Not logged in Talk Contributions Create account Log in

Article Talk Read Edit View history Search Wikipedia Search

Main page
Contents
Featured content
Current events
Random article
Donate to Wikipedia
Wikipedia store

Interaction
Help
About Wikipedia
Community portal
Recent changes
Contact page

Tools
What links here
Related changes
Upload file
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Wikidata item
Cite this page

Print/export
Create a book
Download as PDF
Printable version

In other projects
Wikimedia Commons

Languages
Català
Cymraeg
Deutsch
Español
Esperanto
Français
Italiano
Nederlands
Polski
Русский
Scots
Simple English
Svenska
Українська
中文
Edit links

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** (**RSPB**) is a charitable organisation registered in England and Wales[3] and in Scotland.[4] It was founded as the **Plumage League** in 1889 by Emily Williamson. It works to promote conservation and protection of birds and the wider environment through public awareness campaigns, petitions and through the operation of nature reserves throughout the United Kingdom.[5]

The RSPB has over 1,300 employees, 18,000 volunteers and more than a million members (including 195,000 youth members), making it the largest wildlife conservation charity in Europe.[6] The RSPB has many local groups and maintains 200 nature reserves.[7]

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

giving nature a home

Type	Conservation charity
Founded	1889, Fletcher Moss Botanical Garden, Manchester
Headquarters	The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, England 2 Lochside View, Edinburgh, Scotland
Area served	United Kingdom
Key people	Kevin Cox (Chairman) Miranda Krestovnikoff (President) Dr Mike Clarke (Chief Executive)[1]
Revenue	▲ £88.28 million GBP (2006)[1]
Operating income	▲ £69.7 million GBP (2006)[1]
Net income	▼ £3.68 million GBP (2006)[1]
Number of employees	1,545 paid staff[1] 18,750 volunteers[1]
Website	www.rspb.org.uk

Contents

1 History
2 Activities
  2.1 Reserves
  2.2 Awards
    2.2.1 RSPB Medal
  2.3 Magazines
    2.3.1 *Bird Notes*
    2.3.2 *Birds*
    2.3.3 *Nature's Home*
  2.4 Junior divisions
  2.5 Big Garden Birdwatch
  2.6 BirdTrack
3 Finances
4 Advertising
5 Presidents
6 Chief officers
7 Associate organisations
8 See also
9 Notes
10 External links

History [edit]

The Plumage League[8] was founded in 1889 by Emily Williamson at her house in Didsbury, Manchester, (now in Fletcher Moss Botanical Garden),[9] as a protest group campaigning against the use of great crested grebe and kittiwake skins and feathers in fur clothing. The group gained popularity and eventually amalgamated with the Fur and Feather League in Croydon to form the Society for the Protection of Birds.[10] The Society gained its Royal Charter in 1904.[11]

Action for Birds
100 YEARS
THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

Plaque at Fletcher Moss Park, Manchester, commemorating the foundation of the RSPB

The original members of the RSPB were all women who campaigned against the fashion of the time for women to wear exotic feathers in hats, and the consequent encouragement of "plume hunting". To this end the Society had two simple rules:[10]

- That Members shall discourage the wanton destruction of Birds, and interest themselves generally in their protection
- That Lady-Members shall refrain from wearing the feathers of any bird not killed for purposes of food, the ostrich only excepted.

At the time of founding, the trade in plumage for use in hats was very large: in the first quarter of 1884, almost 7,000 bird-of-paradise skins were being imported to Britain, along with 400,000 birds from West India and Brazil, and 360,000 birds from East India.[12]

The Society attracted support from some women of high social standing who belonged to the social classes that popularised the wearing of feathered hats, including the Duchess of Portland (who became the Society's first President) and the Ranee of Sarawak. As the organisation began to attract the support of many other influential figures, both male and female, such as the ornithologist Professor Alfred Newton, it gained in popularity and attracted many new members. The society received a Royal Charter in 1904[10] from Edward VII, just 15 years after its founding, and was instrumental in petitioning the Parliament of the United Kingdom to introduce laws banning the use of plumage in clothing.[9]

At the time that the Society was founded in Britain, similar societies were also founded in other European countries.[13][*which?*] In 1961, the society acquired The Lodge in Sandy, Bedfordshire as its new headquarters.[9] The RSPB's logo depicts an Avocet. The first version was designed by Robert Gillmor.[14]

Activities [edit]

Today, the RSPB works with both the civil service and the Government to advise Government policies on conservation and environmentalism.[15] It is one of several organisations that determine the official conservation status list for all birds found in the UK.

The RSPB does not run bird hospitals nor offer animal rescue services.[16]

An Avocet at the RSPB's Minsmere reserve. This species is used in the RSPB's logo.

Reserves [edit]

The RSPB maintains over 200 reserves throughout the United Kingdom,[7] covering a wide range of habitats, from estuaries and mudflats to forests and urban habitats.[17] The reserves often have bird hides provided for birdwatchers and many provide visitor centres, which include information about the wildlife that can be seen there.[18]

Awards [edit]

The RSPB confers awards, including the President's Award, for volunteers who make a notable contribution to the work of the society.

RSPB Medal [edit]

Main article: RSPB Medal

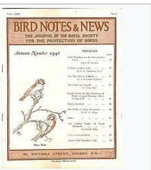
According to the RSPB:

> The RSPB Medal is the Society's most prestigious award. It is presented to an individual in recognition of wild bird protection and countryside conservation. It is usually awarded annually to one or occasionally two people.[19]

South Stack reserve, Anglesey, with Ellin's Tower, housing a visitor centre

Magazines [edit]

The RSPB has published a members-only magazine for over a century.



A webcam installed near Sumburgh Head lighthouse, (Shetland). The cliffs are home to large numbers of seabirds and the area is an RSPB nature reserve.

Bird Notes [edit]

Bird Notes and News (ISSN 0406-3392) was first published in April 1903.

The title changed to *Bird Notes* in 1947. In the 1950s, there were four copies per year (one for each season, published on the 1st of each third month, March, June, September and December). Each volume covered two years, spread over three calendar years. For example, volume XXV (25), number one was dated Winter 1951, and number eight in the same volume was dated Autumn 1953.

From the mid-1950s, many of the covers were by Charles Tunnicliffe. Two of the originals are on long-term loan to the Tunnicliffe gallery at Oriel Ynys Môn, but in 1995 the RSPB sold 114 at a Sotheby's auction, raising £210,000, the most expensive being a picture of a partridge which sold for £6,440.[20]

From January 1964 (vol. 31, no. 1), publication increased to six per year, (issued in the odd-numbered months, January, March and so on, but dated "January–February", "March–April", etc.). Volumes again covered two years, so vol. 30, covering 1962–63, therefore included nine issues, ending with the "Winter 1963–64" edition instead of eight. The final edition, vol. 31 no. 12, was published in late 1965.

Bird Notes

BIRD NOTES & NEWS
THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.
Autumn Number 1946
82, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

Cover of Autumn 1946 issue of *Bird Notes*, Vol. 23, No. 3

Discipline	Ornithology
Language	English
Publication details	
Publication history	1903-1966
Publisher	RSPB (United Kingdom)
ISO 4	Find out here
Indexing	
ISSN	0406-3392

Editors [edit]

This list is incomplete; you can help by expanding it.

- Miss M. G. Davies, BA, MBOU (for many years, until vol. 30 no. 9)
- John Clegg (from vol. 31 No. 1 – vol. 31 no. 3)
- Jeremy Boswell (from vol. 31 no. 4 – vol. 31 no. 12)

Birds [edit]

Bird Notes' successor *Birds* (ISSN 1367-983X) replaced it immediately, with volume 1, number 1 being the January–February 1966 edition. Issues were published quarterly, numbered so that a new volume started every other year.

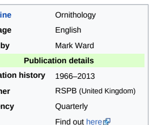
The Autumn 2013 edition, dated August–October 2013, being vol. 25 no. 7, was the last.[21]

Nature's Home [edit]

In Winter 2013 *Birds* was replaced by a new magazine, *Nature's Home*. The editor was Mark Ward. The magazine had an ABC-certified circulation of 600,885.[22]

Junior divisions [edit]

The RSPB has two separate groups for children and teenagers: Wildlife Explorers (founded in 1943 as the Junior Bird Recorders' Club; from 1965–2000 the Young Ornithologists Club or YOC[9]) and RSPB Phoenix. Wildlife Explorers is targeted at children aged between 8 and 12, although it also has some younger members,[23] and has two different magazines: *Wild Times* for the under 8s and *Bird Life* for those over 8. RSPB Phoenix is aimed at teenagers, and produces *Wingbeat* magazine, although members also receive *Bird Life* magazine.[24] The RSPB is a member of The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services.[25]



"BIRD NOTES AND NEWS."
For all interested in Wild Birds and their Preservation.
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.
82 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

Advert for *Bird Notes and News* from the March 1934 edition of *North Western Naturalist* magazine. Note early logo.

Big Garden Birdwatch [edit]

RSPB organises bird record data collection in annual collective birdwatching days in Britain. RSPB claims this is the "world's biggest wildlife survey" and helps that society to get a better knowledge on bird population trends in Britain.[26] That activity was launched in 1979 as an activity for kids, although from 2001 is a survey open to adults too. In 2011 over 600,000 people took part, being only 37% RSPB's members. The usual date for this birdwatching collective activity is the January's last weekend. From the start of this annual survey records for sparrows show a decline of 60%, while starling population's decline is about 80% from 1979 to 2012.[26]

BirdTrack [edit]

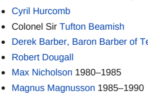
BirdTrack is an online citizen science website, operated by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) on behalf of a partnership of the BTO, the RSPB, BirdWatch Ireland, the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Welsh Ornithological Society (Welsh: *Cymdeithas Adaryddol Cymru*).[27][28]

Birds

Discipline	Ornithology
Language	English
Edited by	Mark Ward
Publication details	
Publication history	1966–2013
Publisher	RSPB (United Kingdom)
Frequency	Quarterly
ISO 4	Find out here
Indexing	
ISSN	1367-983X
Links	
• Journal homepage	

Finances [edit]

The RSPB is funded primarily by its members; in 2006, over 50% of the society's £88 million income came from subscriptions, donations and legacies, worth a total of £53.669 million.[1] As a registered charity, the organisation is entitled to gift aid worth an extra £0.28 on every £1.00 donated by income tax payers.[29] It also receives contractual payments from clean energy utilities and financiers of renewable energy solutions, when its members sign up as clients.[30] The bulk of the income (£63.757 million in 2006) is spent on conservation projects, maintenance of the reserves and on education projects, with the rest going on fundraising efforts and reducing the pension deficit, worth £19.8 million in 2006.



Fund-raising at the Great British Beer Festival 2016.

Advertising [edit]

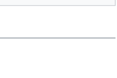
The RSPB was forced by an article in *The Daily Mail* on 2 November 2014 to withdraw claims that it "was spending 90 per cent of its income on conservation" by the UK Advertising Standards Authority, which said that the true figure was closer to 26%. The Charity Commission investigated the claims, and contacted the RSPB to get it to clarify its web statement. The RSPB complied, with the clarification that 90% of its net income (after expenses, not gross income as received) was spent on conservation, and that conservation activities were diverse, not limited to spending on its own nature reserves. This was accepted by the Charity Commission.[31]

Nature's Home

Discipline	Ornithology
Language	English
Edited by	Mark Ward
Publication details	
Publication history	2013–present
Publisher	RSPB (United Kingdom)
Frequency	Quarterly
ISO 4	Find out here
Indexing	
ISSN	2054-3433
Links	
• Journal homepage	

Presidents [edit]

- Winifred Cavendish-Bentinck, Duchess of Portland 1891–1954
- Cyril Hurcomb
- Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish
- Derek Barber, Baron Barber of Tewkesbury
- Robert Dougall
- Max Nicholson 1980–1985
- Magnus Magnusson 1985–1990
- Sir Derek Barber 1990–1991[32]
- Ian Prestt 1991–1994[32]
- Julian Pettifer 1994–?
- Jonathan Dimbleby 2001–?
- Julian Pettifer 2004–2009
- Kate Humble 2009[33]–2013
- Miranda Krestovnikoff 2013–(incumbent) [34]



Winifred Cavendish-Bentinck, Duchess of Portland, painted by Philip Alexius de László in 1912

Chief officers [edit]

Over time, the organisation's chief officers have been given different titles.[9][32]

- William Henry Hudson – Chairman of Committee 1894
- Sir Montagu Sharpe, KBE DL – Chairman of Committee 1895–1942
- Phillip Brown
- Peter Conder OBE – Secretary 1963. Director 1964–1975
- Ian Prestt CBE – Director General 1975–1991
- Barbara Young – CEO 1991–1998
- Sir Graham Wynne – CEO 1998–2010
- Mike Clarke – Chief Executive 2010–

Associate organisations [edit]

The RSPB is a member of Wildlife and Countryside Link.[35] The RSPB is the UK Partner of BirdLife International[36] and manages the South Atlantic Invasive Species Project on behalf of the partner governments.

See also [edit]

- List of RSPB reserves
- Category:Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reserves
- List of Birdlife International national partner organisations
- Wildlife law in England and Wales
- RSPCA

Notes [edit]

Notes

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32. ^ a b c RSPB *Birds* magazine, Vol 13 No 7, Autumn 1991
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External links [edit]

- Official website
- RSPB Images
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' channel on YouTube
- Charity Commission. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, registered charity no. 207076.
- "Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Registered Charity no. SC037654". Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

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Categories: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds | Organizations established in 1889 | Environmental organisations based in England | Ornithological organisations in the United Kingdom | Animal charities based in the United Kingdom | 1889 establishments in the United Kingdom | 1889 establishments in England | Charities based in Bedfordshire | Bird conservation organizations | British landowners

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