



Our strategy to 2030

**WETLANDS
ARE
THE
WAY**



WE ARE WWNT

We are the wetland restoration charity

We're on a mission to restore wetlands because they are a wondrous solution to the problems our world faces. Together we will unlock their power – and help nature burst back to life. Because when wetlands flourish, all life will flourish.

A photograph of a frog in a wetland pond with reeds. The frog is in the water, and its reflection is visible. The background is a soft-focus wetland scene with reeds and water.

WE'RE ON A MISSION TO RESTORE WETLANDS AND UNLOCK THEIR POWER

We all know our natural world is in crisis. But at WWT, we also know there's a solution. You'll find it wherever water meets land.

Our vision is a world where healthy wetland nature thrives and enriches lives. To bring this vision to life, WWT is changing.

Just like our founder, Sir Peter Scott, we're dedicated to finding solutions and inspiring change. But to respond to the magnitude of today's challenges, we need to do even more. Our world and way of life cannot survive without nature – and nature cannot survive without wetlands. We need to accelerate the pace of wetland restoration and reverse the loss of this valuable habitat.

What people expect from organisations like ours is changing too.

This strategy builds on our long history of delivering evidence-based conservation to protect wetlands and the wonderful species that rely on them, and creating opportunities for people to see and enjoy wetland nature first hand at our sites. We've commissioned research and consulted with our supporters, employees, volunteers and partners to help shape the approach we are taking.

We'll break new ground with our research and build broader partnerships that deliver action at scale. We'll inspire a movement for change with a bolder, louder voice and by creating new opportunities for people to get involved.

Our planet is changing. To save wetlands and the world, we must change with it.

WETLANDS ARE A WONDROUS SOLUTION

At the place where land meets water, exists a unique ecosystem. From saltmarshes to city streams, peatlands to floodplains, wetlands are truly wondrous. They might look like still waters, but these mysterious places are teeming with life, rebirth and activity.

20%

of all the world's 'ecosystem carbon' are stored in peatlands and coastal wetlands

10

minutes in a wetland can boost positive feelings

Wetlands are among the most biodiverse habitats on Earth. 40% of the world's wildlife depends on them for homes and food. We depend on wetlands too – for the food we eat, the water we drink, the wildlife we love and so much more.

And in the fight against the climate crisis, we are learning that wetlands are powerful weapons of mass creation. Saltmarsh and other coastal wetlands are hotspots for carbon storage – in the long-term, they bury carbon 40 times faster than forests. Wetlands can also shelter us from the climate change impacts of floods and drought.

They can purify our water. They enhance our mood and offer a space for healthy outdoor activity. They're a part of our story and have been throughout history. And they are a lifeline to multiple declining and threatened species.

Being near wetlands has been shown to be good for our physical and mental wellbeing, giving lots of chances for recreation. Where wetlands thrive, life thrives. Where wetlands are, lives are enriched.

And right now, wetlands need us.



WETLANDS ARE DRYING OUT

From deadly heatwaves and devastating floods to sewage-filled rivers and dramatic nature loss, we're already witnessing the destruction a changing climate and unsustainable development has on people and on wildlife. The world is crying out for our help. And the window for global action is closing.

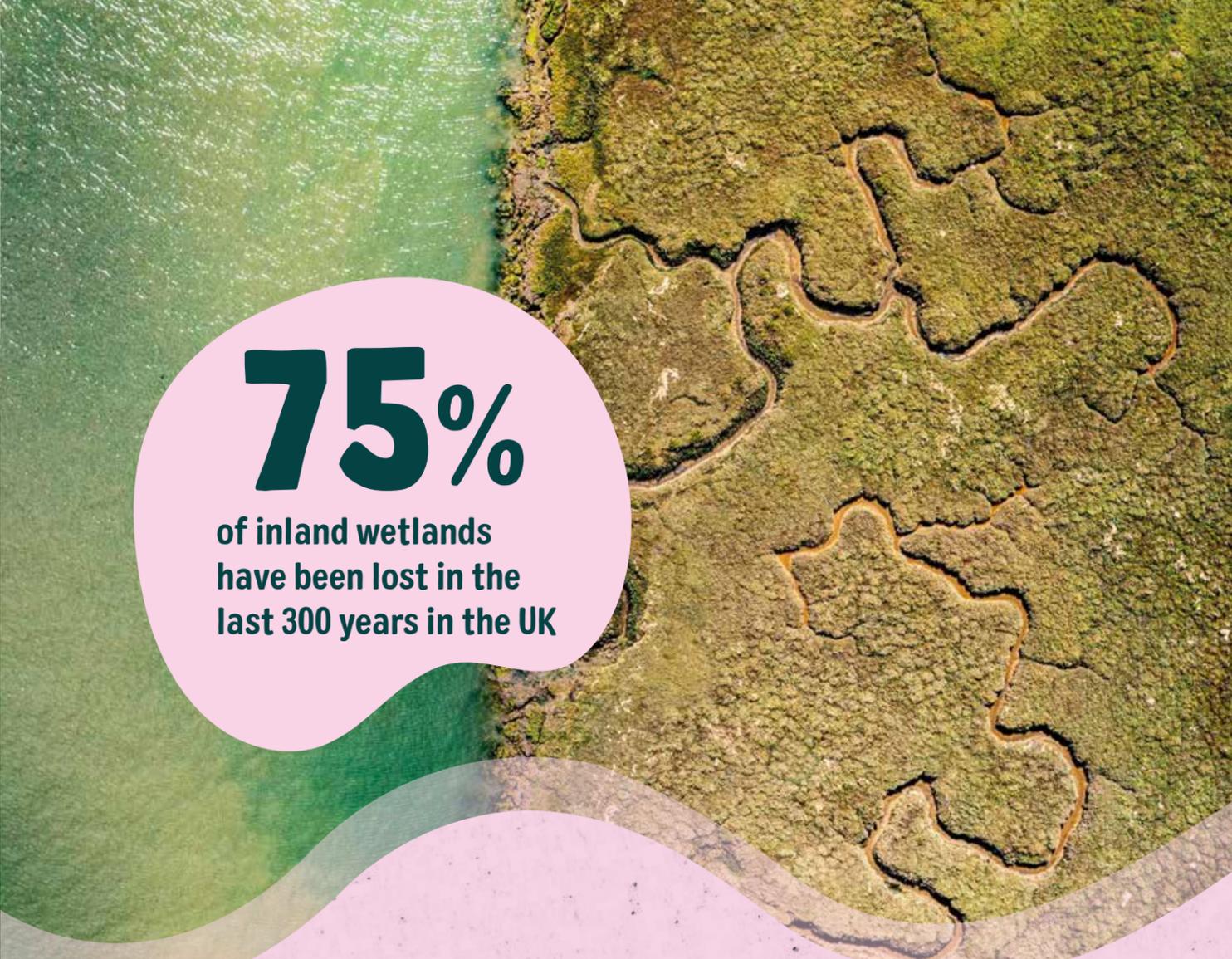
In 2022, WWF's Living Planet Report told us that nothing short of transformational change is needed to tackle the biodiversity crisis. And despite being a natural solution to many of our problems, we are losing wetlands at a staggering rate.

These superpowered ecosystems are vanishing three times faster than forests. 35% of the globe's wetlands have been destroyed between 1970 and 2015. And in the UK, our landscape is, quite simply, drying out. 75% of wetlands are gone and much of what is left is in poor condition.

These wildlife-teeming, flood-buffering, water-purifying, mood-lifting, carbon-sinking habitats need our help.

For too long, these complex habitats have been misunderstood and overlooked. In 2023, less than half of people in the UK understood what a wetland is. We need that to change.

At WWT, we know wetlands have the potential to solve some of the world's biggest challenges – and we have the evidence to prove it.



75%

of inland wetlands have been lost in the last 300 years in the UK

By flowing water back into our landscapes, we can help nature to recover and bring resilience into our lives and livelihoods.

That's why we're on a mission to restore wetlands and unlock their power – and empower everyone to do the same.

Together with our partners and supporters, and backed by research, we can speed up nature's survival by:

- **Restoring bigger, better, more connected wetlands**
- **Protecting our most important wetlands and their thriving nature**
- **Inspiring people to join us in our work and make change happen**

The time for wetlands is now.

WE WILL LEAD THE WAY

For over seven decades, WWT has sought solutions, fixed problems and inspired change. We have protected wetlands and saved wetland species. It's in our DNA.

This heritage is why WWT is known as the birthplace of modern conservation.

But, like the wildlife we protect, we too need to adapt if we're to change attitudes, win hearts and restore wetlands like our lives depend on it. Because they do.

In today's world we need to re-imagine what pioneering conservation looks like – and the role we play in tomorrow's conservation history.

To continue to be that beacon of hope and optimism in today's world, we will focus on three key areas to deliver our strategy to 2030.

With ground-breaking research, we will solve problems

Wetlands can change the world. Through our pioneering research, we will build the case for wetland restoration to drive nature's recovery and as national and international critical blue infrastructure. We need to develop and test innovative financial models to fund landscape-scale wetland restoration.

We will:

- Research and build the evidence for, and find the best ways to restore, wetlands and key wetland species
- Trial, evaluate and find breakthrough solutions to deliver wetland restoration that are viable, replicable and scalable

Forging partnerships with others, we will drive action

We bring life, and we need to partner with those who can, and will, work with us to actively restore wetlands. This will mean creating new partnerships at a scale we've not seen before. Globally, we need to build the skills of a new generation of wetland conservationists who can act for the future restoration, creation and protection of this incredible habitat.

We will:

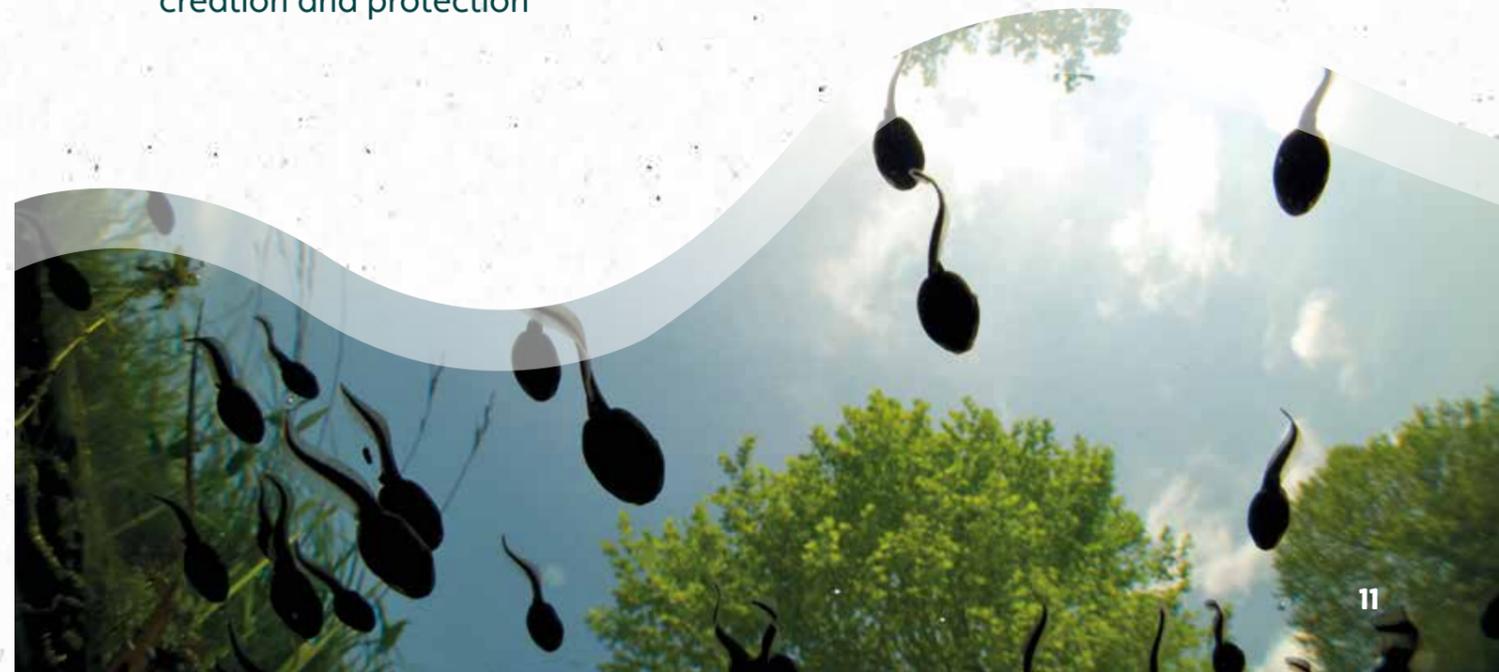
- Actively restore wetlands at scale, working with partners and communities in the UK and globally, and recover the species that depend on them
- Protect and restore wetlands at our ten WWT sites to maximise biodiversity, increase their resilience to climate change and connect them with their wider landscapes
- Share, advise and build a movement of global wetland conservationists, engineers and decision makers who can act for wetland restoration, creation and protection

By speaking up for change, we will inspire others to take action

Wetlands are bound up in our wellbeing, our wildlife and our future. Our sites are the windows into our world, we need to re-imagine them as centres of inspiration, connection and action. We need to find new ways to engage with new and different audiences to support our work. This means having a clearer, bolder and more compelling voice to move people and drive action where they live and work.

We will:

- Create experiences at our sites, and in the places people live and work, that create joy, connection and inspiration
- Build a bigger community of people who care about and understand wetlands and take action with us for these amazing habitats
- Speak boldly and with confidence, making wetlands relevant to everyone and championing their restoration





CHANGE IS NEEDED

With stubborn optimism, scientific evidence and practical action, we are changing our focus. To protect wetland species, we need to restore and protect the extraordinary spaces that these species call home. Because we know that by restoring habitats, we can protect more wildlife, and support the future of all life on earth.

40%

of the world's wildlife
depend on wetlands

We need to share our expertise and speak up for wetlands and the many creatures that live in them and rely on them. And we need to let everyone in on the secret.

That wetlands can change the world.

But to do so, they need to become the go-to solution to the many crises our natural world is facing.

To accelerate the pace of wetland restoration and keep hold of the wetlands we have left, we need to bring about these changes in the world.

- More people valuing and campaigning loudly for wetlands as solutions to building resilience to floods and drought, storing carbon, purifying water, boosting biodiversity and improving lives

- Public policies that recognise the power of wetlands as the clear, nature-based, solution to the immediate climate, biodiversity and wellbeing crises

- New financial mechanisms created for more, and sustainable, investment in wetland restoration because of the return on investment it creates for nature, climate and society

- Greater understanding of wetlands, increase in skills and creation of jobs to allow people to take action for wetlands where they live and work

OUR AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Our long-term ambitions set out the change we want to see by 2050. And to make sure we stay on track, we've set out clear targets for delivery by 2030.

RESTORE

Bigger, better, more connected wetlands



INSPIRE

More people to value, act for and benefit from wetlands

THRIVE

WWT will become a more thriving, sustainable and effective organisation



RESTORE. BIGGER, BETTER, MORE CONNECTED WETLANDS

By 2050:

- 🌐 We'll have a bigger, better and more connected network of wetlands, with over 100,000 hectares of new and restored wetland habitat in the UK
- 🌐 All UK Ramsar wetland sites will be protected, and in good condition that supports wetland species
- 🌐 One million hectares of wetlands will have been improved globally through locally-led action in our priority hotspots around the world

How we will do it:

Combining passion with cutting-edge research and conservation expertise, we'll find the best ways to restore wetlands, understand their value, and share our knowledge with others who want to take action. In the UK, we will work with landowners, farmers, developers, governments, scientists, financiers, the private sector and the public. In our global hotspots, we will support community-led actions to protect both livelihoods and important local wetlands. Together, we'll give time, investment, and dedication to restoring wetlands and the wildlife that live in them.

By 2030, we will:

- 🌐 Have created and restored over 20,000 hectares of wetlands
- 🌐 Have established at least three self-sustaining populations of wetlands species through conservation activity that also drives wetland creation and restoration
- 🌐 Have increased the wetlands we manage to over 9,000 hectares (from 6,900) and ensure all of our sites burst with life
- 🌐 Be working with local communities to identify and reduce pressures faced by our most important wetlands in global hotspots*
- 🌐 Be mobilising on the ground networks to drive wetland conservation action at a local level in global hotspots*

- 🌐 In the UK
- 🌐 Internationally

* Our global hotspots include East Asian intertidal wetlands, Cambodian Mekong Delta, freshwater lakes of Madagascar and the coastal wetlands of East Atlantic Flyway (focussing on West Africa).

1M

hectares of wetland will be improved globally by 2050

This is why we will do it:

We'll do this for a future where wetlands provide homes for amazing species, improve water quality, tackle climate change, build flood resilience and support livelihoods. Nature always provides the answers we need, but too often we try to control and constrain it. Wetlands offer so many incredible solutions for the future. When they flourish, all life will flourish, too.





Investing in wetlands

As confidence in measuring the value of wetland benefits grows, so does our optimism. As new markets emerge, transformational sums of private capital will be unlocked to restore and create wetlands.

The opportunity to invest is already changing the way we think about how our landscapes function and how we support communities and businesses that depend on it. Our evidence-based planning work identifies areas where such investment should take place. For example, with Aviva's support of £21 million, we will be creating wildlife-rich saltmarsh habitat that reduces flood risk, captures carbon, enhances biodiversity and improves public wellbeing.

As the evidence builds, so will the confidence of those in a position to invest in the future of wetlands – and the future of us all.

Sharing our expertise

We already offer wetland and wetland species advice to a wide range of organisations, but to enable us to work with a wider range of partners, we'll develop new services and sources of advice. We will share our expertise and practical experience with organisations that share our vision and would like help to restore wetlands or develop new ones.

We also plan to seek funding to build a team of wetland advisors who can offer free advice to community groups and wetland champions so we can restore, protect and manage wetlands at a grassroots level.

Backed by science

Building on our standing as a leader in evidence-based conservation, we have plans for an international centre for wetland restoration science. Our world-class science will place wetland restoration at the heart of global nature recovery.

We will work with scientists around the world, to better understand the value healthy wetlands can deliver for people and nature, as well as identifying barriers to successful wetland restoration. This will be used to provide compelling evidence of 'what works' to share with those who need it. Above all, we'll deliver impact: clearly communicated science that highlights the value of wetlands and provides solutions to the challenges we all face.



Aviva's
support of

£21M

means we can create wildlife-rich saltmarsh habitat

INSPIRE. MORE PEOPLE TO VALUE, ACT FOR AND BENEFIT FROM WETLANDS

1M

people in the UK will be taking action for wetlands by 2050

By 2050:

- 🌍 A movement of one million people in the UK will be taking action for wetlands where they live and work
- 🌍 25,000 conservationists, from grass roots to governments, will be delivering impactful wetland conservation worldwide

How we will do it:

We will create experiences for people that nurture a deeper connection and understanding of wetlands at our sites and engage with communities to protect and restore their local wetlands. We will make our work inspiring, accessible and easy to understand – and show how anyone can play their part, wherever they live, work or study. We will build skills and create tools to help people around the globe to take action. When it comes to policy and governmental change, we will speak up for wetlands and make ourselves heard at every opportunity.

We'll encourage everyone to see wetlands like we do – as a solution to the crises our planet, wildlife and society faces.

By 2030, we will:

- 🌍 Have welcomed one million people to engage with wetland landscapes and the species that live at our sites each year. Every visitor will have the chance to enjoy a diverse range of experiences and activities and be inspired to take action
- 🌍 Have seen public understanding of wetlands, why they're important and the issues they face increase from 15% to 30%
- 🌍 Have built a movement of 400,000 people to speak up for wetlands, take action where they live, work and study, to champion wetlands and create a network of healthy wetlands in towns, in the countryside and on the coast



- 🌍 Have shaped public policy and funding streams to support the delivery of 100,000 hectares of newly restored wetlands and the protection and recovery of all Ramsar sites
- 🌍 Have worked with wetland conservationists around the world to improve knowledge of wetland management, stakeholder engagement, influencing policy and the ways in which wetlands deliver nature-based solutions to enable them to be effective in their regions
- 🌍 Have motivated government officials worldwide to champion the wetlands agenda

This is why we will do it:

Because we share our founder's belief that the most effective way to save the natural world is to inspire people to fall in love with it – with its beauty and its reality. By creating a global community of dedicated conservationists and vocal nature lovers – from members of the public to policy makers and global leaders – we will restore wetlands and unlock their power.

External voice

We have already begun work to raise the profile and importance of wetlands with new audiences. To increase our impact we will speak with a louder, bolder voice and build coalitions to help campaign for change. We will empower people to take action wherever they live, work and study and create more opportunities for them to join us to take action on the ground. We will create new volunteering opportunities to help us map, monitor and restore wetlands in local communities, as well as at our sites, and use technology to connect people in different communities together.

10 wetland sites inspire people to love wetlands as much as we do

Windows to our world

At our ten incredible wetland sites, we inspire people to love wetlands as much as we do. As WWT evolves, so must our sites as we look at new ways to attract a wider range of people and enable them all to connect with wetland nature through the interactions they have on our sites.

Each site has its own unique character, and we'll develop new spaces and new exhibits that are relevant to the local landscape and community it is part of. Wherever the site and whoever the visitor, we'll use the magic of storytelling and the delight of interaction to connect everyone to our cause. Every visit is a chance to develop people's love for wetlands, understand why they matter and empower them to take action, through volunteering, advocating or creating wetlands where they live and work, or supporting WWT's work financially.

Building knowledge around the world

Our digital Wetland Learning Hub will equip professionals working in and around wetlands, with the necessary skills and knowledge to influence and shape the future for wetlands.

Capacity building in this sector is hard to find. And many conservationists have never received any training in wetland conservation.

Developed with experts from across the global wetland community, our pilot course on Wetland Health and Vitality attracted 350 applicants from 45 countries. To further the reach, we'll be developing regional hubs to deliver regionally-relevant content in workshop settings.

350

applicants across 45 countries attended our pilot course on Wetland Health and Vitality

THRIVE. BECOME A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION

We have big ambitions for 2050. But to achieve them, we need to change as an organisation. This ambition requires us to look inwards and push ourselves to be better. It looks at how, in the long-term, we will:

- Become a financially resilient and sustainable organisation, able to invest in innovation and capable of delivering at scale
- Become a diverse workplace, filled with empowered and engaged people. Lead by example, living up to our values and having impact and influence externally

How we will do it:

We will look at new and innovative ways of working and increasing our teams' skills. We'll use technology to make changes that have the most immediate impact first. We will build skills and opportunities that allow people to take action for wetlands. We'll develop our relationships with our supporters, policy makers and partners. We will work collaboratively with our colleagues and our external partners – sharing our knowledge and expertise at every opportunity.

We will be an organisation filled with doers. And we will value diversity, encourage innovation, empower teams and create a workplace that others want to join.

By 2030, we will:

- Have built a more diverse workforce, which recommends WWT as a good place to work and volunteer
- Have reduced our gender pay gap and built on our flexible working offer
- Have healthy finances, with free reserves and operational surpluses enabling us to invest in new ideas to deliver our ambitions
- Have increased our external profile and see 250,000 people donating to support our work each year
- Have transformed our business operations and infrastructure to become a digital first organisation

- Reached our net-zero targets by reducing our emissions and rebalancing through natural solutions at our sites and waterscapes; and the water environment where we operate will have improved

This is why we will do it:

This isn't an easy task. To restore 100,000 hectares of wetlands in the UK, or protect one million hectares in our global hotspots, we need people by our side. A movement of one million taking action for wetlands in the places they live, work and play isn't going to happen without a lot of hard work and dedication from those within and support from those who already know us. We need to be bold enough to live by our values, putting sustainability at our core and leading the way in our field of expertise.

We need everyone who works for, and with, WWT, to share a common vision and understand the important role that they each play. We also need to represent the people that wetlands benefit. And that's everyone, because the wondrous solutions they provide are for everyone.



Funding the future

We cannot deliver our ambitions without sustainable sources of income. We also know that the scale and urgency of the nature and climate emergencies mean that we need to access funds quickly so we can respond to external events and opportunities.

Our visitors and supporters play a vital role in ensuring we can continue our work and we are immensely thankful to them all. We will continually review how we keep them up to date about our work to ensure it is informative, engaging and environmentally sustainable. We will invest to broaden our supporter base, and continue to develop ways to diversify our income streams, including innovative new funding mechanisms for wetland restoration.

These approaches will enable us to fund wetland restoration at a transformational scale and engage more people to take action for wetlands.

A charity for everyone

Diversity, inclusion and belonging in our working environment is vital if we're to realise our vision of a world where healthy wetlands thrive and enrich lives. We know we have more work to do to have a diverse workforce who feel empowered, engaged, motivated and treated with dignity and respect.

We will welcome future conservationists and transform into a more inclusive and diverse employer that better represents contemporary society. For example, through work experience, apprenticeships and student placements, we'll get better at engaging with young people from a range of backgrounds and reach out to those who wouldn't ordinarily be able to consider a career in conservation while tackling recruitment and retention challenges.

We will reach our

NET-ZERO

operational emission targets by 2030



WE ARE WWT



Our natural world is in trouble. But, at WWT, we know there's a wondrous solution. You'll find it wherever water meets land.

Wetlands are super-powered ecosystems. But we are losing them at a staggering rate. These wildlife-teeming, flood-buffering, water-purifying, mood-lifting, carbon-sinking habitats need our help.

That's why we're on a mission to restore wetlands and empower everyone to do the same. From getting muddy outdoors and taking action, to forming partnerships at a scale we've not seen before and rallying governments worldwide, we're leading the way. We're sharing the wonders of wetlands and building a global community of nature lovers who will champion wetlands and help wildlife bounce back.

WWT is a charity that is actively restoring wetlands in the UK and globally. But we can't do it alone. Every action we take together, large or small, will help wetlands burst with life once more. Because when wetlands flourish, all life will flourish.

We'd love to hear from you

If you have questions about our new direction and ambitions, or would like to be more involved, you can contact:

enquiries@wwt.org.uk

Thank you for your support.



© WWT 2023. Registered charity no. 1030884 England and Wales, SC039410 Scotland.

Printed on 100% recycled material, in a factory powered by renewable energy, using a 100% waterless process and sending 0% waste to landfill. 100% recyclable.

