



**Cumbria**  
Wildlife Trust



# Wildlife Highlights

2022–23



Ringed plover chicks at  
South Walney, June 23  
©Jessie Prentice

# Contents

Our visual guide to restoring and connecting wildlife and wild places in 2022-23

About Cumbria Wildlife Trust	03
.....	.....
Making space for nature	05
.....	.....
Nature Reserve Highlights 2022-23	06
.....	.....
Creating a marine recovery network	09
.....	.....
Working together to transform our land and sea	11
.....	.....
Connecting more people with wildlife	14
.....	.....
Providing opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer	16
.....	.....
Raising our game	21
.....	.....
Thank you	22
.....	.....

Psst..  
Map overview  
on page 4



# About Cumbria Wildlife Trust



Cumbria Wildlife Trust cares passionately about wildlife and wild places. We're here to put wildlife back into our land and seascapes to make Cumbria a wilder county with more space for nature. We restore and connect wild places, work with nature to tackle the climate emergency and support people to take local action for wildlife.

Our skilled and dedicated staff work closely with volunteers, partners and thousands of supporters to create a wilder future for Cumbria.

We are part of a UK-wide grassroots movement made up of 46 individual Wildlife Trusts who all believe that we need nature and nature needs us.

## Our top three priorities are:

1. Delivering nature-based solutions by playing a leading role in tackling the wildlife crisis and climate emergency on land and sea.
2. Helping connect more people with wildlife and their natural environment and making wildlife even more relevant and important in everyone's lives.
3. Raising our game to meet the scale of the challenges that lie ahead.

## Influencing locally to influence globally



Almost daily, we see climate change and the global wildlife crisis unfold on our news screens. Our species is facing many global environmental and social challenges, most of our own making.

Here in north-west England, we don't have much of an opportunity to change what's happening in distant places. We do have a duty to address and solve some of those global challenges here in Cumbria, in our own neighbourhoods and countryside where we do have influence. That's exactly what our members, supporters, volunteers, staff and trustees are doing: working hard to address global problems at the local level.

As the pages of this report show, this has been an incredibly busy and successful year. We're working to make things happen with our partners in local communities and other organisations.

I'm so proud of the work everyone is doing for wildlife in Cumbria. A massive thank you to everyone involved. Your commitment and dedication is awesome. Our grateful thanks goes to the many members, donors and supporters who've made contributions to our work. We couldn't do anything for Cumbrian wildlife without your generosity.

I hope you enjoy the report.

Best wishes

**Stephen Trotter**  
CEO. Cumbria Wildlife Trust



# Our Visual Guide to Restoring and Connecting Wildlife and Wild Places in 2022-23

**A**

Clints Quarry Nature Reserve is the first of our nature reserves to have diseased ash trees removed  
See page 8

**B**

Six nations have come together as the Irish Sea Network to find solutions to the challenges nature is facing across the Irish Sea  
See page 10

**C**

Surveys for seagrass ecosystems took place at Ravenglass Estuary & Roa Island  
See page 12

**D**

A diverse range of habitats were created along the A66 & A595 strategic road network  
See page 13

**E**

Over 50,000 wildflower plug plants were grown by volunteers at the Gosling Sike wildflower nursery  
See page 14

**F**

Meadows along a lane are being restored at Knott Lane Nature Reserve, near Orton. Rubble and rocks were removed for easier cutting in summer  
See page 14

**G**

Residents of Elmhurst Care Home looked at coastal themed 'Reminiscence Boxes' to encourage conversation and reduce isolation  
See page 19





41

nature reserves  
for people to visit



3,701

hectares managed  
for wildlife

Oyster catcher eggs

© Cumbria Wildlife Trust

# Making space for nature

Restoring and connecting wildlife and wild places in our nature-depleted county is now incredibly urgent as we begin to see changes the climate crisis is having on the natural world. Wildfires and flooding are increasing and record summer temperatures are affecting nature's seasonal patterns.

Cumbria Wildlife Trust cares passionately about wildlife and wild places. Working with organisations, businesses, individuals and communities, we're here to reverse the loss of wildlife and habitats, to put wildlife back into Cumbria's land and seascapes and make the county wilder with more space for nature.

We work with nature to lessen the effects of climate breakdown and help wildlife – and society – adapt to the changes and challenges that lie ahead.

## Connecting nature reserves

Cumbria Wildlife Trust's nature reserves are the backbone to creating a connected landscape for nature. We look after our nature reserves for both people and the wildlife found there, and are making decisions on how each place could be affected by climate breakdown in the coming years.



# Nature Reserve Highlights



April 2022

**Whitbarrow Hervey Memorial Reserve**

Duke of Burgundy butterflies were recorded breeding for the first time where hundreds of cowslips were planted



June 2022

**Cold Springs Community Nature Reserve**

15 hectares of farmland at Penrith were given by Ann and Brian Clark



August 2022

**Foulney Island Nature Reserve**

Sadly, electric fence equipment used to protect birds' nests from predators was vandalised

May 2022

**Foulshaw Moss Nature Reserve**

Osprey pair White YW & Blue 35 hatched 3 osprey chicks



July 2022

**Eskmeals Dunes Nature Reserve**

New ponds were dug for rare natterjack toads



September 2022

**South Walney Nature Reserve**

1,128 pairs of gulls nested, a 150% increase on the previous year



© Hannah Bernie



# Nature Reserve Highlights



October 2022

**South Walney Nature Reserve**

First seal pup of the year was born



December 2022

**Eycott Hill Nature Reserve**

Staff from our business supporters planted trees along Naddles Beck



© Barnaby Wylder-Forestry

February 2023

**Clints Quarry Nature Reserve**

Diseased ash trees were removed to ensure the safety of visitors

November 2022

**Bowber Head Farm Nature Reserve**

More land was purchased to complete the full network of meadows

© Helen Tulloch



January 2023

**Staveley Woodlands Nature Reserve**

The first trees were planted by the local community in the land linking Craggy Wood with Dorothy Farrer's Spring Wood



March 2023

**South Walney Nature Reserve**

Three truckloads of rubbish were removed from the beaches by volunteers

© Mary Greenwood





# Tackling ash dieback

**Sick and dying ash trees across our countryside are becoming a more common sight. As more and more ash trees become affected by ash dieback disease, we'll start to see large-scale change in our woodlands and hedgerows.**

Evidence from Europe suggests that we will lose up to 80% of our ash trees to the disease. However, this could be a very slow and prolonged process, with affected trees potentially persisting for many years after first becoming diseased.

We manage a number of ash woodlands in the south and east of Cumbria, and ash is a significant component of many of our nature reserves. Clints Quarry Nature Reserve is the first of our reserves to have diseased ash removed, with others to follow this coming autumn and winter.

We have taken down the most dangerous trees, those that threaten busy roads, dwellings or other important infrastructure, and we intend to tackle trees close to some of our busiest footpaths and more minor roads.

More information



Ash dieback symptoms  
Crown decline

© Barnaby Wylder-Forestry





# Creating a marine recovery network

Grey sea slug

© Holly Stainton

We have been campaigning for a network of marine protected areas in the Irish Sea for many years.

Thanks to all of you who spoke up during our campaigns, there are now five designated Marine Conservation Zones off the coast of Cumbria.

Part of Allonby Bay Marine Conservation Zone has been designed as a pilot Highly Protected Marine Area which is the gold standard of marine protection and means it will have effective management in place so wildlife can recover.

**“We want to see at least 30% of the Irish Sea connected and effectively protected for nature’s recovery by 2030.”**



B

# Irish Sea Network

Minke whale breaching off Rue Point, Rathlin Island, Co Antrim

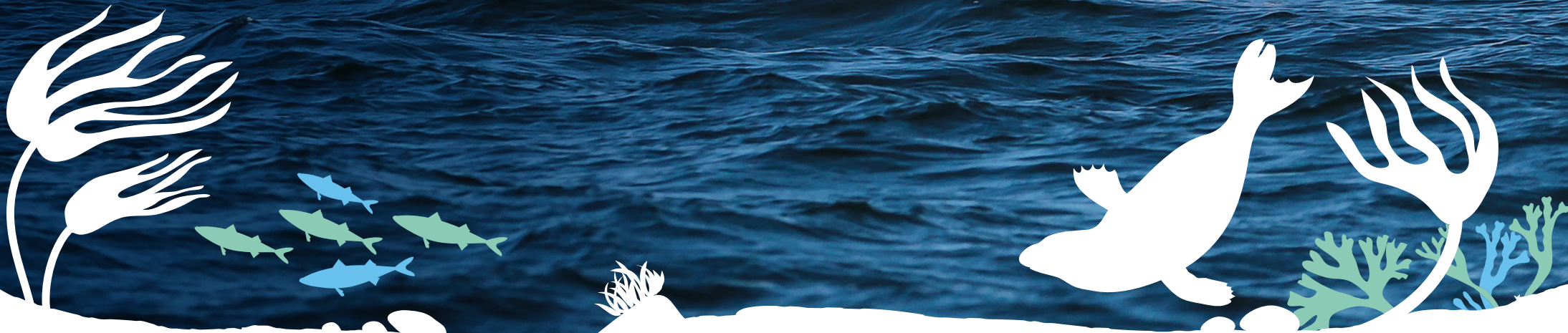
© Tom McDonnell

The Irish Sea is surrounded by six different administrations (Scotland, England, Wales, the Isle of Man, Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland) each with their own policies, laws and positions on the marine environment.

However, the marine environment cannot be managed in segments - we need a joined up approach to management and conservation as there are many common issues that cross national boundaries or affect multiple parts of the Irish Sea simultaneously.

The Network released a 'Review of the Irish Sea 2022' document which is a technical assessment of the Irish Sea and developed Vision and Position Statements.

Download review



# Working together to transform our land and sea

In our work beyond nature reserves and Marine Conservation Zones we are connecting more landscapes, improving water quality and soil health and promoting habitat and environmental restoration. We work with farmers, fishermen, landowners and land managers to transform how land and sea are managed.

Our focus habitats are:

-  Seagrass
-  Sand dunes
-  Grasslands & pollinators
-  Peatlands

## Peatland

**91** hectares of peatland restored in **6** locations

**18** peatland locations surveyed and restoration plans created

## Grassland

**18.95** hectares of grassland restored in **10** locations

**13,750** plug plants planted

**41** hectares in **20** fields surveyed by volunteers





# Surveying for seagrass

Seagrass species are ecosystem engineers and form hugely important ecosystems worldwide. They provide habitat for numerous species, ecosystem services such as food through fisheries support and protection from coastal erosion and flooding. They are also an important blue carbon habitat, capturing carbon at a rate higher than rainforest ecosystems.

Despite their importance, seagrass ecosystems have seen considerable declines over the last century. The UK has suffered particularly drastic losses of its seagrass beds; most recent loss estimates of the two species found in UK waters, *Zostera marina* and *Zostera noltii*, range as high as 92% within this time period.

It was thought the only seagrass in the North West was in the Walney Channel. However, we were made aware of a report from 2013 that detailed a 1m<sup>2</sup> patch in the Ravenglass Estuary and decided to investigate. After initially confirming its presence, we surveyed the area and found some small patchy beds that covered about 2,000m<sup>2</sup>.

This is a really exciting find as it highlights how much we don't know about seagrass in the North West (it doesn't appear on any national maps of seagrass) and how important it is that we continue to build up our knowledge of this important habitat.

We also undertook further monitoring of the seagrass beds around Roa Island which showed fragmentation of two larger patches since 2017 – further work is needed to investigate the cause of the decline. We also identified that this bed is producing seed, which is adding to our knowledge base in order to undertake seagrass restoration in the area.

© Solway Firth Partnership

Distribution, extent and condition of *Zostera noltii* in the Ravenglass Estuary, Cumbria, UK

[Download report](#)



Distribution, extent, condition and potential seed bank use of *Zostera noltii* Beds at Roa Island, Cumbria, UK

[Download report](#)





# Restoring grasslands for pollinators

From 2019–2022 we created a diverse range of habitats along the A66 and A595 strategic road networks in partnership with National Highways. Using innovative techniques, we created short-flowering lawns, flower-rich grassland, sunny banks, glades and tussocky areas to provide overwintering refuge for wild pollinators.

We added important pollinator plants such as goat willow, devil's-bit scabious, clovers and trefoils to provide pollinators with forage. We also worked with Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council to reverse pollinator decline across north and west Cumbria.

We created, improved and connected over 50 pollinator-friendly habitats, in turn providing food, shelter and nesting places for the likes of bees, butterflies, wasps and other insects. The sites were varied and included roadside verges, farmland, community green spaces, orchards, church grounds and public & private gardens.

In spring 2022 a survey was carried out to monitor small blue butterflies at a newly-created wildflower area at Maryport Coastal Park.



[Download report](#)

## Key stats

  
**33,441**

wildflowers grown in our plant nursery

**151** 

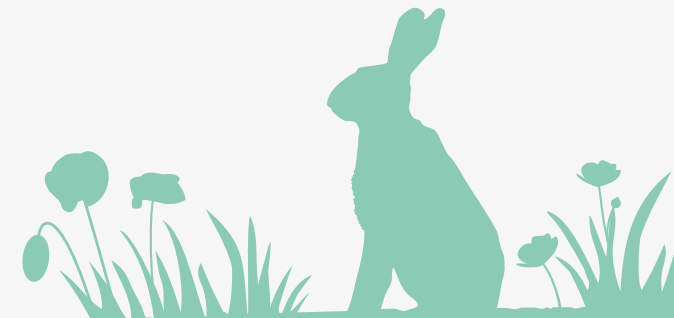
young and disadvantaged people learnt new skills a volunteers at the nursery

  
**80.4**

hectares of pollinator habitat restored or created at community locations

  
**39.4**

hectares of pollinator habitat restored or created on the strategic road network





# Restoring hay meadows

**Nationally, 97% of flower-rich hay meadows were lost between the 1930s and the mid 1980s. This was in part due to agricultural intensification converting 'herb meadows' to more productive grasslands, dominated by lush grasses. Hay meadows are important for the plants they support. A hay meadow can support an incredible 50 plant species per sq. metre!**

Such a wealth of plant species can in turn provide habitats for many different animal species, including brown hares, insects such as great yellow bumblebees, and birds such as skylark, curlew, lapwing and twite.

Cumbria Wildlife Trust has been restoring hay meadows for many years. Just one example from the year is a restoration at Knott Lane, close to Gamelands Stone Circle near Orton.

Following conversations with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority archaeologist, a local farmer who will mow the lane, and Orton Manor Court who own many of the roadside verges in Orton, we organised for the lane to be levelled. Orton is perhaps the last place with a functioning 'Manor Court'. These were the lowest court in the land and were an important source of justice for misdemeanours. Most ceased to function in the early 20th century.

Piles of boulders, old walling materials and old concrete have been moved into one pile. The lane was surveyed and a list of plug plants put together which will be planted in autumn 2023. The lane will be cut every year, improving the whole lane for wildlife, and creating a visual delight for walkers and cyclists. It is a lovely avenue to walk down on the way to the nearby lime kiln, limestone scar and the high ground of Beacon Hill.





# Connecting more people with wildlife

Cumbria Wildlife Trust is here to make wildlife matter more to society and in everyone's lives, for everyone's benefit. We aim to inspire and support 1 in 4 people to take action for wildlife by 2030.

**1,304** students inspired to do more for nature



We do this by:

- Helping people to take action for wildlife in the places that are closest and most important to them.
- Getting young people involved so they become the future generation of naturalists and environmentalists that Cumbria needs.
- Providing opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer.
- Creating events for people of all ages to have fun, relax and learn in nature.
- Inspiring people to create more space for wildlife in their gardens or outdoor areas.



## Helping people to take action for wildlife

By working together, people can change the natural world for the better. Everyone has a part to play. When people take action in the places that are closest and most important to them, we see this as being a powerful force for change and that more is achieved when people learn from others.

We care deeply about the links between people and wildlife and believe that getting close to nature is good for our health, well-being and enjoyment. If we can inspire and motivate more people from all ages, backgrounds, cultures, identities and abilities, and work with local communities and organisations to get involved and take action, nature can become abundant on their doorstep.

In 2022 we created a new Community Team to enable individuals and communities to learn and develop, so as to create a Wilder Cumbria. The aim of this new team is to offer diverse volunteering opportunities, create great inclusive learning opportunities and work collaboratively with everyone, as we believe everyone has a part to play.

## Nature is good for young people

The Wildlife Trust's study 'Children and Nature, 2019' revealed that children's well-being increased after they had spent time connecting with nature. After participating in supervised outdoor activities in nature, children showed an overall increase in their personal wellbeing and health, with the greatest improvement being in those who initially reported low levels. Children demonstrated high enjoyment levels, and were motivated and engaged.

---

4

schools were helped to make their grounds better for wildlife

---

3

Wildlife Watch groups

---

74

young people engaged with nature outside of school

---

57

children enjoying Wildlife Watch groups every month







236

new volunteers registered during the year

1,082

active volunteers

# Providing opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer

[Find out more](#)

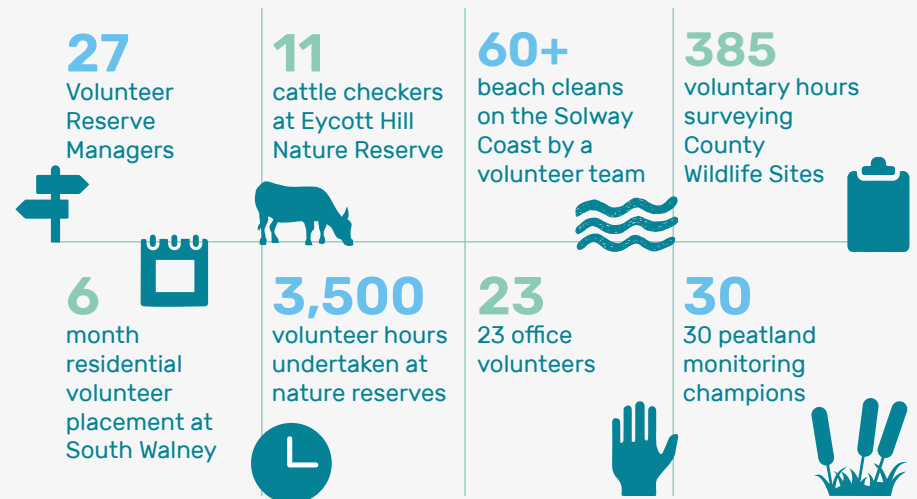


By increasing people’s awareness of the natural world, and nurturing a sense of enjoyment and appreciation of it, Cumbria Wildlife Trust often starts people off on their journey of discovery, as they increase their levels of participation and support for nature conservation. All of our amazing volunteers work side by side with our staff to help create a better future for wildlife and wild places.

### Being a volunteer can bring so many positive outcomes:

- Gain new skills and a greater understanding of wildlife conservation.
- Personal growth through networking and training events.
- Meet new people and make new friends with similar interests.

### Volunteers help nature through varied roles:



# Accepting a new challenge

“ **Having retired from full-time employment in March 2021, I subsequently moved to Carlisle from the Central Belt of Scotland three months later in June, to Houghton, shortly after Covid restrictions had been lifted. The existence of Gosling Sike on my doorstep was a contributing factor in my decision to move to Houghton, having walked through the wetlands on previous visits to the area when looking for a new place to live.**

**I joined the Cumbria Wildlife Trust a few weeks after moving home and registered with them to become a volunteer. Over the past two years I have made a lot of new friends whilst completing a lot of work tidying the site and clearing overgrown flower beds.**

It is a friendly, relaxed atmosphere at Gosling Sike and Adam, the Horticultural Manager, is very helpful and supportive. I enjoy talking to the many visitors we meet whilst I am there and chatting with the other volunteers; it has given me confidence to meet up socially again after two years of working from home during the covid pandemic.

To anyone considering becoming a volunteer I would offer the following advice. Keep an open mind, be prepared to accept new challenges and don't be afraid to try something new. Through Cumbria Wildlife Trust I am learning new ways to help and care for wildlife. I have helped build a dead hedge, built new habitats for insects to over-winter and even turned my hand to weaving a willow hedge. ”




**Teri Norman**  
Gosling Sike  
volunteer



## Creating events for people of all ages

Our aim is to provide events for people of all ages to have fun, relax and learn in nature so that they gain an appreciation of the natural world and in turn benefit from the positive effect it has on well-being. We run events across the county and online, from family fun days to in-depth talks on species. Local Support Groups inspire people in their local communities by organising talks and walks throughout the year.

**3,063**   
people came to **421** events  
across the county

**7**   
Local Support Groups  
organised **50** walks and  
talks in their communities

## Mental health and well-being

The natural world is the foundation of our health, wellbeing and prosperity. Evidence shows that a thriving, wildlife-rich environment benefits both physical and mental health. People with nature on their doorstep are more active, mentally resilient and have better all-round health.

However, we know that many people feel unwelcome and unsafe in green spaces or are unable to access wild places close to where they live. This is why The Wildlife Trusts are working to bring wildlife to more people, and more people to wildlife.

**17**  
care homes and community  
groups took part in activities

**137**  
individuals referred into  
wellbeing programme

**3,223**  
people engaged at  
Wild Well-being Days





# Case study

## Taking nature to older people

**Older people and care home residents are often some of the most isolated in our community, and find it most difficult to access nature. We wanted to engage care home residents with the natural environment, encourage conversation about their experiences on their local beaches and dunes, and evoke positive memories of their time visiting the sea using sensory activities.**

Residents looked at 'Reminiscence Boxes' containing sensory items such as suncream-scented post cards, swimming caps, beach blankets, buckets and spades, and a sand box. These have worked really well in engaging with residents, as we're able to bring the sand dunes to them.

We also took a 'Mobile Rockpool' which is a transparent plastic storage box with sea water, hermit crabs, seaweed, crabs, starfish, sea urchins, and anemones (borrowed from the local beach and returned safely afterwards!). We chatted to the residents about the items we'd brought to show them.

Residents really enjoyed feeling the different textures of the shells, bird nests and sand, as well as recognising different scents from the beach, and talking about their memories (eg. everyone seemed to collect and eat periwinkles!) The activity is accessible for a range of abilities, and for people living with dementia.

*"Thank you so much for the session this morning — we all really enjoyed it and are looking forward to your next visit. The service users have been talking about the rockpool all afternoon!"* [Elmhurst Care Home](#)



# Raising our game

Cumbria Wildlife Trust has an ambitious vision and we will need to grow as an organisation if we are to meet the scale of the challenges.

We are deeply committed to making sure that as much as possible of the funding that supporters entrust to us reaches the frontline, where it can make the maximum impact for people and wildlife.

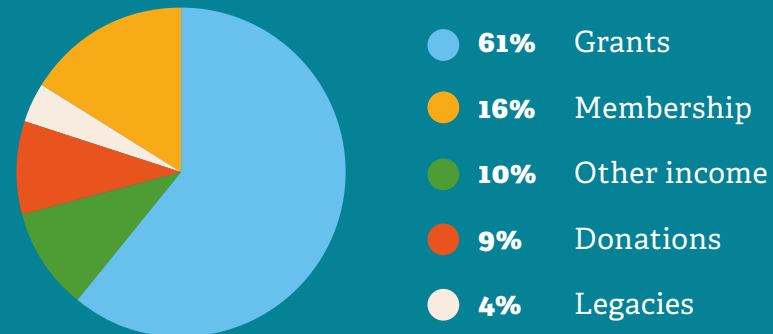
We will strive to continuously improve our efficiency and effectiveness as an organisation and work hard to drive down back-office costs and minimise expenditure on necessary but non-charitable purposes.

## Where our income came from

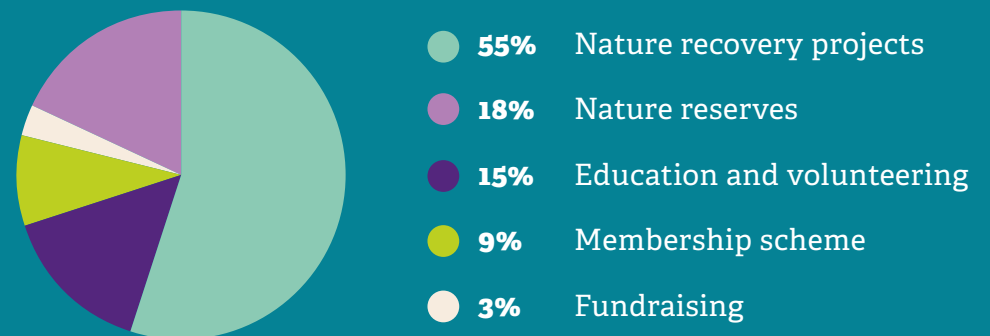
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,599,026</b>
Grants	£2,810,306
Membership	£718,842
Donations	£425,911
Legacies	£163,943
Other income*	£480,024

\*This includes income from contracts, Local Support Groups, our lottery, merchandise sales, fundraising events and investment income.

## Income in the year ended 31 March 2023



## Expenditure in the year ended 31 March 2023



# Thank you

## Big Give double your donation appeal

Thank you to all our supporters who donated to the Big Give appeal, giving £16,338.75 in just 7 days. This was matched by a donation of £12,380 from The Oglesby Charitable Trust, the 'project champion', who increased their pledged donation from £10,000 because of the response from you, our supporters.

The Big Give appeal raised £28,718.75 in total for restoration works at Bowber Head Farm Nature Reserve.

## Business supporters

Thank you to businesses supporting us with donations in 2022-23, including

- Lakeland Limited, donating £40,000 to wildflower habitat restoration work.
- Ticket Tailor, donating a percentage of their profits, totalling £31,120.30.
- Lakeland Trails' charity of the year, donating £5,000.

Percentage of sales, fundraising or in-kind donations were made by Grasmere Gingerbread, 2 Sisters Food Group, and Park Cliffe Camp Site.

## Thank you to our Corporate Members

Platinum: Lyon Equipment, The World of Beatrix Potter.

Gold: Dalefoot Composts, OroSurgeon Ltd, The Roselands Charitable Trust, United Utilities.

Silver: H&H Reeds Printers Ltd, WCF Ltd.

Bronze: Arnison Heelis Solicitors, Cedar Manor Hotel, Center Parcs, The Cumbria Grand Hotel, HolidayCottages.co.uk, Storrs Hall Hotel, O'Neil Architects.

Standard: Aggregate Industries, English Lakes Ice Cream, Fern Howe Guest House, Fortis Remote Technology, Good Life Cottage Company, Lakeland Cottage Company, Lakeland Hideaways, Lakeland Limited, Lakelovers, Langdale Hotel & Spa, TheLakeDistrict.org, Phil Collier Associates, Wildroof Landscapes.

Complimentary: Aerial Artwork, Cumbria Waste Management, Radiata Trees, 2 Sisters Food Group, Vine House Farm.



# Thank you

## Wild Work Days

Many businesses also contributed to Cumbria Wildlife Trust through a donation and staff taking part on a Wild Work Day. Thank you to all those who came along.

You can find out more about our Wild Work Days and Wild Wellbeing Days on our website.

Find out more



## A massive thank you to all our members

Thank you to all our members who continued to support us through a very difficult economic climate for many. Particular thanks to those that chose to increase their membership subscriptions in February. This generated an additional £43,000 including Gift Aid, which will make a huge contribution to protecting our county's wildlife.

## Gifts in Wills

A gift in your will is a simple yet powerful way to keep your wishes alive. No matter how big or small, your gift can help Cumbria's wildlife in the future.

During the year we were grateful to receive new legacies from Margaret Miller, Gillian Lawrence, John Bowerbank, Ian Shepherd, Catherine Scott, Dorothy Perks, Brian Pickford, Mike Langley, Eunice Stevenson and Anne Simpson, Edward Higgins and Maurice Payn.

*If the time is ever right for you to consider a gift in your Will and you would like further information, please contact:  
Helen Duxbury 01539 816325, [helend@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:helend@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk)*

.....



# Contact us

Head Office  
Plumgarths  
Crook Road  
Kendal  
Cumbria LA8 8LX

**01539 816300**  
Monday to Friday 9-5pm

[mail@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:mail@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk)

Join us

Make a one-off donation



**Cumbria**  
Wildlife Trust

[cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk](http://cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk)

