



Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Boost for rare breeds and carbon sinks

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, the county's largest environmental charity - run by local people for the benefit of local wildlife, is delighted to announce that the Access Foundation has awarded the Trust £5000 towards wetlands maintenance across the county providing a boost for rare breeds and carbon sinks.

Wetlands are crucial to our existence, providing valuable services for our environment and helping to moderate the effects of climate change. They are beautiful places for people's wellbeing, enabling them to enjoy being immersed in nature, whether bird watching, walking or just taking time out. Not just for wildlife habitats.

The Trusts' nature reserves along both the Trent and Idle include the much-loved Attenborough Nature Reserve in the south of the county, the Trusts largest nature reserve, Idle Valley Nature Reserve in the north with Besthorpe more centrally located and Skylarks on the Trent too.

Historically, the Trent and Idle valleys have been ecologically important floodplains with complex mosaics of wetland habitats. Extensive ponds, lakes, marshes, reed beds, wet grassland, wet woodland and fen wet grasslands, marsh and reed beds hosted abundant wildlife, with huge flocks of water birds, fish, eels, and abundant invertebrates, attracting otters and water voles. It has long been and still is an important route for people and migratory birds. Cranes are now repopulating parts of the Humberhead levels & are occasional visitors on the reserves. The Trust hopes to attract them more often with the support of this grant and the work involved including scrub management.

Without scrub management in reed beds, they quickly become unsuitable for bitterns and hunting marsh harriers, unmanaged wet grassland quickly reverts to scrub, which stops the rarest waders, such as redshank, from breeding there.

Without functioning wetlands in the landscape, society must undertake costly efforts to replicate their natural services—or to address the consequences of not having them.

Sadly, 90% of the UK's wetlands have disappeared in the last 100 years, and we have lost a staggering 45% of reed bed habitat, one of the richest carbon sink areas. Rising temperatures coupled with the potential loss of coastal habitats means that inland wetlands are now more than ever important habitats for wildlife.

Improved habitats with regular maintenance can provide greater biodiversity alongside water control and reed beds as carbon sinks. Controlling the flow of water, particularly where reedbeds are situated, will help retain carbon more effectively.

The Trust also aims to double the area of turtle dove swards on the reserves & on adjoining farmlands. Scarification of field margins, coupled with reseeding will see an increase of good new feeding habitat for the rare turtle doves. The mix used is expensive but consists of essential plant species that provide optimal food for turtle doves. In time, with the work the Trust is doing both on their own wetland reserves & with local farmers & other landowners, it is hoped to see

the turtle dove population expand, reversing its downward trend in Nottinghamshire at least.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trusts' nature reserves act as important 'green lungs' to local communities and attract well over half a million visitors each year. As well as bird watchers, other nature enthusiasts and dog walkers, they are places where families can enjoy time together, where friends can meet and others just to seek moments of solitude.

Erin McDaid - Head of Communications & Marketing at the Trust stated, "Over the past century, 90% of the UK's wetlands have been degraded or lost - but over the past sixty years Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has helped protect and enhance amazing wetland sites across the county that now serve as havens for both wildlife and people wanting to connect with nature.

Maintaining and enhancing these sites is a 365-day challenge requiring significant resources. The support of the Access Foundation provides a real boost by helping ensure that our staff and volunteers have the tools and equipment they require and enabling us to plan both management and restoration work to benefit rare and threatened species such as bitterns, turtle dove and red shank. Their support will also help ensure that our nature reserves remain accessible and welcoming to visitors keen to learn about, connect with and act for nature."

Rob Parkinson, Trustee at The Access Foundation, said:

"We are delighted to support Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust with this grant, awarded as part of our employee-nominated pillar, which champions causes that are personally meaningful to Access Group employees. It's fantastic to be able to back a project that not only protects and enhances vital wetland habitats but also delivers lasting environmental benefits such as biodiversity recovery and carbon capture. We're proud to play a small part in helping these important landscapes thrive for both wildlife and local communities."

kind regards

Rachel Rutherford (She/her)

Communications and Marketing Manager

Tel: 0115 958 8242

Mobile: 07519633236

www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org

Article received 12th April, 2026