



BirdWatchIreland
protecting birds and biodiversity

Annual Report 2025





South Dublin Branch members on a dawn chorus walk on Killiney Hill in May 2025. **Photograph:** Shane Kerr (Chair, South Dublin Branch)

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 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 is the BirdLife International partner in the Republic of Ireland

BirdWatch Ireland Directors in 2025

James Fitzharris (Chairman – stepped down from Board 17 June 2025)

Alan Mulligan (Board member throughout, elected as Chairman 17 June 2025)

Jonathan Taylor (Secretary)

Lorraine Benson (appointed 17 June 2025)

Yvonne Kelly

Congella McGuire

Micheál Ó Briain (appointed 17 June 2025)

Conor O'Brien

Eugene O'Brien

Frances Threadgold (stepped down from Board 24 February 2025)

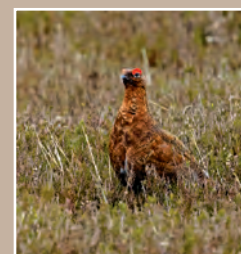
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BirdWatch Ireland complies with the Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland.

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COVER
PHOTOGRAPH:
Red Grouse
by Shay Connolly

Welcome

Report from the Board

The Board is pleased to report that BirdWatch Ireland had another very successful year in 2025, both from an operational and a financial perspective. This continued the positive results from 2023 and 2024.

Throughout 2025, our staff, branch network and volunteers were again involved in many conservation, monitoring, policy, research and related activities, details of which are included in this Annual Report. The examples included in the report exemplify our continued and constant efforts to protect wild birds and biodiversity in Ireland, as part of our major contribution to preserving our precious natural heritage.

Within Ireland, and indeed globally, the financial climate continues to be challenging. However, while we are continuing to monitor our finances closely and make savings where possible, our finances continue to improve steadily. We recorded a healthy, positive surplus of €328,000 in 2025, with the cash position continuing to improve.

Our operational and financial success over the past few years is due to the hard work, professionalism, expertise, dedication and commitment of all the staff, ably led by **Linda Lennon CBE**, our CEO up to July 2025. Linda, who joined us in 2022, stepped down in July 2025 at the end of her contract. As a result of Linda's excellent work, we believe that the organisation is now on a robust, sustainable



Dr Andrew Kelly, BirdWatch Ireland's CEO

footing, both financially and operationally. Linda had a transformative effect on BirdWatch Ireland during her three years as CEO, and we are all very appreciative of her outstanding leadership.

In June 2025, we welcomed our new CEO, **Dr Andrew Kelly**, who has a strong background of leadership in a range of other organisations within the charity sector, both in Ireland and the UK. Andrew has picked up where Linda left off, and we are confident he will continue to ensure that BirdWatch Ireland stays at the forefront of environmental advocacy in Ireland.

The Board members would also like to put on record once again their sincere thanks and appreciation to their former Chair, **Jim Fitzharris**, who stepped down at the end of his term at the 2025 AGM. Jim helped to steer the organisation to a more sustainable financial position, as well as achieving full compliance with the Charities Governance Code. Following Jim's successful period as Chair, the Board has appointed him as **President of BirdWatch Ireland**, which will enable the organisation to continue to benefit from his considerable experience.



Jim Fitzharris, President of BirdWatch Ireland

Continued next page....

Report from the Board (*continued*)

Alan Mulligan was appointed as Chair at last year's AGM and is committed to ensuring that BirdWatch Ireland continues to operate at the highest possible level of governance.

The Board would also like to express sincere thanks, on our own behalf and that of our members, to the **BirdWatch Ireland team, staff** and **volunteers** for all their hard work in 2025. Their work has enabled the organisation to continue to thrive.

Since its publication in 2024, and throughout 2025, we have made significant progress on our **Strategic Plan 2024–2030** on all four pillars: **(1) Conservation, (2) Policy and Advocacy, (3) People Engagement** and **(4) Organisational Resilience**. The Board and staff of BirdWatch Ireland meet regularly to review progress, and have continued to do so into 2026. Strategic planning and ongoing critical review are crucial to the success of our work.

We were also delighted to see so many of our **branches** represented at our face-to-face event in Portlaoise in February 2026, and we very much appreciate their support, which they show in so many ways. This includes holding talks and events as well as offering up thousands of days' volunteering, from enhancing habitats and carrying out surveys across the country, to recruiting new members. These combined efforts have been invaluable in helping us go from strength to strength.

We are committed to holding a **Branches Meeting** each year to hear from our branches about how best we can support them, and how they can contribute most effectively to our work. Our new CEO, **Dr Andrew Kelly**, has attended several branch meetings to give presentations about BirdWatch Ireland's work and he hopes to attend more branch meetings in 2026 and beyond.

BirdWatch Ireland has achieved so much in 2025, and this Annual Report provides details of some of BirdWatch Ireland's most notable activities and successes in 2025 in our **Good News** section, including: the launch of our **Important Bird Areas for Seabirds (IBAs)**; the development of a **Nature Restoration Plan** for Red- and Amber-listed birds; the successful bid for the **Irish Wetland Birds/Countryside Bird Survey (IWeBS/CBS)** contract; the commencement of



Alan Mulligan, Chair of the Board of BirdWatch Ireland

PeacePlus Nature – an EU-funded project to protect breeding waders in Donegal over the next four years.

The Board met nine times during 2025, with the customary excellent attendance record of all Board members. As was shown in the AGM Notice of Meeting, two existing Board members will fall to retire by rotation at the 2026 AGM – **Yvonne Kelly** and **Congella McGuire** – who are both eligible for re-election. **Conor O'Brien** has decided to step down from the Board for personal reasons, leaving a vacancy on the Board. The Board would like to thank Conor for his invaluable contributions over the past few years.

In 2025, we were very pleased to welcome two new Board members, **Dr Lorraine Benson** and **Dr Mícheál Ó Briain**, who have both made significant contributions since their appointment.

Finally, the Board wishes to thank all our **members** and **donors** for their support, which is crucial to the success of BirdWatch Ireland. We would also like to thank the funders of our work, including the **National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)**, the **Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)**, **local authorities** and others.

The Board Members

(Alan Mulligan (Chair), Congella McGuire, Conor O'Brien, Eugene O'Brien, Jonathan Taylor, Yvonne Kelly, Lorraine Benson, Mícheál Ó Briain)

Annual Report 2025

Good News

Some of BirdWatch Ireland's most notable accomplishments and updates from 2025

Seabirds

In 2025, BirdWatch Ireland continued to manage tern colonies at **Dublin Port**, **Rockabill Island** (Co Dublin), **Kilcoole Beach** (Co Wicklow) and **Lady's Island Lake** (Co Wexford). These are the most important breeding sites for **Roseate Terns**, **Common Terns**, **Arctic Terns**, **Little Terns**, **Sandwich Terns** and **Mediterranean Gulls** in the Republic of Ireland.

Management of these colonies involves habitat management, predator control, ringing and nest monitoring to ensure a successful breeding season and the continued collection of important scientific data.

A wardening programme was launched on **Ireland's Eye**, with **Fingal County Council**, the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** (NPWS) and **Howth Castle Estate**, to monitor seabirds and reduce visitor impacts. The project was very successful, with visitors benefitting from the knowledge and guidance from our wardens, and seabirds benefitting from the reduced footfall in key parts of the island.

For the second year, censusing and productivity monitoring of key seabird sites on the east coast was carried out, enhanced this year for the first time by the use of a drone. Sites monitored included **Bray Head**, **Howth Head**, **Ireland's Eye** and **Lambay**. Many species showed increases from 2024, but this may have been due to the enhanced coverage.



CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS GALWAY

Volunteers constructing a tern nesting platform at Lough Atalia, Galway

We began a **Common Tern colour-ringing project**, working with **Conservation Volunteers Galway** to support their conservation work. In total, 14 adult terns were fitted with colour rings, including a 19-year-old individual from Cork Harbour. The work was funded by **Galway City Council** and the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** under the **Local Biodiversity Action Fund**.

Common Terns, which were impacted by bird flu in 2023, did well at **Dublin Port** (+34% to 367 pairs) and **Lady's Island** (+22% to 817 pairs) and remained stable at **Rockabill** (+4%, 842 pairs).

After getting hit hard by the avian influenza in 2022 and 2023, **Sandwich Terns** at **Lady's Island** returned to pre-influenza numbers in 2025.

After experiencing an all-time high of 285 in 2024, **Little Tern** breeding-pair numbers at **Kilcoole Beach** dropped to 132 in 2025. This could be attributed to significant predator pressure and a lack of food.

Roseate Terns increased in number at **Lady's Island** (270 pairs) and remained stable at **Rockabill** (1,671 pairs). Breeding success was high at **Lady's Island** (1.1 chicks fledged per pair) but lower at **Rockabill** (0.7) because of predation by gulls.

CÓILÍN MacDOCHLAINN



Kittiwakes and Guillemots in nesting colony on Bray Head, Co Wicklow

Good News (*continued*)



R TOWE

Part of the tern colony at Lady's Island Lake, Co Wexford

Table 1. Tern numbers and their productivity at the east coast tern colonies wardened by BirdWatch Ireland in 2025.

Site	Species	Pairs (trend since 2024)	Productivity
Rockabill	Roseate	1,671 ↓	0.72
Rockabill	Common	842 ↑	0.73
Rockabill	Arctic	~20 –	0.28
Lady's Island	Sandwich	1,710 ↑	0.84
Lady's Island	Roseate	270 ↑	1.18
Lady's Island	Common	817 ↑	1.38
Lady's Island	Arctic	181 ↓	0.36
Lady's Island	Little	9 –	1.33
Dublin Port	Common	367 ↑	1.3
Dublin Port	Arctic	16 ↑	1.4
Kilcoole	Little	132 ↓	0.18

9 We continued to monitor **Arctic Tern** populations and productivity at key sites, though, for reasons unknown, they have suffered low productivity at many locations in recent years.

10 Highlights from our ringing projects included records of a 25-year-old **Common Tern**, hatched as a chick in 1999 in Dublin Port and nesting there in 2025, and a 19-year-old **Common Tern** hatched in Cork Harbour in 2006 and nesting in Lough Atalia, Galway, in 2025.



RICHARD T MILLS

Common Terns: we learned that one we ringed was now 25 years old

11 For a number of years the **Little Tern** colony at Portrane, in north Co Dublin, was monitored and protected by volunteers from BirdWatch Ireland's **Fingal Branch**. In 2025, BirdWatch Ireland staff and Fingal Branch volunteers met with **Fingal County Council** to discuss the possibility of the council funding BirdWatch Ireland to manage this colony in 2026.

12 The target of fieldwork for the **Lambay Whiskey Puffin Project** in 2025 was the recapture of some of the 10 **Puffins** fitted with geolocator tags in summer 2024. The team was unable to stay on the island this year, but three long daytrips were made in late June and early July during which we recaptured three birds and put new tags on five individuals. The data downloaded from the tags are presently being analysed and soon we hope to report on where these birds wintered.

At the same time, we fitted tags to seven **Kittiwakes** nesting on the cliffs close to the Puffin colony on Lambay. We expect that the locational data gathered from these in 2026 will make an interesting comparison with those tagged on Rockabill (11 km away) in recent years.

Waders & Farmland Birds

13 BirdWatch Ireland was one of nine partners in a coalition led by **RSPB NI** to draw down €20m over the next four years to deliver **PeacePlus Nature** – an ambitious programme to tackle the decline in priority species and habitats in the border counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland. BirdWatch Ireland's main focus in the project will be the protection and conservation of **breeding waders** in Co Donegal through continued management of successful predator exclusion fences and focusing on the protection of breeding waders on **Tory Island**.

PeacePlus Nature is supported by **PEACEPLUS**, a programme managed by the **Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)**.



Lapwings

RICHARD T MILLS

14 We were awarded funding from **Community Foundation Ireland** to carry out habitat enhancement works at three breeding wader sites in Co Donegal that are important for **Lapwing** and **Curlew**. The works included scrub removal, creation of wader scrapes, ditch-reprofiling and rush-cutting.

15 **Donegal County Council** provided funding to continue the management and monitoring of three predator exclusion fences established in Donegal as part of the **Cooperating Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB)** project (2017–2022). Three fences were made operational for the breeding season, and population monitoring showed that **Lapwing** numbers remained relatively stable and the number of chicks produced was sufficient to maintain populations.

16 We worked with **Donegal Acres** to deliver important bird actions on farms entered in the **Acres CP scheme**, including identifying Landscape Actions for breeding waders on Acres farms and training farmers and advisors in bird-related measures.

17 In late 2025, we joined a consortium led by the **SECAD Partnership CLG**, which successfully bid for a new **European Innovation Project (EIP)** aimed at enhancing arable habitats for biodiversity along the south coast, focusing on **Hen Harrier** winter roost sites.

Good News (*continued*)

Peatland Birds

18 BirdWatch Ireland continued long-term breeding bird monitoring across blanket bogs in Connemara, Co Galway, and on raised bogs to improve understanding of the importance of Irish peatlands for breeding birds and to assess how bird communities respond to peatland restoration.

This work is helping to provide the scientific evidence needed to guide restoration projects and improve conservation outcomes for breeding birds in peatland landscapes.

Urban Birds

19 We successfully integrated all known **Swift nest records** into the **Office of Public Works (OPW)** GIS database, providing the OPW with information necessary to look at opportunities to adapt OPW buildings to support Swift populations.

20 We began a programme of resurveying **OPW heritage sites** to assess how **Swift** populations have fared at these sites between survey years. We also began a programme of surveying OPW modern building stock to assess opportunities for Swifts at these sites.

21 We successfully carried out **Swift surveys** for **Fingal County Council**, **Galway County Council** and **Cavan County Council**.

22 We trialled a small-scale survey of **House Martins** on behalf of **Fingal County Council** in north Dublin.



RICHARD T MILLS

House Martin gathering mud for nest-building

23 We delivered the **Brent Goose Ambassador Programme** to four schools and one community group across Dublin city, directly involving approximately 330 people.

Reserves

24 It was another successful breeding season at our **Annagh Marsh Reserve** (Co Mayo), with 71 nesting attempts by **Lapwings**, which produced an estimated 144 chicks. **Red-necked Phalaropes** also returned to breed, making two nesting attempts; one was successful but the other failed at the egg stage for unknown reasons.

25 At our **Termoncarragh Meadows Reserve** (Co Mayo), five calling male **Corncrakes** were recorded, with the first males vocal from mid-April.

26 At our **East Coast Nature Reserve** (Co Wicklow), our warden and volunteers worked tirelessly on maintaining the visitor infrastructure and habitats, from repairing the ramps and boardwalks to managing the reedbed to provide an open vista from the hides for wintering waterbirds. To assist with this work in future seasons, a **utility terrain vehicle** was purchased at the end of the year with funding support from **Pfizer** through the LEED fund scheme.

27 Our **Fingal Branch** volunteers completed the construction of an extension to the raised boardwalk at our **Rogerstown Estuary Reserve** (Co Dublin), allowing safe access to the **Ger McCann Hide**, which overlooks the saltmarsh and mudflats within the estuary.



POTR RAK

Swift: a key conservation priority species for BirdWatch Ireland



Boardwalk in the East Coast Nature Reserve

28 In June, **Planning Solutions Consulting Ltd** were awarded a tender to deliver a feasibility study on options for the future management of our **Kilcolman Nature Reserve** (Co Cork). The study began in autumn 2025 (it was completed in summer 2026) and was supported through the **LEADER Programme** under the **CAP Strategic Plan 2023–2027**.

29 At our **Cuskinny Marsh Reserve** (Co Cork), we created a series of small islands to provide a safe roosting area for shorebirds. The project was supported by **Cobh Credit Union** and **BioMarin** through the LEED fund scheme.

■ Surveys

30 Following decades of hard work and dedication, data from the **Irish Wetland Bird Survey** (I-WeBS) is set to be published in 2026 by the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** (NPWS) as a detailed **Irish Wildlife Manual**. The report will cover up to the 2022/23 season, detailing trends for 44 waterbird species sufficiently monitored by I-WeBS. It is a landmark publication and a reward for our thousands of volunteers who have participated in I-WeBS since its inception over 30 years ago.

31 The **Countryside Bird Survey** (CBS) and **I-WeBS** teams prepared detailed trends for 51 common bird species and 44 waterbird species to support the Government's reporting on the status and trends of birds in Ireland to the European Union under Article 12 of the Birds Directive. It is planned by NPWS to publish both sets of results in its **Irish Wildlife Manual** series.

32 BirdWatch Ireland's bid to coordinate the national **I-WeBS** and **CBS** projects for the coming six years on behalf of the **NPWS** was successful. Now supporting five full- and part-time staff, these projects oversee hundreds of surveyors scientifically monitoring hundreds of sites across Ireland every year, and have been running since the 1990s. They provide many of our most valuable scientific insights on the trends and status of birds in Ireland.



Sedge Warbler

Good News (*continued*)

DOMINIQUE BABLEE McDAID



Chough: BirdWatch Ireland carried out surveys of the species in west Clare

33 Preparations for the **2026 International Swan Census** got underway in 2025. To ensure comprehensive survey coverage across the country, it was essential to allocate key census sites at an early stage among volunteers, National Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers and BirdWatch Ireland staff.

34 During the 2025 **CBS** season, a record total of 339 squares was successfully surveyed. This was the highest number of completed squares in any CBS breeding season to date, exceeding the previous record of 330 squares in 2024.

35 Spring was marked by the annual **CBS training workshops**, which helped new participants learn the CBS surveying methods. Workshops were held at **Clara Bog Visitor Centre** and the campus of **University of Limerick**, giving us a valuable opportunity to connect with new birdwatchers and recruit additional volunteers to continue the survey's work. A total of 53 attendees resulted in 28 squares being taken on.

36 The **Irish Garden Bird Survey (IGBS)** remains hugely popular – 1,638 households took part in winter 2024/2025, the highest level of participation since the Covid lockdowns. Long-term citizen science projects such as the IGBS provide invaluable data for monitoring wild bird populations and informing conservation decisions.

Many thanks to **Ballymaloe** for its continued sponsorship of the **Irish Garden Bird Survey** and to the many citizen scientists nationwide who send us their data and to the volunteers who help enter that data.

37 A **Breeding Chough Survey** was undertaken along the west coast of Clare from Kilkee to Loop Head during April to June 2025; it was funded by **Clare County Council**.

In total, 19 Chough nests were recorded along the 30km stretch between Kilkee and Loop Head Lighthouse, all on the coastline or within 1km of it. Of the 19 nests found, 16 fledged 31 chicks, giving a mean productivity of 1.63 fledged young per pair and a nest density of 0.63 nests per km².

Chough numbers in the survey area exceeded the 1% national threshold for site designation and should be surveyed again to show continuous use.

38 Our survey work with **Clare County Council** also looked at the distribution of **Choughs** and **Peregrine Falcons** along the **Cliffs of Moher** during the 2025 breeding season.

Four **Chough** nest sites were confirmed, all of which were located within the **Cliffs of Moher SPA**. Their breeding habitat was natural (as opposed to man-made), with the four confirmed nest sites located on cliff faces within the SPA. Across the four nests, a total of 12 fledglings was recorded, giving a mean productivity of 3.0 fledglings per pair. It is hoped that this survey work will be continued in 2026.



Merlin

RICHARD T MILLS



Red Grouse: BirdWatch Ireland developed thermal drone methodology to monitor its distribution and estimate numbers and productivity

39 **Merlin surveys** were expanded in Connemara, including to the **Connemara Bog Complex SPA**, building on recently developed drone and thermal survey techniques. The work provided improved information on breeding distribution, densities and breeding success while refining innovative survey methods for one of Ireland's least studied breeding raptors. The surveys are helping to inform conservation management and the site-specific conservation objectives for the SPA.

40 BirdWatch Ireland continued to coordinate specialist monitoring of breeding **Hen Harriers** across Ireland's Special Protection Area network. Working alongside the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** and dedicated survey teams, breeding success, productivity and population trends were monitored using drone and thermal technologies to support conservation management, nest protection measures and long-term assessment of the national population.

41 BirdWatch Ireland successfully developed and trialled a new **thermal drone surveying** technique for breeding **Red Grouse** in the **Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA** in counties Laois and Offaly on behalf of the **National Parks and Wildlife Service**. The project demonstrated the potential of UAV-mounted* thermal imaging to estimate breeding densities, distribution and productivity, providing an important new monitoring approach for this declining upland species.

42 Building on the discoveries made in 2024, BirdWatch Ireland expanded **Nightjar surveys** across the south-east using **passive acoustic monitoring** and **thermal drone** technology. Nightjars were confirmed at three sites, including one successful breeding pair. Ireland's only known Nightjar nest was located using thermal drone surveys, providing valuable new information on the species' breeding ecology and conservation requirements.

43 Drone-based surveys of breeding **Cormorants** were undertaken at selected Special Protection Areas on behalf of the **National Parks and Wildlife Service**. The surveys demonstrated the effectiveness of UAV technology for accurately counting breeding colonies while minimising disturbance, providing improved baseline data for long-term monitoring of this important seabird species.

44 BirdWatch Ireland continued its nationwide **Barn Owl conservation programme** through county-scale surveys, population monitoring and expansion of nest box schemes. These county surveys in Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon, together with new nest box initiatives and monitoring across counties Cavan, Cork, Clare, Longford, Monaghan, Westmeath, Galway and Kildare, are improving our understanding of Barn Owl distribution and population trends while supporting the recovery of this iconic species through partnerships with **local authorities** and the **NPWS**.

* UAV – unmanned aerial vehicle or drone

Good News (*continued*)



ANITA DONAGHY

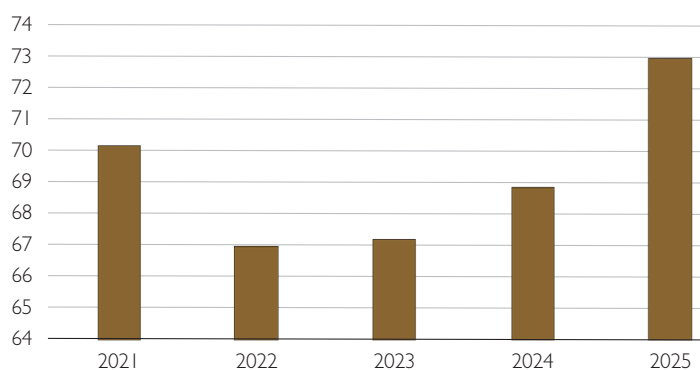
CEOs Andrew Kelly (BirdWatch Ireland) and Juliet Vickery (British Trust for Ornithology) signing the Bird Atlas 2027–31 partnership agreement

45 A short-term **EU-funded (LIFE22)** project was carried out to promote the recording of 'Complete Lists' through **BirdTrack**. We are happy to report that the combination of targeted outreach and improved guidance worked. There was a substantial increase in the number of people who captured their bird observations in this way.

More structured, high-quality data is now available from BirdTrack for use in scientific studies. Several actions to elevate the use of BirdTrack are planned to continue through 2026 to reinforce the impact of the project.

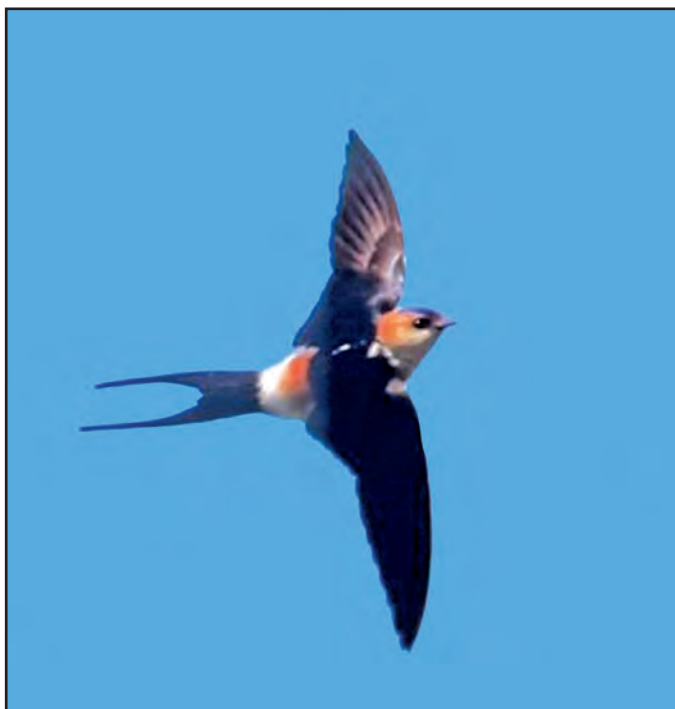
46 During 2025, our planning started for **Bird Atlas 2027–31**, with partners the **British Trust for Ornithology**, **Scottish Ornithologists' Club**, **Welsh Ornithological Society** and the **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**. It has been almost 20 years since the last Atlas, which ran from 2007–11. It analysed over 16 million bird sightings made by 40,000 volunteers, these coming from 3,870 10-km squares across Britain and Ireland and covering four winter and breeding seasons, reporting on the status and changes in the distribution and abundance of over 500 bird species.

Percentage of records entered as part of Complete Lists (Republic of Ireland)



Percentage of bird records entered as part of Complete Lists in BirdTrack.

DICK COOMBS



Red-rumped Swallow on Cape Clear Island, Co Cork, on 29 April 2025

53 To record and monitor key environmental indicators on Cape Clear Island, we invested in new tools to record **moth species**. In total, 283 moth species were recorded across the island during 2025, with 29 new species being added to the island's list of Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths).

54 Lodging at the CCBO underwent considerable upgrading and refurbishment, thanks to a generous donation from the **Olivemount Trust**. New flooring, beds, furniture and white goods all combined to provide a more comfortable experience for our staying guests, with further substantive upgrades set for 2026. Visit the BirdWatch Ireland website for further information and booking details.

55 Our 2025 **Cape Clear Wildlife Courses** were fully booked. Many thanks to everyone who participated.

■ Policy and Advocacy

56 Oonagh Duggan, BirdWatch Ireland's Head of Policy and Advocacy, was elected again to the Steering Committee of the **Environmental Pillar**, the coalition of **Irish Environmental Network** member organisations advocating for the environment in Ireland. Oonagh was also elected by the Pillar as the representative to the **Department of Agriculture's** Consultative Committee on the Common Agricultural Policy, set to discuss Ireland's next CAP strategic plan.

57 In conjunction with our partners at **BirdLife International**, we researched, analysed and published our **Important Bird Areas** (IBAs) for seabirds in Ireland. 75 IBAs were identified on land and sea, which we are now calling for to be designated as **Special Protection Areas** (SPAs) where they are not already so designated. These 75 IBAs join the global network of 13,958 IBAs.



Oonagh Duggan on North Bull Island, Co Dublin

■ Cape Clear Bird Observatory

47 In March, we welcomed **John Horton** as the new Warden for **Cape Clear Bird Observatory** (CCBO).

48 To better understand and protect the biodiversity of Cape Clear Island, research began to record the life on the island. In total, over 750 species of flora and fauna were recorded on the island. Several nationally significant records of rare plant, insect and sea-life species further evidenced the importance of the island as a beacon for birds and a haven for a wide variety of other wildlife.

49 New project ideas were explored to protect and enhance important habitat areas on Cape Clear Island to make this international hotspot for bird migration an even more attractive 'stop-over' for thousands of birds each spring and autumn.

50 In 2025, 182 bird species were recorded at Cape Clear Island, the highest annual total so far this century.

51 Two new species of bird were added to the comprehensive list of birds recorded on Cape Clear Island: an **Eastern Subalpine Warbler** in the spring and then, during the autumn, a **Pacific Diver**, taking the island species total to 352.

52 Bird ringing also had a notable year on Cape Clear Island, with more passerines being ringed than during any year since the observatory was launched in 1959. A **Red-rumped Swallow** ringed in May was the first of this species ever to be ringed in Ireland, while a **Marsh Warbler** in June was only the second of its species to be ringed in Ireland.

Good News (*continued*)



RICHARD T MILLS

South Lagoon, Bull Island, Dublin Bay

58 Of the 75 IBAs, the 24 marine sites and eight of the terrestrial sites are newly identified IBAs. The Government is legally obliged under the EU Birds Directive to designate areas important for breeding, feeding and wintering for certain bird species, including migratory birds, as SPAs. The Government has already committed to protecting 30% of Irish marine waters by 2030. If the marine IBAs identified by BirdWatch Ireland and BirdLife International are designated, they will make a significant contribution to this “30×30” target.

59 We lobbied the Government to advance **Marine Protected Area legislation** as part of the **Fair Seas** campaign, and gave a presentation to Dáil representatives on the matter.

60 BirdWatch Ireland started developing a plan for restoring the habitats of Red- and Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland, to inform the development of the national **Nature Restoration Plan** and to raise awareness of the habitat restoration needs of threatened wild bird species.

61 We set out a project proposal and fundraising strategy to undertake **avian offshore wind sensitivity mapping** to highlight areas of low, medium and high sensitivity of birds to offshore wind power development in Ireland. We received initial funding for this work, which will be progressed in 2026.

62 We met with European Environment Commissioner **Jessika Roswall** and EU Trade Commissioner **Maroš Šefčovič** to impress upon them the need to resist any weakening of EU environmental laws.

63 We wrote and submitted our views to the relevant planning regulators and authorities in five submissions on proposed Irish and UK offshore wind farms to better protect birds from any adverse effects of offshore wind power development while supporting the roll-out of renewable energies to tackle climate change. We also developed submissions on policy plans relating to birds and renewables and gave presentations, both nationally and internationally.

Development & Communications

64 June 2025 saw the appointment of **Dr Andrew Kelly** as BirdWatch Ireland’s new Chief Executive. Andrew has a strong background of senior leadership in a range of organisations, most recently including seven years as chief executive of the **ISPCA** and three years as director of the UK-based animal protection charity **Freedom for Animals**.



Dr Andrew Kelly, CEO, BirdWatch Ireland



The BirdWatch Ireland stand at the Bord Bia Bloom festival in June 2025

Andrew holds a first-class honours degree in zoology from the University of Glasgow and a PhD in evolutionary ecology from the University of Leeds. Following a number of years of post-doctoral research working on a wide range of taxa, including birds, sea turtles and invertebrates, Andrew moved into the animal welfare charity sector as manager (for six years) of the **RSPCA's** largest wildlife rehabilitation centre, where he developed a programme to measure post-release survival of rehabilitated wildlife. This was followed by two years as the head of the RSPCA's wildlife department, where he was responsible for developing and implementing RSPCA policy on wild animal welfare.

65 Dr Andrew Kelly's appointment as Chief Executive followed the stepping down of **Linda Lennon** after just over three years in the position. Linda had a transformative effect on BirdWatch Ireland during her tenure, and her outstanding leadership played a major role in putting the charity on a robust footing, both financially and operationally. All of us at BirdWatch Ireland are very appreciative of all of Linda's hard work at the helm of our organisation, and we wish her the very best for the future.

66 The many topics covered in the 47th edition of BirdWatch Ireland's peer-reviewed scientific journal **Irish Birds**, published in September 2025, included: Cormorants breeding in SPAs in the

Shannon Estuary; estimates of breeding seabirds in the Shannon and Fergus Estuaries; productivity analysis of the Common Swift in nest box projects; factors influencing trends in coastal grassland breeding waders in counties Donegal and Sligo; wintering birds of the non-estuarine coast in counties Sligo and Leitrim; and the breeding gulls and terns of Loughs Mask and Carra in Co Mayo. The issue also included both the **Irish Rare Bird Report** and the **Irish Ringing Report** for 2022. As Ireland's only ornithological journal, **Irish Birds** is a necessity for all serious birdwatchers and scientists working in the Irish conservation sector.



67 Running for five days across the June bank holiday weekend, the **Bord Bia Bloom** festival in Dublin's Phoenix Park is BirdWatch Ireland's largest public engagement and membership recruitment event of the year. The 2025 event proved to be one of our most successful to date, producing in excess of 300 new memberships and thousands of euro in donations. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers who so kindly and graciously contributed their time, expertise and effort into making this event such a success and without whom our participation would not be possible.

68 Key media highlights in 2025 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*, *Today with Claire Byrne*, *The Ray D'Arcy Show* and *Morning Ireland*, as well as to multiple prominent radio stations, including **Newstalk**, **Today FM**, **East Coast FM**, **LMFM**, **CI03 FM**, **Shannonside FM**, **Connemara Community Radio**, **Ocean FM** and **BBC Radio Ulster**.

69 In May, BirdWatch Ireland staff and branch members participated in **RTÉ Radio One's** seven-hour *Dawn Chorus Live* broadcast, helmed by **Derek Mooney** and featuring contributors across Ireland. The main broadcast location was BirdWatch Ireland's **Cuskinny Marsh Nature Reserve** near Cobh, Co Cork, where the main presentation team of **Niall Hatch** and **Jim Wilson** was based.

70 April 2025 saw the commencement of our ambitious **Communicating the Wonders of Irish Wildlife 2025–26** project, funded through the **Heritage Council's** Heritage Organisation Support Fund. This project was developed to enhance and extend our communications and outreach capacity in response to the markedly increasing interest in nature across Ireland, coupled with growing concern amongst the general public over the twin climate and biodiversity crises.

Key elements of the project included the recruitment of a Communications Officer and the provision of a dedicated wildlife information helpline and online response service, whereby members of the public can easily pose questions, report wildlife crimes, request assistance with bird identification and obtain advice on biodiversity-friendly actions. Between April and December 2025, 4,183 such queries were addressed.

71 As part of this Heritage Council-funded project, a very popular event in celebration of **National Heritage Week** was held on 19 August 2025 at BirdWatch Ireland's East Coast Nature Reserve in Newcastle, Co Wicklow. Entitled **Discovering the Wildlife of Wicklow's East Coast Nature Reserve**, it took the form of a 90-minute guided walk around the various habitat types managed for wildlife on the reserve.

72 2025 saw the release of additional episodes of our **In Your Nature** podcast, hosted by **Niall Hatch** and **Ricky Whelan**. Topics covered during the year included: Dark Skies Ireland; the Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project; Ealing Beaver Project in London; bird conservation in the Falkland Islands; an interview with



Niall Hatch leading a National Heritage Week walk in BirdWatch Ireland's East Coast Nature Reserve in August 2025

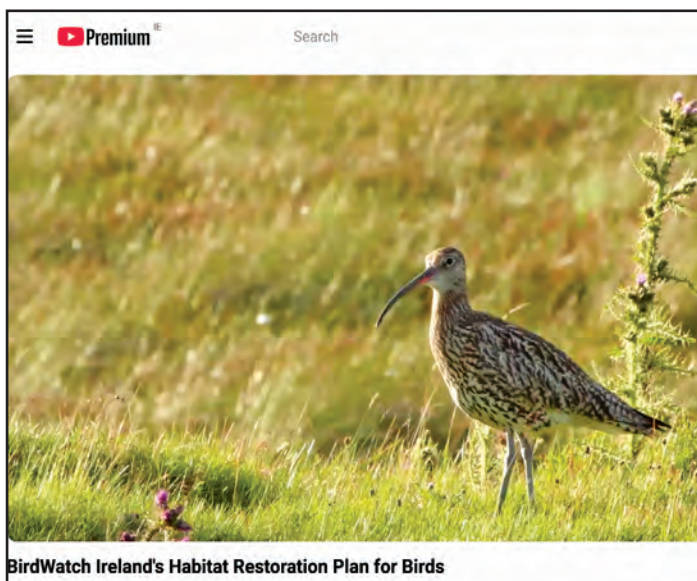
ANNE KIRWAN

ecologist and author **Pádraic Fogarty**; and recordings from the Whinchat Podcasting Stage at the **Global Birdfair** in Rutland, England, in front of a live audience. To listen to these and to all of our other episodes of **In Your Nature**, visit <https://inyournature.buzzsprout.com>.

Edited by **Ann-Marie Kelly**, **In Your Nature** is supported by **Laois County Council**, **Westmeath County Council**, **Offaly County Council**, the **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage** and **The Heritage Council**.

73 We continued our very popular “**Sparkbird**” feature in **Wings**, our magazine for BirdWatch Ireland members. In each issue, we invite different people to share what species sparked their initial interest in birds and, ultimately, helped to fuel their passion for birds and the many other natural wonders around us. It has been a great success since its launch, with members, branch representatives, BirdWatch Ireland staff and some well-known public figures taking the opportunity to share their stories.

74 We continued our participation in **Spring Alive**, the migratory bird outreach and education project for **BirdLife International** partners across Europe, Central Asia and Africa. In 2025, 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**.



Screenshot of frame in "BirdWatch Ireland's Habitat Restoration Plan for Birds," a BirdWatch Ireland video on YouTube.

75 The **BirdWatch Ireland website** attracted over 978,000 users and more than 2.3 million page-views, both of which represent new records. 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.

76 The videos on **BirdWatch Ireland's YouTube channel** received over one million views, with the clips featuring our Barn Owl and Hen Harrier work proving especially popular, along with videos relating to garden birds and our Irish Garden Bird Survey. To see our videos, please visit [youtube.com/BirdWatchIreland](https://www.youtube.com/BirdWatchIreland).

77 The number of subscribers receiving our free monthly email newsletter, **eWings**, exceeded 35,000 for the first time. The newsletter enjoys a click-through rate of in excess of 70%, which is exceptionally high. To subscribe to **eWings**, please visit <https://birdwatchireland.ie/ewings>.

78 BirdWatch Ireland is extremely grateful for the generous contributions made by its corporate supporters, which in 2025 included **Analog Devices, Antaris Consulting, Ballymaloe, BEM Ireland, Dublin Zoo, Fusco Foods, Greenbuild, Kirby Engineering Group, Lambay Whiskey, Nourish, Pfizer, Regeneron, Virgin Media Ireland and Warbler & Wren Coffee.**

79 For full details of the very extensive range of activities carried out by BirdWatch Ireland's **local branches** during 2025, please see the separate **BirdWatch Ireland Branches Report 2025** that is available for download from the BirdWatch Ireland website.

80 For In May, BirdWatch Ireland launched its first ever app for smartphones and tablets. Called **Birds of Ireland Field Guide** and produced in conjunction with developer **Sunbird Images**, it is a truly comprehensive guide to all of the 492 bird species ever recorded in Ireland. All regularly occurring Irish bird species are included in the free version, while over 260 additional species – rare vagrants to Ireland – can be unlocked with an annual subscription, which in turn provides funding to support our vital conservation work.

The app is available for download both on the Apple App Store for iOS at www.bit.ly/apple-app-field-guide and on the Google Play Store for Android at www.bit.ly/google-app-field-guide.



Huge successes at Annagh Marsh on the Mullet Peninsula

Years of hard work at Annagh Marsh Reserve are providing concrete evidence of why conservation work matters. This BirdWatch Ireland reserve is located on the Mullet Peninsula, along the west coast of Mayo, and is a key breeding location for important species such as the **Lapwing** and the **Red-necked Phalarope**. The Reserves Manager, **Dave Suddaby**, shares more about this conservation success story.

DAVE SUDDABY



Annagh Marsh on the Mullet Peninsula, Co Mayo, a key breeding location for Lapwings and Red-necked Phalaropes

In 1985, Ireland's first machair grassland breeding wader survey recorded eight pairs of **Lapwings** breeding at BirdWatch Ireland's Annagh Marsh Reserve and adjacent machair plain. Some 40 years later, BirdWatch Ireland is delighted to report that Lapwing numbers have now reached 67 pairs.

Similarly, in the mid-20th century, the **Red-necked Phalarope**, or 'Fairy Bird,' was famously known for breeding at Annagh Marsh, but disappeared from Ireland for 30 years. After initiating targeted conservation measures, we were delighted to celebrate the return of this elusive bird in 2015.

However, it hasn't been all plain sailing and there have been some ups and downs along the way.

A follow-up breeding wader survey in 1996 recorded just two pairs of Lapwings at the reserve. The declines in breeding wader numbers, and in particular the loss of the Red-necked Phalarope, spurred BirdWatch Ireland into action. In 2001, we were successful in securing funding through the **European LIFE-Nature** programme to deliver a project, with our partner **Teagasc**, focusing on the restoration of habitats at the **Termoncarragh Lake Special Protection Area**, which includes the Annagh Marsh reserve.

Predator fencing

Work at the reserve started in 2002 and, following appropriate management, breeding Lapwing numbers started to increase, reaching 17 pairs by 2004. However, most of these failed in their breeding attempts, and the numbers started to decline again.

Looking further into this, BirdWatch Ireland began an in-depth study that identified **Red Foxes** as the main predators, especially during the crucial egg-hatching stage when the chicks repeatedly call to their parents, affording the foxes an aural clue and leading to an easy meal. By 2011, Lapwings had ceased to be recorded as a breeding species at Annagh Marsh.

In an attempt to turn the situation around, a non-lethal solution was sought in the form of a **predator exclusion fence**, which had proven to be a useful management tool for protecting breeding waders from mammalian predators at other sites.

So, with support funding from **The Heritage Council**, **Fiontar Chomhraic Teo**, **Dublin Zoo** and our members, a new fence was installed in the autumn of 2011. Importantly, working closely with the two farmers who own land there, the protected area was extended to include the whole machair plain at Annagh.

DAVE SUDDABY



Red-necked Phalarope (male in summer plumage) at Annagh Marsh



RICHARD T MILLS

Red-necked Phalarope (female) in summer plumage

Coupled with installing the new fence, new **scrape pool** areas were also created and cattle continued to graze the grasslands.

Lapwings recover and increase

The following year, three pairs of **Lapwings** returned and bred successfully. Although some adjustments to the fence were needed in the initial years, the breeding numbers went from strength to strength. Each breeding attempt produced at least one chick and more often two chicks that survived to the flying stage. By 2023, numbers had risen to a record 42 breeding pairs.

With this success, other potential mammalian predators were attracted to the site, in particular **Otter** and the non-native

American Mink. Therefore, the fence, after 12 years of good service, was replaced and upgraded in 2024 with the aim of excluding these predatory mammals and preventing them from reaching the breeding Lapwings.

This new fence was support-funded through the **National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Measures Unit** and the **LIFE on Machair** project and, since its instalment, breeding Lapwing numbers have continued to rise.

The fenced area at Annagh Marsh now holds approximately 8% of the national breeding population of Lapwings, which was recently estimated at around 800 pairs; still a decline of around 90% since pre-1990s estimates.

COLIN RIGNEY



Lapwing in nesting habitat in summer



SHAY CONNOLLY

Red Fox: predator-proof fencing keeps it out of the reserve

New warden on Cape Clear

In 2025, following the sad death of our much-loved friend and colleague **Steve Wing** the previous year, **John Horton** was appointed as the new Warden of BirdWatch Ireland's Cape Clear Bird Observatory. Here is a summary of John's career to date, followed by his thoughts on becoming the Warden on Cape.



John Horton at the Global Birdfair in Rutland, England

One way or another, **John Horton's** career always has been in wildlife and conservation, and extensively with birds. Starting out at **London Zoo**, he quickly specialised in avian artificial incubation, then progressed to delivering training courses and lecturing at universities on the subject.

An accomplished aviculturist, John is credited with several first British captive breeding records, including for the **Short-crested Rockhopper Penguin**.

Having spent some years involved with the legitimate international trade in wildlife, he joined London's **Metropolitan Police**, attracted by the chance of becoming a wildlife crime investigations officer, combatting the illegal trade in endangered species.

His highly decorated police career included a Commissioner's award for excellence in the Best Thief-taker category. He secured a slot alongside high-profile police units such as the mounted branch and the fraud squad, delivering the first ever presentation on wildlife crime at the **Hendon Police College** in London. From a prosecution for possession of an alligator to large-scale operations with the London airports, he says that this work was often demanding but occasionally very rewarding.

John was also the **London Bird Recorder**. He was granted a career break in 2016 to spend two years establishing the first new bird observatory in Britain and Ireland for decades, on **Alderney**

in the Channel Islands. The island sits on one of the world's busiest bird migration routes, the East Atlantic Flyway.

Research results from **Alderney Bird Observatory (ABO)** soon gained publicity, with John appearing on the **BBC's Countryfile** programme in the spring of 2016. The subsequent surge in enquiries from members of the public who were interested in visiting the island crashed the local government's tourism website.

The observatory on Alderney achieved national accreditation status in 2018. The submission John produced to achieve this is used by the **Bird Observatories Council (BOC)** of Britain and Ireland as a template for new observatories seeking accreditation.

In 2019, John represented the BOC at an international bird observatories conference in Israel, at which he delivered a presentation.

Taken with small island life, he repeatedly extended his career break and eventually resigned from the Metropolitan Police in 2023 to dedicate his future to bird observatories.

During nine years in Alderney, John sat on a variety of Channel Islands wildlife and ecological panels and committees; led over fifty specialist wildlife holiday groups in Guernsey; and recorded more than one hundred previously unrecorded flora and fauna species across these historically under-recorded islands.

He remains the chairman of the **Channel Islands Bird Ringing Scheme** and is personally sponsored by **Zeiss Optics** and **Spepsavers**.

John loves photography and was the featured artist for the **2025 Wildlife Photographer of the Year** competition, which opened at **Guernsey Museum** on January 31st.

A highly experienced bird ringer, John has performed the role of **Ringing Course Assessor** for the **BTO**, and has taken part in ringing projects on five continents. He cites the ringing of a **Spoon-billed Sandpiper** in south-west India in 1989 as a memorable highlight.

"Since the 1950s, bird observatories have been synonymous with excellence in ornithological research," says John. "Some of these twenty-one key sites situated around the coasts of Britain and Ireland and monitoring bird migration have near-mythical status for birders. For me, Cape Clear falls firmly into this bracket; it has been delivering standardised species recording and wowing the birdwatching world with sightings of exceptionally rare birds since 1959.

"I am delighted to join the BirdWatch Ireland team and am extremely proud to be the warden of Ireland's only accredited bird observatory and to have the opportunity to build on the established foundations and to progress the science and data gathered here on Cape, which is an important contributor to our international understanding of the human and environmental impacts on our birdlife."

Lambay Whiskey Puffin Project

Research is being carried out on the important colony of Puffins on Lambay Island in north Dublin to learn about their movements and feeding grounds in the Irish Sea. **Kaylin Doherty** reports.



Steve Newton releasing a newly-tagged Puffin on Lambay

Just a few kilometres from north Dublin's coastline stands the largest Irish island in the Irish Sea, Lambay. This 630-acre island has been steeped in a unique Irish history for over five centuries. Now Lambay hosts a troop of **Red-necked Wallabies**, introduced by previous landowners. Even more recently it became the home base for **Lambay Whiskey**.

In addition to being known as the island with wallabies and whiskey, Lambay boasts the largest seabird colony in Ireland. Along the jagged cliffs surrounding the shoreline, hundreds of **Kittiwakes**, **Gannets** and other seabird species nest on and feed on or near the island – but perhaps the most iconic of these birds is the **Puffin**.

During the last few summer seasons, **Dr Steve Newton**, BirdWatch Ireland's Senior Seabird Advisor, has travelled to Lambay to tag Puffins in order to learn more about the colony on the island and to contribute to a larger scientific study. During winter 2025 he sat down with me, **Kaylin Doherty**, Communications Officer with BirdWatch Ireland, to answer some questions about the Lambay Whiskey Puffin Project and what was on the horizon for the following year.

■ What is the draw for seabirds to Lambay, and why do we want to learn more about the colonies there?

Lambay is quite a big island for the Irish Sea and is phenomenally important for seabirds. We believe it has the largest colony of seabirds in Ireland, though there are islands on the west coast that have lots of shearwaters and petrels, which are crucial seabirds, but they are nocturnal, so during the day, you will most likely only

see a few gulls flying around on those.

Lambay is the opposite, in the sense that you can watch plenty of **Guillemots**, **Kittiwakes**, **Cormorants**, **Razorbills** and, of course, a Puffin population we are curious about.

We've done quite a bit of work on the west coast, especially on **Skellig Michael**, Co Kerry, where we've been tagging and tracking Puffins for a long time, so we know what goes on there. There's a little bit more of a gap on the east coast, where we don't know if their behaviour is the same or completely different.

This research on what they do and where they do it is important, as discussions about wind farms in the Irish Sea continue. We know Puffins are there during the breeding season, which means they probably forage 20 to 50 kilometres off the island, which could make them vulnerable to wind farm effects. We also don't know if they remain in the Irish Sea for the winter, or if they are somewhere else, which is where tagging on Lambay comes in handy.

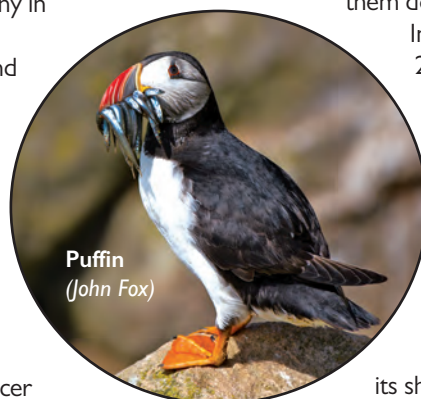
■ How do the tags work?

There are generally two sorts of tags: the first is a GPS-based tag using satellites, and the other is a light-level tag or geolocator. The former provides more data, but only over the course of a few days, while the latter lasts about a year, but only provides data output about once a day.

Both are tiny bands that go on the birds' legs and weigh less than a gramme, which doesn't restrict or harm the bird at all.

We have to tag these birds anyway, so adding a geolocator to them doesn't burden them.

In 2024, I tagged ten Puffins on Lambay, but in 2025 I was only able to tag three adults myself.



Puffin
(John Fox)

■ What's it like trying to tag a Puffin?

At first, the Puffins are quite naïve and allow themselves to be caught, but after the first time, they become much smarter and much harder to tag. The best time to try to tag them is early in the morning or later at night, when they leave to forage.

Once I've got a Puffin, I have to watch out for its sharp beak and even sharper talons. They have razor-sharp claws that they use to dig their burrows. They're dead cute, but if you see my hands, they're covered in scars.

■ What does the data show us so far, and what do you expect from the 2026 season?

We only really have a few data points since starting in 2024, and we are still in the process of analysing some of the data, so we can't make any major conclusions about their behaviours yet.

In 2026, I am hoping to tag more. Tagging three in 2025 wasn't the best sample size, but it was better than none.

Bord Bia Bloom

BirdWatch Ireland administration and membership staff member **Valerie Lowth** describes her experience of organising and attending the Bord Bia Bloom festival each summer.

Bord Bia Bloom, which takes place in Dublin's Phoenix Park over the June bank holiday weekend each year, is a very important date in our calendar here in BirdWatch Ireland. It is the main annual event where we meet the public, answer their questions and sign up new members ... so let me take you through it.

My Bloom organising starts approximately six weeks before the festival begins. Our ever-reliable volunteer **Robert Busby** and I get the new membership packs ready, including all the extras we give to new members who join us at Bloom, or indeed at any time.

My Excel files are created, ready to get started as soon as our first day is done. Each day's new members will be sorted into categories, depending on which membership type they requested. Each name will be checked on our system to ensure we do not create duplicate memberships.

We try to encourage as many staff as possible to offer time away from their busy schedules to help out at Bloom, and our wonderful volunteers are also contacted. My colleague **Louise Barry** organises the volunteer roster, which is broken into days, both mornings and afternoons.

So, Day 1 is set up!

A five-day marathon

At 6.00am on the day before the festival opens, **Niall Hatch** and I load up the BirdWatch Ireland van at the Kilcoole office with items needed to start our five-day marathon. Key amongst these are boxes of membership packs, along with table runners, banners, posters and our donation boxes. We also pack a box of our extremely popular **pin badges**, which are displayed on our table at Bloom.

As we join the long line of exhibitors, there is always a wonderful buzz around the park in the lead-up to Thursday, the first day of Bloom.

We are always situated at **Stand G10** in the **Grand Pavilion** tent, and are extremely fortunate to get the same prime spot each year. This very much helps our established members to come and chat to us and to renew their existing memberships.

At the end of the day, we take our boxes and return to HQ, ready and prepared for Thursday, the opening day.

Meeting the public

On the opening day of Bloom, that day's staff and volunteers set off early to get to Phoenix Park for 8.15am, before the festival opens. The day kicks off at 9.00am, when the gates open and we begin to meet the visitors at our stand, answering any questions they may have and encouraging them to take out membership to support our work. The questions we are asked are wonderfully varied, particularly from the younger generation.

Our gorgeous pin badges are a wonderful draw to the table; it really is great to see people asking questions about which birds are featured on them and where they might be seen in the wild. **Robin badges** never last long and are by far the most popular choice.



Valerie Lowth at Bord Bia Bloom

After a long first day, we pack away the items on the stand and head home at 6.00pm, looking forward to doing it all again every day for the following four days.

Most staff and volunteers commit to one or maybe two days, but Niall is generally on site every day, which is tiring for him but necessary for BirdWatch Ireland, as he delivers some wonderful public talks.

I always do the set-up on Wednesday along with Niall, and then I am in attendance on the stand on Thursday when the festival opens. It's then back to the office for me on the Friday to start the process of separating, checking and processing our new members and renewing existing ones.

My Bloom admin work carries on for a week to 10 days after the event to ensure that all details are correct and entered.

Summary of Accounts 2025

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The details given below are a summary of accounts for BirdWatch Ireland and BWI Retail and Services Limited in 2025. A full set of accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025 is available from BirdWatch Ireland on request.

	2025 €	2024 €
Income		
Membership subscriptions	352,363	339,490
Donations and bequests	121,505	104,518
Grants	24,886	24,886
Advertising and other income	126,687	125,396
Conservation projects	1,876,731	1,640,202
Investment income	67	92
Total	2,502,239	2,234,584

Expenditure

Conservation project costs	1,570,569	1,385,855
Support costs	602,870	531,886
Total expenditure	2,173,439	1,917,741

Net surplus/deficit	328,800	316,843
Reversal of building impairment	0	0
Funds brought forward	3,366,108	2,906,865
Funds carried forward	3,694,908	3,223,708
Revaluation reserve	0	142,500

Represented by:

Non-current assets	3,331,569	3,330,610
Net current (liabilities) / assets	1,035,253	732,298
Other creditors	-671,914	-696,800
	3,694,908	3,366,108

BWI Retail and Services Limited

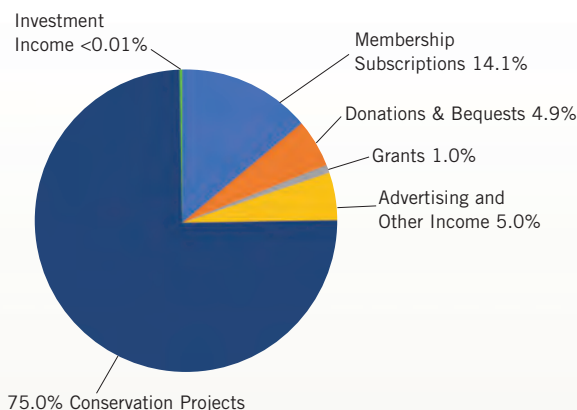
Turnover	206,956	202,136
Cost of sales	144,605	143,552
Gross profit	62,351	58,584
Administrative expenses	62,351	58,584
Interest payable	0	0
Profit before taxation	0	0
Tax on profit	0	0
Profit after taxation	0	0
Funds brought forward	1,434	1,434
Funds carried forward	1,434	1,434

Represented by:

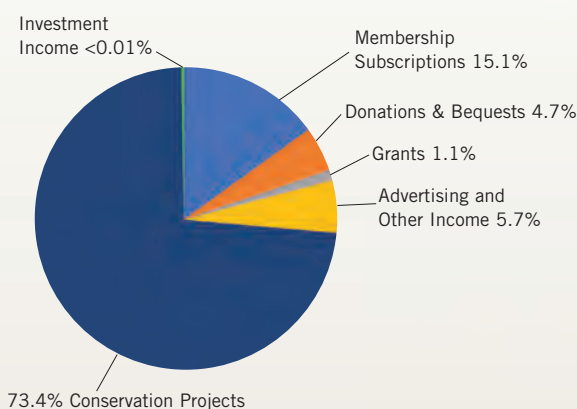
Fixed assets	645	1,606
Net current assets	789	-172
	1,434	1,434

BirdWatch Ireland gratefully acknowledges the receipt in 2025 of Annual Core Funding in the amount of €50,062.33 from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, via the Irish Environmental Network (IEN). There were no restrictions on the use of this funding and its expenditure is compliant with all relevant government circulars.

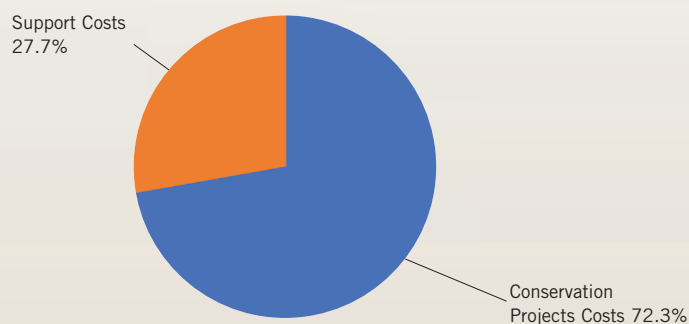
INCOME 2025



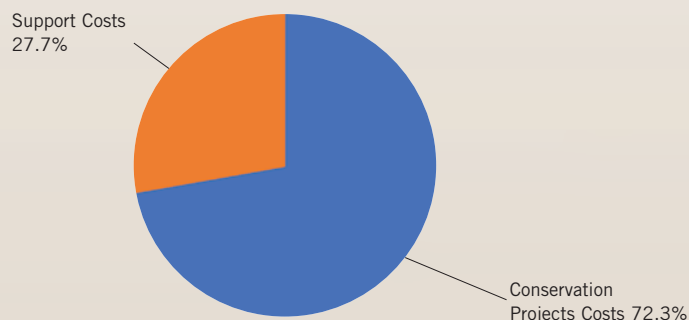
INCOME 2024



EXPENDITURE 2025



EXPENDITURE 2024





Lapwing. **Photograph:** Richard T Mills



BirdWatchIreland
protecting birds and biodiversity

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