



# OUR IMPACT

The BirdLife Annual Review  
2023



# We are BirdLife International

We look after  
birds so all life can  
flourish. We're the  
only organisation  
that does this globally,  
working with and  
through national  
Partners in 118  
countries in 2023.



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# MESSAGES

## FROM OUR CHAIR



**Dr Mike Rands**  
Chair of BirdLife  
International  
Global Council

Birds are amazing, beautiful and inspire us in many ways. They live with us, all around us, in our streets our gardens and parks, and our wider countryside. Every year billions of birds migrate across the world’s great bird superhighways, which we call flyways. Because birds are so well studied, they can act as barometers for the rest of nature. When birds are in trouble, we know other species are in trouble as well.

This year, as the global authority on birds, BirdLife contributed to the first ever UN report on the status of all migratory species. Nearly half are declining with 1 in 5 at risk of extinction. Our network of partners is uniquely placed to take action to reverse these declines. BirdLife has made extraordinary progress in developing regional flyway initiatives in the last 12 months alongside many other efforts to conserve the world’s birds and other biodiversity – inspiring in a world full of uncertainties and challenges.

I am also delighted this year with the appointment of our new BirdLife CEO, Martin Harper. Under his leadership, the highly committed global BirdLife Secretariat Team is uniquely equipped to support and engage our 122 Partners to tackle the immense challenges facing the natural world today.



# MESSAGES

## FROM OUR CEO

I was honoured to take on the role of BirdLife International CEO this year, and to lead our partnership in this crucial decade. I am proud that we are different from other international NGOs. Our Partners are local, independent and are trusted by their communities with whom they have been working, sometimes for decades, and provide legitimate voices to influence their local governments. At the centre, through our global offices, we provide the glue, the roadmap and sometimes the rocket fuel. We provide the science to find solutions to conservation challenges.

I am, we are, incredibly grateful for the generous support we receive from our donors. We depend on you all to enable our globe-straddling effectiveness. 2023 has been a year of great accomplishments. Our family grew to 122 Partners in 118 countries and territories. Our science drives our conservation action through and with these Partners.

In the Americas, our Conserva Aves programme is stepping up over the next 5 years to protect and restore over 1 million hectares, or 3,900 square miles, in 9 countries, to benefit both threatened endemic and migratory bird species. In Europe, we have been tirelessly campaigning to secure the world's first law to drive nature restoration. In the Pacific, we've launched a great new project to restore island ecosystems

vulnerable to both climate change and invasive alien species. In Africa, we've scoped ambitious new plans to restore the West African Guinean forests, one of just 35 of the planet's global hotspots for biodiversity. And, of course, protecting migratory birds remains core to our mission, with their flyways connecting nature, people and partners across countries and continents. We played a key role in activating two regional initiatives in Asia and the Americas, working with regional development banks. Finally, 2023 saw the close of our award-winning Migratory Soaring Birds project which helped mainstream nature into energy, agriculture, waste and ecotourism in the Middle East and North Africa.

We have a lot to do. The breadth of our actions around the planet is testament to our commitment to saving birds and nature. Yet, it is abundantly clear that collectively, society is failing to end the extinction and climate emergency. I want BirdLife around the world to be projecting hope and optimism that we can end the extinction and climate crisis.

It is a hope rooted in the ambitious projects above. It is optimism founded on our track record and the evidence that we can make things better. I urge you to fly with us on this journey in the year ahead. Thank you again for your support.

**Martin Harper, CEO of BirdLife International**



# ABOUT US

## We're a conservation organisation unlike any other

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### **We focus on birds: nature's early warning system.**

Birds react quickly when habitats are in trouble. They live in every environment and are a vital part of ecosystems that support people's health and livelihoods. So, when we protect and restore the most important places for birds, we make our planet safer for every living thing.

### **We're both grassroots and global.**

We're made up of 122 Partners on the ground – independent national organisations with local roots and knowledge. We're united by our international team, which strengthens, advocates and protects nature across borders. It makes us the world's biggest conservation partnership.

### **We're world leaders in conservation science.**

To make the greatest progress for our planet, we carry out groundbreaking research to understand threats to nature and how to tackle them. Combined with local knowledge, it guides our work, and helps other conservation organisations set their priorities, too.



# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



# 1,000,000

## stories sent to Members of the European Parliament

As part of the #RestoreNature campaign, we gathered more than 1 million stories and messages from citizens across Europe and delivered them to Members of the European Parliament.

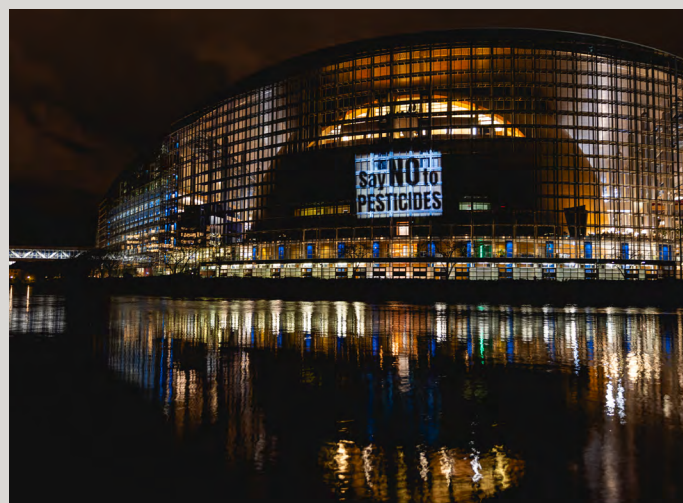


Image © The Left

# 7,500

## crucial habitats secured for migratory raptors



Steppe Eagle © Ondrej Prosky

▲ In collaboration with our BirdLife Partners, we contributed to getting more than 7,500 of the most important sites for migratory raptors across Africa-Eurasia to be recognised by governments at a key international meeting. It was a much-needed and timely win as more than a third of those raptor species are considered to be of global conservation concern and many more are in decline.

“ The momentous decision to secure more than 7,500 sites demonstrates that there really is commitment among governments to put in place measures to reach the targets agreed last year in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.”



**Nina Mikander**  
BirdLife's Global Director of Policy

# 450

## Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas designated between 2013 and 2023

The most important action for the greatest proportion of threatened birds is to effectively protect, safeguard and manage the most critical sites for their conservation – Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). We've worked alongside our BirdLife Partners to designate 450 IBAs as protected areas over the last 10 years.





Image © Rodrigo Calvo

# 12 COUNTRIES

## benefitted from our Conservation Leadership Programme

Working in partnership with Fauna & Flora International and the Wildlife Conservation Society, we provide grants, training, mentoring and internships to individuals who represent the future of conservation through the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP). In 2023, the programme supported 17 award-winning teams in 12 countries worldwide and trained 12 early-career conservationists in Conservation Management & Leadership skills.



Image © Mike Fernandez

# 30

## landscapes and seascapes identified for urgent conservation across the Americas

Together with our Partner Audubon and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, we launched the Americas Flyways Initiative at the 2023 Climate Week in New York. This innovative new initiative aims to identify over thirty critical landscapes and seascapes along the Americas flyways for urgent conservation, restoration, and management by local partners, communities, and Indigenous Peoples.



Image © Nature Rwanda

## 122 organisations joining forces

Our BirdLife Partnership grew to 122 organisations in 118 countries and territories in 2023 as we welcomed two new Affiliates, FPWC (Armenia) and PPNEA (Albania), and two new Partners, Nature Rwanda (Rwanda) and SOS-Forêts (Côte d'Ivoire), into our flock!



This news brings immense joy, marking a significant milestone that fills us with elation.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the BirdLife team for their unwavering support throughout this journey. We are truly grateful for the collaboration and are steadfast in our commitment to creating an even greater impact together."



**Jean Claude Dusabimana**  
Executive Director, Nature Rwanda



# PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

The loss of any species is a tragedy; beyond the beauty, richness and variety it brings to the world, biodiversity is what makes our planet tick. The disappearance of a single bird species can throw an ecosystem out of balance, from increasing agricultural pest populations to interrupting seed dispersal. The repercussions are far-reaching for both nature and people.

# 1 IN 5

MIGRATORY BIRDS AT RISK OF EXTINCTION



## Key 2023 Achievements

**We protect vulnerable birds worldwide and make sure common birds stay common. We monitor the populations of all bird species across the globe and act fast when numbers dip – by tackling threats and raising awareness.**

- Our scientists assessed the extinction risk for more than 500 birds as part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species update for 2023. This data is crucial in helping guide urgent conservation action across the world, especially for species that are in trouble.
- Our reaction to vulture numbers having plummeted by 99% in Asia involved lobbying against poisoning and creating Safe Zones to help populations recover. We have now expanded this approach to implement Safe Zones in Africa.
- We've established our KIWA INSPIRE project – a groundbreaking partnership across the Pacific to lead the way in creating climate resilience that benefits birds and people. Its work engaging local communities and managing the removal of invasive species across Fatu Hiva, Samoa and Fiji not only protects endangered endemic birds, it's building stronger, more sustainable livelihoods for Pacific Islanders.
- In 2023, we continued our work on bycatch – the phenomenon of fishing gear entangling birds, leading to their deaths. We built on our work to reduce bycatch by 98% in the Namibian long-line fishing fleet by raising awareness and implementing simple measures to prevent seabirds being caught on hooks or colliding with cables.



# PROTECTING THE MOST VITAL HABITATS

Looking after important habitats not only helps flora, fauna and local communities survive, it also keeps ecosystems healthy – providing clean water, air, food and livelihoods. Healthy habitats store vast amounts of carbon, so restoration helps counteract climate change, mitigating its effects and shielding communities from them.

# 8,000

**SQUARE KILOMETERS CONNECTED BY GREEN  
CORRIDORS AND KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS**

## Key 2023 Achievements

**From seascapes and wetlands to grasslands and rainforests, we identify and conserve crucial places for birds and nature. In total, we've pinpointed a network of more than 13,000 Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), forming the basis of 16,000 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).**

- Our Seabird Tracking Database data was used to identify six Marine Flyways – superhighway routes used by seabirds on their journeys around the world. We've continued to support protection of important seabird feeding grounds such as the NACES Marine Protected Area and played a key role expanding its protection to include the seafloor, benefiting other marine species including Loggerhead Turtles and Blue Whales.
- Together with our Partner Audubon and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, we presented the Americas Flyways Initiative at Climate Week in New York. A pioneering approach, it will drive a step-change in conservation across the Americas, safeguarding critical places for migratory birds, as well as benefiting local communities and indigenous people, and helping address the climate crisis on a vast scale.
- We completed the first phase of our Atlantic Forest Action Plan in 2023. Our BirdLife Partners in South America are now working to protect more than 700km<sup>2</sup> of Key Biodiversity Areas, buffer zones and 'green corridors' across a total area of 8,000km<sup>2</sup>, linking the landscape together for the benefit of threatened birds and other wildlife.



# MAKING HUMAN ACTIVITIES KINDER TO NATURE

**Unsustainable human systems are seriously damaging nature and the climate, while even renewable energy infrastructure has the potential to do more harm than good. Our human needs don't have to sacrifice the natural world. Indigenous Peoples have been using (and are still using) nature-based solutions for thousands of years.**



## Key 2023 Achievements

**Whether it's advising farmers about nature-friendly agriculture or supporting communities for sustainable forestry, we work with the private sector, financial institutions and local people to promote a carbon-neutral planet. We help industries put nature at the heart of their work, integrating conservation early in planning stages so it becomes intrinsic.**

- We've used our worldwide data to build AVISTEP – The Avian Sensitivity Tool for Energy Planning – a mapping tool to help wind and solar energy developers to find nature-safe locations and fast-track the change to renewable energy.
- We celebrated success in our campaign to ban the use of lead ammunition in wetlands across the EU. The new law will prevent the lives of roughly 1 million waterbirds being taken by lead poisoning in EU wetlands every year.
- We're spreading projects such as IBIS Rice to new areas – this wildlife-friendly project in south-east Asia involves farmers agreeing not to hunt, log or encroach upon the forest and grow their crop organically, in return for receiving a premium price for their rice.
- As part of the Guardians of the Sea project in Cabo Verde, we recruited and trained 130 fishers to properly handle marine megafauna bycatch, such as seabirds and sea turtles, and report fishing incidents including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.



# RALLYING SOCIETY TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION

Conservation on the ground cannot save the planet on its own – we must all stand united as a force for change. More than any other conservation organisation, BirdLife's local-to-global approach puts us in position to reach society at all levels and secure our planet's future.

# 1,000,000+

STORIES AND MESSAGES DELIVERED  
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## Key 2023 Achievements

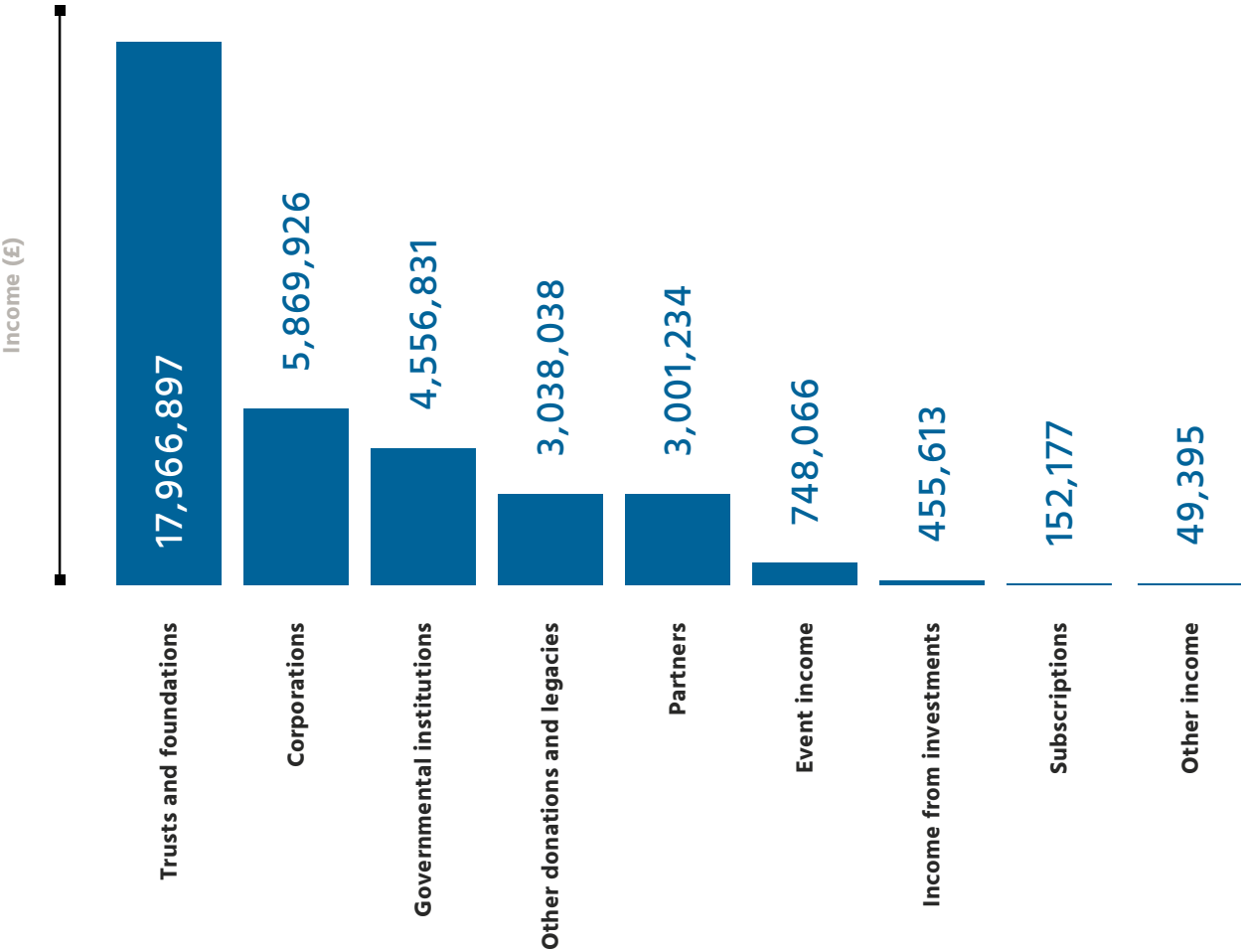
We work with 122 Partners in 118 countries on local projects to help nature and communities. We can quickly and efficiently mobilise the actions of our Partnership to create power for social change bigger than the sum of its parts. We amplify voices on the global stage to rally support for local issues, advocate for people and for nature in the face of the biodiversity loss and climate crisis.

- We teamed up with Avaaz, WWF, the European Environment Bureau and ClientEarth to run the #RestoreNature campaign, gathering more than one million stories and messages from citizens across Europe and delivering them to Members of the European Parliament. We successfully pushed the European Commission to develop a pioneering Nature Restoration Law to restore 20% of the continents nature by 2030.
- BirdLife was recognised as part of a coalition that won the prestigious 2023 United Nations Human Rights Prize for its essential role advocating the 1Planet1Right campaign for the United Nations to introduce a new Human Right – the right to a healthy environment.



# TOTAL INCOME

## £35,838,177



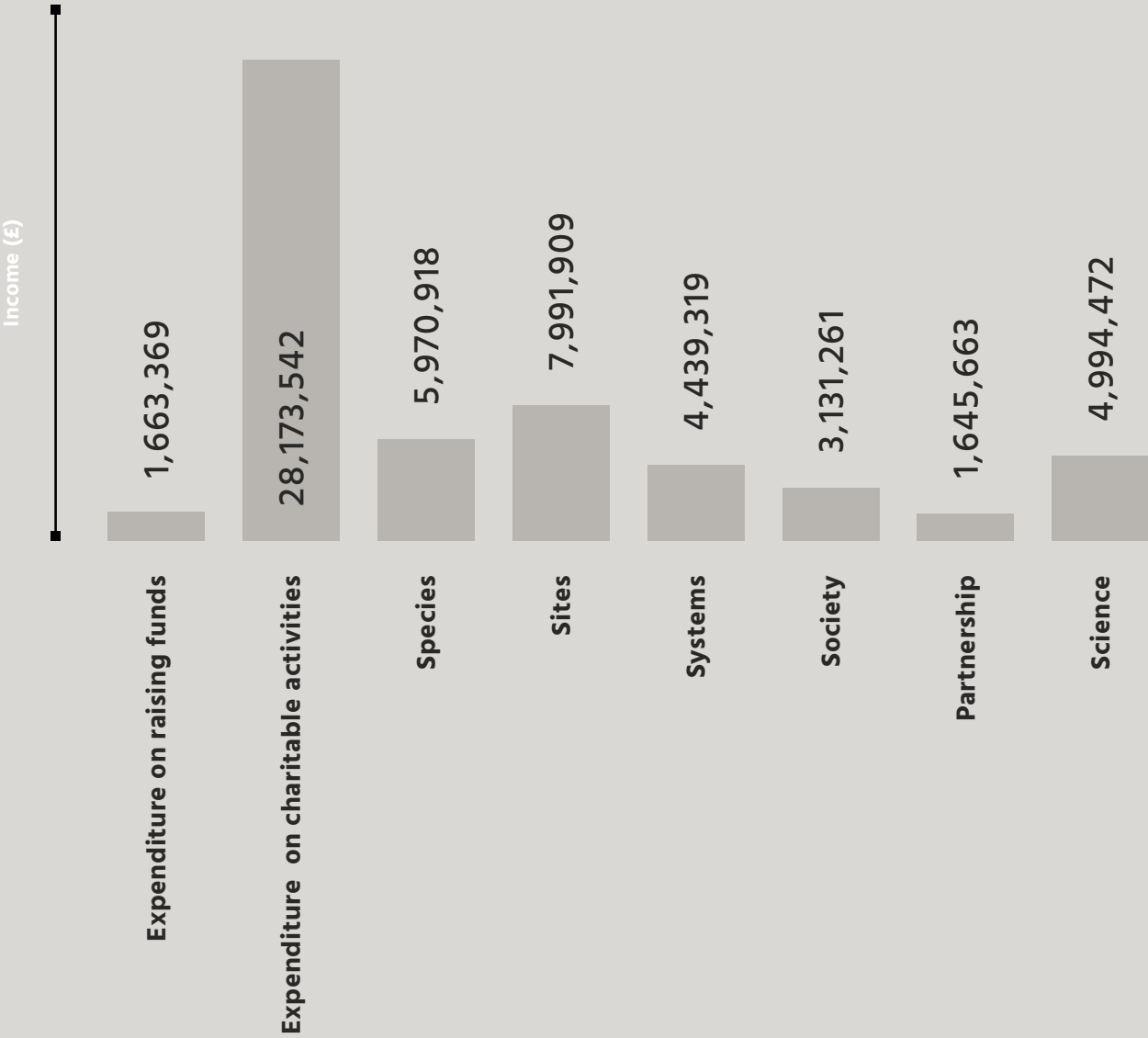
# UNRESTRICTED INCOME

## £4,067,996

Trusts and foundations	486,997
Corporations	25,449
Governmental institutions	339,757
Other donations and legacies	1,478,017
Partner organisations	315,845
Partner membership contributions	887,735
Event income	4,283
Income from investments	403,454
Subscriptions	112,474
Trading activities	13,219
Other income	766

# TOTAL EXPENDITURE

## £29,836,912







Listen to the full interview  
as part of the BirdLife  
Partnership Podcast

**Pedro Develey, director of SAVE Brasil – BirdLife’s Partner in Brazil**, explains the impact of our work and how it provides hope for the future:



Since I was very young, I’ve had a deep love for nature and animals, probably influenced by my father, who is a veterinarian. When I was about ten years old, I developed a fascination with parrots, especially large macaws. There’s no clear explanation for this; I’ve always loved animals, but parrots had a special allure for me. From the first day I started university, I was determined to work with birds and in bird conservation. It was something so important to me that I wanted to devote my time and energy to ensuring these incredible birds remained in the wild for everyone to experience.

One of the achievements I’m most proud of is the work we’ve done in the Atlantic Forest, particularly in northeastern Brazil. When I began working for SAVE Brasil and BirdLife in 2004, we purchased an area of the Atlantic Forest in north-east Brazil that was on the brink of destruction due to charcoal production. Nearly 20 years later, whenever I return to that

preserved forest, I feel a deep sense of accomplishment. Though the forest is only 5km<sup>2</sup>, it’s incredibly important. If I leave a legacy for conservation, I hope it will be the work we’ve done to save crucial forest tracts in northeast Brazil’s Atlantic Forest.

Seeing people transform their views on conservation is incredibly rewarding. We have excellent examples of this in Brazil and other countries. People who never thought about conservation or respecting the environment have, through education, realised its importance. In our grasslands project in Brazil, we’ve seen ranchers, who once focused solely on cattle raising, come to understand the value of native grasses and the birds that live in harmony with their cattle. This shift in perspective has led them to become real partners in our conservation efforts. Witnessing this transformation in ordinary people gives me hope—it’s possible to change the world and save it. There is still time, and we must believe in that.



THANK  
YOU

Our work protecting birds and nature around the world wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our supporters. They include:

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**Ideas that fly.**