



**YOUR**

**WILDLIFE**

**FUNDRAISING**

**PACK**

Love **Fundraising** • Love **Wildlife**



**Essex**  
Wildlife Trust



# THANK YOU

## FOR CHOOSING TO SUPPORT

## ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

### You're helping to protect Essex's wildlife and wild places!

Our climate is in crisis and our species and habitats are facing extinction like never before. By signing up to fundraise for us, **you have taken the first step in our fight to restore thriving habitats and species** and help us beat extinction.

We are so grateful for your incredible support, our work is only possible because of people like you and we are here to support you with your fundraising journey every step of the way.

Be inspired by some of our incredible ideas, top tips and tricks and our past fundraisers who have shared their own fundraising stories to help support you and make your own fundraising event a success.

Whether you walk, cycle or run the Essex Coast path, host a bake sale or do a head shave, together we can act now to stop wildlife decline in its tracks and help bring it back to our towns and gardens for the people of Essex. We can't wait to see the brilliant things you do!

Don't forget to send us a picture of whatever you get up to, or upload it on social media using **#LoveEssexLoveWildlife**. If you would like to discuss any ideas or speak to our team, we are right here for you. You can email us at [fundraise@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@essexwt.org.uk) or give us a call on **01621 862960**.

**There is no time to lose. Extinction won't wait, so neither can we!**

*Good luck and thank you*

From everyone at **Essex Wildlife Trust**



Registered Charity Number 210065  
Front cover Badger photo: Bertie Gregory/2020VISION



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**‘WE MUST ACT NOW  
TO GIVE OUR WILDLIFE  
A FUTURE’**

Water vole photo: Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

# Our goal

Our mission is to **protect** wildlife  
and **inspire** a lifelong love of nature

## The challenge

As biodiversity continues to decline dramatically, there is an urgent need to tackle the climate emergency, restore damaged habitats, increase the connectivity between protected areas and well managed land, and lobby for legislation that places natural heritage at the forefront of policies and forward planning.

## Climate change won't wait, so nor can we!

It is estimated that we only have a decade left to meet these challenges before damage is irreversible. **The next 10 years are the most important in the history of nature conservation** and that's why your support is so vital. Every penny raised will help us in our fight to help create a wilder Essex and help give our wildlife a chance to thrive.

## Our movement

Essex Wildlife Trust is a local wildlife charity supported by over 1900 volunteers and over 38,000 members. Together we protect and care for wildlife and wild places across Essex but we do not face this challenge alone.

We are part of a wider grassroots movement of Wildlife Trusts across the UK who engage in critical conservation work and campaign collectively on behalf of wildlife and the natural world. **All of our work connects to a larger vision for wildlife in the UK.**

## Your support

We can't do it without you. Our work is only possible because of people like you. Your fundraising efforts play a huge part and will allow us to act now before it's too late.

**“Individually, we are one drop.  
Together, we are an ocean.”**

Help us tackle threats to our amazing wildlife and their habitats. You will be helping to create a wilder Essex where wildlife thrives.

**We must act now to give our wildlife a future.**





# 'WE ARE HERE EVERY STEP OF YOUR FUNDRAISING JOURNEY'

Turtle dove photo: Russell Savory

## How you can help

### Fundraise in memory

Fundraising in memory is a wonderful way to celebrate the life of someone you loved, share your previous memories and honour their passion for the natural world and love of wildlife. By fundraising in their name, you will help protect wildlife and our wild places in Essex. Find out more: [www.essexwt.org.uk/get-involved/celebrate-commemorate/in-memory](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/get-involved/celebrate-commemorate/in-memory)

### Essex lottery

Sign up to your local lottery supporting Essex Wildlife Trust in your community with a chance of winning a £25,000 cash prize. For more information on how to take part please visit: [www.essexwt.org.uk/wildlife-lottery](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/wildlife-lottery)

### Recycling scheme

Donate your unused clothes, bras and household items! Donate to selected Nature Discovery Centres across the county and you can be sure you are supporting people and wildlife. Find out more by visiting: [www.essexwt.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/fundraising)

### How we will help you

We are here every step of your fundraising journey with all the advice, tips and tools you need to ensure you have a great time from planning to taking part in your fundraising event or challenge. We are here to make your events and activities as successful as possible. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our friendly fundraising team to discuss your ideas or ask for further help.

£5

#### Secures vital nesting habitats for birds

£5 could fund three metres of new hedgerow which is vital nesting habitat for birds.

£10

#### Builds a new dormouse nest box

£10 could help us build and install one new dormouse nest box.

£20

#### Supports research for otters and water voles

£20 could fund surveying over 1500m of river bank for otters and water voles.

£50

#### Supports fish migration work

£50+ could help us continue our work creating passages for eels and migratory fish in the rivers of Essex, helping fish get to their spawning grounds.

£125+

#### Saltmarsh restoration projects

£125 could help us to buy the materials and install structures that will help restore our saltmarsh and protect our vulnerable coastline from climate change.

£500

#### Creation of turtle dove plots

£500 could help us provide a feeding plot for the turtle dove, the UK's fastest declining bird species that is on the brink of extinction.



**‘EVERY SINGLE DONATION  
MAKES A DIFFERENCE’**

Bluebells photo: Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography

# Five simple steps to start fundraising

Follow our **advice** to make your event a **huge success!**

## 1. Choose an event

Do you have a talent or skill or maybe you enjoy a certain activity? Now is the time to turn it into a fundraising event! Or would you like to challenge yourself to try something you would never usually do, and make a once in a lifetime experience really count?

We have lots of ideas to help you kick start your fundraising in this guide and we are only an email or phone call away if you wish to discuss any of your fundraising ideas. Whatever you decide to do to raise money, by signing up to receive this pack, **you are already one step closer to protecting your wildlife** and Essex's precious wild places.

## 2. Pick a date

Now you have decided on your fundraising idea, **it's time to start planning**. Make sure you pop it in the diary and share it with your family and friends so you can get as many people to support you as possible!

## 3. Set up your online page

The best way to start fundraising is to set up a page via **Just Giving**. Setting up your online page is really simple. Just visit [www.justgiving.com/ewt/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/ewt/donate), click on 'Fundraise for us', and set up your page that will then link to Essex Wildlife Trust. Once you have set up your page and personalised it, you just need to share it with your friends and family to donate to your page. You can personalise your own thank you notes too and use it as a tool to keep track of your progress and fundraising total.

## 4. Have fun and go wild

You are doing a wonderful thing, so make sure you **enjoy every moment of your fundraising journey!** Don't forget to share it and keep your family and friends up to date with your efforts – give them a chance to feel part of your journey too! Social media is a great tool to help you connect with your supporters, don't forget to tag us too! You can find our social media details at the front of this pack.

**Top tips for sharing your fundraising:**

- **Create a facebook fundraiser and invite all of your friends and family**
- **Follow local groups, businesses and high profile people in your community. Tell them about your fundraiser and see if they want to help promote or donate to it. They might be able to contribute a gift or prize towards your raffle.**

## 5. Pay your money in

Well done on completing your fundraising, we are so grateful for your support. From the bottom of our wildlife hearts, thank you! Find more information on how to send your money to us on page 14 in this guide and if you need any further help, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

### Our fundraising toolkit

Visit [www.essexwt.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/fundraising) to view and download lots of helpful fundraising items.



# 'YOU ARE ALREADY ONE STEP CLOSER TO PROTECTING WILDLIFE'

Bluebells photo: Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography

## Top five fundraising events

### 1. Celebrate and donate

Party with a purpose! Whether it's your birthday, wedding day or anniversary, you can use your celebration to raise vital funds for Essex Wildlife Trust by asking for donations instead of presents.

### 2. Games night

Get your game on in the fight to protect wildlife and wild places. Get your friends together for a fun night to discover and crown your board game champion. Make it even more of a challenge and ask for donations if they land at certain parts of the game!



### 3. Feng shui

Change your wardrobe, change the world. You could sell your household items or recycle your clothes at one of our clothing banks to help raise vital funds for wildlife.

### 4. Sporting challenge

Are you in need of some motivation? Whether you are a novice or an athlete, we have the challenge for you! Walk, run or cycle, and discover Essex's magical wild spaces. Whatever you decide to do, step it up by setting up your online page and asking for donations.

### 5. Crafternoon

Make a difference one crafternoon at a time. Why not get creative and host a crafternoon session for your friends and family? Make cards and gifts to help your fundraising or try making resources to help bring back wildlife into your own garden. For more ideas, visit [www.essexwt.org.uk/actions](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/actions)







# 'OUR WORK IS ONLY POSSIBLE WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU'

Bee photo: Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography

## Bee inspired

Discover **ideas** from our fantastic **fundraisers**.

### We need you

Our work is only possible because of people like you! Every supporter fundraising for Essex Wildlife Trust plays their part in protecting the future for wildlife. **Meet some of our featured fundraisers.**

Bella and Rosie took part in the **2.6 challenge**, completing a 26km cycle challenge and **raised a fantastic £121** to help protect wildlife.



Nathan, Elliott and Grayson ran **26 laps** around the woods raising an incredible **£654**.

### Make it a team challenge

**Get your team together!** Nick and Jem challenged Alys and Sybille in a family cycle. Taking part in the **Essex Coastal challenge**, they both cycled 175 miles each, covering 350 miles together and between them raised a fantastic **£2,932**.

"Our children love being outside and enjoying nature. I want to fundraise so our children can enjoy it the rest of their lives. **The pandemic has highlighted the beauty of what is locally available**, and the importance of not taking it for granted. We need to secure its future together." Nick, Supporter.

### Spot the local wildlife!

Marc and Harry designed an **ultra-challenge** and completed a **35mile run** to raise vital funds for Essex Wildlife Trust.

### Marc shares his experience;

"We started at Two Tree Island at 07.30 and finished at Lion Creek at 15.30. It was a tough but fantastic day and brought home the amazing wildlife that lives around our Essex coastline and the threats it faces.

Guiding us on our way were flocks of yellow wagtails, house martins and corn buntings. A seal popped by to say hello and we found the rare saltmarsh plant, slender-hare's ear, as we progressed along this section of **South East Essex coast**.

Thank you for all of your inspirational fundraising and challenges, it definitely fired me up before undertaking mine. Thank you Harry for being a brilliant running partner – we will definitely be taking part again".

### Wild at heart, will you play your part?

Turn to the next page for inspirational ideas to kickstart your fundraising.





# 'WE NEED TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF WILDLIFE TOGETHER'

Bee photo: Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography

## Go wild indoors or outdoors

From bake sales to sponsored silences, these ideas are sure to help make it easy to fundraise at work, school or in your community. We have an **A-Z list of fundraising ideas** to help get you started with your fundraising.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>A</b> Art exhibition  | <b>N</b> Night time trek - spot the nocturnal wildlife  |
| <b>B</b> Bring and buy   | <b>O</b> Office olympics  |
| <b>C</b> Comedy night  | <b>P</b> Picnic at a reserve - <a href="http://www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves">www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves</a> |
| <b>D</b> Dog walking   | <b>Q</b> Quiz   |
| <b>E</b> Ebay auction  | <b>R</b> Recycle challenge  |
| <b>F</b> Facebook painting                                     | <b>S</b> Sweepstake   |
| <b>G</b> Give up something                                     | <b>T</b> Treasure hunt  |
| <b>H</b> Head shave  | <b>U</b> Upcycle and hold a crafternoon session   |
| <b>I</b> International day / evening                           | <b>V</b> Valentine's day  |
| <b>J</b> Jar of wild actions - get donations for each wild act | <b>W</b> Walk for wildlife  |
| <b>K</b> Karaoke   | <b>X</b> Xmas - 12 days wild challenge  |
| <b>L</b> Ladies night  | <b>Y</b> Yoga - connect with nature and wildlife  |
| <b>M</b> Marathons   | <b>Z</b> Zumba  |

### Top tips

**Put your heart into it** – find activities you enjoy, be creative and turn your passion into a fundraising event.

**Make it Inspirational** – Make sure you share the charity's resources with your supporters to help them understand more about the Trust's work and how they can help. Remind them why your fundraising is important to you!

**Set a target** – Start fundraising early so you can focus on planning on your event/ training for your challenge. Take on extra forfeits and add to your challenge as you reach key milestones to encourage donations. Those who add a **target** to their fundraising page raise **46% more**.

### Supports fish migration work

**£50**

£50+ could help us continue our work creating passages for eels and migratory fish in the rivers of Essex, helping fish get to their spawning grounds.

### Protects and restores sea walls

**£125**

£125 can help buy materials and support the installation of a structure designed to protect our sea walls and restore degraded saltmarsh.

# 'MAKE US YOUR CHARITY OF CHOICE'

Heather photo: Paul Harris/2020VISION

## Everyday fundraising

Easy things you can do every day to **raise vital funds** to support Essex Wildlife Trust, **without costing you a penny!**

### Shop with a purpose

With thousands of retailers to choose from, sign up to the following sites and **raise donations at no extra cost to you.**

Sign up to **easyfundraising** or **AmazonSmile**. By choosing to support Essex Wildlife Trust, every time you buy from these sites, you raise money for wildlife around us.

**You shop, they give!**

Do you fancy taking a holiday? Or would you like to explore wildlife all over the world? **Charitable bookings** are in partnership with booking.com, will help you find your perfect stay at the best prices.

### Support from your local stores and supermarkets


Many stores and supermarkets help support their local communities by offering customers a **chance to choose a charity of their choice** to receive a donation.

#### How you can help?

You can nominate the trust for these schemes and vote for us when you see us in your local store.

Find your nearest store online or visit the store in person to **complete a nomination form and nominate Essex Wildlife Trust.**


Watch out for ASDA's green token giving or Waitrose and John Lewis community matter schemes. If you do make a nomination, please email [fundraise@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@essexwt.org.uk) to let us know.



**easyfundraising**  
[easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ewt](https://easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ewt)  
Free donations for us every time you shop!



**AmazonSmile**  
[smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk)  
They donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases!



**Charitable bookings**  
[charitablebookings.com/charity/essex-wildlife-trust-limited](https://charitablebookings.com/charity/essex-wildlife-trust-limited)  
Support us when you book a stay away!





# 'MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR WILDLIFE EVERY SINGLE DAY'

Heather photo: Paul Harris/2020VISION

## Recycle for wildlife

Recycling helps wildlife. It keeps waste out of the environment, **preserves habitats** by reducing landfill, and **lowers carbon emissions** that cause climate change.

### Recycling

Recycle your unwanted items to help protect our environment and raise money all at the same time. Below are some ideas of things to donate:

1. Clothing, textile and bras
2. Jewellery and watches
3. Mobile phone and tablet devices
4. Old currency and stamps
5. Ink cartridges
6. Car



### How to recycle your items

#### Clothing

For our clothing recycling scheme, you can drop off your unwanted items at designated bins at **Hanningfield, Thorndon or Chafford Gorges Nature Discovery Centres**, and also at **Abbotts Hall Farm**. Please ensure bras are kept separate from your other items of clothing.



#### Ink cartridges

Recycle4Charity is a sustainable organisation that helps recycle your old ink cartridges, raising money for Essex Wildlife Trust. Get your free postage box: [www.recycle4charity.co.uk/Register/C33150](http://www.recycle4charity.co.uk/Register/C33150)



#### Car

GiveaCar will sell or scrap your car for you and send the proceeds to us. Visit: [www.giveacar.co.uk](http://www.giveacar.co.uk)



#### Other items

All other items including jewellery, currency, stamps, mobile phones, tablets and other electronics can be recycled by requesting an envelope or sack from: [www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org/individual-donors](http://www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org/individual-donors)



# 'MAKE THIS YEAR YOUR YEAR FOR WILD LIFE'

Peacock butterfly photo: Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

## Seasonal ideas

Whatever the **season**, we have a **reason**! Make this year your year for wildlife. Hold your own fundraising events all through the year, a great way to get together with your family and friends and give wildlife a hope for the future.

### Winter

Tis the season to hold a festive fundraiser and protect wildlife this winter!

#### Winter walk

Wrap up warm, put your wellies on and spot golden plover, dunlin and teal whilst listening out for the noisy flocks of up to 2,000 wintering dark-bellied brent geese! With over 87 nature reserves, we have plenty of walks to keep you exploring!



Dark-bellied brent goose photo: David Tipling/2020VISION

### Christmas carols

Did you know the robin is one of the few birds in the UK that sing all year around? This is due to the importance of holding winter territories. Warm up your vocal cords and join our birds, singing in aid of Essex Wildlife Trust. Plan a carol concert or sing with your friends and family in your local community to spread the Christmas cheer!

### Festive fun

There are so many ways to get creative this Christmas. Dress up and take part in a Christmas challenge to spread the cheer, make and sell homemade cards and crafts or have your friends over for a wreath making workshop with recycled items? Maybe even a Christmas cocktail challenge!

### Spring

Spring is a time for new beginnings - a wonderful time of year to start fundraising!

#### Wild at heart (Valentine's day)

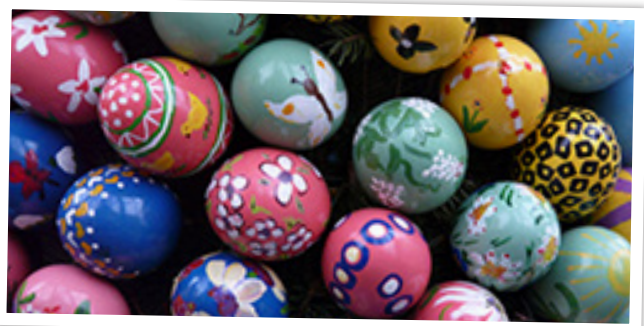
If you are wild at heart and otterly in love, why not take your loved one to one of our nature reserves? Give the gift of love to wildlife and your loved one by joining as a member of Essex Wildlife Trust? Visit our website for more information: [www.essexwt.org.uk/membership](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/membership)

#### Spring clean

Tis the season for spring cleaning – Start your year off as you would like to go on and donate your unused textiles, bras and household items and raise funds towards protecting wildlife in Essex with our Recycling Scheme to raise vital funds for our work.

#### Have a cracking Easter

Organise a Easter egg treasure hunt and raffle and invite all of your friends to join. Feeling creative? Invite your group to enter an Easter bonnet and egg painting competition. You could hold an Easter bake off and bake a difference!







# 'WHATEVER THE SEASON WE HAVE A REASON'

Peacock butterfly photo: Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

## Seasonal ideas

There is no bad time to **fundraise**. We can give you lots of ideas, whatever the time of year.

### Summer

From rock pooling at the beach to walking through wildflower meadows, summer is a very special season to enjoy wildlife and celebrate marine month in Essex. As our butterflies flit between flowers and reptiles bask in the sun, why not take part in one of our challenges to spot our summer time specials?

#### 30 Days Wild

We are putting you to the challenge, can you do one wild thing a day throughout the whole of June? We believe you can! It's time to get out and find your local greenspace. Visit our website to sign up and receive your digital pack for some wild ideas. Set up a just giving page to collect donations for your challenge, remember to document your 30 'random acts of wildness' and share them with your friends and family.



Photo: Katrina Martin / 2020VISION

### The Essex Coastal Challenge

Discover our stunning coast or take part from home. Join our team over Marine Month this August and help raise vital funds for the Trust by completing your own fitness challenge. Our coastline is 350 miles, join our team and get everyone on board to take part in something big!

### Summer skies

From paragliding along the coast to sky diving out of a plane, find a new challenge to take you high into the sky raising vital donations in this once in a lifetime experience.

### Autumn

For many plants, insects and some mammals, autumn is a time of slowing down, of shutting down. It's all about changing where and how you live in preparation for the winter, but it's also the perfect time to visit our reserves and host your own fundraiser this fall.

### Diwali

Celebrate the festival of light. Serve some delicious Indian food and let your guests tuck in. You could sell your tickets or have collection buckets located around your venue for discretionary donations.


### Oktoberfest

Why not host your own Oktoberfest with German food and a beer tasting session. Encourage your friends to come in traditional Bavarian garments and make it an October to remember.

### Halloween party and bake off!

Host a Halloween party and beastly bake off to celebrate the creepiest time of the year! You could include apple bobbing, face painting, costume and pumpkin carving competitions to raise vital funds.





**‘WE RECEIVE 25% MORE  
WITH A GIFT AID DONATION  
AT NO EXTRA COST’**

Blue tit photo: Adam Jones

# Paying in your fundraising

**Every single penny counts** and we have some great ways to make your **donations** go even further to make even more of a **difference**.

## Gift aid

If your supporters are UK tax payers and their donation is voluntary, they can **add 25% at no extra cost** to their donation. Please make sure that your family and friends fill in their details on your sponsorship form. If they donate to your online page, you don't have to worry, JustGiving captures this information. Please note that purchases of tickets or goods cannot be gift aided.

## Matched giving

Lots of businesses operate a **matched giving scheme**, which will double the amount of money you raise. Find out if your employer operates a scheme. Remind them it's tax efficient for them and it benefits the Trust. If they are able to match your donation, please let us know so we can identify the payment from your organisation. We are happy to help complete any forms that are needed.

## Add a little extra

Remember to have a look at all of our ideas and mix them together to make your fundraising a huge success. For example, if you are completing a sporting challenge, why not hold a bake sale or a raffle to give your fundraising a boost – every little helps and we have **ideas to inspire you for every occasion**.

## How to pay in your fundraising

**You did it for wildlife! Here's how to pay it in:**



### JustGiving

If you have set up a JustGiving page that is linked to the Trust, you won't need to do a thing, all donations on your page will get automatically transferred to us.



### Website

Pay in your fundraising online at **[essexwt.org.uk/donate](https://essexwt.org.uk/donate)** and send us your sponsorship form by post.



### Post

Please make all cheques payable to **“Essex Wildlife Trust”** and send to: **Essex Wildlife Trust, Abbotts Hall Farm, Maldon Road, Great Wigborough, Colchester, Essex, CO5 7RZ.**

Please include a note to inform us of your name and contact details in case we need to contact you in regards to payment. We'd love to hear what event you choose and how it went too. Please include paying in and sponsorship forms.



### Phone

You are welcome to call us on **01621 862 960** and donate over the phone using a debit or credit card.





# 'WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU AND SUPPORT YOUR FUNDRAISING'

Blue tit photo: Adam Jones

## Stay safe

A few things to ensure your fundraising event is **safe** and **legal** for everyone involved.

### Permission

If you are holding an event in a public place, please get permission first from the **property owner** or the local authority.

### Photos

If you plan to take photos of other people at your fundraiser, make sure your attendees are aware and you **gain their consent**.

### First aid

If your event involves many people, please ensure you have the appropriate first aid involved. Further advice can be found from **St John Ambulance (sja.org.uk)** or the **British Red Cross (redcross.org.uk)**. There should always be someone on hand to help at smaller events but for larger events holding 500 individuals, there should be a minimum of 2 qualified first aiders on site. If your event is bigger than this, please contact us.

### Insurance

It's important to have public liability insurance in place if your event involves the general public. Check first with your venue to see if they have this in place. Please note Essex Wildlife Trust cannot be held responsible.

### Public collections and raffles

If you are planning to hold such an event, please email [fundraise@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@essexwt.org.uk) to register your collection as you may need a license. We can also help to supply the appropriate buckets and tins to aid your fundraising

### If you are under the age of 18 years old

If you are under 18, you will need to gain permission from your parent or guardian to raise money for us. They can call **01621 862 960** or email [fundraise@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@essexwt.org.uk) to give their consent.

### Data protection

Only collect the information you need. Keep it safe, do not share it and only keep it as long as you need. You can find information about how we protect and use personal data in our privacy policy on our website: [www.essexwt.org.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/privacy-policy).

If you have any questions regarding your fundraising or any of the above, please email us on [fundraise@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@essexwt.org.uk). We'd love to hear from you and support your fundraising.



### Representing the Trust: Code of Conduct

Not that we would ever doubt you... when you are fundraising in aid of Essex Wildlife Trust, remember that you are acting as an ambassador for our work. Please be courteous and professional at all times and treat donors fairly. We follow the **Chartered Institute of Fundraising's Code of Behaviour** (we recommend reading this) and the **Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice**.

# 'ONE HECTARE OF SALTMARSH CAN CAPTURE TWO TONNES OF CARBON A YEAR'

Abbotts Hall Farm saltmarsh photo: Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

## Unsung heroes of our coast

Rachel, our living seas coordinator explains how **saltmarshes** can help fight the **climate change**.

### What is a saltmarsh?

Saltmarshes are habitats regularly flooded by the tide and are made up of unique, salt-tolerant plants. It is the roots of this highly adapted vegetation that bind the precious mud and creates semi-sheltered areas. The twists and turns of saltmarsh channels act as fish nursery areas, **allowing juvenile fish to find refuge** and feed, and predatory fish to hunt! These fish go on to support the biodiversity of the wider seas.

### Why are they important?

Not only do they **support a huge biodiversity** – from tiny critters in the mud, fishes in the creeks, to birds on the shore; they also protect us from coastal erosion, storm surges and help to combat climate change. **One hectare of saltmarsh can capture two tonnes of carbon a year** and lock it into sediments for centuries!

The UK are losing nearly 100 hectares of saltmarsh a year due to a combination of threats including sea level rise, development, an increase in storm surges and eutrophication. Despite being an iconic part of the Essex coastline, over **60% of our saltmarshes have been affected by erosion over the last 20 years**.

**"The truth is, the natural world is changing. It is the most precious thing we have and we need to defend it".** Sir David Attenborough



### What are Essex Wildlife Trust doing?

As a key part of Essex's wildlife, landscape, heritage, and identity, we have been protecting, restoring and creating saltmarsh habitats for many years.

Coastal realignment projects at our **Abbotts Hall Farm** (Blackwater estuary) and **Fingringhoe Wick** (Colne estuary) nature reserves are landscape-scale conservation in action. By breaching parts of the sea walls, the projects have created over 70 hectares of new intertidal habitat. In just over five years, the Fingringhoe Wick intertidal area is fully functional for feeding wading and wetland birds, including Brent geese, avocet, grey plover and shelduck.



# '60% OF OUR SALTMARSHES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY EROSION OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS'

Abbotts Hall Farm saltmarsh photo: Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

## Unsung heroes of our coast

Excitingly, it is already acting as a fish nursery area - with juvenile European bass, sand smelt, thin-lipped grey mullet and common gobies all being found. Trained marine citizen scientists and Essex Wildlife Trust staff had similar discoveries at another Essex Wildlife Trust saltmarsh, finding **over 160 fish** in two small surveys, including a baby squid! This highlights that these complex habitats are key for the recovery of our marine wildlife.

More recently, Essex Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency have been exploring an experimental, low-cost approach to saltmarsh restoration. Coir roll structures were installed in selected saltmarsh creeks (with the help of volunteers) to combat saltmarsh erosion. After one summer, they had already been colonised by saltmarsh plants and encouraged sediment to build up – both of which will consolidate and strengthen the marshes. All structures are being monitored to determine the success of this low-cost restoration technique and its potential for other sites along the Essex coast.



'Coir roll structures were installed in selected saltmarsh creeks to combat saltmarsh erosion.'

We are also working with the University of Essex to assess and showcase the amazing carbon sequestration and storage abilities of Essex's saltmarshes and these key projects. We look forward to sharing more with you.

### Your support

Our work is only possible because of your kind support. We are in a biodiversity and climate crisis and we must be ambitious and forward-thinking now to safeguard wildlife and ourselves in the future.

Support our **30 by 30 campaign** and help us restore 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030:

[www.essexwt.org.uk/donate](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/donate)





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