



# Freshwater life – together we can protect it

Annual report and accounts 2014/15







© Vic Cobbold

First prize winner of the Freshwater Habitats Trust photo competition, this beautiful picture featured as the front cover of our 2015 Calendar

# About Freshwater Habitats Trust



Freshwater Habitats Trust is a national charity created in 1988 to ensure the future of wildlife in our freshwaters. The freshwater environment is under threat everywhere. We think that maintaining rich and healthy freshwater habitats brings benefits to everyone, and we work to protect them through strong practical action backed by sound research-based information.



© Genevieve Leaper

Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) thrives in unshaded and shallow water in ponds, lakes, bogs and slow-flowing rivers, mainly where the water is naturally acidic.

### We are:

- An evidence-based conservation charity, with strong science grounding.
- Highly strategic – we target our work where evidence suggests it will be most effective.
- Concerned with all freshwaters including those that are small and undervalued like headwater streams, ponds, flushes and ditches.
- An organisation that works in partnership with many people, communities and organisations to get the best results for freshwater wildlife.

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### Strategic areas

Our organisation's strategic priorities are to protect and create high quality freshwater habitats and expand and connect these areas to create The Freshwater Network.

#### We do this though:

- **Practical projects:** implementing practical solutions to protect species and habitats based on best practice.
- **Research, monitoring and information:** investigating better ways to protect freshwater biodiversity, understand national trends and review the effectiveness of our work, and tell other people what we know.
- **Public outreach and partnership:** working with people to achieve our aims and enable greater enjoyment of freshwater habitats.
- **Policy and advocacy:** championing freshwater biodiversity at regional, national and European levels.



© Martin Hammond

This ancient fenland specialist diving beetle (*Agabus undulatus*) is classified in IUCN guidelines as 'near threatened', with its distinctive gold zig-zag pattern across the shoulders it is easy to recognise. The British population is now centred on the Fens and Breckland, having disappeared from outlying sites in southern and western England. On Thompson Common it was recorded in 5 out of the 41 ponds surveyed.



# Achievements in 2014/15

During 2014-15 we have expanded in size, delivered against our conservation targets, made some significant advances in key areas of understanding and laid important foundations for our future development.

## People, Ponds and Water

In October 2014 we were very pleased to be awarded a grant of £1,344,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to roll out our **People, Ponds and Water** project over the next three years in England and Wales. The project aims to achieve two overarching outcomes:

- To make a nationally significant difference to the protection of freshwater biodiversity in the UK.
- To engage many thousands of people with activities that help them to learn about, participate in, and enjoy their freshwater heritage.

The project started in December 2014, and between January and March 2015 we recruited four new staff members and began implementation of the three project strands:

**PondNet:** a volunteer network which will collect essential data about national trends in freshwater species, including those at greatest risk, so that they can be better protected.

**Flagship Ponds:** will engage local communities to help protect 70 of our most important freshwater sites so they retain their exceptional biodiversity importance in the long term.

**Clean Water for Wildlife:** a public participation survey enabling thousands of people to collect data about two important pollutants, nitrate and phosphate, in different water bodies; raising awareness of pollution in the environment and encouraging action to improve water quality.

People, Ponds and Water is important to us not only because it will help to deliver many of our core aims, but because it represents an opportunity to kick start our regional development, enabling us to deliver more effectively in the long term.

Set against the good news from HLF was a stark reminder of why the project is so badly needed.



A Great Crested Newt impresses her audience at an amphibian training event in Hampshire 2014

© Cathy Dyason

Monitoring data from two of our 2014 projects provided evidence of significant biodiversity declines in freshwater habitats – especially in wider countryside areas.

## Water Friendly Farming

Water Friendly Farming is a major research demonstration initiative to assess the effectiveness of practical measures to mitigate the impacts of farming on freshwaters. The project, which includes three Leicestershire stream catchments, is run jointly with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Syngenta, the Environment Agency, three universities and a wide range of landowners and other partners. 2014 analysis of the first three years of baseline data shows that, before the measures were put in, biodiversity (measured by wetland plant richness), declined in all three catchments.

## Protecting endangered freshwater species in Wales

Similarly, surveys of rare freshwater plants and invertebrates in Wales undertaken in the Protecting endangered freshwater species in Wales project, suggests that most of the rare species we studied were now extinct at some of their previous sites,

particularly those located outside nature reserves. The findings suggest an urgent need for site management, particularly the introduction or increase in conservation grazing by livestock, and diffuse pollution control.

Fortunately both studies also have more positive findings. Early results of the effect of Water Friendly Farming's mitigation measures showed that new ponds we created made a significant difference to biodiversity. And the new plant species that colonised these ponds compensated for the more general biodiversity decline.

In Wales there was a similar story: new ponds designed according to best practice, created by our Million Ponds Project, and other pond creation initiatives, successfully provided new habitats for species of conservation concern and already supported rich plant communities.

We continued our practical action on the ground in the catchments of the River Thame, the River Ock (west of Oxford, which also includes the flood prone area of central Oxford), and in the New Forest. The experience we are gaining in these areas will underpin landscape-wide practical initiatives in other parts of the country.

## Evidence gathering

Evidence gathering is a crucial part of our work. During the year we completed surveys of one of the UK's most important freshwater sites, the pingo ponds of Thompson Common in Norfolk, as well as continuing surveys of new ponds created in the Million Ponds Project as part of research work with the University of Sheffield.

We also published the result of our ground-breaking research using environmental DNA to detect great crested newts, undertaken with the support of Natural England and Defra. Following this, we were invited to join a University of Hull-led research consortium to bid for substantial further funds to investigate the use of eDNA in freshwater ecology. We also began establishing relationships with researchers interested in eDNA at two other universities. As part of the Water Friendly Farming project we are gathering one of the most detailed datasets describing the distribution of freshwater biodiversity, and the nature of freshwater ecosystems, in the farmland landscape. This information is providing new insights into how we should manage freshwaters to protect their biodiversity, especially the thousands of miles of small streams and headwaters and the hundreds of

Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) a photo competition entry that made the FHT 2015 calendar



© Jack Perks





© Rachel Hudson (butterflytrack.co.uk)

Discovering the cast skin ('exuvium') of a dragonfly larva after it has emerged from the pond

thousands of ponds that are a vital part of the water environment. With Earthwatch we have been developing and testing the use of rapid test kits to assess water pollution, work which we expect will be of interest to many volunteer and local groups.

## Making a practical difference

We use our information to make a practical difference in freshwater conservation through advice to the public, technical guidance, strategic planning, and dissemination in the media, network co-ordination, training, education, and policy. Our public advice and engagement continued to grow: with Earthwatch we continued to train staff of HSBC bank in England and France. The beginning of HLF funded People, Ponds and Water project will see a large increase in our interactions with the public, crucial for the effective protection of freshwater biodiversity. In our catchment projects we undertook local public engagement events for landowners and farmers, with projects in the Thames and New Forest.

## Championing freshwaters

There were regular reminders during the year of the threats to freshwater, globally and locally. WWF reported that around three-quarters of freshwater

vertebrate species had declined since the 1970s and in England and Wales the Environment Agency reported that only 17% of rivers were in 'Good' condition (almost none are at 'High' status). We continue to champion freshwaters in the face of these threats, especially the smaller waterbodies – ponds, streams headwaters, ditches, spring and flushes – which make up the majority of the freshwater resource and support most freshwater species. We worked both at European and national level to do this: we continued developing a small waters manual with the European Environmental Bureau and, Jeremy Biggs, our Director, became the president of the European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN). In the UK we promoted our Water Friendly Farming work with a meeting at Portcullis House in Westminster hosted by our Trustee Baroness Jenny Hilton, summarising the first four years of the project. In addition as part of the Wildlife and Countryside Link's Blueprint for Water group we developed the 'Save our Waters' campaign.

## Developing the organisation

We constantly keep the work of Freshwater Habitats Trust under review to ensure that our organisation is secure financially and is helping to meet the many challenges facing freshwater life. In January 2015 we published a strategy refresh to ensure that our work over the period 2015-2018 was well-focused on activities that would help to achieve this objective. Following work to increase our regional presence in Cheshire, Sussex, Yorkshire, Wales, and East Anglia during 2012-14, we used the People Ponds and Water project as a trigger to employ four Regional Officers that will hopefully become a long term fixture of the organisation after the initial three year funding.



The Freshwater Habitats Trust works in four main ways to achieve its goals, and this framework is used throughout this Annual Report to describe our activities in 2014-15.

# Practical projects

Effective practical action brings direct benefit to freshwater wildlife, and in 2014/15 we undertook national, regional and local projects to ensure this happens.

## Landscape and catchment scale

### The Water Friendly Farming (WFF) project

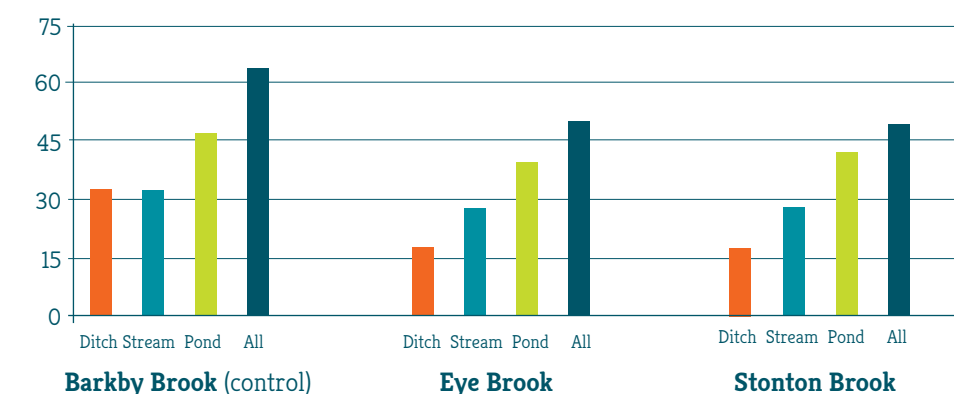
lies at the core of our catchment work. Based in three test catchments in the Loddington area of Leicestershire, this partnership initiative aims to address a critical knowledge gap: how can we effectively reduce the impacts of agriculture on freshwaters whilst retaining agricultural productivity? The project has installed, and is monitoring, a very wide range of practical measures including buffer strips and constructed wetlands, as well as creating new clean-water ponds and improving stream habitat diversity – to see if we can protect and restore freshwater biodiversity across whole landscapes.

Together the WFF project team, which includes the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, University of York, the Environment Agency, Syngenta, Anglian Water, University of Sheffield and others, has brought about £1 million to this project so far and the new knowledge it provides is already beginning to influence the way we manage freshwater on farmland.

In October 2014 we presented the first report of the project's results to politicians, policy makers and a wide variety of people in industry and the environmental movement who are involved in protecting freshwaters.

### Key results were:

- The three study areas are representative of a large part of Britain's farmland, and we can simulate the catchments accurately in models, meaning the results we get, and any guidance we develop, will be relevant to other parts of the country.
- We have seen the first practical demonstration anywhere that habitat creation can prevent loss of freshwater biodiversity at a landscape scale. Thus against a background where catchment biodiversity was declining in our three test catchments – the new ponds we created maintained or even increased freshwater plant diversity in the catchments.
- We demonstrated the value of buffer zones in reducing the amount of sediment being washed into waterbodies.
- We modelled our new catchment water storage capacity and found that we don't have enough! We need to introduce additional measures to reduce downstream flood risk significantly.
- There are still patches of clean water in the landscape which, for biodiversity, are important refuges.



**Ponds** in the three Water Friendly Farming catchments support more plant species than other waterbody types, and a high proportion of *all* plant species.



Overall the results suggest that physical interventions like pond creation can rapidly bring benefits for freshwater biodiversity. Reducing nutrient pollution in particular is a much harder 'ask'. This is critical information if the UK is to achieve cost-effective protection of freshwaters. The full Water Friendly Farming report can be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/neluwn2>

**Catchment hosting:** Defra's Catchment-based Approach (CaBA) is a national framework for stakeholder-led river basin assessment, planning and management, and aims to encourage community led management of freshwaters across England and Wales. As part of this initiative we are working in three regions to roll-out practical projects for protecting freshwater wildlife: the New Forest National Park in Hampshire and the River Thame and Ock catchments in Oxfordshire / Buckinghamshire.

### New Forest National Park (Hampshire):

In 2014 Freshwater Habitats Trust and the New Forest National Park Authority have continued to develop local and national plans and policies for the protection of the freshwater habitats, with support and enthusiasm from local partners, landowners and communities within this Important Freshwater Area (IFA).

A core activity, undertaken with additional funding from Natural England, was investigative work to evidence perceived changes at Hatchet Pond, a shallow 6.7ha lake, which is both a popular tourist spot, a coarse fishing site and one of the highest quality waterbody in the country, supporting an outstanding assemblage of freshwater plants and animals, with a suite of endangered and protected species. Although a site of exceptional quality, with strong legal protection, we found that changes recorded at the pond are indicative of the early stages of nutrient pollution, before the onset of substantial biological degradation of the lake. We proposed a range of management options to reduce recreational pressure and prevent further declines in the condition of this site, with the expectation that they will be implemented in the next few years.

In the first few months of 2015 we also worked closely with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife



Volunteer collecting eDNA water samples

Trust, the Environment Agency and landowners to put together a detailed £200,000 proposal for capital works to reduce diffuse pollution and restore and create high quality freshwater habitats on the Beaulieu sub-catchment of the New Forest. The 'Living Waters' project will form part of the 'Our Past: Our Future' HLF funding bid, due to be submitted in June 2015. If successful, it will provide an opportunity to extend the areas of high quality freshwater habitats in the Forest, for species to disperse and thrive.

**River Thame (Oxon/Bucks):** This project aims to work with local communities and landowners to protect and enhance the freshwaters in the catchment of one of the main tributaries of the River Thames east of Oxford. During 2014/15 we completed the first stage of the project in partnership with the River Thame Conservation Trust, the Environment Agency and others. Uptake by farmers and landowners has generally been good. Baseline water quality surveys have now been completed and practical work including the creation of floodplain wetlands, undertaken in all

four pilot sub-catchments. These new sites are being monitored for nutrients, birds and wetland plants. A series of workshops was held to provide a forum to discuss diffuse nutrients, sediment pollution and catchment management issues with farmers and other stakeholders.

**River Ock (Oxon):** In the River Ock catchment (which includes the River Thames at Oxford) we have been developing the relationships with landowners and stakeholders and begun detailed planning and implementation of practical works. The catchment has nationally and internationally important fens and wet grassland, outstanding ponds (including Flagship sites), and running waters, with a range of endangered freshwater species. However, the area has lost plant and animal species over the last 20 years, mainly due to pollution. We are now planning and implementing actions to help ameliorate this loss including pollution monitoring with local organisations, working with local groups to improve river habitats in Abingdon and trying to influence flood defence schemes for Oxford and Abingdon to maximise their wildlife benefits.

## Species & habitat protection

### Protecting endangered freshwater species in Wales:

This project undertaken in 2014, builds on our previous habitat protection work in Wales. It was funded by the Welsh Government's Resilience Ecosystem Fund, and was completed in partnership with a range of species experts and Natural Resources Wales.

The project aimed to (i) increase understanding of the current conservation status of critical pond-associated species listed as a priority for conservation action in Wales, (ii) assess new clean water pond creation schemes targeted at these species, and (iii) identify new sites where clean water pond creation or management would enhance populations of critical species.

Our initial work focussed on 21 rare wetland plant and invertebrate species including Pillwort, Yellow Centaury, Tubular Water-dropwort, Three-lobed Crowfoot, Fairy shrimp and Glutinous Snail, and looked at their occurrence in three regions already

## Our delivery of practical conservation measures on the ground

### Landscape and catchment projects

- Water Friendly Farming
- Catchment Hosting
  - New Forest
  - River Thame
  - River Ock

### Species & habitat protection

- Welsh Priority species project
- Million Ponds Project Phase 2
- Oxford Floodplains project

identified as being important for ponds: Radnorshire in mid Wales, Pembrokeshire and Anglesey.

In total we surveyed over 500 ponds, pools and puddles across Wales to find out how their rare plants and animals were faring, and whether measures to protect them were working. The findings showed that:

- Most of the rare plant and invertebrate species we studied appear to be declining in Wales.
- There seems to be a gradual reduction from peripheral areas with sub-optimal land use: thus strong populations were almost always concentrated in nature reserves or other areas of semi-natural land with effective grazing regimes.
- These core reserves are increasingly becoming vital refuges but can suffer from pressures from the surrounding land. So it is essential that these areas continue to be protected, maintained and extended.
- There was positive evidence from the study that sites which are proactively and knowledgeably managed are doing best, with sites like the



National Trust owned Marloes Mere in Pembrokeshire or the RSPB's Malltraeth Marsh in Anglesey retaining and increasing strong populations of their key species.

- Although habitat creation was often clearly a force for good, there were some sites where more knowledge was needed to inform their design, location and grazing level to be suitable for the species of interest.

The project's work on one of Wales' rarest species, the Glutinous Snail, was very successful. This small, delicate, mollusc with a glass-like shell, is almost extinct in Britain, and now found only at Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake). The results of 2014 lake surveys showed that the species is restricted to a distinct depth zone in the rocky shallows around three quarters of the perimeter of Llyn Tegid. Ten snails were also taken from the lake under licence, by specialist ecologist Ian Hughes. The ultimate aim is to breed the snails, making it possible to establish new populations at other sites in the future. Along the way, we hoped to learn more about how the snail behaves and what it needs. Ian's tank set-up was successful – the first time these snails have been successfully kept in captivity. His studies showed why these animals can be so hard to find and what they eat: they like to hide under boulders and cobbles, and only come up at night to feed on algae. The next stage of the work will show if it's possible to breed Glutinous Snail for the first time in captivity.

### The Million Ponds Project Phase 2 – Putting back clean water in the landscape:

Ponds are small, easily created, and if you make new ponds in places where they can have clean water they can quickly become fantastic wildlife habitats.

The Million Ponds Project, which was conceived in 2007 as a core activity of our organisation, is the biggest clean-water pond creation project in the world. Phase 1, which ran from 2008 to autumn 2012, exceeded its target of creating 1,000 ponds specifically for over 40 Biodiversity Action Plan species such as Spangled Water Beetle, Water Vole, Pillwort, Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Tassel Stonewort, Grass-poly and Natterjack Toad. A wide range of partners also created many thousands of additional ponds to make new clean-water habitats across England and Wales.



Orton Pits in Peterborough is one of the special Flagship pond sites our core work aims to protect and expand. The site has dozens of very high quality unpolluted ponds, which were created when clay was extracted for brick making. It is managed by our partners Froglife and supports a wide range of endangered water plants, as well as the UK's single largest great crested newt population.

In September 2012 we began Phase 2 of the Million Ponds Project to extend the creation of new high quality ponds across the country and in 2014 continued to build regional and local partnerships to deliver this. Projects to promote pond creation included work on the Water Friendly Farming project in Leicestershire; in the New Forest; and in Oxfordshire. The latter included work at North Leigh, where thanks to a grant from TOE2 (The Oxfordshire Community and Environmental Trust) the North Leigh Wildlife Group created and restored ponds to protect and increase freshwater biodiversity at sites around North Leigh parish and Foxburrow Wood, in partnership with the Wychwood Project. We also created 28 clean water ponds at sites in and around Oxford itself with financial support from the SITA Trust. As well as improving pond habitats, the project raised awareness of pond wildlife, and encouraged more people to get involved in freshwater conservation.

# Research & monitoring

## Applied Research

Freshwater Habitats Trust is an evidence based organisation and our practical work and advice is underpinned by the applied research, survey and monitoring work we have undertaken over the past 25 years. We continue to initiate and undertake high quality science, focussing on areas where knowledge gaps are critical barriers to habitat and species protection.

Wherever possible we combine our practical actions with research to see their effect. Our Water Friendly Farming project, for example, is a major platform for research on the effectiveness of pollution, flooding and wildlife mitigation measures. A range of our other research areas are outlined below.

### Heritage Lottery Fund research

Prior to our funding application for the People, Ponds and Water project, we undertook considerable research into two elements of the project: PondNet and Clean Water for Wildlife, to ensure they would be credible and effective.

**PondNet** is a volunteer-based survey to collect high quality information about trends in pond quality and pond species across England and Wales. Environmental data are also being collected to help explain the reasons for any observed changes.

In 2014 we finalised the trials for PondNet, with support from Natural England and Defra, to develop the structure, standardised methodologies, training, framework and viability of the network. The trial which was undertaken in four regions – Hampshire, Cheshire, NE Yorkshire and Sussex was very successful: attracting over 300 volunteers who entered more than 1,000 records on pond species and pond habitats. The trials also provided an invaluable opportunity to understand the significant role that Local Environmental Record Centres could play in the implementation of the network at a local level; with

## Evidence gathering

### Applied research

- Water Friendly Farming
- PondNet trials
- Clean Water for Wildlife trials

### Survey and monitoring

- New Forest project
- Norfolk pingo survey and management
- Million Ponds Project phase 1 evaluation
- Welsh Assembly Axis II

their links to the local recording community and for the validation and verification of site records, to create a statistically robust network. Thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England, and continued support from Local Environmental Record Centres, PondNet will now roll out over the next three years across England and Wales.

**Clean Water for Wildlife** is a 'rapid assessment' method for measuring water pollution which can be used by anyone to collect chemical data from all kinds of freshwaters (ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, ditches) using two simple measurements – soluble reactive phosphorus and nitrate-nitrogen.

In 2014 we researched both the efficacy and practical use of the kits in a range of different areas. We continued work with the Earthwatch-led Freshwater Watch project, funded by HSBC, looking at kit variability, and trialling water quality surveys in London. We have also been testing these methods





One of Thompson Common's pingo ponds. Our surveys showed the huge range of species, many rare or endangered, present in these ancient post-glacial pools

in our catchment studies in the New Forest, the River Thame catchment and in our Water Friendly Farming project. To ensure that volunteers enjoy the surveys and gain benefit from them we undertook practical trials with schools, youth and adults groups.

## Survey and Monitoring

**New Forest Ponds:** The New Forest is one of the few remaining areas of lowland Britain where large numbers of unpolluted, near-natural freshwaters can be seen – and that makes it one of the most important areas for freshwater wildlife in Western Europe.

In 2014 we completed the first ever baseline survey of ponds in the New Forest with funding from the Forestry Commission. At a landscape scale, the 38 ponds surveyed were found to support 94 wetland plant species, 41 invertebrate families and 68 species of aquatic beetles. The survey recorded 34 species of conservation importance (Nationally Scarce, IUCN or S41 species); including the Fairy Shrimp, Medicinal Leech and Mud Snail. In total, an outstanding 34 ponds (89%) qualified as BAP Priority Ponds: far higher than the 20% which represents the national

average. We recommended steps that will be needed to maintain these high quality sites and prevent deterioration from issues such as nutrient runoff from outside of the SSSI.

The pingos on **Thompson Common** in Norfolk have long been known to support extraordinary assemblages of plants and invertebrates. The 140 hectare reserve is owned and managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust and is one of the most important pond areas in the UK with over 400 pingo ponds: a post-glacial feature, typical of this part of the country. Although known for their outstanding assemblages of plant and animal species there had been no systematic surveys to record the full range of larger freshwater invertebrate animals, within the reserve. In 2013 we raised funds from a range of Trust funds, and in 2014, commissioned colleagues Martin Hammond and Jonathan Graham to undertake a survey of the site on our behalf.

41 ponds have now been studied, and an exceptional total of 193 invertebrate species and 124 wetland plant species recorded. Many ponds produced incredible lists of endangered and threatened species and species which had been previously unrecorded

at the site. Examples of notable species included: Thick-horned diving beetle, Mud snail, Shining Ram's-horn Snail, Scarce Emerald Damselfly, Frogbit, Water-violet, Great Fen Sedge, Fen Pondweed, and a variety of stonewort species. In addition to the invertebrates, populations of Water Vole and Great Crested Newt were also found. The survey has highlighted the importance of some key invertebrate habitats within Thompson Common's ponds, particularly tall emergent vegetation, sedge tussocks, grass mats and carpets of moss along the pond margins. These habitats are essential for the survival of rare invertebrates on Thompson Common, and their extent needs to be monitored and maintained by adjusting grazing levels.

The high quality invertebrate, plant and environmental data collected by the survey will provide an important baseline for monitoring any future changes on the site. We will follow up this work with a guided walk for land managers and local interest groups to ensure that the extraordinary value of the site for invertebrates is recognised and maintained.

During the summer of 2014 a range of **Million Ponds Project Phase I** sites were also evaluated in Oxfordshire to find out how they have fared, providing evidence of the effectiveness of pond creation. Sites were surveyed by PhD student Catherine Stokowski (University of Sheffield) and a summer intern from Sardinia, Giovanni Riviaccio, who collected baseline plant survey and water chemistry data from a complex of 22 ponds created on the Thames floodplain in Buckthorne Meadow. Three years on about a third of the ponds support stoneworts, amphibians, and a good diversity of plants generally, all from natural colonisation.

In Wales our own ecologists surveyed new ponds as part of a Welsh Government's Resilient Ecosystem Fund. We surveyed a total of 67 two to four year old ponds located in three Important Areas for Ponds: Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire and Brecknockshire. Around half the ponds were already Priority habitats and many supported priority species. The information we gathered adds to our growing bank of evidence that making new clean water ponds in the right places really helps freshwater wildlife.

Sundews sparkling in sunlight on the margins of a New Forest pond





# Public outreach and partnership

We ensure that our information makes a practical difference by providing advice to the public, technical guidance, strategic planning, dissemination in the media, network co-ordination, training and education.

## Public advice, dissemination and engagement

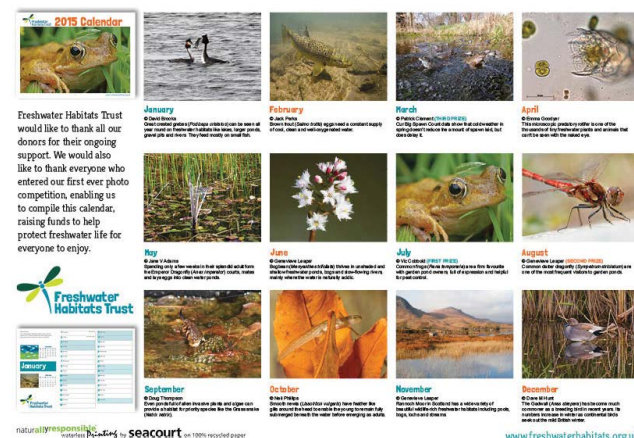
Our Facebook and Twitter accounts are a growing social media platform where people can share their passion for freshwater wildlife, and we share news and events, and celebrate freshwater wildlife. We also put out calls to action, joining forces with others to speak with a louder voice on major issues. For example, Facebook and Twitter were the main tools for publicising the Blueprint for Water's campaign 'Save Our Waters'.

We set ourselves a goal of reaching over 2000 Facebook followers this year; by the end of March 2015 we were at 2170 and growing rapidly. Twitter followers grew from 3500 to 4500 over the 12 months. We engaged with an additional audience by giving online advice through our website, now receiving about 120,000 visitors a year. Most visits are to our garden pond and pond management and creation pages. We disseminated additional information through a supporter newsletter and social media. Even with limited capacity our staff dealt with about 500 calls and emails seeking advice during the year.

Garden ponds are still an important part of our awareness raising strategy, allowing us to reach beyond the traditional conservation audience. **The Big Pond Dip**, which is the first ever national garden pond public survey to assess the quality of the pond environment, turned five years old in 2014 and continues to augment the support we provide through our public advice line. Our survey of frog and toad spawn, the **Big Spawn Count**, returned

for its third year, asking garden and school pond owners to count the number of spawn clumps they had, to help us learn even more about the breeding habitats of native amphibians. The survey always captures people's interest, and has generated much discussion and engagement through our online social forums.

In 2014 we ran our first ever photo competition to allow us to produce a 2015 calendar and collect excellent images of freshwaters and their species. We plan to repeat the event in 2015 with more promotion to target Christmas sales.



## Training and education

We have continued to increase and improve our range of **technical information and guidance** for many different audiences, particularly through our web-based guides to protecting and enhancing freshwater habitats. In 2015 we extended our range of around 60 downloadable factsheets in the Pond Creation Toolkit to include new online species dossiers and Welsh versions of existing factsheets.



If you're lucky Common Toads may use your garden pond as a breeding refuge. It's much commoner to see Common Frogs, Smooth Newts or Palmate Newts in garden ponds.

Our PondNet **database**, hosted by Biological Records Centre, currently contains around 2000 species and environmental records. All data is open access and free to download. We plan to considerably expand the database to contain a much wider range of records in the next few years.

In 2014 we ran approximately 30 **training courses** on pond survey methods and identification, including training in eDNA surveys, amphibian, invertebrate and plant identification, and ID of rare species.

We gave around 25 **public talks** through the year to wide-ranging audiences both public and professional. We had many more requests for talks and presentations, but our ability to fully disseminate our information in this way remains constrained by capacity.

In formal education, we co-supervised **PhDs, MSc and undergraduate student projects** and provided one student internship.

## Network co-ordination

We retained our role in the **European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN)** which hosts Europe-wide scientific workshops, develops policy and encourages practical conservation of ponds. The 5th international workshop was held in 2014 in Saragossa, Spain, in collaboration with the European Chapter of the Society of Wetland Scientists. Further information about the EPCN can be found at [www.europeanponds.org](http://www.europeanponds.org).

## Using information to make a difference

### Advice, dissemination, engagement

- Social media
- Advice line
- Newsletters
- Online advice
- Media: BBC TV, radio and BBC website
- Public engagement surveys (Big Pond Dip, Big Spawn Count)

### Training and education

- Technical guidance online
  - Toolkits
  - Priority species dossiers & maps
  - PondNet database
- Training in survey methods, pond creation and management
- Supervision of PhD, MSc and undergraduate projects
- University lectures
- Public talks
- NELMS, National Ecosystem Assessment, Biodiversity 2020
- Crown Estates – strategy

Our **Memorandum of Understanding** with the Mineral Products Association (MPA) set up in 2012 was renewed in 2014 and will continue to provide an exchange of technical and advisory information between FHT, MPA members and other stakeholders within the industry. The minerals industry is uniquely placed to create new high quality clean water ponds on their extensive landholdings and restored quarry sites and the MOU contributes to a greater understanding of the conservation of freshwater biodiversity and encourages the creation of clean water ponds.



# Influencing Policy

In a political climate in which conservation and biodiversity is generally held to be losing ground against economic and development interests, we aim to ensure threats to the environment are well understood by government and statutory agencies, and promote positive action by policy makers. Our work is currently supported by a John Ellerman Foundation grant which has enabled us to continue developing European level influence on the Water Framework Directive.

## During the year we have:

- Worked closely with other members of Wildlife and Countryside Link to refine and simplify the highly successful Blueprint for Water campaign, encouraging the group to focus more precisely on the protection of freshwater biodiversity. Our director, Jeremy Biggs was re-elected as Deputy Chair of Link and helped the organisation undertake a strategic review of its priorities.
- Joined the Steering Group of the NGO 'State of Nature' consortium, promoting the need to protect freshwater biodiversity (we expect a second State of Nature report to be published in 2016).
- Worked closely with members of the Wales Freshwater Biodiversity Group to implement plans to protect priority freshwater species and habitats in Wales.

- Continued to engage with the Defra Catchment-Based Approach (CaBA) in England for water management, particularly by developing our co-hosting of the New Forest catchment with the New Forest National Park Authority, and hosting of the Ock and Thame catchments.

## Championing freshwaters

- Developing an EU-wide small waters manual
- Wildlife & Countryside Link
- Developing Important Areas for Freshwaters
- Member of the national support group for the Catchment-based Approach

# Plans for the year ahead

As an organisation we continue to be concerned by the drip, drip, drip of biodiversity loss that we see in the freshwaters around us.

In the year ahead we will continue to address this damage using the approach which evidence suggests works best: focusing on actions to ensure the best places are well protected, helping to improve them, extending outwards and linking them to create freshwater networks. This will include:

- Building upon the considerable on-the-ground opportunities we already have to improve the biodiversity of important sites through the People, Ponds and Water project and through opportunities created by the Million Ponds Project.
- Providing, the critical tools (e.g. Important Freshwater Areas work) needed by ourselves and others, to support and progress habitat and species protection.
- Increasing our strategic partnerships – working with others to share and promote our vision.
- Ensuring that we bring people with us – enabling a wider audience to appreciate and enjoy wonderful freshwater as much as we do.

Starting in 2015, our **People, Ponds and Water** project is a major opportunity to help us to achieve many of these aims: we will engage many thousands of people, raise awareness, gather important information, and help protect the freshwaters of around 70 of the UK's most important freshwater habitats for the long term. It is also a significant step for the Trust, enabling us to pump prime our regional development to enable us to deliver more effectively on the ground.

## Working on the ground

In the coming year we will continue with other important on-the-ground activities, working with a wide range of partners, particularly:

- Our CaBA hosting projects on the River Ock, River Thame and in the New Forest catchments.
- We will also seek funding from a second HLF proposal through the 'Our Past: Our Future' bid submitted by the New Forest National Park in June 2015, which will hopefully enable us to work with landowners: providing capital works that reduces diffuse pollution and restores and creates high quality freshwater habitats that extend out from the New Forest.
- We will continue to develop **Phase 2 of the Million Ponds Project**, particularly by seeking funds for new practical projects and a national development officer, working to increase the extent of clean water in our countryside.

## Land ownership

Freshwater Habitats Trust is not currently a land-owning organisation, however our view is that, to achieve our strategic goals, there is merit in considering strategic land purchase to protect or link important biodiversity areas. To progress this in 2015 we will begin to evaluate the practicalities of land ownership (costs, continuity, risks, long-term funding etc.), and consider options to increase our experience of site management through partnership projects with existing land-managing organisations.

## Evidence gathering

Our strong evidence base remains one of our major strengths, and is a key element of our credibility. Our future research will continue to focus on areas of strategic value likely to be most persuasive to audiences we need to influence.

Research areas that we will continue to develop:

- **Water Friendly Farming** – with its strong biodiversity and multi-waterbody focus, this



Rannoch Moor in Scotland has a wide variety of beautiful wildlife-rich freshwater habitats. This photo was another successful entry into our first photo competition, making it into our 2015 Calendar



project will provide unique information about maintaining freshwater biodiversity at landscape level, the importance of habitat, and specifically pond creation to maintain biodiversity, as well as objective information on the value of agri-environment measures to prevent pollution, flooding and protect biodiversity.

- Information on **trends in freshwater biodiversity**: this will be partly delivered through the PondNet volunteer-based monitoring of pond species and habitats, and in 2015/16, will include a re-survey of National Pond Survey sites, 25 years after they were first surveyed, to assess changes in these high quality waterbodies.
- The **value of high quality pond creation** – ensuring that we learn lessons from the Million Ponds Project and are able to maximise its future take-up, by reporting on the project's biodiversity impact, and successes.

### New research that we want to develop

- Information on **protecting and managing high quality freshwater sites and species**. This will be delivered through our People, Ponds and Water – Flagship Ponds project.
- Information on the **value and success of measures that build-out from, link or restore high-quality freshwater habitats and landscapes**.
- **Newly developing areas** – particularly eDNA, that keep us at the forefront of science and provide tools that will help us better deliver our aims.

### Information and awareness

Like all organisations, Freshwater Habitats Trust will be able to achieve far more by influencing and motivating others than we can by working alone. In 2015, our main advocacy aims are twofold:

- To develop a consensus of views amongst key partners, and begin the practical steps towards the development of a national Freshwater Network that adequately protects biodiversity, including key species.

- Review and assess the effectiveness of practical conservation activities, particularly at catchment scale, in order to ensure best use of scarce funding and actual benefits to freshwater biodiversity.

To achieve these aims, we need to make a range of critical support materials widely available. These include:

- Important Freshwater Areas (IFA) maps, data and reports. Developing IFA resources, particularly for England and Wales, and in due course Scotland and Northern Ireland. This work provides critical information to help everybody to protect key sites and species, and is essential for the development of The Freshwater Network.
- Providing key documents and evidence that debunk the current myths about the conservation of freshwater biodiversity.

### Influencing Policy and legislation

We will continue to develop and deliver the steps, evidence and alliances needed to influence key policies and legislation with an influence on freshwater biodiversity including:

- Continue to encourage (and actively involve ourselves in) **Water Framework Directive** refinement so it better reflects needs of freshwater biodiversity (e.g. has stronger support for small waters, and is implemented in a way that gives more priority to High status water.
- Work in partnership with others to halt the decline in freshwater biodiversity as set out in the Government's **Biodiversity 2020**, which has ambitious creation and conservation targets.
- Influence and inform **Catchment Plans**, particularly those developed under auspices of the Catchment-based Approach (CaBA), assuming it survives the General Election, and influence the content and shape of the next and **3rd round of River Basin Management Plans in 2020** – particularly aiming to get wider representation of the freshwater landscape (e.g. include small water bodies in the WFD implementation), and biodiversity/species specifically included.

# Structure, governance & management

**The trustees (who are also directors of Freshwater Habitats Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).**

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Freshwater Habitats Trust is an incorporated charity established and governed under a Memorandum and Articles of Association completed in December 2004, under the name of Pond Conservation: The Water Habitats Trust. The Trust was entered onto the Register of Charities, Number 1107708, on 19th January 2005. It was registered as a Limited Company, Number 5317683, on 20th December 2004. Pond Conservation remained inactive until 1st April 2005, at which point it took over the charity "The Ponds Conservation Trust". It subsequently also took over the subsidiary company "The Ponds Conservation Trust: Policy & Research Ltd". The Trust's name was changed to Freshwater Habitats Trust in August 2013.

The Trust is administered by a Board of Trustees, currently consisting of seven members. The Senior Management Team (SMT) reports to the Trustee



Board, and manages staff and activities of the Trust under delegated authority from the Trustee Board.

The financial management and fundraising strategy of the Trust are supervised by Trustees and SMT, reporting and making recommendations to the full board for implementation.

The Trust currently provides an informal induction process for new Trustees. Prospective trustees are nominated for their professional experience and the match of their skills to the board's needs. They are approached by the Chair or an SMT member, the aims and activities of the Trust are explained to them, and they are provided with explanatory information and reports. They are invited to attend a board meeting to learn more of our work and procedures and when possible, to meet staff. On becoming a Trustee, they are provided with explanatory material on Trusteeship from the Charity Commission, and copies of the budget, recent accounts, and recent staff and board meeting minutes.

## Public Benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the 2006 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of Freshwater Habitats Trust meet with these criteria.

## Objects

- To advance public education in the conservation and ecology of ponds, wetlands, catchment systems and other water habitats;
- To promote for public benefit the conservation and creation of ponds, wetlands, catchment systems and other water habitats, and their wildlife and historical features, and their prudent use and enjoyment by the public, in particular, but not exclusively, by:
  - a) The promotion and conduct of research and the dissemination of the useful results thereof;
  - b) The promotion and conduct of active conservation and creation of ponds, wetlands, catchment

systems and other water habitats by landowners and community groups;

- c) Such other charitable purposes as the Trustees may think fit or such other charitable objects as the Trustees may think fit.

## Mission statement

To protect freshwater life for everyone to enjoy.

## Risk management

The Board of Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations, reputation, business and finance of Freshwater Habitats Trust. The Senior Management Team (SMT) assess and update the likelihood and impact of material risks on a risk management matrix, which is reviewed by the Board on a quarterly basis at Trustee meetings. Any significant changes are reported to Trustees as they arise.

Health and Safety Procedures are reviewed annually on a rotational basis, with Health and Safety reports as standing items on Board, SMT and staff meeting agendas. Specific risk assessments are carried out for all new activities and field working sites. Health and Safety is a primary element of the staff induction system, and training is provided whenever appropriate.



# Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2015 is set out on page 25 of this report.

## Income

Freshwater Habitats Trust's total income decreased by 8% in 2014/15 to £769k (2013/14: £832k). Most of this decrease is in Charitable Activities, as the prior year had higher than usual contract activity due to the one year environmental DNA (eDNA) Great Crested Newt monitoring research project. Also substantial restricted funds were carried forward from the prior year (£252k) that were utilised on projects during the year.

Voluntary grant income of £515k (2013/14: £543k) still represents the majority of Freshwater Habitats funding: Grants received as part of the Environment Agency's Catchment Restoration Fund (in its final third year) and Catchment Partnership Fund (either directly or via project partners) totalled £207k. Continuing grants included the Citizen Science Water project funded by Earthwatch Institute (£69k), Oxfordshire Priority Ponds funded by SITA UK Ltd under the landfill tax credit scheme for (£32k), the Protecting S42 Species project funded by Natural Resources Wales (£31k) and the fourth year of the 5-year (2011-16) Tubney Development Grant (£35k). On the completion of the development project, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded the People, Ponds & Water project 3 years funding, of which £28k was utilised within this financial year.

Charitable activities income relates mostly to funds received for Pondnet (£78k), and £110k for eDNA Great Crested Newt testing.

## Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2014/15 increased 37% to £854k (2013/14: £625k) in part due to the high level of project funds carried forward from the

previous year, which were spent during the year. The fundraising and governance costs of the organisation remain low at 3% of total expenditure (2013/14: 4%).

Charitable expenditure is dominated by practical projects due to the implementation of physical measures. Research and monitoring is also more costly due to the cost of buying and testing samples (such as for eDNA):

- Practical Projects including the catchment restoration projects and the Oxfordshire Priority Ponds make up 48% (2013/14: 34%);
- Public Outreach and Partnership, including People, Ponds & Water and PondNet, make up 17% (2013/14: 25%);
- Research and Monitoring, including the Great Crested Newt eDNA testing make up 31% (2013/14: 36%)
- Policy spending at only 3% (2013/14: 5%) remains relatively small, but does not require extensive practical costs.

## Reserves position

Closing reserves of £511k are 14% lower than 2013/14 (£595k) primarily due to the lower closing position of restricted reserves.

Restricted reserves decreased 57% to £108k (2013/14: £252k) due to a number of projects with funds available being completed during the year: remaining funds represent amounts received and still to be spent on the completion of restricted projects.

Unrestricted reserves increased 17% to £402k (2013/14: £343k): the continued improvement in unrestricted reserves is in part due to the higher



level of contract work awarded in the year. Also it should be noted that £48k relates to contract funds on ongoing projects into 2015/16, rather than core funds.

### Reserves policy

The Trustees have agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of Freshwater Habitats Trust's working capital, in order to meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure, such as finding new accommodation, and therefore enable Freshwater Habitats Trust to fulfil its charitable objectives. Working capital is defined as the equivalent of 6 months' unrestricted expenditure.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Reserves Policy and amount of reserves required annually as part of the budget setting process. The unrestricted reserves at the end of this period were £402k and comply with this policy.

Restricted reserves represent unspent monies received from donors who have specific conditions as to their use on agreed projects. These funds are fully covered by matching assets. No project funds are in deficit at the end of the financial year, and the Board of Trustees anticipates that these are sufficient to fulfil project requirements.

The Board of Trustees considers there are sufficient reserves held at the year end and therefore continues to adopt a going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

### Approval

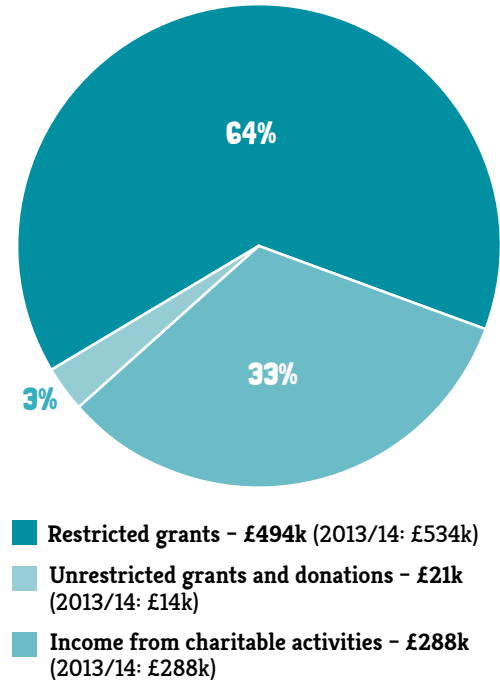
This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 29 July 2015.



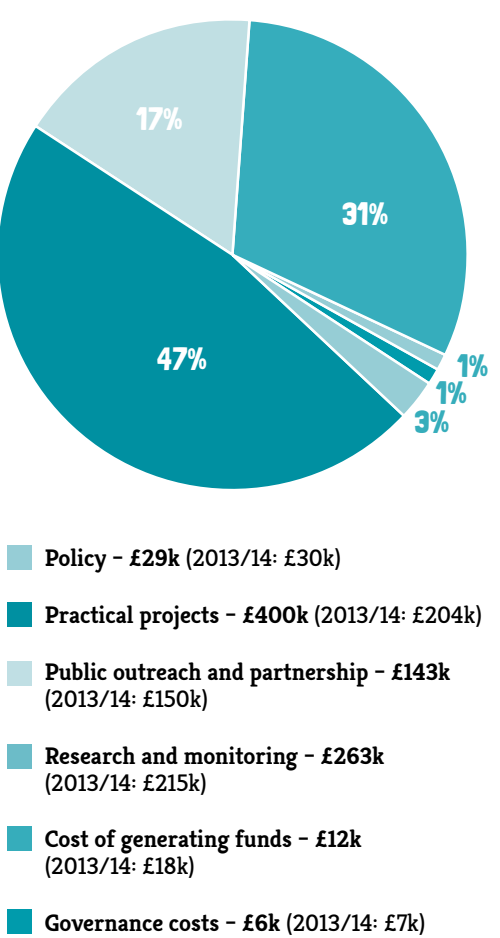
Martin Layer  
Chair

Paul Jackson  
Treasurer

### Income



### Expenditure



## Independent Auditors' report to the members of Freshwater Habitats Trust

### Year ended 31 March 2015

We have audited the financial statements of Freshwater Habitats Trust for the year ended 31 March 2015 which comprise of the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and the related notes, which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 27. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement set out on page 19, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the trustees; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Trustees' Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

### Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31st March 2015 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (applicable to smaller entities); and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.



### Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act

In our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies exemption in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report.

*Taylorcocks*

James Blake ACA (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
for and on behalf of Taylorcocks



Taylorcocks, Statutory auditor, Portsmouth office.  
Date: 31 July 2015  
Taylorcocks is eligible to act as an auditor  
in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.



Water mint (*Mentha aquatica*) is a common and widespread water plant, equally at home in ponds or at the side of rivers and streams. It's a good choice for a garden pond as it grows quickly and well. Just a small amount collected from a local wild source is all you need to get it growing in your pond.

## Statement of financial activities

for the year ended 31 March 2015

(Incorporating the summary income and expenditure account)

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds year ended 31-Mar-15	Total Funds year ended 31-Mar-14
		£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources:</b>					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Voluntary income	2	19,860	494,261	514,121	543,209
Investment income		765	-	765	768
Incoming resources from charitable activities:	3	254,018	264	254,282	287,931
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>274,643</b>	<b>494,525</b>	<b>769,168</b>	<b>831,908</b>
<b>Resources expended:</b>					
Cost of generating funds	4	2,995	8,800	11,795	18,204
Charitable activities:					
Influencing policy	5	-	29,216	29,216	30,067
Practical projects		20,423	379,749	400,172	203,935
Public outreach and partnership		56,729	86,478	143,207	150,138
Research & monitoring		128,645	134,275	262,920	214,764
		205,797	629,718	835,515	598,904
Governance costs	7	6,318	-	6,318	7,621
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>215,110</b>	<b>638,518</b>	<b>853,628</b>	<b>624,729</b>
<b>Net incoming resources</b>		<b>59,533</b>	<b>(143,993)</b>	<b>(84,460)</b>	<b>207,179</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Funds brought forward:		342,610	252,472	595,082	387,903
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>402,143</b>	<b>108,479</b>	<b>510,622</b>	<b>595,082</b>



## Balance Sheet

as at 31 March 2015

	Note	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-14
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets:</b>					
Tangible assets	11		7,036		4,495
<b>Current assets:</b>					
Stock	12	386		620	
Debtors	13	235,134		252,221	
Cash at bank and in hand		381,230		449,676	
<b>Total current assets:</b>		616,751		702,517	
<b>Creditors:</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(113,165)		(83,207)	
<b>Net current assets:</b>			503,586		590,587
Amounts falling due in 2-5 years	15		-		(28,723)
<b>Net assets:</b>			510,622		595,082
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>					
Restricted funds			108,479		252,472
Unrestricted funds			402,143		342,610
<b>Total charity funds</b>	16		510,622		595,082

These statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 29 July 2015 and signed on their behalf by:



Martin Layer  
Chair

## Notes to the financial statements

for the year ended 31 March 2015

### 1. Accounting Policies

#### a. Basis and preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (issued March 2005) and applicable UK accounting standards and the Companies Act 2006.

#### b. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are those funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are those funds over which the trustees do not have full discretion concerning their use.

#### c. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity becomes legally entitled to the income and when this income can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Any contract income received in advance of the work being done is deferred.

No amounts are included in the financial statements for services provided by volunteers.

#### d. Resources expended

All expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis. Costs of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income. Charitable activities include costs in furtherance of the charity's objects and support costs relating to those activities. Governance costs include

those incurred in the governance of the charity and are primarily associated with constitutional and statutory requirements. Support costs include administrative staff and central office costs. Where support staff work for a particular activity their costs are allocated to that activity based on an hourly recharge rate. Any remaining support costs are allocated to the charitable activities in the same percentage.

#### e. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Plant and machinery – 25% straight line
- Leasehold costs – depreciated over the period of the lease (5 years)
- Assets costing less than £1,000 are not capitalised and are included in expenditure.

#### f. Stocks

Stocks and work in progress are included at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

#### g. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the charity in the year.

#### h. Foreign Currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the exchange rate ruling at the date of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are retranslated at the balance sheet date. All exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activities.



## 2. Voluntary income

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	£	£	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14
			£	£
<b>Policy</b>				
The John Ellerman Foundation			-	24,500
Environment Agency			-	2,646
		-	-	27,146
<b>Practical projects</b>				
Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust		109,566	109,566	90,138
Environment Agency		97,583	97,583	104,615
SITA Trust		31,582	31,582	43,918
Natural Resources Wales		30,676	30,676	1,924
The Waterloo Foundation		5,000	5,000	-
Oxford University (Wytham)		3,899	3,899	-
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2)		1,229	1,229	-
Ernest Kleinwurt Charitable Trust		1,000	1,000	-
Oakdale Trust		1,000	1,000	-
D Clough			-	5,000
Miller Foundation			-	2,500
M MacFayden			-	2,000
A Redston			-	1,620
The Panton Trust			-	1,000
Mr and Mrs JA Pye's Charitable Settlement			-	1,000
Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Trust			-	1,000
Michael Marks Charitable Trust			-	1,000
The Alan Evans Memorial Trust			-	1,000
H R Bull Charitable Trust			-	1,000
Other	-	250	250	13,275
		281,785	281,785	270,989
<b>Public outreach and partnership</b>				
Heritage Lottery Fund		34,606	34,606	57,690
New Forest National Park Authority		15,000	15,000	29,077
Miller Philanthropy		2,000	2,000	-
Other		6,409	6,409	250
	-	58,015	58,015	87,017

## 2. Voluntary income (continued)

<b>Research and monitoring</b>				
Earthwatch Institute		69,364	69,364	30873
Syngenta Ltd		51,566	51,566	24389
Centre for Ecology & Hydrology			-	9980
Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust			-	2000
Paul Bassham Charitable Trust			-	1000
Clark Bradbury Charitable Trust			-	1000
Other			-	950
	-	120,930	120,930	70,192
<b>Other</b>				
Supporter Scheme	9,434		9,434	9,986
Tubney Charitable Trust		33,531	33,531	74,687
Environment Job	1,055		1,055	-
D Clough	5,000		5,000	-
The Mackintosh Foundation	-		-	1,000
Other	4,371		4,371	2,192
	19,860	33,531	53,391	87,865
<b>Total voluntary income:</b>	<b>19,860</b>	<b>494,261</b>	<b>514,121</b>	<b>543,209</b>

Note some grants are given for projects which bridge different areas of activities. Allocations have been made according to where the majority of the work fits.

## 3. Incoming resources from charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14
	£	£	£	£
Policy	-		-	3,025
Practical projects	28,312		28,312	1,000
Public outreach and partnership	80,216		80,216	92,202
Research and monitoring	140,877		140,877	181,056
Corporate membership & sponsorship	4,300		4,300	10,317
Other	313	264	577	331
	<b>254,018</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>254,282</b>	<b>287,931</b>



#### 4. Cost of generating funds

	Unrestricted	Restricted	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	1,538	6,949	8,487	14,615
Support costs	1,457	1,851	3,308	3,589
	<b>2,995</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>11,795</b>	<b>18,204</b>

#### 5. Cost of charitable activities including grants payable and activities undertaking directly by the charity

	Staff costs	Project activities	Other costs	Support costs	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Influencing policy	16,206	4,143	1,000	7,867	29,216	30,067
Practical projects	179,550	179,131	988	40,503	400,172	203,935
Public outreach & partnership	74,267	32,307	2,421	34,212	143,207	150,138
Research & monitoring	102,647	123,275	-	36,998	262,920	214,764
	<b>372,670</b>	<b>338,856</b>	<b>4,409</b>	<b>119,580</b>	<b>835,515</b>	<b>598,904</b>

#### 6. Support costs

	Unrestricted	Restricted	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	5,251	28,334	33,585	60,365
Office Running costs	12,932	69,778	82,710	45,016
Other	514	2,771	3,285	2,839
	<b>18,697</b>	<b>100,883</b>	<b>119,580</b>	<b>108,220</b>

#### 7. Governance costs

	Unrestricted	Restricted	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-14
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	1,176		1,176	900
Travel & subsistence	153		153	261
Audit costs	3,441		3,441	4,443
Other	1,548		1,548	2,018
	<b>6,318</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,318</b>	<b>7,621</b>

#### 8. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

Trustees received reimbursement £153 (2014: £261) in the financial year and no trustees received any remuneration.

#### 9. Employees remuneration

	2015	2014
	£	£
Wages and salaries	361,674	314,121
Social security	31,101	30,069
Pension costs	18,912	15,626
	<b>411,687</b>	<b>359,816</b>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year (2014 - no. 0).

#### Average number of employees

	2015	2014
Policy	0.5	1
Practical projects	4.5	3
Public outreach & partnership	3	3
Research & monitoring	2.5	2.5
Support	1.5	1.5
	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>

#### 10. Taxation

The company is a registered charity and is, therefore, exempt from taxation.

#### 11. Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Costs	Plant & Machinery	Fixed Assets
	£	£	£
<b>Cost</b>			
As at 01/04/14	4,495	4,252	8,747
Additions	1,080	3,710	4,790
As at 31/03/15	<b>5,575</b>	<b>7,962</b>	<b>13,537</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
As at 01/04/14	-	4,252	4,252
Annual Charge	1,115	1,134	2,249
As at 31/03/15	<b>1,115</b>	<b>5,386</b>	<b>6,501</b>
<b>Net book value</b>			
As at 31/03/15	<b>4,460</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>7,036</b>
As at 31/03/14	<b>4,495</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,495</b>

#### 12. Stocks

	2015	2014
	£	£
Books for resale	<b>386</b>	<b>620</b>

#### 13. Debtors

	2015	2014
	£	£
Project debtors	160,483	179,210
Prepayments and accrued income	71,604	69,098
Other debtors	3,048	3,913
	<b>235,135</b>	<b>252,221</b>

#### 14. Creditors falling due within one year

	2015	2014
	£	£
Project creditors	52,470	32,403
Deferred income < one year	28,723	33,531
Accruals	22,087	8,524
Taxation and social security costs	9,885	8,580
Other creditors	-	171
	<b>113,165</b>	<b>83,207</b>

#### 15. Creditors falling due within two to five years

	2015	2014
Deferred income > one year	-	<b>28,723</b>



## 16. Analysis of funds

	Balance 31-Mar-14 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance 31-Mar-15 £
<b>Restricted Funds</b>				
Catchment Partnership Funds: Ock, Thame & Beaulieu	5,045	37,292	35,335	7,002
Catchment restoration - Loddington	38,272	109,566	147,838	-
Catchment restoration - Thame	51,238	60,541	111,779	-
Citizen science water quality training - France	-	10,521	10,521	-
Citizen science water quality training -UK	4,759	58,843	63,602	-
HLF People, Ponds, and Water Project	15,268	43,014	56,623	1,659
Important Freshwater Areas Pilot	4,614	58	3,908	764
Important Areas for Ponds	6,520		115	6,405
Pond Digging Fund	22,582		4,623	17,959
Million Ponds Project Phase 2	10,828		2,321	8,507
NERC Macronutrients	4,931		278	4,653
New Forest Catchments	18,420	15,000	13,907	19,513
New Forest Rural Urban Measures	8,035	-	-	8,035
North Leigh Community Pond Project	60	1,229	1,289	-
Policy Officer	22,973	206	12,721	10,458
Protecting S42 Species Wales	-	37,676	37,676	-
SITA Oxfordshire Priority Ponds	15	35,482	35,497	-
Tadpole Shrimp Research Project	2,291		2,291	-
Tassel Stonewort Translocation Project	3,936		-	3,936
Thompson Common Pingo Project	15,137		12,260	2,877
Tubney Development Fund	16,579	33,531	42,814	7,296
Water Friendly Farming Researcher	969	51,566	43,120	9,415
<b>Total restricted funds:</b>	<b>252,472</b>	<b>494,525</b>	<b>638,518</b>	<b>108,479</b>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>				
General funds	342,610	274,643	215,110	402,143
<b>Total unrestricted funds:</b>	<b>342,610</b>	<b>274,643</b>	<b>215,110</b>	<b>402,143</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>595,082</b>	<b>769,168</b>	<b>853,628</b>	<b>510,622</b>

## 17. Analysis of net assets by funds

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 31-Mar-15 £	Total 31-Mar-14 £
Tangible fixed assets	7,036	-	7,036	4,495
Current assets	411,636	205,115	616,751	702,517
Current liabilities	(16,529)	(96,636)	(113,165)	(83,207)
Liabilities falling due in 2-5 years	-	-	-	(28,723)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>402,143</b>	<b>108,479</b>	<b>510,622</b>	<b>595,082</b>

## 18. Operating Lease Commitments

As of 31 March 2015 the charity had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases.

	Land and Buildings 2015 £	Land and Buildings 2014 £
Expire within one year:	-	-
Expiry in one to three years:	21,000	21,000



## Acknowledgements

We work with numerous partners and allies. Our sincere thanks to the many organisations and individuals who work together with Freshwater Habitats Trust to support life in freshwater.

Abingdon Naturalists  
Adrian Bicker, Living Record  
Amphibian & Reptile Conservation  
Amphibian & Reptile Groups of the UK  
Anglian Water  
Aquascience Ltd  
Aquatic Coleoptera Trust  
Association of Local Environmental Record Centres  
Auchenorrhyncha Recording Scheme for Britain & Ireland  
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BBOWT  
Beaulieu Estate  
Big Give  
Blackwater Valley Conservation Volunteers  
Bob Bray Associates  
Botanical Society of the British Isles  
British Aggregates Association  
British Dragonfly Society  
British Trust for Ornithology  
Buglife  
Butterfly Conservation Trust  
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Catherine Stokowska  
Catchment-Based Approach  
Catherine Duffy  
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology  
Cheshire Wildlife Trust  
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David Glover  
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Defra  
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Environment Agency  
Environment Bank  
European Environmental Bureau  
European Pond Conservation Network  
Field Studies Council  
Forestry Commission  
Freshwater Biological Association  
Froglife  
Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust  
Gary Butt, Pipefix  
Get Support IT Services Ltd  
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Hansons plc  
Helen Edwards, myAcorn Limited  
Ian Hughes  
Ian Wallace  
James Gillies, Complete Land Care  
JNCC



John Poland  
Jonathan Graham  
Judy Webb  
Kate Measures  
Keith Gittens  
Knepp Wildland Project  
Martin Hammond  
Matt Sutton  
Minerals Products Association  
National Trust  
Natural England  
Natural Environment Research Council  
Natural Resources Wales  
Neil Phillips  
New Forest Land Advice Service  
New Forest National Park Authority  
Nick Stewart  
Norfolk Wildlife Trust  
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Oxford Brookes University  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Oxford University WildCru  
(Wildlife Conservation Research Unit)  
Panasonic  
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Radnorshire Wildlife Trust  
Richard Bunting  
Richard Griffiths, DICE  
Richard Lansdown  
Rivers Trust  
River Thame Conservation Trust  
Robert Aquilina  
Royal Horticultural Society  
RSPB  
Ruth Shaw  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Seacourt Ltd  
Spygen  
South and West Wales Wildlife Trust  
Sussex Wildlife Trust  
Thames Water  
The Chemicals Regulatory Directorate  
The Wildlife Trusts  
Trichoptera Recording Scheme  
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2)  
University of Sheffield  
University of York  
Vikki Aust  
Welsh Government  
WFF  
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust  
Wildlife & Countryside LINK  
Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



## Our funders

We would like to thank the following people & organisations for their financial support this year:

Anne Redston  
Carillion  
D Clough  
Earthwatch Institute  
Environment Agency  
Environment Job  
Ernest Kleinwurt Charitable Trust  
Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust  
Heritage Lottery Fund  
Miller Philanthropy

Natural Resources Wales  
New Forest National Park Authority  
Oakdale Trust  
Oxford University (Wytham)  
SITA UK Ltd  
Syngenta Ltd  
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2)  
Tubney Charitable Trust  
The Waterloo Foundation



**Patron:** The Earl of Selborne GBE FRS

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Paul Jackson	Treasurer
Baroness Hilton of Eggardon	
Juliette Jowit	(Re-elected July 2014)
Professor Lorraine Maltby	
Geoff Phillips	
Keith Lawrey	(Appointed July 2014)
Roger Thomas	(Resigned July 2014)

**Company Secretary:** Ms Jo Fever

### Senior Management Team:

Dr Jeremy Biggs	Director
Penny Williams	Technical Director
Dr Pascale Nicolet	Policy & Implementation Director
Janey Forgan	Finance Director
Dr Naomi Ewald	People, Ponds and Water Manager

### Registered Office:

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### Auditors:

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