



**Avon**  
Wildlife Trust

# Bringing Wildlife Back

Our 10-year strategy for  
nature's recovery



# Foreword

## A wilder future – responding to the ecological emergency

We know the natural world is in crisis. Every year we're overwhelmed with new statistics about the shocking losses in wildlife around us. Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history. Since 1970, we have lost 69% of our wild animals, 50% of all marine wildlife and a staggering 83% of freshwater wildlife.

Here in Avon the picture is equally bleak – for example we have 96% fewer starlings and swifts than we did in the 1990s and we've seen sharp declines in familiar friends like nesting birds and hedgehogs. The loss of our natural world is rapid, and it's accelerating at an alarming rate.

The first Wildlife Trusts were set up to protect at-risk habitats – and that aim is still central to our mission. For decades we've worked hard to protect the few wild areas that remain, saving species in nature reserves and even bringing some back from local extinction. For over 30 years we have worked with landowners across whole landscapes to create more spaces for nature and join them up with wildlife corridors. But now, in the face of these devastating losses, we need to go further to restore, regenerate and rewild places everywhere, creating more space for nature to recover - before it's too late.

The next 10 years are crucial. The 2020s must be a powerful decade of transformation, where people everywhere start taking meaningful action on

the ecological crisis. We are encouraged that local authorities in our region have declared nature emergencies and are developing plans for how to respond. Avon Wildlife Trust is here to play a vital role in leading the change.

We're proud of our work to date - and this 10-year strategy outlines our goals for the next decade to bring us closer to our vision; where nature is recovering at a grand scale and we – along with future generations - are all able to enjoy abundant wildlife on our doorstep.

We hope you will join us on our journey. We need as many people involved as possible.

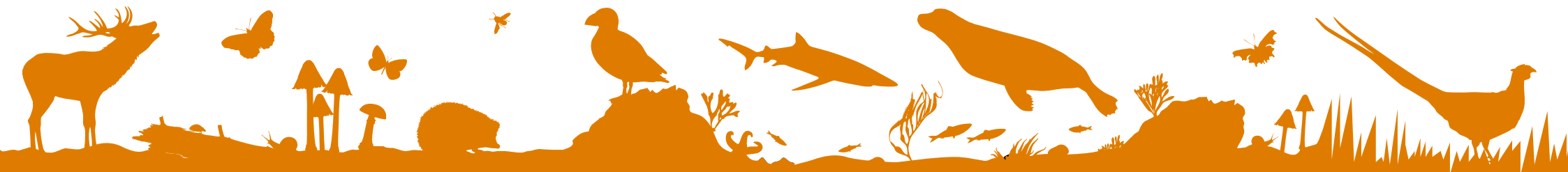
Let's do this together, for all of us, and for wildlife.



**Ian Barrett**  
Chief Executive



**David Relph**  
Chair



# 2020-30

## The decade we save our wildlife together

Our 10-year strategy is simple but ambitious; we want to help reverse nature's decline and bring back an abundance of wildlife in our region. We remain committed to our charitable purpose and have refreshed our mission and vision to reflect the latest scientific evidence on the scale of the challenges we now face.

### Our Charitable Purpose

**To advance environmental protection and improvement for wildlife.\***

### Our Mission

**To enable wildlife's recovery by working in partnership to restore, create and connect habitats, and increase species abundance.**

**To connect people with nature and help them take action for wildlife where they are.**

### Our Vision

**Nature is recovering on a grand scale, and everyone is able to enjoy increasingly abundant wildlife.**

\*Our full charitable purpose is "to advance environmental protection and improvement for wildlife especially but not exclusively in the area formerly known as the County of Avon"

# How Avon Wildlife Trust is supporting nature's recovery

The science is clear - human activities are causing significant ecological decline and change is needed at every level to restore nature's abundance.

Only by lots of people working together can we reverse the declines in wildlife and enable nature to recover on a grand scale. Nature is resilient – but it needs everyone's help, from farmers to town planners, and business owners to local people in their homes. Only then will wildlife recover.

At Avon Wildlife Trust, we believe that only when people have a connection with nature will they take the action needed to care for it. We know that the more people we involve in our work, the more likely society will reach a tipping point where prioritising wildlife becomes normal.



## Inspiring a love of nature

We work with people from all walks of life to inspire a lifelong love of nature, so they care about protecting it.

## Enabling people to act

We support, empower and amplify the voices of nature-loving people, and provide practical skills and training to enable them to take action for nature in their communities.

**HOW OUR WORK SUPPORTS NATURE'S RECOVERY**

## Managing land for nature

We work on our own reserves as well as in communities and with landowners and farmers to create bigger, better, more connected habitats.

## Advocating for change

We influence local government and partner with the national Wildlife Trusts to call for laws and policies which make more space for nature and restore wildlife's abundance.

**MORE ABUNDANCE OF WILDLIFE**

**MORE LAND FOR NATURE**



# Making a difference

The natural world needs all kinds of help to thrive. To help us focus, we have identified three priority areas for our organisation to work on.

## Nature's recovery

Protecting  
Creating

Protecting, creating and connecting wilder landscapes where wildlife and people thrive

by 2030 we want to see:

**30%**  
of land and sea managed for the benefit of wildlife

Connecting



We need to make more space for nature to give our struggling wildlife the chance to recover. We'll create, connect and restore a diverse range of abundantly wild places and form thriving nature recovery networks across the region.



## Empowering people

Inspiring  
Resourcing

Inspiring and resourcing people to take action for wildlife



by 2030 we want to see:

**1 in 4**  
people taking action for wildlife



The science shows that if just one person in every four takes action for wildlife, this can be enough to change the minds and behaviour of the majority, which will help to put nature into recovery.

## Nature-based solutions

Unlocking Nature to tackle the climate crisis

We want to restore and create good quality habitat to draw down carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, reduce local flooding and pollution while promoting an abundance of biodiversity across our region.



by 2030 we want to see:

**1,000 hectares**  
of habitat restored to provide nature-based solutions

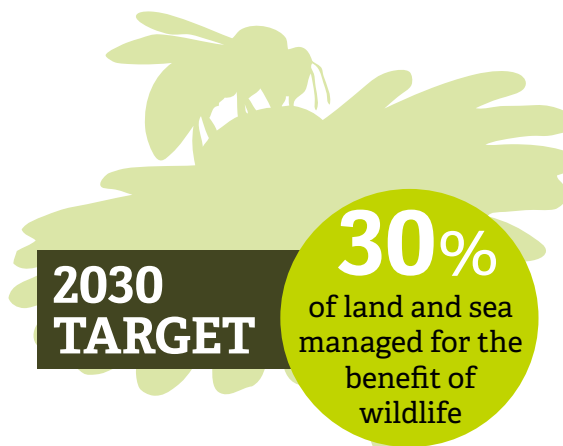


© SUSIE PEARCE



## Nature's recovery

Imagine this: spectacular woodlands and gorges, bursting with life. Peregrines soaring above urban gardens and wildflower meadows. Bats, beavers and dormice thriving in a countryside abuzz with insects. Vast wetlands fed by species-rich waterways, and murmurations of starlings sweeping across the skies. An Avon in which nature's abundance is available to all. Together, we can make this a reality.



### CASE STUDY

## Wilder Waterways

We're working in partnership with landowners, NGOs and local authorities to join up floodplains, create wetlands and increase biodiversity around North Somerset's Land Yeo river.

**Learn more at:**  
[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-waterways](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-waterways)



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# Bringing wildlife back



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To do this, we are creating a nature recovery network - an interconnected network across our region, where wild plants and animals don't simply survive in diminishing numbers but can thrive into the future.

We want 30% of land in Avon to be managed for nature – in cities and towns as well as the countryside.

To us, land that is 'managed for nature' means the landowner

has acknowledged the ecological emergency we face and is taking action that is sufficiently ambitious for that type of land, whether it's a farmer's field, a school playground or a motorway verge.

Our dedicated nature reserves are unique and special habitats, and we will continue conserving and enhancing them so that wildlife can spill out beyond their boundaries.

This means working with our newly-acquired land and with other Avon landowners to create more space for nature, rewilding large areas and having the courage to take a step back, allowing nature to do more.

## ROADMAP

**We will work with landowners, local authorities and statutory bodies** to support them in recognising the ecological emergency and restoring wildlife on their land.

**We will acquire new land**, creating habitats that are not only bigger, better and more joined-up, but also complex and dynamic. These purchases will be highly targeted, focusing our efforts on areas in which we can have the most effect.

**We will seek opportunities to restore natural processes**, creating wilder landscapes where people and nature thrive.

## Empowering people

# Empowering people to take action for wildlife

In order for nature to recover, we need many more people on nature's side. Evidence shows us that if 25% of the population – 1 in 4 people – visibly take action, we create a social 'tipping point', where the majority will follow.



For Avon, that means getting around 250,000 people taking action for wildlife. Nature needs to be a priority for the whole of society, and we want to bring everyone with us, starting with finding and supporting those 1 in 4 people.

'Team Wilder' is our solution. This is a community-based approach for getting unprecedented numbers of people involved in our work. We're building a movement of people taking action for nature across the region

**2030  
TARGET**

**1 in 4**  
people taking  
action for  
wildlife

that they love; doers, champions, networkers, campaigners and changemakers.

Our training will support people to become leaders and activators in their own communities, giving them the resources to set up projects, and work with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues to make a difference to their local environment.

Together we will take meaningful steps to bring about the change we want, and the change nature needs.

## CASE STUDY

### The Team Wilder approach in action

Grow Wilder is a meeting place and plant nursery where people come to learn and be inspired - and it's empowering children and adults alike to take action for wildlife at home.

**Learn more at:**  
[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/explore/grow-wilder](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/explore/grow-wilder)



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## ROADMAP

**We will listen to our community and develop practical resources** that help them: toolkits, training and advice.

**We will share our knowledge and skills** to help local people develop nature recovery plans for their own communities.

**We will connect communities** and create powerful peer-to-peer networks to share learnings, successes and failures.

## Nature-based solutions

The climate crisis and the nature crisis go hand in hand – they both need to be addressed at the same time. Global warming of just 1.5 degrees could mean 20-30% of species go extinct, as well as having a devastating impact on human communities.

**2030  
TARGET**

**1,000  
hectares**  
of habitat  
restored to provide  
nature-based  
solutions

# Nature-based solutions to tackle the climate crisis



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The good news is that nature offers infinite possibilities for taking action. Wildlife-rich habitats like meadows, wood pasture, peatlands and wetlands can soak up flood water, clean up polluted waterways and lock away carbon dioxide. Finding ways to create and restore new habitats, and to value them properly for the services they offer, will be hugely beneficial for local climate action as well as nature's recovery.

As society wakes up to the need for business and planning processes to halt and reverse the damage they do to the environment, there are excellent opportunities to bring in corporate support and private finance to fund nature-based solutions.

Avon Wildlife Trust is well placed to play a key role in local efforts to deliver these projects and ensure that the potential benefits to wildlife are also unlocked, and work on this

### CASE STUDY

## Bristol Avon Catchment Market

A £1.8million award from the Government's Green Recovery Fund has allowed the creation of the Bristol Avon Catchment Market with our partners Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Wessex Water, kickstarting a market for nature-based solutions.



Learn more at: [www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/avon-wildlife-trust-receives-ps1777600-grant-governments-green-recovery-challenge-fund](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/avon-wildlife-trust-receives-ps1777600-grant-governments-green-recovery-challenge-fund)

has already begun. With the help of our partners, we are planning to hit a target of 1,000 hectares of habitat used for nature-based solutions by 2030.

## ROADMAP

We are about to significantly upscale projects that can deliver biodiversity gain, carbon sequestration and pollution reduction.

We are forming partnerships with the farming and landowning community to create markets for tools like carbon credits and bring in private finance to spend on improving habitats, supporting our aim of managing 30% of Avon's land for nature by 2030.

We will create an Avon rich in habitats delivering nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, generating income to benefit wildlife for years to come.





# Saving nature also benefits people

As an organisation with wildlife at its heart, we know that, to achieve nature's recovery, we need as many people as possible to engage with the natural world. That means recognising and celebrating how it benefits them. For example, preserving natural spaces in our local area provides us with fresh air, clean water, carbon sinks and pollination. It also brings a whole host of benefits to individuals too.



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## Community

Our projects bring diverse communities together to care for wildlife in their area. Our events and volunteering opportunities build a sense of community, reducing social isolation and loneliness. **Learn more at: [www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities)**

We offer support and training to people of all ages to develop skills in conservation, horticulture and wildlife-friendly food growing, which improve confidence and help get people into employment.

**Learn more at: [www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/opportunitiestolearn](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/opportunitiestolearn)**



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## Skills & confidence



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## Economy

Living landscapes support a wide range of incomes across the economy, from nature-friendly farming to eco-tourism, as well as helping to build a sense of place in our region.

## Health & wellbeing

The science shows that spending time in nature is great for people's physical and mental health with **85% of adults in England** saying it "makes them very happy". **Learn more at: [www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wellbeing-with-nature](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wellbeing-with-nature)**



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*"No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced."*

**David Attenborough**



# Ensuring nature is for everyone

In nature, the sign of a thriving system is diversity – and human communities are no different. We passionately believe in the power of nature to transform us, and we want to share that with as many as people as possible. We know that those who have a relationship with nature are more likely to want to protect it.

In traditional forms of wildlife conservation there can be many barriers to people from certain communities taking part. These barriers have deep roots in our history and culture, and affect people in many ways. In practice, people from visible minority ethnic (VME) backgrounds or LGBTQ+ individuals may feel uncomfortable visiting rural locations where they are underrepresented. Meanwhile, those on lower incomes may not have access to a private vehicle, putting many of our sites out of reach.



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We want to create opportunities for everyone to feel welcome, both in nature and within our organisation. We've made a strong start, but we need to do more. We will be exploring how we

can do this most effectively, as we recognise that building a truly diverse community of nature lovers and environmental leaders is critical to nature's long-term success.



## WHAT WE'RE DOING:

**We will continue to improve representation** across our whole organisation, including at board level, to include disabled people, visible minority ethnic people and LGBTQ+ people.

**We will dedicate part of every Board meeting to reviewing our progress** regarding the implementation of our diversity strategy.

**We will bake equity and inclusion into our decision-making processes.** Staff will be required to consider how to remove barriers to participation and put plans on record at the outset of every project or campaign.

**We are reviewing our recruitment processes,** looking beyond digital communications and application forms to more radical ways of reaching potential applicants.



# Enabling actions

Our strategy is ambitious because the problems we face as a planet are grave. To solve them, organisations will need to change, and we are no exception.



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## IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY DELIVER OUR STRATEGY, WE ARE WORKING TO:

**Develop more hubs** where we can engage, inspire and equip people to take action for nature and provide suitable bases of operations for staff and volunteers across Avon

**Develop networks** of people and partner organisations to champion, drive and organise action for nature across Avon and help us engage more people from all walks of life

**Acquire more land** so we can directly implement even more nature-positive practices all over our region – as well as working with landowners to bring wildlife back throughout the area

**Grow our membership and income** to increase our capacity, by growing our supporter base and diversifying our income streams to provide stable, sustainable funding and generate a small surplus each year. **Join us at: [www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/join-us](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/join-us)**

**Invest in our staff and systems**, supporting a shift to more flexible working, with systems, technology and training that support effective working in a wide range of locations

**Monitor the impact** of our work and the outcomes for wildlife and people; and effectively communicate the difference we are making

# Bringing Wildlife Back

Urgent action is needed to tackle the nature and climate emergencies and reverse wildlife declines.

Our vision is to see nature recovering on a grand scale across Avon.

Join us and be part of it at:  
[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/join-us](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/join-us)

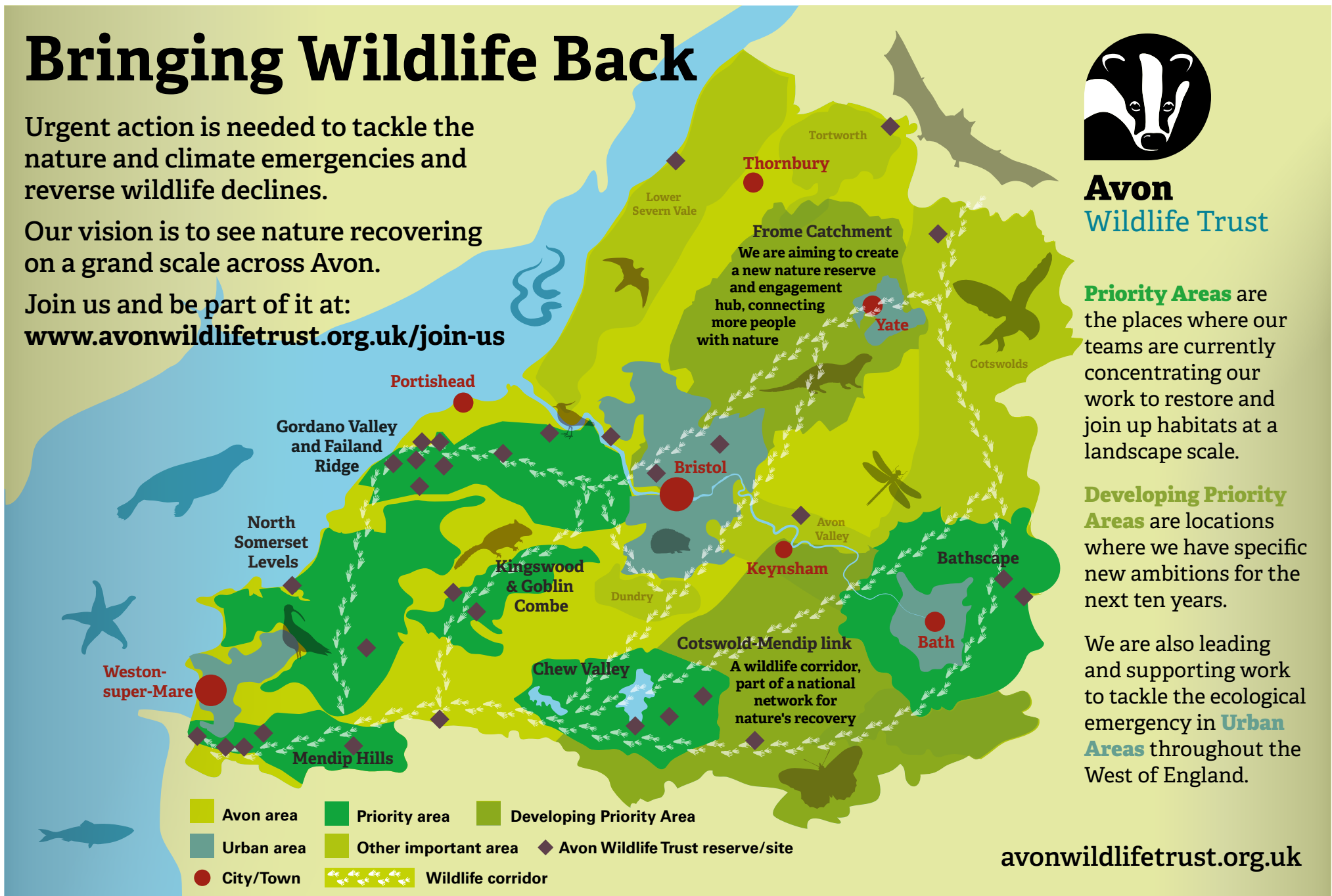


**Avon**  
Wildlife Trust

**Priority Areas** are the places where our teams are currently concentrating our work to restore and join up habitats at a landscape scale.

**Developing Priority Areas** are locations where we have specific new ambitions for the next ten years.

We are also leading and supporting work to tackle the ecological emergency in **Urban Areas** throughout the West of England.



[avonwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)