



Cumbria
Wildlife Trust

Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Wildlife Highlights 2020–21



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

This has been a tough year for all of the Trust's members, supporters, volunteers, partners and staff.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the stop-start lockdowns throughout 2020–2021 have been a severe test of endurance, and we've been deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of everyone who cares about Cumbria's wildlife and natural environment.

Despite the difficulties, this has been an excellent year of progress in protecting wildlife on our nature reserves and restoring habitats further afield across Cumbria.

Thanks entirely to the hard work of our volunteers and staff, and your wonderful support, our nature reserves are in very good heart. They remain some of the best places to see and enjoy special wildlife in Cumbria. We continue to work hard to make them even better for wildlife, as they form the core 'backbone' of the future nature recovery network that we must build across Cumbria.

I'm particularly excited that the Trust is now caring for Bowber Head Farm and its magnificent wildflower meadows. These are some of the most critically vulnerable and fragile of special habitats, so it's a privilege for us to become their guardians.

Again this year, we've continued to work closely with our many partners to carry out a significant amount of project work on land and species beyond our nature reserves. This is aimed entirely at bringing back wildlife, repairing habitats and encouraging people to get involved in creating a physical network for nature's recovery in our amazing county.

This includes a number of short-term projects, funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, comprising peatland work, marine project work and the Meadow Makers project, through which 50 hectares of wildflower meadows are being restored in south Cumbria with Plantlife.

Excitingly, the Trust is also leading a programme to promote a coordinated approach to marine conservation in the Irish Sea, thanks to support from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, John Ellerman Foundation and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This will enhance the Marine Protected Area network that the Trust has successfully campaigned to designate with the support of members.

The biggest impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns was probably the reawakening of popular interest in the everyday wildlife on people's doorsteps. We've put a great deal of time and effort into promoting and supporting this refreshed engagement with wildlife amongst people of all ages.

We owe a huge debt of thanks to all of our trustees, volunteers, funders and staff for their hard work and commitment to the cause of Cumbria's wildlife during this exceptionally difficult period.

We are especially grateful to all of our members and supporters for your amazing support for wildlife in Cumbria in these difficult times. Without you, none of our achievements would have been possible.

Thank you.

Stephen Trotter, CEO

Restoring and conserving wildlife habitats

Our activity this year

Marine Conservation Zones

Nature Reserves ●

Restoration projects:

Hay meadows ▲

Peat ■

Pollinator habitat //

Plumgarths ●

Gosling Sike ●



Wildlife habitats restored

440,800 m² of pollinator habitat restored or created on **37 community sites**

800 cowslips planted at **Whitbarrow Hervey Memorial Reserve**

92,700 m² of meadows restored across **5 meadows**

An extra coppice coupe created at **Howe Ridding Wood**



1.6 km² of upland wetlands restored, locking in **539 tonnes** of carbon per year

395,000 m² of pollinator habitat restored or created on **100 roadside verge locations**

Wildlife habitats cared for

38 nature reserves you can visit **38.4 km²** cared for

Habitats conserved include limestone grassland, lowland raised mires, upland heath, sand dunes, woodland, wetlands, coastal shingle and limestone pavement.

Bowber Head Farm

Last year was our first spring and summer seasons with Bowber Head Farm, near Ravenstonedale, under our ownership. Although we had known about the superb northern hay meadows at the farm for many years, this was our first opportunity to carry out a detailed plant survey. The survey revealed an astonishing 208 plant species. However, it also revealed the decline of some important northern hay meadow plants. Thanks to your donations, £89,212 was raised to carry out restoration work, to make the meadows even better and a great place for you to visit. This unusual habitat has declined hugely since World War II and Bowber Head Farm, alongside nearby Piper Hole are considered the best remaining northern upland hay meadows in England.



Alongside our fellow Wildlife Trusts we launched our '30 by 30' campaign, calling for at least 30% of our land and sea to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030. Here are our achievements and future plans for making this happen in Cumbria. Currently, we estimate 15% of Cumbria's land is protected for wildlife.

30 by 30 success story: Eycott Hill Nature Reserve

This new nature reserve was restored over five years from 2015–2020

216 hectares protected

10,150 trees planted

29 wetland scrapes created

459 invertebrate species recorded

31 of these are designated as nationally scarce

8 species of dragonfly breeding

1,200 days of volunteering

173 art workshops attended by **1,200** people

Over 28,000 people visited Eycott Hill

Waymarked path to the summit of Eycott Hill created

2 Public Rights of Way created

2 additional footbridges built

Cumbria Wildlife Trust's survey of bogs in the Lake District confirmed that most have been damaged, prompting action to restore peatland. Peatlands are a special wildlife habitat; they store carbon, help to reduce flooding and improve the quality of water.

Shap Fells Site of Special Scientific Interest

50 km of eroding peat banks stabilised & covered in turf

1.4 km² of the Wet Sleddale reservoir catchment restored

1,000s of bog pools created
Large bog pools planted with native plug plants
Sphagnum mosses transplanted into the pools to restart peat formation

30 by 30 conservation in progress: Bowber Head Farm Nature Reserve

120,000 m² protected

102 people enjoyed a guided walk to see the meadows at their best

208 plant species found in survey, with **30–40** plants per square metre in a good meadow

13 people attended a watercolour workshop

Roundthwaite, near Tebay

Management plans for **4.4 km²** of peatland written

10,000 m of moorland grips blocked with peat dams, timber dams & stone dams

Armboth Fells Site of Special Scientific Interest

214,000 m² of eroding peat hags & bare peat stabilised & re-turfed

Large bog pools planted with native plug plants

30 by 30 conservation in progress: meadow restoration

Cumbria Wildlife Trust is working to restore 50 hectares of meadows at locations across the county. We're working with land managers, including farmers, smallholders, conservation workers, contractors and local communities, as well as running a trainee support programme.

Restoration involves tried-and-tested natural seeding techniques, such as collecting and spreading green hay from a species-rich donor site onto a species-poor recipient site. We're also bulb and plug planting wildflower species to increase the variety of species on different sites.

We're helping people to reconnect with nature, by raising awareness of meadows and species-rich grasslands and gaining public support for them. Our popular events so far include the Open Weeks at Bowber Head Farm and the innovative Girls on Fells day for 11–13 year-olds.

30 by 30 conservation in progress: improving & creating pollinator habitat

#30by30

Cumbria Wildlife Trust is creating 1.15 km² of wildflower-rich habitat across northwest Cumbria to help boost pollinators. We're working with local communities, and we have joined forces with National Highways and a wide range of partners to achieve this.

4 art & craft events enjoyed by **163** people

13 pollinator identification skills workshops delivered to **391** people

12 educational workshops delivered to **791** children

23 community locations restored for pollinators

10,005 wildflower plug plants grown

Awarded the **National Highways award** for 'Excellence in environment and sustainability' for improving habitats for pollinating insects on Cumbria's A-roads

353 gardens and green spaces made friendly for pollinators were pinned on our online map

1,107 watched an online talk: 'Averting the Insect Apocalypse' by Professor Dave Goulson

8 pollinator-friendly online gardening workshops streamed to **1,398** people

500 wildflower seed packets were sent out

Free downloadable teachers' packs created for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3

85 conservation days restored and created **156,400 m²** of pollinator habitat

Getting the community involved

"The children get a lot out of practical activities such as those provided by Get Cumbria Buzzing – we can't wait to see our wildflower area grow!"

Year 2 teacher, Houghton Primary School



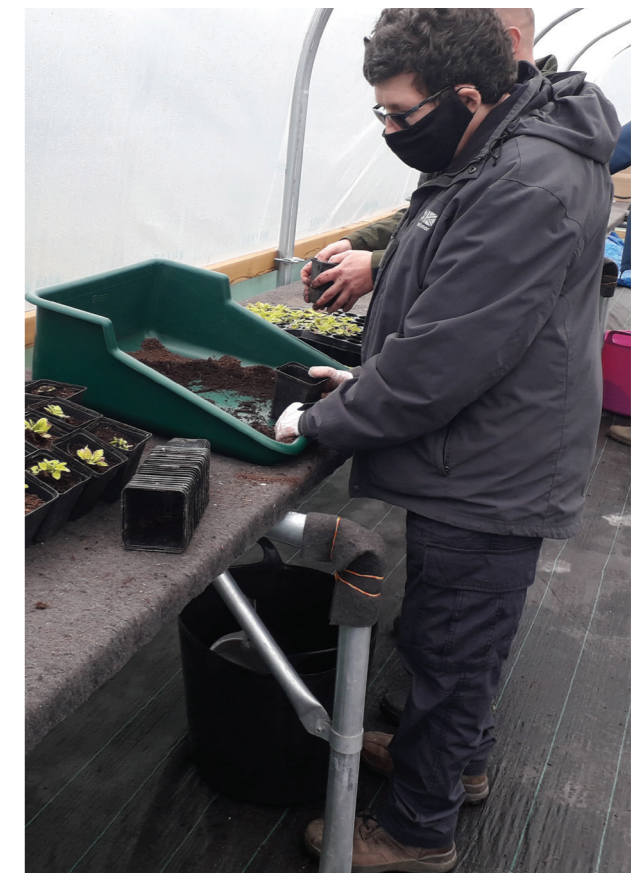
▲ Planting wildflower seed at Houghton Primary School

A group from Mencap volunteered at Gosling Sike, near Carlisle, to work in the gardens and the wildflower nursery before lockdown in March 2020. Many of this group became isolated in their own homes during the year and were happy to return to volunteer work in 2021. To support them during this difficult period, we sent out activity packs around wildlife gardening for them to do at home.



"I remember back at primary school, being in the courtyard and planting. I remember I've always had a garden. And I like going for walks in the park. I noticed a lot of bees and plants in the summer. I used to be terrified of bees! But as I've got older, I've realised they are so important for the environment and pollination. At Gosling Sike I like watering the plants and planting wildflowers. It's all good but I do find watering relaxing. When I'm not here, I like going out for walks, but at the moment during the quarantine, I'm kept inside quite a lot. The scenery here is nice. We've sown devil's-bit scabious today. I've learnt different types of flowers. At the moment it's winter and there aren't many pollinators or flowers about but later I'll plant more plants for pollinators in my garden."

Jordan, volunteer



▲ Volunteers prick out seedlings in the wildflower nursery at Gosling Sike Farm

Pollinator habitat creation plans 2021 onwards

We plan to create and improve 1.58 km² – that's around the size of 94 football pitches – of pollinator-friendly habitat, in north Cumbria. We'll work with Cumbria County Council, local communities, landowners and organisations, to create pathways for pollinators through our towns and countryside, to link fragmented nectar and pollen-rich habitats.

30 by 30: protecting wildlife in the Irish Sea

#30by30

The North West Wildlife Trusts (Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire Wildlife Trusts) campaign for the designation and management of a network of Marine Protected Areas throughout the Irish Sea and the conservation of the wider marine environment.

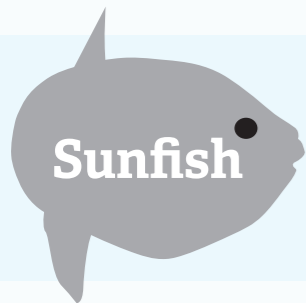
We want to see at least **30%** of the Irish Sea to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030. Currently, in the areas cared for by these three Trusts, **41%** of the sea is 'protected' but only **5%** has any sort of protection measures, and **0%** is fully protected.

30 by 30 success story: Highly Protected Marine Areas

Over 10,000 people supported our Highly Protected Marine Areas campaign. Defra announced it will begin the process for designating HPMA's by the end of 2022.

2 marine interns supported

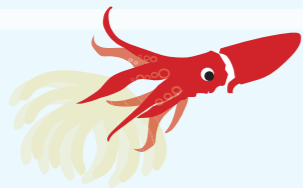
Sealife sightings off Cumbria in 2020–21



Sunfish flat and circular, looks like a giant swimming head

Northern bottlenose whale sadly washed up near Roosebeck

Squid eggs: look like a string mop head



Sea gooseberries: not true jellyfish, but ctenophores



Portuguese man o' war: not a jellyfish, but made up of co-dependent organisms called zooids



5 grey seal pups were born at South Walney Nature Reserve

grey seal pups were born at South Walney Nature Reserve

67 beach cleans collected **1,285** bags of rubbish across Cumbria

The grey seal colony at South Walney peaked at **518** hauled out on the beach



▲ Squid eggs at St Bees © Natalie O'Kane

30 by 30 conservation in progress: sand dune restoration

2020 saw the start of our work to restore sand dunes in locations across west Cumbria. This work is part of Dynamic Dunescapes, a national project to restore dunes over four years.

South Walney Nature Reserve

15,000 m² of dune restoration

3 new ponds created

Mawbray Banks

280,000 m² fenced and now grazed

1,000 m² invasive *Rosa rugosa* removed

2 volunteer natterjack toad training sessions

1 student placement supported

"I had a brilliant time with Dynamic Dunescapes in Cumbria. I had the opportunity to carry out many different tasks across different key areas to understand the skills a job in a conservation organisation requires. From learning how to do surveys and identify species, to being more confident in front of camera and improving my engagement with the public and other volunteers; to carrying out practicals and spreading the importance of restoring the sand dunes for the specialist wildlife at Walney, Sandscale and other key sites along the Cumbrian coast."

Barry, student placement

20 volunteer self-led activities

23 talks and training events

"Very well put together. Lucy and Eve worked well, and interacted well, the slides were fascinating, and the pace of information given was about right for me. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

1,004 participants at events

Drigg Dunes, Sandscale Haws National Nature Reserve, North Walney National Nature Reserve, West of Airfield, Walney

1,000 m² invasive *Rosa rugosa* removed

Haverigg Dunes

70,000 m² gorse removed

Eskmeals Dunes Nature Reserve

20,000 m² of sea buckthorn removed

15 beach cleans

1 community arts project

1 Dune Detective bioblitz event: **70** species recorded, **38** people involved

"I attended your talk this evening about Haverigg and the Dynamic Dunescapes project. It was really interesting and has inspired me to get involved with the project."

248 engagements with volunteering activities

"Increased my knowledge about Morecambe Bay, which I love and am lucky enough to live beside."

2 student bursaries awarded

Inspiring and engaging people to value nature

During 2020 we had more people engage with us than ever before, from all over Cumbria and beyond. The lockdowns we experienced during the year inspired people to get out in their local area and experience wildlife for themselves. We weren't able to run our usual events and volunteering activities for much of the year, and so we adapted and used digital communication to inspire people to learn and take action at home.



868,648 views of osprey cam, up 67% compared with previous year

1,478,096 visits to our website, up 70% compared with previous year



405,514 views of badger cam, up 143% compared with previous year

43 online talks and training webinars streamed to **5,571 people**

f Facebook followers increased by **35%**

Instagram followers increased by **331%**

Twitter followers increased by **9%**

Providing access to nature

Eycott Hill Nature Reserve

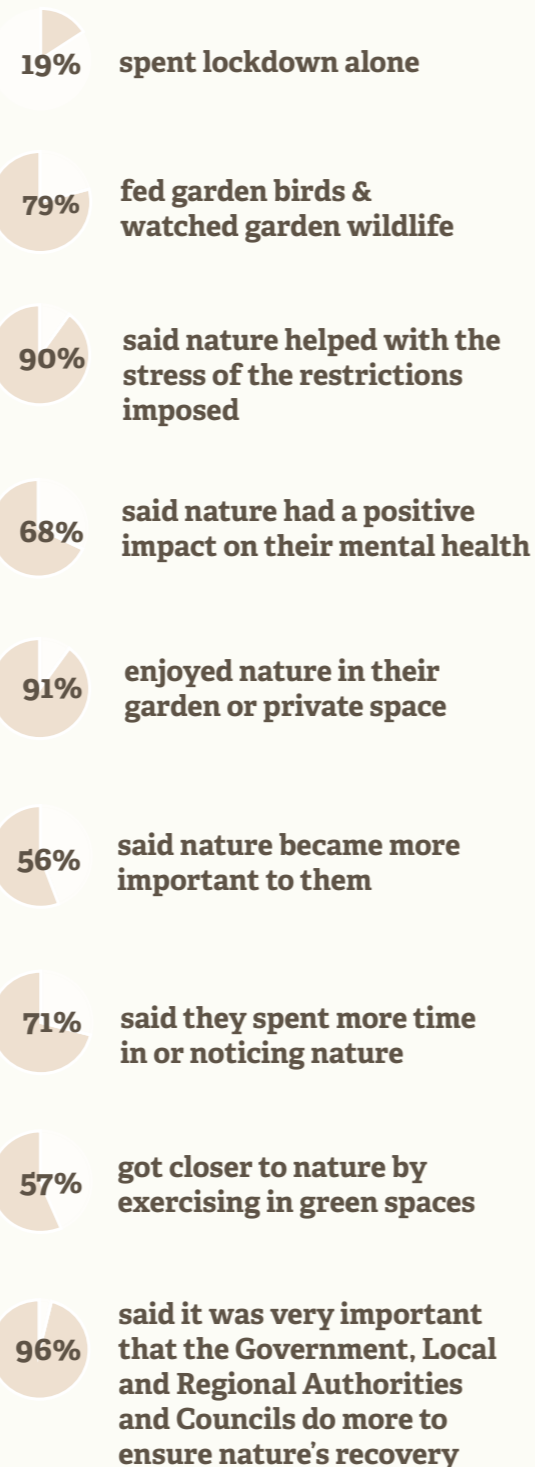
Information boards were installed near the new right-of-way path

Eskmeals Dunes Nature Reserve

A new information board was installed

Nature and you survey

We asked people how the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic affected their relationship with wildlife:



Numbers of people visiting our nature reserves



20,000

Foulshaw Moss



12,000

Smardale



10,000

Eycott Hill



11,384

South Walney

Local Support Groups

The volunteers who run our local support groups help us to reach out into our communities and bring people closer to nature through the many events they organise each year. In 2020, groups were not able to meet and put on their usual range of enjoyable talks and outdoor activities. Groups are now looking to get up and running again, but many need more help. Please get in touch if you would like to get involved in organising events with your local support group.

Your contribution



1,410 hours were given by volunteers working from home, helping with a range of tasks



211 days were given by volunteers to improve nature reserves

1,708 volunteers signed up to help wildlife

Badger's Paw Awards

Each year Cumbria Wildlife Trust recognises the outstanding contribution of volunteers with our Badger's Paw Award. This year, the following volunteers were recognised: Janet Ashton, Linda Robinson, Martin Tordoff, Barbie & John Handley, Diana Hall, Ian & Elizabeth Holcroft, Dorothy Hill, Dave Shackleton and Pete Davies.



Thank you

Donations are the financial backbone of Cumbria Wildlife Trust, and we are grateful to our 15,000+ members who make it possible for us to do so much for wildlife in the county. Thank you to all our individual, joint, family, child, life and corporate members, and to those who have left us a legacy, either in their Will or as a living legacy. Our thanks also go to the grant-giving organisations which have supported our projects throughout the year.

Thank you to our Corporate Members who have supported us this year

Platinum: inov-8.

Gold: Lyon Equipment, United Utilities.

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

Bronze: Arnison Heelis Solicitors, Cedar Manor Hotel, Center Parcs, The Cumbria Grand Hotel, HolidayCottages.co.uk, Larfarge Tarmac, Storrs Hall Hotel, University of Cumbria.

Standard: Aggregate Industries, Alpkit, The Daffodil Hotel, English Lakes Ice Cream, Fortis Remote Technology, Good Life Cottage Company, Lakeland Cottage Company, Lakeland Hideaways, Lakeland Limited, Lakelovers, Langdale Hotel and Spa, Pure Leisure Group, TheLakeDistrict.org, Wildroof Landscapes.

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

Gifts in Wills

During the year we were grateful to receive new legacies from Graham Mathews, Rosemary Maine, Dorothy Jex, Mary Joan White, Betty Green, Bridget Morley Pearce, Marjorie Perks, Lois Howard, Buntly Ellison, Christine Hill, Mark Johnson, Joan Wynne, Edith Cook, Arthur Todhunter, Kathleen Atkinson, Maureen Forshaw, Freda Beachell and Elaine Stuttard.

We understood, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the year was a challenging one for many of our supporters, with many businesses not generating an income during this period. So, whilst corporate membership is a very important source of income for us, we gave some of our supporters a hiatus in their membership, but continue to acknowledge their support. It is important to us that we are able to continue these relationships and support long into the future, and not simply cancel this because of one difficult trading year. We hope that most will be in a position next year to again make their donation to help Cumbria's environment and wildlife.



▲ Inov-8 donated £9,600 towards the planting of new trees and the restoration of peat habitats in Cumbria

Where our income came from

Total £4,011,673

Grants £2,389,621

Membership £632,029

Legacies £586,635

Donations £259,507

Other income £143,881 *

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

What your financial support means

86% of our expenditure created living landscapes, secured living seas, and inspired people to care for the natural environment.

14% was spent on membership scheme costs and fundraising.

