

# Impact Report 2018-19



Avon

## Welcome...



to Avon Wildlife Trust's look back over the past year as we have worked to protect wildlife in the region and build nature's recovery. Read about restored wetland habitat where snipe and lapwing are finding homes again; bat and invertebrate species flourishing thanks to better land management; and more insects on restored grassland.

You can also find out how we're making sure the environment is at the heart of the local and national agenda. And we share our work supporting young people to take action and engage with debate to shape the kind of natural world they and future generations will inherit.

Over the last year, people of all ages and backgrounds have given their time and enthusiasm to take action for wildlife, volunteering with us to create and improve wildlife-rich spaces in towns, cities and neighbourhoods across the region. And we've been heartened by supporters who have championed nature in their own communities, and raised their voice in campaigns to call for stronger protections to guarantee a wildlife-rich natural world.

We can't mention everybody here, or even every Trust activity, but we are hugely grateful for all the support of our members, volunteers, partners, and funders, who inspire everything we do, and make it happen. Together we can continue to restore lost species and increase the abundance of wildlife in the urban and rural landscapes we love.

Ian Barrett  
Chief Executive

Prof. Jane Memmott  
Chair of Trustees



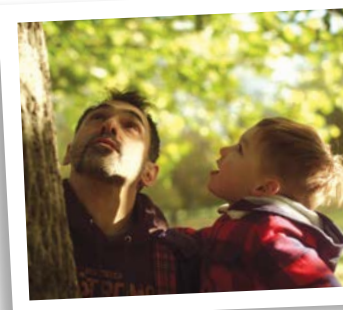
## People for wildlife

Nature needs all of us to help build its recovery across Avon and over the last year we've worked with thousands of people who have joined us in taking action to restore and create wildlife-rich places. And we've helped all generations connect with the beauty and value of our natural world.



"I graze my cattle on Clapton Moor and Puxton Moor, working in partnership with the Trust to help improve these wetland nature reserves."

**Olly Matthews,**  
farmer



"It's important to get the kids hands-on with nature at a young age so they continue to care about it as they grow older."

**Tom,** father at My Wild Child



"You can use nature to alleviate stress and [it] enables you to cope better with everyday problems that everyone faces."

**Participant,** Older People's Wildlife Gardening

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### Damselflies spotted for first time in ten years

Land management changes have brought new species to the North Somerset wetlands.

[More success stories inside...](#)

© Richard Hopkins

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# Creating, connecting and caring for places rich in wildlife

Across our Gordano Valley nature reserves we've improved habitat for wetland wading birds, creating 'scrapes' – wet, shallow areas where birds can feed – and improving the network of ditches (rhynes) which criss-cross this low-lying landscape. We've seen breeding pairs of lapwings return to raise their chicks and good numbers of snipe throughout the season.

This is just one example of the progress we're making, together with our partners, landowners and volunteers to provide rich habitats for diverse wildlife. We manage a total of 1,118 hectares of nature reserves and wild places, and this year we secured a further 101 hectares through two generous gifts, creating a new nature reserve at Hutton Hill and extending the reserve at Goblin Combe.

50 landowners advised on how to manage their land for wildlife



▲ Scrapes at Weston Moor

© Peter Speight

"Getting out in all seasons to do practical work to enhance the Gordano Valley landscape is incredibly rewarding when we see wading birds, plants and other wildlife returning in greater numbers."

**Dave Horlick**  
Avon Wildlife Trust volunteer



▲ Bees and other pollinators are foraging on our newly-created grasslands

© Nick Upton/2020VISION

## Other wildlife highlights this year



- **adders** found in three locations, including a 'hibernaculum' or underground shelter used for overwintering
- four **greater horseshoe bats** using a hibernation site we provided at Weston Big Wood
- 34 species of **dragonfly** and **damsel** spotted over three reserves, including rare species and some that hadn't been seen for ten years or more, countering the national trend in invertebrate decline

One of our challenges is to link up areas of healthy habitat which otherwise function as islands providing no opportunity for wildlife to spread beyond a confined area. Over 3.5km of the rhine network in North Somerset was restored this year. Our B-Lines project continues to benefit pollinators, this year shifting its focus from grasslands to more urban fringe sites, where we've created nine hectares of species-rich grassland and planted 200 fruit trees in two orchards, supported by over 200 volunteers.

Our hundreds of volunteers and landowning partners are making progress to provide secure, connected habitats that protect wildlife for the future.



© David Tipping/2020VISION

# Championing the value of nature

This year, we've secured homes for wildlife such as greater and lesser horseshoe bats at Weston Big Wood, but there are huge challenges looming: climate crisis, Brexit, local development.

Our aim is to keep nature at the heart of decisions, for the wellbeing of people and the environment. To that end, we met with 11 MPs on our nature reserves to discuss the legislation needed to secure environmental protection following the UK's departure from the EU. The MPs witnessed the fragility of the environment and potential for serious declines in wildlife, and recognised the importance of robust legislation to deliver the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Locally, we've been involved at every stage of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), which set out proposals for built development across the West of England – with 110,000 homes proposed over the next 20 years. We've raised our concerns about the impact of the proposed development on protected bat colonies in North Somerset, and Trust members and supporters have contributed to public consultations on the JSP as well as local plans across the region.



▲ From left: Leilah, Bristol East MP Kerry McCarthy and Cat (16)

"It was really good to be able to convey our passion for the environment to people who are able to make important decisions, and actively feel like we are able to do something."

**Leilah (18)** on representing young people from Avon in discussions with MPs at Westminster for *Our Bright Future*.

1,116 young people connected with nature through the *Our Bright Future* project

# Inspiring people & communities to care for nature

Participants in a project at Feed Bristol grew 160 different species of wildflower, which were used to seed a meadow, creating a rich wild space for pollinators. This is a prime example of the Trust's approach to building support for the natural world; getting people involved in local projects so they feel the benefits of getting out into nature and then see the results of their actions for wildlife.

*My Wild City* project is another example: we completed the research and planning for eight urban wildlife sites, to bid for National Lottery Heritage Funds for Bristol to become a world-class, nature-rich city, with green corridors for wildlife.

Elsewhere, 1,409 school children developed their curiosity about the natural world through activities including pond dipping, bat detecting and badger watching, at our education centres at Folly Farm and Feed Bristol.

Some children even got to look after their own slippery classroom 'pets' – young eels that they later released into Blagdon Lake, to grow into adults which, we hope, will complete the long journey to the Sargasso Sea to spawn again. "We felt our hearts warm up to them," said one of the 270 children who have become vocal advocates of the protected species.

Burges Salmon law firm, was one of the corporate supporters which collaborated with the Trust, when 105 staff members got stuck in with the hard work of

transforming Feed Bristol: "Our teams have benefited from the wellbeing opportunities of being in nature, connecting with colleagues and giving to our local community," said Emma Dowden, COO.



1,409 school children got up close to nature at Folly Farm and Feed Bristol

▲ Helping children to develop their curiosity about the natural world

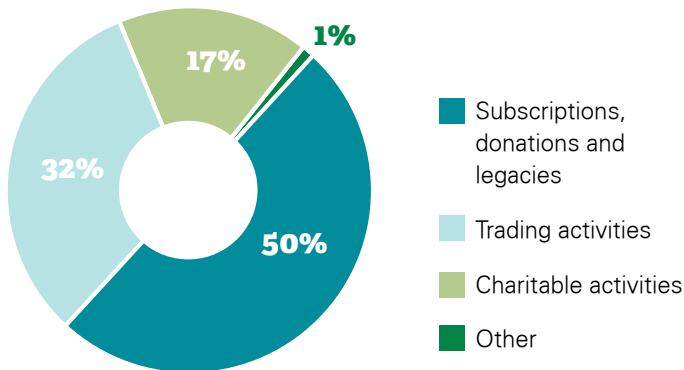
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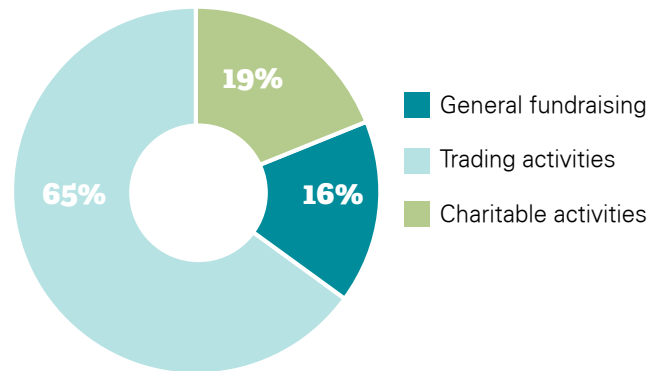
# Money matters



**Income: £3,180,969**



**Expenditure: £2,510,518**



**Full financial statements available on request** (contact details at bottom of page)



## Thank you to all our supporters

AWT Local Groups (various)  
 AJH Ashby Will Trust  
 The Banister Charitable Trust  
 Basil Brown Charitable Trust  
 Biffaward  
 Bristol City Council  
 Bristol Water plc  
 Business Initiative  
 Burges Salmon  
 The Cobalt Trust  
 The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
 DEFRA  
 Enovert Community Trust

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 Van Neste Charitable Trust  
 Vine House Farm  
 Wessex Water  
 Western Power Distribution  
 Woodland Trust

© Andy Rouse/2020VISION (Barn owl); ©Amy Lewis (Common blue)



**130,000**  
 people visited  
 our nature  
 reserves

**1,832**  
 new members  
 joined up



**40,000**  
 volunteer  
 hours



**101**  
 hectares of  
 new nature  
 reserves

**526**  
 people took part  
 in employee  
 engagement days



Avon Wildlife Trust  
 32 Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol, BS8 1DR  
 0117 917 7270  
 mail@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)



**Avon**