



Birds  
Science  
People

# ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

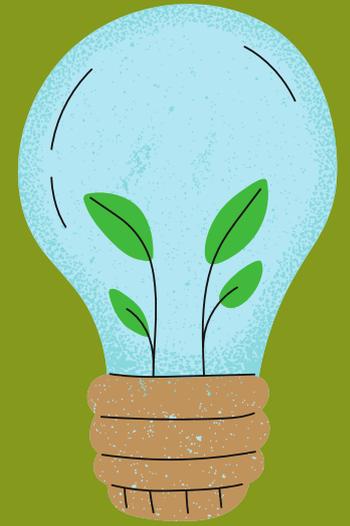
BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY  
2023-24



# Introduction to the report

BTO's 2023 - 2030 Strategy is intrinsically linked to making a net-positive impact on the environment and people. Each section of this report will look at our current activities and how much carbon equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) those activities cause, where improvements have been made in the 2023/24 financial year and plans for the future. The aim of this work is to achieve Net Zero earlier than 2050 and a net-positive impact for nature and people.

During the 2023/24 financial year BTO activities were calculated to have produced a minimum of 102 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. To help visualise this, imagine a hot air balloon. They look small, far away up in the sky, but when you see them close up they are huge! The air filling one hot air balloon is the equivalent size of one tonne of Carbon Dioxide. So to put in perspective the size of our carbon emissions, imagine more than 102 of these balloons in the sky.



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This symbol throughout the report signifies ways to work together to reduce our environmental impact.

# 2023/24 SUSTAINABILITY FIGURES

A bitesize report comparing 2023/24 to the 2018/19 baseline and previous year

Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)

Overall 102.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>e produced through BTO's activities during 2023/24

**21% reduction**

Compared to baseline

**4% increase**

Compared to previous year

**Gas heating** 25 tCO<sub>2</sub> produced

**16% reduction**

Compared to baseline

**13% reduction**

Compared to previous year



**Waste**

2.6 tonnes of waste collected

Generating 2.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

65% recycled

35% sent to Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) incineration



**Utilities** For The Nunnery, BTO HQ

**Water Consumption**

**44% reduction**

Compared to baseline

**12% increase**

Compared to previous year

409 m3 used



**Electricity Consumption**

**59% reduction**

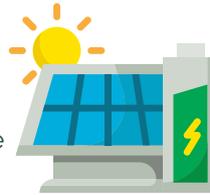
Compared to baseline

**1% reduction**

Compared to previous year

82,825 kwh energy used in 2023/24

9% of electricity produced by onsite solar panels



**Business travel**

Organisation wide

2023 / 2024

**3% overall reduction**

Compared to baseline

**10% overall increase**

Compared to previous year

57 tCO<sub>2</sub>e generated

**Car travel**



BTO owned cars

Other cars

**13% reduction**

Compared to baseline

**10% reduction**

BTO owned cars

Other cars

**40% increase**

Compared to previous year

**8% reduction**

148,000 miles travelled by car generated 42.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

**Air travel**



**31% increase**

Compared to baseline

**41% increase**

Compared to previous year

23 return flights covering 37,243 miles generated 11.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

**Rail travel**

**32% increase**

Compared to baseline

**16% increase**

Compared to previous year

65,283 miles travelled by train generating 3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e



**Bus, Coach & Ferry**

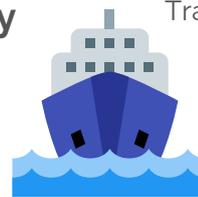
**302% increase**

Compared to baseline

**30% reduction**

Compared to previous year

8,449 miles travelled generating 0.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e



**Travel purposes**

Travel miles for fieldwork saw a

**47% increase**

Compared to baseline

Travel for meetings and other reasons saw a

**14% decrease**

Compared to baseline

**Projects**

2023 / 2024

**Energy saving initiatives**

- Continued upgrades of lights to LED.

**Green Travel Week**

- Reminder of available cycle support schemes
- Information on public transport and car sharing

**Improved waste collection service**

- Started collating calculations on waste
- Continued soft plastic collection, Terracycle collection and composting

**Biodiversity**

- Managing BTO gardens to optimise biodiversity through garden management group and management plan.

**Upcoming Projects**

2024 / 2025

**Waste calculations**

- Plan to start six-monthly waste auditing to understand and improve recycling rates.

**Climate perks holiday benefit**

- From 1 April 2024 staff can book additional leave for time spent travelling for holidays when choosing low carbon transport instead of flights.

# UN SDG's

## United Nation (UN)'s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

BTO currently makes a positive impact towards 13 of the UN's 17 SDGs, with many goals aligning with our strategy. Our priority is to make a positive impact for birds, using our strong and objective science in partnership with others. We strive to work sustainably and to welcome everyone.



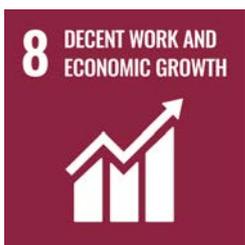
- Staff have access to a comprehensive wellbeing package.
- Staff have access to weekly sessions with Mental Health First Aiders.
- Work towards understanding eco-anxiety and how best to support it.
- Work connecting people and nature is shown to improve health and wellbeing.



- Public online training courses available to all.
- Free training sessions for young people.
- Supporting students and young people through ambitious youth work programme.



- We are committed to becoming more inclusive and doing more work towards closing the gender pay gap.
- We advertise job roles using gender neutral wording and promote equal opportunities and support for all.
- BTO Women's Network, aimed at providing opportunities to discuss and improve the barriers that women face in the workplace.



- We endeavour to support local business through procurement where possible.



- Our work focuses on scientific research and the development of STEM research careers.



- We are committed to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone is welcomed, valued and supported to contribute to our mission: achieving the greatest impact for birds. [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion statement](#).
- We are leading [community engagement projects](#) to engage local communities and engage more people from diverse backgrounds with the work BTO does.



- Research work is used to improve biodiversity in cities and developments.



- Internal travel policy to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Sharing information around purchasing and lifestyle choices with staff and supporters.
- Connecting people with nature.



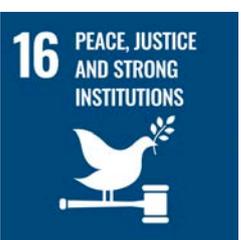
- Scientific research papers on the impacts of climate change.
- Carbon footprint calculations and reductions.
- Policies to reduce environmental impacts.
- Sharing informative education with staff.



- Our science is not restricted to life on land. Many birds are impacted by water systems and their resources.



- Our priority is to make a positive impact for birds, using strong and objective science in partnership with others.



- Our Promises & Policies have been brought together to show that we expect respect and integrity from all BTO staff and volunteers.
- Annual governance and accounts reports are available online.



- We are collaborative, working in partnership with individuals and organisations to achieve our collective goals.

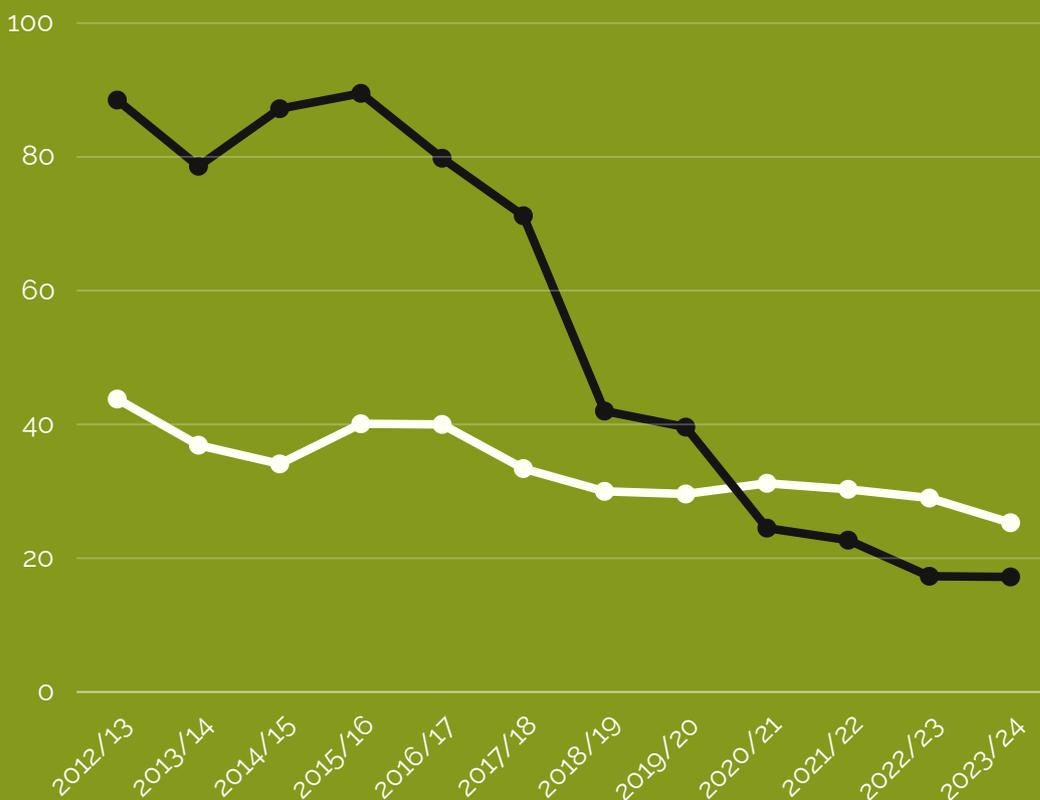
# Energy

This energy reporting refers only to The Nunnery BTO headquarters and does not include offices in Scotland and Wales or home working calculations. This year saw a 13% reduction in the use of gas compared to the previous year and a 16% reduction compared to the 2018/19 baseline. This was likely helped by adjustments to the boiler settings and turning the system off earlier in the spring and on later in the winter.

The solar panels generated 9% of electricity used this year. Overall, electricity use saw a 1% reduction compared to the previous year and a 59% reduction compared to the baseline year. Energy use has shown a consistent reduction since December 2021, largely due to upgrading IT equipment such as servers.



*Turning off lights when leaving a room, monitors when leaving your desk and computers at the end of the work day are obvious but impactful ways to reduce energy consumption.*



— Electricity  
— Gas

**FIGURE 1.**  
*tCO<sub>2</sub>e for all gas heating and electricity within the Nunnery buildings.*

# Waste

This is the first financial year we have had waste figures available, therefore 2023/24 will be the baseline year for waste calculations. The current waste collection provider, Veolia, takes general waste to an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) where it is incinerated to create energy. Dry Mixed Recycling goes to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and cardboard is taken to a paper mill where it can be recycled up to 9 times.

In total, 2.6 tonnes of waste was generated at the Thetford offices, which produced 2.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. 65% of waste was recycled and the remainder was sent for ERF incineration.

We have had compost bins in place since 2015 and additional Terracycle recycling bins since 2018, with the intention of significantly reducing waste going to landfill. These recycled and composted waste amounts are not calculated.



Keep Britain Tidy updated Waste Hierarchy, with the top priority to buy less, then purchase second-hand. Recycling and throwing away are the least desirable options.



*Do your bit to reduce waste by following the BTO Procurement Policy and making use of all recycling and composting facilities.*

# Food

Compared to diets containing animal products, plant-based diets in the UK are responsible for 76% less greenhouse gas emissions, 75% less land use, 54% less water use, and 66% less biodiversity loss. Therefore guidelines for purchase of food for meetings and events is to purchase plant-based, with the exception of dairy milk provided for hot drinks as this is still a challenging switch for individuals. We have now had many successful events with a fully plant-based buffet provided.



*Follow the BTO Food Procurement guidelines for all events and avoid waste by sharing out left over food.*

# Water

Water is the utility most directly impacted by the number of people using a space. There was a 12% increase in water usage compared to the previous year, with a 44% reduction compared to the baseline year as building use is levelling out, compared to the sharp annual increases between 2020 to 2023.



*Instead of leaving the tap running, use the plug to wash-up.*



**FIGURE 2.**  
*Annual water measurements per m<sup>3</sup>.*

# Travel

Travel is our largest contributor to carbon emissions. In April 2023 a travel policy was introduced with the aim of reducing travel emissions by encouraging travelling less and choosing land and sea travel methods over flights. Despite the introduction of this policy, travel emissions increased by 10% compared to the previous year and 3% compared to the baseline. There was an increase in the number of flights and rail journeys taken and the miles travelled for all modes of transport. The aim is for travel emissions overall to reduce, with less flights and an increase in international train travel to account for this. This year flights covered 37,243 miles compared to 32,879 miles in the previous year, with four domestic return flights, 18 short haul return flights and one long haul return flight producing 11.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to the previous years 8.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. An additional reason for the increase in flight emissions was a significant update to Defra's GHG emission conversion factors, recalculated annually to improve accuracy. This year our flight miles saw an additional two tCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to if the conversion factors had remained the same as the previous year. As per the travel policy, all flights have been offset with 12 tonnes purchased for a project in Gola Forest, Sierra Leone costing £228.

*Continued on the next page...*



***Follow the BTO Travel Policy and reduce travel through online meetings. When you need to travel choose the train. Talk to those around you about online and sustainable options.***



**FIGURE 3.**

*tCO<sub>2</sub>e for total travel by BTO staff including Scope 1 and Scope 3 emissions, excluding commuting.*

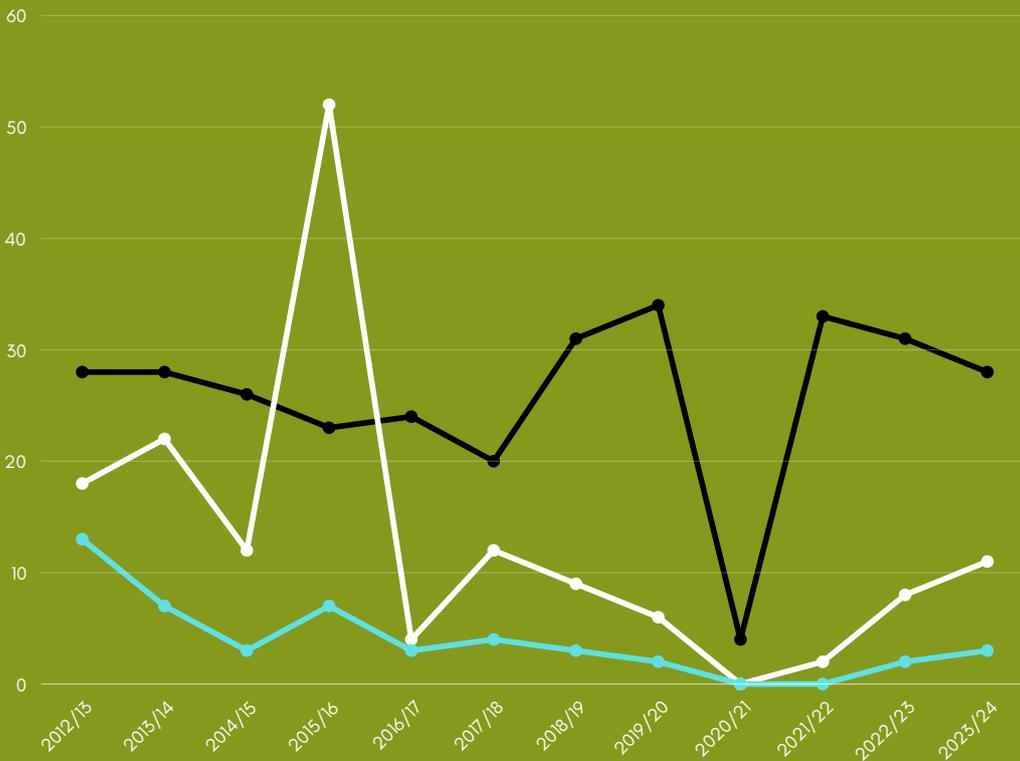
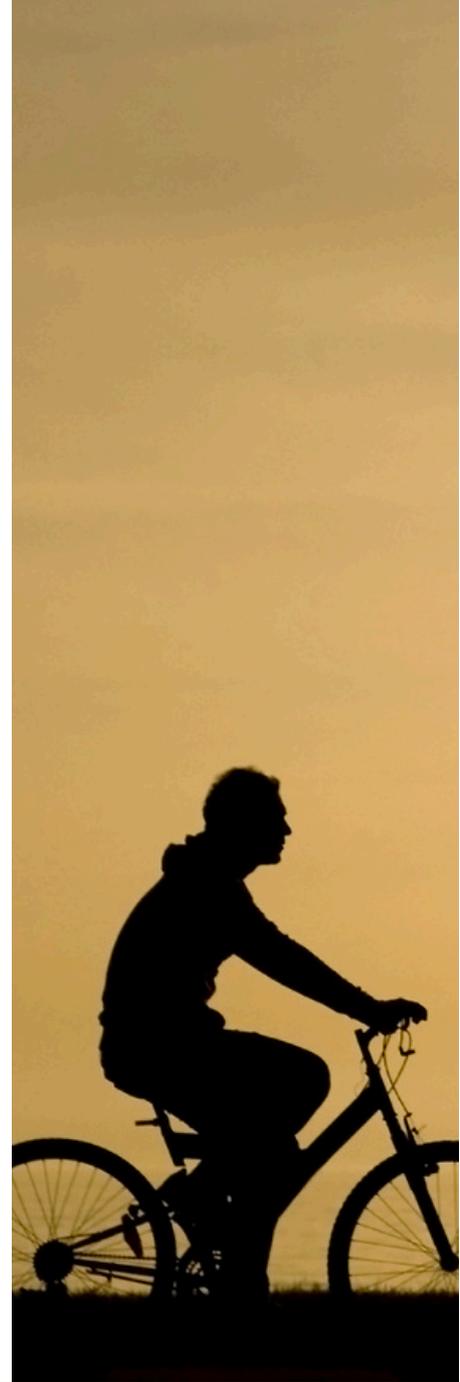
# Travel

Our largest travel emission is car travel with a total of 148,000 miles generating 42 tCO<sub>2e</sub>. Cars are frequently used for fieldwork, but we must investigate how car use can be reduced in favour of less travel and public transport, and make a start transitioning to an electric vehicle fleet.

We continue to encourage cycling for both work purposes and commuting, however just five miles of cycling were claimed as a travel expense this year. To encourage cycling, public transport and car sharing we ran a Green Travel to Work Week in June, with a celebratory breakfast for anyone travelling in a 'green' way, drop-in sessions and cycle maintenance and confidence sessions led by staff.



*Reduce commuting emissions by car sharing or cycling. Make use of the car share document and / or cycle resources.*



**FIGURE 4.**  
*Comparison of tCO<sub>2e</sub> for road, air and rail travel methods.*

# Social Responsibility

As part of BTO's societal role as an organisation taking responsibility for how its actions impact the environment and working towards a future where people and planet thrive, we have a responsibility to workers. This includes our own staff and those in supply chains producing the products and consumables we purchase.

The BTO's Procurement Policy outlines research to take on supply chains when making purchases and as per the food procurement guidance, food provided should be Fairtrade where possible, particularly fruit and coffee.

BTO is committed to educating staff, addressing the barriers to equity and diversity, and creating an inclusive environment. In order to help uphold these values in 2023 we started a project called 'Becoming Inclusive: BTO's programme of work, creating a place of belonging for all'. This has so far involved the introduction of the Becoming (more) Inclusive framework; mandatory training for all staff on race equity; participation in the Race Report; and the recruitment of a full-time EDI administrator. In March we held a break-out group for discussions around 'climate anxiety'. This work will continue as part of the mental health support programme.

With a fluctuating economic market, switching our pension fund to a more ethical fund has so far lacked progress, however the intention is to take this forward in 2024/25 as we need to ensure our investments align with our values.



*Participate in the provided EDI workshops and training sessions to broaden your understanding of people from varied backgrounds.*



# Education

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We can expect jobs throughout the entire workforce as well as individuals' lives to be impacted by climate change in the coming years. This is why it is vital to empower employees through education and access to information. We share updates on BTO's sustainability journey as well as information and ideas around making sustainable choices in the workplace and at home through fortnightly newsletters and staff meeting updates.

# Successes & plans for the future

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## **Successes during 2023/24 financial year:**

- Introduction of travel & flight offsetting policy.
- Introduction of procurement policy.
- Started a garden management group and produced a garden management plan to benefit biodiversity.
- Began calculating waste figures.
- Green travel week breakfast and events.
- Trialling public events which are accessible by public transport.

## **Plans for 2024/25 financial year:**

- Continued replacement of LED lighting & hand dryers.
- Application for Cycle Friendly Employer Accreditation for England.
- 'Climate perks' sustainable travel for holiday benefit.
- Switch to environmentally sustainable & ethical pension fund.

