

How the Species Survival Fund is supporting nature projects across England

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The Thames Youth Action Panel are just one of the communities engaging with nature restoration at RSPB Wallasea for the Coastal and Wetlands project. Credit: RSPB Katie Hargreaves.

[See all updates](#)

Our interim evaluation report explores findings from the programme's first year of delivery, creating and restoring habitats that reverse the decline of species.

Attachment

Size

[Species Survival Fund Interim Report.pdf](#) 1.41 MB

Species Survival Fund (SSF) is a two-year nature recovery programme that's investing £25million in 20 projects across England. We are delivering SSF on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The programme was designed to make early progress towards the UK government's statutory targets for species abundance and the restoration and creation of wildlife-rich habitats. These are referred to collectively as the statutory [Biodiversity Targets](#).

We commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme in July 2024 to follow SSF's progress, see how it is contributing to these targets, and to understand what lessons we can learn to inform our future nature recovery work.

Key findings

The interim evaluation covers the first year of delivery, from April 2024 to April 2025. The report shows that the projects are delivering the programmes priorities and are motivated to restore and create habitats that connect people with nature. It also shows that:

- Strong partnerships with local organisations helped projects to think more strategically, explore funding opportunities and exchange learnings
- 205.2 hectares of habitat have been managed, restored and created
- 6,138 trees were planted, 1,059 habitat and species surveys took place and 454 habitat improvement actions have been completed, including seeding native wildflowers and installing winter shelters for small mammals
- Projects have sufficient resources to carry out species and habitat surveys to monitor the effectiveness of activities
- Over 14,490 people engaged with 358 events, including guided walks and school visits
- Projects directly supported 144 jobs and 3,202 volunteers contributed their time
- 576 project staff and volunteers received training that included surveying and technical skills

Explore some of the projects

Re:New Nature

New Forest National Park Authority received a grant of £1.04m to bring together partners and landowners to restore habitats across 250 hectares of land spanning 25 sites.



The New Forest National Park Authority team use surveys to record species like the pink meadow grasshopper to plan targeted interventions. Credit: Russell Wynn/Wild New Forest.

Part of the funding helps to deliver community activities, including great crested newt eDNA training days and litter picks with young people to build the communities awareness of conservation.

Coastal and Wetlands project

RSPB received a grant of nearly £2.5m to restore landscapes across the South East of England. The project is transforming grazing marshes at Vange Wick to create climate-adaptive habitats that retain winter water for longer, whilst supporting species like the tumbling lapwing.

They've also led the way on nature prescribing programmes, where they are training healthcare professionals and occupational therapists to prescribe nature as part of their practice.

Northwest and Southwest Rainforest Restoration

The Woodland Trust and Plantlife received an award of nearly £2.7m to protect ancient woodland habitats within England's only Temperate Rainforest Zones, which cover approximately 580 hectares.



Oak, alder and wild cherry are just some of the seeds being planted across the rolling hills around Bodmin. Credit: The Woodland Trust.

The team use high-tech drones to scatter native rainforest seeds around Bodmin to reach areas inaccessible for traditional planting. They are also delivering walks and talks, webinars, and advice sessions for landowners.

Our commitment to nature

We will use this interim report along with the final evaluation in late 2026, to help us identify what approaches to nature recovery are most impactful and how this could support our future grant-making. This will be in line with our strategy, [Heritage 2033](#), where protecting the environment is one of our four investment principles.

Read the interim SSF report in the PDF attached to this page, and find out more about what the inspiring projects have achieved so far.

Our research and evaluation

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. [Read more of our insight.](#)



[Big City Butterflies. Credit: Chris O'Donovan.](#)

Habitats and species

Landscape Connections



Landscapes, parks and nature