survey to determine their presence or absence across Northern Ireland. Woodlands were surveyed across Northern Ireland – 218 in total – revealing a significant rise in pine marten presence over the last five years.

To help simplify data collection and to inform conservation action, we developed and launched a new sightings database for the public to record red squirrels, grey squirrels and pine martens. A grey squirrel control database was also developed for volunteers.

Additionally, we collaborated with the Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum and the National Trust to successfully introduce red squirrels to the Castle Ward estate.



Hedgehog survey at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve

Hedgehogs

We teamed up again with NUI Galway last year for the Irish Hedgehog Survey to help find out more about these much-loved mammals. This citizen science project encourages the public to submit sightings of hedgehogs and carry out surveys using footprint tunnels and camera traps.

Over 1,000 people in Northern Ireland signed up to take part in the survey, which ran from May to September, with sightings collected all year round. In total, 390 hedgehog sightings were submitted – a huge increase since the survey began in 2020. Sixteen hedgehog talks and workshops were delivered, with 70 people trained in the survey methodology.

Along with a number of other organisations, we carried out 15 Local Area Surveys; these consisted of 10 tunnels placed in a 1km square for five nights. A number of our nature reserves were surveyed including Balloo, Bog Meadows, Slievenacloy and Glenarm. We had a fantastic uptake from the public and our members with 108 surveys carried out in people's gardens. This data is important to establish a baseline for hedgehogs and build a better picture of their distribution, so we can work to secure their future.

We have also been raising awareness of hedgehogs and encouraging people to create hedgehog-friendly gardens through our 'Let Nature In' wildlife gardening campaign.



Tystie transporting sheep to Isle of Muck Nature Reserve

Nature Reserves

Our nature reserves cover nearly 850 hectares of land spread across 19 sites that include some of Northern Ireland's most important habitats and species. From a small field in the Glens of Antrim safeguarding a rare plant to a vast expanse of wilderness in the Belfast Hills, our nature reserves are equally important in their conservation efforts.

A key highlight of the year was the acquisition of a new boat named 'Tystie' to aid our seabird conservation work at the Isle of Muck – our sincere thanks to everyone who generously donated to our appeal. At Glenullin Bog, monitoring of our efforts to raise water levels through damming and bunding yielded positive results, confirming the first steps in the restoration of this 45-hectare lowland raised bog.

As is the nature of the natural world, it was a year of highs and lows for many priority species we help to protect. There were record counts of small eggar moth webs at Umbra, while nesting kittiwakes hit their highest ever numbers at Isle of Muck, although a disappointing number of chicks fledged thereafter. Slievenacloy saw a record number of common lizards surveyed, and Devon carpet moth was recorded again at Glenarm, proving that the latter species has started colonising Northern Ireland. Beyond this, it was another year of hard work from our staff and volunteers with the reward of conserving and restoring our native wildlife – a fantastic effort by all involved.

Protected Sites

We continued to work in partnership with the Ministry of Defence to support the management of Ballykinler and Magilligan Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Our previous suspension of scrub cutting at Ballykinler ended with the removal of 10 hectares of thick gorse, which was obstructing the growth of crucial plants and covering the significant grey-dune grassland habitat. Furthermore, we resumed scrub cutting at Magilligan and successfully eliminated three hectares of dense blackthorn scrub. We also treated scrub that had been cut in the previous three years at both locations to prevent regrowth.

Surveys were completed for a number of priority species including petalwort, marsh fritillary butterfly, scarce crimson and gold moth, northern colletes bee and small eggar moth.



Scarce crimson & gold moth, Magilligan SAC © Adam Mantell

NRN partners at Clondeboye Estate



Nature Recovery Networks

We continued to work with project partners RSPB NI, National Trust and Woodland Trust to develop ways to adopt a landscape-scale approach to nature's recovery using Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs) – more, bigger, better and joined-up wildlife-rich places to benefit people and wildlife.

A second series of knowledge-sharing webinars took place focusing on work already underway in Northern Ireland and exploring our next steps. A suite of educational videos were also produced to provide greater understanding of the Nature Recovery Network approach. Finally, partners had the opportunity to visit stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network, providing ample ideas and inspiration.



Engaging with farmers in Co Fermanagh @ Giles Knight

Environmental Farming Scheme

Membership of our Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) Group programme, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), continued to grow. This is one of five pilot schemes in Northern Ireland designed to support farmers to deliver nature conservation at scale through agri-environment schemes.

Our group facilitators worked with 441 farmers last year to engage them in positive land management; this included 24 group events, 268 one-to-one mentoring sessions and 152 farm walkovers.

We also added around 75 farms to the Higher Level Environmental Farming Scheme – which focuses on designated sites and priority habitats – putting approximately 4,000 hectares of high nature value land into positive management across four counties. In total, we have engaged with over 20% of all farmers with EFS (Higher) Agreements.

We engaged in a diverse range of activities, from identifying woodland and meadow plants and providing guidance on tree planting and hedge management to hosting peatland restoration demonstrations. We delved into sustainable farming concepts and provided valuable guidance on paperwork and record keeping. Additionally, we organised unique farm walks conducted after dark and addressed the impacts of ash dieback. We also collaborated with farmer groups in Co. Leitrim and worked closely with farmers and partner organisations to assist landowners in safeguarding priority species, including marsh fritillary, curlew, barn owls and red squirrels.

In addition, through on-the-ground surveys, facilitators and associates added 212 hectares of land to priority habitat maps, mainly species-rich grassland in Fermanagh, ensuring it can be protected and made eligible for agri-environment measures in the future.

Public Affairs, Policy and Legislation

It has been a critical year for policy and public affairs. World leaders finally signed the Montreal Biodiversity Framework at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in December 2022. This is the most significant global agreement yet to tackle biodiversity loss with over 23 targets agreed.

Although not binding, governments must show their progress in meeting the targets within their biodiversity plans. In Northern Ireland, we have been working with the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to co-develop a new Biodiversity Strategy and will be pressing for legally binding targets and strong reporting duties to be put into place. We also ran a communications campaign throughout COP15 to engage our supporter base and highlight the urgent need for local action.

The UK Government's proposed Retained EU Law Bill, which could see vital pieces of environmental legislation of EU origin scrapped, required a rapid response to ensure decades of wins for wildlife and wild places were not lost. We joined forces with fellow environmental charities to send a joint letter to NI Ministers as well as engaging with key local politicians to speak out against this Bill. We also worked with The Wildlife Trusts to mobilise public support in the form of template letters and a postcard campaign to MP constituency offices.

One of the biggest highlights of the year was in June when the long-awaited Northern Ireland Climate Change Act became law. As part of the NI Climate Coalition, we campaigned throughout the legislative process and provided oral and written evidence to the Assembly. This is the

first-ever legislation in Northern Ireland to drive forward action to tackle the climate and nature crises, although much work now needs to be done developing the first carbon budgets and sectoral plans.

We also responded to several other major consultations during the year, including the Draft Ammonia Strategy, Wild Birds Licenses, and the Republic of Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan.

As a lead member of the Northern Ireland Marine Task Force, we worked with DAERA to help co-design vital new conservation strategies for Northern Ireland. These included the Blue Carbon Action Plan, to improve understanding of how coastal marine habitats can contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, the development of a Seabird Conservation Strategy, and an Elasmobranch Conservation Strategy to provide guidelines for the conservation of local sharks, skates and rays.

We also collaboratively responded to several key consultations affecting the marine environment. These included the Draft Joint Fisheries Statement, Management measures on the use of fast craft and personal watercraft in MPA's, Hand-gathering of intertidal shellfish in NI: a call for evidence, and the Future Strategy for the Marine and Fisheries Fund.

Barn owl success at Ballycruttle Farm

“ Ballycruttle Farm has been involved with the RSPB’s Co. Down Farmland Initiative for a few years now, providing rich-seed habitats, rough grass margins, and hedgerows for a number of birds on the red list such as yellowhammers, linnets, tree sparrows, reed buntings and skylarks.

During conversations with RSPB, we talked about erecting barn owl boxes so they put us in touch with Ulster Wildlife. Ulster Wildlife advised us on the best locations and we set about putting our first box up in February 2021. Thankfully, having a husband who is a tree surgeon made this process a little easier.

On that same evening, we were excited to hear the eerie, long screech of a male barn owl, which continued for a few nights.

One particular evening, as I was chasing a duck to bed, I suddenly became startled by something flying low above my head – the night was silent, so the noise took me by surprise. The next evening, I went out a little earlier to see if my thoughts were correct – and they were; an owl flew out of the box and headed for the woodland.

Excited about our discovery, we invited Ulster Wildlife out and together we observed the barn owl box using infrared binoculars. Hissing sounds confirmed there was at least one chick.

Roll onto the middle of June, and a team arrived to ring what we assumed were two chicks. To our surprise, three chicks awaited us – two boys and a girl!

This was an amazing experience, both for my family and for all of those involved. They are the most beautiful, majestic birds, and we are so proud to have been part of their recovery story.



Dawn Stocking
Ballycruttle Farm



Dawn Stocking with Ulster Wildlife and RSPBNI representatives



Barn owl chick being ringed



Adult barn owl at Ballycruttle Farm © Andrew Bassett

Outcome 2 People

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

Without more people taking action themselves, the fight to protect nature and tackle the climate crisis is an insurmountable task. We need to engage and empower people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to take action and stand up for nature, and also to reconnect people with wild places and green spaces. By increasing the number of people who can speak up for nature, our collective voice will be louder and reach further than ever before.

95 registered volunteers

1,500 volunteer hours donated to nature

1,020 people learned about nature at our events

1,600 gardens signed up to our wildlife gardening campaign

28 Youth Forum members

Corporate volunteers at Dallynaphone Bog Nature Reserve



Youth Forum residential at Crawfordsburn

Youth Forum

Our Youth Forum continued to grow with 12 new members joining during the year, providing a platform for young people to speak up for nature, take part in campaigns and take action for wildlife.

A highlight was a weekend residential at Crawfordsburn Country Park where members explored rocky shore ecology and made bird boxes, as well as discussing ways young people can influence change and have their say on the future of the Youth Forum. Other activities this year included 'Leave No Trace' training and contributing to a consultation on DAERA's Green Growth Strategy.



Young people repairing paths at Colm Glen Forest Park

Wild Youth

Young people from north and west Belfast engaged in nature-based wellbeing activities as part of this innovative programme, delivered in conjunction with Belfast Hills Partnership, and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

750 young people took part this year, and over 125 young people gained Bronze, Silver or Gold Wild Youth Award certificates in recognition of their time spent connecting with and helping the natural world. Feedback from participants has shown increases in their level of connection with nature as well as their mental wellbeing. A particular highlight of this programme has been the opportunity to work with young people who are new to Northern Ireland and who have arrived here recently seeking asylum.



Our Bright Future

Youth Forum members continued to promote three key policy issues on outdoor learning, green jobs, and the role of young people in decision-making, as part of our work supporting the UK Our Bright Future initiative.

As well as producing a Youth Manifesto for the Environment, forum members also met with local politicians to outline their environmental concerns and to advocate for specific actions in the run up to the Assembly elections in May 2022. Although the initiative ended in November 2022, the legacy of our involvement continues in other youth projects we are now delivering.



Tree talk with Bloomfield Wildlife Watch



Training workshop for youth workers in Belfast

Sustainable Youth Work Curriculum

Training workshops were delivered for youth workers from more than 20 organisations, focusing on the new Sustainable Youth Work curriculum we developed on behalf of the Education Authority.

The workshops gave youth workers the skills and confidence to engage young people with environmental issues. Resources are now available to youth workers across Northern Ireland via the Education Authority website.



Bloomfield group tree planting at Orangefield Park

Wildlife Watch Groups

Wildlife Watch Groups for children continued to grow with 30 members spanning three groups in Lisburn, Bloomfield and Bog Meadows, all run by passionate volunteers.

The groups meet monthly to enjoy activities such as pond dipping, bat walks, and listening to wildlife talks by guest speakers. During the year, the Bloomfield group launched a Tree Trail at Orangefield Park, in conjunction with Belfast City Council, raising the funds to purchase and plant 24 native trees, including signage for locals to enjoy.



Helping Glentoran with their raised beds

Nextdoor Nature

We embraced a new way of working with communities in south and east Belfast by discovering what they need and want in their area to help nature flourish and then supporting them with the skills and tools to take action on their own terms.

A number of community-led projects are now underway to help put nature into recovery, thanks to funding support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Glentoran Football Club is supporting local people to grow their own produce, raised beds have been revitalised at The Larder foodbank, wildlife gardening workshops have been delivered to alleyway gardeners in south Belfast, and residents of Wingrove Gardens plan to make their whole street wildlife-friendly. Most importantly, the local communities decide on what happens and drive the change in their own neighbourhoods.



Bog Meadows youth volunteer team

Community Engagement at Bog Meadows

Our work to strengthen a sense of community ownership of Bog Meadows Nature Reserve continued with a range of programmes to engage local residents and community groups, thanks to support from the National Lottery Community Fund.

This included nature connection sessions, wildlife walks, summer schemes, school education sessions, regular adult and youth volunteering opportunities and a Wildlife Watch group for children.

We are also delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Department for Infrastructure to create a 'Community Wildlife Garden'. This will be planned and cultivated in partnership with local community groups to showcase a working wildlife garden and provide a valuable community space for our activities.



'Let Nature In' Wildlife Gardening Campaign

We continued to promote our 'Let Nature In' campaign to encourage more people to make space for nature in their gardens.

Over 1,600 people have signed up to the campaign so far, with regular emails providing tips and advice throughout the year to help people welcome nature into their gardens.



Pine Marten, Co Down © Ronald Surgenor



Yellowhammer © Mark Hamblin 2020 VISION

Defend Nature Campaign

We teamed up with The Wildlife Trusts to mobilise public action to defend nature and put a stop to the UK Government's plans to threaten wildlife with the proposed Retained EU Law Bill.

Over 150 supporters used our template letter or postcard to ask their MPs to scrap the Bill, which could see vital pieces of environmental legislation of EU-origin weakened or removed.

We also joined forces with fellow environmental charities to send a joint letter to NI Ministers as well as engaging with key local politicians to speak out against this Bill.



Portballintrae Armada Interpretation project

Landfill Communities Fund

We helped distribute £276,000 of Landfill Communities Fund contributions from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to 17 community and environmental projects.

The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) is a grant scheme that enables operators of landfill sites to contribute a portion of the monies they pay as landfill tax directly to approved Environmental Bodies, such as Ulster Wildlife, for distribution to projects of environmental and public benefit.

2022 saw an increase in project activity with the effects of the pandemic winding down. For the remaining lifespan of contributions from our two landfill operators, we 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.



Volunteers at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve



Red kite event for members



Danske Bank volunteers at Balloo Woodland Nature Reserve

Exclusive Member Events

We delivered a successful series of online talks for members during the winter, many delivered by guest speakers, on everything from red kites and brent geese to wildlife photography.

We also planned an exclusive programme of member face-to-face events from woodland foraging to coastal walks for the spring and summer months.

Over 100 members joined us for our AGM and Members' Day at Malone House in September with special guest Craig Bennett, CEO of The Wildlife Trusts.

Volunteering

We received tremendous support from 95 registered volunteers with practical conservation tasks on our nature reserves, species conservation efforts, people engagement and office support.

Over 200 corporate volunteers from 24 local businesses joined us at Balloo, Bog Meadows, Slievenacloy and Ballynahone Bog Nature Reserves to lend a hand with invasive species control, litter picks, hedge trimming, path clearing and site maintenance.

Our first native oyster nursery at Bangor Marina received fantastic interest from potential volunteers, with 15 dedicated volunteers now regularly helping us look after the oysters and conducting regular health checks.

Five volunteer student placements from Queen's and Ulster Universities joined our Nature Reserve and Marine teams for the year. They benefitted from a range of training and invaluable on-the-job experience learning about habitat management, invasive species control, GIS mapping, volunteer engagement, and survey data and reporting.



Eibhlinn and youth forum members at Belfast Climate Rally

Youth Action For Nature

“ I got involved with Ulster Wildlife’s Youth Forum because I had a desire to connect with other young people with an interest in nature. Looking back, I was isolated in my love for nature and even a bit lost. The Youth Forum gave me a direction for my interest, and the virtual meet-ups allowed me to connect and learn from other young people. The Forum has been instrumental in giving me confidence and a sense of belonging within circles of ecology and environmental advocacy. I was even lucky enough to represent Ulster Wildlife at the Wildlife Trusts’ planning event for the upcoming youth festival.

The Forum is not just a connection-building group, but also a brilliant educational tool. One of my favourite memories was visiting Cuilcagh to learn about peatland restoration with young farmers – it was such a valuable experience, and each interaction with a different issue (like peatland restoration) leaves you a little more invested in it than you were before. In a similar way, meeting others in the Forum that have different interests or approaches can lead to the discovery of new interests – like butterflies!

I’m currently studying Biological Sciences at Queen’s and hope to pursue a career in ecology, or science communication. Not everyone in the Forum will – but I think that’s what makes it special. The Youth Forum supports those wishing to pursue an environmental job but also fosters and maintains an interest and care for nature in those who will not. In the face of the biodiversity and climate crises, we need everyone in all sectors to care – and through the Youth Forum, Ulster Wildlife is playing its part.



Eibhlinn Fee, aged 20
Ulster Youth Forum member

Outcome 3 Climate

Nature-based solutions are playing a critical role in addressing the impacts of climate change in Northern Ireland

We are in the midst of a nature and climate crises and neither can be resolved in isolation. The natural world can provide its own solutions to combat and reverse these threats. We are promoting the implementation of nature-based solutions such as the restoration of peatlands and of coastal blue carbon habitats to provide carbon sequestration and storage while supporting resilient wildlife.

50 hectares of peatland restored across 3 sites

34,500^{m3} of seawater filtered by our native oyster nursery



Peatland restoration in action

Restoring peatlands for nature and climate

We were a key delivery partner in the EU funded (Interreg VA) Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN) project, in which we oversaw the restoration of hundreds of hectares of priority peatland habitats, from blanket bog on Cuilcagh Mountain to the species-rich fens in Lecale.

The CANN project ended in September 2022 with the completion of Conservation Action Plans for 11 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Since then, with funding from the DAERA Environment Fund, we have used these plans to deliver further restoration on key peatland habitats across Northern Ireland. This includes the installation of hundreds of new dams at Fairy Water Bogs and Tully Bog SAC in Co Tyrone. Additionally, we cleared invasive reed and scrub at Carrowcarlin Fen Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) in Co Down using specialist amphibious machinery. We also continued efforts to control invasive rhododendron at Peatlands Park SAC, with over five hectares treated in areas that had never been addressed before.

Alongside this, we have been developing a 'pipeline' of potential restoration sites and collecting the data needed to deliver works on the ground when funding becomes available. We've collected LiDAR data (light detection and ranging), aerial imagery, and developed restoration plans for a variety of new sites including Teal Lough SAC and Magho Cliffs ASSI. We have also been working closely with other environmental organisations and making use of our new drone technology to collect data on areas such as the Mourne Mountains and Colebrooke Bogs.

Monitoring of atmospheric ammonia on sensitive sites has also been a key part of our work over the past year. We have continued to work with Northern Ireland Environment Agency to collect and analyse ammonia deposition on both Curran Bog and Turmennan Fen SAC. These efforts form part of wider monitoring taking place at a national level and will help strengthen policy and regulation around atmospheric ammonia going forward.

In February 2022, we purchased Haughey's Bog, a degraded peatland site in County Tyrone, with the aim of showcasing a range of peatland restoration techniques and developing a best practice site.

Restoring blue carbon habitats and species

We installed our second native oyster nursery at Glenarm Marina in March 2023 to help bring back this endangered species and provide a host of wider benefits to the marine environment.

The native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) was once a common sight along the Glenarm coastline up until the mid-1800s when overfishing, disease, invasive species and pollution decimated the local population. To help revive the species, we have installed over 800 mature native oysters in 30 purpose-built cages suspended over the edges of the marina's pontoons, thanks to funding from DAERA and a generous donation from Wilson Resources.

The nursery will release millions of oyster larvae every summer, which will settle onto the seabed and support the oyster's natural recovery. These ocean superheroes will also help boost biodiversity by providing nursery grounds for fish and other creatures, improve water clarity and quality by filtering 162,000 litres of water every day, and tackle climate change by storing carbon in their shells.

At our first native oyster nursery in Bangor Marina, the oysters are thriving thanks to support from a fantastic group of volunteers who have helped us keep the cages clean, carry out health checks, and monitor the oysters' growth. Since April 2022, the average growth rate has been ~25mm with an average increase in weight of ~30g, similar to that observed in wild populations.

Over 60 marine species have also been recorded at the Bangor nursery since it was established, including common prawn, juvenile crab, pipefish, lumpsuckers, tompot blennies, spined stickleback fish and, on two occasions, the critically endangered European eel. This is a win for wildlife and as the oyster nursery grows and matures, we envisage a lot more species being discovered within these unique hanging mini reef systems.

Native oyster shell



Launch of Glenarm oyster nursery





Oyster cage at Bangor Marina



Helen Marks, Radio 4, with staff and volunteers at the Bangor oyster nursery

Bringing Back Native Oysters

“ I have always been interested in wildlife, whether it be on land or under the sea where I enjoyed diving down to wrecks and seeing the diversity of the wildlife down there.

Since I stopped diving, I had been looking for something to occupy my spare time. Then I heard about Ulster Wildlife’s oyster nursery in Bangor Marina, so I went along to the volunteer induction day and was so inspired I had to get involved.

Although it is not very glamorous hoisting up and handling dirty oyster cages, I enjoy weighing and measuring the oysters to see their development and meeting new friends with like-minded interests.

It was fantastic to see a local radio station come down to the marina to talk to us and find out about the restoration project. I was particularly chuffed when they asked me to explain to the listeners what activity we were doing and why we choose to volunteer.

Over the last few months, I have learned a lot about how the oysters cluster together and make a sort of reef, which in turn provides a home and shelter for other marine life. I’ve learned how overfishing and pollution have drastically reduced their population in once large thriving beds, which in turn has affected the ecosystem, so it’s crucial we redress the situation and start nurseries to re-introduce the native oyster back to the sea bed.



David Hill
Oyster Nursery Volunteer at Bangor Marina





Thank you to our supporters

We would like to express our profound gratitude to all our valued members for their unwavering support throughout the year. Their dedication has been the cornerstone of our conservation efforts and has enabled us to make a significant impact for nature.

We are equally thankful for the generous gifts in wills received this year, as well as donations from businesses that have supported our work. In addition, funders and philanthropic loans have been key to developing long-term conservation projects and purchasing key areas of land for habitat restoration.

With this support, we have been able to implement vital conservation projects, restore habitats, protect endangered species, and create safe havens for wildlife to flourish. Thank you!

Tystie - our new boat for the Isle of Muck Nature Reserve



Members

Many charities are feeling the effects of the cost of living crisis on donations and regular giving. With fewer people giving to charity, our membership income dropped slightly this year. Our existing members continue to be an extremely important source of unrestricted funds and we were heartened to see the vast majority of members staying with us even in these difficult times, aided in part by an increase in member-exclusive events and benefits over the past year. Member generosity is the driving force behind our conservation efforts.

Our annual appeal raised more than £10,000 in match funding for the purchase of a new boat for seabird conservation at our Isle of Muck Nature Reserve. Our generous supporters chose to name the boat "Tystie" – the local/Scots name for black guillemot.

Swallow at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor



Legacy and In-Memory

Gifts in wills and in-memory donations, no matter the size, allow a person's passion for nature to live on. Every legacy or in-memory donation 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.

Each year, more people are recognising the significant impact a gift in your will to Ulster Wildlife can make. This year, committed members and supporters left specific bequests to Ulster Wildlife and in-memory gifts were also received. Several people remembered loved ones via online donations.

Power NI volunteers at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve

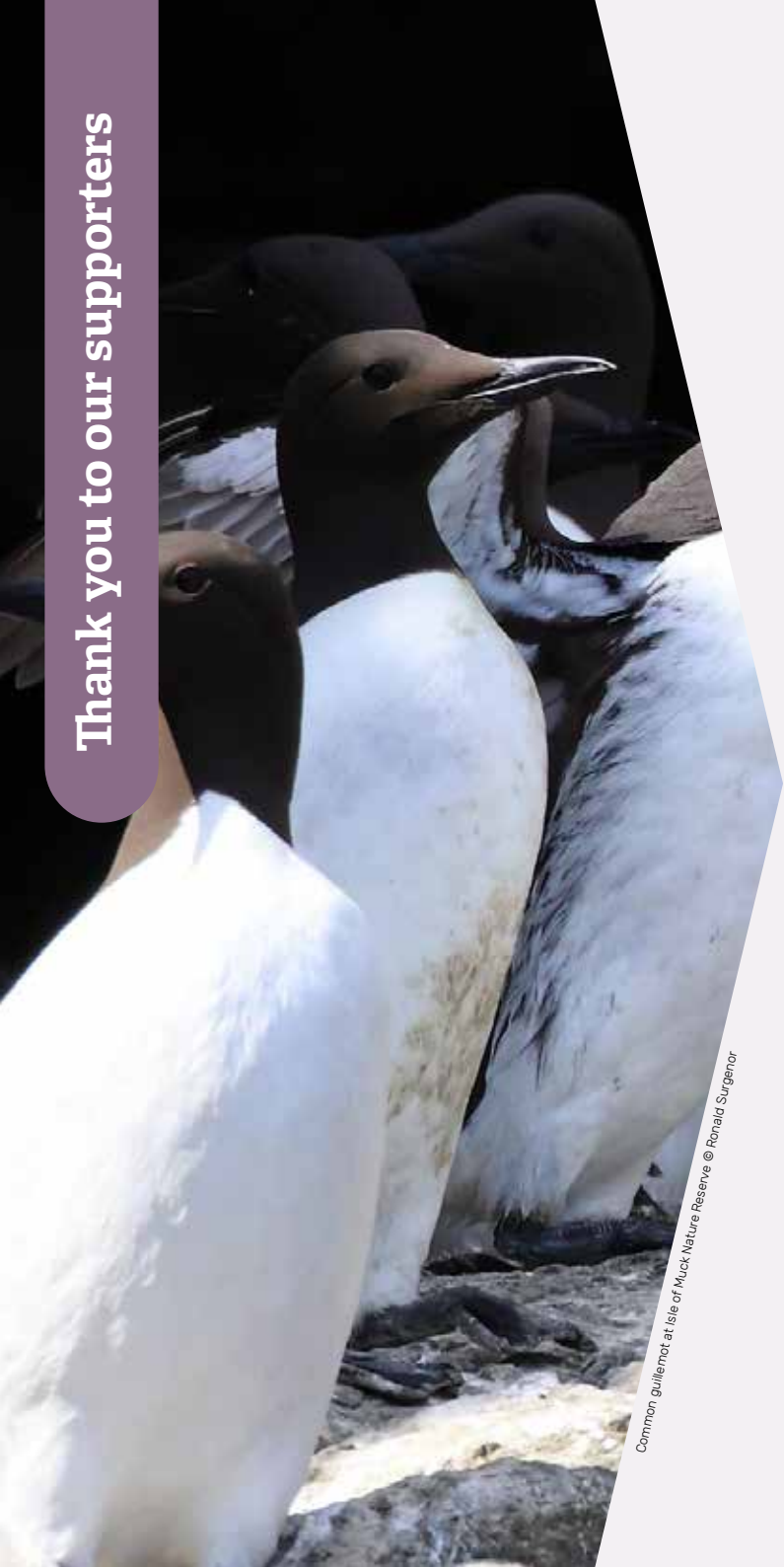


Businesses

We are proud to work with many local businesses to support nature's recovery. Working with others is crucial to tackling the nature and climate crises. Financial support from local businesses, in the form of unrestricted and in-kind donations or through the commissioning of our Ecological Consultancy services, is crucial to supplement our other funding streams. In addition, for these businesses, supporting Ulster Wildlife demonstrates their commitment to championing local nature conservation efforts to both their employees and customers.

Some of the businesses supporting local nature conservation efforts this year: Almac, Ardbarron Trust, The Boulevard Banbridge (Ulster Wildlife nominated as Charity of the Year), ENCIRC, Field Day Ireland, Finnebrogue, Mash Direct, Moy Park, NI Trucks, PowerNI, Spirit Aerosystems and Wilson Resources.

Thank you to our supporters



Common Guillemot at Isle of Muck Nature Reserve © Ronald Sargen

Six spot burnet moth at Slievenacloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Sargen



Round-leaved sundew © Simon Gray



Funders

Charities rely on a wide range of funding streams including statutory (government) funding and charitable trust funding to help support some of our larger projects and areas of work. We are very grateful to our funding partners for providing funding for specific projects last year.

Thanks to our funding partners this year: Ards and North Down Borough Council, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Education Authority, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, INTERREG VA, Marine Institute, Ministry of Defense, National Lottery Community Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Department of Communities.

Philanthropic Lenders

We believe that part of the solution to aid nature's recovery is to acquire and restore land. However, cash flow when land comes up for sale can often be a major barrier. Philanthropic lenders enable charities to respond quickly to land purchase and restoration opportunities when they arise, without the need to raise the funds first.

In February 2022, we were able to purchase a commercially cut-over peatland site in Co Tyrone with the aim of showcasing a range of peatland restoration techniques and developing a best practice site. A Philanthropic loan from John Smith, and gifts in Wills from supporters, helped secure this space for nature until funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs was received.



Plans for the Future

2022/23 was the first year of putting our new strategy to 2030 – Bring Nature Back – into action. With ambitious goals and transformations, our new strategy drives us towards our vision of a thriving natural world, where everyone is inspired to get involved in nature's recovery, and where nature plays a key role in addressing the nature and climate emergencies.

Common Hawker, Glenuilin Bog © Ronald Surgenor

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

Fundamental to achieving this outcome is the development and establishment of a national 'Nature Recovery Network' for Northern Ireland – a strategic approach to creating more, bigger, better and joined-up spaces for wildlife to thrive.

We will continue to explore opportunities for our nature reserves to deliver as part of a connected network within the wider landscape, while also delivering specific conservation actions for key species.

Our continued work engaging farmers and landowners is critical and we will 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.

Supporting and empowering people of all ages to become agents of change is critical to making the significant changes we need to address climate change and nature's decline.

We will continue to engage, empower and amplify the voice of people across Northern Ireland to speak up for and take action for nature through our campaigning work and community mobilising programmes.

We will also continue to engage younger generations in issues that will affect their future by growing our Youth Forum and by supporting youth-led nature activities. In addition, we will develop our Children and Young People Strategy to embed this new approach in our work going forward.

Maintaining and strengthening our membership and supporter network is key to delivering on the ambition of our strategy and a comprehensive growth plan and new staff structure will be put into place to expand our membership support base over the next five years.

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

Over the next number of years, we will work to tackle both the climate and biodiversity crises at a local level, recognising and promoting the importance of nature-based solutions. We will expand our work to restore peatlands, develop new native oyster nurseries, and establish new partnership projects to deliver blue carbon habitat restoration such as seagrass. Together, these initiatives will provide long-term carbon sequestration and storage while also promoting diverse and resilient wildlife.

Financial Review at 31 March 2023

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 is 7% lower than the previous year (-£46k). Donations and legacies decreased (-£65k) as did consultancy income (-£14k). This was partly offset by an additional grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation of £35k to contribute towards the cost of living increases.

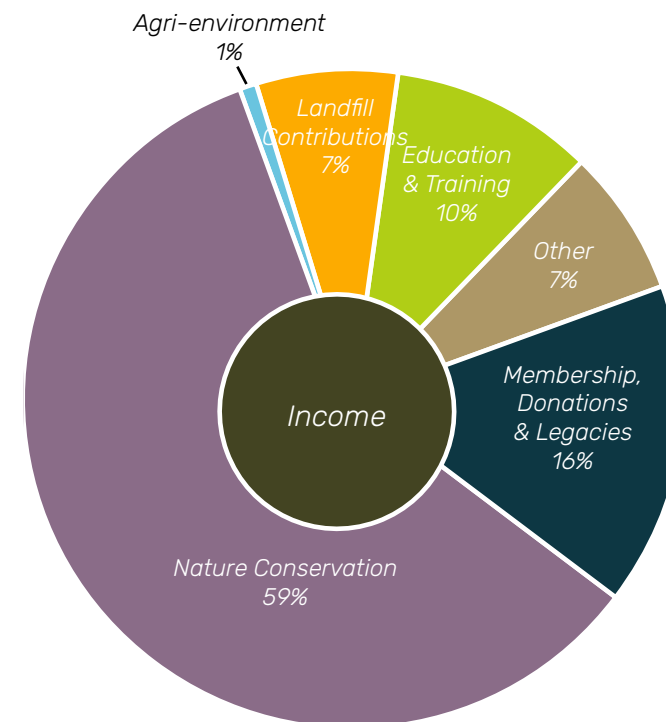
Restricted income is income given to the charity for specific purposes. It may be a grant for a specific piece of conservation work or education activity or funds to be awarded as grants to third parties, in line with specific grant guidelines.

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 decreased by £260k in the year. In the previous year DAERA contributed £594k towards the purchase of additional lands at Slievenacloy which increased the 21/22 income substantially. DAERA continued to award Challenge Fund income however in 22/23 for conservation work on peatlands, our marine environment, priority species and nature reserves including the £75k towards the purchase of a peatland site at Haughey’s Bog.

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



Income	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Ratio
Membership, Donations & Legacies	453	72	525	16%
Nature Conservation	-	1,919	1,919	59%
Agri-environment payments	28	-	28	1%
Landfill Tax Contributions	-	227	227	7%
Environmental Education & Training	-	314	314	10%
Other Income	181	45	226	7%
Total Income	662	2,577	3,239	100%

Financial Review at 31 March 2023

How the Charity Spent its Resources

Overall expenditure was £273k lower in the year to 31 March 2023 than in the previous year.

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

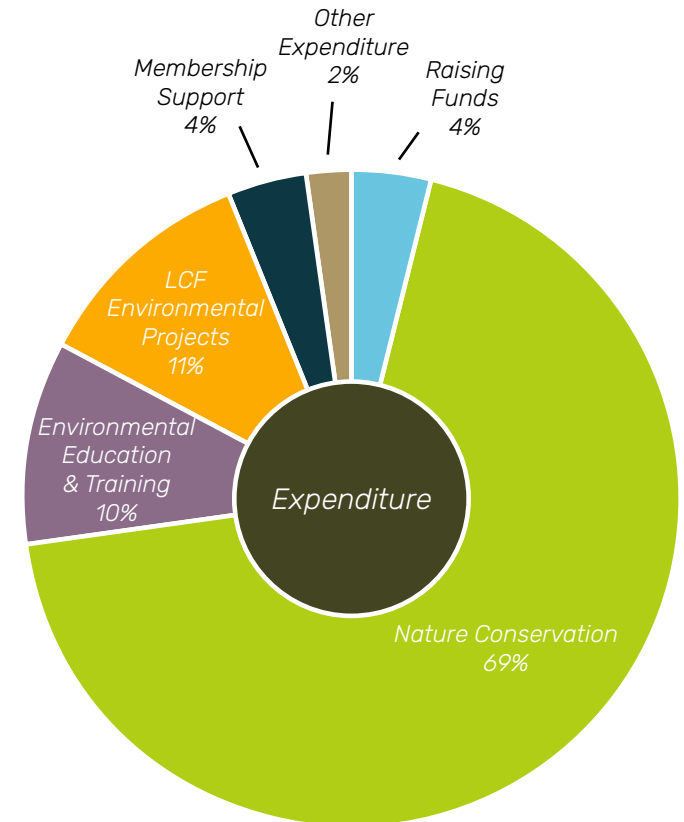
Restricted projects make a contribution to core overhead costs for time and expenses incurred in running the projects. After taking this contribution into account an unrestricted surplus of £23k was generated.

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

After expenditure on restricted projects, the balance on restricted funds amounted to £500k.

This balance represents income received relating to projects in the year to 31 March 2023 where expenditure was incurred in prior years or will be incurred in future years and was in line with expectations. £184k relates to income received from DAERA for the purchase of peatland at Haughey's Bog and capital equipment including 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 £	Ratio
Raising Funds	95	4%
Nature Conservation	1,870	69%
Environmental Education & Training	274	10%
LCF Environmental Projects	304	11%
Membership Support	125	4%
Other Expenditure	46	2%
Total Expenditure	2,714	100%

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, affiliated to The Wildlife Trusts, a federated network of 46 charities across the UK.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees (Council) comprised of up to 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 of which there were 36 at the end of March 2023.

All Board Members receive induction training in relation to their role, are provided with a Governance Handbook when they are appointed and adhere to the Code of Good Governance. In addition, in 2022, the Board undertook governance training and carried out a governance review facilitated by Blue Moss consulting. The Board are currently implementing actions arising from this review.

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.

Details of serving Trustees during 2022/23 can be found to the right.

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

HONORARY TREASURER



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

COMPANY SECRETARY



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

COUNCIL MEMBER



Anna Barclay
(Appointed 24 November 2020)
E, G

COUNCIL MEMBER



Joe Breen
(Appointed 9 June 2022)
E

COUNCIL MEMBER



Bob Brown
(Appointed 16 October 2020)
E

COUNCIL MEMBER



Fiona Davey
(Appointed on 19 November 2015)
G

COUNCIL MEMBER



Stephen Maginn
(Appointed 05 December 2019 Resigned 01 Oct 2022)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Seamus McKee
(Appointed 18 March 2021)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Stephen Smith
(Appointed 24 November 2020)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER



Helen Surgenor
(Appointed 24 November 2020)
F

COUNCIL MEMBER




John Wittchell
(Appointed on 07 December 2017,)
E

COUNCIL MEMBER



Ed Wright
(Appointed on 07 October 2015)
F

HONORARY PRESIDENT



Joe Furphy



Red squirrel, Co Fermanagh © Adam Gerrard



Pine marten, Co Down © Ronald Surgenor



Green hairstreak butterfly, Slievenacloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor

Changes to the Ulster Wildlife Council during 2022/2023

Stephen Maginn resigned from Council on 01 October 2022. Joe Breen was confirmed at the AGM on 01 October 2022 after co-option on 09 June 2022.

The governance sub-structure comprises 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 the required 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 nature recovery and community action. The remit of this Committee encompasses nature reserves, environmental projects linked to habitats and/or species, and input into regional policy issues.

4. 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 31 August 2023 and signed on its behalf by

Ken Brundle
Chairman

David Hendron
Honorary Treasurer

Articles of Association

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.

Scarce crimson & gold moth © Adam Mantell

Key Policies & 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 health & safety 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 subcommittees 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 2022/23 were:

- The impacts of climate change on the environment, economy, and people.
- The cost of living crisis and its continued impact on fundraising and running costs for the organisation.
- Staff retention and recruitment.

The cost of living crisis has affected our ability to fundraise and our membership income did decrease slightly this year. A membership growth plan and associated staffing structure, similar to pre-covid levels, has been put into place in an effort to return to membership growth over the coming years. Similarly, the running costs for the charity increased significantly during the year.

Staff turnover was higher than usual during the year due to funding uncertainties and projects ending. This will remain a key issue for the charity to manage particularly with delays in agreement of government funding due to the lack of an Executive in Northern Ireland.

The most significant risks identified for 2023/24 are:

- The cost of living crisis and its continued impact on fundraising.
- Impact of inflationary pressures on running costs.
- Staff retention and recruitment.
- Delays in agreement of funding due to lack of NI Executive in place.



Bumblebee on devil's bit scabious, Slieve-na-cloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor



Red squirrel © Mark Hamblin 2020 Vision

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 Promise

- 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/privacy-notice

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.

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.

Our Equality in the Workplace policy helps all those who work for us to develop their full potential and ensure that the talents and resources of the workforce are utilised to fully maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Sustainability

We have set a target to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 and we take sustainability very seriously. We have already commenced the net zero journey, which will be an integral part of our organisational and project planning. All electricity used is renewable and we are in the process of phasing in EVs as budget allows. During the project development phase for new projects, carbon footprint and location of project staff is considered to minimise carbon footprint as by the nature of our work, nature restoration is dispersed throughout Northern Ireland.

A priority for Northern Ireland in terms of the regional carbon budget is to restore damaged peatland and this is a significant delivery strand for the charity. During the year, we purchased a peatland site in Co Tyrone which has been cutover for commercial peat extraction and we are in the process of designing restoration plans for the site, which will be implemented during the next two to three 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

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 and potential winding up costs should be targeted. The balance on unrestricted reserves as at 31 March 2023, 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 further 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.



Razorbill at Isle of Muck Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor

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

Company Secretary

Catherine Thompson

Senior Leadership Team

Jennifer Fulton - Chief Executive Officer
Dawn Miskelly - Director of Development & Engagement
Peter McEvoy - Director of Land Management
Niamh Hart - Head of Finance

Charity Registration Number

NIC 101848

Company Registration Number

NI12711

Registered Office and Operational Address

McClelland House
10 Heron Road
Belfast
BT3 9LE

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of the Ulster Wildlife Trust

Opinion

We have audited the charity financial statements of Ulster Wildlife Trust ('the charity') for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. 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" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

In our opinion when reporting in accordance with a fair presentation framework the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 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 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 the date 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 contained within the annual report. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material

misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

Opinion on other matter 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 Annual Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees Annual 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 Annual 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
- 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.

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of the Ulster Wildlife Trust

Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees 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 they 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 management either intends to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or has 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.

Greater butterfly orchid, Slievenacloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of the Ulster Wildlife Trust

Further information regarding the scope of our responsibilities as auditor

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

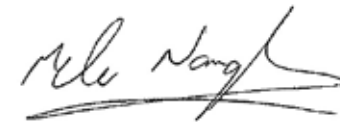
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting 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 charity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' 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 charity'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 charity 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.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

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.**

Six-spot burnet moth, Slievenacloy Nature Reserve © Ronald Surgenor

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2023 Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
INCOME FROM:					
Donations & Legacies	3	452,709	72,647	525,356	538,105
Conservation Activities	4	-	1,918,730	1,918,730	2,178,277
Agri-environment Payments		28,242	-	28,242	29,034
Charitable Activities - Landfill Contributions	5	-	227,085	227,085	337,392
Education & Training Activities	6	-	313,655	313,655	313,680
Interest Received	7	3,971	2,901	6,872	2,984
Other Income	8	176,818	41,880	218,698	247,950
TOTAL INCOME		661,740	2,576,898	3,238,638	3,647,422
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising Funds	9	80,453	-	80,453	90,732
Charitable Activities	10	780,520	1,853,219	2,633,739	2,897,091
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		860,973	1,853,219	2,714,192	2,987,823
NET INCOME BEFORE TRANSFERS AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE					
		(199,233)	723,679	524,446	659,599
Gains/(losses) from Foreign Exchange		(871)	-	(871)	(5,237)
Transfers Between Funds	14	223,262	(223,262)	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		23,158	500,417	523,575	654,362
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
Total Funds at 1 April 2022		1,178,771	1,485,935	2,664,706	2,010,344
Transfer (from)/to Designated Fund for the Future		(3,192)	3,192	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2023		1,198,737	1,989,544	3,188,281	2,664,706

The notes on pages 40 to 43 form part of these financial statements.
The Statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year.
All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2023 Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	16	325,038	1,501,703	1,826,741	1,670,011
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	17	104,934	121,872	226,806	717,915
Cash at Bank and in Hand		928,421	1,148,467	2,076,888	1,703,260
		1,033,355	1,270,339	2,303,694	2,421,175
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors	18	151,549	439,682	591,231	1,074,551
NET CURRENT ASSETS		881,806	830,657	1,712,463	1,346,624
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,206,844	2,332,360	3,539,204	3,016,635
CREDITORS due in more than 1 year					
Capital Grants	19	8,107	342,816	350,923	351,929
		1,198,737	1,989,544	3,188,281	2,664,706
FINANCIAL RESERVES					
General Fund	20	989,251	-	989,251	988,414
Fund for the Future	22	209,486	-	209,486	190,357
Restricted Funds	21	-	1,989,544	1,989,544	1,485,935
		1,198,737	1,989,544	3,188,281	2,664,706

These financial statements were approved and signed by the members of the board and authorised for issue on 31st August 2023



Ken Brundle, Chairman



David Hendron, Honorary Treasurer

The notes on pages 40 to 43 form part of these financial statements.
Company Registration Number: NI 12711

Statement of Cash Flows for year ending 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash Flows from operating activities		
Net Income/(Expenditure)	524,446	659,599
<i>Adjustments for</i>		
Depreciation of Tangible Fixed Assets	25,982	7,995
Increase/(Decrease) in Deferred Capital Grant	(1,006)	(1,006)
(Increase)/Decrease in Trade and Other Debtors	491,109	(383,485)
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and Other Creditors	(483,320)	837,627
Net Cash (used in)/from Operating Activities	<u>557,211</u>	<u>1,120,730</u>
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Purchase of Tangible Assets	(187,508)	(801,065)
Disposal of Tangible Assets	4,796	20,961
Net Cash used in Investing Activities	<u>(182,712)</u>	<u>(780,104)</u>
Net Increase /(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	374,499	340,626
Cash and Cash Equivalents at Beginning of the Year	1,703,260	1,367,871
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents due to Exchange Rate Movements	(871)	(5,237)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at End of the Year	<u><u>2,076,888</u></u>	<u><u>1,703,260</u></u>

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 funder 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 and other grants are recognised at the fair value of the asset received or receivable. Grants are not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that the charity will comply with the conditions attaching to them and the grants will be received.

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 matches employee contributions to the scheme at a maximum rate of 7% of salary.

Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity with HMRC and is therefore not liable for taxation to the extent that any surplus or gains arising are wholly applied to its charitable objects.

The company is registered for VAT. Much of the income is either exempt or outside the scope of VAT.

Consequently, it is not possible to recover most of the VAT incurred on expenditure. Income and expenditure are shown exclusive of recoverable VAT.

Notes to the accounts

3 Donations & Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
Legacy & In Memory Giving	3,320	-	61,166	-
Membership Contributions inc. Gift Aid	416,757	-	420,319	-
Corporate Support	26,491	58,500	7,500	10,000
Other Gifts & Donations	6,141	14,147	28,919	10,201
	452,709	72,647	517,904	20,201

4 Conservation Grants

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
DAERA Environment Fund	-	1,092,606	-	1,257,842
DAERA Maritime and Fisheries Fund	-	47,625	-	-
Department for Infrastructure Living Places and Spaces Fund	-	10,000	-	-
Environmental Farming Scheme	-	231,641	-	195,673
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	103,250	-	150,000
EU- Interreg VA	-	247,531	-	410,941
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	30,000	-	30,000
Kreitman Foundation	-	11,600	-	15,000
Landfill Communities Fund	-	2,167	-	4,419
Marine Institute	-	1,623	-	1,617
Ministry of Defence	-	14,249	-	17,684
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	116,438	-	92,307
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts	-	10,000	-	-
Save Our Seas Foundation	-	-	-	2,794
	-	1,918,730	-	2,178,277

5 Landfill Environmental Projects

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
Landfill Contributions Received	-	227,085	-	337,392
	-	227,085	-	337,392
Expenditure				
Entrust Administration Fee	-	8,084	-	9,818
Direct Project Expenditure	-	276,178	-	238,944
Direct Costs	20,166	-	30,490	-
	20,166	284,262	30,490	248,762

Notes to the accounts

6 Education & Training Grants

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
DAERA Environment Fund	-	-	-	35,744
Department for Communities (JobStart Scheme)	-	60,471	-	12,012
Department for Communities (Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative for Heritage)	-	44,249	-	-
Education Authority	-	7,445	-	31,332
European Solidarity Corps	-	13,201	-	-
National Lottery Community Fund (Our Environment, Our Future)	-	22,768	-	74,124
National Lottery Community Fund (People & Communities)	-	74,761	-	60,263
National Lottery Community Fund (Empowering Young People 3)	-	61,282	-	31,226
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	29,478	-	58,829
Other	-	-	150	10,000
	-	313,655	150	313,530

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.

8 Other Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Core Funding	110,000	-	75,000	-
Consultancy	20,198	-	34,495	63,891
Furlough Income	-	-	7,312	-
Sundry income	46,620	41,880	42,281	24,971
	176,818	41,880	159,088	88,862

9 Expenditure on Raising Donations & Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
Travel	62	-	-	-
Professional Fees	92	-	-	-
Printed Materials, Misc	14,338	-	10,369	-
Wages & Salary Costs	65,961	-	80,363	-
	80,453	-	90,732	-

Notes to the accounts

10 Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Landfill Environmental Projects	20,167	284,262	304,429	279,252
Nature Conservation	227,489	1,355,435	1,582,924	1,912,891
Environmental Education & Training	73,714	158,128	231,842	285,336
Membership Support Costs	106,115	-	106,115	75,251
Organisation Support Costs	325,698	43,965	369,663	307,847
Depreciation	17,503	12,270	29,773	24,791
Bank Interest & Charges	5,109	-	5,109	4,784
Auditors Remuneration	4,725	-	4,725	3,780
(Profit)/Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset	-	(841)	(841)	3,159
	780,520	1,853,219	2,633,739	2,897,091

11 Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Staff Costs £	Other direct costs £	2023 £	2022 £
Landfill Environmental Projects	16,130	288,298	304,428	279,252
Nature Conservation	678,958	903,966	1,582,924	1,912,891
Environmental Education	203,329	28,514	231,843	285,336
Membership Support Costs	46,042	60,073	106,115	75,251
Organisation Support Costs	192,359	177,304	369,663	307,847
Other- Depreciation, Bank Charges, Audit.	-	38,766	38,766	36,514
	1,136,818	1,496,921	2,633,739	2,897,091

Other Direct costs Environmental Projects	Landfill Environmental Projects	Nature Conservation Projects	Environmental Education Projects	Membership & Organisation Support Costs	Total £
Direct Project Costs	284,262	114,056	15,490	15,373	429,181
Premises Costs	4,036	24,433	1,280	115,701	145,450
Postage, Printing & Stationery	-	3,869	522	41,385	45,776
Staff Travel and Vehicle Costs	-	63,060	2,146	15,125	80,331
Contracted Services	-	666,125	2,440	15,713	684,278
Staff Training	-	16,847	4,210	2,316	23,373
Council Costs	-	-	-	4,281	4,281
Information Technology	-	15,576	2,426	27,483	45,485
	288,298	903,966	28,514	237,377	1,458,155

Notes to the accounts

12 Depreciation

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £
Motor Vehicles	3,499	12,270	3,499	6,499
Equipment	5,759	-	6,548	-
Buildings	8,245	-	8,245	-
	17,503	12,270	18,292	6,499

13 Staff Costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Salaries and Wages	1,044,198	1,033,452
Social Security Costs	93,964	91,548
Pension Contributions	64,617	73,321
	1,202,779	1,198,321

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 33.6. (2022- 36.5).

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 £287,960. (2022: £271,838).

14 Transfer Between Funds

	2023 £	2022 £
Landfill Fund Administration Costs	20,166	30,490
Project Contribution to Organisation Support Costs	213,101	160,530
Conservation Work at Glendun	-	2,107
Match Funding for DAERA Funding	(10,005)	(20,733)
	223,262	172,394

15 Board Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Helen Surgenor was appointed to the Board in the year to 31 March 2022. 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. (2022 £NIL).

No travel and subsistence costs were paid to trustees during the year. (2022 £NIL).

No trustees received payment for professional services supplied to the charity (2022 £NIL).

No balances are owed to trustees at 31st March 2023.

Notes to the accounts

16 Fixed Assets

	Nature Reserves	Land & Buildings	Motor Vehicles	Equipment & Computers	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£
COST OR VALUATION					
At 1 April 2022	1,161,966	589,355	149,464	76,674	1,977,459
Additions	78,192	-	22,399	86,917	187,508
Disposals	-	-	-	(4,796)	(4,796)
At 31 March 2023	1,240,158	589,355	171,863	158,795	2,160,171
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 April 2022	-	165,285	83,613	58,550	307,448
Charge for year	-	8,245	16,774	5,759	30,778
Disposals	-	-	-	(4,796)	(4,796)
At 31 March 2023	-	173,530	100,387	59,513	333,430
NBV at 31 March 2023	1,240,158	415,825	71,476	99,282	1,826,741
<i>including restricted assets of</i>	<i>1,200,158</i>	<i>150,000</i>	<i>64,628</i>	<i>86,917</i>	<i>1,501,703</i>

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

17 Debtors

	Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022	Restricted Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Debtors and Prepayments	85,958	73,530	68,901	10,349
Grants	-	48,342	118,405	499,575
Tax Refunds Due	18,976	-	20,685	-
	104,934	121,872	207,991	509,924

18 Creditors Falling Due Within One Year

	Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022	Restricted Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
<i>Sundry Creditors and Accrued Expenditure</i>	<i>151,549</i>	<i>439,682</i>	<i>77,373</i>	<i>997,178</i>

A specific provision has been created in the year of £60k for roof repairs identified as necessary at McClelland House.

19 Creditors Falling Due After More Than One Year

	Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022	Restricted Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
<i>Capital Grants</i>	<i>8,107</i>	<i>342,816</i>	<i>9,113</i>	<i>342,816</i>

Notes to the accounts

20 Movement on Unrestricted Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022
	£	£
Opening Balance	988,414	942,333
Surplus for the Year	23,158	127,247
Transfer to Fund for the Future	(22,321)	(81,166)
Closing Balance	989,251	988,414

21 Movement on Restricted Funds

	Restricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2022
	£	£
Opening Balance	1,485,935	790,226
Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year	500,417	527,115
Transfer from/(to) Fund for the Future	3,192	168,594
Closing Balance	1,989,544	1,485,935

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

22 Movement on Fund for the Future

	Designated Fund for the Future 2023	Designated Fund for the Future 2022
	£	£
Opening Balance	190,357	277,785
Income from Donations and Legacies	22,321	81,166
UW Contribution to the Purchase of Land	(3,192)	(168,594)
Closing Balance	209,486	190,357

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

23 Contingent Liability

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

24 Taxation

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

The net amount payable on taxable supplies was £13,496 in the period (2022 £13,750).

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.



School children at the Lurch of Glenam native oyster nursery



Ulster Wildlife is Northern Ireland's largest local nature conservation charity. We are working to bring nature back across Northern Ireland and secure a wilder future where people and nature are thriving together.

Join us now and together we can make a real difference
www.ulsterwildlife.org/join-us

Get in touch

- ✉ info@ulsterwildlife.org
- ☎ 028 9045 5094
- 🌐 www.ulsterwildlife.org
- 🐦 twitter.com/ulsterwildlife
- 📘 facebook.com/ulsterwildlife
- 📷 instagram.com/ulsterwildlife
- 🌐 linkedin.com/company/ulster-wildlife

We are proud to be one of **46 independent Wildlife Trusts** working across the UK



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.