



# 2009-10 Annual Report



nightingale Marcus Valesio / naturepl.com



**Half of all wildlife in Sussex is found on the shoreline or under the sea and campaigning alongside other Wildlife Trusts for the Marine and Coastal Access Act has helped us forge good links with organisations that are now responsible for improving our marine habitats.**

If these three summaries whet your appetite to learn more about our work in *Taking Care of Sussex* then please visit our website: [www.sussexwt.org.uk](http://www.sussexwt.org.uk)



## Good Nature

The Sussex landscape is entwined with our cultural and historic heritage but is also a product of far greater forces – those of nature. How we manage our nature reserves is important for the wildlife living there, but it is only when we weave those reserves into the rich tapestry of our landscape that their true value is realised.

Improving the way our landscape functions for wildlife brings together the work of all the departments of the Trust. Our policy team work with planning authorities and Government agencies and departments to minimise development pressure and also to look for ways to encourage people to enjoy our county without damaging its wildlife.

Although we enjoyed some success last year, despite many years of trying to prevent it, planning permission was granted for the Bexhill Hastings Link Road, a route which threatens to cut the Combe Haven Valley in half isolating numerous species.

Our Reserves Team continues to work to ensure our land is strategically placed and integrated within the landscape. We use our sites to demonstrate best practice and to provide opportunities to work alongside other land managers and owners.



## Good Neighbours

Sussex Wildlife Trust puts considerable thought into its reserve management plans. We have a clear idea of what we want to see in our nature reserves and how we can work to achieve this. It could be a specific grazing regime that encourages wild flowers or leaving patches of scrub that will benefit particular species of bird or butterfly.

However, we are very much aware that preserving nature in small compartments is not going to halt the massive decline in biodiversity that is taking place, not just in the UK but globally. We appreciate the need to work in larger areas, making the landscape around our reserves and elsewhere in Sussex more favourable to wildlife. In order to work outside of our reserves we need to keep talking to our neighbours.

- 1 short-snouted seahorse *Paul Naylor*
- 2 family picnic at Woods Mill *SWT*
- 3 lapwing *Damian Waters*
- 4 brilliant emerald dragonfly *Dave Sadler*
- 5 hedge planting *SWT*
- 6 dropwort *Neil Fletcher*
- 7 wood white butterfly *George McCarthy / naturepl.com*

The West Weald Landscape Project (WWLP) hosted and managed by us, has been focussing on talking to our neighbouring landowners in the Ebernoe area of West Sussex for the past 18 months. However, this year, the project received an enormous boost by the recruitment of a dedicated landowner advisor who is working predominantly around the area of The Mens nature reserve.

We now have two members of staff talking to landowners in the West Weald about how their land could help to conserve wildlife and become part of a larger network for species and habitat – and so The Wildlife Trusts vision for a Living Landscape stretching the length and breath of our country starts to crystallise.

In approaching landowners regarding wildlife enhancements on their land we ensure that we highlight all the benefits, both in biodiversity gain and financial gain, as there are often woodland or agricultural grants that can support their work. The Trust also offers support with capital works and will bring in volunteers (sometimes local school children) to help plant hedges and small woodlands.

Our partnership work has enabled the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) based at Woods Mill to bring together expertise from across the county to identify and map Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). This forms the basis of the South East Biodiversity Strategy and helps us, and others, to prioritise work ensuring maximum benefit to wildlife.

This work is now being led by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership Officer, who is a member of our Conservation Team. The BOAs map sets a framework for delivering towards our own strategy with all our departments working together and in partnership with other organisations and individuals. Examples of this include working with landowners to improve the quality and connectivity of wetland habitat for species such as the rare brilliant emerald dragonfly as well as highlighting the needs of water voles, breeding birds and wetland invertebrates in general while still putting the needs of local people high on the agenda.

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## People and Wildlife

Our objective to generate a desire for a wildlife-rich environment received a tremendous boost with an 'Access to Nature' grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for projects in Hastings and Brighton. In Hastings we will be building on the success of the Ore Valley Greenspace Project and expanding our work with communities in developing the importance and use of local greenspaces within the Borough. Similarly in Brighton we will look to work with partners in less affluent areas to achieve similar aims. Together with the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership Project, the Trust has made considerable progress with its work in the urban environment.

Another growth area, within our expanding education programme, has been Forest Schools and in particular Forest Schools leader training; the Trust is now the major provider in the south east. This teaching method develops opportunities in an outdoor setting for children and adults of all ages to develop a variety of life skills: altruism, independence, self-awareness and social communication skills, all of which assist individuals to grow in self-esteem and confidence. Forest Schools has become an important way for us to

introduce the countryside to many groups in Sussex – from pre-school children to excluded teenagers, families and adults.

Our events programme continues to expand and reach out to new people. The Trust is now the major partner with Brighton & Hove City Council in organising the Springwatch Festival – an event that attracted nearly 10,000 people to Brighton's Stanmer Park last year. Of equal importance are the volunteers who run the West Dean Woods Roadshow, representing the Trust at a number of major public events in West Sussex during the spring and summer months.

Volunteers contribute hugely to bringing our message into communities. Our group leaders and Wildlife Watch organisers run year-long programmes of events designed to stimulate interest in our habitats and the creatures they support. Volunteer activity throughout the year exceeded over 25,000 'man' hours contributed by 450 registered volunteers.

We have maintained a high profile through various media outlets. Monthly articles appeared in 65 parish magazines throughout Sussex as well as in publications such as Sussex Life and the county's weekly papers. During the year our experts were invited to

appear on television and radio, both at local and national level.

Our WildCall helpline received 1,254 calls during the year. One to one advice was provided on a broad range of subjects ranging from planning enquiries, advice on gardening for wildlife and identifying unusual species. Our website has improved to offer more comprehensive information on a host of wildlife related topics.

Providing opportunities for adults to enjoy, learn about and engage with wildlife continued to lead our courses programme: take-up of places increased by nearly 10% on the previous year. Other organisations looked to the Trust to provide day courses and training and we now organise these for the Workers Education Association, The Centre for Community Engagement and the University of Brighton. At the end of the year, a Living Landscapes conference was delivered by the Trust to 80 members of the University of the 3rd Age at the University of Brighton.

8 forest schools at Springwatch *Elli Saunders*

9 brown long-eared bat *Hugh Clark*

10 bee-keeping course *Fran Southgate*

## Chairman's Report



Despite the challenging economic climate we are still managing to maintain a turnover of just over £3m. This has been, in part, due to a good number of our members kindly agreeing to increase their level of support and their generous response has helped us to maintain a steady level of membership income.

The Trust is also extremely fortunate that, for each of the past two years, income from legacies has exceeded £640,000. Sadly, when legacies come to the Trust we have no way of thanking our generous benefactors so if you have remembered the Trust in your Will, thank you.

With money donated specifically for land purchase and from legacy income held in reserves, the Trust purchased an area of heathland at Graffham Common, near Petworth - land almost adjacent to the area we acquired as a result of our appeal in February 2009. Both areas fall within the newly created South Downs National Park which, incidentally, was officially established on 31st March - a great landmark to end a busy and fulfilling year.

We enjoyed a record turnout of members for our Annual Members meeting in October. The Aadastra Hall in Hassocks was packed to capacity with members travelling from all over Sussex to listen to the keynote speech by wildlife expert and TV presenter Chris Packham, who followed his excellent talk with a question and answer session.

The increasing number of activities and projects and the growing size of the Trust, inevitably results in more work for our Business Team who deal with financial transactions and day to day administration. I would particularly like to thank them for their hard work, essential to the smooth running of the organisation.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank all the hardworking staff, our fantastic team of dedicated volunteers across the county and, last, but not least, my fellow Trustees for their support during the year.

To end, special mention should go to our staff who took on and beat the formidable BBC 2 quiz giants Eggheads. Those who watched the programme, screened in March, witnessed 'The Wise Owls' beating The Eggheads and winning £37,000. They donated all their winnings to the Trust - the first time in the history of the show that contestants had not kept the money for themselves!

*Patricia Berry*

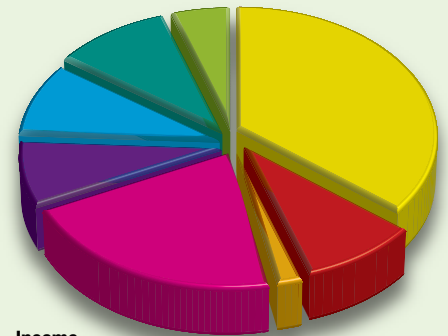
## Money Matters

Last year we reflected on the gloomy economic situation and anticipated a negative effect on Trust finances for the coming year. In some respects this has come to pass with a significant reduction in investment income - down from £52,500 in 2009 to £8,600 in 2010 for interest earned on short-term deposits. However, growth in membership numbers has remained on the positive side. This is better than expected thanks to a concerted effort in the Marketing Department to keep our profile high and through personal interaction with the membership.

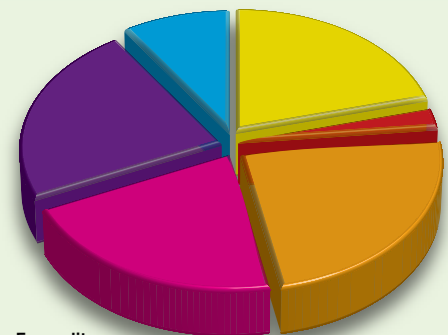
Gross income for the year was in excess of £3,000,000. Two-thirds of this was directly due to the generosity of our supporters as voluntary income exceeded £1,900,000; of this membership income was in excess of £1,080,000 and legacies over £640,000.

Once again, a significant proportion of our income earned was spent on land acquisition. Last year we reported the purchase of 8.6 hectares of land at Graffham Common near Petworth and during the year further acquisitions adjacent to Graffham have taken place. We have also purchased 3.3 hectares of unimproved chalk grassland on the north side of the Downs at Ditchling - a welcome addition to our existing landholding there.

The past year has seen the start of a variety of new projects including 'Access to Nature' funded through the National Lottery and supported by Natural England. This project presents an exciting opportunity to extend our community and education work to those families living in Hastings and Brighton who wouldn't usually have the opportunity to become involved with nature conservation. We are also delighted to be working with the Tubney Charitable Trust who is supporting our continuing work to protect habitat and rare species within the West Weald.



Income



Expenditure

The above information is extracted from the full annual audited accounts and its purpose is to highlight visually the different segments of the Trust's Income and Expenditure for the year. To view a full set of these accounts please visit [www.sussexwt.org.uk](http://www.sussexwt.org.uk). If you require a printed copy please tel: 01273 497523.



common lizard Veronica Carter



Barry Pickthall/Horsham DC/PPL

## Supporters

### Business Supporters

Acumen Business Law  
 Ashdown Forest Llama Park  
 Bon Appétit  
 Brighton Marina Estate  
 Clayton Wood Burial Ground  
 Coaching Professionals  
 Court Lodge Organics  
 CSL Behring  
 Designate  
 Easy Fundraising  
 Ecotecture  
 EDF  
 Evonprint  
 Face Media Group  
 Fresh Egg  
 Geeks on Wheels  
 Gemini Press  
 Ginger Dragon  
 Greenmetrics  
 Harvey & Sons  
 Honey Bridge Caravan Park  
 Horsham Social Services  
 Initial Retail Cleaning  
 Keepers Woodlands Ltd  
 Kids Love Earth  
 Legal & General  
 Old Tollgate Hotel  
 Prestonville Arms  
 Projects Abroad  
 Redeem PLC  
 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd  
 Roundhill Financial Management  
 SITA Trust  
 SiteVisabilty  
 South Downs Cellars  
 Swan Press  
 The Southern Co-operative  
 Thompson Allen

TW CAT  
 Veolia Environmental Trust  
 Vine House  
 Wienerberger Ltd  
 Yorkshire Building Society  
 Zeta Colour

### Charitable Trusts

A I Hawksbee Charitable Trust  
 BBC Wildlife Fund  
 Bramham Trust  
 The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
 Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust  
 Gurney Charitable Trust  
 Irene Newman Charitable Trust  
 Poling Charitable Trust  
 The Tubney Charitable Trust

### Lottery Funding

Access to Nature (Big Lottery)  
 Heritage Lottery Fund

### Other Supporters

Adur District Council  
 Arun District Council  
 Chichester District Council  
 Crawley Borough Council  
 Eastbourne Borough Council  
 East Sussex County Council  
 Environment Agency  
 Horsham District Council  
 Lewes District Council  
 Mid Sussex District Council  
 Natural England  
 Rother District Council  
 South Downs Joint Committee  
 Southern Water  
 Wealden District Council  
 West Sussex County Council

### Legacies were received from

Miss H K Adams  
 Miss E L Catt  
 Miss J B Courtauld's  
 1974 Discretionary Settlement  
 Professor J P Elliott  
 Mrs M M Derby  
 Mrs C M Gordon  
 Mrs R Hancock  
 Professor V M Hart  
 Caroline Agnes Joan Hervey Trust  
 Mr A J F Hoby  
 Miss V M Hodson  
 Miss E Jeudwine  
 Mrs D H D G Kindersley  
 Miss J A Leaning  
 Mrs F P Naish  
 Mr G L Parker  
 Mrs E M Parris  
 Mr C L Payne  
 Miss A P M Phillips  
 Mrs E Pinnock  
 Miss E M Stewart  
 Mrs M P Swain  
 Mr D C Taylor  
 Mr K S Williams  
 Mrs B E Willis  
 Miss D E Young

A total of £643,183 has been received in legacies and bequests during the year.

This is a valuable source of income and we are especially grateful to those who make provision for the Trust in their Will.

Continuing our 'green initiative', the Trustees Report and a full set of audited annual accounts are available from our website [www.sussexwt.org.uk](http://www.sussexwt.org.uk) Go to **About** section and click on **Annual Report**.

To receive a printed copy please telephone 01273 497523.



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