



Manx
Wildlife Trust
Treisht Bea-Feie
Vannin

Annual Report

2021-2022

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BACKGROUND IMAGE: LEIGH MORRIS



CEO's Report

(1st Feb 2021 to 31st Jan 2022)

Leigh Morris



Leigh with a large tope, caught as part of MWT's small shark tagging scheme (note the tag just below the dorsal fin)

Finances, Governance & Team Development:

2021-22 was another progressive year for MWT and the team's individual reports highlight the positive impact we are having. We had an excellent year financially, with turnover increasing by £116K on the previous year to £504K, with a surplus that we have used to purchase a new piece of land (details to follow later this year). Our charitable funding continues to come from an expanding range of income streams, giving us greater resilience. These include a newly launched corporate membership offer, and our Ecological Consultancy business that delivers conservation gains and income. Our volunteer run gift shop, despite the negative impact of COVID, still made a fantastic contribution of c.£30K.

Eight new Trustees were appointed to Council, bringing with them a wonderful range of experience, skills, and connections. David Bellamy (Agri-Environment Officer) and Laura Strand (Administrator) joined our staff team; a revised staff appraisal and development process was launched; our Communications Assistant, Rachael Harrop, commenced her MSc with Edinburgh Napier University; and we hosted four interns funded by the Department for Enterprise (DfE). COVID remained challenging, but it brought some real positives for MWT, notably development of stronger digital skills and a culture of hybrid working. We were delighted that our new Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Lorimer and his wife, Lady Lorimer, agreed to be our Patrons, and their support for MWT this year has been excellent.

Our financial operations were reviewed. No.1 Accounts were commissioned to act as our accounting providers and we transitioned to a new accounting package, Xero, which is providing timely and far more detailed information. The organisation of our Peel office has been transformed by our new Administrator, including installation of new computer hardware, funded by the Manx Lottery Trust. We conducted a carbon audit of our work and took delivery of a new electric vehicle, which is being well used.

Conservation:

Our MWT strategy continues to focus on three goals: developing a Nature Recovery Network, Nature-based Solutions, and engaging more people in our work. Our MWT nature reserves remain the core of our conservation work, and we held two land review workshops to agree future ambitions, with participants including staff, volunteers, trustees, and the Director of Land Management for The Wildlife Trusts. Our agreed aim is to

Tricia Sayle, HE Sir John and Lady Lorimer and David Bellamy



ensure more people engage with nature in our reserves and that we influence far more land for nature than we own. Excitingly, Ramsey Forest is set to become a major land project for public engagement, with a 99-year DEFA lease agreed for the core land at Cloughbane and the Rotary Club Douglas have pledged significant financial support.

In terms of wider land influence, in July 2021 MWT took on the DEFA contract to be the delivery agent for the new IOM Govt Agri-Environment Scheme (AES). This is a landmark for MWT and gives us a tremendous opportunity to drive landscape-scale nature development and positively influence >72% of the IOM. Year 1 exceeded expectations.



Andy Cooper, Geoffrey Boot MHK, Leigh and David Bellamy on the signing of the AES contract

Action for Wildlife is the overarching title for our biodiversity conservation work, with various projects in the pipeline, and others we would love to deliver if we can raise the funding. Biological Data is fundamentally important to enable us to prioritise and measure the impact of our work, and we aim to improve the Island's data pipeline in several ways. We commenced work on a Manx State of Nature report summarising the status across all of IOM's biodiversity, that will be published in 2023. We became the IOM coordinators of the Seasearch citizen science scuba diving programme and commenced seagrass surveying under the DEFA Blue Carbon project. We further developed our invertebrate recording, including recruiting butterfly surveyors, and have commenced more formal bird surveys on all our nature reserves.

Engagement:

Our DESC/DEFA Education Contract was renewed, and Dawn Colley received a (richly deserved) UNESCO Biosphere Education Award, 2021. We successfully launched three new adult education courses in Wildlife Gardening, Wildlife Observing, and Magnificent Meadows, and held our first presentation evening. Our digital communications continue to widen our reach and impact, with the St Mark's elm trees demonstrating the tremendous power of social media. Notable events delivered included the Festival of the Sea, Southern and Royal Agriculture Shows, On-line Talks by Prof. Dave Goulson, and our first hybrid talk by the Calf Team. MWT staff participated in several COP26 events, and we published our first ever public annual report in September 2021.

Partnership Working:

This remains a core goal, both on and off Island. Our relationship with the IOM Government has been further strengthened, and we continue to work positively across several departments, and

are active partners and advocates for the UNESCO Biosphere IOM. I joined a small group to review our Biosphere, and the Visit IOM Agency Board, to champion Biosphere and eco-tourism. We have strengthened our relationship with the Manx National Farmers' Union and the wider Manx farming community to support delivery of the Agri-Environment Scheme. Manx National Heritage (MNH) are another key partner, with our contract to manage the Calf of Man Bird Observatory having been extended until Nov 2022, and we are doing all we can to secure the tender long-term. We are now an official partner for Manx Wildlife Week and created a joint exhibition 'Extinct' at the Manx Museum.



Laura McCoy and Leigh at the Extinct exhibition at the Manx Museum

We are working positively with the developer, Hartford Homes, on a partnership for a more sustainable approach to housing development and signed an alliance with KPMG to engage more corporates in our work as part of their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agendas.



Leigh with Simon Nicholas, partner at KPMG

Beyond the IOM, our Chair and I participated in developing the new Wildlife Trusts movement strategy, which went live in autumn 2021, and we were virtual attendees at the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) conference in March, and active participants in their European meetings.

Reserves

Tricia Sayle, Reserves Officer

2021 Highlights

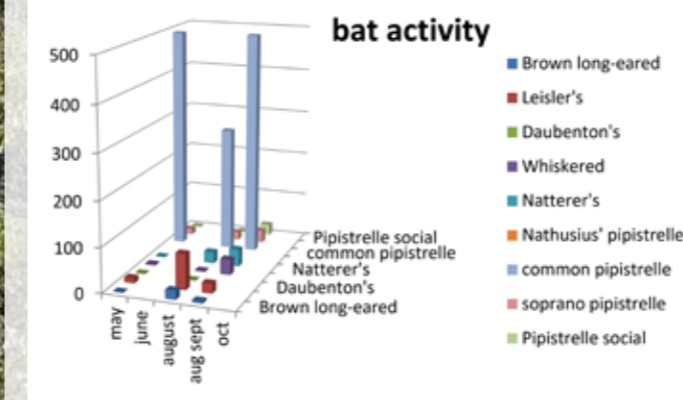
- Finding a new location for Isle of Man cabbage (*Rhynchosinapis monensis*), at Cronk y Bing, and around 1,352 pyramidal orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*)
- A spread of adder's-tongue fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) at Fell's Field and Close Sartfield
- An increase in common twayblade orchid (*Listera ovata*) at Ballamoor Meadow and Close e Quayle
- 10 species of fly recorded on MWT nature reserves that are new records for the Island

Most of the reserves have been managed for some years now and most of the work which is undertaken is maintenance of

what has been achieved and part of a well-established, long-term plan. Autumn/winter fenceline clearance and ditching is followed by bracken and invasive weed control which in turn is followed by the raking season, hand cutting and clearing of awkward areas. However, there were some new projects and minor changes in 2021.

2021 saw sheep grazing taking place on Curragh Feeagh for the first time in many years. This reserve is composed of a wildflower meadow and two areas of very rough tussocky grassland and curragh interspersed with a myriad of ditches. The sheep took a while to investigate the latter areas, which is where they were really wanted but, once in, they did an excellent job, and it is hoped this arrangement can continue.

The research by our local naturalists continued throughout 2021, building on our knowledge of the flies, spiders, moths and fungi for Cooldarry, Dalby Mountain, Close e Quayle, Aust, Ballachrink and Goshen. Close e Quayle is proving to be particularly good for invertebrates with five of the ten new flies being recorded here. 2021 also saw bird and bat data being collected. Miss Guylor's Meadow proved particularly good for bats with eight of the nine Manx bat species recorded. Bat detectors were set up at three locations within Miss Guylor's Meadow for 3-4 nights each time, from May to October. These are the results for the east recording point:



Botanical recording continued as usual through the summer on many of the reserves, and I am grateful to Amber Cordwell who joined me on several of these visits for her knowledge and enthusiasm for wildflowers. There were many botanical highlights in 2021 but my personal favourite was the thriving population of cranberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) on Dalby:



Volunteers on one of the annual raking tasks at Close Sartfield



Alan Jones and Geoff Dean with hazel binders

Luing cattle grazed the picturesque slopes of Glen Dhoo last autumn (see background image). Luing are a beef breed developed on the island of Luing in the Inner Hebrides by the Cadzow brothers in 1947. It was formed by first crossing Beef Shorthorns with Highland cattle. They are extremely hardy and now farmed in many parts of the world.

Montbretia is a Schedule 8 species found in many places around the Island. Along with Japanese knotweed, it is an offence under the Wildlife Act, 1990 to allow it to spread into the wild. In common with the other species on the list, Montbretia is very invasive. A programme of systematic removal was initiated at Goshen, Close Umpson and Cronk y Bing and many bags full of corms were taken away for safe disposal. This is likely to be a regular task for some years to come.

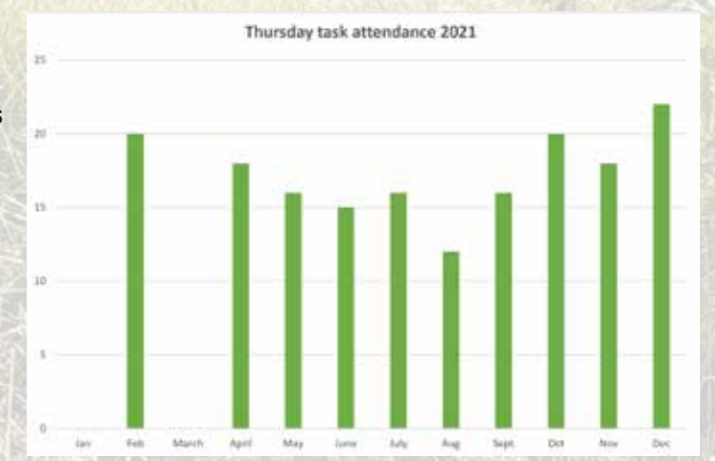
In the last couple of years, a small market for hedge laying materials has developed. 2021 saw a surge in demand for

stakes and binders as several farmers had hedges laid under the Agri-Environment Scheme. Hazel is the preferred material, but we have also been able to sell willow. Harvesting took place from several sites, peaking with a task in December at Cooldarry, cutting well-established hazel for the first time. Hazel was planted in Cooldarry in 2011, 2013 and 2018 and whilst a first cut is some way off yet, it is hoped that in conjunction with the coppicing rotation already in place at Close Sartfield, a continuous supply of coppice materials can eventually be established.

Approximately 2,771 hours were spent on practical work on the reserves in 2021, primarily undertaken by me and the Muckers, but includes some contractor time too. This is slightly down on previous years due to two Covid lockdowns at times of normally peak work on the reserves. Around 36% of the time was spent at Close Sartfield and Goshen which as two of our larger sites is to be expected.

The Muckers continue to be incredibly hard working and enthusiastic for the reserves, and their efforts are very much appreciated. Throughout 2021, there continued to be good turnouts on both Tuesdays and Thursdays with several volunteers undertaking extra duties and a small core, out both days and staying for the full day. As a result, I can get jobs which require only a small number of helpers done; such as completion of work, preparation for the bigger work parties and tasks on small sites. Without the support and dedication of the Muckers, my job would be impossible, and we would not have such fantastic reserves showcasing Manx wildlife.

Average number of volunteers attending Thursday tasks in 2021. No tasks were held in January or March (and some of February and April) due to Covid-lockdowns. A further five tasks were lost due to bad weather:



A big thank you to all those who helped on the reserves in whatever capacity.

Marine

Dr Lara Howe, Marine Officer and Clare Rogerson, Marine Conservation Assistant



Shark taggers, the Casey J team and Bill Lawrence (left) who donated to the programme

Seagrass

Four new small seagrass beds have been found in Derbyhaven bay by Seasearch divers as part of our continued work. It is hoped that more dives will yield even more beds in the bay. The highlight though has been the trial to transplant seagrass plants from Fort Island gully into Port Erin bay where it was once found. This is an exciting project and we are grateful for the support of the Seasearch divers to help enable this. So far, the plants have been in Port Erin for just over a month and are looking good. The initial check-up dive showed they hadn't been washed away or died off, so fingers crossed they continue to grow and thrive. More dives are planned to monitor the bed's progress. The donor site in Fort Island Gully has also been dived after the plants were removed to ensure the site had not been damaged. I'm pleased to say it looks fine. In fact, you can't tell where the plants or core samples were taken from. Core samples have been collected to look at the carbon captured in the sediments below the seagrass meadows. This work is in conjunction with DEFA and National Oceanography Centre (NOC) as part of the Blue Carbon Project. This work wouldn't be possible without the support from Sea-Changers and Microgaming.

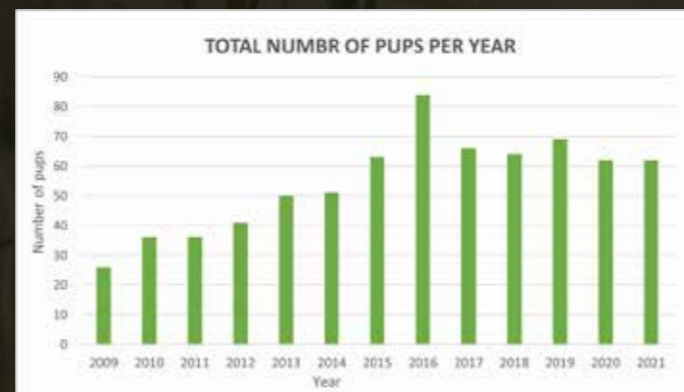
These were well received, with people pledging to do their part. For more information on these topics please check out our website. Huge thanks again to Discover Diving and the divers who collected all the critters for us.



HE Sir John Lorimer talks at the Friday night event

Calf of Man Seal Surveys

Last year saw another great year for our seals on the Calf with 62 individuals born. Numbers have remained fairly consistent over the last few years at 60+ pups, showing the Calf has likely reached capacity. Hopefully this year will be the same with the volunteers having arrived in early September.



Mortality last year has also remained fairly consistent compared to previous years at around 6.45%. The main cause for higher mortalities in previous years has been linked with storm conditions and thankfully last year the weather was kind to us. However, there are other causes such as stillbirth, trauma, septicaemia, infection and starvation.

We are also finding that pups are being born earlier in the season compared to when the surveys first started back in 2009 and we hoped last season to arrive early enough to catch the first pup

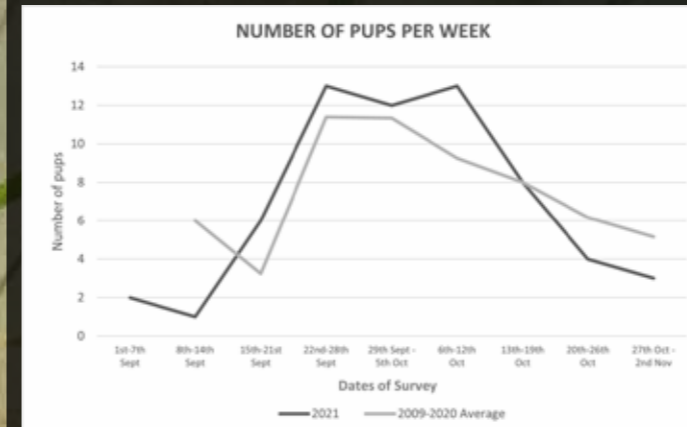
Collecting mature plants for transplanting.



Festival of the Sea

This was another great year for us with the support from OceanWeb again. The Friday night corporate event went well, and we gained support for the small shark tagging work that we do in partnership with DEFA. Thanks to Bill Lawrence at TLC Business Solutions Ltd for his support. The weekend saw over 3000 people come through the marquee and this year we had an additional set of rock pool tanks designed and built by Clare, our Assistant Marine Conservation Officer, that was a great addition to our other tanks. We also wanted to highlight key issues affecting our wonderful marine life, namely plastics in the sea, the need to respect sea life, what goes down your drain and climate change.

and we did, it was born the day we arrived! It is thought that this is linked with climate change and warming waters. Work on Skomer Island has found after monitoring their breeding seal population that older mothers are pupping earlier. Over the 30 years of monitoring, they have found that they are now pupping three weeks earlier.



We are grateful to funding from DEFA for last year's survey and this will continue again this year. Next year funding has been secured with The Curragh's Wildlife Park through their Conservation Fund.

Puffins

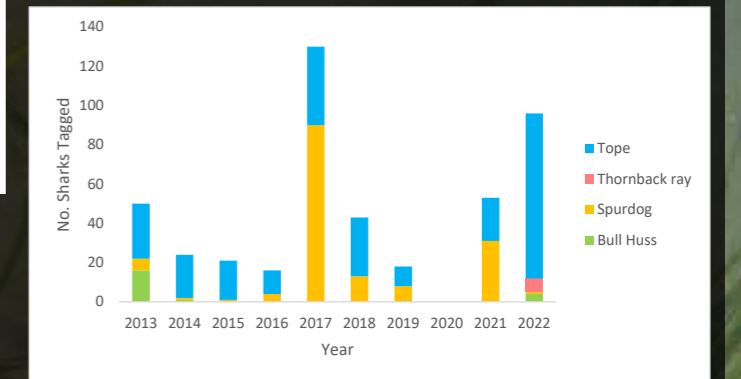
As part of the warden's induction at the start of the Calf season I roped them in to helping repair the decoy puffins who were looking a bit worse for wear, with missing feet and the odd missing beak. Matching the right feet or beak to the right bird is always a challenge! However, even with all that work and effort sadly there was no evidence of puffins nesting on the Calf this year but there has been an increase in sightings around the islet so we continue to keep optimistic for the future.



Volunteer Calf Wardens gluing puffin feet

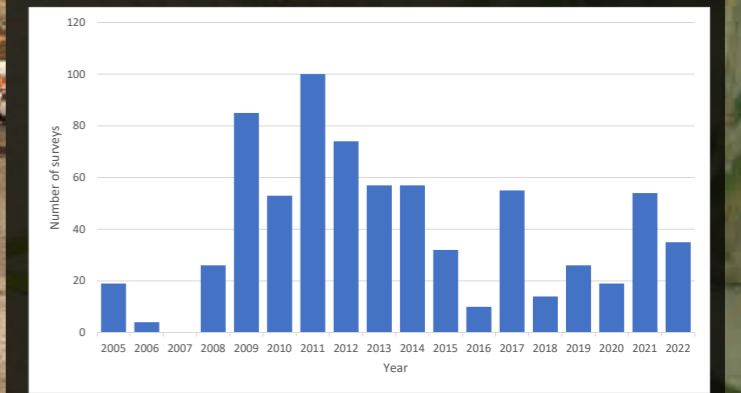
Small shark tagging

Three theory training courses have run this year resulting in 14 new anglers joining the programme. Two boat trips were held in August, out of Port St Mary and Peel. Thanks to Casey J and Gemini for hosting us. We were lucky to be joined by Lady Lorimer out of PSM and Minister Barber for the second trip out of Peel. Unfortunately, we only managed to tag two tope on the trip out of Peel but the anglers have been very busy tagging this season, with over 96 sharks tagged, mostly tope. However, this year we have had a few thornback rays tagged which is a first for the programme, hopefully there will be more to come. Recently we had a tope caught off the Calf with a tag in it, sadly not one of ours but one from Scotland, again confirming their ability to cover great distances.



Seasearch

We held an Observer course back in March and April 2022, training another 8 divers and snorkellers. Many have already completed their assessment dives and have been heavily involved in the Seagrass work that we have been undertaking in Derbyhaven and the translocation work in Port Erin bay. We had 19 forms submitted in 2020 and 54 forms in 2021. I think we will exceed last year's tally as we have more seagrass dives to conduct this year before the weather really sets in.



Agri-Environment Scheme

Skeim y Ghymmyltaght Eirinagh

David Bellamy, Agri-Environment Officer



Isle of Man
Government

Reillys Ellan Vannin



Lapwing nest, one of two nests found on a Manx farm in spring 2022



Orchids at Ashcroft Farm in St Judes, an Area of Special Scientific Interest



Cattle grazing on a herbal ley at Moorhouse Farm (Kirrie Jenkins)

The rollout of the Agri-Environment Scheme in April 2021 is likely the most significant development in Manx conservation since the passing of the Wildlife Act in 1990. Recognising its vast potential, MWT have been working closely with Government to help deliver the scheme since July 2021. The scheme is voluntary, open to all 353 active farms across the Island and well resourced, with a budget of up to £2 million available per year. These farms cover 101,000 acres; an incredible 72% of the Island! The scheme provides financial support for nature-friendly farming and for undertaking new environmental initiatives. Pleasingly, it now also rewards sympathetic management of existing farmland habitats, of which the Island has so many. Engaging with farmers is a key part of MWT's Strategy as we believe it is an essential pathway to achieving nature's recovery on the Isle of Man. We see farming as the solution, not the problem, for many of the issues faced by Manx nature.

Manx farmland area eligible for Agri-Environment support	101,349 acres
% of Island eligible for Agri-Environment support	71.7%

Just a year ago MWT had few relationships with farmers across the Island, however in this time we have undertaken an astonishing number of farm visits across every part of the Island:

MWT farm visits (August 2021 to August 2022)	
MWT farm visits conducted	266
No. of farmers engaged with	611
Area covered (lowland)	33,372 acres
Area covered (upland)	15,081 acres
Area covered (total)	48,453 acres
Manx farmland covered	48%
Whole Island covered	35%

Our priorities in 2021/2022 have been: building relationships with farms, increasing awareness and understanding of the scheme amongst the farming community, streamlining the application process and regulatory paperwork and working to ensure that high uptake resulted in the budget being spent in full. Looking to the year ahead, our focus will shift to developing long-term management plans and financial support on existing habitats of

ecological importance, developing long term wildlife projects and upskilling farmers in their understanding and identification of Manx farmland wildlife.

The last year has been both fun and highly rewarding yet immensely busy and challenging too. Above all it has been a pleasure working with such a passionate community, the custodians of our landscape, who are really embracing this scheme, exploring how they can provide for wildlife alongside producing high quality food. This is despite the huge, varied and complex issues facing the sector, of which there are too many to list here. Despite these challenges, the scheme has seen impressive levels of uptake, with over 160 farms participating in the first year alone.

Recognising the inevitable teething problems, feedback given to MWT by farmers has been passed on to DEFA, who have made a number of recent improvements, including:

- a considerable reduction in the amount of paperwork involved; the streamlining of regulatory documentation and allowing MWT to assist farmers in drafting and completing applications.
- the introduction of support for pollinator-boosting herbal leys (a real win-win for wildlife and farmers, especially during times of drought such as this summer) alongside new support for laboratory analysis costs to help reduce any unnecessary use of wormers, pesticides and fertilisers.
- the introduction of a Manx lime grant. Lime is a natural soil improver which also benefits many wildflowers and soil invertebrates, along with the wildlife that depend on them.
- new financial support and advice for managing existing habitats of ecological significance.

2022 Highlights

Skullcap, *Scutellaria galericulata*, a rare wildflower of marshes was rediscovered on a dairy farm, the first record for 142 years (see page 4). Well-timed cattle grazing benefits this species.

Acorncrake was heard calling over three nights on a mixed farm in the north of the Island, the first confirmed record on the Island in around a decade.

Two pairs of lapwing were found breeding on an arable farm. Lapwing are now so rare on Manx farmland that it was thought they had already been lost as a breeding species. MWT worked closely with the farmer to protect the nests and their chicks and will continue to do so.

Aseries of wildlife walks has been held specifically for farmers, looking at the six species of orchids most commonly found on Manx farmland and exploring the important links between Manx farming and farmland birds such as chough and linnet.

Wetlands: 14 new dubs (farm ponds) or shallow wildlife scrapes have been created (or approved for creation) across the Island, with 5 former dubs undergoing sensitive restoration after an MWT ecological impact assessment. On two farms, a series of very shallow pools have been created across whole fields to benefit breeding curlew.

Over four kilometres of new thorny hedges, shelterbelts or earthen banks have been planted/constructed (or approved for creation this winter).

Ten barn owl boxes have been placed in isolated barns around the Island. If all were occupied, this would double the Manx population!

We have begun a program to measure peat depths across lowland farms, complementing extensive work done across the hills. Although covering a small area, lowland peat is often much deeper.

At one of two sites where areas of barley were left unharvested to benefit seed-eating birds, a survey in February 2022 found a single field to be supporting incredible numbers of farmland birds, including 300 chaffinch, 150 linnet (red-listed), 26 brambling (amber-listed), 24 skylark (red-listed), 5 meadow pipit (red-listed) and a reed bunting, a bird specially-protected by the Wildlife Act.

Working together for nature

In late 2021, our Agri-Environment Officer David Bellamy and Liz Charter of the Isle of Man Fungus Group discovered two new species of fungi for the Island on two different farms. Ivory coral *Ramariopsis kunzei* was found at an upland site in German parish, while beige coral *Clavulinopsis umbrinella* (see photo) was found at a lowland site in Bride. These discoveries have now been verified by Nev Kilkenny, a mycologist who is now a fellow of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Grasslands rich in specialist fungi includes lawns, graveyards and permanent pasture on farmland. Fungus-rich grasslands are a rare, declining and poorly understood habitat and little is known about their distribution on the Island, which both MWT and the IOM Fungus Group are working to address.

Specialist grassland fungi includes various groups of species including the waxcaps, pinkgills, earthtongues, spindles, clubs and coral fungi. Such grasslands are indicators of permanent pasture which has been sensitivity managed for generations. These grasslands are often also species-rich in flowering plants and invertebrates as well as holding stores of carbon. Fungus-rich grasslands are easily destroyed by ploughing, reseeding, the use of bagged fertiliser, the cessation of grazing or the planting of trees. For this reason they are now a Manx Priority Habitat, and farmers who have such grasslands on their farms can now receive advice on nature-friendly farming methods specially to benefit these rare fungi alongside Agri-Environment Scheme payments.



Working with the Isle of Man Woodland Trust, seven areas of new native woodland and a new traditional orchard have been planted (or are approved for planting this winter). Across the Island these new woodlands cover 21 acres, ensuring the right tree is planted in the right place.



Working with the Manx Bat Group, the largest soprano pipistrelle roost on the Isle of Man was discovered, containing over 200 bats in an old farm barn! Elsewhere on the farmyard, brown long-eared and Natterer's bats were also found roosting. Daubenton's bats were found feeding over a nearby dub with whiskered bats and common pipistrelles elsewhere on the farm. The number of different species along with the size and number of maternity colonies means this farm is of national importance for bats.

Bird highlights on MWT reserves in 2022

- Across all reserves, 64 species were recorded during winter by Calf Warden, Aron Sapsford
- All reserves - 86 species recorded during the spring and summer by Agri-Environment Officer David Bellamy
- Aust – Woodcock present throughout the winter along with Redwing, Fieldfare and Buzzard
- Ballachrink – Treecreeper nested. Tufted Duck (max 6) present all year with 30 Mallard present in August
- **Ballachurry – Reed Warbler successfully reared young, being the only known breeding site on the Island for 2022. The range of the species is spreading north with climate change, however its spread on Island will be hampered by a lack of reedbeds, which covers only 0.03% of the Island. Ballachurry also remains the best site to see and hear Water Rail on the Island, with one present throughout the winter. 54 species seen so far this year!**
- Barnell – Woodcock and Sparrowhawk seen throughout winter
- **Calf of Man (managed on behalf of MNH) – 124 species seen by mid-August, including only the fifth ever Kingfisher!**
- Close Sartfield – less common sightings included Mistle Thrush, Lesser Redpoll and House Martin
- **Cronk y Bing – An incredible 76 species seen by mid-August both on the reserve and just offshore, highlights included 100 Curlew (August), 80 Swallow (May), 77 Oystercatcher (January), 72 Whimbrel (May), 53 Sanderling (May), 42 Ringed Plover (May), 2 Bar-tailed Godwit (May). On the dunes themselves Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler all bred**
- Cooldarry – 56 nests were present in the Rookery and Great Spotted Woodpecker heard in spring. The reserve held 17 Wren and 12 Blackcap territories
- Curragh Feeagh – Snipe present over winter, with Meadow Pipit and Willow Warbler breeding
- Curragh Kiondroghad (Onchan Wetlands) – Sparrowhawk regularly seen with an abundance of garden birds
- Dalby Mountain Fields – high counts included 25 Meadow Pipits, 5 Willow Warblers, 3 Reed Buntings. Also regularly present: Stonechat, Chough, Hen Harrier, Wheatear and Curlew. Unusually feral Greylag Goose bred nearby, reflecting the ongoing rapid spread of this escapee across the Island
- **Dalby Mountain Moorland – 2 Grasshopper Warbler were present throughout the breeding season.** The reserve held 20 Meadow Pipit territories, 2 pairs of Reed Bunting and Hen Harrier, Chough, Curlew, Stonechat, Mistle Thrush were all regularly seen
- Dobbie's Meadow – Blackcap and Willow Warbler bred, with Swift seen feeding overhead
- Glen Dhoo – Hen Harrier, Peregrine and Raven were regularly seen. A breeding bird survey found 22 species on site
- Lough Cranstal – 8 Pink-footed Goose were seen in February along with a flock of 17 Meadow Pipit. 2 Teal and 4 Snipe were seen in mid-spring. The breeding season highlights included Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Whitethroat, Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler (5 territories), Willow Warbler (7 territories), Chiffchaff (2 territories) and Wren (14 territories)
- Lough Gat-y-Whing – A male Shoveler was present in February along with 8 Teal, a Woodcock, a Sparrowhawk and 2 Buzzards. A Woodpigeon chick was seen safely being fed in a nest dangled precariously over the water
- Moaney & Crawyn's Meadows – Great Spotted Woodpecker was added to species list, reflecting its near total colonisation of the Isle of Man after its first breeding in 2010

MWT Southern Supporter Group

Margaret Kelly, Volunteer



Creating the new dragonfly pond at Ballachurry, photo by Rachel Smith

The end of May marked the retirement of Sheila Norris from the MWT Southern Group Committee and as organiser of Ballachurry Nature Reserve work parties. We are very grateful to Sheila for her generosity of time, knowledge and thoroughness, which she dedicated to her work in these roles. Happily, we can continue to enjoy Sheila's knowledge and company as she continues to record sightings and notes them on www.ballachurryreports.blogspot.com and she continues as a volunteer.

Another former member of the Southern Group Committee, Anne Kaye, who sadly passed away last year, has been very much in our thoughts. Anne's family have had a beautiful and appropriate plaque made to be displayed on the bird hide at Ballachurry. Anne financed the building and maintenance of the hide as part of her much wider volunteer work for MWT. If you visit the reserve, do take time to read it.

Ballachurry Reserve continues to be well visited both by humans and wildlife. A dragonfly and dipping pond has been excavated and should soon be lined and filled. The spoil from the excavation has made a bund which, when weeded and grassed, might provide a home for solitary bees. Nearing completion are a beautifully constructed new raised boardwalk and bridge which replace the rotting ones that spent winters with their wooden foundations in water. Volunteer Ian Costain, ably assisted by Peter Hayhurst and others, devised and undertook this work, even sourcing previously loved paving and hardcore for the foundations. Plant growth on the reserve has been abundant this summer. Spindly twigs of willow that were pushed into the ground to form a screen adjacent to the bird hide are now robust trees. Cutting back to keep the paths clear is a constant task. Committee members have disciplined themselves to having a pair of shears or secateurs with them when visiting. We are grateful to Rushen Commissioners,

whose groundsman cuts the grass on the paths, and to all the lovely, cheerful work party volunteers without whom the reserve could not be maintained.

The work leads to fulfilment when the reserve is enjoyed and respected by members of the public whether they are out for a stroll and some fresh air with their family, or ornithologists spotting the variety of bird species that find a safe haven there to breed. For the Queen's Jubilee Celebration, Rushen Commissioners organised a fair in the adjoining fields and invited MWT to make the reserve part of the event. Dawn Colley kindly devised a Jubilee Nature Trail. To our surprise the success of the afternoon was enhanced by the request to proceed quietly because of nesting birds. Young and old alike enjoyed the reserve as a peaceful retreat from the noise and activity in the neighbouring fields.

Scarlett Nature Discovery Centre seemed to have a slow start to the season. During TT fortnight many who are over for the racing find their way to Scarlett and call in, but not this year. Most visitors seem to be Island residents. By contrast the number and variety of groups requesting visits to the Centre has increased. Many of these are school groups or the MWT junior section "WATCH" groups organised by Dawn. They come for rock pooling or fossil hunting sessions. It is pleasing when some of the children who attend these sessions then persuade their families to visit. In addition, the Centre has also been used by groups of Scouts, walking groups, a group visiting from St. Vincent and as the venue for a photographic course. The Scarlett volunteers are greatly appreciated because they are vital in enabling the centre to open.

If you would consider becoming a volunteer in the South of the Island, either welcoming visitors to the Scarlett Nature Discovery Centre or a more physical role at Ballachurry Reserve, or occasional help at fund raising events, please email lucy@mwt.im

MWT Northern Supporter Group

Kim Etherton, Trustee



Children on the Ayres Nature Trail during the family treasure hunt for Manx Wildlife Week, photo by Paul Etherton

Ayres Nature Discovery Centre

Hard to believe that another season has ended as the centre closed on 18th September, having opened on 30th April. Based on visitor data from last year and in consultation with our volunteers, it was decided to continue to open daily but earlier at 1pm and closing at 4pm and this seems to have worked well. We don't have final visitor numbers or sales data at the time of printing but sense that it has been a quiet season. We can confirm that the venue predominantly attracts adults - only 15% of visitors were children. However, our family Treasure Hunt during Manx Wildlife Week in May did attract families who thoroughly enjoyed using our Nature Discovery rucksacks to take a closer look at the natural treasures of the area! Schools continue to visit the area to learn about its very special biology – sand dune formation and ecology for sixth formers and more general wildlife for primary schools.

DEFA Warden, Louise Samson, provided valuable updates on seasonal changes but sadly had to report breeding failures for both Little and Arctic Terns. Predation by hedgehogs and aerial assaults from various bird species are a major challenge in the NNR and up to the Point of Ayre. Carpets of Burnet roses, orchids and other wildflowers perhaps made up for the scarcity of lizard sightings even on hot days.

A post Christmas walk revealed a surprising discovery – an "Ayres fairy" had painted the entire outside of the centre which gleamed white in the winter sunshine! We have never discovered who this kind person was, but it has set the scene for a new look – a mural to be painted on an outside wall by MWT's Biosphere Artist in Residence, Clare Payne. Some new interpretation indoors will follow plus, fingers crossed, a new array of solar panels which will enable us to expand what we can offer visitors especially families – maybe even a cup of tea!

Events

Following a very successful series of talks in the autumn of 2021 it was decided to repeat the format this year with talks at Ramsey Town Hall on the second Thursday of September, October and November. Please see the website for details.

This season we have already had "All about Hedgehogs" with - Vera "the hedgehog lady of Peel" with one of her prickly companions. The timing coincides with hopefully lots of sightings of hedgehogs as they finish fattening up in advance of hibernation but also inevitably of young undersized hedgehogs which may need help if they are to survive. Vera helped us understand what to do and the MWT team were there to encourage us all to record sightings so we can better protect these attractive creatures.

We have also enjoyed "What a load of rubbish" with Stephanie Gray from DOI and Norman Cannell from the Northern Civic Amenity Centre. Waste management, including recycling, is an important topic for a small Island nation which imports and exports both goods and waste. We heard why reducing waste, and then managing the waste we produce more sustainably, is so vital. Conserving resources through recycling has a positive impact on climate change and biodiversity, so all of our efforts have real value.

The final talk on 10th November is completely different, not really a talk more a consultation. What can our communities do to encourage wildlife in the north, what would they like to take on/ be involved with to bring nature into our lives with all the mutual benefits to us and our Island? MWT's Community Ranger, Hannah Phillips, will talk about her role and how she can interact with our northern communities to help them act for wildlife.

Although we have not held a **Gardeners Fair** this year, much preparatory work has been going on for next year. Date for diaries - **Sunday 18th June 2023** when the Fair returns with the usual plant sales, garden tours, cream teas and more. Decisions are currently being made about which and how many plants are to be grown ready for that date. They must be good for wildlife, attractive in our gardens and are, generally, perennials – and very importantly, grown in peat-free compost.

Can you help? We would be delighted if you would like to be a volunteer grower. If so, we would be grateful if you could contact us as soon as possible for more details: vivdavies@manx.net or iandavies@manx.net. We look forward to growing with you!



Nature Based Well-being

Adam Denard, Well-being Champion

Back in early 2019, Tim Graham (MWT CEO at the time) noted that Manx Lottery Trust's (MLT) latest theme for awarding grants was focused on human well-being. For some time we had wanted to use nature-based therapeutic practices for the benefit of mental health, so Tim and I approached MLT. This developed into a grant application in collaboration with Praxis Care Isle of Man and Mike Kewley (Mindfulness Practitioner) to benefit Praxis service users (mostly adults with learning challenges) and the wider Isle of Man community through outdoor-based mindfulness walks.

Having been successful with the bid, I was tasked with leading the project with some wonderful back up from our Education Officer, Dawn Colley. I already had some experience in the care sector (mostly elderly persons residential and domiciliary care) and mindfulness practice, but it was not without trepidation that the project commenced in autumn 2019.

Praxis care

In our first session with Praxis Care we took several service users into Summerhill Glen to experience woodland from a sensory perspective. Back at their HQ were some services users who were reluctant to partake or had mobility issues, so we brought some of the woodland back to them to experience. It quickly became clear we would have to adapt our approach to the service users' needs and followed up with some indoor sessions making bird feeders and getting up close with rescued hedgehogs, which was very popular with lots of engagement.

It wasn't long before covid restrictions put a fairly big spanner in the works to our sessions. However, it was during this period that the Praxis 'Ballysleigh' day centre relocated to a large property on the grounds of Ramsey Cottage Hospital. This was a blessing in disguise, with nice grounds and Mooragh Park on the doorstep for service users. Sessions eventually recommenced

and developed into art making, bird box building, woodland walks, flower pressing and some wild plant identification. Both Dawn and I got a lot of satisfaction from facilitating nature-based activities that were not ordinarily available to users of the day centre. A personal highlight was when a particular individual who had many challenges with communication and anxieties decided to join in nest box building instead of watching videos on a computer which his caregivers stated was 'massive' for him.

During the project, I decided to collaborate with Manx Sailing for Disabled (MSFD) to offer a special experience for service users. This culminated in a wonderful sailing trip out into Douglas Bay on their wonderful Yacht the 'Pride of Mann III', where I spotted a pod of Common Dolphin in the distance. On my instruction the boat cut the engine and the dolphins duly approached us to interact on their terms, leaving all on board with a thoroughly enjoyable encounter. Many thanks to all MSFD volunteers for being so great with the service users.

The trip was brilliantly captured on film by our in-house moving image specialist and Engagement Manager, Graham, to provide a great digital memory resource for the service users and to highlight the project to a wider audience. The video can be viewed on our YouTube channel:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1O6m7pNI3U

Mindfulness

Mindfulness or meditation has been around for millennia, although it's unclear when humans actually started to explore it as a collective practice. It is long associated with eastern religions and spirituality such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism, but has now long become popularised in Western modern culture.

Practitioner Mike Kewley was already well-known in the Manx community for his Mindfulness work with groups, seminars and public awareness raising. To date, this was mostly an indoor

A mindfulness session at the Chasms



IMAGE: ADAM DENARD

experience, so we offered to move things outdoors into our Nature Reserves and other wild places that would potentially enhance the experience. Mike was totally on-board and off we went.

Since inception we have now run in excess of 20 sessions all over the Island in inspiring places such as our Ramsey Hairpin Woodland Park, Close Sartfield, The Sound and Chasms and Ballaglass Glen. We have developed a staunch following with regular attendance of 12-15 persons. This has been across the Island's demographic with young children also attending.

A simple mood score system was instigated to gauge how people were feeling before and after, with most people showing improved mood scores at the close of a session. This was by no means scientifically robust but an encouraging indicator of the impact that the sessions had.

From these beginnings we have been able to continue to offer these sessions free of charge through the kind donation by my long-time friend, Jim Reid, (whom I met volunteering for MWT in 1999!). Jim raised sponsorship by running the equivalent length of the Pennine Way (268 miles) in January 2021.

An example of our sessions and feedback from participants is available on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3azGKukyHM

Legacy

Due to the instigation of this project we are now actively developing our well-being scope within MWT and are actively engaged with partners, such as Manx Care, in developing nature-based therapeutic approaches for the whole Island community.

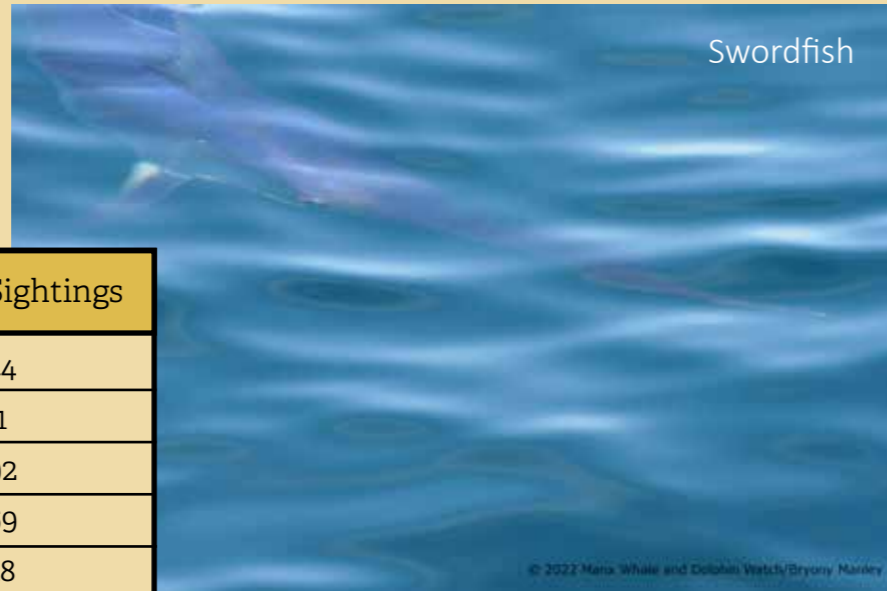
BACKGROUND IMAGE: CLARE PAYNE



Manx Whale & Dolphin Watch

January to end August 2022

Bryony Manley, Researcher at MWDW



Species	Sightings
Harbour porpoise	44
Common dolphin	11
Bottlenose dolphin (total)	92
- Moonlight and Starlight	69
Risso's dolphin	28
Minke whale	13
Unidentified small cetacean	3
Basking sharks	68

With slightly unsettled and windy weather, sightings have been a little sparser for the cetaceans this year. The team have had a busy summer with events and surveys so dedicated surveys have not yet been analysed. This summary covers public sightings of which we have had 262 reported to the end of August.

Risso's dolphin sightings were a little thin initially with a few in March and April and just one in May, before things picked up with better numbers through June, July, and August.

Minke whales seemed to return late, with the first sighting coming on 6th June and just 13 sightings so far this year. We are still hoping for their return to the east coast over the next month or two where we hope to see them close in to Marine Drive feeding on the spawning herring.

Common dolphins were also late to show up, with just one sighting at the end of July. They have made up for it with 10 sightings of good-sized pods throughout August.

This year Manx Whale and Dolphin Watch were delighted to take over the basking shark public sightings scheme following the retirement of Jackie and Graham Hall and the end of Manx Basking Shark Watch. For the past few years, public sightings of basking sharks have been extremely low, with just five or so being seen in both 2020 and 2021. This has proven to be a much better summer for the sharks though with 68 reports from members of the public totalling 79 animals. The first sighting came on 29th April, a few

weeks earlier than the usual mid-May start to the season, and the last sighting was reported on 28th August.

We have had a few interesting sightings as well this year. On 14th August a member of the public used their phone to film a pod of dolphins near the airport runway and sent the footage to us. The activity and colouring looked a little different to what we would expect from our regular species, and on consulting with other cetacean researchers around the British Isles we suspect this to be a pod of white-beaked dolphins. The video quality is such that we may never be 100% sure, but if so, this would be a first record for this species in Manx waters.

On 27th August, whilst on a boat survey from Peel, the MWDW team spotted a very unusually shaped animal breaching ahead of the boat about 5nmi from Niarbyl. Observing through binoculars it was identified as a swordfish and the boat was stopped hoping to get another sighting of it. After a minute or two it was spotted at the surface close to the boat and we were able to get some photographs to prove its identity. As far as we know this is the first recorded sighting of this species in Manx waters.

As Starlight approaches her third birthday Moonlight and Starlight continue to stay in residence around the Isle of Man. There have been consistent sightings of the pair throughout the year, predominantly around their favourite haunt of Peel Bay, but also venturing to Castletown, Gansey, Douglas, and Laxey. The pair seem to be becoming more and more comfortable around human activity, be that swimmers, paddleboarders, jet skis, or motorboats. It is important to respect the space of these wild bottlenose dolphins which have made their home here, and if you maintain a calm and consistent behaviour on the water you are likely to have a wonderful interaction with the pair on their terms.

Manx Telecom... at the heart of the community for more than 130 years



Business Partner collaboration with Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) and first corporate sponsor of an MWT nature reserve



We're also pleased to support small charities and projects, including:



Good causes apply for support that makes a difference across Manx society



Grants for community activities our staff are involved with



manx telecom

manxtelecom.com/community

Administration

Laura Strand, Administrator

I joined the MWT team in November 2021, having previously spent 9 years working in the Financial Services Industry. Like many people, following the COVID pandemic, I decided to take a step back and follow my passion for nature and the environment, and I don't regret it! This report covers my first three months at MWT which was jam-packed.

Operation 'Office tidy'

It was fair to say that the MWT office needed to be refreshed and with the help of a very kind donation we were able to make this happen. Once a new seating plan was agreed it was time to get to work! The whole MWT team got stuck in and my DIY skills were put to good use. From painting & decorating, erecting shelves, building desks, picture hanging, and much more.

The rooms within the office are now split, so we have Marine & Education, Conservation, Admin, and Engagement office (also known as the Comms Cave). This is working well and enables the team to communicate and work together more effectively.

There are still some finishing touches to be made, but after copious amounts of paint, and a good number of tip runs my OCD has been put at ease as the office is now a lot tidier and organised. We even have office plants!!



This would have been a lot more difficult to achieve if it weren't for the kind donations of funds, some second-hand furniture, and of course all of the MWT team. A BIG thank you to all for your help and support.

Accounting

In November 2021 we contracted No.1 Accounts to review our accounting processes and software with a view to identifying areas for improvement which in turn would offer greater efficiency and ease of accounting administration. No.1 Accounts provided a detailed report, which gave a clear direction on how MWT could improve our processes and systems.

Following the departure of Charlotte Pointon, our Accounts Officer, we decided to completely outsource our bookkeeping and accounting to No.1 Accounts. Having previously used Sage, we decided to make the switch to Xero accounting software, which No.1 Accounts facilitated. Along with that we implemented new accounting processes and procedures. This was no mean feat, with end of year approaching, the departure of our Accounts Officer and our Treasurer, but No.1 Accounts were brilliant and got everything over the line.

MWT would like to extend a massive thank you to Kat Whittaker, Kelly Watterson, and all the team at No.1 Accounts for their fantastic and continued work. We look forward to continuing our relationship with them in future.



Kelly & Kat from No1 Accounts with Laura

IT

This year MWT received funding from the Manx Lottery Trust to upgrade our IT systems, which tied in perfectly with operation office tidy! With the help of our IT Support, David Kinrade, we scoped out what new equipment we needed and began compiling a list.

We were able to purchase three super powerful PC's to run Ark GIS mapping software, which is used by our ecologists, new computer screens for every member of staff, new WiFi pods to strengthen our WiFi within the office, new TV's for our shop, Nature Discovery Centres and events, and the list goes on...

Our next upgrade in terms of IT, was a new telephone system for the office via Manx Telecom. The new VOIP system allows for individual and direct extension numbers and voicemail facilities, something that MWT didn't previously have.

Recycling

Recycling is something that is really important to MWT. When I joined, MWT had a rota in place where staff would arrange for all recycling to be taken to a local recycling centre. But, having heard about Recycle Collect and the important service they are providing to the Island we signed ourselves up! Clara and her team do a fantastic job and recycling couldn't be easier. MWT are thrilled to be supporting such a great scheme.

I continue to thoroughly enjoy my time at MWT. In addition to



Kirstie & Clara from Recycle Collect with Laura

the above, I am lucky enough to accompany my colleagues out in the field at various occasions which is continuing to expand my knowledge in varying areas and feed my passion.

Ecological consultancy

MWT Consultancy offers a range of ecological consultancy services to a variety of clients, from large scale developments to smaller habitat improvement schemes. Whatever the type of project, one thing remains the same – we work professionally, supporting our clients and ensuring nature and the environment are appropriately surveyed and considered on all projects.

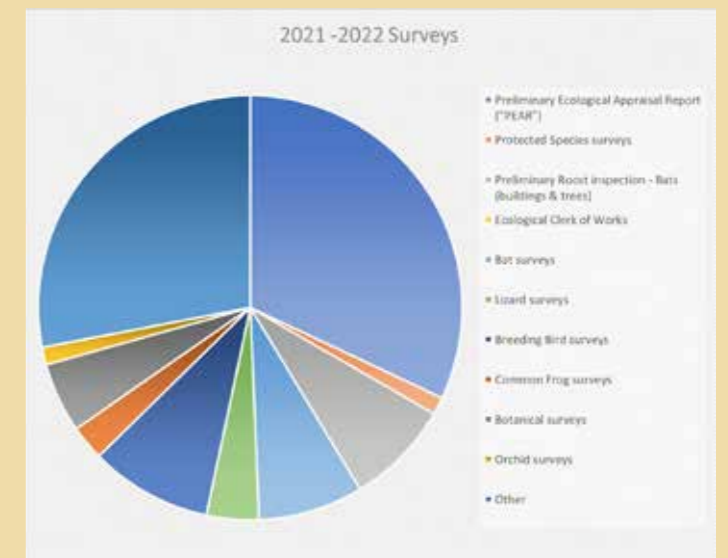
MWT Consultancy's team are well qualified, licensed and highly experienced Manx ecologists with CIEEM membership. Our USP is that our team fully understand Isle of Man habitats, species, legislation, and planning requirements. Below is a list of some of the services we provide across the Isle of Man:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report ("PEAR")
- Protected Species surveys
 - Bat surveys
 - Common lizard surveys
 - Breeding bird surveys
 - Common frog surveys
 - Orchid surveys

- Preliminary Roost Assessment - Bats (buildings & trees)
- Ecological Clerk of Works
- Botanical surveys
- Habitat management / creation plans

In the year Feb 2021 to Jan 2022 our Ecological Consultancy income was £78,509 compared to £90,861 in the previous year, but that's not to say it has not been a busy one and our Ecological Consultancy service continues to grow.

We have continued to work closely with large developers, such as Hartford Homes, assisting them in achieving Biodiversity Net Gain in their new developments. This enables these developments to have more places for nature and a positive impact for wildlife overall. We have also been working proactively with Government departments to ensure that large projects give adequate consideration to reducing their impact on nature and improving the value of sites for wildlife.



The most common type of survey we conduct is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ('PEAR'), as detailed in the above pie chart. A PEAR gives an overall appraisal of the site covering species of flora and fauna, native and non-native, as well as habitats present and will flag up the need for any more-in-depth specific surveys should there be evidence of a possible impact on a particular plant or animal species.

Consultancy Administration

Upon joining MWT in November 2021, I took on the co-ordination of MWT's Ecological Consultancy work. This type of work was new to me in terms of the different types of surveys we do, what they entail/require and the species we survey on. There was no time to hang around, enquiries and bookings were coming in thick and fast, but I soon picked it up with the help of fellow team members.

Following a review and the change of accounting software to Xero, I was able to streamline the process and bring survey bookings into the 21st century with our ecological consultants now using digital calendars.

I have also been lucky enough to go out in the field with our ecologists, assisting with a range of surveys, giving me a clearer insight on what we do, how we can help protect wildlife, and how existing areas can be enhanced for nature.

Discussions are currently underway around the future plans of our Ecological Consultancy, so watch this space!

If you would like any further information about our Ecological Consultancy work, or if you would like us to provide advice, or conduct a survey, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01624 844432 or email consultancy@mwt.im

The Calf of Man

Aron Sapsford, Bird Warden (Calf of Man)

2021 summary

Despite the uncertainty created by COVID-19 and the associated delay to the start of the season, 2021 will be remembered as one of the most successful seasons on record. Spring was rather cold, and this had a detrimental effect on the timing and numbers of breeding birds and migrants moving through the Calf. Regardless, there were some exciting observations, with the Calf's 5th woodchat shrike and a western wubalpine warbler in early June. Monitoring of our important seabird breeding populations is a key fieldwork task during spring and summer, with full colony nest counts of European shag and the three large gull species conducted during May and colony counts of fulmar, razorbill and guillemot throughout June. In addition, an intensive two-week burrow call-back census was undertaken at the South Harbour and Kione ny Halby Manx shearwater colonies during early June and it is pleasing to report their population is now believed to have exceeded 1,000 pairs for the first time since the recovery programme was instigated in 2012. However, perhaps the most significant observation was the sighting of at least two Atlantic puffin coming ashore – the first record of potential breeding in 26 years.

Autumn migration was very exciting with some large arrivals of common species, as well as several rarities including a thrush nightingale (2nd Calf & Manx record), red-flanked bluetail (1st Calf & 2nd Manx record) and a paddyfield warbler, which was a new species for the Island and takes the Calf's bird list to 283 species.

The delay to the start of the season had a significant impact on the number of birds ringed during the season, so a grand total of 6,063 birds of 76 species was a reflection of an excellent autumn passage. The ringing conducted on the Calf makes a significant contribution to the information provided to the British Trust for Ornithology, with notable totals in a British Isles context, achieved for 10 species, including four #BoCCIOM(2021) Red-listed species and a further three amber-listed species.

2022 – so far

As I sit down to write this review and look back at 2022 so far, we are about to lift restrictions implemented to help prevent the occurrence or spread of avian influenza on the Calf. Thankfully, the arrival of this virus, to the Isle of Man, occurred towards the tail-end of the breeding season and, although there were a few casualties, most of our seabirds got away in time. Time will only tell what impact this will have on our already vulnerable bird populations.

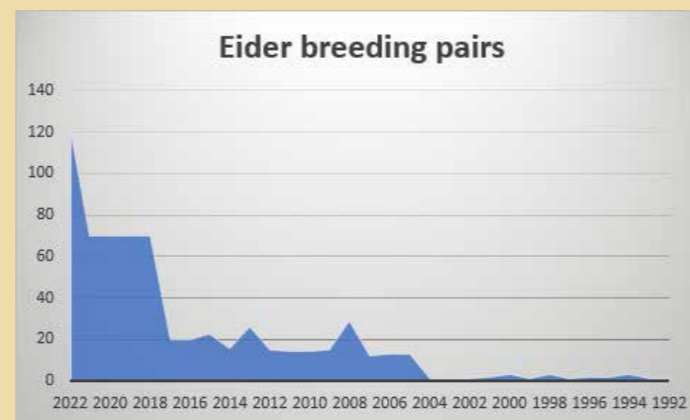
We arrived on the Calf during the second week of March, and I was joined by Oliver O'Sullivan (Estate Warden) and Chloe Hurst and Eleanor Grover (Assistant Wardens) for the season. Spring 2022 was very productive, and migration was above average in terms of numbers and species of birds passing through the Calf. We were also treated to several rarities, in the form of the 2nd

ever dusky warbler for the Isle of Man, the 13th greenish warbler and two eastern subalpine warblers.



Dusky warbler

During April, we were also joined by Phoebe Grzeskowiak, a student from Nottingham Trent University, who takes up her story: "In April I had the amazing experience of undertaking Wheatear research on the Calf of Man. My adventure started in a little boat across the Sound, and I had no idea what to expect when I got



there. Whilst travelling across I was amazed by the number of seabirds and array of migratory species I encountered. When I arrived on the Calf, I undertook a Breeding Bird Survey, a wheatear territory study and even managed to get involved (addicted!) with locating Eider nests. The data I collected on the Calf is about the effect of Longtails (brown rats) on wheatears and eiders and the variation in wheatear territory sizes. This data will be used for my dissertation. Originally, my focus was just going to be on wheatears and their territories, but I had a hidden love for eiders, finding more than 85 nests (with an estimated 120 pairs), so they had to make an appearance! Furthermore, I gained a vast amount of ringing experience and knowledge. I handled a range of exciting birds, such as, shag, swallow and cuckoo and I hope to come back in the future and undertake more study on eiders, looking at their lifecycles and where they migrate to after their breeding season on the Calf".



Phoebe with a female eider

Whilst the primary research role of the Calf is focused on birds, we also collect data on many other taxa and during this season we have been able to add a range of new species to the Calf list, including two species of spider, a click beetle, a hoverfly and two 'macro' moths – the archer's dart and triple-spotted clay. We have also been able to add birch catkin bug and a species of non-biting midge that were both new for the Isle of Man.

Summer 2022 has seen a great deal of focus on seabirds. Unfortunately, for the wrong reason of devastating mortalities, due to HPAI, at many colonies along the north-east coast of England and in Scotland. Thankfully, the effect of the virus was minimal on the Island and there were no confirmed cases on

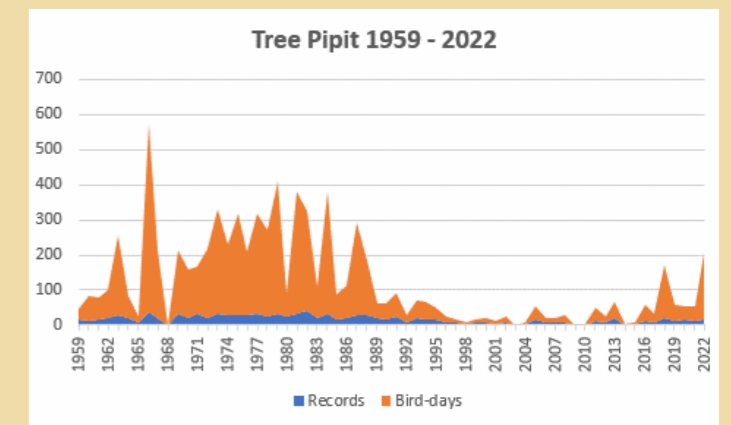


Psectrotanypus varius, non-biting midge

the Calf. Certain elements of our monitoring were affected by restrictions implemented to help reduce the potential spread of the virus, however in general most species would appear to have enjoyed a largely successful season, as can be seen from the table below:

Species	Count Unit	Long-term Trend	2012 – 2021 Average	2022
Northern Fulmar	Apparently Occupied Site		68	73
Manx Shearwater	Apparently Occupied Burrow	↑	479	1000
European Shag	Apparently Occupied Nest	↑	125	191
Herring Gull	Apparently Occupied Nest	↓	416	656
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Apparently Occupied Nest	↓	40	38
Great Black-backed Gull	Apparently Occupied Nest	↓	47	85
Common Guillemot	Individual Adult	Level	171	177
Razorbill	Individual Adult	Level	177	154

Autumn is now well and truly here and during August we witnessed the best tree pipit passage since the mid-1970's, with a definite upturn in numbers compared to recent decades. The ringing of passerines plays an important role in understanding the numbers of birds, as well as providing insight as to the origins and destinations of migrants passing through the Calf. Early indications are that several species appear to have had a very successful breeding season and good post-breeding survival for young, with a 50% increase on record totals for both robins and linnet. Provided the weather is favourable for the remainder of autumn then we should be on target to ring about 8,000 birds and potentially achieve one of the top three totals in the Observatory's history.



Engagement

Graham Makepeace-Warne, Engagement Manager

I'm going to start this report with an apology: the magazine that you are reading is late. You will notice that, at 68 pages, it is the largest member's magazine/annual report we have ever produced. Simply, this is because there is a huge number of things going on at MWT. In fact, if this article was to have an executive summary, that would be it.

The engagement team has arguably seen the biggest expansion of late. Since I started at the beginning of 2018, we have taken on Rachael Harrop to help with communications whilst she completes her Masters in Wildlife Biology & Conservation with MWT, Hannah Phillips has joined as our Community Ranger, supported by Lloyds Bank International and Lucy Chapman has recently started as our #TeamWilder Coordinator, funded by the Wildlife Trusts Strategic Development Fund. Lucy is also embarking on a Masters in Sustainability and Behaviour Change. At the time of going to press, we are also looking for a Corporate Partnerships Officer to help explore new funding streams and look after our existing corporate partners better. Education is also an important part of our engagement work, so our Education Officer, Dawn Colley, has also moved into the Engagement Team. From just me to a team of six may go some way to explaining the lateness of the magazine.

There is a federation-wide movement towards more engagement. MWT is 50 years old next year and, although we have done great work during that time, we are still sadly losing species through

local extinction. We need to change the way we are doing things and our strategy shows a clear ambition to connect people in the IOM strongly to nature. This is exactly what #TeamWilder is all about, so we are very much aligned with The Wildlife Trusts on this.

Membership

2021 was a challenging year for membership as COVID-19 continued to hamper our events and engagement activities. Unfortunately, the recent cost of living crisis is also forcing people to question all their outgoings, including memberships and donations. However, our membership continues to grow as we find more and more people becoming aware of sustainability and biodiversity loss.

Corporate Members

2021/22 was a successful period for corporate partnerships as our new scheme gained momentum and the need for local companies to fulfil their ESG goals grew. Most notably, we gained our first reserve sponsor. Manx Telecom have agreed to support MWT Cooldarry Nature Reserve for two years and got stuck straight in with a work party removing invasive montbretia from the site. But they didn't stop there. They have also paid for and helped plant hundreds of trees at our Mullen y Cloie Agro-forestry project, provided free 4G connectivity for our Manx shearwater cameras on the Calf and Peatland mapping equipment, installed a telegraph pole for barn owl nest boxes, utilised our consultancy services and committed to 'rewilding' their office grounds in Douglas and will be hosting Hannah, our Community Ranger, at their Strand Street store later in October.

Lloyds Bank International's funding of our Community Ranger is also a first for us. Funders often dislike the idea of covering staff time and core costs, but this clearly shows how this kind of

nature. Other new corporate partner members include Cherry Godfrey and Hansard Global, while Island Escapes continue to raise over £3k a year for us through their optional £3 donation at check out.

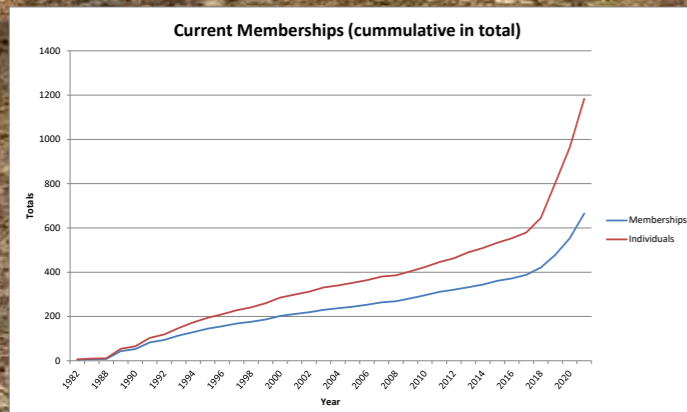
Marketing and PR

We can't afford to do the kind of brand awareness market research that would really help us understand our reach in the Isle of Man. But I am confident that it is heading in the right direction. We received a good amount of press coverage and our digital channels continue to grow (see Rachael's communications review on page 25 of this report). Headline stories like the St Mark's Elm Trees and proposed Ramsey Marina development illustrate not only the power of our Social Media following (should we feel the need to mobilise it) but also how well respected MWT is. The coverage of the release of Crunchie, the rehabilitated seal, also reached tens of thousands. Watch the video out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKFR58UWBA8

Climate Change

Following a great deal of work to calculate the carbon footprint of MWT we were able to create a carbon reduction strategy and start implementing it. This was kicked off with the purchase of our electric van. It has proved extremely successful and the team fight over it to travel to meetings and events. This, combined with our cycle-to-work scheme, has also meant that team members can leave their cars at home. I am now cycling in from Sandygate a couple of times a week!

The trajectory is good, and we look forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary next year with a series of great events and projects, in an even stronger position than we are now.



Manx Telecom Volunteers at Mullen Y Cloie

Volunteer, Kate Silverthorne with Aron Sapsford and Lara Howe, installing the Manx shearwater equipment on the Calf



Crunchie the rehabilitated seal

Community

Hannah Phillips, Community Ranger



Community Ranger is a new role at Manx Wildlife Trust, supported by Lloyds Bank International. Commencing in mid-May, this position aims to engage more of the public with wildlife through the creation of community-led projects. The establishment of a Community Ranger is pertinent to The Wildlife Trusts' organisational shift towards a community organising approach, exemplified by their Team Wilder campaign. Community Organising is a different form of engagement which aims to empower people, enabling them to take meaningful action and be part of restoring their local nature. This approach is vital in achieving the organisation's three aims:

- To put nature into recovery
- To create more space for wildlife to thrive
- To reduce the pressure on the environment and tackle the climate and ecological emergencies.

Team Wilder is central to The Wildlife Trusts' 2030 strategy. This is demonstrated specifically in the charity's second goal and third transformation aim.

"Goal 2: People are taking action for nature and the climate, resulting in better decision making for the environment at both the local level and across the country"

"Transformation 3: Inspiring community organising and mobilising, especially amongst young people."

At Manx Wildlife Trust, these aims are reflective of the work of UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man, who also embolden the aim of working together for a sustainable future. My work as Community Ranger will encourage the achievement of these aims by working alongside community groups to establish more local projects that create wildlife-friendly areas.

Although my aim is to work alongside residents from all regions of the Island, particular focus has so far been placed on establishing a new Eastern Community Group. Currently, Manx Wildlife Trust have minimal outreach within the eastern region of the Island, with only one nature reserve and no volunteer group. With the majority of the Island's urban area being located in the east, this region offers an excellent opportunity to facilitate Team Wilder.

I joined Manx Wildlife Trust as Community Ranger in May 2022 after recently completing an MSc in Applied Ecology at the University of Gloucestershire. I moved to the Island from Bristol, where I had been working as the Volunteer Organiser at a retirement village. My previous experience includes being a volunteer leader for a tree planting charity and being the Local Media Coordinator for Bath Greenpeace Group. After living for several years in a city centre with no private outside space, I am passionate about welcoming more wildlife to urban areas and making nature accessible to all.

During my first few months at MWT, I have led several educational and outreach events. These have included three 'Gardening for Wildlife' talks in collaboration with Jane Prescott as well as a Wednesday Wildlife Walk around Peel.

From May 2022 to the end of September 2022	No.
Number of events led	11
Number of events involved in	18
Number of people attending events led	164
Number of collaborations with Island media	6
Meetings with different Commissioners	3
Followers on social media platforms	224

In September, I organised several community consultations in the east of the Island. These were opportunities to hear from the public regarding their thoughts on encouraging more wildlife to their local areas. The consultations also offered a chance for MWT to establish their new Eastern Community Group and to present MWT's new community led projects.

The first of these consultations was held at Lloyds Bank International in Douglas. As well as providing a location for those living in the city, this venue also offered an opportunity to involve other businesses. Since starting in May, I have been working alongside Manx Radio and Lloyds Bank International to improve their outside spaces for wildlife. The community consultation hosted at Lloyds Bank International presented an opportunity to invite other businesses to work with the charity and improve their outside spaces for wildlife.

The second event, hosted at Onchan Parish Hall, was a more traditional community consultation and offered a chance for those living near MWT Onchan Wetlands Reserve to voice their opinions. Both events were extremely positive with attendees keen to get started on the projects. Following on from these consultations, we hope to improve community engagement with MWT Onchan Wetlands Reserve and start work on several new community led projects.



Digital Communications

Rachael Harrop, Communications Officer

1st Feb 2021 to 31st Jan 2022

Facebook

- increased by 1,129 new followers to 10,273
- reached 181,949 people (155,023 of which engaged through reactions, comments, and shares with MWT content)
- had 501 posts/shares

Twitter

- increased by 1,171 followers to 6,449
- had 1,722 tweets retweeted
- had 1,172,700 tweet impressions
- had 316 tweets

Instagram

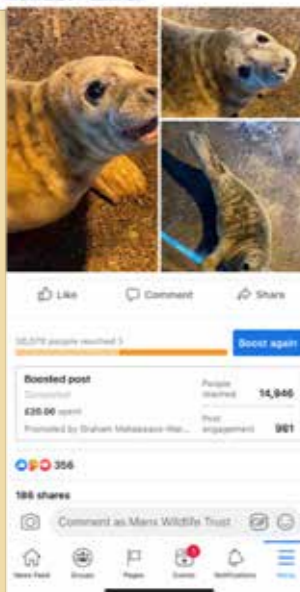
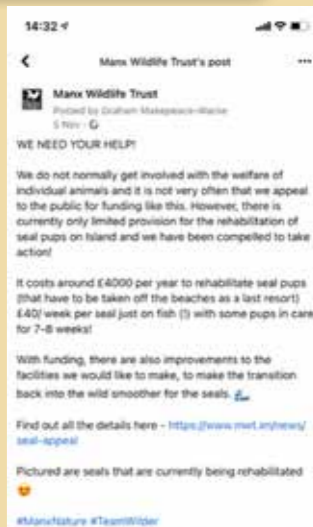
- increased by 442 followers to 2,775
- had a reach of 156,946
- had 231 posts

Website

- had 88K users
- had 137,660 page views
- had a bounce rate of 75.01% (percentage of people only viewing 1 page)

2021 to 2022 was another busy year for digital content with COVID-19 still very much present in everyday life. Highlights include:

- Passing a milestone of 10,000 likes on Facebook at the start of September 2021.
- In June MWT highlighted a failure of the IOM planning system where an internationally important tree landmark, an elm tree tunnel in St Mark's, was to be felled to widen a driveway. This had a huge social media reaction, getting support from conservation activist Chris Packham.
- On the 6th June, the first puffin to be spotted on the Calf of Man in 40 years caused a social media storm as the love for these seabirds was highlighted.
- MWT wrote an open letter responding to the proposed zoning for development of Ramsey South Beach in the North and West area plan, again picking up public support through social media
- We had a massive response to our online 'Seal Appeal' in November 2021 which raised over £20,000 for the rehabilitation of injured seal pups found around the Island.
- The list of MWT staff with social media accounts has grown massively, 9 staff had active twitter accounts by the end of 2021.
- MWT broadened its social media profile with a TikTok account. Mostly used to produce videos, the content is always well received across all the channels.
- The new website continues to grow; The most viewed pages, after our landing page with 14,139 views, were – events page with 2,632 views, jobs page with 2,594 views and meet the

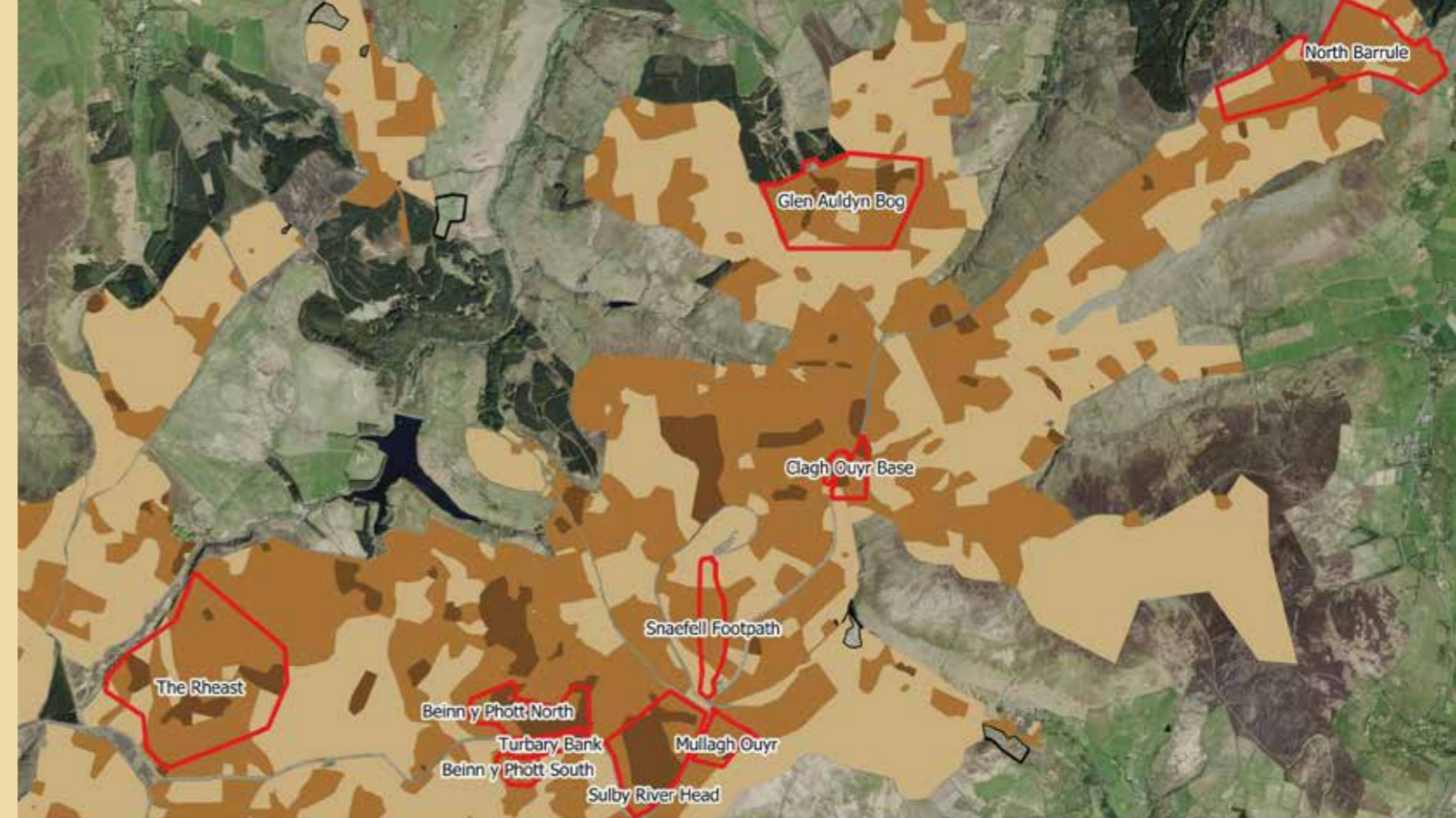


Follow the team on Twitter:

- Leigh - @MorrisLeigh
- David - @ManxAgriEnviro
- Hannah - @MWT_Ranger
- Sarah - @Sarah_E_Hickey
- Graham - @GrahamMakepeace
- Clare - @ClarePayneArt
- Calf - @CalfObs
- Aron - @aron_sapsford
- Lara - @DrLaraHowe
- Laura - @LauraStrand222
- Adam - @adamjuandenard
- Rachael - @rachael_harrop
- Lucy - @MWT_teamwilder

Peatland Survey and Restoration

Sarah Hickey, Conservation Officer (Mires)



Extensive Peat Survey

The extensive upland peat survey, which was started in 2018, is ongoing but has already provided valuable information on which areas have deep peat. Erosion features, such as hags and gullies, have also been mapped using aerial images and this information has been used to target key areas for restoration work. Ten areas, covering 420 hectares, have been selected for the first phase of restoration work.

Peat Survey Work to Date:

Peat Depth Category	Area (hectares)
Deep Peat >99cm	203
Peat 40-99cm	1,763
Shallow Peat <40cm	2,993
No Peat	31
Total area surveyed	4,990

HE Sir John and Lady Lorimer helping with the survey work:



Restoration Survey

In order to undertake effective restoration work, the area first requires a detailed survey to be undertaken. The survey specification used was based on that developed by Yorkshire Peat Partnership and adjusted to suit local conditions. The survey work was made simpler by the development of a Peat Survey app in conjunction with Government Technology Services and this app has now been used to survey five of the ten sites (see image opposite). The survey measures and records erosion features, peat depth every 50m and habitat condition (based on Common Standards Monitoring). This information is used to produce a restoration plan, detailing work needed and required resources.

Peatland Restoration Sites:

Restoration Site	Area (hectares)	Surveyed
Turbary Bank	8	Yes
Clagh Ouyr Base	9	Yes
Snaefell Footpath	18	Yes
Black Hut	3	Yes
Mullagh Ouyr	12	Yes
Beinn y Phott North	28	No
The Rheast	131	No
Glen Auldyn Bog	76	No
North Barrule	74	No
Sulby River Head	45	No
Total	420	49

Restoration Work

So far, restoration work has been undertaken in a trial area at Turbary Bank. This was a very degraded site with lots of exposed and eroding peat hags, following its use as a site for peat cutting. The restoration of this site is not yet complete but has involved the re-profiling of peat hags and the placement of heather bales as sediment traps in shallow gullies. The site has been fenced off to allow the regeneration of vegetation on the re-profiled peat. The practical restoration work at this site was undertaken by a local contractor, with guidance from DEFA officers. It involved the use of diggers to work on larger peat hags, which is much quicker and more effective on sites with extensive damage. Some sites are not suitable for diggers, however, so MWT are trialling restoration of smaller hags by hand. If this goes well, we hope to be able to involve groups of volunteers in this work.

Restoration Survey Areas



Legend

- Restoration Survey Sites
- Shallow Peat <40cm
- Deep Peat >99cm
- No Peat
- Peat 40 - 99cm

Restoring peat hags by hand:



Additional Survey Work

As well as mapping upland peat, we have started to map the depths of lowland peat sites. This has been done with the permission of local landowners, some of whom have requested a survey. Although the areas mapped so far are relatively small, many contain deep or very deep peat and we aim to gradually extend the survey to map all areas of lowland peat. We have even been helped with this survey by the Lt Governor and Lady Lorimer!

Emissions Inventory

As well as providing information for restoration work, the survey has provided information on carbon stored within our peatlands and the likely emissions from them. Peatlands are a great store of carbon, as peat comprises approximately 50% carbon (not including the water!). In the uplands, peat is largely formed by blanket bog habitat, which is wet and acidic and contains a lot of sphagnum moss. If this habitat is not in good condition it tends to dry out and stop forming peat. It also releases carbon into the atmosphere. By looking at the habitats, and their condition, currently on our peatlands we were able to estimate carbon emissions from upland and lowland peat on the Isle of Man. One of the aims of peatland restoration is to improve the habitat condition, thereby lowering these emissions and enabling peatlands to actively form more peat.

For more information and to make a donation to support our peat survey and restoration work visit: www.mwt.im/peat

A Year of Action

Andree Dubbeldam,
Conservation Officer



Plants of Conservation Concern 2022



Action for Wildlife website

The past 12 months is the year when everything happened...All at once!

Yes, June and July 2022 have been breakthrough months, but let's rewind a bit, this has been a great year.

First the LISTS!

Organised people have lists and in conservation management they do help. Manx Birdlife got the ball rolling last year with 'Birds of Conservation Concern Isle of Man'. A simple idea which is to rank species as Green (no concern), Amber (some concern), Red (conservation priority) and Black (extinct on Island).

MWT worked through the winter and spring to do our bit; 'Plants of Conservation Concern Isle of Man'. Endorsed by many partner organisations and listing 78 red listed and 45 black listed species. There is a supporting webpage which can be viewed at: www.mwt.im/PoCCIoM

Having these Red/Amber/Green (RAG) lists is useful for us; we can prioritise conservation action, make decisions about the importance of different sites, have real evidence for campaigning work and through planning. The more of these lists there are (we are talking to partner organisations to help with butterfly, habitat and bat lists too) the more effective our actions can be.

We have also worked with partner organisations to create a definitive native tree list. With tree planting becoming an ever more important global action, planting the right species is really important. The native tree list should be published later this year.

Action for Wildlife

After three years' work on 'Action for Wildlife' our programme to help reverse biodiversity loss on the Isle of Man, we have ten initiatives underway. The last part

has been the development of the website, which is now nearly ready to go. MWT have been stopping species from going extinct on the Island for nearly 50 years, but we want to be more effective and so Action for Wildlife will be a programme of initiatives to target species and habitats that are most at risk. We are already actively working on these initiatives, but they will be formally launched with the web pages soon.

Not just a Summer of Heatwaves

In June we had two big breakthroughs. The first was the long-awaited signing of the 99 year lease of Claghbane Plantation. A big thanks to our partners in DEFA who have put in so much effort to make this happen. We now have just two years to turn Claghbane plantation and our existing adjacent reserve 'Crosssags Coppice' into our flagship public engagement site 'MWT Hairpin Woodland Park'. To get this site fully running in two years will be a daunting task, but we have some wonderful partners in DEFA, Milntown and Douglas Rotary Club to help us.

Last year we reported on the restoration of Rosehill Quarry ASSI, the Island's most important limestone grassland. This year after a year of earth moving and sculpting by Colas Ltd the three acre extension site was finally ready. With 12 big bales of species-rich hay from Stewart Clague's Ballanette Nature Reserve, we were able to sow the site in one day. We have also introduced, through plants and seeds, over 100 additional species of wildflower. The introduced species include agrimony, a species that went extinct in the wild 14 years ago, but MWT have held in cultivation awaiting the right site for its return. It was a lot of hard work in a very hot summer but MWT and Colas's partnership has really been cemented and should go from strength to strength.



Spreading species-rich hay at Rosehill Quarry

Visiting Billown Quarry: Tricia Sayle, Andree Dubbeldam, Aron Sapsford, David Bellamy, Laura Strand, Clare Payne and Sarah Hickey from MWT with Daniel Madden, Site Manager, from Colas



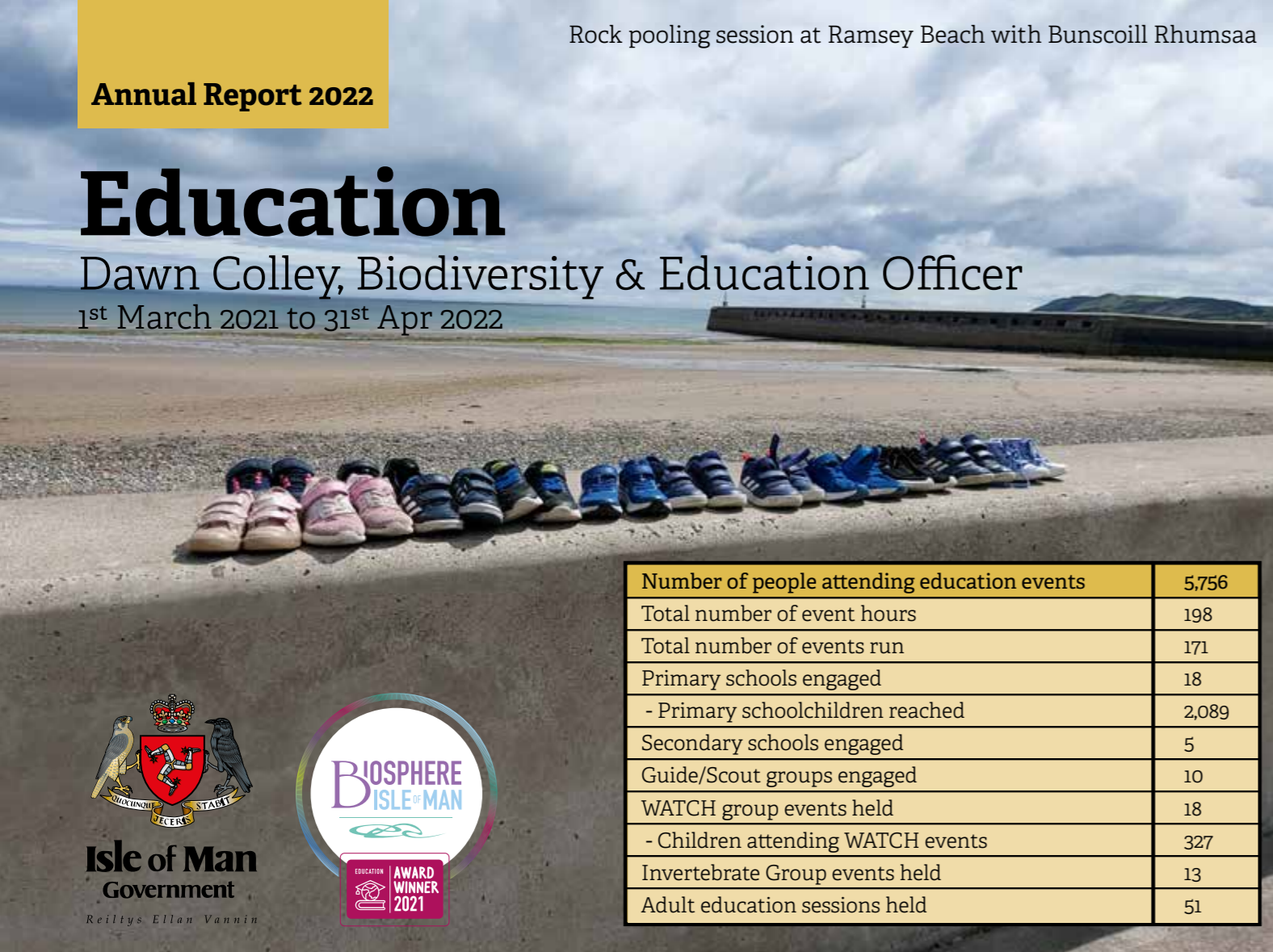
IMAGE: GRAHAM MAKEPEACE-WARNE

BACKGROUND IMAGE: DAVID BELLAMY

Education

Dawn Colley, Biodiversity & Education Officer

1st March 2021 to 31st Apr 2022



Number of people attending education events	5,756
Total number of event hours	198
Total number of events run	171
Primary schools engaged	18
- Primary schoolchildren reached	2,089
Secondary schools engaged	5
Guide/Scout groups engaged	10
WATCH group events held	18
- Children attending WATCH events	327
Invertebrate Group events held	13
Adult education sessions held	51

Schools

DESC and DEFA have continued to support the MWT Education post, we re-gained the contract to provide Education about the Island's Biodiversity for the next 3 years, which is excellent news and meant we have delivered Educational sessions to 7,900 people this year and have seen the numbers of secondary school pupils using the service increase.

This year, we supported King William's sixth form students with their baccalaureate+ studies in Ecology. We surveyed the new dragonfly pond at Ballachurry which was being colonised over the summer months. We were delighted when three of the students chose to theme their coursework projects around Manx wildlife. These included studying bird migration via data from the Calf to explore if there were any trends relating to climate change, investigating the effects of urbanisation on small mammals and a stream invertebrate study in Groudle Glen. One of the students, Toby, has written about his studies for us. In the future we are looking forward to the establishment of the Natural History GCSE and hope it is adopted by some of the schools on Island. It is a fantastic opportunity for learning more about our ecosystems and biodiversity. We will be supporting any schools with fieldwork and resources who would like to adopt this new course.

Invertebrate Group

The Invertebrate Group held 11 events, with 105 in attendance, over the year. The winter sessions concentrated on identification work and with the use of microscopes, sponsored by Manx National Heritage, We held sessions about spiders, hoverflies and

looked at the invertebrate collection held at the Manx Museum. Field work included investigating dung, dead wood, stream invertebrates and a return survey of the dark green bush cricket. Visit www.mwt.im/invertebrate-group to find out more about this group and meeting dates.

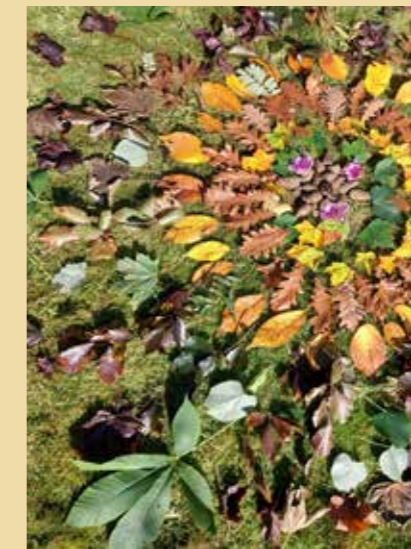
Butterfly Transects

Our butterfly transects volunteers have increased in number and undertook two fieldwork training courses with Gail Jeffcoat. One of the goals was to ensure geographical coverage of the Island and the group split into pairs to explore the central west part of the Island, covering the mountain area. All this data will also go forward to Butterfly Conservation UK for their atlas of butterflies showing trends and the spread of species northwards. From our volunteers work at the MWT Close Sartfield Nature Reserve transect, we found there were fewer butterflies in 2021 than 2020 (2020 had a much warmer spring and extended period of warmth) The dominant species for the reserve continues to be meadow browns but more small heaths were seen in 2021 as well as common blues. Transects are run from April to September so we await the results for 2022. We have also established this year a new transect at our MWT Cronk Y Bing Nature Reserve and hope to expand our work to get a better geographical coverage of the Island and a range of habitats.

If you are interested in joining the invertebrate group or helping with the butterfly transects, please email me on dawn@mwt.im



Filming with Vera Barber for COP 26



Leaf mandala by the Praxis Group



Common lizard at Dalby with the WATCH Group

New species found on MWT Nature Reserves in 2021	
<i>Crossocerus capitosus</i>	MWT Aust NR
<i>Chirosia grossicauda</i>	MWT Goshen NR
<i>Dolichopus signatus</i>	MWT Close e Quayle NR
<i>Fannia polychaeta</i>	MWT Close e Quayle NR
<i>Fannia umbrosa</i>	MWT Close e Quayle NR
<i>Mycetophila dentata</i>	MWT Close e Quayle NR
<i>Dynatosoma reciprocum</i>	MWT Ballachrink NR
<i>Epicrypta aterrima</i>	MWT Ballachrink NR
<i>Mycomya marginata</i>	MWT Ballachrink NR
New species found on Invert Group activities in 2021	
<i>Norrbornia costalis</i>	Sandygate, Ballameanagh Hs
<i>Sphaerocera curvipes</i>	Sandygate, Ballameanagh Hs
<i>Suillia pallida</i>	Milntown Estate Gardens
<i>Exechia bicincta</i>	Milntown Estate Gardens
<i>Agathomyia unicolor</i>	Milntown Estate Gardens

MWT Close Sartfield Nature Reserve Butterfly Transects 2021

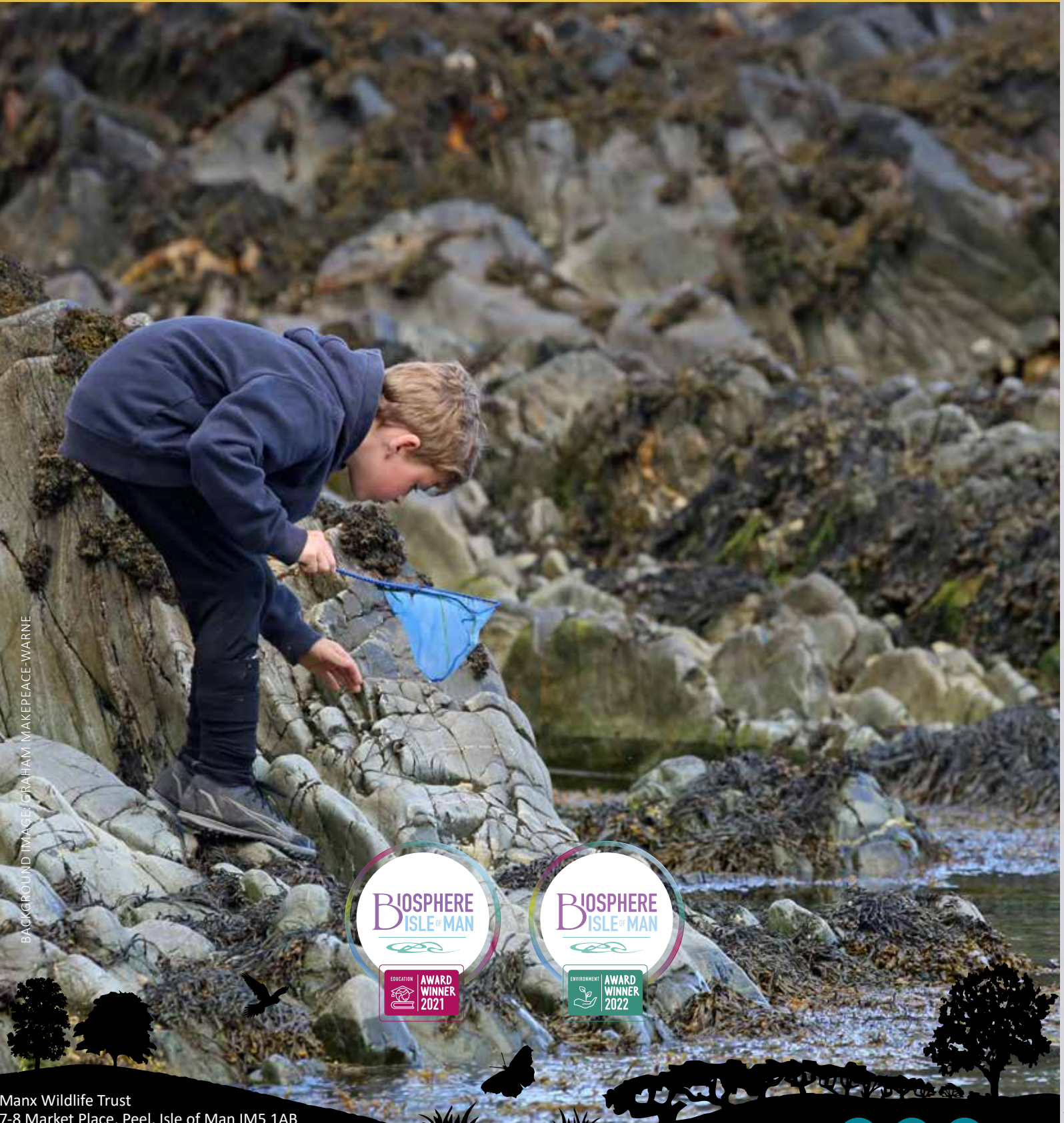
Species	Count	Peak Month
Common blue	32	August
Green-veined white	15	Early August
Large white	2	July & August
Meadow brown	332	Mid June onwards
Orange tip	6	May
Peacock	2	August
Small copper	2	Early August
Small heath	57	Early July
Small tortoiseshell	4	August
Small white	6	From May onwards
Speckled wood	55	Sept
Wall brown	1	Early August

Observers course mammal trapping at MWT Cooldarry Nature Reserve





Manx
Wildlife Trust
Treisht Bea-Feie
Vannin



BACKGROUND IMAGE: GRAHAM MAKEPEACE-WARNE



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