



ULSTER WILDLIFE

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2014/15



**Ulster
Wildlife**



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Foreword from our Chairman &

Nature matters to everyone in Northern Ireland. It's about place and belonging, culture and heritage, local people and local wildlife. It shapes communities and plays an important role in our quality of life, health and well-being.

If we get the balance right, it preserves our future, providing clean air, water, food, shelter and natural resources whilst supporting the local economy.

To help demonstrate that 'Nature Matters' we were delighted to welcome author Tony Juniper as the guest speaker at a reception in Belfast City Hall during August 2014. The event was sponsored by Bombardier. Prizes were presented to the winners of the Nature Matters photographic competition by Jenny Bristow. This highlighted the valuable role nature plays in our society and the need for each of us to act responsibly to ensure that Northern Ireland, the corner of the world we all call home, is protected for future generations.

We were also delighted that Monty Halls joined Ulster Wildlife as our Living Seas Ambassador. As a broadcaster, speaker, naturalist, marine biologist and travel writer, he has over two decades of experience leading teams to some of the most remote environments on earth, presenting wildlife and adventure documentaries.

Effective environmental governance is the key to sustainable development at regional, national and international levels. Within Northern Ireland, it has been encouraging to see progress towards improving the protection and management of Strangford Lough, one of our most valuable natural heritage assets. Following the complaint taken to the European Commission by Ulster Wildlife in 2012, an investigation was completed by the Northern Ireland Audit Office and they will now monitor the progress of the implementation plan by DOENI and DARD. We will continue to work alongside government and key stakeholders to consider how the sensitive ecosystems within the Lough can be better protected and restored.

Complete restoration of the lost horse mussel reefs may not happen within this generation, but, as the legacy of damage occurred under its custodianship, it is important that remedial action starts now.

During the year, we were successful in securing a five-year contract for the delivery of ParkLife, an environmental education programme in partnership with Belfast City Council. Recognising the value of the outdoor classrooms offered by Belfast parks, this project provides the opportunity for schoolchildren to learn about wildlife in their locality and how the natural environment supports their health and well-being. With over 20,000 interactions with children to date, feedback demonstrates that this is a very effective way to facilitate a connection with nature that will stay throughout their lives.



**Ulster Wildlife's Ambassador -
Monty Halls**

Work continues on our nature reserves with investment to improve the infrastructure for public access and further enhance the condition of habitats. During the year, upgrade work was progressed on Bog Meadows in Belfast with grazing re-established for the first time in many years. Specialist nature conservation work continues on designated sites such as Ballynahone Bog, Slievenacloy and Umbra.

We also welcomed the first intake of trainees onto our new Nature Skills Programme. Six trainees started in November 2014, developing their knowledge and expertise in Living Landscapes and Living Seas to help them prepare for a future career within the natural heritage sector.

Chief Executive

New projects coming on stream have added a new and very positive dimension to the work that we do, such as the Save Our Magnificent Meadows Project in Fermanagh and Tyrone. During the first year this project has seen tremendous results and we hope to build on this success during the remainder of the project. We are very fortunate to have an extremely talented and committed staff team who really make a difference, working to deliver our key themes of Living Landscapes and Living Seas.

Although considerable progress has been achieved in terms of delivering tangible environmental outputs, funding uncertainties following the budget cuts for the NI Assembly featured throughout much of the year. This uncertainty caused significant governance challenges for the charity, which were eventually resolved, in part, for the 2015/16 financial year. We would like to thank Council Members and the Ulster Wildlife staff team for their support as we managed this complex and difficult process.

We would also like to say a special thank you to all our members for their continued support. It is a privilege to work for and to volunteer for a charity like Ulster Wildlife. Together we can find a sustainable future for the wildlife in Northern Ireland.



Jennifer Fulton

Jennifer Fulton
CEO



R. Ramsay

Roy Ramsay
Chairman



Swans at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve

Vision, Mission & Goals

The scope of responsibility for Ulster Wildlife is governed by its charitable objects and purposes.

Ulster Wildlife's Charitable Objects as set out in its current 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 wellbeing through activities linked to the natural environment.

Our Articles of Association were reviewed and presented for approval and adoption at the 2014 AGM. Our corporate strategy 'Wildlife in Trust' was launched in April 2013 and delivery has been ongoing since this date. Our vision, mission, strategic themes and strategic goals (which are linked to our Charitable Objects) are illustrated opposite.

MISSION

We are a local charity that champions native wildlife. We work with local people to secure space for nature in our countryside, towns, coastlines and seas.

VISION

A healthy, well cared for natural environment which contributes to enjoyment, quality of life, prosperity, health and well-being.

STRATEGIC THEMES

Our work will be delivered through the themes of Living Landscapes & Living Seas.

Living Landscapes is about conservation of natural spaces that is bigger, better and more joined up.

Living Seas is about ensuring that we protect the seas so that marine life can thrive, from the depths of the ocean to the coastal shallows.

Living Landscapes and *Living Seas* aim to secure environments that are: resilient and adapting well to the changing climate; support sustainable food production; promote biodiversity within healthy functioning ecosystems; and build places where people understand, value, respect and work with nature.

STRATEGIC GOALS

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

Progress towards achieving our goals are set out in the subsequent pages.



Living Landscapes and Seas © Nigel Jamison

Governance

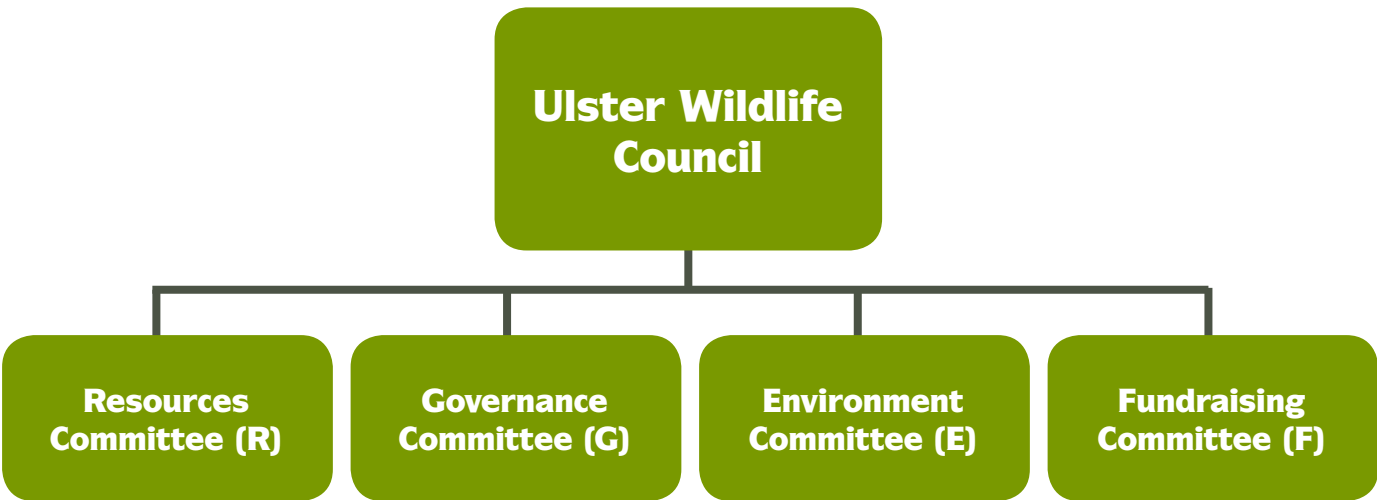
Ulster Wildlife Trust, (operating as Ulster Wildlife) is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC101848 and is a not-for-profit company incorporated in Northern Ireland, limited by guarantee NI 12711.

The charity is governed by a Board of Directors (Council) comprised of up to 16 members, nominated and elected from the membership of the organisation. Council members are elected at the AGM each year to serve up to an eight-year term. At the AGM at least one quarter of the Council must retire, and unless they have served for eight consecutive years, are eligible for re-election. Details of the serving Council Members for 2014/15 can be found below.

	CHAIRMAN Roy Ramsay (Appointed to Council for eight years from 5 September 2012) R, G
	VICE CHAIRMAN Joe Furphy OBE (Reappointed for one year from 7 October 2014) R, G, E
	HONORARY TREASURER Graham Fitzgerald (Appointed for eight years from 17 September 2013) R, F
	COUNCIL MEMBER Duggie Anderson (Appointed for eight years from 28 September 2011) G
	COUNCIL MEMBER Peter Archdale (Appointed for eight years from 17 September 2013) E
	COUNCIL MEMBER Lucinda Blakiston Houston (Reappointed for two years from 7 October 2014) E, G
	COUNCIL MEMBER Bob Brown OBE (Appointed for eight years from 29 September 2010) E
	COUNCIL MEMBER Ken Brundle (Appointed for eight years from 17 September 2013) F, R
	COUNCIL MEMBER Edith Finlay (Appointed for eight years from 28 September 2011) E
	COUNCIL MEMBER Margaret Finlay (Stood down on 7 October 2014) G
	COUNCIL MEMBER Jim Kitchen (Appointed for eight years from 5 September 2012, resigned 11 June 2015)
	COUNCIL MEMBER Philip Lennon (Appointed for eight years from 28 September 2011) R
	COUNCIL MEMBER Ben Matson (Appointed for eight years from 5 September 2012) G
	COUNCIL MEMBER Jim McAdam OBE (Reappointed for four years from 7 October 2014)
	COUNCIL MEMBER Craig McGuicken (Appointed for eight years from 7 October 2014)
	COUNCIL MEMBER Doris Noe (Appointed for eight years from 5 September 2012) E
	COUNCIL MEMBER Howard Platt (Appointed for eight years from 7 October 2014) E

The governance sub-structure of the charity is illustrated in the diagram below. This governance framework is designed to ensure that we are an accountable, effective and efficient charity and to manage risk at a reasonable level.

Governance Sub-committee Structure



Risk and Control

Ulster Wildlife Trustees regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of its work. Risk is an everyday part of charitable activity and managing it effectively is essential to safeguard the charity's funds and assets. This is achieved through an annual and quarterly review of the organisational risk register with the Executive team and consideration of appropriate control strategies.

Changes to the Council

Changes to the Ulster Wildlife Council during 2014/15:

Margaret Finlay stood down from Council on 7 October 2014 having served for an 8-year term. We would like to thank Margaret for her valued contribution.

Two new members were voted onto Council on 7 October 2014 - Craig McGuicken and Howard Platt. With many years of experience in the culture and heritage sector, both bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the charity.



Trainees learning about
'Shore Thing' Survey in Killough



GOAL ONE

**INSPIRE PEOPLE TO CHAMPION
WILDLIFE AND VALUE NATURE**



Discovery & Learning

Ulster Wildlife believes that in order to protect NI's diverse landscapes and seas, and secure a future rich in wildlife, we must invest resources into engaging people with nature and especially educating and inspiring the next generation to value the natural environment.

During 2014/15 our Discovery and Learning Staff, supported by our team of Environmental Guides, worked with a range of partners and funders to deliver a series of engaging and interactive sessions for children and their families, promoting the concept of 'Outdoor Classrooms'. We believe that learning about nature should be fun and we work to help inspire the next generation of budding naturalists.

Throughout the year, we ran Eco-Clubs and Summer Schemes at Holy Cross Boys' School in Belfast and at Mossley Mill in Newtownabbey. These sessions gave the young people who attended the chance to find out more about nature in their local area and the opportunity to learn through hands-on, fun and creative activities.

We continued to work with Bombardier Aerospace in their 'The Flight Experience' Programme. Ulster Wildlife is one of a number of partners that Bombardier works with to deliver this innovative programme, with the key objectives to encourage pupils to consider STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

subjects as exciting and creative processes of discovery and invention, and to inspire and inform them about possible career choices in these subject areas. Ulster Wildlife delivers the 'Flight in Nature' element of this programme - which focuses on how different species use flight and how scientists and engineers have looked to nature in the designing of planes and other flying machines.

Ocean Giants

A life-size basking shark and a bottlenose dolphin are just a couple of the marine creatures that made waves in schools across North Down, Ards, Belfast and Newtownabbey, as part of an exciting new living seas education programme delivered by Ulster Wildlife in 2014/15.

The hand-crafted ocean giants, which also include a common and grey seal and a harbour porpoise, were funded by Bombardier Aerospace Foundation and Northern Ireland Environment Agency, alongside an interactive classroom session to help bring our marine



Ocean Giants Workshop with the Environment Minister, Mark H Durkan and representatives from Bombardier Foundation



Ocean Giants Workshop at Castle Gardens Primary School, Newtownards

Funders: Bombardier Foundation, Newtownabbey Borough Council, Newry & Mourne District Council, NIEA, AES.

environment to life. Twenty schools took part in the programme, exploring the giants that live in our local seas using life-size models, stories and games, plus footage from above and below the water. A curriculum-linked education booklet was also developed to help teachers deliver marine-themed activities after the sessions.

Energy in Nature

Schoolchildren throughout Carrickfergus and Larne discovered the power of energy in nature, as part of a series of education workshops delivered by Ulster Wildlife during 2014/15 and sponsored by AES UK & Ireland. Using interactive activities, experiments and games, P6 and P7 pupils from over 20 schools explored the different types of energy provided by nature, and the importance of saving energy in school and at home to help tackle climate change. The workshops are designed to bring science to life for the schoolchildren involved and to spark a lifelong interest in our natural environment.

Public Events

Another significant area of delivery for the Discovery and Learning Team is the programme of family-friendly public events at Kilbroney Park in Rostrevor, Mossley Mill in Newtownabbey and Slieve Gullion in Armagh. Events delivered in 2014/15 included Easter events and Squirrel Walks at Kilbroney, Bat Evenings and Wildlife Art events in Mossley Mill and Spring Walks at Slieve Gullion. The events aim to educate local families about the wildlife on their doorstep and to encourage people to get active in the outdoors.

Ulster Wildlife also offered a programme of one-off discovery sessions that schools and groups booked directly with us during 2014/15. These included 'Minibeast Safari' and 'Birds & Bird Feeders' workshops, and adult talks on wildlife gardening, barn owls and our local sea life.



Holy Cross Eco Club in Belfast



Red Squirrel Event at Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor



'Energy in Nature' sessions with AES

ParkLife

The ParkLife Education programme offers children across Belfast an invaluable resource for learning whilst experiencing the nature that can be found by simply walking through their local park.

They also gain knowledge about the history of their park as well as the importance of the natural environment for their health and well-being and the need to keep healthy through regular daily exercise.

Research has shown that:

- Lack of exposure to the natural environment can have a negative effect on human health.
- Exposure and access to green spaces can have a wide range of social, economic, environmental and health benefits.
- Urban green spaces are major contributors to the quality of the environment and human health and well-being in inner city and suburban areas.
- Outdoor recreation provides an opportunity to increase quality of life and heighten social interaction.
- Physical activity in the natural environment can increase life-span and lead to greater well-being. Children who are physically active outside also show fewer symptoms of depression, and an increased ability to function better at school and home.

The ParkLife Education Project aims to create the environmental champions of the future. During 2014/15 approximately 3,500 children from 24 primary schools across Belfast took part in the project. The ParkLife team also delivered sessions for five Community Groups, ran monthly Saturday Clubs in four parks - Falls, Ormeau, Tommy Patton and Woodvale. They also provided activities at 14 Fun Days in Belfast Parks and four summer schemes.

The sessions are run in partnership with educational facilitators from Belfast City Council trained by the Ulster Wildlife team to carry out this role. We would like to formally thank each staff member for their help and commitment to the ParkLife programme.

Organised park visits are complemented with online resources to encourage unsupervised park visits, providing materials to help teachers, parents and children tie in with key curriculum topics.

Through practical field work activities, pupils build an understanding of educational concepts in a new environment which can help to remove barriers to learning. Feedback from teachers and pupils has been very positive.

Teachers

“This was a super project. It was extremely informative and engaged the children at all levels. They really enjoyed the practical activities, such as making bird-feeders and getting their hands dirty!”

“The mathematical activities were very subtle. They were dressed up in exciting activities so the class didn’t even know they were actively counting and calculating.”

Pupils

“We enjoyed getting out and finding new things.”

“Very good - saw things I never knew about before.”

“It was fun and exciting.”

“Awesome, epic.”

“I now want to work in parks.”

“I loved it and the games were brill.”

“Great fun, loved the messy bits.”



ParkLife Saturday Club in Ormeau Park

Funder: Belfast City Council.

Wildlife Watch

Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts aimed at 7-14 year olds and at the 31 March 2015, Ulster Wildlife had 3011 registered Wildlife Watch members.

Wildlife Watch encourages and nurtures young people's interest in wildlife and the environment by creating learning opportunities, and inspiring personal participation and celebration. During the year, Wildlife Watch members receive quarterly mailings which are filled with information, quizzes and activities to get young people engaged with nature. There is also a series of awards that members can work towards to encourage action and recognise and reward environmental activity and achievements.

Another element of Wildlife Watch is the organisation of Wildlife Watch groups by teams of adult volunteers supported by a member of Ulster Wildlife staff. In the groups, which usually meet once a month, children aged between 7 and 14 get to know, enjoy and care for their local area - for example through fungus forays or tree games; and by doing things like organising litter picks or helping to restore ponds.

They may also participate in projects such as recording species and monitoring the environment. Together, these activities enable them to build personal and social skills and knowledge, whilst developing a positive relationship with their local environment.

At present, Ulster Wildlife supports two local Wildlife Watch Groups - one in Lisburn and one in east Belfast, Bloomfield Wildlife Watch Group, which meets in Orangefield Park in Belfast.

During 2014/15 the Bloomfield Wildlife Watch Group had their usual packed schedule of meetings. This included Nature Walks in Orangefield Park focusing on Autumn and Winter topics such as seeds and hibernation and an evening learning about composting including a Minibeast ID session in the Park and also a wildlife photography session in the park.

Their annual 'Bird Day' in Orangefield Park in January 2015 was a huge success, as always, with the Wildlife Watchers making bird boxes, bird ringing with Aidan Crean and a range of arts and crafts. There was also a bird trail round the park for people to learn more about the birds that live there. A little egret was spotted in the Park over the winter which provided a lot of interest.



Bird Ringing at the Bloomfield Wildlife Watch Group Bird Day at Orangefield Park

The Lisburn Wildlife Watch Group meets in Knockmore Primary School each month. Over the 2014/15 year, the groups had sessions on a range of nature topics including hedgehogs, bees and honey, and homes for birds. They also enjoyed a trip to Ulster Wildlife's Slievenacloy Nature Reserve in June 2014 to learn about the site's orchids and wildflowers. The Lisburn group also got crafty during the year making clay plaques and berry artwork.



Lisburn Wildlife Watch Group at Slievenacloy

Skills for Living Landscapes and Seas

The Skills for Living Landscapes and Seas project, for which funding was confirmed in March 2014, involves Ulster Wildlife offering eighteen, 12-month, training placements over three years to provide practical, hands-on natural heritage skills encompassing both land and sea.

Trainees will develop a wide range of skills ranging from specialist site and species management, wildlife identification and monitoring, and community engagement. The placements will provide trainees with the skills needed to develop a career in the natural heritage sector.

The project is funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Skills for the Future' Programme which supports work-based training in a wide range of skills that are needed to look after our natural heritage. The grant was awarded due to the identified gap in the Natural Heritage Sector for skills such as species and habitat identification and practical land management.

The HLF Skills for the Future funding has run successfully for many Wildlife Trusts in Scotland and England for the past five years. What makes Ulster Wildlife's scheme unique is the opportunity for placements focused on both the terrestrial and marine environments. Our trainees will also complete a Lantra Accredited training programme while they are with us to take forward for future employment opportunities.

Our Project Coordinator, Sheila Lyons, was recruited in August 2014 and will run the programme for its three-year duration, managing the project, and acting as mentor to the trainees to ensure they are fully supported in their year with us.

One of the outcomes of the HLF funding was to diversify the types of people accessing training and employment in the sector, therefore in June 2014 we ran an enhanced recruitment campaign to encourage particularly under-represented groups to apply for the programme. We targeted those under the age of 25, career changers (40 plus) and those without a third level environmental qualification.

Nearly 300 applicants applied for the first round of the traineeship, with six lucky individuals joining our team in November 2014 to train with us for the year. As well as internal training delivered by Ulster Wildlife staff, the trainees receive individual training budgets to avail of short external accredited courses and the opportunity to complete short work placements with other organisations within the sector.

In the early months of the first cohort, the trainees have enjoyed many benefits of the project such as receiving formal classroom learning with our Nature Reserves and Living Seas Managers. Some external accredited training courses have also taken place, and have been opened out to the wider organisation to both staff and volunteers. Trainees have also benefited from invaluable networking opportunities, attending events and meetings with or on behalf of Ulster Wildlife. By far the most beneficial aspect of the project has been the ability to job shadow Ulster Wildlife staff, allowing trainees to put into practice what they have learned, with some already branching out to take on individual responsibilities and solo projects.

Likewise, the early benefits of the traineeship to Ulster Wildlife are notable, allowing us to develop a much more structured and strategic training programme and to upskill our existing staff in training provision. We have also gained hands-on assistance with reserve work and for seas activities within community engagement and education.

The exceptionally high level of interest in the programme has highlighted and identified that there is a need for such a provision in the sector within Northern Ireland, which is something Ulster Wildlife will take forward for future project development.



Trainees clearing scrub at the Umbra Nature Reserve

Funder: Heritage Lottery Fund

Volunteering

The strength of Ulster Wildlife is based on the partnership between staff, volunteers and our members, working together for nature in Northern Ireland.

As a local charity, volunteering has always been, and remains, fundamental to every aspect of our work. We are dependent on volunteers to enable us to protect our environment for future generations and we strive to encourage and support all our volunteers and to offer a friendly and enjoyable environment in which to volunteer.

We provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities across the organisation and receive support from skilled and dedicated volunteers throughout the year.

By far the largest area of volunteering in the organisation involves practical 'hands-on' work on our nature reserves with volunteers helping our staff all year round, in all weathers. These volunteers work alongside our nature reserves staff carrying out a range of activities such as path maintenance, meadow management, scrub control, and invasive species control.



Barn owl volunteers

As well as the local people who give up their free time to help us in our nature reserve management activities we also act as a host organisation in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) Scheme, hosting volunteers on one-year placements from all over Europe.

Our Living Seas Team has also provided a range of volunteering opportunities, in the form of short-term and longer-term placements, with volunteers getting involved in policy work, awareness-raising events and projects and in research.

We also have a network of approximately 70 Barn Owl Project volunteers who survey for nest sites and signs of barn owls each summer across Northern Ireland. This survey would be impossible without the support and time given by these dedicated individuals.



Corporate volunteers from Citigroup

We could not achieve as much without the support and time given by this diverse range of volunteers. They bring expertise, fresh ideas and energy to our work. We thank all our volunteers for their contribution in 2014/15.

We do not have enough space in this publication to list all our volunteers individually, but pictured are just a few of the dedicated volunteers who have given their time to support our work in 2014/15.



EVS volunteers - Hannah, Isabella, Sofia and Julia



Bluebells at
Glendun Nature Reserve





GOAL TWO

**PROTECT AND RESTORE HABITATS
AND ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH
PRACTICAL ACTION AND RESEARCH**



Nature Reserves

During 2014/15, Ulster Wildlife continued to manage and protect a suite of special places for nature and people across Northern Ireland.

The Nature Reserves Team carries out its work with the support of volunteers - this continued assistance is invaluable, enabling us to undertake the broad range of conservation activities required for the best practice management of our nature reserves. A wide range of activities are carried out including (but not limited to) scrub and invasive species control, grassland management, fencing, hedge-laying, biological monitoring, working with machinery and access works.

Invasive species pose a threat to many habitats and species in Northern Ireland and our nature reserves are not immune. We regularly work to limit the spread of notorious species particularly Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, Himalayan honeysuckle and sea buckthorn.

Ballynahone Bog Restoration

Ballynahone Bog, near Maghera, is one of the best examples of a lowland raised bog in Northern Ireland and one of our most important National Nature Reserves (NNR). Following a hydrological survey and Phase One of the restoration project (where 100 dams were installed), a further 130 dams have been installed during 2014/15, through the NGO Challenge Fund.

The dams are located in areas where conditions are expected to encourage peat formation if the water level is raised. Water level monitoring equipment was installed along the drains in co-operation with the QUB School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering to inform the success of the damming works. Ballynahone

Bog is included in a PhD research project and early data shows that the damming works are proving successful in raising water levels within the restoration areas.

Also, as part of the NGO Challenge Fund, an investigation into the area of Ballynahone Bog affected by lead shot took place, also in conjunction with a QUB student project - this looked at the level of contamination within the affected area and provided projected costs for removal. Further work is required to establish the spatial distribution of the lead and how this may have moved through the peat structure and drainage system of the bog.



Ballynahone Bog © Katy Bell

BioBlitz 2014

Glenarm Nature Reserve was selected as the Northern Ireland venue for the All-Ireland BioBlitz in 2014. The event was run in partnership between Ulster Wildlife, CEDaR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording), NIEA, Butterfly Conservation NI and Glenarm Estate. The lure of one of the best nature reserves in the country and good weather brought an array of local wildlife experts and volunteers out to record as many species as they could within a 24 hour period. Thanks to an enormous effort by all involved, a massive total of 1116 species was recorded within the site boundary by close of play. Glenarm was crowned the all-Ireland winner of BioBlitz 2014 (beating the nearest rival by more than 100 species).

Highlights and totals included:

- 328 plants, 155 bryophytes, 211 fungi and lichen.
- 267 insects, 60 birds and 10 species of butterfly - new site for cryptic wood white and green hairstreak butterflies.
- An amazing 19 species of mammals including red squirrel, Irish hare and pine marten.
- Over 110 species of moths recorded including one new species for Northern Ireland: the micro-moth *Pammene splendidulana*, an oak feeder.
- A new species of leaf-mining fly for Northern Ireland (and a second Irish record): *Cerodontha silvatica*, feeds on great wood-rush.
- Three species of fish.



Opening the moth trap at Glenarm BioBlitz

Review of grazing

Following changes to the Common Agricultural Policy, Ulster Wildlife carried out a significant review of its grazing activities in 2014/15. New graziers and grazing agreements were established on a number of our nature reserves. Grazing was re-established at Bog Meadows following a hiatus of several years and, in time, this conservation grazing should improve the species-richness of a number of areas within the nature reserve.

We also reviewed options for grazing Milford Cutting in Armagh and Inishargy Bog on the Ards Peninsula. It is hoped that grazing can be re-established in 2015/16 on Inishargy which should help to control the bracken and improve conditions for the marsh fritillary butterfly.



Cattle grazing at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve

Funders: Northern Ireland Environment Agency; Landfill Communities Fund; Alpha Programme; Biffa Award, North Down Borough Council, NGO Challenge Fund 2015.

Nature Reserves

Surveys and Monitoring

At Ulster Wildlife we are extremely lucky to manage some magnificent sites of national importance such as Glenarm, Isle of Muck, Slievenacloy and Umbra.

We monitor key flora and fauna across our suite of nature reserves each year - this work is carried out by staff, volunteers and expert consultants. The survey and monitoring that we carry out covers a wide range of some of the most important species and habitats found in Northern Ireland.

Floral Surveys

- Dune Slack Monitoring at the Umbra - the vegetation monitoring helps inform our management of the dune slacks found at this reserve. Interesting plants that can be found here include the rare marsh helleborine orchid and grass-of-parnassus.
- Wood cranesbill monitoring at Feystown - monitoring work of this species is now also carried out at the nearby Drumcrow Road site where wood cranesbill has been successfully transplanted.
- Vegetation monitoring also took place in 2014 at the High Hollow within Glenarm Nature Reserve as well as monitoring of the bog rosemary colony at Ballynahone Bog NNR and marsh helleborine orchids at Milford Cutting Nature Reserve.



Marsh helleborine at Umbra Nature Reserve © Katy Bell

Butterflies and Moths

Ulster Wildlife's suite of nature reserves includes some of the best sites for butterflies and moths in Northern Ireland.

The butterfly transect at Slievenacloy continues to be walked each year by our volunteers monitoring important species that are declining throughout the British Isles, such as small heath and dark green fritillary. The data from this transect is forwarded to the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS).

The marsh fritillary butterfly monitoring at Inishargy Bog was carried out in June, but no adults were found within the nature reserve. Similarly, a follow-up larval search produced no caterpillars. The species is still found on adjacent land and it is hoped that habitat works such as scrub and bracken control will encourage this species to spread back to the reserve.

Survey work was again carried out for small eggar moth at the Umbra - light-trapping took place early in March followed by larval searches in late June. No larval webs were found but this species is known to enter a state of diapause (whereby the moth caterpillar stalls its development) and can go unrecorded for several years. This species feeds on blackthorn and our scrub management activities at the Umbra take this into account.

One of the rarest and most attractive of all British moth species, the scarce crimson and gold moth (a Red Data Book species), was again recorded at the Umbra during monitoring work. In contrast to the small eggar moth, this species requires areas of dune blow-outs vegetated with wild thyme.



Marsh fritillary at Inishargy Bog © Katy Bell

Bird Surveys

Bird survey work included continued Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) at Slievenacloy and Ballynahone Bog to monitor the populations of key species such as meadow pipit and skylark.

Work continues at the Bog Meadows Constant Effort Site, one of the longest running CES bird-ringing sites in Ireland, run entirely by volunteers and the Friends of Bog Meadows. Highlights of 2014 included a healthy winter population of reed bunting and prospective breeding of lapwing in spring - both encouraging signs of how wildlife can hold on or colonise urban areas if given the chance.

The Isle of Muck is the third largest breeding seabird colony in Northern Ireland - a survey of black guillemots, the whole seabird colony and a kittiwake productivity survey showed that the populations here continue to remain relatively stable. The data from these counts are included in the Seabird Monitoring Programme coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

Further information on our nature reserves can be found at www.ulsterwildlife.org/reserves

Notable Sightings

We survey and monitor a range of habitats and species but we can't cover them all – please contact us if you have any wildlife recording skills. We would be particularly interested in under-recorded groups such as spiders, dragonflies, bees and wasps, lichens and mosses.

Interesting or notable species that have been recorded across our nature reserves during 2014/15 included:

- Small white orchid - recorded for the first time at Slievenacloy, bringing the total number of orchid species on this species-rich grassland site to nine.
- Hemp agrimony plume - found at the Umbra Nature Reserve, the first record of this micro-moth in Northern Ireland.
- The micro-moth *Lampronia pubicornis* (discovered new to Northern Ireland at the Umbra in 2013) was found in large numbers. This species feeds on burnet rose.
- Other notable species include the continued presence of red grouse at Glendun Hill Farm and Irish hare at Inishargy Bog on the Ards Peninsula.



Kittiwake Productivity Survey at Isle of Muck

Save our Magnificent Meadows

The Save our Magnificent Meadows Project moved into full blown implementation in July 2014. This project is landscape-scale conservation in practice and is a UK-wide partnership project, led by Plantlife and delivered by Ulster Wildlife in Northern Ireland.

A challenging set of habitat maintenance, restoration and re-creation targets have been set for purple moor grass and lowland meadows in Fermanagh & Tyrone.

With backing from NIEA, DARD, local Councils and other partners including Butterfly Conservation NI, the mechanics of the project were established in 2014/15. Public access sites were assessed, farmers still making hay identified and areas of operation agreed. An NI steering group was convened and our partnership colleagues from across the UK held their inaugural team meeting in Fermanagh in summer 2014.

With a remit to focus on the remaining species-rich grassland habitats in Fermanagh and Tyrone, protecting, enhancing and connecting ASSIs, SACs and priority farmland habitats was a key requirement. So too was the need to find a balance between the local people and the wildlife communities. Awareness raising and community engagement work began to generate genuine interest as volunteers, farmers and the rural community got involved in ever-increasing numbers.

Wednesday morning volunteering sessions took place on selected grassland sites in Garrison and Enniskillen, with scrub clearance the main task. Community talks elicited a similarly positive response with big turnouts, backed up by meetings with local farmers' groups designed to help close the policy to practice gap.



Volunteers helping with scrub clearance

An early coup was a visit from the Minister for Agriculture Michelle O'Neill, who witnessed the project first-hand and some innovative seed collection

techniques. The establishment of a species-rich meadow at the Ulster Folk and Transport at Cultra will promote and signpost the project for up to 500,000 visitors a year. Discussions were held with Forest Service, NI Water, Fermanagh District Council, the Geopark, Field Studies Council and local schools. The project was promoted at QUB, delivering site visits and interested trainees. Machinery and equipment were purchased as we geared up for the growing season.



Minister O'Neill with Giles Knight and local farmers learning about the project

Following a series of reminiscing sessions in local day care centres, a story telling event took place at Killykeaghan NNR in February. With 35+ attendees present, this demonstrated the strong cultural connections between rural communities and their agricultural traditions. Equally, with seven local schools now on board, two new Ulster Wildlife guides began to lead learning sessions on site, with species and art projects added in. So, literally a project for all ages!

Overall, the first few months were about establishing a clear direction of travel for the project, generating trust and credibility, while announcing the arrival of Ulster Wildlife in the region and gathering a huge amount of local information. The Project Officer has identified a strong community appetite for making more of these special wildlife-rich places, and the project hopes to develop and capitalise on this as it enters its second year.

Funder: Heritage Lottery Fund and NIEA

Be There for Barn Owls

The barn owl is one of Northern Ireland's most iconic species, but unfortunately one of the most endangered due to the loss of nesting and feeding sites.

The five main aims of the 'Be There For Barn Owls' project are to:

- Increase the availability of foraging habitat for barn owls.
- Increase baseline knowledge of barn owl distribution and abundance throughout NI.
- Identify and map nest and roost sites across NI.
- Raise awareness of the barn owl as part of our natural heritage and its conservation needs.
- Build capacity for local action through a network of community-led barn owl groups.

Year One of the project worked towards the above aims focusing on Co. Armagh and Co. Down. In Year Two the focus moved to Co. Derry/Londonderry. John Woolsey, the original Project Officer left in March 2014 and Catherine Fegan took up the role in May 2014.



Erecting Barn Owl Nest Box



Publicising the project at the Balmoral Show

Some of the activities in 2014/15 included:

- A full scale summer barn owl survey took place; 71 volunteers surveyed 45 2x2km² tetrads across NI, covering countryside considered suitable for barn owls.
- Over 65ha of barn owl habitat has been made available by working with major landowners and individual farmers.
- Nest boxes were provided where habitat was available but suitability for barn owls limited by lack of nest sites.
- Changes to management were agreed that will increase the amount of rough grassland.
- In Year Two, 435 students received a barn owl talk, 198 people participated in a talk or workshop, nine events were attended such as agricultural shows. This has helped promote barn owl conservation and obtain sightings.
- Publicity through newspaper and magazine articles, television and radio appearances and through an online presence on Twitter @BarnOwlsNI has led to an average four sightings per week being reported to Ulster Wildlife. All sightings are mapped and help to progress the barn owl survey.

In the third and final year of the project, the focus will turn to Co. Tyrone and it is hoped that the continued survey effort from our dedicated volunteers will identify more nest locations. We continue to target conservation efforts in the areas where barn owl activity has been recorded and raise awareness of the barn owl throughout the country.

Funder: Heritage Lottery Fund

Living Seas Community Engagement

The Living Seas Community Engagement Project aims to raise levels of awareness of marine biodiversity in coastal communities in Northern Ireland, and encourage local people to promote marine conservation through the establishment of Voluntary Marine Conservation Areas.

A Voluntary Marine Conservation Area is a non-statutory conservation area. Its role is to engage communities and encourage sensible use of the natural resources in the area. This is primarily achieved through community events and talks, and the promotion of voluntary codes of conduct.

During the year the project focused on the four target areas identified during Year two.

- Portrush & the Skerries
- The Glenarm coast
- Groomsport, Donaghadee & the Copelands
- Killough & Dundrum Bay

The initial focus for the new Living Seas Officer (Dave Wall) has been on re-engaging with stakeholders in each of the four target areas to establish a positive working relationship. This has been achieved by holding events and information stands in each of the target areas. In some cases events have been held in conjunction with key stakeholders such as the National Trust, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, DOE Marine Division, and council biodiversity officers.



Rockpool Ramble at Dunseverick

Updated stakeholder engagement plans have been drawn up for each area and meetings have been held with individual key stakeholders to exchange plans and ideas.

Data from the national biodiversity database at CEDaR is being used to deliver talks to local wildlife and community groups which allow them to dip below the surface and explore the species and habitats in their local area. Citizen science projects such as Shore Thing, marine mammal surveys and shoreline quality assessment surveys are being used to get local community groups involved in biodiversity data collection and to build their knowledge and appreciation of local marine biodiversity.



**Exploring the Marine Life Pool at
Rathlin Sound Festival**

The next phase in the project will focus on strengthening ties with key local stakeholders and groups to work towards raising awareness of local marine habitats and species, and hosting stakeholder workshops to assess local attitudes and opinions on establishing Voluntary Marine Conservation Areas.

Shore Thing Project

The Shore Thing is a unique project which offers schools, community groups and volunteers the chance to monitor the impact of rising sea temperatures on our rocky shore species.

It is an initiative of the Marine Biological Association (MBA) which coordinates the project throughout the UK. The aims are to create a national database of verified and validated intertidal species for the UK, to engage schools and volunteer groups raising awareness of marine issues and to strengthen the links between education and marine research in the UK.

The project is particularly focussed on monitoring non-native and temperature-sensitive indicator species. The survey protocols have been designed so that volunteer recorders can make a significant contribution to our knowledge of marine biodiversity and the impacts of climate change. Information on intertidal life is collected in a structured way, in order to make the results comparable from site to site and from year to year. Data is uploaded online and made available through the open access Shore Thing website.



'Shore Thing' survey at Groomsport

Ulster Wildlife received funding from the Peter de Haan Charitable Trust SLICK Environmental Challenge to conduct coastal surveys as part of the Shore Thing project. The original funding application was based on a two year project, running from 2012 to 2014. However, due to wider support through from volunteers and a placement student, as well as external support through biodiversity officers and other stakeholders, the funds were available to extend into a third year ending in June 2015.

In 2014/15, 21 surveys were conducted around the Northern Ireland coastline. Over 200 people participated from local schools, local Councils, Queen's University Belfast, environmental NGOs and volunteer conservation groups. Ulster Wildlife's Nature Skills trainees took part in a Shore Thing training day at Killough in February 2015. In the following months, the marine trainees provided support at 10 surveys which improved their knowledge of rocky shore species and gave them experience with managing volunteer groups and leading practical conservation events.



'Shore Thing' survey at Ballygally

The Shore Thing has also contributed to the Voluntary Marine Protected Areas (vMPA) project, with surveys engaging local stakeholders and communities in each of the four project areas.

Throughout the three year duration of the project, a total of 57 surveys have been carried out at 21 sites across Northern Ireland. We hope to continue surveying in 2015/16 with the help of the Living Seas trainees to ensure the dataset is maintained.

Funder: Peter de Haan Trust





GOAL THREE

**STANDING UP FOR NATURE BY
INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT
POLICY**



Our Influencing Work

Policymaking is the process of changing ideas into action.

These ideas can come from many different places e.g. ministers, politicians, civil servants, public opinion, voluntary organisations. Unless we all take part in that debate, our views will not make a difference.

One of the main ways to influence government policy is to participate in formal consultations and during the year we have worked alongside the policy support staff within Northern Ireland Environment Link and collaborated with colleagues in the Environment Sector to communicate a clear consistent message on environmental policy issues. This has involved responding to a wide range of consultations including badgers and bovine TB, the NI Rural Development Programme, NI Biodiversity Strategy, and Marine Conservation Zones.

Northern Ireland's devolved government means that more decisions are taken by politicians elected by the people of Northern Ireland and we are fortunate in that our MLAs are always willing to meet us to hear our views.

During the year, the financial challenges arising from Westminster budget cuts and welfare reform have resulted in the environment taking a lower priority in terms of investment. The Department of the Environment received the largest budget cut across government and this in turn had an adverse impact on the environmental sector.



Parliament Buildings, Stormont

Badgers & Bovine TB

Policy input into the issue of badgers and bovine TB has continued and it is encouraging that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has avoided the approach adopted by DEFRA with the indiscriminate culling of badgers that caused public outrage across the UK.

Research was published by scientists from the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute which dispelled many of the myths associated with the transmission of this complex disease.

This research demonstrates that whilst there is a proven link between the strains of bTB in badgers and cattle within a given locality, there is minimal contact at grass or when cattle are housed during the winter. This raises many questions about the historic view that the badger is a main cause of transmission and refocuses attention towards the issues of on farm biosecurity and cattle movement. The targeted approach being used in the Test Vaccinate Remove Strategy will potentially help to humanely reduce the disease loading within the badger population as well as amongst cattle.

Over time this will hopefully facilitate progress towards a bTB free status for Northern Ireland similar to that in Scotland, removing the need for any intervention.



Badger © D Smith

NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP)

As a stakeholder on the NIRDP Monitoring Committee and Strategic Development Group, we have contributed to the development of the new programme (2013-2020).

This provides the opportunity to design an agri-environment programme that makes a real difference to the environment in Northern Ireland, protecting priority habitats and species. With a declining budget, this money needs to be effectively targeted to where it will deliver the greatest environmental benefit in halting the loss of biodiversity.

Our Influencing Work

Designated sites & Priority Habitats

Much of our Living Landscapes policy work throughout the year focused on designated sites and priority habitats following the results of the Article 17 Report by Northern Ireland to the European Commission.

This highlighted that the vast majority of sites with a European designation within Northern Ireland were in unfavourable condition status. We subsequently completed a study on the barriers to effective management of these sites consulting with key stakeholders - government, NGOs, farmers and EU officials, drawing on the experiences of other member states. We were encouraged to see that a number of the suggestions highlighted by this report have been adopted by DARD within the proposals for the new Agri-environment Schemes. This should make a difference in helping to reverse the loss of biodiversity, protecting our most valuable habitats and species.

Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy

The NI Biodiversity Strategy has been in development for some time and is now nearing completion.

It focuses on the theme of valuing nature and is about halting the loss of biodiversity up to 2020. The strategy recognises that progress requires commitment and partnerships with everybody working to a common goal - central government, local government and NGOs.

We look forward to endorsement from the NI Executive and hope to see the implementation actions embedded within the new Programme for Government.



Common Dolphins in Irish Sea © Dave Wall

Health and Well-being

At a UK level, across The Wildlife Trusts we have also been promoting the positive health and well-being benefits of the natural environment using a growing base of scientific evidence.

This year, work was progressed with the University of Essex to build the evidence base on the value of experiencing the natural world to our health and well-being. This is just the beginning - we will be providing more information on this research in coming years.

Marine Protection

The Northern Ireland Marine Task Force (NIMTF), of which Ulster Wildlife is a lead partner, has been working diligently as a key stakeholder throughout the process of designating new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) for Northern Ireland.

In the run up to the first tranche of MCZs for Northern Ireland (Rathlin Island, Red Bay, Belfast Lough and Carlingford Lough), the NIMTF has been working closely with the Department of the Environment, Marine Division, to ensure that new MCZs will be adequate to recover our seas, protect vital marine species and habitats and be sufficiently managed in order to produce the vital network of Marine Protected Areas for Northern Ireland. The NIMTF has been recognised as providing important scientific evidence and advice for achieving a network of Marine Protected Areas for Northern Ireland and continues to advise and recommend new sites for future designation via a second tranche of MCZs for Northern Ireland.



DOE MCZ Stakeholder Workshop

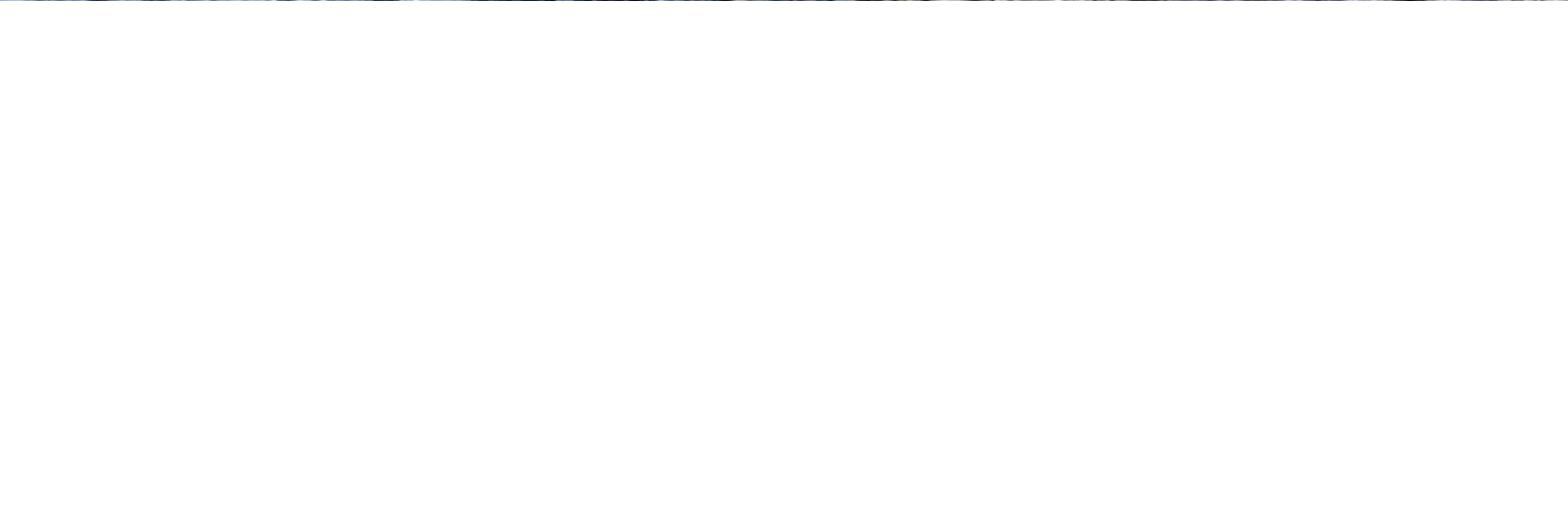
The NIMTF continues to be an active stakeholder, engaging a range of marine policy sectors for Northern Ireland including the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), commercial fisheries as an active member of the Inshore Fisheries Partnership Group (IFPG), and in a range of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Projects including case study work (e.g. Gaelectric Compressed Air Storage, Islandmagee Gas Storage, Fair Head and Torr Head Tidal Energy Developments). In February 2015, the NIMTF organised a Marine Spatial Planning Information Event to bring together a range of sector stakeholders including NGOs, government departments and academic institutions to discuss MSP concepts and future policy for Northern Ireland.

In partnership with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Ulster Wildlife held the second Measuring and Monitoring Biodiversity Offshore (MAMBO 2) conference in March 2015. Following the success of MAMBO 1 in 2013, the conference attracted over 60 delegates from a broad range of sectors, including government, NGOs, industry and academia.

The conference included presentations on marine legislation, measuring and monitoring populations, offshore human impacts and citizen science initiatives. The keynote speaker, Erich Hoyt from Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), explained the use of Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA) as a tool for protecting species. A workshop session allowed delegates to discuss and produce recommendations on how we can effectively monitor offshore biodiversity, especially in the current financial climate. MAMBO 2 was sponsored by Fairhead Tidal, Ecologists Ireland, North Down Borough Council and the Challenge Fund; and supported by NIEA, DOE, AFBI and Loughs Agency. The conference report and recommendations are available on our website.

As members of the 'Modiolus Restoration Plan Working Group', Ulster Wildlife continues to work with the Government and key stakeholders to conserve the damaged horse mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*) reefs in Strangford Lough. In March 2015, a report by the Northern Ireland Audit Office concluded that DOE and DARD had been too slow to react to the deteriorating condition of horse mussel beds and that subsequent restoration measures were long delayed. Following on from our complaint to the European Union, Ulster Wildlife will continue to campaign for proper protection of Strangford Lough through implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan for *Modiolus*.

A non-disturbance zone, which was introduced in 2012, is still in effect along with a recent permit scheme to manage pot fishing. Research by Queen's University into *Modiolus* reef restoration has ceased due to financial restrictions. Regular monitoring is a requirement Natura 2000 sites and we will be continuing to liaise with the Departments to ensure an appropriate monitoring strategy is in place.



Holly enjoying nature at Stickland's Glen, Bangor



GOAL FOUR

**PROMOTE HEALTH & WELL-BEING
THROUGH ENJOYMENT OF THE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**



Natural World Challenge

This Big Lottery Funded project started in 2009, and goes from strength to strength. Caring Breaks is the lead organisation in the project and works in partnership with Ulster Wildlife to raise awareness of nature and protection of the environment both for adults with a learning disability and their family carers.

Caring Breaks delivers respite breaks for family carers in the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas by providing activities for their family members who have a learning disability. The project provides the opportunity for Caring Breaks' clients to discover a whole range of new activities and to experience the natural world in ways that others in the wider community perhaps take for granted.

This project has continued to reinforce the fact that nature-based activities can be used to improve people's social inclusion, health, well-being, confidence and self-esteem. The outcomes for the carers and the participants have been very positive and beyond what had been anticipated.

In October 2015, we were delighted to join Caring Breaks at their Gala Evening to celebrate their 15th Anniversary. It was a fantastic evening attended by almost 300 families, friends, clients and staff and showcased the years of excellent work by Caring Breaks supporting families in Belfast, Lisburn and Bangor.



Caring Breaks Gala Evening



Ocean Giants Workshop with Caring Breaks

2014/15 we ran a series of seasonal workshops for Caring Breaks' clients. In April and May 2014 nature focused scavenger hunts were held in the grounds of the Ulster Folk Museum - using the museum's new farm area as a focus.

In July and August 2014 we ran our ever-popular Beach Art and Rockpool Ramble sessions at Crawfordsburn Country Park where clients created works of art using materials found on the beach and also learned more about the inhabitants of the local rockpools.

In November and December 2014 we ran workshops focusing on our local seas and sea life using the inflatable marine creatures from our Ocean Giants Project and screened our Living Seas film for groups of Caring Breaks clients. Afterwards the clients had fun playing some marine-based games and then applied their skills to make marine creatures from clay.

We also moved into the second year of the allotment in Dundonald. It was doubled in size this year after we took over the plot directly adjacent to the current plot and opened up the partition fence to give access. This area has become a wildlife garden complete with pond, butterfly bed, lawn area and patio with picnic tables. Growing courgettes proved very fruitful this year and we also had a good crop of blueberries and blackcurrants along with onions, baby carrots, radishes and herbs.



Harvest from Caring Breaks allotment

Funder: Big Lottery Fund

Access on Nature Reserves

It may seem obvious to some of us, but an increasing body of research shows that spending time outdoors and enjoying nature is good for us.

At Ulster Wildlife we provide opportunities for people, young and old, from all walks of life, to experience green spaces and green exercise. Our vision is for everyone to live near a green space.

Ulster Wildlife plays a part in providing opportunities for people to engage with nature and make use of the outdoors through our suite of nature reserves. While not all of our nature reserves are publicly accessible, where possible we provide access to our sites for people to walk, play and relax in.



New path at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve

In 2014/15 we delivered a significant access enhancement project at our Bog Meadows Nature Reserve in Belfast. Funded with support from Landfill Communities Fund monies from the Alpha Programme and from Biffa Award, this large capital project included the upgrading of paths, bridges and viewing areas.



New pond dipping platform at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve

Funder: NIEA, Alpha Programme, Biffa Award

It also improved fencing and access points to provide a better overall visitor experience on the site. These works have had a real impact on the overall accessibility of the site and have been very positively received by the local community.

We also provide opportunities for people to get active on our nature reserves while learning about the wildlife on their doorstep through public events.



Glenarm Bioblitz

We ran, or were partners in, 11 public events on our nature reserves in 2014/15, which included Wild Food Forays at Straidkilly with Forage Ireland, Dawn Chorus Events at Bog Meadows, Big Bog Walk at Ballynahone Bog, Autumn Moth Walks at Umbra, the BioBlitz at Glenarm and a Woodland Birds Event at Balloo Woodland.

These events provided the opportunity for people of all ages to learn something new about wildlife in their local area and to gain some of the benefits that being in the great outdoors provides.



Straidkilly 'Food Foray' with Forage Ireland



Ulster Wildlife Members' Day
in the Stormont Estate 2014



GOAL FIVE

**GROW OUR SUCCESS AND
EXTEND OUR REACH**

Our Members & Supporters

Without the vital funds provided by our members and supporters, Ulster Wildlife could not make the impact we do in protecting our local wildlife and wild places.

The securing of new members, as well as servicing our existing supporters, is an ongoing priority for Ulster Wildlife. We work on behalf of our members and use our funds to ensure that we make a real impact for the natural environment in Northern Ireland.



Promoting membership at IKEA, Belfast

Membership 2014/15

The end of the 2014/15 period saw a total of 11,819 people standing up for nature as members of Ulster Wildlife. This small increase in member numbers on 2013/14 is encouraging given the economic climate and budget cuts during 2014/15.

Ulster Wildlife continues to promote membership at events, third party venues and shows, encouraging the public to support biodiversity here in Northern Ireland. This direct, face-to-face engagement allows us to provide supporters with the opportunity to make informed decisions to support our work.

Several initiatives were launched in 2014/15 to ensure that as much of our members' donations as possible go towards our conservation work. These included: an online membership renewal facility, single issue membership renewals and e-magazines for those who prefer to receive their member magazines in this format.

Member Events

Meeting and interacting with the people who support Ulster Wildlife is a priority for our Development Team. Several member-exclusive events during the year including a Members' Garden Party in May 2014 at Stormont Cottages, our Family Days at the Ark Farm, Newtownards, in May and August 2014 and our October 2014 Annual General Meeting held at the Ulster Museum. The days provided opportunities to discuss Ulster Wildlife's activities and future plans with our members and supporters.



Our Chairman and CEO with guest speaker Brian Black at our 2014 AGM

Fundraising Activities

As well as funds from membership subscriptions, Ulster Wildlife received additional income from a range of other sources:

- In-memory donations on behalf of Pat Boaden, Tom McClelland, Maud Wilson and M R Irvine and legacy donations from Peggy Vowles, some of our most committed members and supporters.
- Ulster Wildlife talks in libraries and to groups across NI, enabling us to promote the work and objectives of Ulster Wildlife as well as receiving donations from attendees.
- Generating income from the sales of the Nature Matters 2015 Calendar, a selection of winning images from our Nature Matters wildlife photography competition
- Fundraising Christmas Jumper Day by staff of Belfast City Vets
- Collection boxes in local businesses and members homes
- Other miscellaneous donations from individuals and charitable trusts.

To find out more on how to support our work, please visit our website www.ulsterwildlife.org

Corporate Membership & Support

During the year we continued to work in partnership with a range of businesses and organisations in Northern Ireland - from small family companies to major multinationals. We developed new and existing relationships with companies through corporate membership (see below), as well as welcoming 'in-kind' support for our work to protect local wildlife and wild places. Thank you to all our corporate supporters for supporting nature in 2014/15.

Corporate Members 2014/15

Platinum

AES UK & Ireland Ltd

Gold

Bombardier Aerospace; Dalradian Gold Ltd

Silver

CES Quarry Products Ltd; Titanic Belfast

Bronze

Belfast Harbour Commissioners;
Denman International Ltd

Standard

City Hotel Derry; Colliers International; Lafarge Cement;
Henderson Group Ltd; Peninsula Print & Design Ltd

Corporate Supporters

Ark Open Farm - Free access for members with guided tours

Cotswolds Outdoors - 15% discount in-store and online for Ulster Wildlife members

Delta Print & Packaging, BT Belfast, Citigroup

Belfast - Corporate Volunteering Days

IKEA - meeting rooms and opportunities to promote membership in store as well as a significant discount on our kitchen for the Heron Road office

Peninsula Print & Design Ltd - Colour & Design in Nature education programme

Titanic Belfast - Complimentary room hire, guest passes and reciprocal links

TH Jordan - Print and promotional items

Translink - Ulster Wildlife membership offer promoted to staff via in-house magazine

Thank you to all of our members, donors, and volunteers for their help during the year.



BT volunteers at Caring Breaks allotment



Delta Packaging volunteering at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve



Business and biodiversity fair at Citigroup



Members' evening at the Ark Open Farm, Conlig

Raising Awareness

Our communications work and engagement activities help raise our profile, promote public awareness of environmental issues and ultimately strengthen support for nature and for Ulster Wildlife.

Nature Matters Campaign

To help raise awareness of why nature matters to our everyday lives, from the air we breathe and water we drink, to the food we eat and green spaces that improve our health, we delivered a 'Nature Matters' Campaign in 2014, with support from our corporate partners Bombardier Aerospace.

This included a photography competition sponsored by a range of local businesses, a photographic exhibition at Belfast City Hall with Tony Juniper as guest speaker, a charity calendar featuring the winning images to help raise funds for our work, and the production of a Nature Matters information booklet.

Media Coverage

Our media work provides an essential communication channel to raise our profile. This year, we had 322 news articles published and 13 radio and TV interviews broadcast reaching out to an audience over 15 million people over the year. Main areas of coverage included our barn owl project, Living Seas initiatives, our programme of annual events and our photography competition.

Digital Media

Social and digital media is becoming increasingly important in supporting our offline activities, transforming the way people receive information, and helping to increase public awareness and engagement with our supporters. Our website received over 30,000 unique visitors during the year, with visitors mainly viewing our Living Seas map, job and volunteering vacancies, and events. We officially started to tweet in April, with our Twitter followers growing to 1000 by the end of the year. Likewise, our Facebook presence grew from 1700 to 2700 followers.



We launched our twitter account in 2014/15



Lord Mayor of Belfast, Nichola Mallon with winners and guests at our 'Nature Matters' photography exhibition in Belfast City Hall

Developing Projects

As always, a key focus for the organisation was developing new projects and applying for funding to deliver these initiatives on the ground across Northern Ireland.

Three large projects which took up a significant proportion of development time during 2014/15 were the Belfast City Council ParkLife tender, the Red Squirrels United project and the Big Lottery Fund's Our Environment, Our Future programme.

We received confirmation of our successful tender for the ParkLife project in March 2015. This will see us delivering nature-based education with schools and families in Belfast City Council parks for a further 3-5 years.

Ulster Wildlife is also a key partner in a UK-wide project to protect red squirrel populations. The two strands of the project will involve the control of the non-native grey squirrel in a targeted area and engaging the local community in voluntary groups to support red squirrel conservation. The project is initially funded through Heritage Lottery Fund with European LIFE+ funding starting next year. It is hoped this project will provide a blueprint for the control of grey squirrels within a chosen landscape and make a real difference to our native red squirrel populations.

In late 2014, we developed a project called the Grassroots Challenge which was submitted to the Big Lottery Fund's Our Environment, Our Future Programme. This project aims to bring the great outdoors to life for young people aged 11-24 and is a five year programme in conjunction with partner organisations. It would extend Ulster Wildlife's existing provision of 'hands on' educational training and activities to a new context and to new groups.

YFCU (Young Farmers' Clubs) and individuals and groups from the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and special schools will design, develop and deliver environmental projects within their own community with support from a Project Officer. To recognise achievement and demonstrate environmental leadership it is proposed to include awards such as the Young Environmental Leader of the Year and Project of the Year. If successful in receiving this funding, the project will start in early 2016.

Other projects developed and submitted for funding during 2014/15 included – the Nature Matters education programme to the Bombardier Aerospace Foundation, the Special Schools environmental education project to the AE Harvey Charitable Trust, and the Biodiversity Internship Programme with AES.

We would like to thank all our funders and partners in 2014/15 for their continued support:

AE Harvey Charitable Trust, AES, AFBI, Alpha Programme, APEM Ltd, Belfast City Council, Biffa Award, Big Lottery Fund, Bombardier Aerospace Foundation, Butterfly Conservation NI, DOE Marine Division, Ecologists Ireland, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Fairhead Tidal, Heritage Lottery Fund, Landfill Communities Fund, Loughs Agency, NIEL, NIMTF, Newry & Mourne District Council, Newtownabbey Borough Council, North Down Borough Council, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, NGO Challenge Fund, Peter de Haan Trust.



AES Biodiversity Internship project

Landfill Communities Fund

Administration of the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) for a number of Council landfill operators continued in the year to March 2015.

Since 1997 Ulster Wildlife has helped distribute in excess of £9m to over 500 community and environmental projects across Northern Ireland and during this time the LCF has also played a part in funding our nature reserve activities.

Tax on landfill waste was introduced in 1996 as an incentive to reduce the amount of landfilled waste and to promote more environmentally sustainable methods of waste management. The LCF is a tax credit scheme enabling landfill operators to contribute monies from their landfill tax liability to fund projects that benefit the natural, built and social environment and improve the lives of communities living near landfill sites.

Ulster Wildlife is registered as an Environmental Body with ENTRUST, the government appointed regulator of the scheme, to distribute monies on behalf of landfill operators. There are six main themes of work (referred to as “objects”) that can be undertaken with LCF monies. Projects funded through Ulster Wildlife fall mainly under the public amenity, conservation of biodiversity and restoration of buildings of religious or historical interest categories.

Hanna's Close (Object D - Public Amenity)

Funded jointly by the NGO Challenge Fund, this project by the River Valley Development Association, repaired 2013 flood damage to bridges and paths at Hanna's Close near Killeel and provided upgraded interpretation and facilities at the site.

During the year to March 2015, 25 new projects were registered with ENTRUST with a total value of circa £1.5m and claims of £1m were processed on behalf of eight council landfill operators.

Since 1997, Ulster Wildlife has worked with 13 of the 26 “legacy” Councils prior to the new Super Councils becoming operational in April 2015. By 2014/15 this number had reduced with only five of the legacy Councils still contributing to the LCF through Ulster Wildlife as landfill sites are closed and replaced with more environmentally sustainable waste management.

The high level of project registrations during 2014/15 reflects concerns arising from the current HMRC consultation on reform of the Landfill Communities Fund. The consultation closed in early June and any resulting changes to the scheme are anticipated to be included in the Government's autumn spending review.

Projects completed in 2014/15 included:



Replacement bridge at Hanna's Close

Conserving Cryptics

(Object DA - The conservation of biodiversity at a specific site)

This project's aim was to create favourable conditions for the Cryptic Wood White (CWW) butterfly and other grassland invertebrates at Craigavon Lakes. CWW is a priority species in the UK, a Red Data Book species in Ireland and Craigavon is considered to be the heartland for this species in Northern Ireland. Queens University and the former Craigavon BC have researched ecological requirements of the CWW in the target area and works included scrub removal, stump treating and fencing of areas for grazing by traditional rare breed cattle, and scrape creation. The impact on CWW numbers will be monitored in the future using UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme techniques.



Cryptic Wood White © Philip McErlean

Bellanaleck Moorings Path

(Object D - Public Amenity)

This project developed a 3.5 km circular path at Bellanaleck in Fermanagh, creating a safe and secure walking route with shoreline access. Since completion, the roadside verge on part of the path has been recognised as being managed for wildlife as part of the Save Our Magnificent Meadows project.



Shoreline path at Bellanaleck

FUTURE FOCUS



Looking to the future, we hope to capitalise on our work to protect and restore the special places we manage for nature by further integrating health and well-being.

Growing medical evidence shows that access to the natural environment improves health and well-being, prevents disease and helps people recover from illness.

Experiencing nature in the outdoors can help tackle:

- childhood obesity
- coronary heart disease
- stress and mental health problems.

This is increasingly recognised by governments throughout the world and a concept that we hope will be considered by government as a priority within the new Comprehensive Spending Review as it's negotiated in Autumn 2015.

"We all tend to feel better in the natural environment – so why are we working so hard to destroy it? The NHS needs to make the most of our wonderful, free natural health service."

Dr Michael Dixon

Looking forward, 2016 will bring the winding up of the Department of Environment and the formation of the new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). This is a good opportunity for government to take stock and consider the environmental challenges faced by Northern Ireland and how these can best be progressed. How can environmental governance be improved to underpin the prosperity, health and well-being of present and future generations?

As an environmental charity, one of our challenges is to inspire and educate people to understand and value nature and the important contribution it makes to our everyday lives, e.g. food, clean air, water, outdoor activities, recreation.

With wildlife in the balance, as biodiversity continues to decline across Northern Ireland, the need for positive action has never been greater. There needs to be a sustainable future for the wildlife of Northern Ireland, or in 50 years time today's iconic species such as barn owls, red squirrels, curlew and hedgehogs will only be seen in museums.

During 2015/16 we will be bringing new projects on stream such as Red Squirrels United and Wildlife Aware Training Courses designed to increase understanding and reduce wildlife crime. We will also be considering how we can best make a difference to NI's environment through opportunities such as the EU Interreg Programme and NI Rural Development Programme.

Our work on Barn Owls will continue, as will the 'Save Our Magnificent Meadows' project to protect and improve the wonderful species-rich grasslands, part of the unique culture and heritage of Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone. We also hope to initiate work on lowland raised bogs to look at options for restoring these sensitive and valuable habitats to their former glory.

A new work stream for the charity will be an educational programme to ensure that children and young people have greater opportunities to get involved in practical biodiversity action. Environmental leadership will be important and this programme will work with groups and individuals to deliver practical biodiversity projects and develop knowledge and understanding of the environment amongst the leaders of tomorrow.

With a busy year ahead, we will be settling in to our new premises in the Belfast Harbour Estate. The building has been named in memory of our long standing and valued Trustee and former Chairman, Tom McClelland who was instrumental in its acquisition, providing cost effective accommodation for our team of staff and volunteers. We have recently had the pleasure of a visit from Tom's family to McClelland House as they cycled 400 miles round Northern Ireland in suits, raising money for the British Lung Foundation. We look forward to enjoying many productive years in our new home.



Tom McClelland's family and friends visiting McClelland House during their sponsored cycle

Financial Overview

The income and expenditure for Ulster Wildlife is split between restricted funds, which is revenue received from funders for specific projects, and unrestricted funds which is income received from funders, members and other sources to be allocated to all areas of the charity's operations.

Unrestricted income for the year ended 31 March 2015 amounted to £829k (to include charges transferred from restricted funds to cover the cost of managing individual projects), which was a decrease of 8% for the same period last year. Unrestricted expenditure decreased by 6% and amounted to £811k, giving a net surplus for the year of £18k, against a net surplus of £35k for the previous year.

This surplus has been transferred to the Balance Sheet to provide funding for future activities and to safeguard the future of Ulster Wildlife.

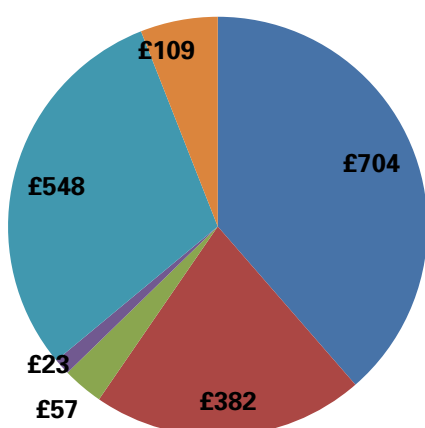
Ulster Wildlife has an objective to set aside financial reserves representing approximately six months of payroll and establishment costs which currently amounts to approximately £260k. The balance on the Financial Reserves General Fund at 31 March 2015 is £310k with a further £260k in a Designated Building Fund.

Restricted income of £1,070k and restricted expenditure of £1,600k (to include management charges) gives a net deficit of £530k on restricted balances. This is mainly a result of expenditure on projects funded by the Landfill Communities Fund, where the monies have been received in prior years and distributed during 2014/15 resulting in a net outflow of funds.

Summary Balance Sheet at 31 March 2015

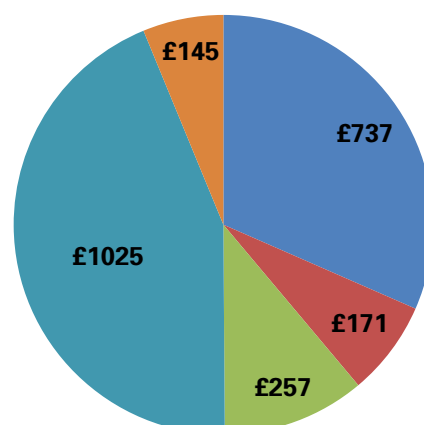
	£'000
Fixed Assets	734
Net Current Assets	2101
Capital Grants	(346)
	<u>2489</u>
Restricted Funds	1918
Unrestricted Funds	570
Life Membership Fund	1
	<u>2489</u>

Income y/e 31 Mar 15 £'000



- Nature Conservation & Reserve Management
- Membership & Donations
- Investment Income
- Other Income
- Landfill Contributions
- Outreach & Learning

Expenditure y/e 31 Mar 15 £'000



- Nature Conservation & Reserve Management
- Membership, Fundraising & Public Awareness
- Premises & Governance Costs
- Landfill Projects
- Outreach & Learning

Financial Statements

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Registration Number NIC 101848

Company Registration Number NI12711

Registered Office McClelland House
10 Heron Road
Belfast
BT3 9LE

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

Ulster Bank Ltd.
11-16 Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 5UB

Solicitors Edwards & Co.
28 Hill Street
Belfast
BT1 2LA

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities for the year ended 31 March 2015

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015

Principal Activity

The principal activity of the company is the advancement of environmental protection, improvement and conservation of all aspects of Northern Ireland's biodiversity and the advancement of education surrounding this work by raising public awareness and knowledge.

Net Assets

The net assets of the Trust at 31 March 2015 were as follows:

	£
General Fund	570,942
Restricted Fund	<u>1,918,120</u>
	<u>2,489,061</u>

Directors' Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that year. In preparing these financial statements the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

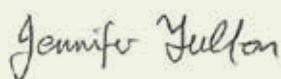
In so far as the directors are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the company's auditors are unaware, and
- the directors 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 company's auditors are aware of that information.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

DNT Chartered Accountants are deemed to be reappointed in accordance with Section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board on 3rd September 2015 and signed on its behalf by



Jennifer Fulton, Secretary

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

We have audited the annexed financial statements which comprise of the Directors' Report, Statement of Financial Activities, Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities, the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities and under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the Trust's members as a body, in accordance with Section 449 of the Companies Act (2006). Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Trust'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 Trust and its members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions formed.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

The Trust's directors are responsible for the preparation of financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit (which is carried out in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland)), on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act (2006) and are consistent with the Directors' Annual Report. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the Trust has not kept proper accounting records or if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We read the Directors' Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

Basis of opinion

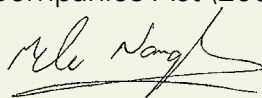
We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Trust's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error.

In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements, which are consistent with the Directors' Annual Report, give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of affairs of the Trust as at 31 March 2015 and of its overall deficit for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act (2006).



Mike Nangle FCA (senior statutory auditor)

For and on behalf of DNT CA Limited,
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors,
91-97 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 1SH.

Statement of Financial Activities - Income and Expenditure account and statement of total recognised gains and losses for the year ended 31 March 2015

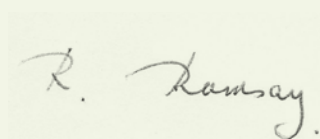
	Notes	General Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2015 Total Funds £	2014 Total Funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds					
Voluntary Income					
Central government grants		241,994	4,595	246,589	265,232
Legacies		3,000	0	3,000	1,000
Other grants	2	36,576	420,644	457,220	268,050
Membership contributions		292,785	0	292,785	295,091
Income tax refunds		68,523	0	68,523	69,934
Corporate support		12,067	0	12,067	10,875
Gifts and donations		6,062	8	6,070	5,354
Investment Income					
Interest received	3	43,856	13,414	57,270	79,553
		704,864	438,660	1,143,524	995,089
Incoming resources from Charitable Activities					
Outreach & Learning Activity		26,075	82,644	108,719	89,408
Landfill contributions received	4	0	548,044	548,044	688,200
Other income	5	22,568	298	22,866	25,246
		48,643	630,986	679,629	802,854
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		753,507	1,069,646	1,823,155	1,797,943
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of Generating Funds					
Costs of Generating Voluntary Income					
Membership services and recruitment	6	165,872	5,022	170,894	201,121
Charitable Activities					
Landfill environmental projects	4	28,146	997,018	1,025,164	1,094,366
Net deficit/(surplus) of farming activities	7	0	(4,846)	(4,846)	(7,761)
Depreciation	8,13	1,337	18,845	20,182	19,564
Premises & Governance Costs	9	230,245	0	230,245	185,465
Nature Conservation		342,512	399,555	742,069	561,553
Environmental Education		35,981	109,290	145,271	106,017
Bank interest and charges		3,535	0	3,535	3,184
Governance Costs					
Auditors' remuneration		3,300	0	3,300	3,720
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		810,929	1,524,886	2,335,815	2,167,229
Net (outgoing) resources for the year before transfers		(57,422)	(455,240)	(512,662)	(369,286)
Transfer between funds	11	75,198	(75,198)	0	0
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains/losses		17,776	(530,437)	(512,662)	(369,286)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		17,776	(530,437)	(512,662)	(369,286)
Funds brought forward at 1 April 2014		552,646	2,448,557	3,001,203	3,370,489
FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 MARCH 2015		570,422	1,918,120	2,488,541	3,001,203

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2015

	Notes	General Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2015 Total Funds £	2014 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	13	247,901	486,470	734,371	719,131
		247,901	486,470	734,371	719,131
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	14	221,486	29,858	251,344	290,058
Cash at bank and in hand		204,251	1,784,440	1,988,691	2,490,548
		425,737	1,814,298	2,240,035	2,780,606
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors	15	92,755	46,485	139,240	137,131
		92,755	46,485	139,240	137,131
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		332,982	1,767,814	2,100,795	2,643,475
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		580,883	2,254,284	2,835,166	3,362,606
CREDITORS due in more than 1 year					
Capital Grants	16	9,941	336,164	346,105	360,883
		570,942	1,918,120	2,489,061	3,001,723
RESERVES					
General & Designated Fund	17	570,422	0	570,422	552,646
Life Membership Fund		520	0	520	520
Restricted Funds	18	0	1,918,120	1,918,120	2,448,557
		570,942	1,918,120	2,489,061	3,001,723

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 3 September 2015 and signed on its behalf by



Roy Ramsay
Chairman



Graham Fitzgerald
Honorary Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts - Year ended 31 March 2015

1 Accounting Policies

The Trust prepares its financial statements on the historical cost basis of accounting except for the revaluation of certain land represented by nature reserves. Restricted fund assets are valued at acquisition value where such valuation is available. Glendun Farm and dwelling house are included at probate value. Unrestricted income and expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis while restricted income and expenditure is accounted for on a cash basis. Funds are held as Restricted or Unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds are further reallocated between General funds and Designated funds (note 17). Transfers between funds are explained in Note 11. Capital grants received are released to the Income and Expenditure Account in line with depreciation on the relevant assets.

Other grants are recognised in the income and expenditure account to the extent that the corresponding expenditure has been incurred.

The Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS1 from the requirement to prepare a cash flow statement because it is a small company.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities, relevant accounting standards and the Companies Act (2006).

Operating lease payments are charged to Income and Expenditure Account as they are paid.

Fixed Assets are capitalised and written off over the period of their useful lives as follows:

Land	not depreciated
Buildings	2.5% straight-line
Equipment	15% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Vehicles - cars and vans	15% straight line

Commission paid to membership recruiters is written off in full in the year that it is incurred.

2 Other Grants

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Capital grant credit		18,845		16,815
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation		182,519		97,736
NGO Challenge Fund		43,286	35,045	
Tubney Charitable Trust	22,240		25,840	(7,594)
HLF		46,851	7,200	71,543
Other	14,336	129,143	16,167	5,298
	<u>36,576</u>	<u>420,644</u>	<u>84,252</u>	<u>183,798</u>

3 Interest received

Interest received in Restricted Funds is the interest earned on the funds held prior to disbursement, mainly Landfill Tax Credits. Interest received in General Funds is that which is used to fund expenditure on Ulster Wildlife Trust registered landfill project sites and bank interest earned on general cash balances.

4 Landfill environmental projects

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Landfill contributions received		548,044		688,200
		<u>548,044</u>		<u>688,200</u>
Expenditure				
Entrust administration fee		11,893		13,764
Direct project expenditure		969,125		1,022,638
Direct Costs	28,146	16,000	27,964	30,000
	<u>28,146</u>	<u>997,018</u>	<u>27,964</u>	<u>1,066,402</u>

5 Other Income

	General Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £
Consultancy	14,800	15,200
Sundry income	7,768	10,046
	<u>22,568</u>	<u>25,246</u>

6 Membership services and recruitment

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Fundraising & Membership servicing	126,796	5,022	162,077	92
Membership recruitment costs	39,077		38,952	0
	<u>165,872</u>	<u>5,022</u>	<u>201,029</u>	<u>92</u>

7 Restricted funds - farming activities

	Restricted Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Income		
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development grants	0	7,842
Conacre letting & other income	6,600	0
	<u>6,600</u>	<u>7,842</u>
Direct Expenditure - excluding Management Charges		
Repairs and running costs	1,755	81
Net surplus/(deficit) of farming activities	<u>4,846</u>	<u>7,761</u>

8 Depreciation

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Motor vehicles	0	3,425	1,976	4,022
Equipment	1,337	3,749	773	1,122
Buildings	0	11,671	0	11,671
	<u>1,337</u>	<u>18,845</u>	<u>2,749</u>	<u>16,815</u>

9 Premises & Governance Costs

	General Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £
Premises costs	52,261	24,680
Postage,printing & stationery	8,289	8,595
Salaries	103,535	102,157
Staff travel and vehicle costs	3,894	2,582
Legal Fees	1,146	1,140
Professional fees	9,433	17,875
Staff training	2,821	0
Council Costs	1,926	3,961
Sundry expenditure	27,235	5,696
Information Technology	7,886	7,479
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts contribution	11,820	11,300
	<u>230,245</u>	<u>185,465</u>

Governance & Establishment costs relate to all departments including Conservation, Nature Reserves Management and Outreach & Learning.

10 Staff Costs

	2015 £	2014 £
Salaries and wages	592,832	595,900
Social Security Costs	47,465	50,733
Pension Contributions	13,222	13,748
	<u>653,519</u>	<u>660,381</u>

No 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 24. (2014- 25).

The Trust does not operate a pension scheme for its employees but administers a stakeholder pension scheme.and matches employee contributions to the scheme at a maximum rate of 4% of salary.

11 Transfer between Funds

	2015 £	2014 £
Landfill management charges	36,863	36,735
Project management charges	34,322	26,333
Management of farm at Glendun	4,013	2,978
	<u>75,198</u>	<u>66,046</u>

12 Council remuneration and related party transactions

No members of council received any remuneration during the year. Travel and subsistence costs amounting to £768 (2014-£695) were reimbursed to 1 (2014-3) member of council.

13 Fixed Assets

	Nature Reserves £	Land & Buildings £	Motor Vehicles £	Equipment & Computers £	TOTAL £
COST OR VALUATION					
At 1 April 2014	349,372	503,631	47,157	166,553	1,066,713
Additions	0	25,090	0	11,669	36,759
Disposals	0	0	0	0	00
At 31 March 2015	<u>349,372</u>	<u>528,721</u>	<u>47,157</u>	<u>178,222</u>	<u>1,103,472</u>
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 April 2014	0	177,748	27,751	142,084	347,583
Charge for year	0	11,671	3,425	6,422	21,518
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2015	<u>0</u>	<u>189,419</u>	<u>31,176</u>	<u>148,506</u>	<u>369,101</u>
NBV at 31 March 2015	349,372	339,302	15,981	29,716	734,371
including restricted assets of	309,372	152,150	15,982	8,966	486,470

Glendun Farm has been included at probate value of £150,000. This complies with guidance issued for the preparation of the Accounts within the SORP for Charities.

14 Debtors

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Debtors and prepayments	5,836	29,858	11,809	10,911
Grants	181,469	0	215,440	0
Tax refunds due	34,181	0	51,898	0
	<u>221,486</u>	<u>29,858</u>	<u>279,147</u>	<u>10,911</u>

15 Creditors falling due within one year

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Sundry creditors and accrued expenditure	92,755	46,485	124,546	12,585
	<u>92,755</u>	<u>46,485</u>	<u>124,546</u>	<u>12,585</u>

16 Creditors falling due after more than 1 year

	General Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2015 £	General Funds 2014 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Capital grants	9,941	336,164	5876	355,007
	<u>9,941</u>	<u>336,164</u>	<u>5876</u>	<u>355,007</u>

17 Movement on unrestricted funds

	General Funds £	Designated Building Fund £	Total Funds £
Balance at 1 April 2014	322,646	230,000	552,646
Surplus for the year	17,776	0	17,776
Transfer between funds	(30,000)	30,000	0
Balance at 31 March 2015	<u>310,422</u>	<u>260,000</u>	<u>570,422</u>

A designated fund has been established for funds which will be used specifically for the provision of new offices.

18 Movement on restricted funds

	Restricted Funds 2015 £	Restricted Funds 2014 £
Opening balance	2,448,557	2,852,509
Net expenditure for the year	(530,437)	(403,952)
Closing balance	<u>1,918,120</u>	<u>2,448,557</u>

Some funders pay in advance and other funders issue payment only after the expenditure has been incurred. The movement on restricted funds in any year is a result of timing differences between receipts of grants for restricted projects and the related expenditure. The decrease in funds for the years to 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2014 is largely attributable to the disbursement of Landfill Community Funds which were received in prior years.

19 Taxation

As a charity, Ulster Wildlife Trust is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the Trust.

20 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.







part of
The Wildlife Trusts



**For further information,
visit www.ulsterwildlife.org
or Email: info@ulsterwildlife.org**

 @UlsterWildlife
 ulsterwildlife

Cover Image - Dark green fritillary at the Umbra © Katy Bell;
Inside Cover - Grey Seal in the Lagan © Ronald Surgenor;
Inside Back Cover - Barn owl © Richard Bowler;
Back Cover - Basking shark © JP Trenque

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