

Habitats across Wales to benefit from vital £2.7million investment

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Hikers in the Brecon Beacons. Credit: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Eleven projects have received up to £250,000 Nature Networks Fund grants to protect, preserve and promote natural heritage across the nation.

From bottlenose dolphins to butterflies, the funding will help organisations and community groups improve the management and monitoring of nature at sea and on land.

The projects – stretching from Caernarfon Bay to the Brecon Beacons – include plans to engage Welsh communities in the wonders of their local landscapes and wildlife.

We are committed to tackling the nature emergency, working together with organisations and people right across the country.

Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister of Wales

Protecting critical habitats and threatened species

We've awarded The Cetacean Monitoring Unit of **Sea Watch Foundation** £249,000 to identify and increase the protection of critical habitats for bottlenose dolphins in Cardigan Bay and Caernarfon Bay. It will train communities in sea mammal monitoring to improve the breadth of its annual dolphin survey.



The Sea Watch Foundation encounter dolphins in Cardigan Bay. Credit: Chloe Robinson / Sea Watch Foundation.

Cardigan Bay is a popular breeding ground for the bottlenose due to its shallow, sheltered habitat. Researchers gather information about the dolphin's environment and population trends over decades. The training and surveys will help protect future generations of these popular mammals.

These latest Nature Networks Fund grants are also supporting:

- **Butterfly Conservation** (awarded £249,995) to research the population and spread of the Large Heath Butterfly. It will also investigate whether the butterfly's presence is a sign of successful bog restoration and what more can be done to protect peatland sites across Wales.
- **The Bat Conservation Trust** (£245,099) to assess the health of temperate rainforest environments across North Wales to aid conservation plans for threatened bat species. It will also train volunteers to monitor the bats' progress.
- **Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority** (£224,487) to establish a partnership between farmers, graziers and the public and private sectors to manage biodiversity and nature recovery on Manor Penderyn Common.

We've distributed the grants on behalf of the Welsh Government, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales.

An urgent challenge

Deputy First Minister with responsibility for Climate Change, Huw Irranca-Davies said: "I am so pleased 11 more projects will benefit from a share of £2.7m Welsh Government funding through the Nature Networks Fund.

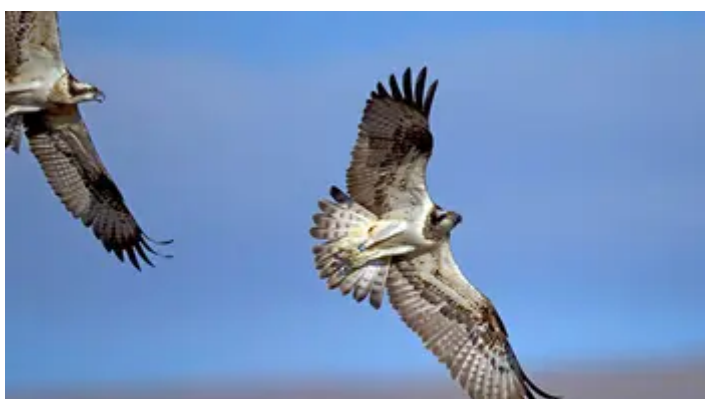
"We are committed to tackling the nature emergency, working together with organisations and people right across the country. This partnership between Welsh Government, the Heritage Fund and Natural Resources Wales is key to making positive change for people and nature across Wales."

Find out more

Explore further recent investments in [protecting Welsh woodlands](#) and find out more about the variety of natural heritage [projects we support across the UK](#).



[Photo: Tim Jones Photography 2015.](#)



[woodlands and tiny forests](#)



Protect Wales' threatened species and habitats

Drew Bennellick, our Head of Land, Sea and Nature, and Harriet Bennett, Land Management Officer for the Chilterns Landscape Partnership project, with Andrew Stubbings, of Manor Farm, an example of a connected landscape. Photo: Oliver Dixon.

£150million funding to enhance and protect the UK's world-class landscapes