



BirdWatchIreland
protecting birds and biodiversity

Annual Report 2022





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 2022

James Fitzharris (Chairman)
Jonathan Taylor (Secretary)
Eugene O'Brien (appointed on July 2nd 2022)
Conor O'Brien (appointed on July 2nd 2022)
Des Fagan (appointed on July 2nd 2022)
Alan Mulligan (appointed on July 2nd 2022)
Conor O'Keeffe (resigned on July 2nd 2022)
Enda Lee (resigned on July 2nd 2022)

Published by: BirdWatch Ireland,
 Unit 20, Block D, Bullford Business Campus,
 Kilcoole, Greystones, Co Wicklow, A63 RW83
 Telephone: (01) 281 9878
 Email: info@birdwatchireland.ie
 Web: <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie>
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 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:
Jay
 By Shay Connolly

Welcome

Report from the Board

We are all aware that the last few years have been difficult for BirdWatch Ireland, but we are now making progress on a number of fronts.

The **Charities Regulator** launched an investigation into the affairs of BirdWatch Ireland in 2021. The **Final Report** of the Charities Regulator's investigation was published in November 2022 and contained a number of conclusions. The Regulator noted that BirdWatch Ireland continued to engage with the Charities Regulator and that, as part of that engagement, the Regulator's Compliance and Enforcement Unit would follow up with us to ensure that any outstanding actions required to address matters referred to in the Report have been implemented.

The Board and staff of BirdWatch Ireland have worked hard since 2021 to address the issues identified, as a result of both the correspondence with the Charities Regulator and the conclusions of the Report.

BirdWatch Ireland now has new leadership in place. At the last **Annual General Meeting**, in July 2022, the Board was significantly revitalised when **four new Directors** were elected with a range of skills to complement those of the two existing Directors. Both the **Governance Committee** and the **Audit & Risk Committee** have been re-instituted with all the Directors involved.



MAURA TURNER

Bird ringer Phil Brennan shows a Reed Warbler to Clare Branch members at Shannon Airport Lagoon in September 2022

A new **permanent CEO** has been in place since May 2022, and the Finance function has been considerably strengthened with the appointment of a new **Head of Finance and Administration** in September 2022, as well as the appointment of another financially qualified staff member.

As a result of all these changes, the finances of BirdWatch Ireland are in the process of being stabilised, and substantial steps have been taken to strengthen and change policies, working methods, operational oversight and governance procedures. This will ensure that they remain consistent with recognised best practice in the charity and NGO sectors.

BirdWatch Ireland is committed to addressing the findings in the Report and we will strive to ensure that it continues its vital work as Ireland's largest wildlife conservation charity.

The income of BirdWatch Ireland is spent only on the protection of wild birds and their habitats through conservation initiatives, education and research. While the financial position of BirdWatch Ireland remains

SHAY CONNOLLY



Whitethroat

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challenging, on a positive note, it continues to improve, albeit slowly. Understandably, successfully operating an organisation like ours, especially with tight resources in an inflationary era, is not an easy task.

Members will have noted that BirdWatch Ireland recorded another surplus in 2022 of €295k (excluding the effects of a property revaluation), up on the previous year's surplus of €270k. This is welcome following some years when there were net losses.

Chris Corrigan, our Acting CEO, stepped down in May 2022, as agreed. We are very grateful to Chris for his major contribution to the work of BirdWatch Ireland during his time with us. Our new CEO, **Linda Lennon**, joined the company in May 2022, and is committed and dedicated to the role. We have benefited considerably from her expertise and knowledge, and we look forward to continuing to work with her during the coming years.

The long-running Covid-19 pandemic continued into 2022, but its effects have abated considerably and, thankfully, society and the economy were finally able to return to what has become the "new" normal.

As a result, our key conservation work was able to take place with very limited disruption. As can be seen from this Annual Report, a wide range of conservation and public awareness activities, for which we have an excellent reputation, was undertaken during the year across all of our operations.

Our ongoing efforts to protect wild birds and biodiversity in Ireland is made possible by the professionalism, expertise and commitment 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.

We launched **two appeals** during the year: the first to support critically important **Farmland Biodiversity** and the other to help us deal with the devastating effects of avian influenza, more commonly known as **Bird Flu**.



Linda Lennon, CEO, BirdWatch Ireland

Thank you to all our members and supporters who gave so generously to these appeals, which to date have raised over €86,000.

The Board has met for eight Board meetings since the last AGM in July 2022, 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 retiring by rotation. We are pleased to have one new candidate going forward for election to the Board.

Finally, thank you to all our members and donors for all your support, which is crucial to the success of BirdWatch Ireland.

**Jim Fitzharris, Des Fagan, Alan Mulligan,
Conor O'Brien, Eugene O'Brien & Jonathan Taylor**

Annual Report 2022

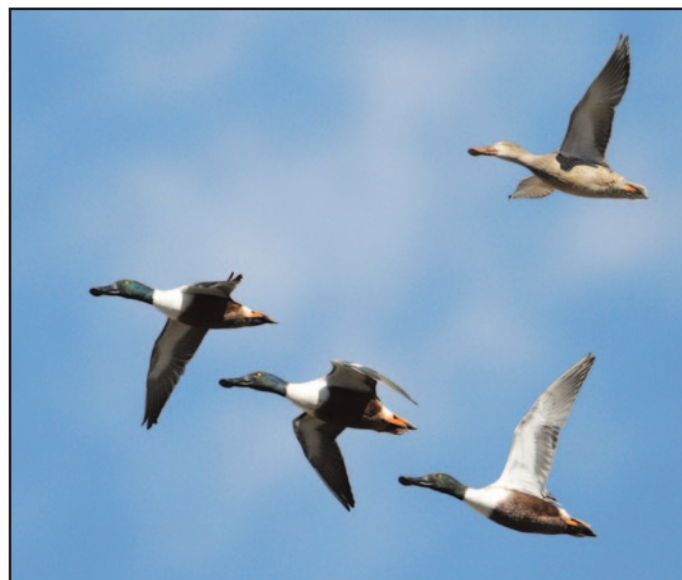
Good News

Some of BirdWatch Ireland's most notable works and successes in 2022

1 We held three **Countryside Bird Survey (CBS)** training sessions, with kind support from the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, at the University of Limerick; Cabragh Wetlands outside Thurles, Co Tipperary; and the Riverside Hotel in Sligo. Over thirty squares were taken up by attendees at these sessions. Such training sessions are a very effective way of finding new surveyors to fill gaps in the CBS survey coverage.

2 The **Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS)** and the **Countryside Bird Survey (CBS)** celebrate their 30th and 25th anniversaries respectively in 2023. BirdWatch Ireland has been proud to coordinate these projects, two of Ireland's largest and longest-running wildlife monitoring programmes, since their commencement in winter 1994/95 and spring 1998, respectively. The success of the projects over the decades has been underpinned by our dedicated network of volunteer bird surveyors, BirdWatch Ireland staff, and staff of the **National Parks and Wildlife Service**, which funds the surveys.

3 Together, these monitoring programmes have amassed an enormous amount of data over the decades, which have been used for many purposes, but perhaps, most importantly, to inform on the status of our wintering waterbirds and their wetlands, and the status and trends of our common and widespread breeding birds.



RICHARD T MILLS

Shovelers

4 The **Irish Wetland Bird Survey** published trends for 36 wintering waterbird species, based on data gathered between the 1994/95 and 2019/20 seasons. As well as the national trends for the species surveyed, for the first time the individual site trends were published for 97 sites around the country. This new detail allows sites with particularly positive or negative trends for particular species to be identified and investigated further. See the report here: www.bit.ly/wetland-site-trends.

5 **Countryside Bird Survey Indicators** have been updated to cover the period from 1998 to 2021, providing insights into how Irish common birds and Irish common farmland birds are faring. See the report here: www.bit.ly/cbs-indicators.

6 Our Countryside Bird Survey data is now integrated in the **Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme** site-level-data portal. This simplifies how international researchers can request and integrate Irish data into their ornithological research.

7 Participation in the **Irish Garden Bird Survey** was very high in winter 2021/22, at 1,899 households across the country, our second-highest level of participation ever. BirdWatch Ireland's **In Your Nature** podcast featured an episode all about the survey, including the patterns and trends it has shown us down through the years, as well as full details on how to take part.

All of us at BirdWatch Ireland would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the **Ballymaloe Group** for its continued sponsorship of the survey.



JOHN FOX

Yellowhammer

Good News (*continued*)

8 Our **tern colony conservation programme** had a significant boost in 2022, with BirdWatch Ireland resuming a wardening role at **Lady's Island Lake** in County Wexford. This colony experienced a really good year, with high counts for all four nesting tern species and good productivity (chicks reared per nesting pair) – see results in the table below. A lot of our normal work activities, such as chick ringing, were curtailed in 2022 due to Avian Influenza restrictions. However, colony counts and productivity estimates were made at all sites.

Tern numbers and their productivity at the east coast tern colonies wardened by BirdWatch Ireland in 2022

Site	Species	Pairs	Productivity
Rockabill	Roseate	1,834	0.89
Rockabill	Common	1,503	0.68
Rockabill	Arctic	49-60 (min-max)	0.12
Lady's Island	Sandwich	1,736	0.72
Lady's Island	Roseate	313	1.36
Lady's Island	Common	1,112	1.47
Lady's Island	Arctic	715	1.15
Dalkey	Arctic	76	0.07
Dublin Port	Common	547	0.50
Dublin Port	Arctic	>13	Not recorded
Kilcoole	Little	245	0.79

9 A new record high count for **Roseate Terns** at Rockabill, Co Dublin, was recorded – 1,834 nesting pairs – though productivity was reduced on the 2021 season, but was still close to the five-year average.

10 Tern numbers at the **Dalkey Islands** and **Dublin Port** were relatively stable, but a key concern was the overall low number of Arctic Terns at the three Dublin sites and their very poor productivity.

11 The **Dublin Port tern colony** is distributed between four nesting structures: most terns nest on two floating pontoons, one in the Tolka estuary and one located off the Great South Wall. Common Terns had good productivity at both of these sites (0.72 and 0.56 chicks reared per nesting pair, respectively).



Common Tern

BRIAN BURKE

12 In 2022, the **Little Tern colony** at Kilcoole, Co Wicklow, had another record-breaking year, with 245 pairs nesting. This is a National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) project, run by BirdWatch Ireland, which now hosts around half of the entire Irish population, thanks to the hard work of our wardening team to protect the terns 24/7 throughout the breeding season.

13 In 2022, we began to increase our ringing efforts at Kilcoole, to better study the survival and recruitment of the adult **Little Terns**. In addition, we started colour-ringing **Ringed Plovers** at Kilcoole, helping to shed light on the behaviour, survival and movements of another Amber-listed species of conservation concern in Ireland.

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14 In 2022, **Dublin City Council** and BirdWatch Ireland agreed a three-year project working on **urban birds**. The project includes community-led measures for **Swifts**, as well as raptor and river bird surveys within Dublin City Council boundaries; waterbird surveys; education and outreach; and breeding bird surveys.

15 **County Swift Surveys** were completed in counties Louth and Limerick – funded by the **Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht** as well as **Louth and Limerick County Councils** – to locate nesting colonies in towns and villages in each area. The projects aim both to protect colonies and to establish community-led Swift conservation projects.

16 A condition was added to the planning permission for an office block in Dooradoyle, Co Limerick, that **Swift bricks** had to be installed during construction. This was a direct result of recommendations made by BirdWatch Ireland to city and county planners during a training seminar in April, presenting the results and recommendations of the 2022 Limerick Swift Survey.



Swift

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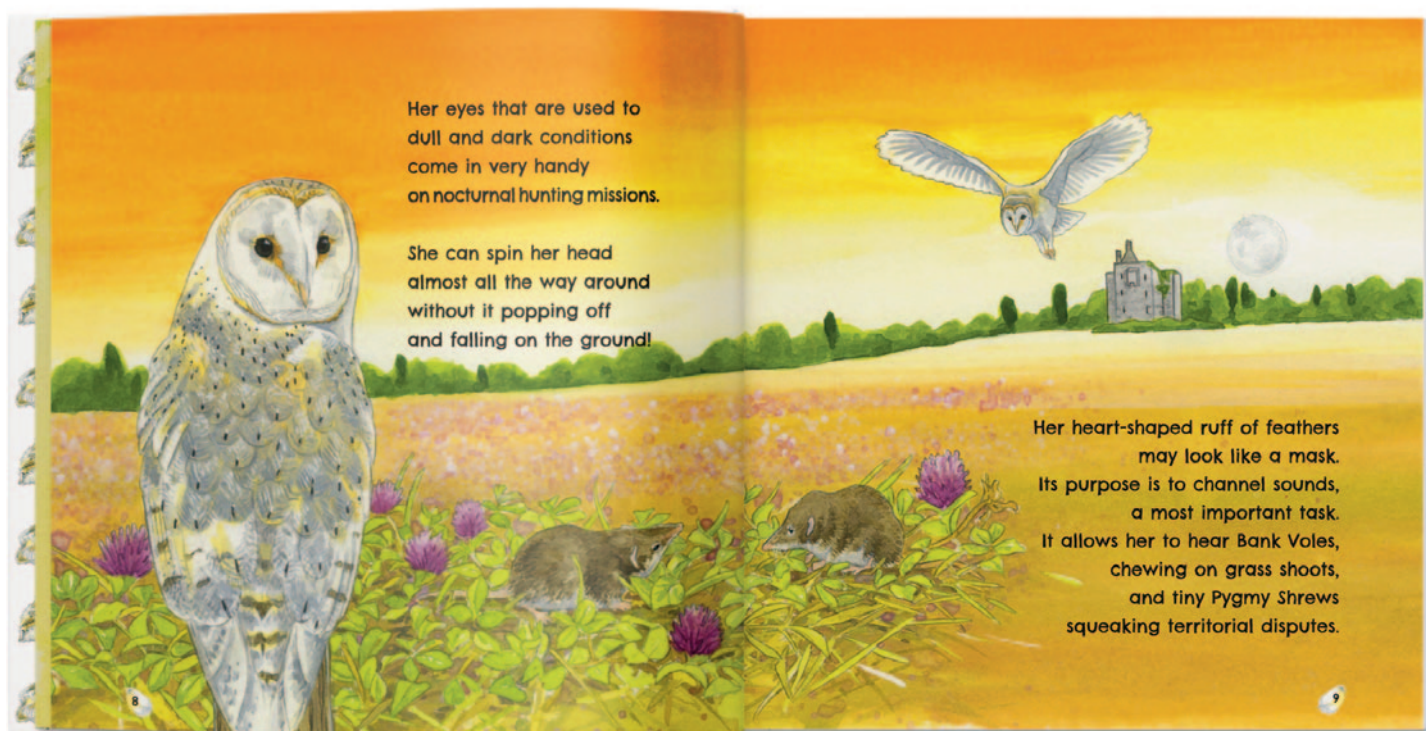
17 We completed county surveys of breeding **Barn Owls** in Limerick, Wexford and Clare in 2022. Results from each county were very positive, with an increase in breeding range of 155%, 22% and 366% in Clare, Limerick and Wexford, respectively, over the last 10 years, compared with the **2007-2011 Bird Atlas**.

We recorded 23 breeding sites in Clare, 38 breeding sites in Limerick, and 12 breeding sites in Wexford. This represents significant increases in the number of known nest sites in each county, compared with our previous knowledge. Overall, the picture across these counties is that the Barn Owl populations are increasing: a rare and welcome good news story for a Red-listed species.

18 We have continued to install **Barn Owl nest boxes** in various counties. In 2022, BirdWatch Ireland and our associated groups installed over 130 Barn Owl nest boxes across several counties. With nest boxes continuing to be the most important known nest type for Barn Owls, many of these boxes will hopefully become occupied in the not-too-distant future.

19 In 2022, we expanded our Barn Owl monitoring team. **Alan McCarthy** joined BirdWatch Ireland in April 2022 as **Barn Owl Research Officer**. We also employed surveyors during the breeding season to assist with the monitoring projects, thereby greatly expanding our Barn Owl monitoring and research capacity. We also increased our community engagement and involved several local groups in Barn Owl monitoring and nest box installations. Investing time in local groups quickly paid off, as they found several new nest sites, and identified ideal locations for nest boxes.

20 Our national monitoring effort on Barn Owls reached an all-time high. For the first time ever, we ringed over **120 broods** of Barn Owls. This massive effort is providing invaluable information to help us understand Barn Owl ecological and conservation requirements, and these efforts will pay dividends in the years to come, with future recoveries from this large cohort being inevitable.



A sample from *Golden Wings*, our children's book about the life of a Barn Owl, published in 2022

Good News (*continued*)

JOHN LUSBY



Young Barn Owl being fitted with leg ring

Already we have had several recoveries of birds ringed in 2022, helping us to gain further insights into the species' dispersal and survival.

21 We designed a '**Barn Owl Action**' to implement Barn Owl conservation measures as part of ACRES, the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme. It includes detailed guidance to allow landowners to undertake Barn Owl conservation measures, including providing nest boxes, reducing rodenticides and engaging in habitat creation and management to benefit Barn Owls.

22 We partnered with the **Irish Raptor Study Group** and the **Golden Eagle Trust** to coordinate and deliver the fifth national survey of **Hen Harriers** in 2022. Ireland's breeding Hen Harriers were censused with the help of an extensive network of trained volunteers and surveyors.

23 We produced a magical children's book, **Golden Wings: A Tale About an Irish Barn Owl**, with **Galway County Council**, author **Susan O'Donohoe**, illustrator **Robert Vaughan** and designer **Sara Sirtoli**, which was printed and distributed free of charge to all primary schools in County Galway.

24 We employed new technologies to help survey for breeding **Merlins**, including for the first time the use of drones with thermal sensors to detect nest sites. This showed significant merit and helped us to increase our understanding of Ireland's smallest breeding falcon and our ability to locate its nest sites.

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25 BirdWatch Ireland's **In Your Nature** podcast, co-hosted by **Ricky Whelan** and **Niall Hatch**, continued to entertain audiences far and wide, with highlights during 2022 including pieces on Life at Cape Clear Bird Observatory, Spiders, the Irish Garden Bird Survey and an exclusive interview with Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity, Senator Pippa Hackett, on land-use policy. The podcast, which is supported by **Laois, Offaly** and **Westmeath County Councils** and the **Heritage Council**, regularly topped the charts as the most-listened-to nature podcast in Ireland.

26 BirdWatch Ireland was awarded the **Heritage Week Biodiversity Award** together with event collaborators **Kildare Bat Group** for the "Bats About Rooks" event hosted in Portlaoise during Heritage Week 2022. The event introduced participants to the fantastic urban wildlife spectacle of the locally roosting **Rooks** (up to 4,000+ birds) and the diversity of **bats** that call Portlaoise Town Park home.

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



BIRDWATCH IRELAND

'In Your Nature' podcast co-host Ricky Whelan

28 We 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 **East Coast Nature Reserve**.

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29 The **Curlew EIP** undertook satellite-tagging of **Curlews** and began collaborating with **NPWS Bio-Data's** tagging project to combine data for analysis. Information gathered through the project may provide a unique insight into population dynamics and habitat usage, which could help inform the design of conservation measures and targeting of future agri-environmental schemes. It also helps locate nests for fencing and it targets work by our **Curlew Keepers**. Seven birds were tagged in 2021 and an additional five in 2022. The Curlew EIP is the only project satellite-tagging birds in the same area each year. Information gathered is providing valuable information about localised population dynamics in the project areas.

30 In the Lough Corrib area, Curlew productivity (number of fledglings) for the total number of pairs confirmed breeding has been at the level of population stability or growth in all years of the EIP, except 2020 (when Covid-19 impacted both delivery of predator management and survey effort). By enabling us to track breeding birds to active nest sites that can then be protected with fences, monitoring, etc, satellite-tagging could play a vital role in increasing Curlew populations.

31 Corrib is also an important site for breeding **Lapwing**, **Redshank** and **Snipe** and the Curlew measures also benefit these species. Populations of Lapwing and Redshank increased from approximately 23 and 10 pairs in 2021 to 30 and 20 pairs in 2022, respectively. Fledgling productivity for Lapwing was above the level required for population growth in 2022, while Redshank productivity was comparably high.



Lapwing

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32 The **Cooperating Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB)** project, funded by the EU's **Interreg VA** programme, concluded its work in 2022. BirdWatch Ireland worked particularly in the border counties of Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim to help protect breeding waders. Our surveys showed that 433 breeding pairs were recorded in 2017, which declined to 390 pairs in 2021, but most of the decline was accounted for at one or two sites. Some sites saw an increase – the largest was at Rinmore on the Fanad Peninsula, which increased from 36 pairs to 50. This site is protected by a predator fence. Overall, we found that sites with predator fences do better than sites without. There are now five predator fences in Donegal, as a result of **Interreg IVA** and **VA** funding.

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

34 In conjunction with NPWS, we undertook **blanket bog restoration work** through drain-blocking at Fiddandarry in the Ox Mountains, Co Sligo. By spring 2022, 35 kilometres of drains had been blocked with almost 3,000 peat dams, facilitating the recovery of 444 hectares of blanket bog.

35 The **Marine Protected Area Management and Monitoring (MarPAMM)**, project, funded by **Interreg VA**, completed its work in 2022 and three reports summarising the data gathered and the outcomes were collated. Tracking data revealed the distribution and habitat use of seabird breeding species from both potential Marine Protected Area regions in the study area.



Curlew, with Little Egret behind

Good News (*continued*)

DOMINIQUE BABLEE McDAID



Kittiwake

36 As part of our MarPAMM work, we monitored breeding adult **Kittiwakes**, a vulnerable species nesting in a colony within the Carlingford SPA. In the North and North-West regions of the MarPAMM project, **Manx Shearwater** and **European Storm-petrel** populations were monitored, revealing information about important sites and interconnections between regions. In addition, complementary, multi-year studies of species such as large gulls (*Larus* species) provided insights into their habitat use, foraging areas and movements.

37 We assisted with or led on the preparation of two **Marine Protected Area** plans, one for the North Channel/North Coast and one for Carlingford Lough. These plans have been submitted to the statutory authorities for consideration.

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38 We were awarded funding by **Donegal County Council** and **NPWS** to undertake a pilot survey of breeding **Snipe** in Donegal in 2022. Undertaking accurate surveys for breeding Snipe was shown to be challenging in terms of timing and ensuring that maximum use was made of suitable weather windows. No dedicated baseline population survey information is available for Snipe at present and the numbers breeding in Ireland are relatively unknown; our pilot survey work indicated they may possibly be rarer than previously thought. Our report provided updates to recommended survey methodology and suggestions related to logistics and staffing which would assist in future surveys for this enigmatic and declining breeding wader.

39 We succeeded in securing a commitment from the Government to invest €30 million in supporting farmers and conservation keepers to protect and restore populations of **breeding waders**. This represents the largest investment ever in the conservation of wild bird species in Ireland.

40 Our **farmland bird hotspot mapping** has enabled better targeting of agri-environment schemes to avoid tree planting in important areas for waders.

41 After gathering and analysing all the available data, we developed **seabird hotspot maps** which were integrated into the Areas of Interest for **Marine Protected Areas**, as part of the **Fair Seas** project. We also launched the Fair Seas maps and report in June 2022.

42 We helped to make a bad Strategic Plan for the **Common Agricultural Policy** better by advocating for wild birds and other biodiversity consistently at the CAP Consultative Committee meetings and by sending detailed briefs to government.

43 We continued to hold the Government to account on **agriculture** and **afforestation policy**, as well as on **fisheries** and **Marine Protected Area legislation**.

44 In December 2022, we organised a workshop to discuss the need and obligation to implement Article 17 of the **Common Fisheries Policy**. It was attended by politicians and advisors, representatives of state agencies including the **Marine Institute**, **BIM** and **Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority**, fisheries organisations representatives and eNGOs.



Snipe

DOMINIQUE BABLEE McDAID

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45 June 2022 saw the welcome return of the **Bord Bia Bloom festival** in Dublin's Phoenix Park, following its cancellation in both 2020 and 2021 as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. Running for five days across the June bank holiday weekend, it is BirdWatch Ireland's largest public engagement and membership recruitment event of the year. It proved to be our most successful event outing to date, producing in excess of 350 new memberships and thousands of euro in donations.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the team of volunteers who so kindly and graciously contributed their time, expertise and effort into making this event such a success.

46 2022 also saw the welcome return of the **Dublin Horse Show**, at which BirdWatch Ireland was delighted to resume the running of its public engagement and membership recruitment stand. It proved to be another extremely successful outing for the organisation, attracting over 125 new memberships.

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47 BirdWatch Ireland's media profile continued to grow at national and local level, with over 1,100 separate media appearances or mentions recorded during 2022.



CORK BRANCH

Cork Branch members and Glounthane Community volunteers constructing a hide at Harper's Island Wetlands reserve

48 Key media highlights included regular public information slots on RTÉ One's *Today* programme and Virgin Media One's *Ireland AM* programme, multiple appearances on RTÉ Radio One's *Mooney Goes Wild* and regular expert contributions to RTÉ programmes such as *Drivetime*, *Liveline*, *The Ray D'Arcy Show* and *Morning Ireland*, as well as to multiple prominent radio stations, including Newstalk, Today FM, East Coast FM, LMFM, Shannonside FM and BBC Radio Ulster.

49 In May, BirdWatch Ireland staff and branch members participated in RTÉ Radio One's live seven-hour *Celtic Dawn Chorus* broadcast, featuring contributors and radio stations across Ireland and in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Brittany. The main broadcast location was BirdWatch Ireland's **Cuskinny Marsh Nature Reserve** near Cobh, Co Cork.

50 The **BirdWatch Ireland website** attracted over 445,000 users and more than 1.6 million page-views. The most popular sections were the pages giving an overview of Ireland's bird species, our Irish Garden Bird Survey page and our advice page on what people should (and should not) do if they find a young bird out of its nest.

51 BirdWatch Ireland's volunteer **branch network** was forced to curtail or cease virtually all activities while Covid restrictions were in force. 2022 finally saw the gradual resumption of many branch outings, talks and other events, as well as the return of many of their local conservation projects and monitoring efforts.

52 BirdWatch Ireland branch highlights during 2022 included the formation of a new **Mayo Branch** committee, the expansion of the **Limerick Branch's** Swift Nest Project, the erection of predator-proof fencing by our **Kildare Branch** to protect Lapwings and other vulnerable ground-nesting birds, and the holding of numerous dawn- and dusk-chorus birdsong celebration events around the country.

KILDARE BRANCH



Predator-proof fence erected by Kildare Branch to protect nesting Lapwings

Good News (*continued*)

53 The **Fingal Branch** successfully wardened the Portrane (Co Dublin) **Little Tern colony** for the fifth successive year, overseen by **Tom Kavanagh** and **Paul Lynch**. Overall, 24 pairs made 30 nesting attempts, and six young were reared to fledging in August.

54 For full details of the activities carried out by our branches during 2022, please see the separate **BirdWatch Ireland Branches Report 2022** that is available for download from the BirdWatch Ireland website.

55 2022 saw the conclusion of our **Seeing the World through Nature** project, a landmark educational initiative 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 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 www.bit.ly/learning-blocks.

56 As part of **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 free of charge for download both for iOS and Android.

57 We continued our participation in **Spring Alive**, the migratory bird outreach and education project for **BirdLife International** partners across Europe, Central Asia and Africa. Ireland once again recorded the highest number of observations per capita of the key Spring Alive "Spring Messengers," namely Swallow, Swift, Cuckoo, Sand Martin and Ringed Plover.

57 2022 also saw the launch of a brand-new, completely revamped Spring Alive website: www.springalive.net.

58 BirdWatch Ireland was both delighted and honoured to be nominated for the **National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2022**, which were held in October, winning the County Wicklow category. In addition, staff member **Andrew Lynch** was nominated in the "Hero of the Year" category for his work both at our **East Coast Nature Reserve** and on our **Birds Connect** community outreach project.

MAURA TURNER



Andrew Lynch (second from left) leading a training session for Countryside Bird Survey volunteers in Limerick

Cape Clear Bird Observatory

The Observatory on Cape Clear Island, Co Cork, re-opens as Covid restrictions are lifted

BIRDWATCH IRELAND



Wildlife Officer Steve Wing (centre) and course leader Dick Coombes (far right) with participants in the Seabirds and Migration course on Cape Clear

After a couple of very challenging years for our Cape Clear Bird Observatory in County Cork, arising from the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions, we were delighted to be able to fully open once more in April 2022.

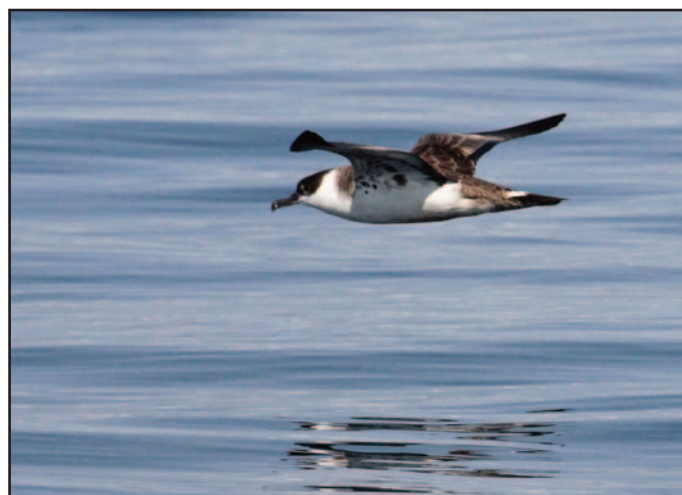
The observatory held monthly **Weekend with the Warden** events that proved to be exceptionally popular. Participants enjoyed spending time with BirdWatch Ireland's **Cape Clear Wildlife Officer, Steve Wing**, taking part in bird ringing, bird surveys, sea watches and all the other activities of a busy bird observatory.

In addition, **Dick Coombes** ran a fully booked **Seabirds and Migration** course in September. These events, virtually all of which were fully booked out, provided a real lift to the local community, bringing in new faces to the island and allowing us to welcome back old friends.

Although we missed out on any American bird visitors, 2022 provided us with a first for Cape Clear Island in the form of a **Citrine Wagtail**, a lifer for Steve, who found the bird. Visitors also got to enjoy such rare vagrant birds as **Fea's-type Petrel**, **Little Shearwater**, our second **Pink-footed Goose**, **Dotterel**, **Rustic** and **Little Buntings**, and a good range of warblers, including **Wood**, **Subalpine**, **Yellow-browed**, **Radde's** and **Dusky**!

A pelagic in mid-September afforded us superb views of hundreds of **Great**, **Cory's** and **Sooty Shearwaters**, along with **Minke Whale** and a possible **Killer Whale**!

Steve summed up the birding year as "Not bad for a quiet year!" Full details of the year are available in the **Cape Clear Bird Observatory Annual Report 2022** on the BirdWatch Ireland website at www.bit.ly/CCBO-2022.



Great Shearwater off Cape Clear Island

STEVE WING

Our Nature Reserves

Our reserves network supports 17 of Ireland's Red-listed bird species

Collectively, 17 Red-listed bird species of conservation concern in Ireland were recorded across the BirdWatch Ireland nature reserve network in 2022, including four that occur in nationally important (>1%) breeding numbers.

Over 50 pairs of breeding waders were recorded at our **Annagh Marsh Reserve** in 2022. The most significant achievement was the return, for the eighth successive year, of breeding **Red-necked Phalaropes** to this site in County Mayo, with six nests hatching young successfully, resulting in juveniles being seen from mid-July. Other species included 30 pairs (up four since 2021) of **Lapwings**, which successfully reared at least 53 chicks to the flying stage, along with three pairs of **Redshank** and a maximum single count of 12 displaying **Snipe**. Close by, singing male **Corncrakes** were again heard at our **Termoncarragh Meadows Reserve**, with at least two males moving around the area.

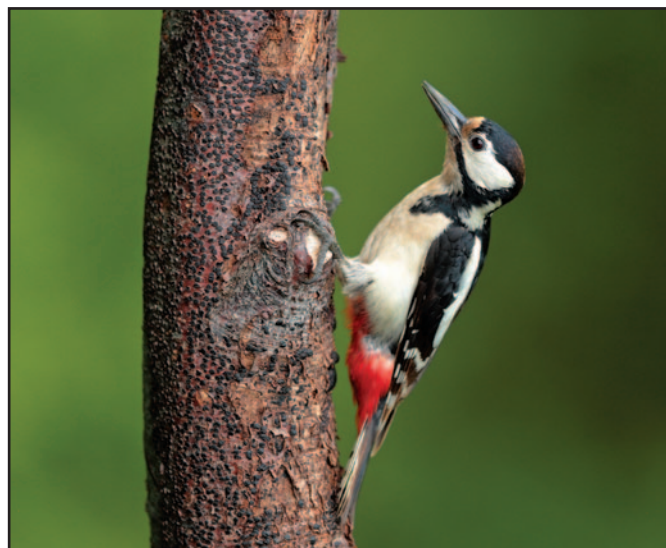


DAVE SUDDABY

Great Yellow Bumblebee at Annagh Marsh Reserve

Our **East Coast Nature Reserve** continues to increase in popularity, not only for people, but also for six Red-listed bird species of conservation concern, along with increasing numbers of breeding **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** and **Reed Warblers**. The work at East Coast Nature Reserve is boosted by volunteers, who provide invaluable assistance in delivering our reserve work programme.

Across our reserve network, volunteers contributed some 3,000 man-hours, creating a sense of pride and community.



COLIN RIGNEY

Great Spotted Woodpecker: now resident at East Coast Nature Reserve

RICHARD T. MILLS



Red-necked Phalaropes

These two reserves continue to host the highest numbers of Ireland's rarest true bumblebee, the endangered **Great Yellow Bumblebee**. Its peak month of activity is August and during this period over 45 individuals were recorded at **Termoncarragh Meadows** and nearly 30 individuals at **Annagh Marsh**.

Summary of Accounts 2022

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The details given below are a summary of accounts for BirdWatch Ireland and BWI Retail and Services Limited in 2022. A full set of accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022 is available from BirdWatch Ireland on request.

	2022 €	2021 €
Income		
Membership subscriptions	349,215	355,653
Donations and bequests	122,581	153,838
Grants	24,886	24,886
Advertising and other income	74,391	74,414
Conservation projects	2,116,684	2,032,778
Total	2,687,757	2,641,569

Expenditure

Conservation project costs	1,892,120	1,878,147
Administration expenses	500,189	493,277
Total expenditure	2,392,309	2,371,424

Net surplus/deficit	295,448	270,145
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Gains on revaluation of fixed assets	339,750	0
Net movement in funds	635,198	270,145

Total funds brought forward	1,976,022	1,585,877
Total funds carried forward	2,611,220	1,856,022

Represented by:

Fixed assets	3,2329,502	2,959,632
Net current assets / (liabilities)	125,290	-208,049
Other creditors	-746,572	-775,561
Total net assets	2,611,220	1,976,022

BWI Retail and Services Limited

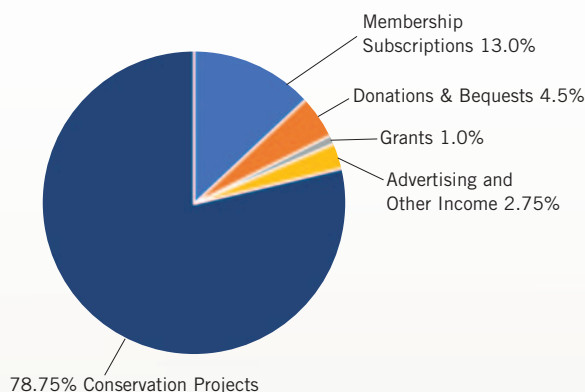
Turnover	184,217	178,319
Cost of sales	117,949	114,688
Gross profit	66,268	63,631
Administrative expenses	66,268	63,631
Operating profit	0	0

Total funds brought forward	1,434	1,434
Total funds carried forward	1,434	1,434

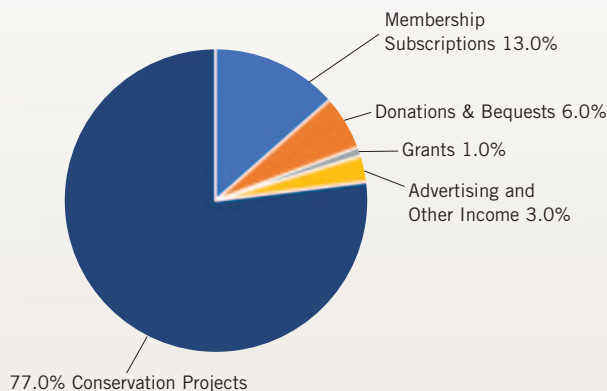
Represented by:

Fixed assets	1,210	1,444
Net current assets / (liabilities)	224	-10
Total net assets	1,434	1,434

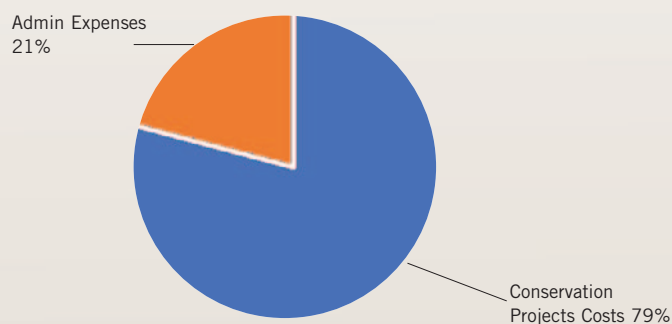
INCOME 2022



INCOME 2021



EXPENDITURE 2022



EXPENDITURE 2021

