

ANNUAL REVIEW
2024 - 2025



Dorset
Wildlife Trust



Making space for nature

in Dorset

FOREWORD



Brian Bleese
Chief Executive

Over the past year, Dorset Wildlife Trust has continued to meet the immense challenge of delivering nature recovery with creativity, ambition, and collaboration. We are living through a time of significant difficulty — but also great opportunity. Nature in Dorset and across the UK remains in crisis. Vital habitats continue to be lost or degraded, species abundance is declining, and communities are feeling the effects of climate change and disconnection from the natural world. Yet we are also seeing a groundswell of public support for action and growing awareness of the role nature plays in our health and wellbeing.

This review of our work over the past year highlights the breadth and scope of our efforts. Thanks to the dedication of our members, volunteers, trustees, partners, and outstanding staff, we are turning ambition into action. From restoring rare peatland habitats and transforming Lyscombe into a future National Nature Reserve, to making Brownsea Island more accessible and welcoming than ever before. These are not isolated successes, but signs of growing momentum in landscape-scale recovery.

Our meadow-making work in west Dorset, the transformation of urban greenspaces, and the vital engagement activities led by our visitor centres all demonstrate that our collective impact is increasing.

However, nature continues to face immense challenges and emerging threats. At a time of growing pressure on the natural world, Dorset Wildlife Trust is standing up for wildlife — challenging misinformation, confronting poor policy decisions, and speaking out against proposals that threaten protected habitats or weaken environmental safeguards. Whether defending landscapes from harmful development or resisting erosion of planning protections, we remain a clear, evidence-based voice for nature. This advocacy is not always easy — but it is essential.

This year has shown how vital partnerships are to achieving our goals. From landowners sharing sites for wildflower seed harvesting to grassroots community efforts, collaboration remains our greatest strength. Nature's recovery needs everyone to play their part.

Looking ahead, our goal remains clear: to build a wilder Dorset by 2030 — characterised by nature-rich landscapes, accessible wild spaces, and a community united in its care for the natural world. Thank you to everyone supporting nature's recovery in Dorset and beyond.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Brian".

Brian Bleese
Chief Executive

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



Mark Kibblewhite
Chair of Trustees

Dorset Wildlife Trust is a force for biodiversity conservation. It is underpinned by the amazing loyalty and generosity of our 27,000 members, and supporters. We are trying to extend this support and engagement to citizens and communities beyond our traditional base – aiming for one in four of the local population to actively support nature. This is challenging but a priority. Our reserves and the wider natural world are public goods that should benefit the whole community's wellbeing, but issues of access and awareness sometimes work against this, especially for some urban communities. Moreover, a strong public call is needed for investment in nature and effective environmental regulation, and this requires understanding across the whole community of the economic importance of natural resources.

The requirement for clear and timely external communications was evident in the 2024 elections, and recently in response to the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill and associated threats to natural environment protections. It is essential that we continue to be bold in our defence of nature and be willing to speak truth to power, including by correcting false information with transparent evidence.

We are making major contributions to the implementation of public policy to control nutrient inputs to Poole Harbour. Nutrient neutrality funding has allowed us to acquire large areas for biodiversity conservation and remove tonnes

of nitrogen inputs. This is progress but is ultimately a fraction of what is required to restore water quality in the harbour. And this gap illustrates why our own actions are by themselves often insufficient to deal with the scale of environmental problems in our landscape. Similarly, a project to restore endangered species to new sites has been inspiring, but its impact is inevitably limited against a backdrop of continuing habitat loss and degradation. Our response is to seek effective partnerships for nature with other land managers, especially in the agricultural sector, based on mutual respect and a common purpose.

We have talented and motivated staff, and many energetic and skilled volunteers. The Council is in a period of transition and development; three trustees stepped down in 2024 and three were appointed, and further departures and arrivals are anticipated in 2025 to ensure that collectively, trustees have the required skills and diversity of backgrounds. The effectiveness and dynamism of the whole organisation depends on the strong motivation of all its actors – staff, volunteers, members and supporters. This is exceptional and I thank them for their support.

Mark

Mark Kibblewhite
Chair of Trustees

Boosting Dorset's biodiversity

Seb Elwood, Species Survival Fund Project Manager

The Species Survival Fund project is coordinating habitat restoration and increasing species abundance across 18 Dorset Wildlife Trust nature reserves, covering over 500 hectares.

The project aims to create richer, more connected ecosystems at a landscape scale through rewilding, targeted habitat management, and the creation of wetlands, woodlands, and hedgerows. By supporting landowners and farmers, it also extends nature recovery through wildlife corridors across the wider countryside. Deer fencing has been completed at West Holme to protect 1,000 native trees planted by volunteers. Stock fencing at Upton Heath, Kilwood, and Lower Common will support grazing that benefits species like the smooth snake and sand lizard. At Lyscombe, Longhorn cattle and Konik ponies are improving the condition of newly fenced Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) chalk downland.

On Brownsea Island, new boardwalks and path repairs have improved access to hides, while new screening has reduced disturbance to lagoon wildlife. Planned gravel islands will increase habitat for the common and Sandwich terns, and lagoon gate repairs will enhance water level control. Smaller-scale interventions across reserves are also delivering benefits: a new cattle bridge at Winfrith, orchard vegetation clearance at Peascombe and Happy Bottom, coppicing at Kilwood and Fontmell Down, and water supply improvements at Lesley's Heath and Kilwood.

The fund has enabled the purchase of essential equipment, including chainsaws, an all-terrain vehicle, a weather station, and survey tools. A harp trap and thermal imager will improve monitoring of bats and nocturnal species.

Species surveys are ongoing to measure the impact of these actions — first to collect baseline data, then to track changes in diversity and abundance, all with the help of volunteers.

In addition to pond restoration at Brooklands Meadow and Lower Common, hydrological restoration is planned at Tadnoll & Winfrith, Lyscombe, and West Holme nature reserves.

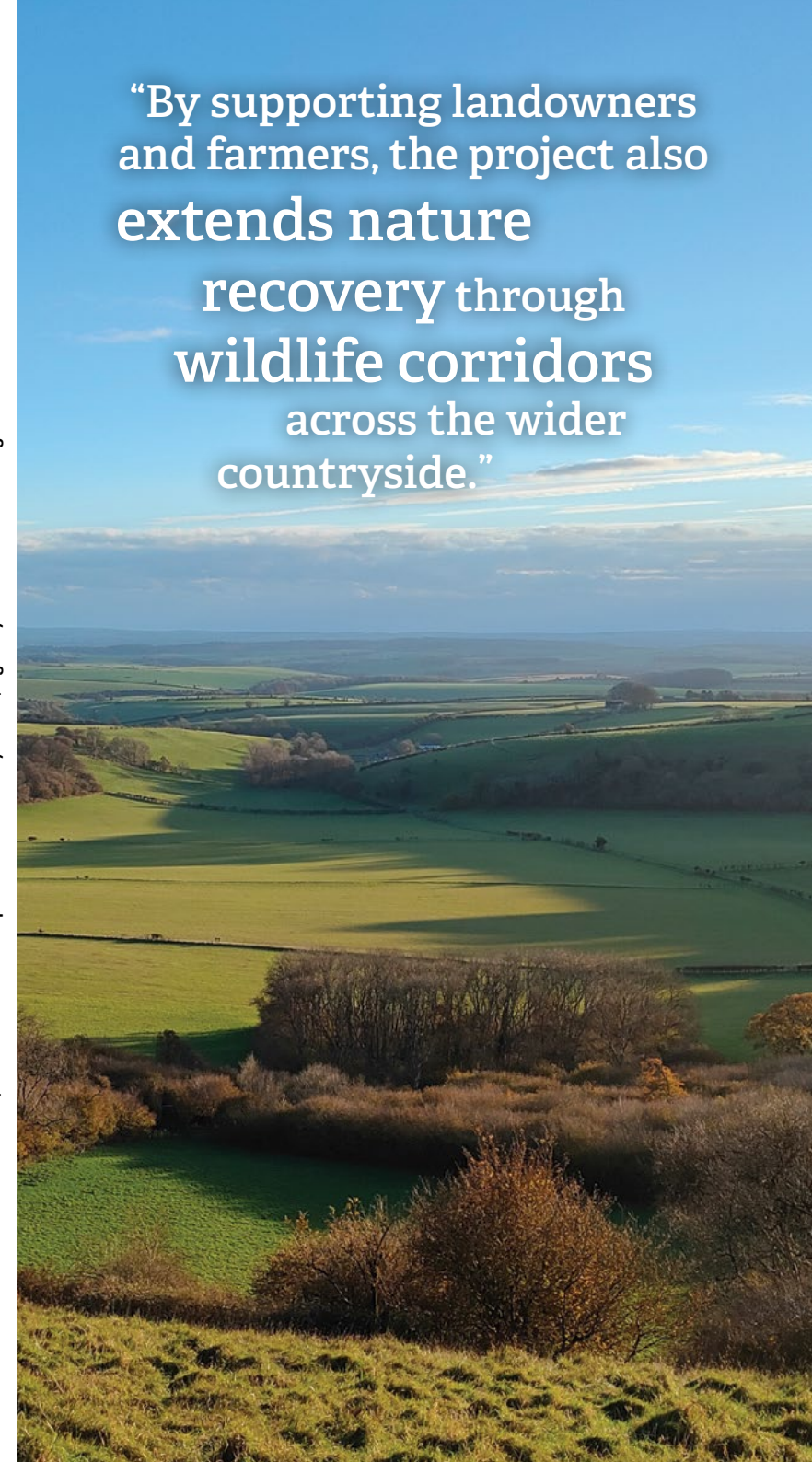
This project is funded by the Government's Species Survival Fund. The fund was developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.



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“By supporting landowners and farmers, the project also extends nature recovery through wildlife corridors across the wider countryside.”

Left: smooth snake © Steve Davis; Brooklands Meadow pond clearance © Lydia Gill; right: Lyscombe © Rob Farrington



Species recovery in action

James Cartwright, Reserve Projects
and Ecology Assistant

Over the past 18 months, the work of the Species Recovery Programme has focused on creating, restoring, and expanding habitats for 10 'Priority Species' in Dorset to help these species thrive once again.

Coppicing willows has promoted new growth, ensuring a steady food source for the larvae of the dingy mocha moth. Dependent on digger wasps for pollination, the fly orchid has benefitted from woodland ride creation in west Dorset, increasing sunlight and encouraging new plant growth.

For great crested newts, five new ponds and 17 restored ones now support breeding and foraging, while volunteers are managing the surrounding scrub to connect habitats together. The potential for greater horseshoe bats is positive following the restoration of a building at Kilwood to provide roosting space, and the installation of bat boxes which are already attracting long-eared bats.

At Sopley Common, six dry scrapes were created for the heath tiger beetle, leading to 77 individuals being recorded, including one in a new scrape. The ladybird spider is known to exist only on Dorset heathlands and we have undertaken conservation measures including habitat management and targeted reintroductions to boost their population.

To help lapwings breed successfully, wetland restoration has been prioritised along with reducing tree cover, which would provide predators with perches. Marsh clubmoss, a rare fern, has been reintroduced with support from the Species Recovery Trust which supplied specimens from the New Forest to boost existing populations.

At Tadnoll & Winfrith, wet scrapes now support pillwort, a small aquatic fern threatened by competition and habitat loss. This reserve also saw the reintroduction of sand lizards, with 25 juveniles released in 2023 and 50 in 2024.

These collaborative efforts, involving volunteers, Natural England, and other partner organisations, have supported the recovery of ten threatened and endangered species and laid a strong foundation for long-term ecological recovery.

“The work has focused on
creating, restoring
and expanding
habitats for ten
'Priority Species'.”

Left: Sopley Common dry scrape before and after creation; right: reintroduced marsh clubmoss © James Cartwright

Our visitor centres

Amy Hogben,
Centres Manager

Interactions at our visitor centres at Chesil, Kimmeridge, Kingcombe and Brownsea help connect people with nature through conversations, interpretation, events, experiences, and education.

We design an annual programme to highlight nature in Dorset, which also showcases Dorset Wildlife Trust's work through raising awareness of specific conservation projects, and of our nature reserves and how they're looked after. Often acting as an initial touchpoint, visitor centres provide 'conservation through conversation', allowing people to better understand our work and how they can connect and contribute to nature's recovery.

The visitor centre engagement team has found new ways to interest and attract visitors, delivering events and exhibitions to inspire taking action for nature. We've continued to facilitate unique nature experiences, running one of the country's only marked snorkel trails in Kimmeridge Bay, and operating the Fleet Explorer, a flat-bottomed boat that sails across Fleet Lagoon, the best way to see wildlife along Chesil Beach.

Our Wild Seas Centre, Wild Chesil Centre and Kingcombe Centre welcomed over 96,000 visitors this year, ran 20 courses and workshops, and 144 public events. Practical volunteers from local communities helped across both Kingcombe and Lorton visitor centres, assisting with hedge-laying, surveying, scrub clearing, wildlife gardening, pond restoration, and mini-meadow maintenance. Major roofing works were completed at Kingcombe to future-proof the visitor centre and at the same time, improve access for bats and swifts.

The Wild Chesil Centre's new café partner, The Salt Pig, provides visitors with fantastic fresh food and drink, whilst driving footfall and increasing opportunities for us to reach new audiences. The Wild Seas Centre had a bumper year, after teaming up with the nearby Etches Collection to highlight the wildlife and natural history of Kimmeridge Bay, past and present. Seaweed was the engagement focus for this year, with new public and volunteer events, surveys, and centre displays, all receiving positive visitor feedback.

The Wildlife and Wetland Centre on Brownsea Island is undergoing an extensive refurbishment and will be re-opening soon with new wildlife-themed displays and an interactive Nature Lab.



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“Visitor centres provide
'conservation
through
conversation'.”

Left: snorkel trail © Sarah Hodgson; Kingcombe volunteers © Matt Harcourt; right: Wild Seas Centre volunteers © Phil Abraham



Access to Brownsea

James Anderson-Barr,
Brownsea Senior Ranger

In February, we were thrilled to unveil The Fine Foundation Lookout — a new space designed to immerse visitors in the rich wildlife and landscapes of Brownsea Island. With stunning visuals, engaging displays, and a panoramic lagoon-viewing window, The Lookout sets a new benchmark for accessibility and visitor engagement.

But the enhancements extend far beyond the building itself. We've made substantial access improvements throughout the island's trail network to ensure that every visitor can explore Brownsea with ease. From the moment visitors step off the boat, a new oak boardwalk leads them along a secluded level path through lush vegetation and into the tree canopy, offering tantalizing glimpses of the lagoon and setting the stage for a journey of discovery. A gentle ramp descends from The Lookout to connect with the original boardwalk — still welcoming and in good condition, six years after installation — winding through wet meadow toward Villa Road.

Along Villa Road, dedicated staff and volunteers have filled hundreds of potholes using locally sourced sand and stone, restoring this historic path. Further along, a new birch screen leads to the Avocet Hide, where we've extended the entrance platform to provide turning space and access for buggies and wheelchair users.

One of the most striking upgrades is the newly re-profiled causeway path to the Tern Hide. This section now features a sweeping 100 metre Douglas fir screen with discreet viewing holes, allowing visitors to spot wildlife along the way. A broad oak ramp at the end ensures full accessibility to this popular bird hide.

Looking ahead, we're excited to continue this work. We plan to replace the ramp to the new Wildlife and Wetland Centre, where visitors can enjoy the Nature Lab and wildlife-themed displays, as well as learn more about conservation projects across the island and beyond.

This project was made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund together with generous funding from The Fine Foundation, the National Trust, as well as Dorset Wildlife Trust members and supporters.

The Lookout © James Dobson, National Trust Images

“The Lookout sets a new benchmark for accessibility and visitor engagement.”





“The project focused on improving access to green spaces for local residents and rail users, encouraging outdoor activity.”

Left: Wildlife-friendly Space Award for the Adam Practice garden © Dorset Wildlife Trust; right: working with Poole BID © Dorset Wildlife Trust; Wild Upton festival event © Anona Dawson

Working with South Western Railway

Anona Dawson,
Wildier Communities
Officer

Through the Customers and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF), South Western Railway (SWR) awarded a grant of £39,252 to Dorset Wildlife Trust to support work with local communities around Poole and Hamworthy railway stations, and along the old railway line to Corfe Mullen.

These stations, along with the Castleman Trailway, are not only important habitats for biodiversity in an urban area, but also form gateways to Upton Heath, Happy Bottom and Lytchett Bay nature reserves. Connecting these spaces creates vital wildlife corridors in an increasingly urban landscape.

The project focused on improving access to green spaces for local residents and rail users, encouraging outdoor activity, and building stronger community ties. The BH15 Grow Together Garden, The Adam Practice Hamworthy Garden, and the United Reformed Church gardens have all developed significantly – gaining members, enthusiasm, and external funding, all supported by SWR’s grant.

As part of a social prescribing initiative, a wildlife-friendly garden was created at The Adam Practice in Lytchett Matravers, with patients planting perennials and building insect homes and bird boxes. Poole Museum’s Physic Garden at Scaplen’s Court, maintained by volunteers, was enhanced with new pollinator-friendly planting and support for wildlife events.

Collaboration with Upton in Bloom led to five successful ‘Wild Upton’ events. SWR funding also helped launch a sustainable planting scheme for pollinator-friendly planters throughout Poole, working with Poole Business Improvement District (BID), Bournemouth and Poole College, and Chestnut Nursery.

Photography students from the College’s SEND department visited Brownsea Island – many for the first time – to practise their skills and experience birdwatching.

The Wild Upton Festival in April celebrated local biodiversity and engaged the local community with talks, walks, and open gardens. Dorset Wildlife Trust’s Wildlife-friendly Space Award scheme continues to grow, with plaques awarded to individuals and community groups creating space for nature.




Restoring Dorset's peatlands


Grace Hervé, Dorset Peat Partnership Project Manager

Dorset Peat Partnership has had a productive year, working to restore 163 hectares of degraded peatland across Dorset's heaths and mires.

Supported by the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme, work has been undertaken at 15 peatland sites spanning from Ringwood Forest, in the east of Dorset, across the urban heaths of Bournemouth and Poole over to the Purbeck Heaths, and further west to Oakers Bog at Briantspuddle. The project partnership includes Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, RSPB, National Trust, Natural England and Forestry England, as well as a private landowner.



Water is essential for peat formation and so the focus across all the restoration sites has been to use techniques to secure water in the landscape for longer. Rewetting the peat and keeping areas in a waterlogged state which prevents plants from fully decomposing allows organic matter to slowly form peat soil. Specialised low ground pressure machinery, including excavators with flail heads, have been used to clear dense scrub and purple moor grass, reconnecting groundwater with surrounding vegetation. Exposed drainage channels have been infilled or blocked with peat dams, to improve surface water flow, and bales of locally harvested heather have been used to slow the flow of water.



On some sites, it has been necessary to remove trees to prevent water being drawn from peat soils. The timber has been repurposed to create leaky debris dams in channels, slowing water flow. Locally sourced timber has been used to install solid dams into the channels to hold back water and spread it across the landscape.

Though the work is recent, early signs are promising and with the help of volunteers, we will continue to survey and monitor these restored habitats to see how they develop.

This project was funded by Defra's Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme, with support from the Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Enhancement Fund, Dorset Council, Silverlake Community Fund, a private donor, and in-kind contributions from partners.

Left: sundew © RSK; RSPB Stoborough Heath, plastic piling dam © DCP; right: Greenlands, heather bale peat dam © DCP



“Securing water in the landscape rewets peat and restores Dorset's precious heathland habitats.”

West Dorset meadow-makers – our wildflower seed harvesting project

Nick Gray,
Conservation Officer

Dorset Wildlife Trust partnered with Dorset National Landscape Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) team and Hogchester Meadows to harvest and spread wildflower seed.

Over a square kilometre of flower-rich grassland has been restored in west Dorset in recent years – crucial work that connects existing wildlife sites and provides ark sites for our distinctive local flora. These wildflower meadows help animate the land management mosaic that the Wilder Landscapes team advises on daily, balancing wildlife habitat with local food production.

A significant boost to this effort has come from our inspiring partnership with Hogchester, where we supported landowner Rob Powell with meadow restoration in 2016. Building on our long-running wider countryside advisory work, which began with the original Dorset Wildlife Trust Pastures New scheme (2008–2013), this new seed harvesting project proudly champions local provenance meadow-making. Using Hogchester as a donor site, and through our landowner liaison and SNCI work, we identified many other potential donor meadows with equally supportive owners. Our list of receptor sites grows annually, refreshed by new restoration requests from farmers and landowners.

The ever-enthusiastic FiPL team saw the pollen-and-nectar potential from the start and supported our proposal for a brush harvester. They generously funded this nimble, self-propelled machine – easily towed by various vehicles – which allowed us to collect substantial quantities of wildflower seed and distribute it to delighted recipients.

Even during the notoriously wet summer of 2024, we harvested 150kg of seed. After careful winnowing and processing – also supported by FiPL – the seed was sown on six hectares across 26 different sites in 2024. While 97% of wildflower meadows have vanished since WWII, we're helping reverse that trend in west Dorset – one meadow, and one seed, at a time.



Left: brush harvester donor site © Nick Gray; brush harvester and a handful of seed © Rachel Janes; right: Hogchester meadow © Nick Gray





“Over a
square kilometre of
flower-rich grassland
has been restored
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in recent years.”

Traineeships

Luke Johns,
Reserves Manager - South & East Dorset

Dorset Wildlife Trust has just entered its sixteenth year of providing traineeships to budding conservationists in Dorset.

Since January, with generous support from private donors, the Species Survival Project, and Nuclear Restoration Services (formerly Magnox), we have supported a record number of trainees—funding seven positions across the Reserves team.

In October 2024, five new practical conservation trainees joined our north, south, east, and west warden teams and the Brownsea Island team. These ten-month traineeships provide essential qualifications and training to help participants move into similar roles within the conservation sector. In addition, funding from a private donor in January enabled us to launch our first rewilding internship at Wild Woodbury, running until the end of June.

For the past three years, we have also supported an ecology trainee each year, funded by private donors. These trainees gain valuable hands-on experience by working alongside experienced staff on our nature reserves and by acquiring licenses for surveying and handling rare species.

The conservation and ecology job markets are highly competitive. Our traineeships continue to be a vital stepping stone, with over 97% of past trainees securing employment within the sector. Many of us in conservation began as volunteers — driven by passion, but unsure how to take the next step. These opportunities help bridge that gap, and crucially, they do not require a university degree or an academic background.

It is always a proud moment when our trainees move into employment — and especially rewarding when they take that next step with us!



“Our traineeships continue to be a vital stepping stone, with over 97% of past trainees securing employment within the sector.”

“At the heart of this vision
is the ambition to see
Lyscombe recognised as a
**National Nature
Reserve by 2030.**”

Lyscombe: transforming the landscape for nature and people

Brian Bleese,
Chief Executive

A year after Dorset Wildlife Trust acquired Lyscombe nature reserve, the plans for an ambitious transformation into a vibrant haven for wildlife and people are progressing well.

Once an organically managed farm, Lyscombe is now the centrepiece of a landscape-scale restoration effort, where natural processes are being reintroduced, heritage habitats conserved, and biodiversity allowed to flourish. At the heart of this vision is the ambition to see Lyscombe recognised as a National Nature Reserve by 2030, a beacon of ecological recovery, resilience, and inspiration. This designation will celebrate Lyscombe not only for its rich biodiversity but also as a model for nature-led land management in the UK and an educational and research hub, inspiring conservation efforts across Dorset and beyond.

Restoration efforts are already showing results: barn owls have returned, streams will be rewilded, and conservation grazing will revive chalk grasslands. Up to 23km of old fencing is being removed to create a more open, connected landscape, replaced with long-lasting, wildlife-friendly infrastructure. English Longhorn cattle now graze the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), helping control scrub and maintain rich grassland habitats.

A major milestone will be the restoration of the Little Piddle stream to its natural course, reversing decades of agricultural modification and creating vital wetland habitats. Meanwhile, sensitive restoration of historical features – including the chapel and old barns – blends ecological and cultural renewal.

Lyscombe’s regeneration is guided by rigorous ecological monitoring and is supported by local community volunteers. Wildlife surveys, including studies of small mammals, birds, bats, and invertebrates, are shaping evidence-based management.

This work exemplifies Dorset Wildlife Trust’s vision of a wilder Dorset by 2030, a place where nature has space to thrive and adapt, where landscapes breathe freely, and where people can reconnect with nature.



Left: Lyscombe © Rob Farrington; right: barn owl © Stuart Canham; Lyscombe's longhorn cattle © Ben Atkinson

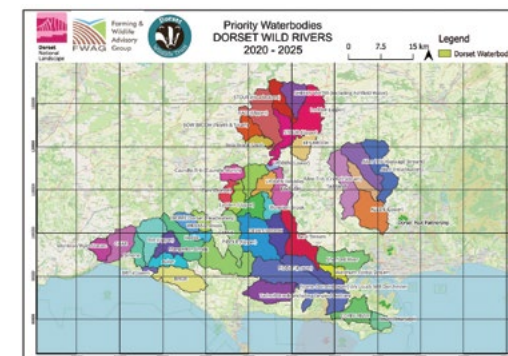
Restoring Dorset's Wild Rivers

Amanda Broom,
River Catchment Manager

The Dorset Wild Rivers project aims to enhance rivers and wetlands for wildlife, working across all three of Dorset's catchments: the Poole Harbour Catchment, the Stour Catchment, and the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams Catchments, with a focus on priority waterbodies.

Dorset Wildlife Trust leads the partnership, working alongside the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West and Dorset National Landscape. The initiative is funded through the Wessex Water Foundation Partners Programme.

This year has brought several highlights. A successful funding application to the Environment Agency and Wessex Water enabled us to continue our work in the Upper Frome Catchment, providing bespoke advice to five farmers to help manage surface water more effectively. One of these farms has also received funding to install leaky woody debris dams to help 'slow the flow'. Additionally, we have acquired three continuous water sampling devices (sondes) to support water quality monitoring across the catchments.



Similar Natural Flood Management measures have been designed for the Brit and Swan Brook Catchments through Environment Agency funding, with implementation planned for the following year. Another highlight is the development of a new partnership focused on Swan Brook, involving the National Trust, Swanage Town Council, and Planet Purbeck. This collaboration aims to raise awareness, encourage behaviour change, and support monitoring efforts through the project.

People are at the heart of Dorset Wild Rivers – whether through engagement with farmers and landowners or the many dedicated volunteers involved in the Riverfly Monitoring and Water Guardians schemes as well as the work to enhance habitats and control invasive non-native plants.

**“People are at the heart
of Dorset Wild Rivers, from
farmers and
landowners to dedicated
local volunteers.”**

Left: riverfly monitoring, right: wetland creation and map graphic © Amanda Broom

The Beaver Project

Steve Oliver,
Rivers Conservation Officer

Beavers returned to Dorset in February 2021 for the first time in over 400 years, as part of Dorset Wildlife Trust's enclosed Beaver Project in west Dorset.

These semi-aquatic rodents, renowned for their ecosystem engineering abilities, have been thriving ever since. The adult pair introduced to the wet woodland site successfully bred, and the growing beaver family has transformed the landscape. By coppicing trees and building multiple dams, they've reshaped their watery surroundings. Scientific studies show that the water surface area has more than tripled, while peak water flows have been reduced by up to 24%. These changes help retain water on the land, enhancing climate resilience during both drought and storm events.

This evolving beaver-created wetland now supports a wide variety of wildlife. Insects such as dragonflies and damselflies, amphibians including frogs, toads, and newts, and species like bats, otters, and kingfishers are all benefitting from the habitat improvements brought about by this keystone species.

The site has also become a centre for public engagement. To date, 226 events have been held, attracting over 3,500 people. These activities have played a crucial role in raising awareness and deepening understanding of what it means to live alongside beavers in today's landscapes.

Looking ahead, the feasibility of the site becoming part of a free-living wild beaver release project is being actively explored. With west Dorset offering ideal habitat, the area is well positioned to support the species' return to the wider countryside and an expression of interest for a wild release has been submitted to Natural England.

In the meantime, the project's licence as an enclosed beaver site is being extended, ensuring continued learning, engagement, and ecological benefits as we prepare for the next steps in restoring beavers to Dorset's freshwater ecosystems.

“Looking ahead, the feasibility of the site becoming part of a **free-living wild beaver** release project is being actively explored.”



Left: beaver dam and wetland creation; frogspawn thriving; right: beaver kit © Steve Oliver



Membership and Engagement

26,928
members
in total

1,464

new
members

378

Species of the Month reports

380

entries in the
photo competition

409,750
visits

to our website

Species Recovery Programme

17 ponds restored and
5 new ponds

1km of ride network created

21 dry scrapes created
on lowland heathland

18,000m² of heathland
managed for the ladybird spider

1.5ha
of wetland created at Winfrith

159 marsh clubmoss
plants recorded

Reintroduction of **75**
juvenile sand lizards

Species Survival Fund

Work
undertaken on
18 nature
reserves

500ha
of land
impacted

2,846
hours of
volunteer
work

25
neighbouring
farmers
engaged

1,000
trees planted
on 3 sites

45km
of fencing and
water supply
installed to allow
extensive
grazing

250m
of hedgerow
laid

Dorset Peat Partnership

163ha
and
15 peatland
sites restored

6,920m
of
drainage ditch
infilled

24.5ha
molinia mulched

199
dams installed

1,900m
peat contour
bunds created

Wild Rivers

165ha
river habitat improved

2.7km of
watercourse improved

1,864 people engaged

6 riverfly training sessions;

70 sites now monitored

135km of
watercourse monitored by
Water Guardians

South Western Rail

2 0 9

individuals
connected to nature
through events and activities

Engaged with

110
young
people

18

events organised
for local communities

Volunteering

21,461
total
volunteer
hours



2,862
volunteer
days
worked



700
volunteers
acting for
nature



Meadows

26
new meadows created



More
than
150kg



of wildflower
seed harvested

volunteer hours spent
200
meadow-making



35
landowners engaged
in meadow-making



Visitor Centres

31,370 people visited
the area we manage on **Brownsea**



Wild Chesil Centre
welcomed **40,690** visitors



Wild Seas Centre at Kimmeridge
attracted **48,387** visitors



6,286 people visited
Kingcombe Visitor Centre



A total of **7,229** volunteer
hours worked at visitor centres



177 people attended a course
and **1,196** attended an event



665 people sailed on
the Fleet Explorer



Educational sessions delivered to
399 young people



37 marine surveys
were carried out



Reserves monitoring

Marsh fritillaries
recolonised Powerstock Common
- **10** larval webs found



15 large marsh
grasshoppers heard
stridulating on
Higher Hyde Heath



79 species of
invertebrates recorded on
dry scrapes created across
Sopley and Tadnoll & Winfrith



Over **100ha** of
habitat condition
assessed across Dorset



First ever record of
hazel dormouse
at Sovell Down



Photo Competition

The 2024 Photo Competition once again captured the imagination of photographers across the county, with a stunning array of entries in all five categories.

The judging panel included Dorset Wildlife Trust trustee and National Trust Countryside Manager Leo Henley-Lock, Wild Woodbury Ranger Daisy Meadowcroft, and Lydia Norrish, Young Journalist from the Dorset Local Nature Partnership. They had the tough task of selecting winners from an inspiring range of images – from fledglings in wildlife-friendly gardens to magical underwater scenes – each capturing the beauty and diversity of Dorset's wild places.

We are immensely grateful to all our members and supporters who took part in the competition. Special thanks to our prize sponsors: the Alexandra Hotel and Restaurant, Sculpture by the Lakes, Holme for Gardens, and Blue Panda.

You can view all winning and runner-up images on our website: dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/photo-competition.

OVERALL WINNER

Photographer: Paul Dibben
Category: Wildlife in action
Subject: Dartford warbler collecting nesting material
Location: Winfrith Heath nature reserve



SECOND PLACE

Photographer: James Hand
Category: People in nature
Subject: My friend taking in the majesty of Chapman's Pool
Location: Isle of Purbeck



FOURTH PLACE

Photographer: Matthew Tranter
Category: Wildlife in your garden/green space
Subject: Nuthatch feeding on a shovel handle
Location: Ferndown



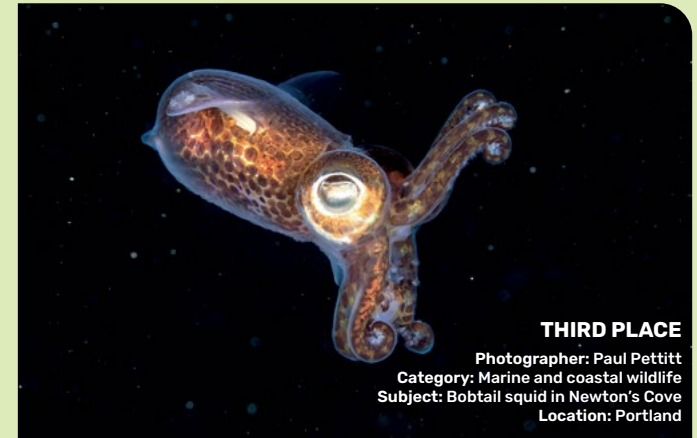
FIFTH PLACE

Photographer: Penny Bentley
Category: Dorset Wildlife Trust nature reserves
Subject: A stormy summer's day at Kingcombe Meadows
Location: Kingcombe Meadows nature reserve



THIRD PLACE

Photographer: Paul Pettitt
Category: Marine and coastal wildlife
Subject: Bobtail squid in Newton's Cove
Location: Portland



JUNIOR WINNER

Photographer: Archie Garth
Category: Junior
Subject: Lively shot of a cuckoo
Location: RSPB Arne





Dorset
Wildlife Trust



Making space for nature

in Dorset

