



Annual Report 2019-20 (Leigh Morris, CEO)

Introduction:

Our CEO at the start of 2019-20, Dr Tim Graham, departed Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) in early November 2019. A key focus in the latter part of the year was recruiting Tim's replacement. Leigh Morris was interviewed and appointed in November. Leigh commenced his role as CEO of MWT on 13-1-20, so consequently was in post for only 18 days of this 2019-20 reporting year (1-2-19 to 31-1-20). This report is therefore predominantly a collation of the feedback from all the staff team at MWT, covering their own highlights and key points from 2019-20.

This report is structured as follows (with MWT staff leading in brackets):

- Membership & Marketing (Graham Makepeace-Warne).
- MWT Nature Reserves (Tricia Sayle).
- Education (Dawn Dickens).
- Wildflowers of Mann (Andree Dubbeldam).
- Marine Conservation (Dr Lara Howe).
- Calf of Man (Dr Lara Howe and Aron Sapsford).
- Manx Mires and Volunteer Coordination (Sarah Hickey).
- Funding & Finance (Leigh Morris)

Membership & Marketing:

- 2019-20 finally saw the consolidation and clean-up of the membership database with extensive help from volunteer John Howie. Although this meant membership numbers appeared to have dropped slightly, they were still strong (and now accurate) at 685 individual memberships.
- Corporate members grew to a value of over £12k for MWT as well as some reciprocal agreements in return for support, such as document storage (Callin Wild) and wider sponsorship of our Wilder Future campaign and Wildlife Watch events (Lloyds Bank). New corporate members include Affinity Management Services Ltd and Ocorian. Grant applications saw a £5k fund from Celton Manx achieved. for the development of the Ramsey Forest Project as well as winning the Co-operative local cause application for 2020 with help from Ian Davies.
- Our communications work gained regular coverage in the press, and our social media engagement and followers continued to grow across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) funding bid also saw funding secured for additional days of staff time: one more day for Graham Makepeace-Warne (MWT Marketing & Membership Manager) and the recruitment of a new team member (2 days/week) in 2020.
- Our Manx Nature magazine continued to improve both in size and quality and saw advertising revenue for the first time.
- A key highlight for 2019-20 was the Wilder Future roadshow which gained great recognition at Ramsey Courthouse, during Festival of the Sea and in the Atrium at Ronaldsway Airport. One highlight was Andy Cowie, Chairman of Ramsey Commissioners playing our Tropic Tumbling Tower game.



MWT Nature Reserves:

- Two strong volunteer groups maintained throughout the year – Midweek Muckers on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The average attendance on Thursdays (the main volunteering day) was >15 each week.
- Botanical highlights: Common twayblade orchid recorded on north Goshen for the first time, Cranberry spread at Dalby, record numbers of pyramidal orchids at Cronk y Bing and increased diversity at Glen Dhoo with spotted orchids now recorded on all fields.
- Public events and visiting groups: Children's Centre Community Farm, Orchid Walks, Watch event and SEN adults at Close Sartfield, Jurby School at Cronk y Bing, Rushed Rainbows & Brownies, and Bug Hunt at Ballachurry, Insect identification at Dalby Mountain, Beetle identification, and Mammal trapping at Cooldarry.
- Biological research: Through our MWT Invertebrate Group and volunteers, new on-Island species were discovered in our Reserves:
 - Dalby Mountain: *Daldinia fissa* Gorse cramp ball (fungus), *Dasyschyphus pygmaeus* (fungus), and *Hypsosinga pygmaea* (spider).
 - Cooldarry: *Mycena citrinomarginata* (fungus), *Tenuiphantes cristatus* (money spider) and *Helophorus insignis* (money spider).
 - Cronk y Bing: *Neottiura bimaculata* (spider) & *Crinipellis scabella* (Hairy parachute fungus).
 - Close Sartfield: *Lasioglossum zonulum* Bull-headed furrow bee, *Cheilosia pagana* (hoverfly), *Eriozona syrphoides* (hoverfly), *Anelosimus vittatus* (comb-footed spider), and *Rugathodes instabilis* (comb-footed spider).
 - Dobbies Meadow: *Cortinarius uliginosus* Marsh webcap (fungus).

Education:

- Over 279 hours of contact time has been spent inspiring people about wildlife on the Isle of Man during 2019-20, with 54 schools and community groups attending/participating.
- The number of people attending across all school sessions and public events run by the Education Officer in the year 2019-2020 was 8,309.
- Number of venues used for outdoor events was 40, more than last year and the number of subjects covered rose from 56 last year to 73 this year.
- Schools were eager to participate in the butterfly monitoring scheme, including 8 primary and 2 secondary schools. With public events, this totalled 1,247 people taking part in the scheme.
- MWT has been evolving our approach to meet the needs of schools to address the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and Eco-schools programme.
- During the period of this report, the allocation of the Education Officers time changed at the beginning of August 2019 from 5 days a week for education to 3 days on Education (funded under a joint DEFA/DESC contact) and 2 days on Citizen Science projects (funded by the Manx Lottery Trust).

Wildflowers of Mann:

- The Wildflowers of Mann project has evolved over the years. The current focus is on the development of the Ramsey Forest project and Action for Wildlife initiative.
- During the year MWT proposed and gained Government approval for Action for Wildlife programme.
- At Cloughbane Plantation MWT Created 1 acre of native woodland and completed the initial phase of the introduction and establishment of 10 rare wildflower plants.
- Completing the tetrad survey of the Isle of Man's flora (the IOM Wildflower Atlas).
- Working with Colas to draft the Billown Quarries management plan.
- Produced indicative map of future native woodlands for DEFA Climate Emergency team.



Marine Conservation:

- MWT's Marine Officer worked for 2-days/week for specific DEFA contracted outputs. The management of the Calf Contract for Manx National Heritage, and the Festival of the Sea being the other key outputs.
- Festival of the Sea – another great year with around 3,000 people attending over the 2 days. There was a great variety of animals on display, with a lot of interest in the edible crabs.
- Over the winter the speaker system for the puffin project on the Calf has been overhauled and is running properly again. In addition, another 10 new puffins have been introduced to replace the broken ones, thanks to the Loughton sheep running into them!
- With the support of Seasearch IOM we have now confirmed that seagrass seeds have been identified in Ramsey MNR and it is hoped these will be cultivated by Swansea University for transplanting. In addition, the small grooved snail was also identified for the first time since 1838 by Edward Forbes at another seagrass site at Langness.

Calf of Man:

- Another great year and the 60th year for the Observatory. 282 bird species have been recorded in that time and 60 have bred on the Calf. Lovely to see so many volunteers helping and several old faces too. The work would not be possible without their support.
- Seal surveys – 69 pups were born, the second highest since the surveys began. 302 females and 46 males have now been identified. There are still several to still identify.
- 148 species of bird recorded, including White-tailed Eagle which was a new species for the Calf. Also, the first spring record of Melodious Warbler since 2005, and only the 4th & 5th Calf records of the 'Western' Subalpine Warbler.
- 8088 birds ringed – 2nd highest total ever.
- 13,002 moths of 211 species recorded from 84 trapping nights, including 8 new species for the Calf and three new species for the Isle of Man, including *Orthotelia sparganella*.

Manx Mires and Volunteer Coordination:

- Sarah Hickey was appointed on a 1-year contract (commencing in August 2019) to deliver a split role. 50% of her time devoted to upland peat survey work, the broad aim to measure the depth of peat across all c.10,000ha of upland peat area, in order to calculate the whole volume and provide the baseline data for potential future restoration work. The other 50% of Sarah's time is allocated to the coordination, development and expansion of the MWT volunteering programme.
- Involving a number of keen volunteers in the upland peat survey, including hill farmers who had previously been sceptical of the project.
- Contributing a chapter on peatland restoration to Professor Curran's IMPACT report on climate change mitigation.
- Making a start on improving internal systems for volunteering.
- Developing her ecological consultancy skills.

Ecological Consultancy:

Adam Denard is MWT's part-time, zero hours contracted, Ecologist Consultant. The consultancy work is primarily ecological surveys and appraisals, including for specific species.

Funding & Finance:

- In addition to core income streams, MWT were grateful to receive funding from RSWT, MLT and IOM Government Contracts for our Education, Marine and Wildflowers of Mann work.
- WMT had a loss of £27,489 in 2019-20, which was predominantly due to the lack of any legacy being received by MWT during the year. A key aim going forward is to remove the annual operational deficit and any reliance whatsoever on legacies to deliver our core function.