



# MANX Nature

*Dooghys Vannin*

The membership newsletter  
of Manx Wildlife Trust  
Spring/Summer 2020



## **The Secret Lives of Swifts**

Why these  
masters of the air  
need our help

## **Natural Solutions**

How restoring  
natural habitats  
can help tackle the  
climate crisis

**Now  
Digital!**



**Free to Members**



# Welcome to Spring/Summer

Leigh Morris, CEO



Just over two months into my role, I'm delighted to be writing my first Welcome for Manx Nature. I first visited and explored the Island 20 years ago (one of my best friends

from horticultural college is from the IoM.) I loved the whole experience then and so it was a wonderful opportunity to return and lead the Island's Wildlife Trust.

You may notice that the 'Proud to Partner UNESCO Biosphere' logo appears more prominently in the magazine. This is a conscious step by us to champion our UNESCO Biosphere status, which I see as a fantastic enabler for collaborative working. I'm making great efforts to engage with other organisations here and discuss ways that we might work more closely together. I'm delighted to have already made some good connections and look forward to developing more.

Our members and supporters may not know that despite our best efforts, MWT operate on an annual financial deficit, especially in those years, such as 2019, when we do not receive a legacy. Fundraising is always a top priority for us and 2020 may prove to be a particularly challenging year due to the coronavirus, which has significantly reduced some funding streams, including the

closure of our Wildlife Gift Shop in Peel. MWT needs ongoing funding to enable us to continue doing all the wonderful work we do for conservation across the Island, including management of MWT's 24 diverse Nature Reserves, three visitor centres, and other key projects such as Ramsey Forest, and the MNH Calf of Man Bird Observatory – one of the most important bird sites in the British Isles. At this time of increased pressure on all charities, you can please help us by reminding others how much MWT does, how much we would welcome donations and legacies and how important our work is to the IOM.

The present situation with coronavirus (covid-19) is a major challenge for us all. Thankfully I work with a positive team of people, who are viewing this as an opportunity to work in different ways and do some things that we hadn't previously had time to do. As I say to my team, this is a period of time, not permanent!

I hope you enjoy this magazine that, due to coronavirus, we are distributing as a free digital copy. Hopefully this will entertain many more people while they are social distancing and inspire them to do something positive for Manx wildlife (including joining MWT!). Great to see the photo of our latest member of staff (Rachael Harrop p.4) and I particularly enjoyed reading the Calf report and the article on Gardening for Butterflies & Moths. I wish you a wonderful nature-filled summer and that you all stay healthy...

Follow Leigh on Twitter: @MorrisLeigh

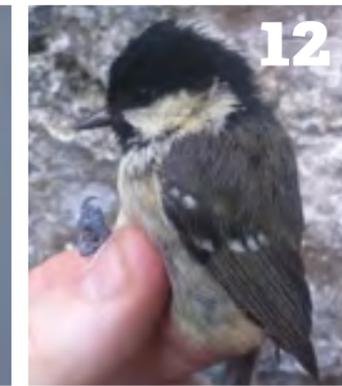


## Welcome New Members!

Mrs A & Mr K Skitt  
Miss K Holden  
Mrs J Clark-Wilson  
Miss S Howard  
Mrs S & Mr V Neild  
Miss L Carey  
The Shanley Family  
Mr A Witherow  
The Tattersall Family  
Mr E Burn  
Mrs D & Mr C Newstead  
Mr I Byron  
Ms J White & Mr S Semark  
Miss L & Mr E Mildwaters  
Miss L Woodworth

The Seymour Family  
Mr D & Mrs S Craine  
The Jones Family  
Ms J Furner  
The Losh Family  
Mr T Thurley  
Ms I M Teare  
Mrs D & Mr R Bairstow  
Mrs J & Mr P Whittle  
Mrs C Highy & Mr P Welden  
Mrs C Harmer  
Mrs A Kneale  
Mr A & Mrs E Marshall  
Mr C Kneale  
Ms P Mason & Mr L Jackson

Ms K Statham  
The Bell-Scott Family  
The Roberts Family  
Miss K Taylor  
Mrs K & Mr P Bergin  
Dr P Newton & Family  
Ms C Scale  
Mrs Y Murphy  
Mrs R Whalley  
Mr J Halsall  
Mrs V Barber  
Dr M & Mrs W Ingram



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## Give the Gift of Wildlife

For an inspirational gift with a difference, how about Manx Wildlife Trust membership?

Your lucky recipient, as well as being a voice for nature and helping to protect Manx wildlife for the future, will receive:

- wildlife news in our colourful members' magazine
- access to nature themed events and talks around the Island
- inspiration to get out and about on our nature reserves
- 5% discount in our wildlife gift shop in Peel

Sign up online using the code **MemberGift** or fill in the form on the back and return to MWT Headquarters.



**Editor and Designer**  
Graham Makepeace-Warne

**Cover Photo:**  
Graham Makepeace-Warne

Manx Nature is produced for the Members and Supporters of Manx Wildlife Trust. The views expressed here

are not necessarily those of MWT. Finished reading this issue? Why not pass it on to a friend?



## MWT Gift Membership Form

**Step 1** - Who is the membership for and how much would you like to give?

Category	Minimum
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (1 adult) (annually)	£30
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint (2 adults) (annually)	£40
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (Includes 2 adults and up to 4 children under 16. Each family membership includes one membership pack and one Watch membership pack and season pass - please order below if you would like one pack and season pass per child.) (annually)	£48
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Watch (Includes up to 4 children. Each Watch membership includes one membership pack and one copy of the Wildlife Watch magazine. Please get in touch if you would like one pack per child.) (annually)	£20

**Step 2** - Please choose your preferred method of payment

Payment by cheque, payable to Manx Wildlife Trust, of

Payment in cash of

If you would prefer to pay by card or PayPal, please use our online membership form.

**Step 3** - Your details

Your Name:

Your Membership No.

**Step 4** - New member details

Title:

Name(s):

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Email:

Children's Names & Age:  Age

Age:

Age:

Age:

Send the welcome pack and membership card to:

me to give to the recipient  the recipient on my behalf\*

\*Write this message in the welcome pack on my behalf:

## New Team Member

Manx Wildlife Trust would like to introduce our new communication coordinator, Rachael Harrop, who joined our team in March of this year. Rachael has just completed her Environmental Science degree through the Open University and has a background in the farming and equine communities. She currently shepherds a flock of rare breed Teeswater sheep, for their wool, and the UK native Shropshire sheep as conservation grazers at Patrick Community Orchard.



Rachael will be overseeing the social media pages for the MWT, so you will hear more from her if you follow us there!

## Cornwall Connection

We've known for a while now that seals can travel large distances in search of food

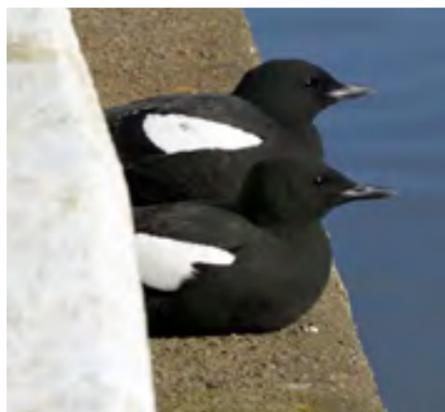


## Local News

but until last year we didn't realise how far. One of our seals, number 079, from the Calf of Man was identified by Sue Sayer from the Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust. Known to them as Tulip Belle, she has been travelling between Cornwall and the Calf for some time now and has given birth on the Calf several times over the years. This just goes to show the importance of collaborative working and the importance of monitoring, albeit not very glamorous. Thanks must go to Sue at the Cornwall Seal Group for taking the time to compare our photos with theirs.

## Marina Living

We will shortly be trialling black guillemot nest tubes in Peel Marina as part of our ecological input to the Department of Infrastructure dredging project. They will be up in time for this year's nesting season but it may be 2021 before they take to them, as nest holes have likely already been decided upon. Consultant Ecologist Adam Denard - who is leading our involvement - says "It's an experiment really to see if the nest tubes



## Stay connected. Follow us

manxwt @manxwildlifetrust @manxnature [www.manxwt.org.uk](http://www.manxwt.org.uk)

can be adopted by other schemes on island where black guillemots are a consideration. It also gives the Peel marina population some additional nesting options if the holes in the harbour wall are affected in any way."

## Triathlon Team

Sarah, Lara and Charlotte, from the team here at Manx Wildlife Trust, are participating in the Microgaming Triathlon on 10th May, in Ramsey, to raise money for our hedgehog project.

We know hedgehog numbers have declined in the UK in the last decade. However, less is known about the Manx hedgehog

population, so we are undertaking a citizen science study to collect some baseline data on their number and distribution.

Your donations will help buy the materials we need to run the project and help support our hedgehogs.

Sarah is doing the swim, Lara is doing the cycle and Charlotte is doing the run.

If anyone would like to sponsor our wonderful ladies, there is a Just Giving Page: [justgiving.com/fundraising/lara-howe2](http://justgiving.com/fundraising/lara-howe2)

or donations can be made in the MWT gift shop in Peel.

We wish them the best of luck!



# 200 Club

## Winners of the Winter 2019 draws:

October 2019	1st Prize Miss G Lockett (33) £35.94 2nd Prize Mr G Woods (34) £23.96 3rd Prize Mrs J Clucas (46) £11.98
November 2019	1st Prize Mr C Clucas (60) £35.94 2nd Prize Mrs D Jacobs (32) £23.96 3rd Prize Mrs S Davidson (12) £11.98
December 2019	1st Prize Mr J C Crellin (57) £36.46 2nd Prize Mrs H Hyde (21) £24.31 3rd Prize Mr M Kelly (61) £12.15

JOIN NOW: Please fill in the whole form using a pen and send it to 200 Club, Manx Wildlife Trust, 7-8 Market Place, Peel, IM5 1AB

Title  Name

Address

Postcode  Telephone

Email

Manx Wildlife Trust Membership No

I wish to apply for  membership(s) of the 200 Club and either enclose a cheque for £  Payable to Manx Wildlife Trust or enclose a completed Direct Debit form for £  payable annually. (Please delete as appropriate. Each membership is £25).

Signed  Date

Manx Wildlife Trust will never give your details to anybody else. We may like to contact you occasionally by post, telephone or email.

I am happy to be contacted by Manx Wildlife Trust about conservation, membership, fundraising and other activities by:

Post  Email  Telephone

This does not affect your regular mailings or any contact necessary for effective administration of your membership or the 200 Club.

**The 200 Club is a prize draw designed to help raise funds for our conservation work. Winners are individually notified and sent cheques by post. Members can join at any time, the more subscribers we have, the bigger the prizes!**

January 2020	1st Prize Mrs J Corkish (70) £36.98 2nd Prize Mr B Denley (15) £24.65 3rd Prize Mrs C M Deighan (14) £12.33
February 2020	1st Prize Mrs J Prescott (26) £36.98 2nd Prize Mr I S Burrell (6) £24.65 3rd Prize Ms N Watterson (17) £12.33

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

BACS Number  7 6 8 1 2 0



Name(s) of Account holder(s):

Bank/Building Society Acc No:

Branch sort code:

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society:

To: The Manager  Bank/Building Society Address

Post Code

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society**  
Please pay Manx Wildlife Trust Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Manx Wildlife Trust and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society. Bank and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of accounts.

Signature(s)

Date:

Reference Number:  (for office use)

Please complete and return to:

Graham Makepeace-Warne  
Manx Wildlife Trust  
7-8 Market Place  
Peel, IM5 1AB

Do you have a story to tell? Please contact Graham on 844432 or email [graham@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:graham@manxwt.org.uk) to submit content for Manx Nature.

Registered charity no. 225 IOM Registered Company no. 5297 IOM Full member of the Wildlife Trusts.  
Manx Wildlife Trust is the registered business name of the Manx Nature Conservation Trust

Swifts epitomise British summertime with their screaming flight. But as fewer of these miraculous birds return to our skies each year, Sarah Gibson reveals how we can help them

# The secret lives of SWIFTS



**Sarah Gibson** works for Shropshire Wildlife Trust. She's met swift experts across Europe, raises local awareness of the birds' plight and revels in the aerial skill of these awesome birds.



COMMON SWIFT: ROBIN CHITTENDEN/NATUREPL.COM

Swifts are not the quietest birds. Nor are they given to skulking in the undergrowth. They live their entire lives in the open air, scything past on crescent wings, often making piercing screeches. Yet, like many people, I never used to notice them.

There had been swallows nesting in a barn near my old home in the Welsh borders. I'd see them swooping over the stable door, beaks stuffed with insects for their chicks. Later, I'd watch the fledglings practise flying in the safety of the barn. When I moved to a nearby market town, I missed that closeness... until I discovered swifts.

There was a pair nesting in the eaves of the house next door. They would storm down the narrow gap between the buildings with a rush of wings, and perform a handbrake turn to enter their nest hole. Blink and you'd miss them. Sitting in the garden on fine, still evenings, I watched them gliding through the air, snapping up insects, until the light drained from the sky and the first bats emerged.

#### Life on the wing

Swifts are incredibly aerial birds, living entirely on the wing for years at a time, rarely touching ground for even a moment. They catch all their food in the air: aphids,

flies, spiders, beetles, moths; even dragonflies, whirled into the sky, carried on the wind. Swifts drink and bathe, sleep and even mate on the wing. They fly closer to the sun than any other bird, feeding and resting at altitude.

Swifts spend most of their lives in Africa, but they journey thousands of miles to breed in a vast swathe across the world, from the westernmost fringes of Europe, eastward to China. Around the globe there are estimated to be somewhere between 95 million and 165 million of them sailing across the skies, justifying their English name of 'common swift'.

You may wonder why these well-travelled

birds come to the UK when so many of our summer days are rain-soaked, making it difficult, you might think, to catch the insects they need to feed their young. The answer must be that, apart from the occasional particularly bad year, it works for them – and has done for millions of years. In fact, our northern summers have a great advantage for swifts – long daylight hours, which allow them to forage for 16 hours a day at the season's peak.

Swifts have several unusual adaptations that enable them to cope with our bad weather. The eggs and chicks of most small birds are vulnerable to chilling, so extended feeding forays by the parent

birds during incubation and brooding can cause the nest to fail. Swift embryos, by contrast, are resistant to cooling, except at the start of incubation. Chicks can become torpid (a state of lowered metabolism) to conserve energy, enabling the parent birds to feed elsewhere, until the weather improves. Once they are a few weeks old and have fat reserves, swift chicks can survive several days without nourishment, greatly enhancing their chances of fledging in variable weather conditions.

Swifts make their nests in crevices in walls, under roof eaves or inside pantiles

(S-shaped roof tiles). Gathering materials takes time – all the feathers, wisps of grass, tree seeds and flower sepals must be found on the wing, blowing about in the air. Inevitably, scraps of plastic are now often found woven into the nest, a shallow dish glued together with saliva.

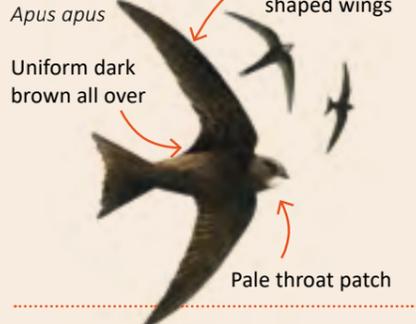
Finding a nest hole is the most crucial thing a swift has to do. Most individuals do not breed until their fourth year, but the young birds still make the migration journey and start looking for a safe, dark hole. Once they have found one, the young birds pair up and start to bring in feathers and other nest materials.



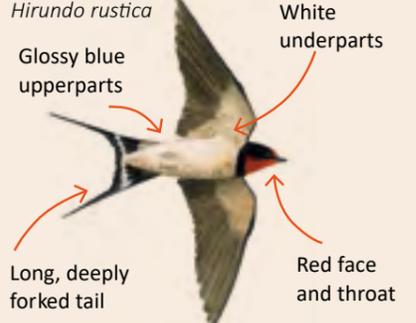
## How to distinguish swifts

Swifts are not hirundines (the family of birds that includes swallows and martins), but they have a similar appearance and lifestyle, so are often confused with them

### Common swift *Apus apus*



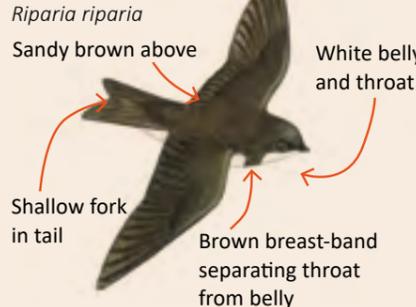
### Swallow *Hirundo rustica*



### House martin *Delichon urbicum*



### Sand martin *Riparia riparia*



Swifts like high, deep crevices to nest, but as many old buildings have been lost and roof spaces filled, their numbers have declined



The apparent joie de vivre of young swifts is breathtaking. You hear them before you see them, screeching over the rooftops in gangs of seven or eight, racing circuits around buildings. As the poet Ted Hughes put it:

Their lunatic, limber scrambling frenzy  
And their whirling blades  
Sparkle out into blue  
Hughes also wrote the much-quoted lines about the swifts' return:

They've made it again,  
Which means the globe's still working,  
The Creation's  
Still waking refreshed, our summer's  
Still all to come  
This anxiety about whether or not 'our' swifts will return each May is something most swift-watchers can relate to, but concerns have escalated since Ted Hughes's poem was published over 40 years ago, with a massive and alarming 57% decline in numbers in the UK recorded between 1995 and 2017.

For thousands of years, swifts have lived alongside us,

As traditional nest sites become scarce, you can help by fitting a wooden nest box to your home

because the homes and other buildings we constructed for ourselves have also suited them. Today though, we make it much harder for these birds to survive. Fewer insects is likely to be a factor – many other insectivorous birds are also in decline – but swifts are also up against a catastrophic loss of nesting cavities. Renovation of old buildings almost always results in access to their holes being

## Renovation of old buildings almost always results in access to swift nest holes being blocked



blocked, while new housing tends to be sealed completely against nature. Modern building materials, such as plastic soffits (part of the eaves), offer little potential for future weathering and gaps opening up. We need to accommodate nesting swifts – and urgently.

### Meet the swift champions

Thankfully, an inspirational movement of swift champions is coming to the rescue across the UK. Around 90 small groups are taking action locally. They run surveys to find swift breeding sites, work to prevent nesting holes from being blocked, install nestboxes, share information and help raise awareness through walks and talks – all with the support of their communities.

Several of these groups work with their regional Wildlife Trusts, which are perfectly positioned to assist grassroots action, such as nestbox schemes in church belfries and public buildings. The Wildlife Trusts also advocate the use of swift nest bricks – and nature-friendly green spaces – in new housing developments. Several Trusts are campaigning directly with local authorities and working with planners to get the installation of swift nesting bricks (a brick with a hole behind which a nest box is fixed)

written into local planning policy and building conditions.

North Wales Wildlife Trust is particularly active on behalf of swifts. Ben Stammers, the Trust's people and wildlife officer, is passionate about the birds and, since 2014, has raised funds to install more than 300 nestboxes on schools, houses, university buildings, a community pub, a doctor's surgery, a theatre and a chapel in the area. More than 60 people have been trained as surveyors and, so far, 500 swift records have been submitted to their database. Dozens of talks, walks and other events have engaged more than 1,000 local people.

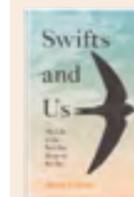
Ben sums up what it means to him: "Seeing joy in people's faces when they watch swifts on their own patch is so uplifting. I hope swifts can become an inspiration for how we can share our living space with wildlife, to the benefit of us all. If we can't find ways to help a species as fascinating and charismatic as the swift – and one so dependent on us – what hope is there?" I feel sure that's a sentiment we can all agree with. ☺

Swifts migrate between the UK and their wintering grounds south of the Sahara. They are the UK's fastest birds in level flight, reaching speeds of up to 69.3 mph

## GET INVOLVED

### Five ways to help swifts

- 1 Ensure nesting holes are kept open when carrying out roof renovations or insulation
- 2 Put up a swift box on your house. Make sure it's at least five metres high
- 3 Stop using garden chemicals to support a healthy insect population
- 4 Keep records of swifts entering holes in buildings and tell your local record centre
- 5 Find out more about swifts and how you can help protect them at [wildlifetrusts.org/swifts](http://wildlifetrusts.org/swifts)



**Swifts & Us: The life of the bird that sleeps in the sky** by Shropshire Wildlife Trust's Sarah Gibson will be published by William Collins this spring.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHRIS SHIELDS; SWIFT AT EAVES: NICK UPTON; NEST BOX: NICK UPTON; SWIFTS IN FLIGHT: GRAHAM CATLEY

# Nature Based SOLUTIONS

BY JOANNA RICHARDS

We face a climate emergency. Extreme weather events are on the increase and the impacts of a warming climate are becoming evident on our beloved wildlife, with some UK species being pushed to the furthest limits of their natural ranges. To tackle a crisis of this scale, it is imperative every tool in the box is used, and this includes the natural solutions offered by our planet. Over half of all carbon emissions released into the atmosphere by humans are re-absorbed by the Earth's natural systems. And yet, many of these systems are broken, the habitats providing them damaged and degraded. Restoring these systems would allow even more carbon to be absorbed – and The Wildlife Trusts are playing a leading role in helping this happen.

At sea, the Trusts fought for the Marine Act 2009: properly implemented it restores our most important carbon absorber and the wildlife that lives within it, including kelp and phytoplankton. On land, 9% of the UK's surface is a huge carbon store with carbon locked up in wet peat. Carbon is also stored in organic rich soils, especially those under grasslands and woodlands. For decades, The Wildlife Trusts have pioneered peatland restoration and sustainably managed woodlands and grassland meadows. This work continues, thanks to our supporters, helping in the fight against climate change.

## Saltmarsh

Like peatlands and grasslands, intertidal saltmarsh provides an important carbon store in its soils. Saltmarshes also act as a buffer against coastal erosion – although this and rising sea levels is leading to the loss of this habitat, with only 15% of its historic range remaining.

## Woodland

As they grow, trees absorb carbon from the atmosphere, storing it in their trunk, boughs and roots and as organic matter in woodland soils. So, new woodland creation – through natural regeneration for example – helps to combat climate change.

## Peatland

Peatlands cover just 3% of the earth's surface, but store more carbon than any other habitat on land (more than twice the carbon of all the world's forests put together). But when damaged, as in the UK, they release carbon, contributing to climate change – so restoration is essential.

## Seagrass meadows

These aquatic flowering plants are responsible for around 10% of all carbon buried in the ocean, despite covering less than 0.2% of the ocean floor. They store carbon 35 times faster than rainforests, but estimates suggest that globally we are losing an area of seagrass the size of two football pitches every hour.

## Grassland

Healthy grassland soaks up and stores carbon in its roots and the soil. Grasslands that are undisturbed by arable agriculture and protected from soil erosion through sustainable management are important stores. Yet in the UK, we've lost 97% of our semi-natural grassland and they continue to be at risk.

## Urban

Urban greenspaces help make cities better in a world that's getting hotter. Young street trees take up carbon dioxide and urban woodlands help control the local climate by providing shade and reducing the street temperature. Pleasant greenspaces can also encourage people to walk and cycle rather than jump in a car!

## Seaweed and kelp forests

Kelp grows incredibly quickly, sucking up carbon as it does. These underwater forests provide critical short-term carbon stores. When they die, bits of kelp sink into the deep sea, where they remain for a long time.

## Marine sediments

Phytoplankton – miniscule marine algae – absorb carbon as they grow. When they die, some of the carbon they've taken up sinks to the ocean floor, where it can remain for thousands of years.

# Calf of Man Bird Observatory

## 2019 Season Report

Bird Warden Aron Sapsford

The season began somewhat belatedly when myself, Dan Woollard (Estate Warden), Di Swayne and Mike Haigh arrived at South Harbour on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> March. An earlier attempt to get to the Calf had been thwarted by Storm Gareth which persisted for the days!

Spring migration was already underway with a number of Goldcrest around the Observatory when we arrived and two Sand Martin flew through on the 19<sup>th</sup> - the earliest date for eight years. Wheatears began arriving from 21<sup>st</sup> and single Swallows were seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> March. All Tit species are relatively unusual on the Calf, however we appear to receive a small annual spring passage of Great Tit during March and this year was no exception. Coal Tit are generally less regular and a single present from 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> March was just the 13<sup>th</sup> record for the month. The bird also exhibited characteristics of the Irish subspecies *P. a. hibernicus* which has only been recorded on the Calf once before, in October 1993.



Coal Tit

A few more migrants arrived towards the end of the month with the first Willow Warbler and Blackcap on the 28<sup>th</sup> and a Yellowhammer trapped on the 30<sup>th</sup> was an unusual capture, being just the 16<sup>th</sup> ever ringed here. Since 2012, a programme of Longtail eradication and monitoring has

been undertaken on the Calf and one of the first jobs of the new season was to activate a contingency grid around the Observatory, after the presence of an individual had been detected near the Observatory compost heap during the winter. A considerable amount of time and effort was also employed in checking and renewing many of the non-toxic bait stations and marker canes, many of which had become damaged or lost due to winter weather.

Constant monitoring of these bait points is a key element in ensuring that Longtail re-infestation of the island is avoided and we were particularly helped during this season by the appointment of Di Swayne as our Volunteer Assistant Warden. Di's tireless enthusiasm and energy in ensuring that the hundreds of sites were visited and checked each month, often in challenging and poor weather conditions, is greatly appreciated. It is pleasing to report that no signs of any Longtails were found during the bait point monitoring, although a second individual for the season was recorded on camera trap footage at the Observatory compost in August, but as with the first sighting the animal was quickly removed.

April began with a fine Ring Ousel around the Observatory on 1<sup>st</sup>, although in general other migrants were few and far between. The first Manx Shearwaters were seen ashore on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the start of a light spring passage of White Wagtails was seen from the 6<sup>th</sup>. The first 'fall' of Willow Warblers on the 7<sup>th</sup> included at least three *P. t. acredula* types and other new migrants included a House Martin and Tree Sparrow on the 8<sup>th</sup> - the latter being relatively unusual as a spring bird on the Calf.

The 9<sup>th</sup> of April marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Bird Observatory on the Calf. Back in 1959, Einar Brun and his wife, Dido, crossed to the Calf and began recording the birds that breed here and move through on migration. There have been 25 different Bird Wardens during the past 60 years, jointly adding at least 60 species to the Manx Bird List. In the absence of any more formal celebrations a cake was cut and a toast to the next 60 years was made.



60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Moderate to strong easterly winds during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the month looked promising but only a handful of spring migrants were blown in, with our only Black Redstart of the year on the 10<sup>th</sup> being the highlight. Calmer conditions on the 17<sup>th</sup> released a rush of migrants and included the first Whitethroat of the year and our earliest ever Reed Warbler, beating the previous record by an astonishing 10 days. Good numbers of Willow Warblers arrived over the next few days, along with our first Grasshopper Warbler (on the 18<sup>th</sup>) of the spring and a Long-eared Owl that roosted in the back garden of the Observatory during the 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>. The theme of early migrant arrivals continued with a male Whinchat trapped in the Front Field on 25<sup>th</sup>, the earliest arrival date for 10 years.

Volunteers play a vital part in ensuring that we are able to achieve many of the habitat management and building maintenance tasks on the Calf, as well as providing valuable support in assisting with environmental surveys. The long-term dry stone walling project continued with Dave Fisher and Pat Griffiths maintaining their long-standing service and completing sections of repair work along the front wall and back field in April, as well as starting a new section at the Twin Fields during June. Paul Corrin continues to provide sterling assistance turning his hand to the many different projects and tasks that are found to be needed both indoors and outdoors.

**Maintenance:** There were many jobs to complete to give the place a spruce-up prior to the 'guest' season starting. Water ingress through the porch roof continues to be an issue despite a renewed bitumen roof but some remedial works and re-painting with damp-proof paint seems to have made a significant difference. Dampness is a

continual problem in such an old building with thick stone walls and repainting the walls and floors is an annual task, once spring is here and things have dried out a little.

The wood stoves also play an important role in drying things out and during the summer the stove in the Warden's lounge was replaced for a much more efficient system. In fact a little too efficient and it was necessary to keep the door to the common room open for the remainder of the season and allow some of the heat to disperse to other parts of the building!

Coppicing of the Willow scrub at the Withies, which was started in autumn 2018, was continued with the main Withy and area to the north of the millpond thinned and reduced significantly in height. Work to enlarge the water-surface area of the millpond was on-going throughout the year; with teams from Hansard International and the Civil Defence clearing silt and vegetation during the early spring, removal of spore-heads of the invasive Horsetail during the summer and clearing of vegetation and raising water levels in autumn.

May got off to an excellent start with a large arrival of more common migrants on the 1<sup>st</sup>, which included a number of new species for the year with Cuckoo, Swift, Garden Warbler, Tree Pipit and Spotted Flycatcher, as well as less commonly recorded Marsh Harrier and 'flava' Wagtail. A Canada Goose flushed from the Millpond on the 4<sup>th</sup> was an unexpected record, as were two Little Egret that flew south past the Burroo on the 6<sup>th</sup>. A Short-eared Owl found in the Glen on the 9<sup>th</sup> remained until the 10<sup>th</sup>, when it put on a good show for passengers from the MV Ocean Adventurer during their guided tours of the Calf. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running that this cruise ship, which specialises in nature-based tours, has visited the Island and spent time exploring the Calf.

A good series of four Lesser Whitethroat records began on the 11<sup>th</sup>, whilst a Wood Warbler on the 12<sup>th</sup> was the first spring record since 2011. Bird of the month was a Nightingale (19<sup>th</sup> Calf record) trapped at the Observatory on the morning of the

17<sup>th</sup> and was the forerunner to an excellent second half of the month which produced another Wood Warbler (18<sup>th</sup>), Subalpine Warbler (20<sup>th</sup>), a 'tristis' Chiffchaff & Melodious Warbler (21<sup>st</sup>), 23 Sanderling (7<sup>th</sup> Calf record) & Pied Flycatcher (22<sup>nd</sup>), Stock Dove (23<sup>rd</sup>) and a second Subalpine Warbler (23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>).

It is pleasing to also welcome back volunteers from previous years, with Mike Haigh, Stephen Vickers, Dave Neal, Peter Norrie, Oscar Adedeji, Richard & Gill Watts, Mark Fitzpatrick and Ed O'Connor all returning to assist with bird-related monitoring, as well as welcoming new volunteers Garry & Candice Barker, Andrew (Pedro) Roberts, Miriam Lord, Ian Beggs, David Wilkinson and Frank Street.

It is often the case that early June can be the harbinger of something 'rare' and in recent years we have managed a run of spring Red-breasted Flycatchers. Not to be out-done, this year's bird turned up on the 6<sup>th</sup>, taking this run of spring records to four consecutive years and six individuals in total.

Our attentions turned more towards the breeding birds of the Calf, with the growing Eider populations season already well under way and many of the seabirds having one of their most successful years in the past decade. Since Eiders first bred on the Calf in 1992 the species has become well established, with perhaps as many as 70 pairs breeding annually. Efforts to locate nests led to 38 nests being monitored and the recapture of females at nest show a high level of site fidelity from year to year, with 20 previous year re-traps caught in 2019, including birds from as far back as 2009 & 2011. However very little is known about the origins of these birds or where they go once they leave the Calf after the breeding season. Seventeen 'new' Eiders were ringed including the first ever two males during early May.

Seabirds in general had a good year for productivity, although the long-term decline in Shag breeding numbers continue with a further 20% decline to just 65 pairs. Razorbill and Guillemot numbers

appear to be remaining fairly stable, whilst the establishment of a small Black Guillemot colony below the lighthouses is encouraging. Puffin numbers remain very low and although a couple of pairs were seen in suitable areas, windy weather during the summer made boat surveys impossible. All three 'large' gulls had their best breeding season for almost a decade, with productivity being considerably higher than in recent years. As a result it was possible to add 305 Herring Gull, 53 Great Black-backed Gull and 15 Lesser Black-backed Gull to our long-term colour-ringing study.

Following on from last year's failure of any raptors to breed, it is pleasing to report that two pairs of Peregrine bred successfully; each raising at least one young - the first time two pairs have bred on the Calf in a single year. Passerines also seemed to have a largely successful breeding season, in particular Stonechat and Wheatear young were particularly numerous during the late summer.

Autumn passage began early with the first dispersing young Grey Wagtail recorded from 19<sup>th</sup> June and an adult Green Sandpiper put in an appearance on the millpond on the 24<sup>th</sup> - the first ever record for the species in June. The 3<sup>rd</sup> breeding record of Willow Warbler was confirmed the following day, when a newly-fledged juvenile was trapped. For the third consecutive year, a Redstart was trapped during the last few days of June. This time a 2<sup>nd</sup> year male, following a female (with brood patch) in June 2018 and a recently-fledged juvenile in 2017.

July continued the early movement theme with a number of juvenile Blackcaps moving through, along with Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Goldcrest recorded in the first week and followed by Sedge Warbler on the 15<sup>th</sup> when an adult female Whinchat was unexpectedly trapped in the Glen. A second Green Sandpiper was on the millpond on 25<sup>th</sup> and the beginnings of a mass influx of Painted Lady butterflies was noted on 30<sup>th</sup> when 238 were counted, increasing to a record count of 850 the following day. →



MV Ocean Adventurer

2019 was an excellent year for **Moth** recording on the Calf with 211 species of moth, consisting of 128 macro and 83 micro species recorded. Eleven new species were added to the Calf list, with seven of these occurring during the month of July alone.

**August** started positively with small numbers of warblers continuing to move through and included the only Wood Warbler of the autumn on the 2nd. Fourteen House Sparrow on the 3rd continued an above average showing for the species and Tree Pipit on the 8th was the start of their autumn passage. The 19th produced four new species for the year, with six Knot, two Arctic Tern, a pale-phase Arctic Skua and Common Gull, along with a southerly movement of 1600 Manx Shearwater.

Of course it's not all about the birds. An immature male **Migrant Hawker dragonfly** recorded on the 26th continued the recent trend of this species being relatively commonly seen throughout autumn and confirmed that the species is now breeding on the Calf.



Migrant Hawker dragonfly

**Seawatching** continued to provide the main focus during the first half of September and with Ed O'Connor returning to keep vigil from Culbery, we were treated to a good range of species and numbers including Great Northern Diver, 14 Leach's Petrel, a juvenile Sabine's Gull and 12 Great Skua on 4th and two Leach's Petrel, Grey Phalarope and Pomarine Skua on 6th. Lighter winds on the 7th brought a more significant passerine movement with 47 Tree Sparrow, 96 'Alba' Wagtails, 10 Tree Pipit and a Reed Warbler, increasing with 130 Goldcrest, 25 Blackcap, 72 Robin, 65 White Wagtail and 808 Meadow Pipit on the 8th, when an adult Hobby was found near the Twin Fields and remained to the 10th.

A quick switch back to the sea produced further Pomarine Skuas on the 9th & 11th and a Black-throated Diver on the 12th whilst Meadow Pipit passage peaked at 1,282 on the 16th and a Wryneck was seen briefly near Cow Harbour on the 17th, when

a record count of seven Buzzard was also made.

The first signs of an unprecedented movement of **Pink-footed Geese** were flocks of 22 & 14 on 29th September followed by 71 & four on 1st October and 11 on the 2nd. These records of five flocks totalling 122 birds eclipsed the previous total of 100 birds recorded from eight sightings in 60 years. Two Brent Geese off South Harbour on 2nd October were new for year and the first since 2016.

The now annual arrival of **Yellow-browed Warbler** began with a single from the 6th-12th, with another individual on the 13th and two new birds on the 14th. Less regular was a Great Crested Grebe seen flying south off Culbery, with Auks, on the 7th being just the 14th Calf record and first since 2005. The eastern theme continued with a 1st year Red-breasted Flycatcher in Mill Giau on the 12th plus a late-ish Reed Warbler at the Withy, a Pied Flycatcher in Mill Giau on the 13th and the only Treecreeper of the year there on the 15th.

A second winter Mediterranean Gull flew south off Culbery on 16th and three Short-eared Owl were around the islet on 19th, when the beginnings of a good autumn thrush passage started, with several counts in excess of 200 Redwing and 300 Blackbird during the latter half of October and into November.

The good passage of **divers** continued with a further Black-throated on the 11th and single Great Northern on the 16th & 26th with at least five birds present on the 27th. Seawatching also provided a 1st winter Little Gull on the 24th and 1,390 Kittiwake, 30 Common Gull and 1,628 'Auks' south off Culbery on the 27th.

**Road Maintenance:** Following some severe rainfall which washed a considerable amount of aggregate off the track down to Cow Harbour, repairs and improvement to the ditching along the track were carried out. The 'old' seawatching hide at Cow Harbour, which was originally built in the 1970s, was taken down and a 'new' three-man hide erected in its place. Particular thanks are due to Mark Fitzpatrick and Ian Beggs for help with the dismantling and laying of the new footings and to Mike Prior who conducted the majority of the re-build.

**Numbers of raptors** present on the islet were noticeably high during the autumn with regular daily counts of up to three Sparrowhawk and four Merlin. This was reflected in the species ringing totals of 10 and 4 respectively. 3 Merlin were females and the biometrics suggest that these birds were of the Icelandic race *F. c. subaesonum*.



Up to 45 Twite were present along the east coast during the first week of November and a Wheatear on Burroo on 8th was the latest ever Calf record by four days.

The strong passage of **Meadow Pipits** during the autumn led to a record species total of 1,235 being ringed and it was rather fitting that, on 6th November, one was the 8,000th bird ringed this year – only the 2nd time in the Observatories 61 year history that this milestone has been passed.

A flock of eight **Long-tailed Tits** arrived during atrocious weather on the 9th and remained to the 10th when they were trapped at the Observatory. One of the birds was a control and subsequently it was discovered that the bird had been ringed near Doncaster in April 2019. The movement of 285 Km is one of the longer distances recorded for the species and perhaps most notable as the first recorded movement between mainland UK and the Isle of Man for the species.

The season ended on 10th November, with a brief weather window providing the opportunity to leave the island before more autumn storms descended.

Many people play a vital role in ensuring everything runs smoothly and we are particularly grateful to the many people that facilitate our programme of work; in particular, the boatmen who bring our supplies each week and during the summer months land day visitors to explore the islet, both MNH and MWT provide a wide range of support and advice and the many volunteers that pass through each season bring a great sense of achievement and enthusiasm to the place. The Calf is a an example of an excellent partnership between MNH and MWT. Those that visit once are often captivated by its uniqueness.

We are currently recruiting for several long-term volunteer positions during the 2020 season. For further information email: [lara@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:lara@manxwt.org.uk)

# Restoring Order

Mires Officer, Sarah Hickey

**U**pland peat habitats have increasingly been the focus of climate change discussions, both in the UK and the Isle of Man. Restoration of the Manx uplands is a key recommendation of the IMPACT report, written by Professor James Curran, to help the Island achieve net-zero carbon by 2050.

So what is meant by 'upland restoration' and why is it important? The term 'restoration' suggests that we try to return an area to its natural habitat type, which thousands of years ago may have been woodland. The deforestation of the Island during the bronze age led to changes in the soil, creating more waterlogged conditions, often unsuitable for re-growth by trees. However, blanket bog vegetation is able to thrive in waterlogged conditions and even creates such conditions – many species of sphagnum moss form hummocks as they grow, raising the water table as they can hold so much water. Blanket bog and other mire habitats must once have covered large areas of the Manx uplands, depositing peat in a 'blanket' across the landscape. Much of this habitat has now been lost, but the peat it laid down is still there in many areas.

The upland habitats that currently dominate our hills are dry heath and acid grassland. These habitats are important for grazing animals and our Island agriculture and they have some value for wildlife but are not great for peat. These habitats are the result of recent land management practices, such as peat cutting, the digging of drainage ditches and grazing, all of which lower the water table and create drier conditions. The current condition of

much of the upland area means that peat is not forming, as it is too dry. Carbon in the peat is actually being lost through erosion, adding to our carbon emissions. Reducing erosion and restoring suitable areas back to blanket bog habitat is an aim of the Manx Mires Partnership. Detailed surveys being carried out by MWT will allow decisions to be made about how restoration should be done, as well as providing baseline data to assess the effectiveness of restoration.

Restoration methods may include blocking drainage ditches, re-profiling peat hags and reducing grazing levels. These techniques can help to reduce the amount of peat, and carbon lost to erosion. They can also create suitable conditions to improve the condition, and allow the spread, of existing blanket bog habitat. This could help contribute towards the Island to achieving net-zero emissions, as blanket bog vegetation traps carbon from the atmosphere and stores it long-term as peat.

It is clear that conserving the peat and increasing blanket bog habitat is important in terms of climate change, but it is also important in protecting upland biodiversity. Blanket bog is an acidic, low nutrient habitat, which supports specialist plant species such as the insectivorous sundews and butterworts. Invertebrates such as dragonflies, spiders and crane flies thrive in the wet bog habitat and provide food for breeding birds. A mosaic of upland peat habitats, including dry and wet heath, acid grassland and blanket bog, would benefit biodiversity and provide a home for protected species such as hen harrier and common lizard, as well as the iconic mountain hare. MWT is leading on the survey work to assess the quantity of upland peat, working closely with DEFA and increasingly with farmers and land owners

Upland restoration, both on the Isle of Man and in the UK, is a process which will take time but will have immense benefits for biodiversity and the climate of our planet.



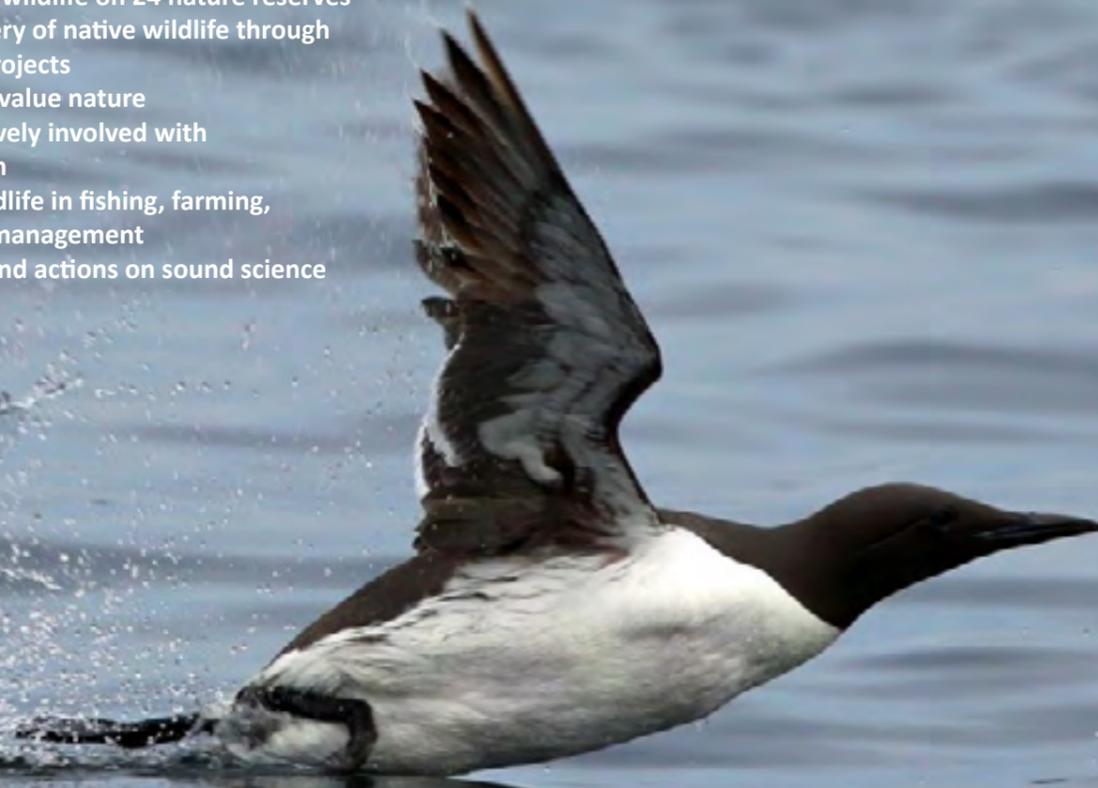


# Are you enjoying this magazine?

## About Manx Wildlife Trust

MWT was founded in 1973 and is the Isle of Man's leading nature conservation charity. Its members, staff and volunteers support MWT to protect Manx wildlife by:

- Providing space for wildlife on 24 nature reserves
- Enabling the recovery of native wildlife through our conservation projects
- Inspiring people to value nature
- Getting people actively involved with nature conservation
- Standing up for wildlife in fishing, farming, planning and land management
- Basing our advice and actions on sound science



To Join complete the form opposite or you can visit [www.manxwt.org.uk/membership](http://www.manxwt.org.uk/membership)

Join us and help to protect Manx Wildlife for the future

## Member Benefits

As a member of Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) you will receive:

- *Manx Nature* magazine twice a year
- Regular e-newsletters to update you on the work you're helping to make possible
- Access to MWT, and other Wildlife Trusts', Nature Reserves throughout the UK
- Membership card which entitles you to 5% discount in our Peel Gift Shop
- Exclusive MWT pin badge and car sticker



## And for our Junior Members

Our younger Wildlife Watch members receive a range of benefits to encourage the next generation of Island conservationists:

- Cool *Wildlife Watch* Badge and Membership Card
- *Wildlife Watch* magazine twice a year, packed with interesting facts, nature spotting tips, competitions and fun games to play
- *Wildlife* Poster, Stickers and *Wildlife Watch* Handbook
- Free *Summer Season Pass* for our wild events including rock pooling, bat walks, den building and much more
- Access to the exciting *Wildlife Watch* website with games, 'wildlife spots' upload area, and videos and much more!

## More ways to get involved

### Volunteer with us

Help out in the shop, our offices, at the visitor centres or with our popular Midweek Muckers on the reserves.

### Fundraise

You can help raise funds for us in so many ways! Our supporters have raised funds by organising raffles, holding a cake sale, taking part in a sponsored event or simply donating at [www.manxwt.org.uk/donate](http://www.manxwt.org.uk/donate)

### Leave a legacy

By leaving a gift to us in your will, you can help us to protect our Island's natural heritage and ensure that it flourishes for future generations to enjoy.

## YES, I'LL JOIN MANX WILDLIFE TRUST TODAY!

### Type of membership (minimum donation)

- Adult per month (or £30 per year)  
  Joint Adult (£4 per month or £40 per year)  
  Family (£4.50 per month or £48 per year)  
  Wildlife Watch only (£2 per month or £20 per year)

### I would like to give (please consider donating more)

£ \_\_\_\_\_ a month (Direct Debit only) or £ \_\_\_\_\_ a year

### Your details

Title  First Name   
 Surname   
 Address   
  
 Postcode   
 Tel. No.   
 Email

### Your partner's name (if joint or family)

Title  First Name   
 Surname

### Your children's details

(16 yrs and under for family membership)

First Name	Surname	Age
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) will never sell or pass your details to anybody else. We would like to contact you from time to time by post, telephone or email.

I am happy to be contacted by MWT about conservation, membership, fundraising and other activities by (please tick all that apply):

- Post  
  Email  
  Telephone

This does not affect your regular membership mailings or any contact necessary for effective administration of your membership.

Tell me more about volunteering opportunities with MWT (please tick).



### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the whole form and send it to:  
Manx Wildlife Trust, 7-8 Market Place, Peel, Isle of Man, IM5 1AB

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society:

To: The Manager  
 Address:

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account number

BACS number

Reference number (to be completed by Manx Wildlife Trust)

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society**  
Please pay Manx Wildlife Trust Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Manx Wildlife Trust and, if so, details will be passed to my Bank/Building Society.

Amount  Monthly/Annually (Delete as appropriate)

Signature(s)

Date (DD/MM/YYYY) / /

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

1 - 30 June

**Are you ready for #30DaysWild?**

wildlifetrusts.org/30dayswild

MANX wildlife TRUST

#30DaysWild

Can you do something wild every day for 30 days?  
Nature needs us more than ever... so take the challenge and share your love of wildlife this June.

# Big Reserves

## An update from Reserves Officer, Tricia Sayle

©Tricia Sayle

The weather over the latter part of 2019 and into 2020 has certainly presented some challenges. I have never encountered so much water lying across our meadow sites as now. Despite this, we've had a tremendous turnout of volunteers when we have managed to find a break between "showers".

The usual winter work involving plenty of muddy ditches has been broken up by some major projects at Ballachrink and Goshen. The felling of more conifers at Ballachrink has coincided with the replacement of another section of fence, part of a rolling programme of improving the boundaries of the meadows.

Goshen, at 42 acres, is our largest meadow reserve, secured over three occasions starting in 1995. The last part, acquired in 2008, has not been grazed by sheep for many years, but it is now felt that by constructing a stock proof fence it increases the management options and will enable controlled grazing to take place.

Over the last two summers a band of local naturalists have been out and about on our reserves studying invertebrates, fungi and bats. Some interesting results and new records for the Island have come forth. Surveying will resume soon, this year expanding the search to some different sites.

A big thank you to all those who have helped on the reserves so far this year in whatever capacity.

If you would like to join the Muckers or help with gathering biological data on the reserves, then please contact our Volunteering Officer by email at [sarah@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:sarah@manxwt.org.uk) or call 844 432

# Donate to Support Our Nature Reserves



**Please donate now to enable our vital conservation work on nature reserves to continue**

Nature reserves are places where wildlife is protected and undisturbed. Areas like these are so important, particularly in the face of climate change and increasing development.

**We urgently need more money to continue this work.**

I would like to donate (please tick)\*

- £10 - provides a pair of heavy-duty work gloves
- £20 - provides 13 fence posts for essential repairs on fencing
- £50 - one year's supply of milk for volunteers during practical tasks
- £75 - one month's fuel for the reserves truck
- £100 - Two 50m rolls of pigwire vital for making meadow reserves stockproof
- Other

*\*Please make cheques payable to Manx Wildlife Trust*

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

**Please return this form to:**

**Manx Wildlife Trust**  
7-8 Market Place  
Peel, IM5 1AB  
Isle of Man

## Celebrating Our Volunteers



MWT are re-launching our awards scheme to recognise excellence in our volunteers. All our MWT volunteers, and what they do for our wildlife, are fantastic and are extremely important to us and what we do for wildlife. Through these awards we aim to recognise and celebrate volunteers who have delivered something of particular note for Manx Wildlife. This could be over a sustained period of time, or a specific act. We are asking you our members, volunteers and staff to nominate such individuals (or perhaps specific groups of our volunteers) who you believe are worthy of such an award. If you would like to make a nomination all you need to do is send the name(s) of the person/group you are nominating, plus a few lines stating why they deserve such an award. Please send this to Graham Makepeace-Warne, our Marketing & Membership Manager, at our Peel Office or email [graham@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:graham@manxwt.org.uk) by 29<sup>th</sup> May.

A panel will review the nominations and decide the recipients. These will then be presented at our AGM (NB: all those chosen for an award will be contacted by MWT to ensure they would like to receive it, before any announcement is made).



**1. Why did you want to be CEO of Manx Wildlife Trust?**

I was looking for a leadership role with a remit that I care passionately about, working with motivated people in a wonderful place. I believe this role with MWT offers all this, plus the opportunity to help the IoM truly deliver a model of island sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

As I've become older, I have become increasingly motivated by nature conservation and this role gives me the opportunity to become part of the Wildlife Trust movement, which is a key federation and a logical next step for me.

**2. What attracted you to the Isle of Man?**

I've just had a fantastic two years on the tiny sub-tropical island of St Helena immediately prior to joining MWT and through both work and travel I have visited a number of islands around the world. I very much enjoy island life and being close to the sea, and so moving to another island with its own unique culture and spectacular natural habitat was an attractive prospect. I had visited the IoM a couple of times previously, liked it greatly and to some

extent knew what I was coming to.

**3. What is your goal for Manx Wildlife Trust?**

MWT are already the largest conservation NGO in the Isle of Man, with a remit that spans all our biodiversity, from birds to basking sharks, from bats to butterflies, and from orchids to porpoises. My aim is that we absolutely deliver on the agenda for net biodiversity gain for the Island by working intrinsically with IoM Government, Manx National Heritage and in genuine partnerships with the other conservation organisations.

**4. What was the path you took to get to where you are today?**

My career started over 35 years ago on a Youth Training Scheme on a large tree nursery in North Yorkshire (Johnsons of Whixley), before attending college and university to study horticulture and I subsequently managed a plant nursery for 8 years. I then moved into education, as a lecturer/training officer, then manager at a large land based college, before enjoying 10 wonderful years at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), initially as

their Head of School of Horticulture, then Director responsible for all education and learning. I was also involved in several overseas conservation projects for RBGE in some fascinating places, including a long-term secondment to the Sultanate of Oman. From RBGE I moved to a similar Director role for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, which taught me about the value of zoos and wildlife parks and wider conservation – including beaver reintroductions and Scottish wildcat conservation. I was then the first CEO of the National Land Based College, developing, careers, curriculum and delivery tools for all the c.70 land based colleges across the UK. Then followed two glorious years on St Helena, and now to the Isle of Man!

**5. How do you feel about the Isle of Man as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve?**

I'm excited by our UNESCO Biosphere status and it was certainly a factor in my decision to move to the Isle of Man. It is a great banner to have and I believe it offers us a tremendous opportunity to drive cross-island collaboration to achieve world-leading sustainable island management. I am determined that MWT are overtly

“Proud to Partner” in the Biosphere, we will be championing the status strongly and my aim is for us to be able to work more closely with other partners under the Biosphere banner.

**6. It's great to see you so active on Twitter, is good social media engagement important?**

Communicating effectively with people is crucial in driving engagement and positive behaviour change for conservation. In 2020, social media is a fundamentally important engagement tool for a great many audiences and in my role as the CEO of a charity I don't see a choice. This is something I absolutely must do. My ambition is that MWT build up the network of people engaging with us on social media. Every 'like' and 're-tweet' helps!

**7. Do you feel optimistic about the future?**

Yes, absolutely. I have always been an optimistic person (my mum instilled the power of positive thinking into me at a young age!) There are certainly challenges for our natural world and much for MWT and organisations like us to do to conserve our wonderful natural spaces and amazing

biodiversity. However, we have a fantastic opportunity to do that in the Isle of Man and to really make a big difference.

**8. What do you feel are the biggest challenges and opportunities facing MWT right now?**

Like all charities, money and our financial sustainability is a real challenge now made harder by coronavirus. Many of our members may not know that MWT operate on a significant annual financial deficit. This keeps constant pressure on our team and greatly reduces our potential impact. There is much more we could do for the long-term benefit of nature of the Isle of Man if we had additional funds to purchase more land, employ more staff, develop more projects and engage with more people.

There are some big opportunities that exist right now for MWT. The new environmental plan for the Island (following Professor Curran's report) and the forthcoming Agri-Environment scheme provide big strategic drivers for positive environmental progress and biodiversity net gain. We are the one NGO on the Island with a remit across all our biodiversity, and with our skilled passionate team of staff and

volunteers and our expanding membership base of individuals and organisations, we are extremely well positioned to drive real positive change for our natural environment.

**9. Will you be diving into the new role?**

Ha, ha! I think this was a question from someone who knows of my love of scuba diving. I am certainly planning to do some scuba diving around the Island and have already started my Technical Diver training with Michelle and Steve at 'Discover Diving' in Port St Mary. I'm also looking forward to helping Tony Glen and our own Dr Lara Howe with the Seasearch survey diving.

In respect to 'diving into my role with MWT'... Yes! I bring lots of enthusiasm to my new post and I am certainly trying to meet with many people and organisations, understand the culture of the Island and make some positive connections quickly. I'm also spending quality time with our MWT team, visiting our nature reserves (18 out of 24 to date) and have been to both our visitor centres. It's a wonderful place, remit and organisation, and there's lots of great things to do. I'm looking forward to my years ahead in the Island...



# Island Life

## Leigh Morris, answers questions from our social media followers



Treeplanting at Ohio with volunteers



Diving with a whale shark in St Helena



Looking for Nurdles in Port Erin with Eleanor Cain

## UK NEWS



A bottlenose dolphin leaps clear of the water in the Moray Firth

UK UPDATE

## A big splash for UK seas - our 2019 marine review

Together, the Wildlife Trusts form the UK's largest marine conservation organisation. Our Living Seas teams are the eyes and ears of the UK's coast. Throughout 2019, with the help of over 5,000 volunteers, they did wonderful things for the wildlife in our seas.

Careful monitoring revealed some fantastic good news stories around our shores, from bumper breeding seasons to amazing discoveries.

A new citizen science project logged 320 sightings of cetaceans off Yorkshire's east coast, including minke whales, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. There was good news for seals too, with Cumbria Wildlife Trust counting a site record of 483 grey seals at South Walney, including seven pups. Elsewhere, an individual seal, nicknamed Tulip Belle, was discovered commuting between the Isle of Man and Cornwall.

Lara Howe, Manx Wildlife Trust's marine officer, says: "It shows that seals will swim great distances for food and a place to pup, highlighting the importance of a network of Marine Protected Areas around the UK, so that wherever marine wildlife goes there

are healthy seas to support them."

Our fight to secure this network saw a huge victory last summer, with the designation of 41 new Marine Conservation Zones.

2019 also saw a welcome boost for some of our struggling seabirds. On Handa Island, Scottish Wildlife Trust counted 8,207 razorbills, the highest number since 2006, though the population is sadly still in trouble. In North Wales, Sandwich Terns had a bumper year, with 800 chicks fledging compared to just 180 in 2018.

Sadly, it wasn't all good news. Several Wildlife Trusts reported an increase in disturbance. jet skis, kayakers, boats and drones have all been recorded causing distress to marine wildlife like dolphins, seals and seabirds. Plastics, ocean litter and discarded fishing gear also continue to devastate marine wildlife, though Wildlife Trusts around our shores cleared up huge amounts of litter, including 2.5 tonnes picked up by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust.

All of this was made possible by the fantastic support of all our volunteers and members. For more amazing stories head to [wildlifetrusts.org/marine-review-19](http://wildlifetrusts.org/marine-review-19)

### 2019 IN NUMBERS

■ **Over 5,000 volunteers** supported coastal Wildlife Trusts with beach cleans, surveys and shore-based events.

■ **More than 200 sharks, skates and rays** were tagged as part of Ulster Wildlife's SeaDeep project, helping us monitor these vulnerable animals.

■ **Two giant gobies** were among **1,310 species recorded in just 24 hours** as Devon Wildlife Trust's Wembury Marine Centre celebrated its 25th anniversary.

■ **27 tonnes** of litter and fishing gear collected by fishermen for Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Fishing 4 Litter.

🚧 **Get involved**  
We need to put nature into recovery on land and at sea. Join us on our campaign for a wilder future: [wildlifetrusts.org/wilder-future](http://wildlifetrusts.org/wilder-future)

UK UPDATE

## 100 miles wilder

Space for nature should be at the heart of our planning and farming systems. This is the only way we can create a Nature Recovery Network, enabling wildlife to thrive across the landscape and bringing nature into our daily lives.



But current proposals for developing the land between Oxford and Cambridge do not have nature at their heart. Without proper assessment, government cannot know whether the area could support

the current proposals for housing, road and rail and stay within environmental limits for nature, carbon and water.

Special habitats are under threat, including ancient woodland and grazing marsh, which supports rare and declining wading birds like curlew and redshank.

The Wildlife Trusts have created an alternative vision for this land: 100 miles of wilder landscape in which people can live, work and enjoy nature. By protecting and connecting the wildest places, we can introduce a new way of planning that has nature and people's wellbeing at the centre. Find out more [wildlifetrusts.org/100-miles-wilder](http://wildlifetrusts.org/100-miles-wilder)

## New leader for The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts are delighted to welcome Craig Bennett as their new Chief Executive Officer.

One of the UK's leading environmental campaigners, Craig joins The Wildlife Trusts from Friends of the Earth, where he was Chief Executive.

In a conservation career spanning over 20 years, Craig has led a movement to end peat cutting on important moorlands, helped secure better wildlife legislation through The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and, more recently, led successful campaigns to highlight climate change and

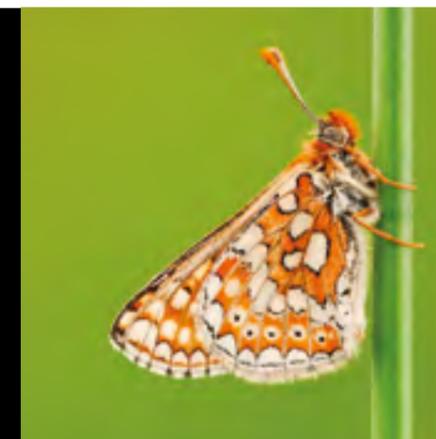


to protect and restore bee populations.

Craig Bennett says: "The Wildlife Trusts are an extraordinary grassroots movement that is uniquely placed to work with local communities to make this happen and ensure a wilder future, and I could not be more pleased to have been asked to lead them at this incredibly important moment." [wildlifetrusts.org/new-leader](http://wildlifetrusts.org/new-leader)

## An insect apocalypse

A new report, *Insect Declines and Why They Matter*, commissioned by an alliance of Wildlife Trusts in the south west, concluded that drastic declines in insect numbers look set to have far-reaching consequences for both wildlife and people. The report concludes: "if insect declines are not halted, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems will collapse, with profound consequences for human wellbeing." [wildlifetrusts.org/urgent-action-insects](http://wildlifetrusts.org/urgent-action-insects)



## UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



### Inspirational youth

1 Over the last year, over 2,800 young people aged 11-25 rolled up their sleeves to help nature thrive in their local area. The Grassroots Challenge project, led by Ulster Wildlife, gave young people the opportunity to unleash their passion, creativity and potential to make a real difference to their environment and community. [ulsterwildlife.org/news/inspirational-youth](http://ulsterwildlife.org/news/inspirational-youth)

### Attenborough appeal

2 Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust launched an appeal to raise £1 million to safeguard Attenborough Nature Reserve, a wild oasis at the edge of Nottingham that's home to large numbers of wildfowl. The appeal was supported by Sir David Attenborough and raised over £900,000 in the first month. [nottinghamshirewildlife.org/lifetimeappeal](http://nottinghamshirewildlife.org/lifetimeappeal)

### Spooky sighting

3 A ghost slug was discovered in the gardens of Devon Wildlife Trust's Cricklepit Mill. The origins of this mysterious species are uncertain, but it's thought to be a native of Ukraine. Since ghost slugs were first discovered in the UK in 2007, there have been a scattering of sightings, mainly from South Wales. It's a predator of earthworms and may cause problems for our native worms if it becomes established.

[devonwildlifetrust.org/news/ghost](http://devonwildlifetrust.org/news/ghost)



# Interesting Insects

Education and Biodiversity Officer,  
Dawn Dickens



© DAWN DICKENS

**W**e have all heard the facts about insect population decline, to quote Dave Goulson's recent report, the abundance of insects may have fallen by 50% or more since 1970. The bulk of animal life on earth is made up by invertebrates, this includes insects, spiders, worms, slugs etc and they are vitally important for our plants with roles such as pollinating, nutrient recycling and even pest control.

The Isle of Man has a rich biodiversity of invertebrates for the size of land mass and this is largely due to the diversity of habitats ranging from rocky coastlines to soft cliffs, woodlands to peat bogs etc. Many of the species have an incredible lifecycle so choosing some to write about was quite a challenge but here is a tour of some of our species.

The beautiful Ruby-tailed Wasp (inset) has a head and thorax of a shiny blue-green colour, and the abdomen is a deep ruby-red. It is one of many species of solitary bee and wasp that can be spotted in a range of habitats from walls to sandy quarries, rocky outcrops to tree trunks. The adult females of the Ruby-tailed Wasp

lay their eggs in the nests of other solitary bees and wasps, especially Mason Bees. When the eggs hatch, they eat the larvae of the Mason Bees and develop - this gives the Ruby-tailed Wasp its other name of 'Cuckoo Wasp'.

The Dark Bush Cricket (pictured) is more commonly found in the south of England but we have a small population on the Island. It's a bit of a mystery why they are here but we suspect our warmer maritime climate helps. They are in two isolated locations on the Island and can often be seen sunbathing on bramble. Typically their bodies are dark brown or green with a lighter patch on top of their thorax and a yellowish underside. The males are very aggressive, defending their territories against intruders. Females are distinctive with their up turned ovipositors with which they lay eggs in late summer in rotting wood or bark crevices; they emerge 18 months later, so odd-year and even-year Dark Bush-Crickets never meet.

The Ash Black Slug is a large species of air-breathing land slug, despite its name it is actually dark grey in colour with a wavy light grey keel (ridge) running along

its back. It prefers ancient oak woodlands with high humidity so our celtic rainforest zones are ideal habitat. This is the largest land slug species in the world growing up to 30cm. It was rediscovered on the Island in 2011 after 100 years of no sightings. Unloved by many, slugs play an important role providing food for all sorts of mammals, birds, earthworms, insects and are a part of the natural balance. They eat decomposing vegetation, dog faeces and even carrion. Upset that balance by removing them and we can do a lot of harm. Thrushes in particular, thrive on them! Here's a strange fact, a Slug's blood is green!

As part of our citizen science projects the Manx Wildlife Trust runs an invertebrate group with the aim to increase identification skills and gather data about Manx species. The group meets every month and everyone is welcome, it's an informal group ranging from experts to beginners. We spend the winter months with microscope and identification sessions then branch out into field work during the warmer months, do come along and join us. Keep an eye on our facebook page and website for details.

# Moths and Butterflies

MWT volunteer, Gail Jeffcoate

Did you see the Painted Ladies last year? Many visited gardens to feed on nectar from Buddleia and many more could be seen in the countryside across the Island. Painted Ladies cannot overwinter here, and arrive each year from the continent, but they can breed here. The caterpillars feed on thistles and the resulting adults fly away southwards in late summer. Red Admirals and Clouded Yellows are also migrants, but there are a further 16 butterfly species that are resident, ie they breed and overwinter, here. Several, including the Grayling, Wall, Dark Green Fritillary (pictured) and Small Heath are of conservation importance due to declines in their numbers in many parts of the British Isles.

Moths are less readily seen than butterflies, but there are many more of them! Some are big 'macromoths', others tiny 'micromoths'. Some are colourful, others are cryptically coloured and hard to spot among leaves or on tree trunks. Only two species eat our clothes. Moths are fascinating, but the sheer number of species can be daunting to a beginner. The best way to get to know moths is to start with the day-flyers. As the term suggests these are active during the day and some are easy to identify. Many people are familiar with the bright red and black Cinnabar and its orange and black striped caterpillars that feed on Ragwort (Cushag). The Six-spot Burnet, often seen on coastal grassland, is also red and black but with a different pattern. Other dayflyers include

the common Shaded Broad-bar and the scarce Dew Moth (inset left), which lives on rocky shores where the caterpillars feed on lichens.

Several of our moths are very scarce in the British Isles and Manx populations are therefore of great conservation importance. The Dew Moth, Thrift Clearwing and Grey are examples. The tiny but beautiful Scarce Crimson and Gold (inset right), a micromoth that can be found at the Ayres, otherwise occurs only at the Burren in western Ireland and a few places in Northern Ireland. It is extinct in Great Britain.

Climate change is bringing new species to our shores. In recent years two butterflies,

the Comma and Speckled Wood, have arrived and the latter is now a common sight across the Island. New moths are recorded every year, some becoming established here, such as the Clouded Buff and Brindled Beauty. But while these new arrivals have extended their ranges in the warmer temperatures we are now experiencing, many are declining in their traditional ranges due to loss, degradation, fragmentation and isolation of their habitats, and climate change brings threats as well as benefits.

Butterflies, moths and other insects are a vital part of the food chain. Look out for events where you can learn more about them and get involved in conserving these fascinating and important creatures.



# Gardening for moths and butterflies

By day and by night, gardens large and small can provide a haven for Britain's beleaguered butterflies and moths. **Kate Bradbury** suggests nine ways to support all the stages of their life cycles

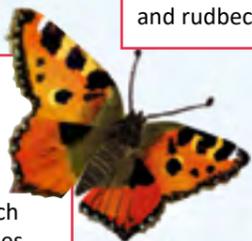


## Grow nectar-rich flowers

Make sure something is in flower from March through to November, starting with primroses, bluebells and forget-me-not in spring, then alliums, lavender and scabious in late summer, and late-flowering *Verbena bonariensis*, sedums and rudbeckias in autumn.

## Plant some climbers

Bare fences and walls are a wasted opportunity to help butterflies. Cover them with plants and provide nectar-rich flowers and shelter for species, such as brimstones, to hibernate. If you grow hops, comma butterflies may lay their eggs on its leaves.



## Provide caterpillar foodplants

Butterflies need the right plants to lay eggs in your garden. Grow cuckooflower for caterpillars of the orange-tip butterfly, nettles for peacocks, small tortoiseshells and red admirals, and holly and ivy for the holly blue.

## Add a window box

If you don't have a garden or your space is small, grow nectar-rich flowers in pots, window boxes or hanging baskets. Choose low-growing primrose and lavender for pots, and nasturtiums for baskets.

Butterflies and moths have suffered huge declines in recent years. This is largely due to habitat loss, but agricultural pesticides and climate change have made life even more challenging for many species. Happily, there's plenty we can do to help them on our own patch, no matter its size. The UK's gardens take up more space than all of its nature reserves put together, so if we all gardened with butterflies and moths in mind, we could help slow, or even reverse, some of these declines.

We tend to feel more fondly about butterflies than moths, which can be viewed with ambivalence as they fly at night and a few species eat our clothes. But not all moths fly at night – the Six-spot Burnet and Hummingbird Hawkmoth can be spotted during the day – and many of them are just as beautiful as their day-flying cousins. Only about five of our 2,500 species eat clothes and moth caterpillars are an important source of food for nesting birds,

hedgehogs and amphibians. So by gardening for moths, we can also help other wildlife.

As adults, most butterflies and moths drink nectar, but their caterpillars eat leaves and other plant material. To make them truly welcome in our gardens, we need to support all stages of their life cycle by growing nectar-rich flowers for the adults and foodplants for the caterpillars. We also need to accommodate the stage in between caterpillar and adult – the chrysalis (butterfly) or cocoon (moth). Many species spend the winter in this vulnerable stage so leave a little patch to grow a bit wild for them. Making space for butterflies and moths to feed, breed and hibernate in our gardens will make all the difference to these struggling pollinators.



Discover more ways to welcome moths and butterflies into your garden on our website: [wildlifetrusts.org/butterflygarden](http://wildlifetrusts.org/butterflygarden)



**Kate Bradbury** is passionate about wildlife-friendly gardening and the author of *Wildlife Gardening for Everyone* and *Everything in association with The Wildlife Trusts*.

## Avoid cutting down plants in autumn

Some butterflies, such as orange-tips, overwinter as chrysalises, which makes them vulnerable to tidying. Leave plants intact over winter and clear them in spring instead. Always check for chrysalises just in case!

## Plant a mixed native hedge

If you have space, plant a native tree or two. Many moths lay their eggs on the leaves of willow, dog rose, birch and hawthorn. Grow a climber, such as honeysuckle, through the hedge to make it even more moth-friendly.

## Grow night-scented plants

Plant groups of common jasmine, evening primrose, honeysuckle and night-scented stock together, so that moths can find them more easily.

## Leave some weeds

Many moths lay their eggs on the leaves of nettles, brambles, dock and dandelions. Even leaving weeds at the back of borders, where you can't see them, will make a difference.

## Don't be too tidy

While some moths breed in long grass, many caterpillars and pupae spend winter hibernating in grass or among leaf litter and other plant debris. Leave things where they are in autumn and winter, and tidy up in spring instead.



To find out more about butterflies or if you've seen them in your garden please go to [www.manxwt.org.uk/Butterfly](http://www.manxwt.org.uk/Butterfly) or Manx Butterfly Conservation's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ManxButterflyConservation/](https://www.facebook.com/ManxButterflyConservation/)

# Conserving Natural History

Manx Museum Natural History Curator, Laura McCoy

Dead things, thousands of them. My job as a curator of natural history is to look after everything related to the natural world in the Manx Museum, starting from the beginning of the solar system (e.g. meteorites older than the Earth) through to microscopic organisms, plants, fungi, shellfish, eggs, nests, invertebrates, fossils, skeletons, animal skins, and taxidermy, although the list doesn't end there. 'Look after' is a vague term. I safeguard and keep track of everything so that if someone wants to look at a specimen I can find it. That means identifying, preserving, labelling, adding all the information and also using the appropriate storage. Should something be kept dry, like bones, or should it be stored in alcohol so that it retains its shape, like small spiders? Our stores are divided up into sections: geology, botany and zoology, then these are further subdivided. Each group has a taxonomic order, so things that are closely related are kept together. Think of it like a supermarket, I even have a freezer section, but you don't want to eat any of it ...

Sometimes we have more than one of something, we have several hedgehogs, burnet roses and a whole drawer of peacock butterflies. Most of these, and certainly the newer ones, all have their own little label of when they were collected, where and by whom; I have examples dating back to the early 19th century. People ask, 'why do you have so many, don't you just need one?' but that information makes each of those specimens like a biogeographical snapshot in time, they may look the same but they are unique. Each species is specialised to live in a particular habitat - take the Bilberry Bumblebee (*Bombus monticola*) for instance. This species is found almost exclusively on moorland in association with stands of Bilberry and is very specialised, so if a place has altered for some reason and this little bee becomes locally extinct due to development, drainage, farming, etc. we will still know that at one point in time they were there. You can

reconstruct a landscape just from one specimen and can even use that knowledge for restoration in the future. We live in a time of unprecedented environmental alteration, with climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, invasive species and over-exploitation all contributing to species declines (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005, IPBES 2019)<sup>1</sup>. Natural history collections help us keep a track of all of that and more.

Some will ask why you need the physical specimen, isn't the data enough? But what if by taking a DNA sample you discovered something that looked similar, but on close examination was actually new to science! Some mycologists (fungi specialists) at Kew tested a jar of dried porcini mushrooms from Waitrose. Far from what you might expect, they found that there were actually 17 different species in there, three of which had never been found before. There is still so much we don't know.

When I took this role and moved to the Island in 2017 I knew very little about the Isle of Man; I had never been here and aside from knowing that it didn't have certain things like moles, badgers and snakes, I had a lot to learn. What I found was that, although it has similarities to its neighbours, it is a unique combination of all of them and has its own individual character; but being a small Island means that character is very fragile and much more sensitive to change than its larger neighbours. We need to be on our guard to monitor and protect our countryside more closely than ever, through surveys, biological recording, habitat restoration and investigation. Some think of museums as only focusing on the past but collections, particularly natural history, curate for tomorrow and we address real world challenges by supporting positive change using research, ideas, partnerships, exhibitions, events, consultations, policy and strategy to address key topics and enhance social and environmental impact (McGhie, H.A., 2019)<sup>2</sup>.



When the first ever Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) recorded in the Isle of Man stranded itself in Castletown and died, I decided it would be a great addition to the cetacean skeletons that we already have on display in the museum's natural history gallery. To prepare out a skeleton one of the best methods is burying the carcass in compost, so that involved piling up a very large heap of horse manure and straw. Curating is very varied, sometimes you even get to shovel poo.



A current work in progress repackaging the egg collection. Old storage materials can be unsuitable by modern standards, there can be issues such as them being acidic or not offering enough protection.

# Southern Group

During 2019 Scarlett Visitor Centre welcomed nine hundred and thirty three visitors. That number excludes the groups Dawn Dickens attracted for rock pooling and fossil sessions. On one occasion it was seventy children and twenty adults!



International visitors came from Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, St. Helena, U.S.A. and Vietnam. Quite a world hub!

The natural history of Scarlett is remarkably diverse and is home to a wealth of flora and fauna. It deserves to be respected. Many visitors are well informed and the volunteers on duty appreciate hearing about their sightings

easily identified by its new sign – continues to attract more visitors, human and non-human.

Committee member, Sheila Norris, compiles the species records, organises the work party sessions and maintains the Ballachurry Blog. This is a major task. Those from other groups who specialise in various species help with identification. For example, last autumn Karen and Mick Rodger of the Manx Fungus Group identified more than a dozen new fungi on the reserve including Pipe Fungus (*Typhula fistulosa*) which was only the second sighting of this fungus recorded on the Island.



Rushen Commissioners have very kindly agreed to take over the mowing of the grass at Ballachurry Reserve. This is a huge help and the Ballachurry volunteers

too far and the water courses flowing. Once a year Tricia cuts the wildflower area so that we can rake off the grass to allow new flower growth.

So many people have generously given time and help to our Group and we thank: Andree Dubbeldam, who led a very happy and interested group on a walk around the Mull /Meayll Hill. Andree explained how the historic use of the site had produced its current biodiversity.

Members of the IOM Fungus Group for a well attended fungi identification foray into South Barrule Plantation.

Richard Hartnoll, who gave a talk to a packed Mount Tabor Church hall about the creatures encountered on his cruise from Zanzibar to Mauritius – and a mention of the last dodo, lost but not forgotten!

Jean Buck for organising the Shoprite bucket collection.

Committee members, Karen and Janet, for the Christmas Wreath Workshop.

The volunteers at Scarlett Visitor Centre and those who put in hard work at Ballachurry work parties.

Most of all we appreciate the interest of

at Scarlett and other parts of the Island.

Equally welcome are those who say they have spotted something and wonder what it is. The identification books are opened and more often than not the mystery is solved.

Thanks to Graham Makepeace –Warne's efforts, joined by volunteers from Search and Rescue, many of the items that had been dumped into the quarry pool during past years have been removed.

For the coming year we will look at work the building requires to keep it in good condition.

Ballachurry Wetlands Reserve – now

are extremely grateful.

Ballachurry Open Afternoon last August was supported by various wildlife interest groups who set up their stalls. It was so enjoyable having these groups coming together and sharing their interests.

The coming year should see work start on a dragonfly pond. Planning requirements have taken quite some time and we do not want to have excavations proceeding during bird nesting season, so we will have to be patient for a little longer. Some paths and boardwalks need refurbishment in addition to the ongoing work of keeping the paths clear, the grass mown, the brambles from encroaching

MWT members and the wider public who support our events. We look forward to seeing you later this year.

Volunteers, we need you on the Scarlett rota. We would love to have the Scarlett Visitor Centre open for more than four afternoons per week during the summer but we can only do this if more people volunteer. No specialist knowledge is required. Ballachurry Reserve also has monthly work parties from late summer to early spring. More volunteers are always welcome to come along.

If you would like to help please contact the Mires and Volunteering Officer via [sarah@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:sarah@manxwt.org.uk)

# Northern Group

After a special appeal in the last issue of Manx Nature in 2019, we have been lucky enough to secure two new members for the volunteer rota, welcoming Mike Bathgate and Alan Marshall; and also to welcome back to the rota two members of the families affected by serious health issues last year, Marinda Fargher and Jean Shimmin. At the same time, we say farewell, and a special thank you, to Sue Kneale whose work and other commitments have changed. Altogether, we have a larger group than we finished the season with in 2019, but our watchword is flexibility and that will continue to be our greatest strength.

As well as the fauna and flora, we have other features at the AVC to delight our visitors to the Ayres at Ballaghennie. First, we are easier to find this year. In the close season, thanks to the DoI, we have helpful new signage at key points on the A10 Bride to Jurby road.

Next, sometimes we don't make enough of the value of the Viewing Platform, both when we are there and when we aren't! It offers the best possible marine views, whether it be sealife, birdlife or IOM and Scotland coastlines. It is available 24/7, 365 days a year (366 this year). We added the fixed binoculars last year and now four illustrated and informative boards about

local sealife and birdlife are in place. All we need now is some help from the DoI (road improvements vitally needed to encourage more drivers to come to the Centre without vehicle damage) and car park improvements at the reserve entrance (hopefully courtesy of Manx National Heritage).

Warden David Wright joined DEFA in 2019 on a year's contract, subsequently extended to April this year, covering the National Nature Reserve and the Point of Ayre. For some years, we have been fortunate to be supported by Louise Samson with valuable information, and David has been a welcome complement. He has supplied regular reports during our open season (Easter, then May to Sept). These more detailed reports, together with the updated board on the wall at the AVC, means we volunteers can provide more specific information to interested visitors. David's final report of the season included the following:

"A full Breeding Bird Survey was completed, showing for the key species - chicks hatched/juveniles fledged: Little Terns 24/14; Arctic Terns 83/8 (after major predation in early July); Ringed Plover 15-20

fledged; Oystercatcher 18 fledged; Curlew at least three fledged. (These came from over 160 nests monitored in total across these species)

Unusual bird visitors included Hoopoe, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Ruff, Long-tailed Duck, Quail, Lapland Bunting and Snow Bunting. Spotted Flycatcher bred in the plantation for the first time.

Full surveys showed very high counts of Northern Marsh Orchid and Early Marsh Orchid but a slight decrease in Early Purple Orchid; then, in the autumn a record count of Field Gentian. The Isle of Man Cabbage was counted in good numbers at two locations.

Moth trapping revealed some unusual dune species such as Archer's Dart and Shore Wainscot. Painted Lady was seen in good numbers during the summer, with a small autumn influx of Clouded Yellow. All other butterfly species were present in good numbers, though specific surveys were not undertaken."

Lots for visitors to see across the seasons, if they are observant, - and have some luck of course!

We look forward to seeing all our members as well as the visiting public, when we can open, to share this unique place.



# Good For Business

## Marketing & Membership Manager, Graham Makepeace-Warne

As a member of Manx Wildlife Trust you are directly supporting the work we do to protect Manx wildlife for the future. Every aspect of our work costs money, whether it's equipment or staff time right through to land purchase and management fees. We are hugely grateful to the people and organisations that fundraise for us and help us to do the work we do. These include: Individuals like Jean Buck MBE who has organised the Art of Nature exhibition at House of Manannan this year with nearly £50,000 worth of art of which we will receive a percentage upon sale! The Northern and Southern Volunteer Support groups who meet regularly to organise events and activities like bag packs to raise funds for MWT. And last but not least, our corporate members and businesses that raise funds through events and activities or sponsor specific projects with MWT.

Businesses in the Isle of Man are perhaps best placed to help conservation here and it could be argued that they stand to benefit the most. It is, after all, a beautiful place to live and work. I have been to Douglas this morning to do an interview at Manx Radio and I popped along Marine Drive afterwards to see not only a peregrine but a kestrel too!

Corporate membership is one of the easiest ways to get involved. We are lucky to have nearly 30 current corporate members but I would dearly love to grow that number. Much like individual membership, it's a great way to stay informed about the work that we do. It's also a great way to meet corporate social responsibilities and there are a number of benefits that we can offer our corporate members too:

- Invitation to exclusive Corporate Member events
- Use of our corporate logo on literature
- Staff discount on membership
- Access to Wild Work Days upon request
- Company website link on Manx Wildlife Trust website
- Bespoke wildlife talk for employees on joining
- Access to our environmental consultancy service
- Bespoke guided wildlife tour for employees or guests at one of our Nature Reserves
- Company logo on Manx Wildlife Trust website
- Press release on joining
- Feature article in Manx Nature magazine
- Free Family Membership for a nominated staff member

Corporate membership ranges from £250 for Bronze, £500 for Silver to £1000 for Gold membership so it doesn't have to break the bank. If you know a company that may be interested in membership please pass on my details. I'm pleased to welcome two new corporate members this month; Affinity Management Services Ltd and Ocorian. I look forward to working with them to make sure the relationship is a success for both parties.

Corporate members, Nedbank Private Wealth, have had a number of Wild Work Days at our Glen Dhoo reserve where they have helped our Reserves Manager clearing



gorse and planting native trees. Tricia and I are trying to encourage Nedbank to become our first reserve sponsor. No luck yet, but we'll keep trying.

Leigh and I recently visited corporate members, PwC, in Douglas to discuss how they can get more involved with MWT. It was great to hear Client Account Executive Manager, Liz Moore say: " We're proud to be a Corporate Member of Manx Wildlife Trust. It has been amazing to see them continually strive to meet their conservation aims. Over the years, we have provided both financial and practical support. Our recent community project has supported the 'Ramsey Eco-Active' project. It's more important than ever to help sustain and protect our local environment."

Sponsorship is another great way for businesses to get involved and may offer better PR opportunities than membership alone. I'm really pleased that Lloyds Bank are supporting our #WilderFuture campaign for a second year to the tune of £2,500. With Lloyds, it's much more than just the money though. Lucy Felton, Business Development Manager, shows a real interest in conservation and the work that MWT do. They provide staff as volunteers for some of our events including Wildlife Watch activities and even provided a safe place for our exhibition in their marquee at last year's Royal Agricultural Show. Our traditional gazebo would have been flattened! You can next see our #WilderFuture exhibition at The Strand Shopping centre in Douglas during Manx Wildlife Week from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> May.

For some companies no money changes hands at all. For example, ORS Limited provided a secure waste bin for us so we could dispose of a large amount of sensitive paperwork that had built up at MWT HQ over the years. Storage is another area in which we really struggle.

Callin Wild have let us store a number of

archive boxes at their facility in Douglas in return for a complimentary corporate



membership. We also have storage at Empire Garage in Peel, Sartfell Nature Reserve, Sunset Lakes in Peel and other places too. So you can get a picture of the scale of our problem.

Following an appeal on social media, Quanta Global in Douglas donated a desk and chair so Adam, our Consultant Ecologist, could have a base in our ever expanding office. This actually did them a favour as they were downsizing so it was just a case of being in the right place at the right time. A win for all.



Some organisations have their own platforms for fundraising and we are lucky enough to be one of three charities

currently being supported by Co-op's members Community Fund. Last year Ramsey Grammar School received nearly £18k from this fund so this could really



make a big difference to our Ramsey Forest Project. If you want to support this (it doesn't cost you anything) become a Co-op member and choose MWT as your local cause at [membership.coop.co.uk/causes/37969](http://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/37969)

Easyfundraising is another way you can raise money for us without it costing you. Simply go to [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) and select MWT as your chosen cause before

you do any online shopping. Many online retailers donate a penny in every pound. It doesn't sound like much but it all adds up.

We always have a range of interesting projects waiting in the wings and they inevitably cost money to deliver. Businesses can really make a difference for us through sponsorship. Have a look at the list below. Maybe you could show this list to your employer or propose one of these opportunities at the next corporate social responsibility meeting? In return we can offer a great deal of PR for your company including in this magazine, on our website and through our contacts across the Island's media outlets.

Whether it is corporate membership, fund raising ideas or sponsorship opportunities I am more than happy to discuss them. We have a very flexible set up and I'm confident that we can tailor any of the options to suit every business on the Island. So why not make the first move? Email me on: [graham@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:graham@manxwt.org.uk)

### Current Sponsorship opportunities:

- Action for Wildlife scheme with 10 individual 5 year projects totalling - £500k
- Event sponsor for Festival of the Sea - £4k
- Marine Volunteer sponsor - £600 a month
- Wildlife Remembered film sponsor - £2k
- Event sponsor for our inaugural Wild Orchid Ball - £2k
- Sponsor a reserve - £5k
- Multiple live nest video stream kit sponsor - £3k
- Wildflower kits for schools - £750
- Hedgehog tunnels sponsor - £1k
- MWT introductory leaflet sponsor - £800
- Reserves guide sponsor - £1k
- Branded gazebo sponsor - £1k
- 3 x Visitor centre refurbishment sponsors - from £5k
- Seal Survey equipment and boat fees - £1.5k

### Our Corporate Members:

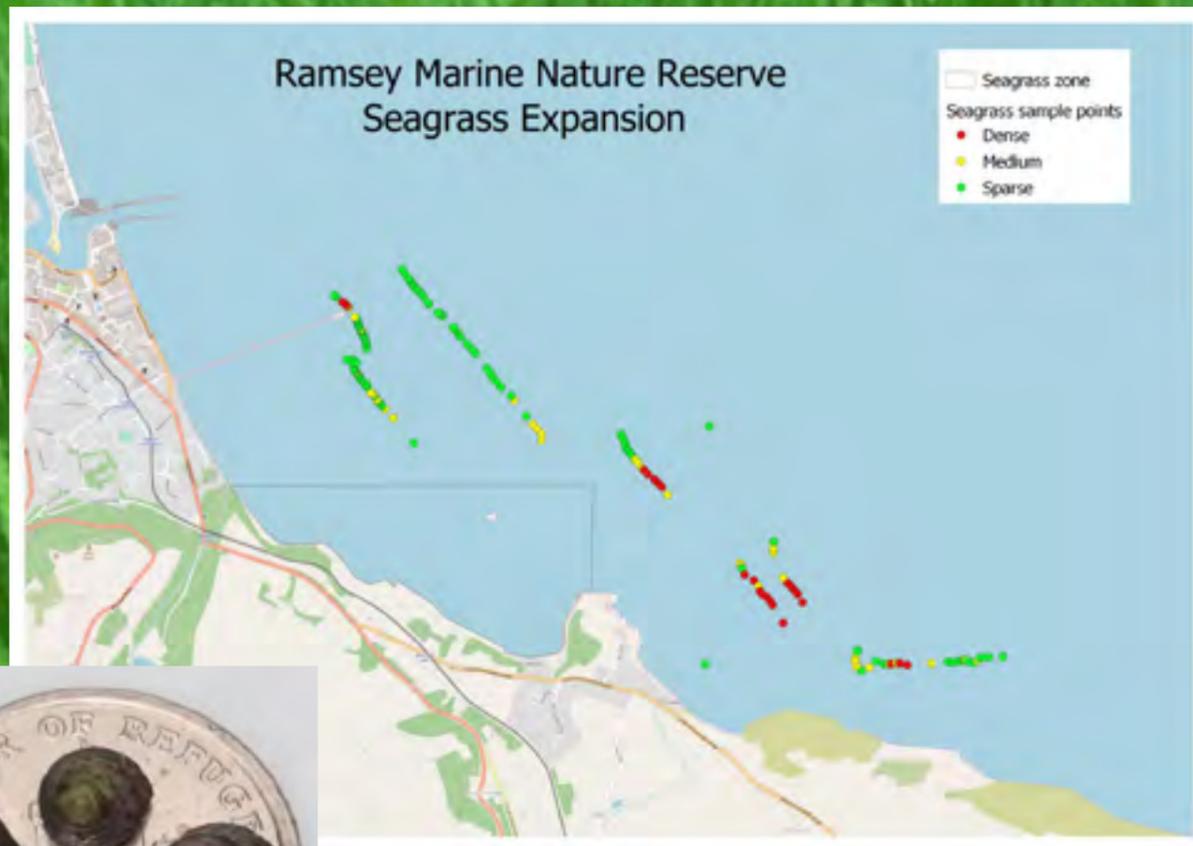


# Super Seagrass

Marine Officer, Lara Howe

Seagrass (*Zostera marina*), also known as eelgrass, is an important marine plant found in Manx waters. Not only can it combat coastal erosion and provide shelter for a vast array of animals, including some of our commercial species, it can also capture carbon, helping our fight against climate change. Seagrass stores up to 90% of its carbon in the sediment locking it away. In one report it suggested that compared to a terrestrial forest seagrass can store more than twice the amount of carbon for the same area. However, seagrass is vulnerable to human impacts such as dredging, excessive nutrients and pollution, that's why in the Isle of Man it is protected within our network of marine nature reserves. This protection is already paying off, as has been seen in Ramsey Marine Nature Reserve. The MNR was designated in 2011 and already the seagrass bed has extended beyond its zone and into several other zones, increasing its size considerably (see map). This just shows that if we give nature a chance it can fix itself.

Another good news story linked to seagrass last year was the identification of a small snail, called a grooved top shell, in Langness Marine Nature Reserve. It was caught on camera by Tony Glen, Seasearch Co-ordinator for the Island and later samples were collected to confirm identification by Tony and myself. The tiny mollusc, only 10mm tall, was last recorded by Edward Forbes in 1838. It is thought to be the most northerly sighting of the species, as it is typically found in the Mediterranean. The plan is to now examine other areas of seagrass to ascertain if the snail is at other sites.



# Editorial: Coronavirus & MWT

At the time of going to press the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic is impacting the Isle of Man. I'm proud to say that MWT took swift action closing our Peel Gift Shop and suspending the opening of our visitor centres at The Ayres and Scarlett as well as stopping the work of the Midweek Muckers to protect our staff and volunteers. All staff are now working from home with the exception of our CEO Leigh who is walking to work, and keeping the office ticking over, including now coordinating all our on-line team meetings.

We had to take the difficult decision to postpone indefinitely most of our events. The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that there is no 'What's On' guide in this issue. We cannot foresee how long social distancing will be required so please keep an eye out for our email newsletters, and on our website, social media and Eventbrite for updates. We will re-advertise events as soon as we are able. As a team we are looking at new ways of working and are aiming to deliver some talks digitally: Leigh's talk on his '2 years on St Helena' will be live streamed on the 13th May and we are looking to run other events digitally, perhaps including our AGM. Our Education Officer, Dawn Dickens, and other MWT staff are delivering live sessions about wildlife on our Facebook page – do join in. If you are a member and haven't been receiving our email newsletters please let me know by emailing [graham@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:graham@manxwt.org.uk) with the address that you would like us to use. We know some of you might not use email regularly, but in this time of self-isolation, we encourage you to connect with us this way.

The Art of Nature exhibition, organised by Jean Buck and hosted by the House of Manannan, was originally planned to run from March until September. Sadly, it only ran for a week before Manx National Heritage were forced to close the venue. The artwork in the exhibition is fantastic, helping to connect people with nature and raising much needed funds for MWT. Again, we are looking at options for when or how we can deliver this event in another way – hopefully a digital exhibition after Easter!

We have been considering making *Manx Nature* digital for some time and the coronavirus has given us the kick we needed to make it happen. By not printing all the magazines we are greatly reducing our use of paper as well as lowering the carbon footprint created through production and delivery. We are also sharing this edition far and wide, so that people stuck at home can engage with Manx nature and MWT – please help us by sharing this with your friends and encourage them to join us so that they can read future issues! We will still be printing a small number of copies so if you have a genuine need for a copy I urge you to let me know on the above email address and I will try to sort that out for you.

We all clearly face some great challenges in the future. The third sector is often the first one to suffer in difficult economic times. I am pleased to say that some people have still found it possible to make donations through our website and we would like to thank all our members for their continued support and understanding at this time. Our team are still working hard to protect Manx wildlife, whilst working from home. We are using this period to catch up on desk work, prepare future plans and develop our digital skills, and as Leigh stresses to us all "this period could be tremendously valuable for us all as a team and it isn't permanent". For our members, we are sharing lots of great educational videos and activities through our social media channels and on our website at:

[www.manxwt.org.uk/discover-our-island/stuck-home](http://www.manxwt.org.uk/discover-our-island/stuck-home)

Please stay safe, keep in touch and we'll see you on the other side.

*Graham Makepeace-Name*

Marketing & Membership Manager



Live streaming from 7pm Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May  
See [www.manxwt.org.uk](http://www.manxwt.org.uk) for joining details

## AGM NOTICE

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual General Meeting of Manx Wildlife Trust will be postponed until later in the year but before the end of September.

### AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of the 46th AGM held on 29 June 2019
2. Treasurer's Report:  
To approve the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 January 2020
3. To appoint the Auditors for the year ended 31 January 2020 and approve the fee
4. Chairman's Report
5. CEO's Report
6. Election of Trustees

The Council is seeking nominations for new members. Any nominations must be delivered to the Trust for consideration.

Those who seek election as a Trustee must submit a short (up to 100 words) statement of the contribution they could bring to the role of Trustee. This must be supported by a Proposer and a Seconder (both of whom must be MWT Members) and be received by the Company Secretary, Manx Wildlife Trust, 7-8 Market Place, Peel IM5 1AB or via [enquiries@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manxwt.org.uk)

7. Any other business (which should be notified to the Company Secretary before the meeting)

By Order of the Board –  
Sally Bolton, Company Secretary



# Leave a lasting legacy to wildlife

**By leaving a lasting legacy to wildlife,  
you'll be helping us to protect Manx wildlife and  
the natural heritage you love - for generations to come.**



**Please remember Manx Wildlife Trust in your will.**

Talk to your advocate, or contact Graham on 01624 844 432  
or email [graham@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:graham@manxwt.org.uk) to discuss leaving a bequest for wildlife.