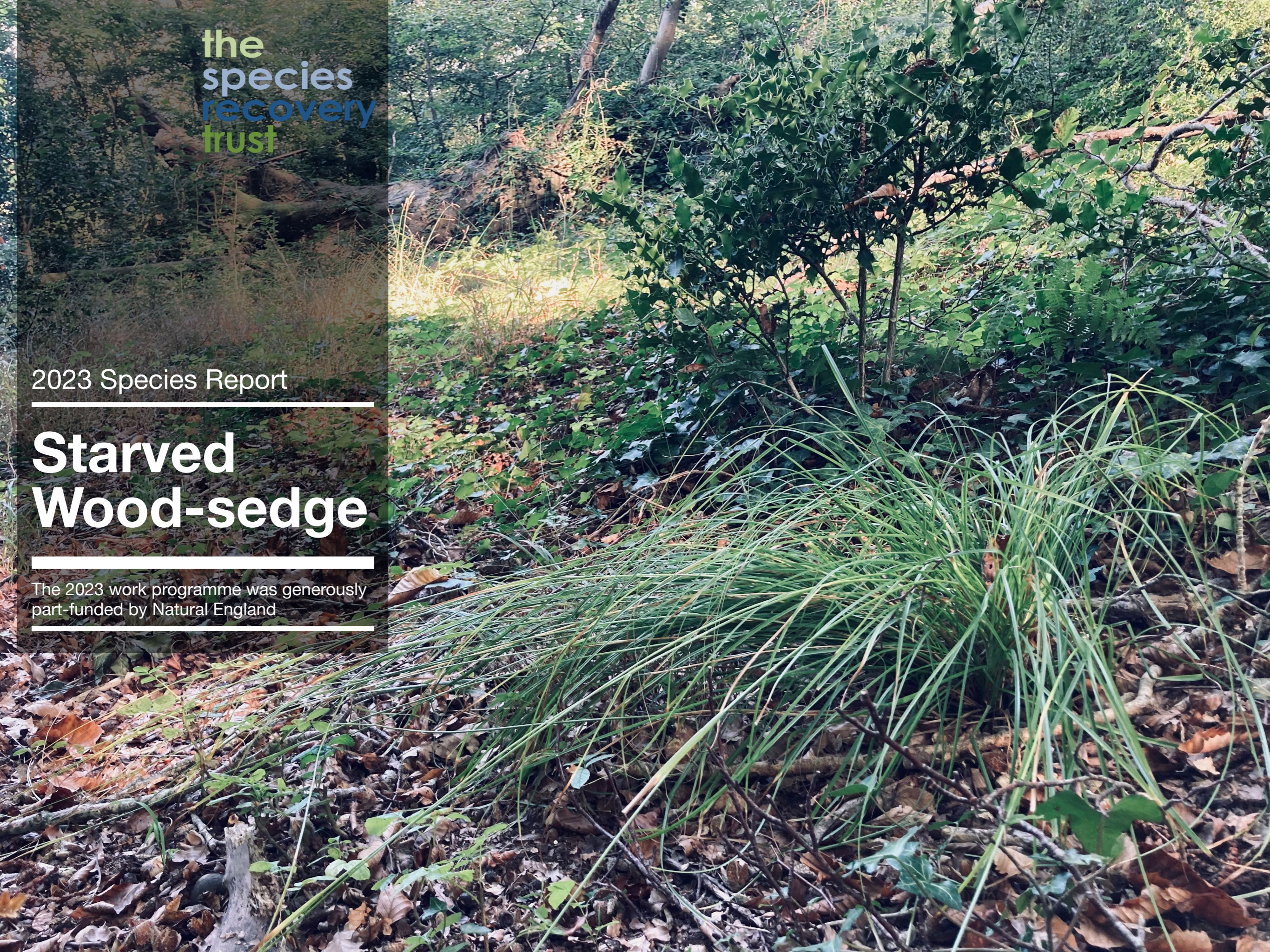


the
species
recovery
trust

2023 Species Report

Starved Wood-sedge

The 2023 work programme was generously
part-funded by Natural England



Summary



Populations continue to remain stable



The Axbridge site was once again damaged by strimming by residents, and we are continuing to seek resolution on this



The Cheddar Wood re-intro is performing well with 0% mortality, but still no recruitment. The Cranborne Chase population has fared less well, and need to be further bulked up

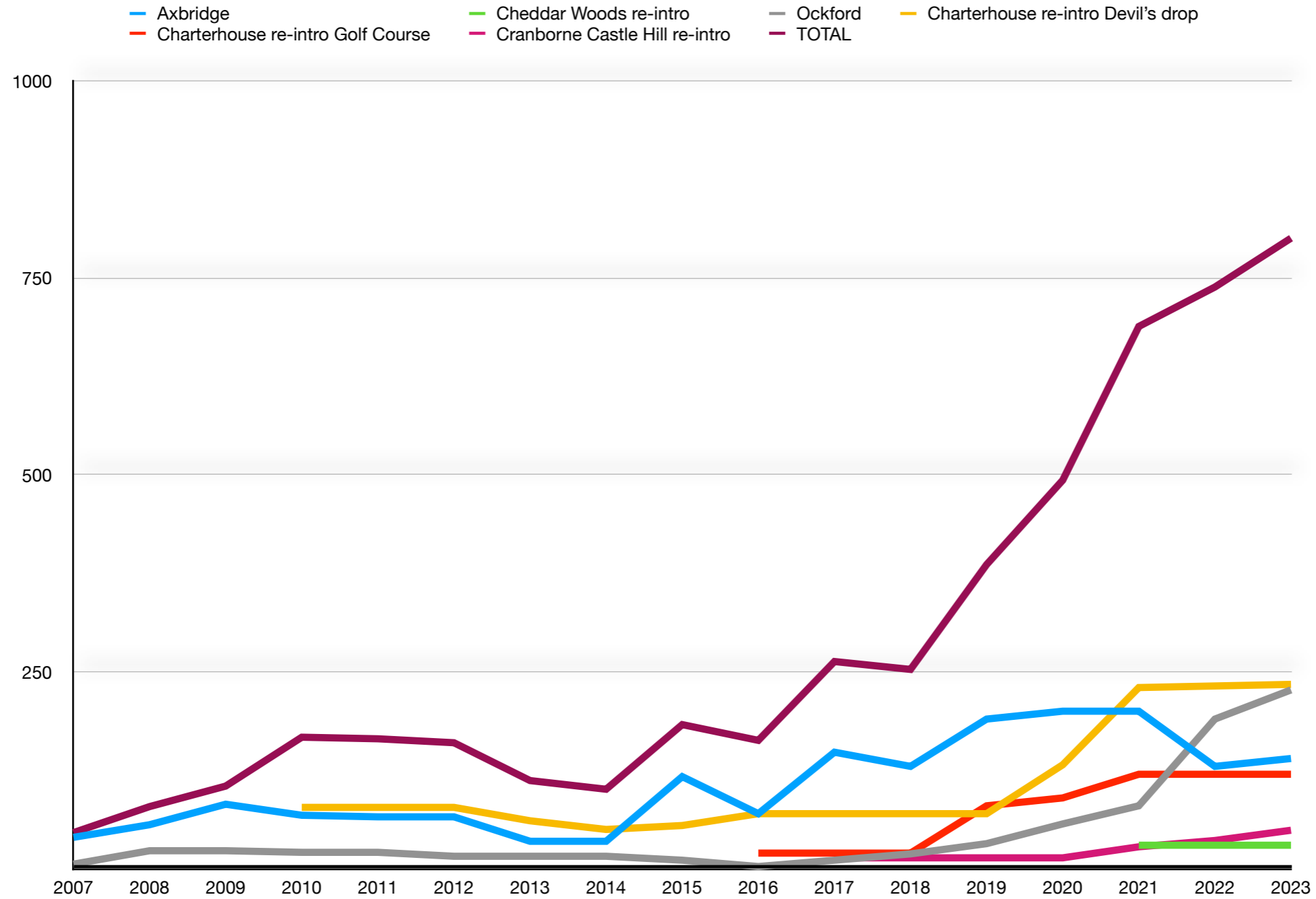
This report should be read in conjunction with the [Species Handbook](#), which give a background to all the sites



Sites Summary

SITE	Axbridge	Cheddar Woods re-intro	Ockford	Charterhouse re-intro Devil's drop	Charterhouse re-intro Golf Course	Cranborne Castle Hill re-intro	TOTAL
2007	40		6				46
2008	56		23				79
2009	82		23				105
2010	68		21	78			167
2011	66		21	78			165
2012	66		16	78			160
2013	35		16	61			112
2014	35		16	50			101
2015	117		11	55			183
2016	70		3	70	20		163
2017	148		11	70	20	14	263
2018	130		19	70	20	14	253
2019	190		32	70	80	14	386
2020	200		57	132	90	14	493
2021	200	30	80	230	120	28	688
2022	130	30	190	232	120	36	738
2023	140	30	227	234	120	49	800

Sites Summary



Sites Summary



Species Targets

BASELINE	CURRENT	Annual target	GOAL 2030	GOAL 2050	PROGRESS
2 sites	6 sites	New site every 3 years	9 sites	15 sites	6 sites
	3 sites over 100	Manage all sites to boost numbers	7 sites over 100	10 sites over 100	4



Axbridge

Despite intensive management at the start of 2022, by the summer of 2023 the Bramble and scrub had returned with ever more vigour, while at the same time many of the plants are now germinating on, or on the other side of, the pathway. Two more clearance sessions were carried out on the Bramble, but at sometime in late July the path was brush cut, we believe by local residents cut (pictured).

A similar incident had occurred in 2022, after which we put up signs explaining the rarity of the plants and their legal protection. These signs were all removed before the site was once again cut in 2023. The timings of this cut was particularly unfortunately just a few weeks before the seeds had fully reopened.

We have made fresh appeals to local residents to come forward. This is likely to be a complex issue as it will be hard to keep the path open without causing damage to the plants.

Cheddar

The re-introduced plants entered their third year in the wild, with 0% mortality and all 30 plants fruiting well.

From the last re-introduction carried out at Charterhouse and Cranborne we hope to find young plants around the fifth year of the re-intro, although the precise mechanism of this is not fully understood.





Castle Hill, Cranborne

In 2023 all sites were monitored, which sadly revealed although the original 2017 site was faring well, there was high mortality within the 2021 cohort. Whether this was down to the age of the stock used (relatively young plants) or a poor choice of sites is not certain, and the dead plants were re-stocked with new stock during the winter.

In addition we worked alongside the archaeology team who are proposing tree clearance around the castle, which we believe will benefit the plant due to reduction in shading.

During monitoring one new plant was found, which is the first self-regenerated offspring found at the site. This appears to correlate with success at Charterhouse, where the first young plants were recorded after 5 years.

In December 2023 a volunteer workday was held to replace all the plants that had died over the last year.



Ockford

The Ockford population continues to thrive and numbers are steadily increasing year on year. In 2023, a total of 227 plants were recorded, many of which were young seedlings. The main site, with the oldest plants, lies at the bottom of the bank and this supports a dense wall of Starved Wood-sedge. Due to the effects of gravity, many of the large seeds end up very close to the PRow below, and so over the last few years, these have been transplanted up the bank. Many of these have now established into mature plants and we've observed a high proportion with inflorescences this year. With this, many young seedlings have appeared at the top of the bank where they haven't previously.

We have a superb volunteer group that joined us for a third year to remove competing and over-shading vegetation. Along with badger activity, this has also provided plenty of disturbance for germinating seed.

Given the vulnerability of this small area, we are exploring the creation of a new sub-site within close proximity.



Charterhouse

The main Charterhouse re-intro site has been going from strength to strength. From the 32 plants re-introduced in 2010 there are now 234 plants on the site.

Most encouragingly the plants are spreading way beyond the initial site of the plantings, with new individuals appearing over 20m away in areas recently cleared by local volunteers.

Active management is key to this population's survival and expansion, so we are working closely with the local volunteers who cherish this area of the woodland. Through the introductions lifespan, the volunteers have created new glades, controlled vigorous holly growth & created disturbance for seed germination. This has positively impacted the population, as well as giving a glimpse of how the plant can succeed in actively managed woodland.

Unfortunately, due to a change in employees, the golf wood introduction site was not visited in 2023. Every effort will be made to monitor this site in 2024.



Looking forward

Project aims 2020-2030



Continue close liaison with Axbridge to work towards a solution for this site



Continued habitat management to enlarge the Ockford Wood site



Re-planting lost plants at Cranborne



Work to create one more site in Surrey



Continued close annual monitoring and management at all sites



The Species Recovery Trust is a charity set up to tackle the loss of some of the rarest species in the UK.

There are over nine hundred native species in the UK that are classed as under threat, with several hundreds more currently widespread but known to be in significant decline. The countryside is now bereft of many species that were a familiar sight a mere generation ago.

A small number of these species are on the absolute brink of existence, poised to become extinct in our lifetimes; our goal is to stop them vanishing.

Our aim is to remove 50 species from the edge of extinction in the UK by the year 2050. In addition we are reconnecting people with wildlife and the natural world through training programmes and awareness raising.



A photograph of a forest floor in spring. The ground is covered with a dense carpet of purple bluebells. In the foreground, a large, moss-covered tree stump lies on the ground. The background is filled with tall, slender trees with fresh green leaves, suggesting a young forest or woodland. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the ground.

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