

**Wiltshire
Wildlife Trust**



Strategic Plan 2005-2010

**Wiltshire Wildlife
Trust Limited**

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A sustainable future for wildlife and people

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Acknowledgement

This strategic plan has been prepared as a collaborative effort by members, volunteers, Trustees and staff. Considerable time and effort has been devoted to its preparation for which the Trust is sincerely grateful.

Introduction

In this plan we set out the purpose of the Trust, our vision, our mission and the goals for the next five years. For each goal we suggest a number of strategies that will be employed to enable us to meet the goal. These strategies may change during the five-year life of the plan to reflect changing circumstances. New strategies may be tried and some strategies may be dropped if ineffective or uneconomic. In pursuing each strategy we will use a number of different tactics. These tactics are not set out in detail; they are covered in the annual action plans.

The purpose of the Trust

We believe that the rich world of nature is an essential part of what makes life worth living - and we depend on it as our life support system. The Trust exists to defend the natural world, and not just in Wiltshire. We want to help people appreciate natural cycles and seasons, show respect and reverence for our world, be good stewards of life, look with awe and wonder at nature and to find beauty, peace and tranquillity in the landscape. We recognise that we need to change the values of our consumer society by raising awareness and understanding of how our actions impact upon the environment.

Our purpose is to help create a sustainable future for wildlife and people.

Our view is of a sustainable Wiltshire where everyone will be able to enjoy a rich and satisfying quality of life, based on a fair share of the world's resources, without destroying the birthright of future generations.

We will present a positive, hopeful face to the world. People have a natural affinity for other creatures and for the beauty of nature and we have a natural tendency to wish to know more and do more to help nature. These attributes can be ignored, forgotten or distorted by the pressures of modern society, but for many people they simply remain dormant, ready to be revived and encouraged. This is our challenge.



Therefore there is a conscious effort to make the Trust more relevant to people. We will endeavour to work with new audiences and try to respond to the levels of awareness, understanding and concern that they have (not what we would like it to be).

In this strategic plan we have used the term biodiversity to mean the variety of all living species - plants, animals, fungi and the lesser-known organisms with whom we share our planet.

Our vision for 2010

Our vision is of a Wiltshire rich in wildlife and where people enjoy a high quality of life achieved with minimum environmental impact.

We need to see more places where nature can thrive. In most of today's countryside the places where we conserve biodiversity are either too small, isolated or lacking in quality. Wildlife, and the natural processes on which it depends, needs room to move, expand, contract and intermingle if they are to be self-sustaining. The Trust's long-term aim is to rebuild biodiversity throughout Wiltshire & Swindon, creating larger, viable areas for species and habitats to thrive and adapt to the changing environment.

Quality of life is greatly enhanced where there are opportunities for all to access natural green space near their homes and places of work. Here people can experience, enjoy, learn about, and contribute to wildlife. This can make a real difference to both physical health, through opportunities for walking and practical conservation, as well as to mental health and the reduction of stress. Regular contact with nature can also be important in encouraging us to change our lifestyles.

While Wiltshire is rich in wildlife areas, these are often remote and hard to get to. Urban wildlife areas, though restricted by size and location, have enormous value for towns people. It remains important for us to work with local communities in the wildlife areas that they value.

By 2010 we wish to see lots of people taking action to create a more sustainable future for wildlife and people. This means widespread measurable behaviour change by householders, individuals, businesses and others.

We face an environmental crisis so great that it can only be countered by a significant shift in the way our society works. As the impact of climate change and destruction of biodiversity gathers pace, the Trust needs to involve everyone in Wiltshire in changing the way they live and what they value. We all need to recognise that our consumer lifestyle and vastly increased material wealth over the past 50 years have not necessarily led to happiness. We need to stimulate reflection on what we really value, and the kind of world we want to live in.

This change in values must be accompanied by widespread behavioural change, dramatically reversing the annual increase in household waste and energy use, for example. Of course, much of this change is behind the scenes, inside people's homes, so we also need as a source of inspiration and motivation, visible examples in every community such as solar panels and community composting facilities.



Mission

The mission of the Trust is to:

- Rebuild biodiversity across Wiltshire by changing the way we design, manage and behave in the landscape.
- Achieve a fundamental shift in people's behaviour, values and actions so our lifestyles become more sustainable.

Goals and strategies

To achieve our mission we have set ourselves three goals (these are cross-cutting and non-departmental), which everyone at the Trust tackles in some way.

- Our goals are:
1. To create and enhance havens for wildlife
 2. To stand up for wildlife and the environment
 3. To reduce the 'Ecological Footprint' of Wiltshire & Swindon

Underpinning the operation of the Trust must be an effective organisation that has wide public support, is adequately funded and is effectively managed. We have therefore set out a number of Operational Goals to sit alongside our environmental goals.



Goal 1. To create and enhance havens for wildlife

Wiltshire has a wonderful diversity of habitats. Our portfolio of reserves needs to reflect this diversity, and we will seek to acquire reserves for those habitats that are poorly represented and in those areas of the county where our presence is currently weak.

Sadly, the fate of many small and isolated sites in the long term is bleak, especially in the light of climate change. We must conserve wildlife in larger areas and rebuild biodiversity across the wider landscape. To do this we will seek to acquire land adjacent to our existing reserves and influence our neighbouring landowners so that they manage their land for the benefit of wildlife. Beyond our reserves, we will continue to work alongside land managers and work with other organisations to create interconnected areas of habitat, allowing wildlife to move and adapt in the face of outside pressure.

The Trust will play a leading role in implementing the Biodiversity Action Plans for Wiltshire and Swindon, ensuring that all of us who are concerned about wildlife are pulling in the same direction. We will develop our work with local communities and community nature reserves, especially in and around urban areas, to ensure that everyone has the ability to experience wildlife first hand.

If we wish to see larger areas for wildlife we need to focus our activities where they are likely to have the greatest impact. Rebuilding biodiversity gives us the framework for this, highlighting specific areas for targeted land acquisition and advice. We will improve and build on this framework, working with other sectors and developing innovative techniques to encourage others to manage land for wildlife. Biodiversity does not recognise administrative borders, and our work will be driven by the regional priorities agreed with our sister Trusts in the South West region.

We will also seek to protect and enhance populations of key threatened species, such as otters, water voles and bats. These are a highly valued part of our natural heritage and are often vital indicators as to the health of the environment. Where appropriate, we will explore opportunities for reintroducing species to Wiltshire. Our work with all biodiversity - plants, fungi, invertebrates and vertebrates - puts the Trust in a unique position to ensure that not only the more charismatic species are conserved but also their interdependence of all life can be emphasised.

Our actions will speak louder than anything else we do. In a time of dramatic change in farming, the Trust needs to show that it can manage land for wildlife and also be financially sustainable. Through our northern reserves grazing programme, based at Blakehill, we will develop our expertise in conservation land management. The Trust and its neighbouring farmers will have much to learn from each other. We will seek to develop and expand our grassland management programme, with new initiatives based elsewhere in the county.

Strategies to achieve this goal will include:

1. Identifying priorities for action at local, county and regional levels
2. Actively encouraging and supporting good environmental land management by others
3. Building up our portfolio of well-managed nature reserves
4. Increasing our capacity for direct land management through our own farming enterprise
5. Taking direct action to protect key species

Goal 2. To stand up for wildlife and the environment

Wildlife and the environment must not be allowed to slip down the national policy agenda. We will seek to bring the plight of the environment - whether the news is good or bad - to the attention of a wide audience, publicising the achievements of our projects through newsletters, publications and the web. Where urgent action is needed, we will engage in high profile campaigns to bring the issue to the fore.

Through the work of the BRC, the Trust will continue to scrutinise all planning applications in the county. We must be robust in the face of threats to wildlife and the environment, highlighting both inaction and inappropriate actions that threaten the environment. Where appropriate, we will seek to engage with developers and planning authorities to secure gains for wildlife, and a sustainable approach to new construction.

We will play a proactive role in influencing policies, strategies and planning at a local level to protect the environment. We will seek to build up our influence at a regional level, working through the South West Trusts partnership and other regional partnerships, including waste, energy and climate change. We will seek to influence the work of the national Wildlife Trusts partnership, and other national partnerships, in key areas that are relevant to Wiltshire, such as water use and the protection of rivers and wetlands.

It is vital that the Trust is able to influence other organisations, individuals and partnerships if we are to secure a safe future for the environment. We will continue to engage actively in local strategic partnerships, AONBs and other fora. We will invest in our relationships with English Nature, the Environment Agency, MoD, Energy Saving Trust, local authorities and other partners to consolidate the strength of the environmental sector in Wiltshire. We will build on our excellent relationships with MPs and other key decision-makers in the county, the region and beyond.

Today's children are tomorrow's wildlife stewards and activists. The Trust has invested years of work in local schools and children of all ages to enable them to experience and gain inspiration from the environment. We will broaden our education work to target young people, students and adults,

developing Langford Lakes as a centre of excellence for the environment and education. We will explore opportunities for opening new education centres elsewhere in the county. We will use our reserves as places where people can experience wildlife at its most inspiring, through improving

interpretation, investing in our network of volunteers and expanding on our programme of activities and events.

As well as the will and the resources to enhance Wiltshire's environment, we must have the necessary knowledge and information to guide our work. Through the BRC, we will compile and publicise information about

the state of the environment in Wiltshire and the South West region. We will continue monitoring the state of natural habitats, including Trust reserves, rivers and road verges. We will expand our monitoring work to include wider environmental issues, and make this information available to new audiences.



Strategies to achieve this goal will include:

1. Identify how key decision-makers can promote the environment as a major factor in their strategies, decisions and programmes of action, and inform and support them in doing so
2. Influence legislation and policies and their implementation
3. Respond to proposals, actions and lack of action that threaten the environment
4. Create opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy the natural world
5. Increase people's understanding of environmental issues

Goal 3. To reduce the ecological footprint of Wiltshire and Swindon

If everyone on the planet consumed as much as each person in the UK, we would need three planets from which to produce the resources and deal with the waste. The ecological footprint is a measure of the land we each need to sustain us. So in the UK we need to reduce our ecological footprint by about a third to enable everyone to get a fair share of the world's natural resources, within the carrying capacity of the planet. Over the past decade, scientists have been working on the development of the ecological footprint as an indicator similar to GDP (gross domestic product), which can be used at all levels from individuals to countries. We will need to assess whether we will consider all aspects of Wiltshire's ecological footprint according to the current scientific methodology or whether we continue to concentrate on the aspects that seem most important.

As with wildlife conservation, our wider environmental work needs to be underpinned by robust strategies and programmes of action. The Trust has already taken the lead in developing and implementing strategies on waste minimisation and affordable warmth. Work on a county Renewable Energy



Action Plan has started, while development of a broader climate change strategy is a priority.

Slowing the rate of climate change is the most important environmental challenge facing us today. One key way to reduce CO₂ emissions

is by improving energy use. Through the Sustainable Energy programme, we will work to reduce energy use while increasing the amount of energy from renewable resources at least to the level of the government target of

10% by 2010. Our work will include a strong emphasis on community involvement, including those who suffer from an inability to heat their homes. We will review the potential for taking a more active role in local food, sustainable transport, and sustainable construction, which are also important in reducing climate change gases.

Even if we hit national recycling targets, the total amount of domestic waste for disposal would still continue to rise. The Trust will therefore continue to concentrate on stopping waste entering the waste stream in the first place. We will continue our current behaviour change programme, aimed at householders, but expand it beyond composting to include nappies and plastics. We will work with the Wiltshire Local Strategic Partnership to target other waste streams, such as commercial, on-farm, and construction waste.



The Ecological Footprint approach is clearly based on the interrelationship between our lifestyles and environmental issues worldwide. We will continue to promote

Fairtrade, through support for the Wiltshire Fairtrade Coalition, as a contribution towards achieving a more ethical and less environmentally destructive world trading system. We will also review the potential for action in other areas, such as the promotion of Green Tourism and highlighting the unsustainable management of water resources.

We will launch a new programme of action, Wiltshire World Changers, to support widespread volunteer and community action. This is the starting point to achieve a fundamental shift towards more sustainable lifestyles.

There is a growing number of successful business enterprises, whose core objectives are environmental and social. These range from businesses recycling furniture and electrical/electronic goods (e.g. Refurbiz) to community wind farms. They can provide a practical example and inspiration of a new type of economy, based on different values. The Trust



will review the scope for establishing more of these enterprises in Wiltshire.

The Trust will continue to provide an example of good environmental practice in the way it manages its own work. The Trust will continue to draw the links between ecological footprint, sustainability issues and biodiversity.

Strategies to achieve this goal will include:

1. Set out and implement a framework of priorities
2. Reduce CO₂ and green house gas emissions
3. Reduce waste at source
4. Link global and local issues
5. Build a Wiltshire World Changers network and support practical, highly visible examples of sustainability in every community
6. Develop green social enterprises
7. Use our own experiences to help people to understand the issues and what they can do
8. Minimise the impacts of over-abstraction and pollution on rivers and wetlands

Our values

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust will adhere to the following values:

- Work towards our vision - Trustees, staff, volunteers, members
- Value and encourage the contribution of all people, seeking to involve a diversity of people of all social groups, age, race, sex and culture
- Work with others to achieve our vision, recognising the responsibilities that come with this partnership approach, and retaining our independence
- Work with the partnership of Wildlife Trusts across the UK, contributing as well as benefiting from the partnership at regional, national and international levels
- Be non-party political, working with decision-makers but being willing to criticise constructively
- Act professionally and share our expertise and knowledge in all we do
- Continue to learn from others and the natural world to increase our understanding and improve our effectiveness
- Act sustainably in all we do
- Be sound in science and sincere in ethics



Operational goals

To achieve our environmental goals we recognise the importance of ensuring that the Trust is efficient and effective. To help us achieve this we have set ourselves the following operational goals:

- To communicate our work effectively and develop marketing expertise
- To deliver efficient financial, technological and administrative structures
- To retain staff and encourage their development
- To provide effective governance and management
- To secure sufficient financial resources by diversifying income streams
- To maintain and increase our knowledge of wildlife and the environment
- To enhance, expand and promote an environmental information service
- To encourage the involvement of communities and volunteers in the protection of the environment
- To build in a review and planning process
- To provide comfortable and adequate accommodation

Implementation and review

Each year under each of the aims and objectives set out in this strategic plan, a detailed set of specific targets will be prepared. These targets are used as the basis for a programme of work involving staff, volunteers and supporter groups within the Trust. The achievement of targets is reviewed after six months and their assessment forms a starting point for setting the following year's targets. The process of assessment and review involves the Trust's staff, Committees and Council.

To achieve a sustainable future for wildlife and people the Trust will draw upon its 15,500 members, Trustees, staff and volunteers. Working to a common purpose we can make a real difference.



Indicators of performance

Significant changes	1994/95	1998/99	2003/04
Number of reserves:			
Owned	19 (209 ha)	24 (452 ha)	28 (742 ha)
Leased	12 (58.4 ha)	10 (101 ha)	9 (72 ha)
Number of reserves with:			
Management plans	19	34	36
Monitoring programmes	0	34	26
Annual reports	35	34	37
Number of volunteers	Not recorded	Not recorded	800
Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre			
Number of planning applications:			
Processed	8,856	10,077	12,750
Screened	1,927	3,549	3,154
Commented on	324	275	340
Total number of Wildlife records held on:			
Sites	29,675	c.113,400	184,897
Species	Incomplete records	Incomplete records	500,000
Number of staff employed:			
Full-time	14	29	52
Part-time	6	8	15
Volunteer days worked on reserves	Incomplete records	943 days	3,300 days
Number of members:			
Adult	4,500	9,491	12,498
Junior (members of Watch)	Not recorded	1,116	2,301
Annual income from membership	£112,832	£219,433	£282,834
Annual income from grants:			
Lottery	0	£162,134	£302,227
Landfill	0	£412,790	£324,918
Local authorities	£50,000	£117,727	£293,410
Other grants	£142,489	£198,076	£679,464
Net assets at year end	£751,224	£2,813,032	£5,201,013
Annual expenditure on and acquisition of nature reserves	£10,417	£208,082	£509,023
Annual turnover	£499,043	£1,594,687	£2,429,123