



**BirdWatchIreland**  
*protecting birds and biodiversity*

# Annual Report 2021







BirdWatch Ireland staff and board members, taken at the Irish Management Institute, Sandyford, Dublin in May 2022

BIRDWATCH IRELAND is the largest independent conservation organisation in Ireland. A registered charity, its aim is the conservation of wild birds and their natural habitats. Established in 1968, it has over 15,000 members and a growing network of 30 local branches. It manages nature reserves which protect threatened habitats and the wildlife that relies on them, works to conserve Ireland's biodiversity, produces a range of media to raise wider awareness of nature conservation in Ireland, and carries out important education, survey and research work.

BirdWatch Ireland is the official Irish partner of BirdLife International, the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations, which strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity.

The key aims of BirdWatch Ireland are:

- To maintain and, where possible, improve the conservation status of all Irish bird species
- To prevent the extinction of any Irish bird species in the wild
- To conserve, and where appropriate, improve and enlarge sites and habitats important for birds
- To help through birds to conserve biodiversity (other wildlife) and thereby improve the quality of people's lives
- To integrate nature conservation with sustainable development
- To educate and promote awareness of our birdlife and habitats



#### BirdWatch Ireland Directors in 2021

**Jim Fitzharris** (Chairperson)  
**Jonathan Taylor** (Secretary)  
**Catherine Casey** (resigned on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2021)  
**Enda Lee** (co-opted on July 15<sup>th</sup> 2021)  
**Breffi Martin** (resigned on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2021)  
**Andrew McMillan** (resigned on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2021)  
**Conor O'Keeffe**  
**Aisling Tallon** (resigned on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2021)

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 BirdWatch Ireland complies with the  
 Governance Code for the Community,  
 Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland.  
 Registered charity: CHY 5703 / RCN 20008963



*BirdWatch Ireland is the BirdLife International  
 partner in the Republic of Ireland*



COVER  
 PHOTOGRAPH:  
**Snipe**  
 by Richard T Mills

# Welcome

## Report from the Board of Directors

The year 2021 was another unusual year because of the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic. As outlined in last year's *Annual Report*, it was also a difficult year for BirdWatch Ireland financially, with the added challenge of the illness and sad death of our newly-appointed Chief Executive Officer, **Nick Williams**, in April 2021.

Following Nick's death, we were very fortunate in securing the services of **Chris Corrigan** as Acting CEO. Chris started work in late July 2021 and finished up in mid-May 2022. In his short time with BirdWatch Ireland, Chris brought huge energy and enthusiasm to the role, and the organisation benefited greatly from his experience, hard work and commitment.

We were delighted to announce the appointment of **Linda Lennon** as our new CEO in early May 2022, and we look forward to working with her over the coming years.

For BirdWatch Ireland, the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that many staff had to work from home during 2021. The shop was able to fully re-open during the year, although an online offering was available at all times. The stock of many items continues to be adversely affected by the introduction of new customs controls as a result of Brexit.

Thanks to the hard work of our staff and volunteers, BirdWatch Ireland's core conservation activities were able to continue with limited disruption. This *Annual Report* sets out the remarkable conservation and public awareness work undertaken during the year, across all our operations.

Our ongoing work in protecting birds and biodiversity is made possible by the professionalism, expertise and dedication of our staff. We would like to express sincere thanks on behalf of our members to the BirdWatch Ireland team for their dedication and support, especially during what has been a difficult time for the organisation.

As was noted last year, one positive effect of the various Covid-related lockdowns, and more extensive media coverage of the climate crisis and its associated effect on biodiversity, was that members of the public have taken a



Linda Lennon, CEO, BirdWatch Ireland

much greater interest in the natural world, particularly in their gardens and local parks. This was reflected in a large increase in the number of general wildlife enquiries, a 14% increase in membership and an increase of over 70% in the number of Garden Bird Survey participants in the 2020/21 winter. This is very heartening in the context of the significant challenges faced by all Irish wildlife.

We launched a Species Recovery Appeal during 2021 and we would like to sincerely thank all members and supporters who gave so generously to this appeal, which, to date, has raised over €55,000.

The Board have met for ten Board Meetings since the last AGM in June 2021, with the customary excellent attendance record of all Board members. As is shown in the AGM Notice of Meeting, a number of the existing Board members are stepping down for a variety of reasons. We are pleased to have four new candidates going forward for election to the Board.

Finally, we would once again like to thank all our members and donors for your support, which is crucial to the success of BirdWatch Ireland.

**Jim Fitzharris, Enda Lee, Conor O'Keeffe,  
Jonathan Taylor**



# Annual Report 2021

## Good News

Some of BirdWatch Ireland's most notable works and successes in 2021

**1** We have made a good start in addressing our financial problems with a surplus of €270,000 in 2021 and the preparation of a balanced 2022 budget.

\* \* \* \* \*

**2** The Curlew EIP (European Innovation Partnership) was one of four out of the 55 EIPs that were granted a project extension into 2022, with an increased budget to further develop aspects of our work.

**3** Forty-seven farmers took part in Curlew EIP measures in 2021, many in multiple options, including habitat options, habitat restoration and, notably, the first Conservation Keeping Scheme in Ireland. All farmers re-entered these options in 2022.

**4** In the Curlew EIP, one of our male Curlews was predated within days of his chicks hatching. However, the female didn't leave the chicks (as normal after *circa* 10 days), but stayed with them and, with the help of staff, successfully fledged two chicks.

**5** The fledging success of Curlew pairs confirmed to have nested in the Lough Corrib Curlew EIP site was 0.8 in 2021 (at the level of population growth for these pairs).

**6** Seven adult Curlews were successfully satellite-tagged in May 2021 by the Curlew EIP. Of these, three were confirmed breeding and their nests located and fenced from predators, and all successfully hatched young. Additional funding was granted to scale up this work in 2022 and begin tagging earlier in the season.

\* \* \* \* \*

**7** National and site-specific species trends were published for 36 species of wintering waterbirds, occurring at 97 sites across the country, based on 25 years of data gathered by over 1,100 counters in the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS).

**8** Details of almost 4,000 I-WeBS and over 360 CBS (Countryside Bird Survey) survey visits were submitted via new online forms in the last two years, since we launched a new online data entry portal. Together with new site-coordinator and validation tools, the I-WeBS and CBS team is able to spend less time on preparing data for loading into the database, and more time on fine-tuning, analysis and extracting insights.

**9** Despite the gap year due to Covid-19, the required threshold of 300 CBS squares were surveyed during 2021, largely by our volunteers.



Curlew

RICHARDT MILLS

**10** In 2021, the I-WeBS and CBS team launched the Bird Monitoring Scientific Network. The aims of this network are to promote, facilitate and drive ornithological, ecological and environmental research, utilising the available datasets, to investigate the questions and issues pertinent to biodiversity management and policy, as well as multi-disciplinary research. Since its launch, one research institute has already started to work on research using 20 years of our I-WeBS data.

**11** During 2021, we produced Countryside Bird Population Indicators online for the first time. These use long-term data from the CBS.

**12** Special Pin Badges were sent to 77 households who have participated in the Irish Garden Bird Survey for at least 20 years. Several responded with great delight at having their contributions to the survey recognised in this way. This year, we plan to acknowledge those who have taken part for 10-20 years (a few hundred households).

**13** There was an increase of over 70% in participation in the Irish Garden Bird Survey in winter 2020/21, compared to the previous year. This was the latest in five years of continuous growth in participation. Donations also increased over this time.

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**14** BoCCI-4 (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland: No 4) was published. This was followed by a presentation of results by staff members Steve Newton, Anita Donaghy, Lesley Lewis and Oonagh Duggan to two government ministers (Malcolm Noonan TD and Pippa Hackett TD) and senior National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) staff.

**15** Our Farmland Bird Hotspots Mapping project delivered a suite of high-resolution maps to inform improved targeting of actions in upcoming CAP agri-environment schemes, based on detailed scoring of 130,000 records of 28 species of farmland birds, extracted from 27 scientifically validated datasets containing almost 2.5 million observations.

**16** The Fair Seas campaign, part of the Seabird MPA Project, is taking shape and the final report has identified 16 distinct areas to propose as potential MPAs (Marine Protected Areas), or at the very least are “Areas of Interest” deserving of policy makers’ consideration going forward. Combined records of over 170,000 offshore sightings of seabirds over four decades contributed greatly to the identification of these sites.

\* \* \* \* \*

**17** Red-necked Phalaropes again returned to breed at our Annagh Marsh Reserve on the Mullet Peninsula, Co Mayo, for the seventh successive year. They made seven successful breeding attempts in 2021, the highest number recorded since 1932.

**18** The numbers of breeding waders at our Annagh Marsh Reserve increased to nearly 50 pairs in 2021. Of these, 26 pairs (up from 24 in 2020) were Lapwings, which successfully reared at least 47 chicks to the flying stage. Three pairs of Redshanks bred successfully, and the maximum single count of displaying Snipe was 12 males. (Lapwing numbers showed increased numbers again in 2022, with 29 nests recorded by mid-April.)

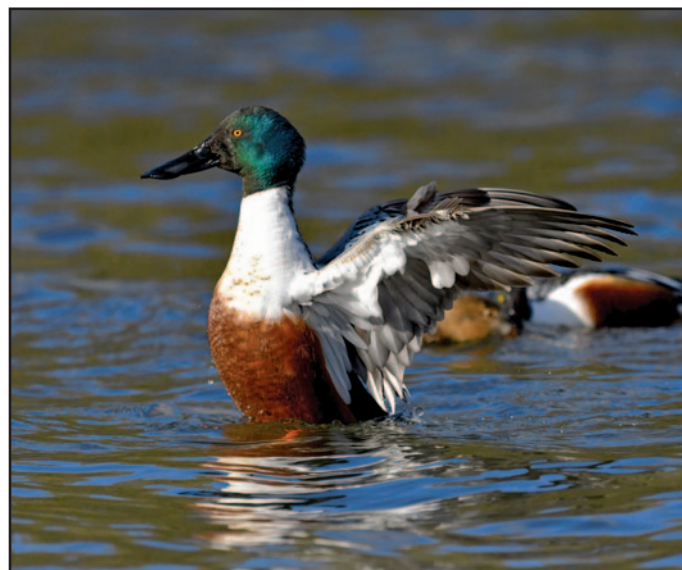
**19** At least two pairs of Shovelers bred successfully at our Annagh Marsh Reserve in 2021.

**20** Three singing male Corncrakes were recorded at our Termoncarragh Meadows Reserve on the Mullet Peninsula in 2021.

**21** Our Annagh Marsh and Termoncarragh Meadows Reserves continued to host the highest numbers of Ireland’s rarest true bumblebee, the endangered Great Yellow Bumblebee, known in the country. Nearly 50 individuals were recorded in the August 2021 transect counts. Two other rare bumblebee species occur in significant numbers.

**22** BirdWatch Ireland is part of a group which was successful in securing funding to develop a pilot results-based EIP focused on the Mullet Peninsula, to enhance the habitats for the Great Yellow Bumblebee.

**23** Our East Coast Nature Reserve continued to grow in popularity, not only for people, but also for increasing numbers of breeding Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Reed Warblers.



RICHARD T MILLS

Shoveler

**24** Volunteers continued to provide invaluable assistance in delivering our reserve work programme, particularly at the East Coast Nature Reserve (ECNR) and Rogerstown Estuary Reserve. Volunteers contributed some 2,000 man-hours at ECNR, working on carpentry, pond restoration, reedbed management, woodland management, surveying, improving habitats, establishing wildflower borders, removing alien species, as well as creating a sense of pride and community among the volunteers.

**25** BirdWatch Ireland secured significant funding through the Heritage Council, under the Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2022, towards purchasing much-needed equipment to manage the pathways and habitats more effectively at the ECNR.

**26** We secured support from Wicklow County Council (as part of their nature awareness programme through the County Heritage Plan) to hold a series of eight events at the East Coast Nature Reserve during 2022. Planned events include a Dusk Chorus Walk, a Butterfly and Seed Bomb Workshop, a Bird Ringing Demonstration and a Festive Walk with Wreath-making.

**27** Many people continued to take their daily exercise either on the permissible access paths within BirdWatch Ireland reserves, or along adjacent roads overlooking a reserve, during the period of Covid-19 restrictions. This has continued since lockdown restrictions were lifted.

**28** The important survey and monitoring work on Cape Clear Island, Co Cork, continued during 2020 and 2021, despite the impacts of Covid-19 on our operations there. The Daily Log was maintained, as was the bird-ringing Constant Effort Site in East Bog and monitoring of seabird passage.

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## Good News (*continued*)

**29** Our works programme had a spectacular beneficial impact for breeding terns across the four tern sites we work on. A total of 4,260 pairs of terns nested at the sites, with an overall productivity of approximately one chick per pair, sufficient to generate surplus birds to drive further population increases.

Site	Tern Species	Pairs	Productivity
Rockabill	Roseate	1,704	1.2
Rockabill	Common	1,670	0.9
Rockabill	Arctic	55	0.3
Kilcoole	Little	216	1.0
Dublin Bay	Common and Arctic	538	1.0
Dalkey	Arctic	77	0.4

**30** 2021 proved an incredible highpoint for the Roseate Terns breeding on Rockabill, Co Dublin: a new record of 1,704 pairs nested on the island and their productivity (average number of young fledged per pair) was 1.2. This is the highest since 2011 and a great improvement on the mean of the preceding five years (0.79).

**31** The Dalkey Tern colony continues to grow year on year: an estimated 77 Common and Arctic Tern pairs bred on the Dalkey islands in 2021. This is the highest number of pairs recorded on the islands since 2017.

**32** Successful conservation measures resulted in an estimated minimum breeding population of 216 pairs of Little Terns at Kilcoole, Co Wicklow, another record high. The birds reared an estimated 220 young. Many of these were ringed with unique green Darvic rings and a total of 93 Kilcoole-raised young were resighted at other sites in the Irish Sea up to the middle of September, including at Gronant in North Wales.

**33** The summer of 2022 marks the tenth season of monitoring by the Dublin Bay Birds Project of the Dublin Port Common and Arctic Terns colony. The colony was ably monitored pre-2013 by BirdWatch Ireland and NPWS, but on a shoestring (or sometimes no string!). Over time, the colony has grown, with 71 pairs of both species combined recorded in 1995, increasing to 538 pairs in 2021, and with an all-time peak of 645 nesting pairs in 2019.

**34** The Dublin Port terns had a good year in 2021, with productivity of 1.3 and 1.2 recorded at two of the platforms (SPA and Tolka), and a productivity of 1.06 overall (anything greater than 1.0 means a stable population likely to grow). Overall, 2021 marked the best breeding season that the Dublin Port terns have had in several years.

**35** We made good progress on tackling predation in the Dublin Port tern colony. A mid-season intervention to exclude rats on one pontoon (GSW pontoon), where mammalian predation occurred for the first time, appeared to have been very effective (with productivity of 0.95 recorded on the GSW pontoon). The number of monitoring visits undertaken in Dublin Port was higher than in previous years and this increased our ability to react to and pre-empt such situations.

**36** After nine years of wader ringing, we have amassed >6,800 colour and metal ring records for Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank and Curlew from 13 countries.

\* \* \* \* \*

**37** We ensured that there was a breeding wader scheme in Ireland's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan, and we will continue to press for more funding for it.

**38** We kept up the pressure on the government to make the CAP plan better for biodiversity and water quality and to address climate change.

**39** We ensured that the Just Transition Alliance declaration included text to safeguard and restore biodiversity as part of a just transition to tackle climate change.



Roseate Tern

PAUL LYNCH



**40** The Biodiversity Citizens' Assembly will happen in 2022, three years after we pressed for it to be included as an action in the successful motion declaring a biodiversity and climate emergency in Dáil Éireann in 2019.

**41** We continued to hold the government to account to make progress on halting the losses of wild bird populations and to restore them and the ecosystems they need.

\* \* \* \* \*

**42** Birds Connect was a new project from BirdWatch Ireland, with grant funding from the Community Foundation for Ireland. The project's focus was on connecting people and biodiversity through citizen science, outreach and training, with a particular emphasis on improving access and participation in bird projects for people with disabilities, new communities and minority groups. 18,000 people benefited directly from the project and an estimated 35,000 indirectly.

**43** During 2021 and early 2022, BirdWatch Ireland held a series of seven online webinars. Topics included The Dawn Chorus, Ireland's Woodpeckers, Swifts, Dalkey, Rockabill, The Irish Garden Bird Survey and Ireland's Wintering Waterbirds. These talks were archived on YouTube. 2,093 people signed up for our webinars and 4,437 have viewed them on YouTube.

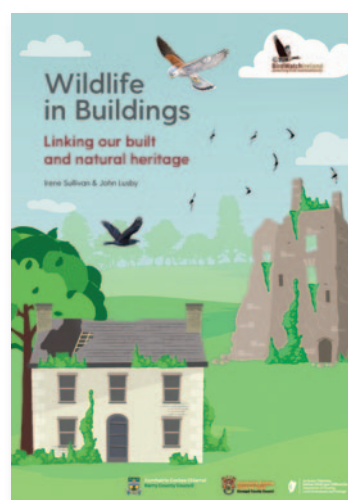
**44** A laminated bird identification guide was created with designer C  il  n MacLochlainn for direct provision centres and nursing homes. The guide features 50 Irish bird species, with information on getting out and seeing them. The text is in English, Irish, French and Arabic.

**45** The Birds Connect project allowed us to participate in a range of events, including a Mosney Community Village residents outing to Christ Church Cathedral and to Newgrange, in collaboration with Sanctuary in Nature. We visited the National Council for the Blind Ireland as part of the Heritage Council's 'Coming to Your Natural Senses' workshop, to give a birdsong talk. We also presented an online dawn chorus talk with Clann.

**46** BirdWatch Ireland worked with local branches, Tidy Town groups and Men's Sheds groups to produce bird nest boxes to be installed in nursing homes and direct provision centres throughout Ireland. Residents received bird guides and over 100 nest boxes and bird tables were installed nationwide. Some, such as Coosan Men's Shed in Athlone, used the opportunity to teach woodwork to new members. Among the centres that participated were Mosney Community Village, Hazel Hotel Direct Provision Centre, Rathmore Holiday Village Direct Provision Centre, Bridgewater House Direct Provision Centre, Greenhill, Carechoice and St Joseph's Community Nursing home in Trim and the Dunraven Centre (Irish Wheelchair Association).

**47** BirdWatch Ireland launched two citizen science projects: (1) The Irish Long-eared Owl Survey and (2) Starling Roosts and Murmurations. 171 people took part in our Long-eared Owl Survey and 73 in our Starling survey, giving us valuable data to aid in our ongoing conservation and monitoring work.

\* \* \* \* \*



Wildlife in Buildings booklet

**48** We published our Wildlife in Buildings booklet and video to raise awareness of wildlife in the built environment and to help protect sensitive species associated with and dependent on buildings.

**49** We published our first children's book on Barn Owls, entitled Golden Wings, which is available online and will be printed in 2022.

**50** Our In Your Nature podcast debuted on March 1st, 2021, presented by Ricky Whelan and Niall Hatch. Between then and May 2022, 19 episodes were released, with over 35,000 downloads made across 55 countries and territories.

**51** Our Seeing the World Through Nature project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission and run in conjunction with our BirdLife partners in Poland, Malta and Cyprus, has produced eleven state-of-the-art lesson modules for teachers of blind and visually impaired pupils, as well as BirdWatch Ireland's first-ever smartphone app.

\* \* \* \* \*

**52** We completed an extensive and innovative research project on the impacts of major roads on Barn Owl populations, which provided new information which we applied to the development of evidence-based mitigation measures adopted by Transport Infrastructure Ireland as required standards for all new road developments in Ireland.

## Good News (*continued*)

RICHARD T MILLS



Barn Owl

**53** We undertook comprehensive surveys of Barn Owl populations in a range of counties to assess the status of the population in these areas, and we recorded the first evidence of a population recovery across many counties, with an increase in breeding range and numbers confirmed, including a 67% increase in range in County Offaly.

**54** We recorded the most productive breeding season for Irish Barn Owls on record in 2021, including 75 occupied nest boxes, the highest number of occupied Barn Owl nest boxes ever recorded.

**55** We produced a range of Barn Owl conservation videos to disseminate practical guidance on undertaking conservation measures for Barn Owls and biodiversity, which are being adopted and used to inform the next agri-environment scheme.

**56** We contributed to an international collaboration to investigate the origins of Barn Owls in Ireland and Great Britain. It provided a new insight on the arrival of Barn Owls to this country, the details of which were published in late 2021.

**57** Working with a range of partners, we developed and implemented bird surveys on raised bogs, to assess their importance for breeding birds and to inform their future management and restoration. The surveys revealed the significant importance of these sites, which hold Red-listed birds of conservation concern, including Curlew, Redshank, Snipe and Kestrel, amongst others.

**58** We produced a range of education outputs on Carrowmagappul Bog, outside Mountbellew, Co Galway, to raise awareness of its importance for biodiversity and as an amenity for local communities, including a video, a feature on RTÉ News and a story map.

**59** We established a collaboration with GMIT to initiate research on the exposure of raptors to rodenticides in Ireland, including assessing rodenticide concentrations in eggs.

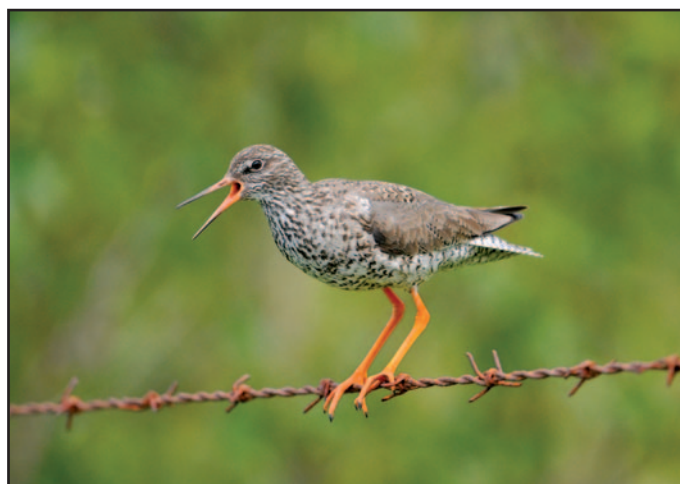
\* \* \* \* \*

**60** The productivity of breeding Lapwings in County Donegal increased from a mean of 0.8 to over 1.0 during the five-year operation of the CABB (Cooperation Across Borders for Biodiversity) project. The increase in productivity was due largely to increased productivity at the three sites with predator fences – Sheskinmore, Magheragallon and Rinmore. Despite a continued decline of almost 20% at other sites, there was an overall increase in the Lapwing population of almost 10% at the fenced sites.

**61** As part of the CABB project, BirdWatch Ireland restored over 400 hectares of blanket bog at Fiddandarry in the Ox Mountains, Co Sligo, a blanket bog SAC owned by the NPWS. Over 2,000 peat dams were installed over 32 kilometres of drainage channel, raising the water-table, to prevent further drying out of the bog and to restore the carbon sequestration potential of the site.

**62** In spring 2022, CABB staff counted 39 pairs of Lapwings at Rinmore in County Donegal, where a predator-proof fence has been in place since 2014, when there were just 17 pairs. This represents a 129% increase in eight years.

**63** The first predator fence (located on Inishee in the Shannon Callows) was so successful it resulted in a 340% increase in wader pairs between 2009 and 2014 (from 22 pairs to 97 pairs), and density (pairs per hectare) increased from 0.7 to 3.3. It resulted in the wader population expanding into suitable habitat in the surrounding area, and was used to promote the erection (and funding) of other fences nationally.



Redshank

RICHARD T MILLS



## Seeing The World Through Nature

A landmark educational project for teachers of blind and visually impaired children



Seeing the World through Nature is a landmark educational project representing a collaboration between BirdWatch Ireland, BirdLife Cyprus, BirdLife Malta, the Polish Society for the Protection of Birds and the Polish Association for the Blind, funded by the European Commission through its Erasmus+ funding stream.

The project was built on the successes of other recent environmental education initiatives that have involved the BirdLife International partnership, most notably the award-winning Erasmus+ Empowering Teachers and Pupils for a Better Life through Nature project. It also drew inspiration from Spring Alive, the ongoing multi-national environmental education project centred around migratory birds, operated by BirdLife partners across Europe, Central Asia and Africa and sponsored by HeidelbergCement.

**Niall Hatch**  
Head of Communications & Development  
BirdWatch Ireland

The aim of the project was to develop environmental educational resources for teachers who work with blind and visually impaired children, in consultation with international experts in this field, to enable them to deliver an engaging and enriching programme of environmental education in a truly appealing manner. These resources, which take the form of eleven blocks covering key aspects of birds' lives and behaviours, are available for download free of charge at <https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/fun-learning/seeing-the-world-through-nature>.

A special bird sound app, entitled Meet the Birds, was also produced as part of the project to enhance the learning materials and to make it easier for teachers and pupils to appreciate and identify the sounds that birds make. This is available for download both for iOS and Android.

The project was also designed to give the opportunity to teachers to strengthen their skills and confidence when it comes to teaching about nature, to understand and learn how to teach about nature and how to use the educational resources to be developed to engage disabled pupils in various school subjects.





## Fiddandarry drain-blocking

CABB blanket bog restoration at Fiddandarry, County Sligo



Survey work underway at Fiddandarry Bog

As part of the CABB (Co-operation across Borders for Biodiversity) project, supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, BirdWatch Ireland, in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), carried out restoration work at an important blanket bog site in County Sligo. Fiddandarry, a 400-hectare area of blanket bog in the ownership of the NPWS, is part of the Ox Mountains SAC (Special Area of Conservation). Much of the site still supports active peat formation, but some parts are degraded as a result of drains installed in the 1980s to prepare the site for forestry or peat extraction. The NPWS acquired the site before this could happen, but the drains have continued to have a negative impact on the bog habitats by lowering the surrounding water table.

Through CABB, plans were made to restore the natural ecohydrological condition of the site by means of a programme of drain-blocking and to monitor the resulting impacts on vegetation and water levels. This is one of the first restorations of blanket bog in Ireland (there have been a number on raised bogs) and the monitoring data will greatly inform further restoration work on blanket bogs.

Following baseline monitoring in the two preceding years, in early 2021 the contractor (Galway-based Matt Farrell, who has carried out a number of similar projects) began the restoration work, using





diggers with specially designed tracks to minimise damage to the sensitive vegetation. Over several weeks, 2,000 peat dams were installed at pre-defined points across 43 kilometres of drains.

Hydrological monitoring carried out by BEC and RPS, the consultants engaged in the site-monitoring, indicated that summer mean water levels were higher at 78% of monitoring plots, following the drain-blocking work. This will result in the water table being raised in the surrounding area, allowing sphagnum mosses to grow and permitting the return of peat-forming conditions. Many plants, such as Oblong-leaved Sundew, Lesser Bladderwort and Bogbean, thrive under these conditions, and the nationally rare Marsh Saxifrage has also been recorded at Fiddandarry.

Healthy bogs play an important role in combatting climate change through carbon sequestration, a process by which carbon dioxide is absorbed from the atmosphere by plants and stored in accumulating peat. As well as improving conditions for biodiversity, the works at Fiddandarry will play a role in meeting Ireland's European and international climate change targets.

BirdWatch Ireland played an essential role in drawing down the funding and working with our CABB partners to deliver this crucial project.

**Anita Donaghy**  
Head of Species and Land Management  
BirdWatch Ireland



Peat dam on drain at Fiddandarry Bog





## Birds Connect

Connecting people with biodiversity through citizen science surveys, outreach and training

BRIAN WHITE



Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary, Men's Shed members display their nest boxes

Birds Connect was a new project from BirdWatch Ireland with grant funding from the Community Foundation for Ireland. The project's focus was on connecting people and biodiversity through citizen science, outreach and training. It had a particular emphasis on improving access and participation in bird projects for people with disabilities, new communities and minority groups.

The project was split up into five main areas to cater for a diverse audience with a wide range of skills and wildlife knowledge. A new section of the BirdWatch Ireland website was also created for it, with information and archived media.



### Webinars

During 2021 and 2022, BirdWatch Ireland ran a series of seven online webinars. Topics covered were The Dawn Chorus, Ireland's Woodpeckers, Swifts, Dalkey, Rockabill, The Irish Garden Bird Survey' and Ireland's Wintering Waterbirds. These talks were archived on YouTube. 2,093 people signed up to our webinars and 4,437 have viewed them on YouTube.



Members of the Irish Wheelchair Association building nest boxes

FIONA DICKINSON

### Identification guide

A laminated bird identification guide was created with designer C  il  n MacLochlainn for direct provision centres and nursing homes. The guide features 50 Irish birds with information on getting out and seeing them. The text was in English, Irish, French and Arabic. The laminated, concertina-folding guide can be taken into the field or kept by the window. Translations were kindly provided by the Irish Refugee Foundation, the Heritage Council and Fearghas MacLochlainn.

### Community nest box scheme

BirdWatch Ireland worked with local branches, Tidy Towns groups and Men's Sheds groups to produce bird nest boxes to be installed in nursing homes and direct provision centres throughout Ireland. Residents received bird guides, and over 100



Learning about birds at Hazel Hotel Direct Provision Centre, Co Kildare

ANDREW LYNCH





LORCAN SCOTT

Sanctuary in Nature gathering at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

nest boxes and bird tables were installed nationwide. Some, such as Coosan Men's Shed in Athlone, used the opportunity to teach woodwork to new members.

Among the centres that participated were Mosney Community Village, Hazel Hotel Direct Provision Centre, Rathmore Holiday Village Direct Provision Centre, Bridgewater House Direct Provision Centre, Greenhill, Carechoice and St Joseph's Community Nursing home in Trim and The Dunraven Centre (Irish Wheelchair Association).

## Citizen science surveys

Two citizen science projects – The Irish Long-eared Owl Survey and Starling roosts and murmurations – were run by Birds Connect. 171 people took part in our Long-eared Owl survey, and 73 in our Starling survey, giving us valuable data to aid in our ongoing conservation and monitoring work.

## Events and outreach

The project allowed us to participate in a range of events, including the Mosney Community Village residents' outing to Christ Church Cathedral and Newgrange in collaboration with Sanctuary in Nature, and paying a visit to the National Council for the Blind Ireland as part of the Heritage Council's Coming to

Your Natural Senses workshop, to give a bird song talk. We also presented an online dawn chorus talk with Clann.

The outcome of the project was a new generation of people connecting with birds and biodiversity, engaging in a meaningful way with nature, and experiencing important areas for birds and biodiversity in their localities, as well as an increase in the number of highly skilled and trained survey volunteers and community groups across Ireland taking part in citizen science surveys to help protect birds and biodiversity. There was a significant increase in the number of community-led bird and biodiversity projects rolled out across the country, which have had a direct benefit for the conservation of birds and biodiversity at local level.

**Andrew Lynch**  
Birds Connect Project Officer  
BirdWatch Ireland



ANDREW LYNCH

Learning to prepare birdfood at Rathmore Holiday Village Direct Provision Centre, Co Kerry



TERENCE CASSIDY

Peter Farrell, Laurentia Vaughan and Brian Sweeney (managers at Carechoice Nursing Home, Trim, Co Meath) with Eddie the groundsman in rear

# Summary of Accounts 2021

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The details given below are a summary of accounts for BirdWatch Ireland and BWI Retail and Services Limited in 2021. A full set of accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 is available from BirdWatch Ireland on request.

	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>		
Membership subscriptions	355,653	278,953
Donations & bequests	153,838	157,599
Grants	24,886	24,886
Advertising and other income	74,414	57,496
Conservation projects	2,032,778	1,264,489
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,641,569</b>	<b>1,783,423</b>

### Expenditure

Conservation project costs	1,878,147	1,367,228
Administration expenses	493,277	496,865
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,371,424</b>	<b>1,864,093</b>

### Net surplus/deficit

	<b>270,145</b>	<b>-80,670</b>
Total funds brought forward	1,585,877	1,666,547
Total funds carried forward	1,856,022	1,585,877
Revaluation reserve	120,000	120,000
	<b>1,976,022</b>	<b>1,705,877</b>

### Represented by:

Non-current assets	2,959,632	3,036,556
Net current (liabilities) / assets	-208,049	-523,303
Other creditors	-775,561	-807,376
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,976,022</b>	<b>1,705,877</b>

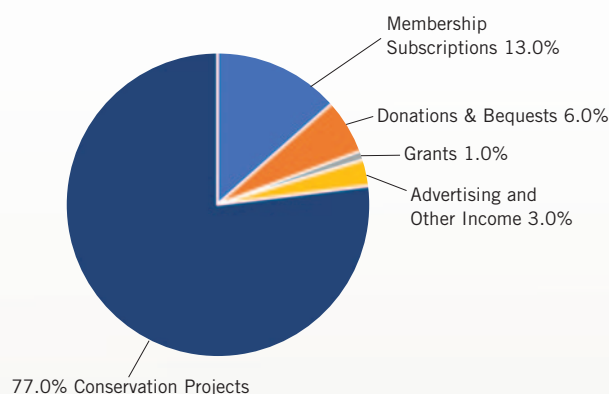
### BWI Retail and Services Limited

Turnover	178,319	193,279
Cost of sales	-114,688	-119,553
Gross profit	63,631	73,726
Administrative expenses	-63,631	-73,726
Interest payable	0	0
Profit before taxation	0	0
Tax on profit	0	0
Profit after taxation	0	0
Total funds brought forward	1,434	1,434
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>1,434</b>	<b>1,434</b>

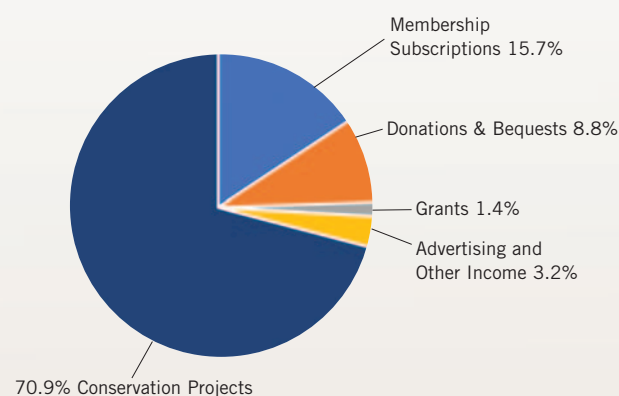
### Represented by:

Fixed assets	1,444	1,678
Net current assets / (liabilities)	-10	-244
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,434</b>	<b>1,434</b>

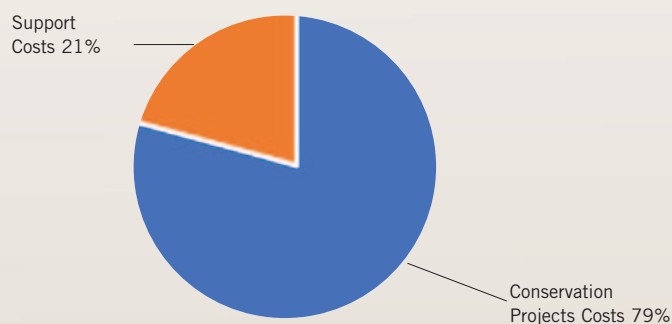
## INCOME 2021



## INCOME 2020



## EXPENDITURE 2021



## EXPENDITURE 2020

