

# Annual Review 2014



## **Saving the small things that run the planet**



Canvey Wick © Steven Falk

## A word from Matt Shardlow, CEO;



© Helen Shardlow

We made great progress conserving bugs in 2014. This was exemplified by the publication of the UK's 'National Pollinator Strategy', the launch of the first National Bug Reserve, the spread of B-Lines across Northern England, the rediscovery of two endangered species – the Pashford pot beetle and Royal splinter crane fly. We also saw the delivery of projects across the UK to 'Get Britain Buzzing', in Scotland to restore peat bogs, and on the island of St. Helena to save its exotic and endangered wildlife.

Our work is in the context of growing concern about our failing ecosystems and particularly the loss of pollinators. Combined with growing concern about the levels of pesticides in ponds and rivers there is an urgent need to increase efforts to save pollinators and freshwater life. In our favour is the public mood - 85% of people are concerned about bee declines – it's the most pressing environmental concern in the UK.



## Tansy beetle

Despite its opulent appearance, bearing a sheen emerald exterior, the Tansy beetle hasn't had the easiest of pasts. Once widespread in Britain, the Tansy beetle is now a conservation priority species in the UK. It was believed to hold only one last remaining stronghold on a 30km stretch of the banks of the River Ouse in York. However, great news came this summer when it was discovered in Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire; a wetland site where the beetle was believed extinct since 1973. Since the discovery, we've been working hard with the Tansy Beetle Action Group to secure Tansy beetle populations by re-introducing it to another site in Cambridgeshire, Wicken Fen Nature Reserve.



© Richard Aspinall



Shrill carder bee (*Bombus sylvarum*) © Steven Falk

## Canvey Wick Bug Reserve

After nearly 10 years, the 'brownfield rainforest' Canvey Wick, was opened as Buglife's (and Britain's) first ever brownfield bug reserve! Canvey Wick is an abandoned oil refinery in Essex, reclaimed by nature and now home to over 1,400 invertebrates. Among the rare and endangered species finding refuge there are the Shrill carder bee and the Canvey Island ground beetle. The site was opened to an excitable public by adventurer and bug enthusiast Steve Backshall in September. He gave an impassioned talk, before taking kids on a torch lit bug hunt. Owned by The Land Trust, Canvey Wick is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest and holds a bright future. We're working with the RSPB to manage the site for its amazing bugs.

## National Pollinator Strategy

It's been an important year for our bees following the launch of our Pollinator Manifesto in spring at the House of Commons, attended by over 100 key influencers. In November, the Government launched a National Pollinator Strategy for England, which includes many of our recommendations, but sadly doesn't go far enough to end the alarming declines of wild pollinators.

Species Champion Angus Macdonald MSP, secured a debate on pollinators in the Scottish Parliament and we've been working with partners in Wales to implement the Wales Action Plan for Pollinators.

We've also been intervening in a court case by Syngenta and Bayer against the European Commission, supporting the Commission in their decision to restrict the use of neonicotinoids due to their harmful effects on bees.

For the first time pollinators have enjoyed a high profile in Government and with the public. 57% of a public poll said if they could save just one species, it would be the bee.

## Bugs on the Brink

2014 has been incredibly busy for our St Helena Bugs on the Brink project, aiming to kick start invertebrate conservation in one of the most diverse places for bugs. With over 400 unique species, found nowhere else in the world, there is a lot to do!

Key achievements so far include engaging nearly 500 children at events ranging from careers fairs to bug hunts to formal education sessions, as well as publishing St Helena's first set of Red Listed species in November. This is part of the work we're doing to highlight the plight of St Helena's endemic bugs and focus conservation efforts. We've been working out extinction risks using guidelines from the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.



© Liza Fowler



## Buglife in Wales

Since our last annual update we have officially landed in Wales, with a Conservation Officer based in Cardiff. The expansion is great news in terms of propelling the importance of bugs into the heart of Welsh policy and conservation by developing new partnerships and projects. Much progress has been made with our on-going West Glamorgan Stepping Stones project. Summer survey work at Tata Steel in Port Talbot led to the discovery of a number of priority species, including the Dingy skipper butterfly. Monitoring and further habitat management work will edge us closer to our goal of restoring 48 hectares of brownfield habitat in South Wales.

## B-Lines

B-lines are making national progress, as we map their way throughout the UK. An innovative and beautiful solution to pollinators habitat loss, B-Lines promote the creation of a network of flower-rich ribbons across our countryside, towns and cities - linking together the best of our existing wildlife areas for pollinators. They have already been mapped in the North of England, South West and London, with plans underway to branch into Norfolk and Suffolk. As well as complementing the Government's National Pollinator Strategy, B-Lines ultimately bring wildlife, nature and the hum of pollinators into our daily lives.



© Richard Smith

## Scottish Seashell Survey

We launched our Scottish Seashell Survey this year, encouraging people to visit the seashore and record what they found; a fantastic day out and a great opportunity to see interesting creatures up-close! The survey has been popular with families, schools and community groups, so much so that the UK-wide Seashell Survey is due to start in 2015.

## J-Crew Bee Tee's

In September J-Crew's London stores shelves were adorned with beautiful 'Bee Tee's'. As well as looking great, these T-shirts championed the importance of bees, and 50% of the proceeds from every one sold were donated to Buglife. They certainly created a Buzz, selling out straight away! A new range of pollinator focused attire was launched in spring 2015.



© J-Crew

## South West Bees Report

The first regional conservation report for threatened bees found that of 23 at risk species in the region, 3 are thought to be extinct. We worked alongside local entomologists to survey selected species, study their ecology and assess the condition of their habitats. Findings also included the first Dartmoor record of the Tormentil mining bee in 41 years! However, habitats have generally declined through inappropriate management due to a lack of awareness of our threatened bees. We are now working with site managers to raise awareness of the bees and their needs, including the publication of a Species Management Sheet for the Tormentil mining bee based on our survey findings.



Tormentil mining bee (*Andrena tarsata*) © Steven Falk

# Our Vision



A wildlife-rich planet where species, including invertebrates, thrive alongside people.

**Our Mission:** To achieve sustainable populations and stop the extinction of invertebrates.

We will accomplish this by protecting, improving and expanding their habitats and strengthening the respect given to bug species by:-

- Mobilising, inspiring, enabling and persuading others to take action, through the development and dissemination of knowledge and values.
- Undertaking practical conservation projects.
- Promoting the value of invertebrates and raising awareness about the challenges to their survival.
- Shaping the development of relevant legislation and policy.

Twitter followers:

**20K**



Projects ending in 2014 worked with over

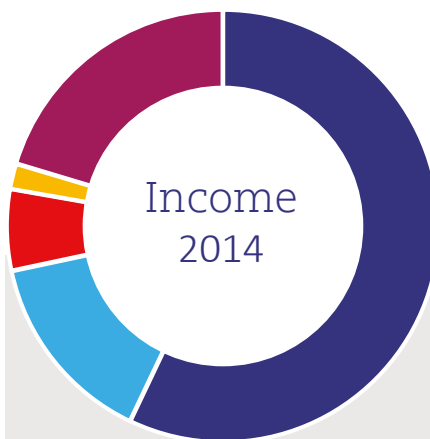
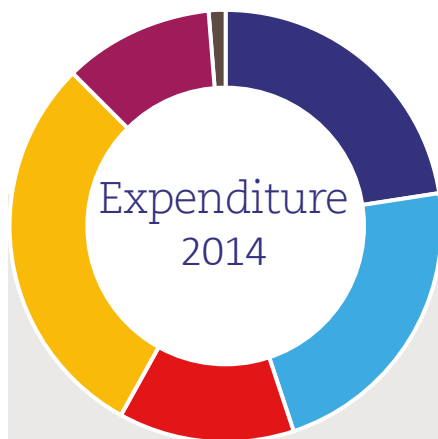
**480**

volunteers



**8,014**

people directly engaged at events



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And a special thank you to all of our members, volunteers and Trustees.

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