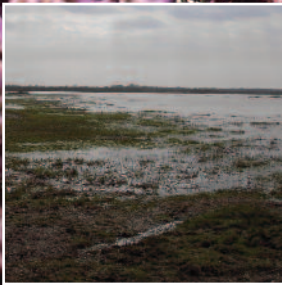




# Wildlife Habitat Trust

25th Anniversary | 1986 - 2011





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Over the 25 years that I have been a trustee I have seen a wide range of applications for help. Some, from large clubs, are ambitious and professionally presented; others come from smaller clubs who may lack expertise but compensate for this with enthusiasm for a small but vital project. Large or small, wherever there is a genuine case we try to give practical help because by maintaining flyways and refuges we can ensure the long-term sustainability of our sport.

“These projects demonstrate shooting’s great commitment to conservation and it is your support for the WHT that makes them possible. Our achievements are your achievements and they are something the whole shooting community can be proud of.”

Simon Cussons,  
WHT trustee





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## WHT 25th anniversary

Over a hundred years ago the Wildfowling Association of Great Britain and Ireland (WAGBI) was formed by a small group of wildfowling clubs who were concerned about the drainage and destruction of wildfowl habitat and the loss of access to coastal marshes by wildfowling clubs.

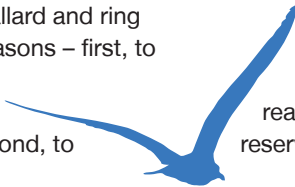
Concern for wildfowl conservation has remained at the heart of WAGBI and BASC ever since. In the 1950s many of our local wildfowling clubs were formed, and these were encouraged to rear mallard and ring and release them for two reasons – first, to inculcate respect for quarry as an internationally shared migratory resource and, second, to

establish the principle of “putting something back”.

At the same time the first wildfowl refuges were being set up. But WAGBI and the clubs soon recognised that to conserve birds it was necessary for wildfowling clubs to step up to the mark and take responsibility by playing a meaningful part controlling and managing wildfowl

habitat within our own shores – within which properly regulated wildfowling would continue.

Wildfowling clubs turned from rearing ducks to creating wildfowl reserves and helping to ensure that key





wetlands continue to provide the stepping stones for wildfowl migration – without which there would be drastically fewer wildfowl and much less ‘fowling, if any. The WAGBI management committee had long dreamt of setting up a “land fund”. Then, in 1986, two South Essex club members, David Gray supported by the late John Fuller, asked BASC, as WAGBI had then become, to create a fund which could be used to secure land for shooting and conservation in the UK.

The request gave rise to discussion about ways and means. It was agreed that the trust should establish a fund which would make loans to help local groups secure land in perpetuity where good conservation would go hand in glove with responsible shooting. On this basis the Wildlife Habitat Trust was born. Creating the Wildlife Habitat Trust was one thing, but finding a way to raise money to allow the fund to work was the next challenge. BASC and the trustees, who at that time had close connections with Ducks Unlimited in North America, resolved to establish a partnership to replicate the American ‘duck stamp’ idea, which was

raising many millions of dollars annually for wetland conservation along their flyways. The UK stamp would be based on an original piece of wildlife art commissioned from a famous artist and, using this idea, the first £5 stamp was produced in 1991. It was also part of the deal with DU that we too would take a flyway perspective. Since then some of the most celebrated of



**the first £5 stamp produced in 1991**

Britain’s wildlife artists have created the artwork from which the stamp is produced. Rodger McPhail, Keith Shackleton, Bruce Pearson, Terence Lambert, Ben Hoskyns, Andrew Haslen and Julian Novorol are among the many names who have

contributed. Every stamp is accompanied by additional artwork relating to the species depicted, enabling supporters to build up an attractive collection of pictures and memorabilia associated with the stamp while helping to boost the trust’s income.

The idea of linking art with shooting has proved inspirational. The Wildlife Habitat Trust stamp has produced a regular income and the art and stamps are appreciated by shooters and non-shooters alike.



The WHT's business model - making loans at low interest rates - has ensured its sustained growth, and loans can be arranged at short notice and on terms that are appropriate to both lender and borrower. It is notable that there have been no defaults over the years – which speaks volumes for the clubs and others involved.

The first loan was made in 1987 to help Norwich and District Wildfowlers' Association buy 16 acres of land; since then the Wildlife Habitat Trust has made loans to allow wildfowling clubs to buy 3,920 acres of land valued at nearly £2.4m. Grants of more than £104,000 have been made to various projects along the flyway - in the UK and more especially overseas. Significantly though, and of benefit to all who shoot migratory waterfowl in the UK, whether at the coast or inland, an impressive £61,000 has been given to projects in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus and even Turkey to help manage important wetland habitats used by birds on migration.

## What you say

Dorset wildfowling have been able to buy eight acres of land thanks to a loan of £28,000.

Chairman of the Dorset Wildfowling Association for Shooting and Conservation, Allan Harwood, said: "We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the trustees and those involved at BASC who have helped us take one step further towards securing our wildfowling heritage for future generations, the provision of increased opportunities for existing members and an opportunity to fulfill our conservation aims as well. We are genuinely excited about our future."

The Gloucestershire Wildfowling Association received a £39,000 loan which enabled them to buy 20 acres of land at Chelt Meadow in Gloucestershire.

The association's honorary treasurer, Peter Crighton, said: "We are delighted to be working once again with the WHT building on a very successful previous land purchase."

**"THE WHT HAS HELPED US SECURE WILDFOWLING HERITAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS"**

## UK case study 1:

### Poulton Court, Gloucestershire

Poulton Court was purchased by the Gloucestershire Wildflowers' Association (GWA) with the assistance of a loan from the Wildlife Habitat Trust. The 50-acre site includes a small woodland, foreshore and wharf, arable fields, hedgerows, ponds and tidal creeks with a rough-grazed estuary edge.

The land had been extensively farmed for many years but the GWA switched the emphasis from arable production to environmental protection and is particularly concerned with developing the saltmarsh, which is an increasingly threatened habitat.

The improvement works carried out comprise:

- Creating shallow scrapes to retain open water.
- Link to a tidal inlet so the land can flood on high tides and retain the water in a new creek system.
- Creation of meandering 'natural' grips across the field to mimic salt marsh gullies.
- Formation of bunds and blocking of field drains to retain water and create damp saline/brackish conditions.
- Widening of drainage culvert to create extensive reed bed fringe.
- Create extended lagoon including wading, feeding and island areas.

This project will provide breeding and winter refuge areas for biodiversity action plan species such as snipe, redshank, lapwing, mallard, teal, gadwall, sandpiper and greenshank.





## UK case study 2: the Town Ponds at Aldeburgh



The Town Ponds at Aldeburgh in Suffolk were long a haunt of local wildfowling, but by the seventies they had fallen into a derelict state and were plagued by poachers.

Then, at the instigation of the town council which owned the ponds, a wildfowling club was formed. It cleared them, controlled the shooting and fowling flourished again. However this was threatened by the gradual silting of the ponds, ever-denser reed growth and the loss of open water. So Alde & Ore Wildfowling Association worked with the council to develop a management plan.

This ambitious restoration project would cost more than £11,000; an impossible amount for a small club to find. But the WHT came to the rescue with a grant of £9,568.

Now the club's efforts have created superb habitat for wildlife and in 2010 the club won a prestigious Purdey Conservation Award in recognition of its work.

**“WITHOUT THIS GENEROUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT THE PROJECT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE CLUB TO CONTEMPLATE”**





The WHT has enabled land purchase throughout the UK.

Among the clubs that have benefited are:

- Alde & Ore Wildfowlers' Association
- Barton on Humber Wildfowlers' Club
- Blackwater Wildfowlers' Association
- Bridgwater Bay Wildfowlers' Association
- Clevedon & District Gun & Wildfowling Club
- Colchester Wildfowling & Conservation Club
- Devon Wildfowling & Conservation Association
- Ely & District Wildfowlers' Association
- Fenland Wildfowlers' Association
- Gloucestershire Wildfowlers' Association
- Great Yarmouth Wildfowling & Conservation Association
- Humber Wildfowlers Association
- Kent Wildfowling & Conservation Association
- Ladywood Shooting Club
- Leicestershire Wildfowlers Association
- Little Oakley & District Wildfowlers Association
- Lough Foyle Wildfowlers' Association
- Lytham & District Wildfowlers' Association
- North Lincolnshire Wildfowlers Club
- Northumberland & Durham Wildfowlers' Association
- Norwich & District Wildfowlers' Association
- Preston & District Wildfowlers' Association
- Rockland Wildfowlers
- Scottish Solway Wildfowlers' Association
- Tendring & Halstead Wildfowlers
- West Cumberland Wildfowlers' Association
- Y Foryd Wildfowling & Conservation Association

## International case study: Lithuania

The Wildlife Habitat Charitable Trust (WHCT) – the grant giving arm of the WHT - has given more than £60,000 in grants over the last 16 years for conservation projects in the eastern Baltic as it is a key area for migratory wildfowl which visit the UK.

In 2008 the WHCT made a grant of £10,000 for the restoration of open natural floodplain habitats on the Nemunas river delta, part of the Wings over Wetlands conservation project which, because of its international nature, is funded by various global agencies. Its goal is to protect the flyways, ensuring there are well-protected marshes, bays, estuaries, rivers and lakes in a network extending thousands of miles across several countries.

The Nemunas river delta, which is shared by Lithuania and Russia, is one of the key stop-over sites for more than 20 species of migratory wildfowl in Europe, including a number of species wintering in the UK.

During the Soviet era, the region's traditional hay farming largely vanished and the open grassland began to revert to bushes, shrubs and trees, making it unsuitable for wildfowl.

The project money was used to cut down bushes, restoring open floodplain. These areas are now being used as demonstration sites, to encourage local farmers to carry out similar work which is grant-aided through the EU. The

abandoned farmland is being transferred to active farmers and groups that will carry out traditional management techniques.

A recent visit to the project site has given the WHCT a better understanding of how important projects like this are and how much can be achieved with comparatively small amounts of money. The WHCT grant helped free Lithuanian Government money for a £30,000 project, which in turn has helped local farmers get access to EU grants. Without this intervention the land would have become unable to support wildfowl.





# The WHT and you



The larger the Wildlife Habitat Trust fund then the greater the amount of money available for those buying land. Consider buying the annual UK Wildlife Habitat Trust Conservation Stamp or some of the limited edition artist-signed prints.

Perhaps the best way to help the WHT though is to look at how your club could buy land.

The WHT loan application process is very simple and advice is available to help identify opportunities for land purchase; this includes land identification, funding and negotiation.

Help is also available to maximise income from land; this includes conservation grants, farm subsidies and letting and grazing agreements.

This booklet shows some of what the WHT has achieved in the first 25 years and how important land ownership is to clubs. During the next 25 years Trustees want to

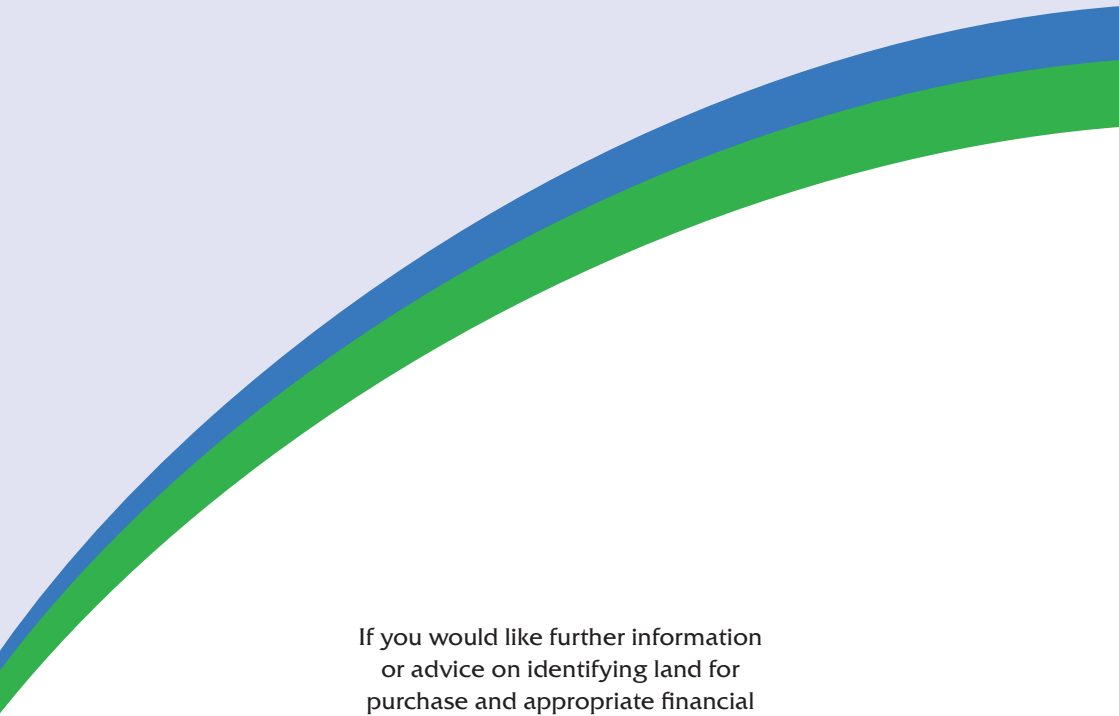


see more clubs owning land for shooting and conservation.

The WHT Trustees are committed to seeing the WHT grow so that shooting and conservation can continue to flourish. Trustees give their time freely and do not claim any expenses so as much money as possible goes into shooting and conservation.

To find out more about how the WHT can help you see the contact details over the page.





If you would like further information  
or advice on identifying land for  
purchase and appropriate financial  
arrangements contact:

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Marford Mill  
Rossett  
Wrexham  
LL12 0HL

**Tel: 01244 573014**

[www.wht.org.uk](http://www.wht.org.uk)

