

July 2026



Somerset
Wildlife Trust

Wilder Somerset 2030

our refreshed strategy



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Our mission

Working for the changes needed for nature and people to thrive together.

Our vision

By 2030, Somerset will be a place where wildlife and natural habitats are resilient and thriving, everyone can access and enjoy nature, and communities are inspired to take meaningful action in response to the climate and nature emergency.

We are proud to be part of a federation of **46** Wildlife Trusts with **3,600** staff, **2,600** nature reserves and **30** working farms





Hello

Nature is part of who we are. It shapes our lives, our landscapes, our food, our health, our wellbeing and our resilience to climate change. But here in Somerset – as across the UK – wildlife is declining, habitats are shrinking, and climate impacts like flooding and extreme weather are becoming more frequent.

For over 60 years, Somerset Wildlife Trust has worked to protect and restore nature across the county. As the scale and urgency of the nature and climate crisis grows, we are focusing our efforts where they can make the greatest difference – and building a powerful movement for change.

This strategy sets out how we will help nature recover, support people to act, influence the decisions that shape our future, and remain a strong, effective charity for the long term.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Dent'.

Georgia Dent
Chief Executive Officer



Adapting to face the scale of the challenge

Our ambition

We all need to reinvent our relationships with nature to recognise that we are part of it. We all depend on nature for our survival and it is only with a healthy, thriving natural world that we as humans can prosper.

Our focus

The scale of the challenge is huge and as a Trust we need to be honest about what we can achieve. We can't do everything, so organisationally, we have focused on where we can achieve the greatest impact for nature.

With Wilder Somerset 2030, and even truer today, our focus is to work with communities, land owners and partners. We want to restore healthy functioning ecosystems that are climate resilient, protected and enabled by policies, decisions and investments that recognise and enhance the value of nature to us all.



Restoring ecosystems

The definition of an ecosystem is a “community of living organisms”. This is a brilliant description because, when we think of nature as a community – one of which we are firmly part of – it becomes clear why damage to one area of that community impacts everyone.

All too often, we can break nature down into species or habitats or geographies. While this can deliver benefits for the area or wildlife in question, to truly make an impact – that is equal with the scale of the problems nature faces – we must look at restoration as a whole jigsaw, not just lots of individual pieces.

We can do this by restoring and connecting high-quality habitats at scale, supporting the nature within them to thrive, and enabling long-term resilience through ecosystems that naturally balance, change and adapt.

Nature and climate

Like ecosystems, there is a risk that if we separate climate and nature, in a bid to make them feel easier problems to solve, we miss a real opportunity. They are entwined.

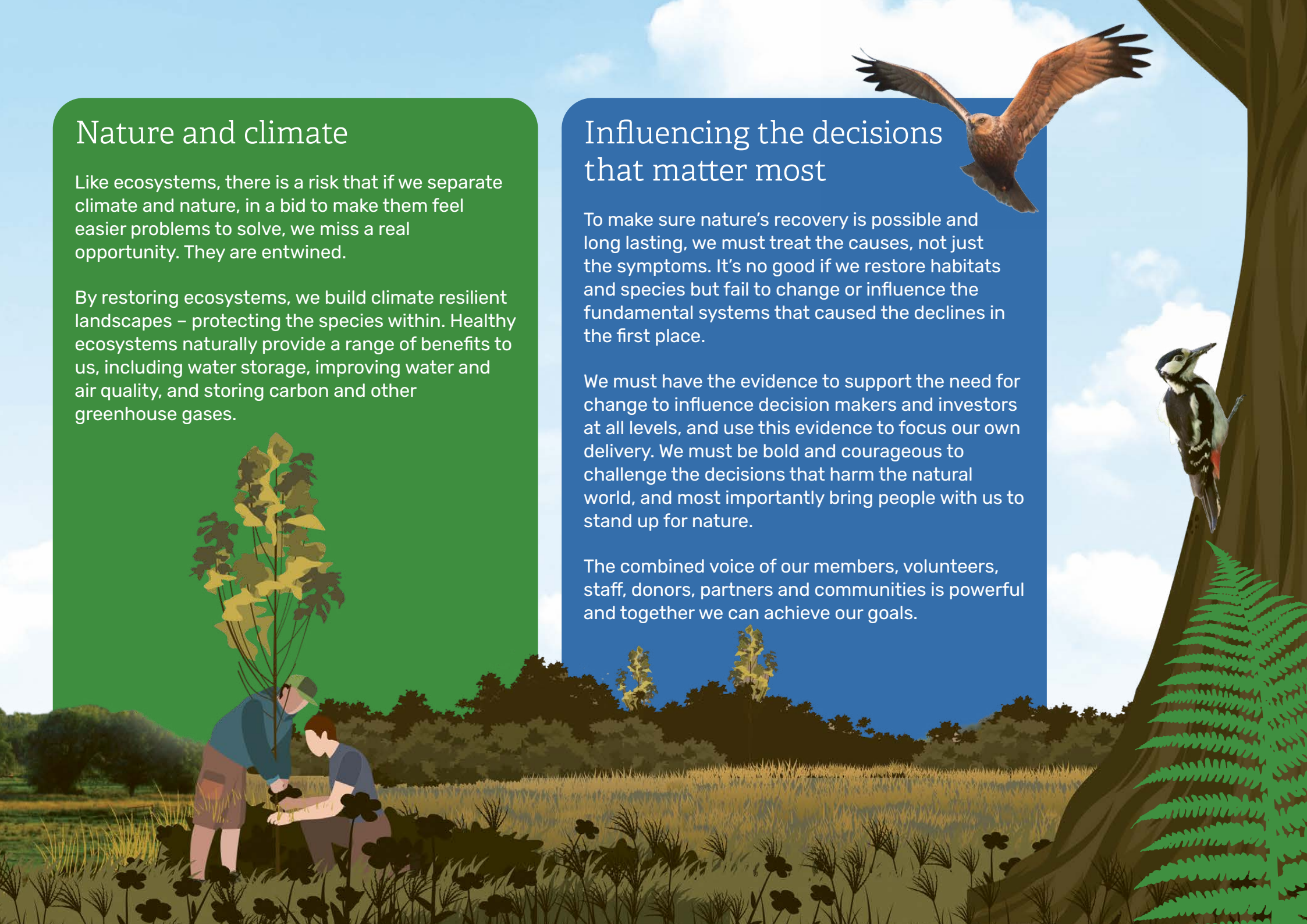
By restoring ecosystems, we build climate resilient landscapes – protecting the species within. Healthy ecosystems naturally provide a range of benefits to us, including water storage, improving water and air quality, and storing carbon and other greenhouse gases.

Influencing the decisions that matter most

To make sure nature's recovery is possible and long lasting, we must treat the causes, not just the symptoms. It's no good if we restore habitats and species but fail to change or influence the fundamental systems that caused the declines in the first place.

We must have the evidence to support the need for change to influence decision makers and investors at all levels, and use this evidence to focus our own delivery. We must be bold and courageous to challenge the decisions that harm the natural world, and most importantly bring people with us to stand up for nature.

The combined voice of our members, volunteers, staff, donors, partners and communities is powerful and together we can achieve our goals.



There is hope

The challenges are big, but we can make a difference.

With supporters and partners, we are already seeing change since the launch of our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy: land secured for nature, communities taking action, young people leading, and stronger evidence influencing decisions. But nature is still under pressure, and the next few years are critical.

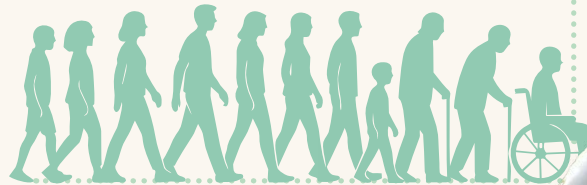
We have:

Worked with
110
community groups
across the county
to help them take
action for nature



Invested in
**research,
science and
evidence**

to ensure we are truly
evidence-led, developing
strong partnerships
with universities and
research projects



Directly secured

300
hectares more
land for nature

Published the first ever

**Somerset
State
of Nature**

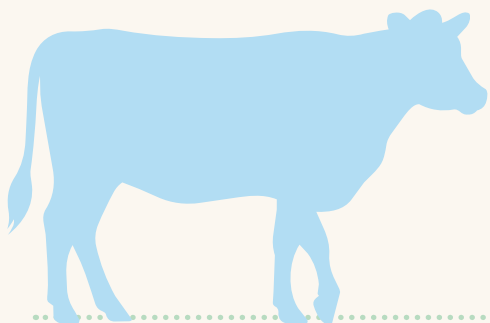
report with plans for
a revised edition
in 2027



Worked closely with

farmers and land owners

to recover nature while supporting
nature friendly agricultural practice



Campaigned

for nature's recovery locally
and nationally, supporting
local people to tell their MPs
why nature is important
to them, such as with the
Planning and Infrastructure
Bill, and holding large
developments, such as Hinkley
Point C and Agratas to account
for their responsibilities
to the environment



Established the

Somerset Peatland Partnership

under the guidance of the
renewed Somerset Local Nature
Partnership coordinated by SWT



Supported and engaged with over

2000

young people across Somerset

9

Worked with
communities to develop
Climate Adaptation Plans

268 Hectares

of peatland benefited
through projects led by
SWT with our partners



Our role in nature's recovery until 2030

We have reviewed our strategic goals and updated them to focus our efforts and hold ourselves accountable. Our strategic goals require collaboration, partnership and influencing others to take action so we have also set out the impacts we, as Somerset Wildlife Trust, will achieve in our Impact Measures.

Goal 1

Flourishing Natural World – More and Better Nature

Nature is improving everywhere with restored natural processes and functioning ecosystems, with at least 30% of land and sea protected, connected and managed for nature's recovery

How we'll deliver this:

- Collaborate with others to manage and increase our land holdings, actively protecting the habitats and species that exist.
- Work with partners and land managers to deliver countywide priorities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Develop and deliver nature-based solutions that create long-term benefits and resilience for people and for nature.
- Engage with developers, before planning submission, to influence their schemes to be nature-positive.
- Hold statutory bodies and planners to account for planning and development decisions.
- Work with parish and town councils to create and support the delivery of Nature & Climate Action Plans.

The change this creates

- Nature is in recovery with more space for wildlife to thrive and habitats connected at a landscape scale.
- Wildlife populations are recovering with abundance and diversity.
- Natural processes are restored with nature providing cleaner water, increased carbon storage, improved water management and improved wellbeing for healthy communities.
- Our restored natural world creates places where people and nature thrive together.

Goal 2

The Power of People – A movement for nature and climate

Everyone has the opportunity to experience nature, with people in every area of society taking visible, impactful, and personally meaningful action for nature

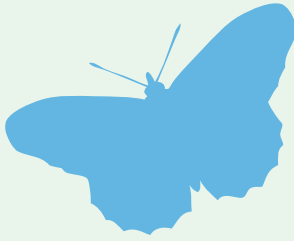
How we'll deliver this:

- Develop new, and expand existing partnerships, enabling inclusive access to and action for nature and climate.
 - Prioritise working with and supporting communities to take meaningful action for them, rather than establishing short-term projects alone.
 - Make it easier for volunteers to get involved, ensuring their efforts are put to the best use.
 - Offer community land advice; training and support programmes building on our existing work such as Wilder Communities, Wilder Churches, Wilder Gardens and Allotments.
 - Work with young people across Somerset, developing their projects and ideas, and giving them opportunities to develop skills and experience.
 - Working with communities to make sure everyone has access to and feels welcome in nature.
-

The change this creates

- Greater access to nature for everyone close to where people live.
- People in Somerset feel they belong in nature and are thriving alongside wildlife.
- More people actively caring for nature.
- Stronger connections within and between communities, sharing their love of and care for nature.





Goal 3

Prospering with Nature – Better Understanding and Influencing Systems Change

Robust evidence providing better understanding of the state of nature in Somerset that transforms policies, decisions and actions, with nature valued as the foundation of our wellbeing and prosperity

How we'll deliver this:

- Ensure data collection approaches provide long-term trend analysis for species and habitats.
 - Expand our evidence base establishing Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) as the hub for environmental data.
 - Restore ecosystems to demonstrate the role nature provides in tackling social challenges: storing and sequestering carbon, reduce soil erosion, improve soil fertility, reduce pollution, improve people's physical and mental wellbeing.
 - Identify and fill evidence gaps for nature providing solutions to social issues, working with academics and researchers.
-

The change this creates

- Better decisions for nature across Somerset.
- Increased funding and policy support for nature based solutions.
- Stronger accountability through shared evidence and data.

Goal 4

Thriving Somerset Wildlife Trust – Strengthening Nature’s Core

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a bold, evidence led, inclusive and financially resilient organisation able to lead transformative change, recognised for our expertise, high integrity and collaborative approach, and we are accountable for our actions.

How we’ll deliver this:

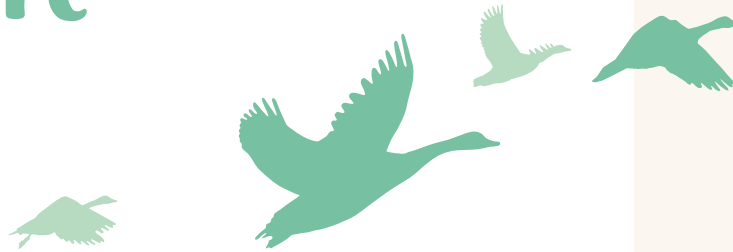
- Invest in our people ensuring we have the skills and expertise needed to achieve our goals.
 - Grow our supporter base, engaging with corporates and individuals who share our goals and values.
 - Uphold the highest standards of governance, leadership, compliance and risk management.
 - Create an inclusive, diverse culture that welcomes and celebrates diversity, listening to and learning from each other and the communities we work with.
 - Lead by example with a clear plan to reduce our own environmental impact, and work towards achieving net zero goals with The Wildlife Trusts.
-

The change this creates

- A resilient Somerset Wildlife Trust able to respond to future challenges.
- Skilled, passionate staff and volunteers supported to achieve the greatest impact for nature.
- Strong diverse partnerships that multiply our impact including with The Wildlife Trusts as a collective movement for nature’s recovery.
- Long term financial sustainability for nature’s recovery.



Supporting nature across Somerset



Somerset's rich variety of landscapes is what makes it such a special place – for wildlife and for people. From our dramatic coastline to our peaceful wetlands, rolling hills and farmed valleys, each place offers something unique. Together, these landscapes support a huge range of habitats, species and communities.

We work across the whole county – supporting communities, farmers and landowners to care for nature. We also know that by focusing effort on key places, we can make a

bigger, lasting difference. That's why we have a particular focus on four landscapes – places where we can restore nature at scale, connect habitats, and create real benefits for people, wildlife and the wider county.

Across all four landscapes, our goal is the same: **to restore nature in a way that benefits everyone – supporting wildlife, strengthening communities, working alongside farmers, and helping Somerset thrive.**

Somerset's Living Coast and Seas

Somerset's coast and seas are nationally and internationally important, with much of this environment protected for its wildlife. But these places still face growing pressures.

We are working to protect and restore marine life by holding decision-makers and developers to account, and by working with partners to safeguard these precious ecosystems. At the same time, we are helping nature recover on land along the coast – creating and expanding habitats that strengthen the whole coastal system.

This work supports thriving marine wildlife, healthier fish populations, and more resilient coastlines. It also benefits local communities through cleaner waters, natural flood protection, and inspiring wild places for people to enjoy.





The Somerset Levels and Moors

The Levels and Moors are one of Britain's most extraordinary wetland landscapes – rich in history, culture and wildlife. These freshwater wetlands are home to iconic species like bitterns and egrets, and they play a vital role in the county's wellbeing.

Our focus is on protecting, restoring and reconnecting wetlands so wildlife can flourish. A key priority is restoring peatlands – these unique habitats are essential for storing carbon, improving water quality, slowing land subsidence, and helping Somerset adapt to climate change.

For farmers, land managers and communities, healthier peat soils means more sustainable land use and beautiful landscapes. And for wildlife, they create safe, thriving homes where rare species can recover and expand.



The Tone Vale

The Tone Vale sits between some of Somerset's most nature-rich areas, yet much of the valley itself is under pressure – from intensive agriculture, water abstraction, pollution and climate change.

Here, we are working with farmers, communities and partners to bring nature back into the heart of the valley. By creating tree-lined wildlife corridors and restoring wide, nature-rich strips along rivers and streams, we are reconnecting habitats across the landscape.

This helps wildlife move and thrive, improves water quality, reduces flood risk, and supports more resilient farming. For local people, it creates greener, healthier places to live, work and enjoy nature.



The Mendip Hills

The Mendip Hills are home to beautiful grasslands and woodlands, rich in wildlife and history. We are working closely with farmers, landowners and local partners to care for this special place in a more joined-up way.

Together, we are creating bigger, better and more connected habitats – through collaboration and, where possible, bringing land into long-term nature recovery. This will help wildlife spread and recover, supporting species like dormice, adders, skylarks and yellowhammers.

For farmers, this approach supports sustainable land management and long-term resilience. For people, it protects the character and beauty of the Mendips. And for Somerset, it helps build a stronger, more connected network of nature that will benefit future generations.

Somerset's Wilder Landscapes

■ Somerset's Living Coast

■ Tone Vale

■ Somerset Levels and Moors

■ Mendip Hills

■ Wider Mendip projects

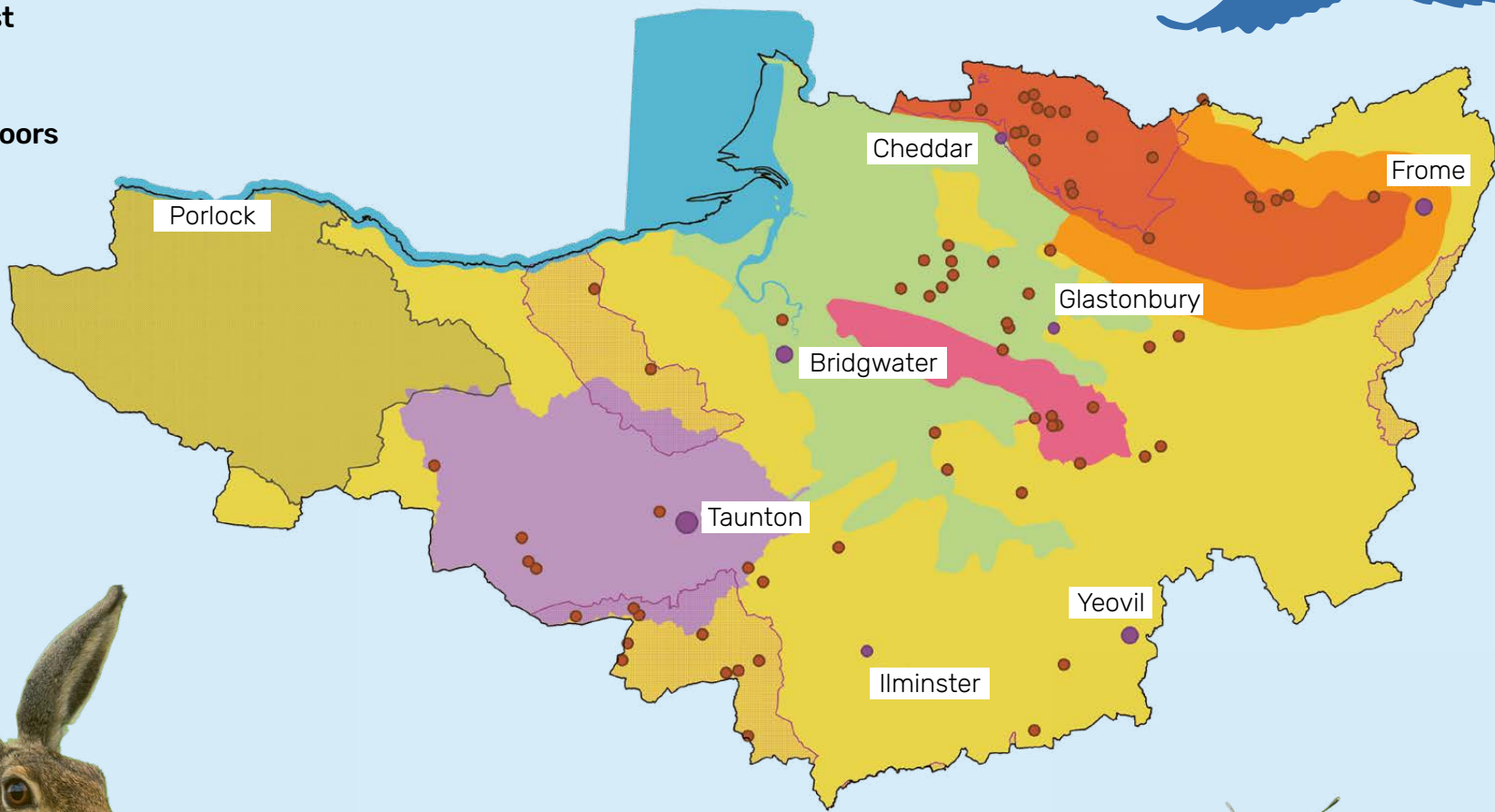
■ Poldens project area

● Trust nature reserves

□ Exmoor National Park

□ National Landscapes

■ Wider landscape



We also have a county-wide offer that includes land advice, community engagement and monitoring that allows us to reach the scale of our ambitions



Holding ourselves to account

Creating real change – whether across Somerset or in response to global challenges like the climate crisis – is not always easy to see or measure. That’s why we have developed a set of Impact measures – to ensure all our actions and decisions have a positive impact on nature. These help us

track real progress made by SWT for nature, for people and for the county. We will share these openly each year in our Annual Impact Report, so we can be clear on what’s working, what the evidence is telling us and how far we still have to go.

By being transparent about our impact, we can hold ourselves to account – and invite you to do the same – ensuring that together we are delivering lasting change for Somerset.

Our impact measures are:

1



Nature Improving Everywhere

the total area of land improving for nature as a result of SWT’s direct influence.

2



Land owned & managed

the total area of land that is protected and positively managed for nature and counting towards international targets, as a direct result of SWT’s activity.

3



Marine and coasts

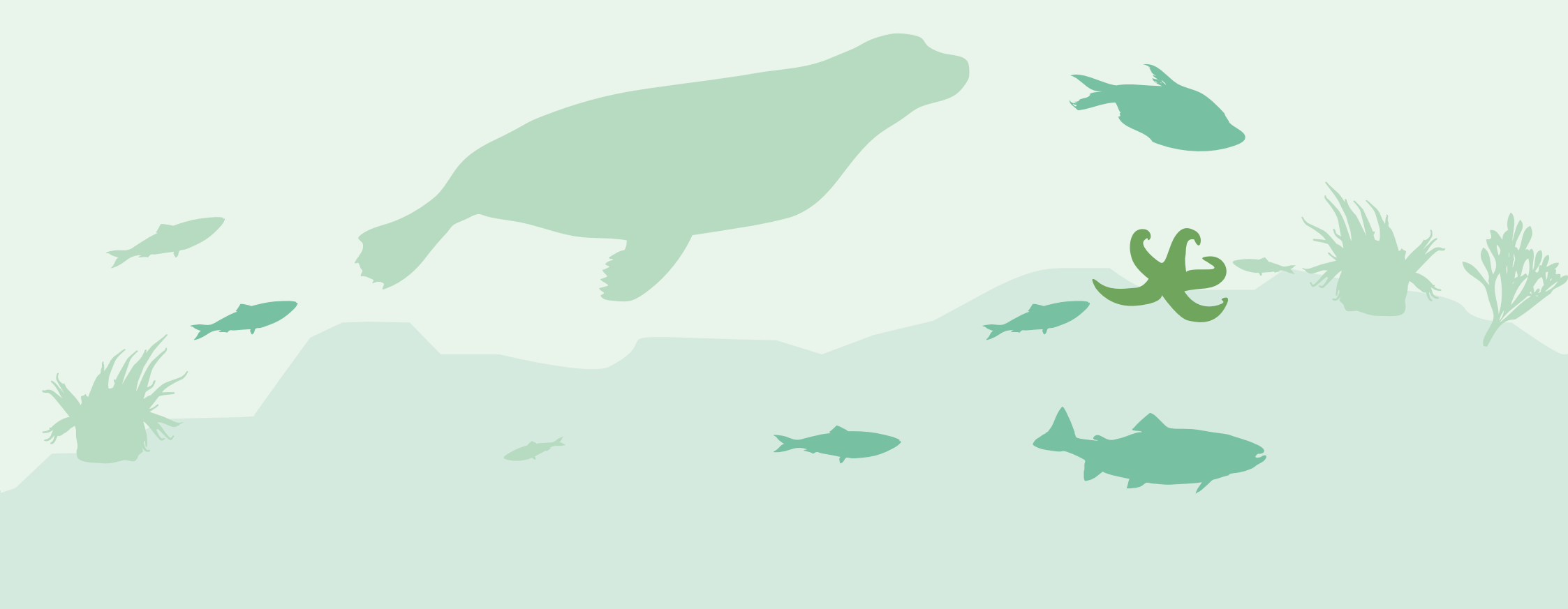
the total area of the marine environment that is protected and positively managed for nature and counting towards international targets.

4



Actions for nature

the number of people taking meaningful action for nature as a result of SWT’s activity.



5



Access to nature

the number of people from our key audiences taking part in nature experiences facilitated and supported by SWT.

6



Building support

the number of decision makers, businesses and organisations making positive changes influenced by SWT, that contribute directly to nature recovery in Somerset.

7



Income

the increase in the amount of money SWT generates to fund nature recovery in Somerset.

8



State of nature

the amount of robust and long-term data sets collected for priority habitats and species, so that we can demonstrate how the state of nature in Somerset is changing.

We're in this together

We asked you to come on a journey with us when we launched Wilder Somerset 2030 and we've been amazed by how many of you have done just that. We've achieved a lot together already but there is still an urgent need for action in Somerset for nature to recover.

We hope you will continue to support us and work with us, and get your friends, family and work involved too! We need now, more than ever before, to restore nature by building a movement for change.



Want to help nature?



Money: donate or become a member
somersetwildlife.org/support-us



Time: become a volunteer or donate your
time in your community [somersetwildlife.
org/get-involved/volunteering](https://somersetwildlife.org/get-involved/volunteering)



Voice: use your voice
to stand up for the things you care
about [somersetwildlife.org/get-
involved/take-action-nature](https://somersetwildlife.org/get-involved/take-action-nature)

We'd love to hear from you:

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Email: enquiries@somersetwildlife.org





Somerset Wildlife Trust

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Registered Company No: 818162

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