

CIEEM AWARDS 2026

CIEEM

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Welcome to the 2026 CIEEM Awards celebration and thank you for joining us today.

I'm delighted we can come together today to recognise the people and organisations delivering progress for nature-raising standards, sharing what works, and celebrating excellence across our profession.

To everyone shortlisted, congratulations: you should be proud of what you've achieved. And to our winners, very well done! I'm also grateful to our judges, sponsors and partners for the time, expertise and support that make these awards possible.

I'm especially pleased that 2026 also sees the introduction of a new award, created in memory of Phil Colebourn, who was one of CIEEM's earliest members and a passionate champion of ancient, biodiversity-rich places.

This past year has reminded me that our work isn't only about getting the science and practice right, important though that is; it's also about bringing people with us. When ecological change is misunderstood, it can be quickly labelled as inconvenient or "anti-growth". The projects recognised today show what's possible when we combine evidence-led solutions with good communication and genuine local involvement, creating outcomes that work for nature and for people.

The challenges facing nature can feel urgent and complex, but today is a welcome chance to pause, celebrate success and take inspiration from one another. I hope you enjoy the afternoon and thank you for everything you do to help shape a more resilient, biodiverse future.

Penny Lewns
CEcol CEnv MCIEEM
President
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management





BRIEF SUMMARY OF AWARDS

CIEEM MEDAL

The CIEEM Medal is the Chartered Institute's highest accolade, awarded annually to an individual who has made an outstanding and enduring contribution to ecology and environmental management. Recognising exceptional achievement, leadership and influence across the profession, the Medal celebrates those whose work has had a lasting impact on nature conservation and environmental practice. The award is open to both CIEEM members and non-members.

IN PRACTICE AWARD

This award celebrates the invaluable contribution that authors make to knowledge sharing through feature articles published in *In Practice*, CIEEM's members' bulletin. Judges look for the most influential, engaging and thought-provoking article of the year – one that inspires discussion, advances understanding and contributes meaningfully to the profession. All feature articles published in *In Practice* during 2025 were considered for this award, regardless of whether the author is a CIEEM member or non-member.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

The Postgraduate Student Project Award recognises excellence in the planning, delivery and presentation of a postgraduate project or dissertation in a relevant area of ecology or environmental management. The award celebrates innovative research, academic achievement and the future talent shaping the profession. It is awarded to one Master's degree project/dissertation undertaken during the 2024/25 academic year, or equivalent where a different academic calendar applies. The award is open to CIEEM Student members, those who have since upgraded to Qualifying membership, and students studying on a CIEEM-accredited degree programme.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Undergraduate Student Project Award celebrates outstanding academic achievement and innovation across undergraduate study. Open to recent graduates who have achieved high marks for their final project or dissertation during the 24/25 academic year, the award recognises exceptional research, creativity and professional potential. Shortlisted candidates gain valuable recognition within the profession, helping to strengthen their CV and showcase their abilities to future employers. Nominations are also welcomed from project supervisors who wish to recognise exceptional student work.

NGO IMPACT AWARD

The NGO Impact Award recognises the outstanding achievements of NGOs delivering initiatives that have made a significant difference for nature and society. From grassroots campaigns to international conservation projects, the award celebrates organisations driving meaningful change through innovation, collaboration and public engagement. Eligible initiatives may focus on species, sites, policy influence, awareness raising or community mobilisation, and can operate at a local, national or global scale. NGOs of any size and from any location worldwide are eligible, with no requirement for CIEEM member involvement.

CLIMATE AND NATURE ACTION 2030 AWARD

This award recognises individuals or organisations making an exceptional impact in addressing the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. It celebrates those who are inspiring change through raising awareness, engaging communities and leading meaningful action that benefits both climate and nature. Initiatives may operate at a local, national or international level and can demonstrate impact through advocacy, education, innovation or direct action. Judges were particularly keen to recognise work that highlights the vital interconnection between climate and biodiversity.

PROMISING PROFESSIONAL AWARD

The Promising Professional Award celebrates the exceptional achievements of a CIEEM member in the early stages of their career. Open to Associate and Qualifying members, the award recognises individuals who demonstrate outstanding potential, professionalism and commitment to the sector. Winners will have shown excellence through their achievements, technical knowledge, leadership, passion for the profession and ability to inspire others working in ecology and environmental management.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Member of the Year Award recognises a CIEEM member who has demonstrated exceptional commitment and achievement in supporting nature, the profession and the Institute. The award celebrates individuals who consistently go above and beyond through their professional work, support for others and contribution to the success and development of CIEEM. Members from all grades are eligible for this award.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

CIEEM's Governing Board introduced the Special Recognition Award to acknowledge exceptional individuals outside CIEEM membership who have made a significant contribution to advancing the profession and supporting the work of the Institute over a defined period or through a specific piece of work. The award is made at the discretion of the Governing Board and is not necessarily presented every year.

PHIL COLEBOURN AWARD

CIEEM is proud to introduce the Phil Colebourn Award for the Conservation and Restoration of Irreplaceable Habitats. Inspired by Phil's lifelong passion for landscape history. Phil spent much of his professional life studying and promoting the protection and conservation of ancient woods, meadows, bogs and other irreplaceable habitats and the award recognises exceptional ecological projects dedicated to protecting and restoring those irreplaceable places such as ancient woodland, species-rich meadows, and blanket bogs, that cannot be recreated within a human lifetime.

BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

The Best Practice Awards are CIEEM's flagship project-based awards, celebrating excellence in ecological and environmental management practice. These awards recognise projects that demonstrate outstanding professionalism, innovation and measurable impact in delivering positive outcomes for nature and society. There are seven award categories:

1. Small-Scale Practical Nature Conservation
2. Large-Scale Practical Nature Conservation
3. Small-Scale Project Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement
4. Large-Scale Project Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement
5. Innovation
6. Stakeholder Engagement
7. Knowledge Sharing

Winning projects demonstrate a strong evidence base, effective planning and delivery, appropriate resource and risk management, and clear achievement of their objectives while showcasing best practice within the profession.

This year, we will be awarding the Tony Bradshaw Best Practice Award, which recognises outstanding achievement and innovation in ecological and environmental best practice. The award celebrates projects and individuals demonstrating excellence within the sector.

CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Consultancy of the Year Award recognises consultancies delivering exceptional ecological services while demonstrating leadership as employers and champions of the profession. The award celebrates organisations that combine technical excellence with innovation, collaboration and a strong commitment to professional development. There are three award categories based on consultancy size, and over two thirds of each company's ecologists and environmental managers must be CIEEM members. Judges consider criteria including high quality outcomes, shared learning, support for continuing professional development and promotion of the profession.



CIEEM MEDAL

Sue Bell CEcol CEnv FCIEEM MCIWEM

Sue Bell is a nationally renowned ecologist and environmental specialist with nearly 40 years of experience gained with the UK statutory agencies, voluntary sector, and consultancy.

Following a first degree in ecology, Sue worked for the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), where she was part of and then led the freshwater loch survey team. Whilst there she helped develop a standard classification scheme for standing waters and contributed to the development of guidelines for freshwater Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Following completion of her MSc, Sue worked for the Marine Conservation Society (MCS). She was responsible for promoting the Society in Scotland, and for developing policy on a range of issues including aquaculture, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Coastal Zone Management (CZM), and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Sue moved to consultancy in 1993, which enabled her to broaden her experience within a large multi-disciplinary company. She honed her considerable skills in ecological management, policy and strategy development, impact assessment, appropriate assessment, green tourism, public participation and environmental education. One standout example is her work on the Scottish Biodiversity List. Section 2(4) of The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 required the production of a list of habitats and species that Scottish Ministers considered to be of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland. Sue led the team that developed the criteria for the selection and identification of habitats and species to be included on the list and contributed to the criteria for aquatic plants.



Between 2001 and 2010, Sue was the Technical Secretary for the Advisory Committee on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (ACSSSI). Her role required a detailed knowledge of the Guidelines for Selection of SSSIs and the ability to assist the committee in preparing reports addressing scientific objections to the evidence base for identification of particular SSSIs. This included providing written and oral evidence for the Scottish Parliament.

As a freelance consultant since 2009, Sue has been able to continue her involvement in influencing policy and managing habitats. For example, she produced a management plan for the Water of Leith in Edinburgh, which required a significant public consultation exercise.

Sue is an ecologist of great integrity. A former Honorary Secretary (2000-2002) and President of CIEEM (2002-2004), Sue steered the growth of the Institute at a challenging time, using her strong leadership and professional skills to increase the range and diversity of membership. Sue has been a member of the CIEEM Professional Conduct Panel pool since its formation, and she is an experienced Assessor for the award of Chartered Ecologist, acting as a Lead Assessor for a short while. Most recently, she has played an integral part in the Institute's work supporting early career ecologists, delivering the two day Introduction to Professional Practice module for every Early Careers Training Programme that we have run since its inception.

Her commitment to encouraging others in their career as ecologists and environmental managers is illustrated through her role as a mentor. To date she has mentored over a dozen people through Napier University, the British Ecological Society and CIEEM's own mentoring programme. She is an enthusiastic and engaging trainer on a variety of ecological topics. She has run CIEEM's training course in habitats regulations appraisal and appropriate assessment in Scotland over the past 9 years and delivered bespoke training courses on this topic for local authorities and private companies. She has also prepared specialist training material in the identification of freshwater plants including invasive species.

In recent years Sue has taken up highly important roles as a self-employed Reporter for the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) of the Scottish Government, and a Planning Inspector for the Government of Jersey, where she uses her rigorous judgment, integrity and impartiality to deal with complex casework.

Sue is a role model to ecologists and environmental managers across the UK and beyond and is well-deserving of the 2026 CIEEM Medal.

VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The Volunteer Achievement Awards, now in its fourth consecutive year, aim to shine a spotlight on the remarkable contributions made by volunteers, recognising their dedication and impact on the CIEEM community. Nominations were assessed by three judges each, including members of the Governing Board and Secretariat and nominations which scored over the minimum average score were successful. It is with great appreciation that the winners of the 2026 Volunteer Achievement Awards are as follows:

Dr Liz Allchin CEnv MCIEEM



Liz was nominated due to her significant leadership and sustained voluntary contributions since 2022, particularly her commitment to upholding professional integrity through roles on the Preliminary Investigation Panel and the Professional Standards Committee, alongside her work developing the Rebuilding Nature Guidance for large-scale nature recovery, bogs, grasslands, and heathlands. Liz's nomination also highlighted her dedication to recognising excellence and raising standards across the profession through judging the CIEEM Awards, supporting award development through the working group, and championing high professional standards.

Athena Allen ACIEEM



Athena was nominated due to the leadership she has shown in revitalising the Early Careers Special Interest Group, delivering impactful events and resources for emerging professionals, and strengthening support for students and early career ecologists. Athena's nomination also highlighted her wider contributions through the Marine and Coastal SIG, mentoring, and work on articles and blogs that help shape understanding across the profession.

Jon Barnes CEnv MCIEEM



Jon was nominated due to his sustained commitment since 2011 across multiple committees and working groups, his enthusiasm for attracting diverse skills into the sector, and his role in upholding professional standards through significant contributions to the Membership Admissions Committee. Jon's nomination also highlighted his efforts to promote aquatic sciences and specialist knowledge within the profession, and his current leadership in developing Good Practice Guidance for freshwater habitat restoration within the Rebuilding Nature Working Group.

Kathy Dale CEcol FCIEEM



Kathy was nominated for her exceptional and sustained voluntary contribution since 2013, particularly her vital role in upholding professional standards through long-standing service on the Registration Authority and her commitment as a Lead Assessor for Chartered Ecologist applications. Kathy's nomination also highlighted her dedication to supporting colleagues and future professionals through mentoring, early career training, Fellowship assessments and wider CIEEM roles, alongside her generosity, reliability and enthusiasm in strengthening both CIEEM and the profession.

Rebecca Harris CEcol MCIEEM



Rebecca was nominated for her long standing commitment in promoting and supporting progression to Chartered Ecologist status, including extensive work as a Chartered Assessor, mentoring of colleagues, and efforts to raise awareness of Chartership across her professional networks. Rebecca's nomination also focussed on her valuable contributions to the Chartered Registration Authority, her role in improving the application process, and her wider support for CIEEM through activities such as judging the NGO Impact Award.

Charlotte Hogg



Charlotte was nominated due to the impact she has made in her short time as Secretary of the CIEEM Wales Section Committee. Charlotte's nomination highlighted her outstanding organisation, professionalism and commitment, and the momentum and structure she has brought to the team. Charlotte's nomination also recognised her leadership in organising and supporting multiple events, her positive and approachable role in careers outreach, and the enthusiasm, warmth and motivation she brings as a valued ambassador.

Victoria Hooper CEcol CEnv FCIEEM



Victoria was nominated for her long-term commitment to raising professional standards across the sector, including her work on multiple CIEEM committees, her role as a Chartered Ecologist Assessor, and her leadership in developing robust guidance such as the hazel dormouse competency standard. Victoria's nomination also highlighted her extensive mentoring, training and outreach work, which demonstrate the breadth of her voluntary efforts.

Dr Caroline McParland CEnv MCIEEM



Caroline was nominated for both her pivotal role in influencing the Natural Environment Bill - where her evidence and engagement directly contributed to the removal of Part 2, and her long standing leadership within CIEEM Scotland; including extensive policy work, consultation responses and representation with key stakeholders. Caroline's nomination also recognised her wider contributions through the In Practice Editorial Board, and her ongoing commitment to supporting members, championing best practice and strengthening CIEEM's profile across Scotland and beyond.

Ro Scott CEnv MCIEEM (rtd)



Ro was nominated for her exceptional and sustained contribution as an Associate and Full membership assessor and as a long standing member of the Membership Admissions Committee, where her commitment, professionalism and thoughtful judgement have supported the growth and integrity of CIEEM. Ro's nomination also highlighted the significant impact of her assessment work - including the large number of applications she has reviewed and the many individuals she has helped achieve membership, as well as her constructive insights, collaborative approach and dedication over six years of service.

Mike Willis CEcol FCIEEM



Mike was nominated for his exceptional commitment as a volunteer assessor, highlighted by the scale, quality and reliability of his support across Associate, Full and Chartered Ecologist applications during a period of increasing demand. Mike's nomination also recognised his sustained leadership and wider impact through long standing policy and strategic roles, including chairing the Wales Policy Group and contributions to the Action 2030 working group, exemplifying dedication, professionalism and generosity to CIEEM.

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IN PRACTICE

WINNER

‘Bots on the ground’ vs. ‘boots on the ground’

Dr Patrick J.C. White FCIEEM, Leni K. Le Goff, Lucy Emery CEnv MCIEEM, Carlos Abrahams FCIEEM, Melanie A. Findlay MCIEEM, James Cook CEnv MCIEEM, Kelly Macleod, Lewis Deacon CEnv MCIEEM, Paola F. Reason CEcol CEnv FCIEEM, Katrena Stanhope CEnv FCIEEM, Matthew A. Wales, Emma Hart and Karen Diele (Issue 127, March 2025)



“Bots on the Ground vs Boots on the Ground: The Future of Robots in Terrestrial Ecological Surveying” explores how emerging robotic and digital technologies are reshaping ecological survey and monitoring, and what this means for the future role of ecologists. The article considers the balance between traditional fieldwork (“boots on the ground”) and increasingly sophisticated autonomous and remote systems (“bots on the ground”) in delivering robust ecological evidence for decision-making.

At its core, the paper argues that robotics, AI, and sensor-based technologies are not replacing ecologists, but enhancing their ability to gather higher-quality data more efficiently and across greater spatial and temporal scales. Technologies including drones, remote sensing platforms, autonomous recording units, and robotic survey tools can reduce field effort, improve access to hazardous or difficult environments, and support more consistent and repeatable data collection.

The authors highlight the particular value of these technologies in long-term monitoring, habitat mapping, and biodiversity assessment, where they can reduce survey bias and expand the volume of ecological evidence available to practitioners. The article also acknowledges important limitations, including high upfront costs, data-processing complexity, and the continuing need for expert ecological interpretation to ensure outputs remain meaningful and decision-ready.

A central theme is integration rather than substitution. The paper presents the most effective approach as a hybrid model, combining technological innovation with professional ecological expertise. In this way, survey design, interpretation, and ecological judgement remain central, while technology broadens what is practically achievable.

The article concludes that the future of ecological surveying will be shaped by collaboration between ecologists and technology, with practitioners increasingly acting as data interpreters, system designers, and

ecological advisors, rather than solely field surveyors. This evolving relationship presents significant opportunities to improve efficiency, strengthen evidence bases, and support better environmental outcomes across development and conservation projects.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Improving confidence in eDNA surveys: Insight from Grassland Fungi

Matt Wainhouse MCIEEM (Issue 127, March 2025)

This article examines the growing role of environmental DNA (eDNA) in detecting and monitoring grassland fungi, and the steps needed to strengthen confidence in its use for ecological decision-making.

The article explains how eDNA has the potential to overcome some of the limitations of traditional fungal surveying, particularly the challenge of detecting ephemeral or cryptic species through fruiting bodies alone. By analysing DNA fragments present in soil samples, eDNA can provide a broader and more sensitive picture of fungal presence and community composition within grassland habitats.



At the same time, the article recognises that variation in sampling design, laboratory methods, and reference databases can affect results and reduce consistency between surveys. This can create uncertainty when interpreting findings for conservation or development planning. The paper therefore highlights the importance of standardisation, including consistent sampling protocols, improved calibration between datasets, and the continued expansion of validated reference libraries to strengthen species-level identification.

A key message is that eDNA should not be viewed as a replacement for traditional field ecology, but as a complementary tool. When combined with expert habitat assessment and conventional survey methods, it can significantly enhance ecological understanding, particularly within species-rich or data-poor grassland systems.

The article concludes that confidence in eDNA applications will continue to grow as methodological consistency improves and practitioners develop a clearer understanding of both its strengths and limitations. In doing so, it positions eDNA as an important and evolving component of modern ecological surveying, capable of enhancing evidence-based decision-making and supporting more effective conservation outcomes within a robust, integrated survey framework.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Notes on a Nightingale: The Opportunities of Scrub Restoration

Thomas Webb (Issue 130, December 2025)

This article explores the ecological value of scrub habitats and the often-overlooked role they play in supporting biodiversity, particularly for species such as the Nightingale.

The article highlights how scrub is frequently undervalued — or actively removed — within land management and development contexts, despite its importance as a dynamic transitional habitat capable of supporting a rich assemblage of flora and fauna. Using the Nightingale as a focal species, the piece demonstrates how structurally diverse scrub provides essential breeding, foraging, and shelter opportunities, and how the species' decline is closely linked to habitat loss and fragmentation.

A central theme is the opportunity that scrub restoration presents as a practical and cost-effective tool for nature recovery. Rather than treating scrub as a temporary or undesirable stage in habitat succession, the article argues for its recognition as a legitimate conservation target in its own right. It outlines how management approaches such as rotational cutting, mosaic habitat creation, and natural regeneration can deliver significant biodiversity benefits while maintaining wider landscape functionality.

The article also reflects on the broader policy and planning context, noting that scrub habitats are often underrepresented within ecological assessment frameworks and may be overlooked in mitigation or enhancement strategies. It calls for improved guidance and greater professional confidence in recognising the value of scrub within Biodiversity Net Gain and wider restoration planning.

Ultimately, the piece positions scrub restoration as a flexible and scalable opportunity for delivering meaningful ecological outcomes. By reframing scrub as a valuable and intentional habitat, rather than a degraded or transitional state, the article encourages practitioners to integrate it more fully into conservation design, supporting both species recovery and long-term landscape resilience.





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POSTGRADUATE STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

WINNER

Do soundscapes reflect differences in tropical rainforest habitat quality and bird communities?

Adam Ixer



Adam Ixer's dissertation, *Do Soundscapes Reflect Differences in Tropical Rainforest Habitat Quality and Bird Communities?*, represents an outstanding example of postgraduate research in applied ecology. Achieving a first-class mark (90/100), the project demonstrates exceptional originality, analytical rigour, and scientific maturity.

The study investigates whether acoustic indices derived from soundscape recordings can reliably indicate variation in avian biodiversity and habitat quality within tropical rainforest ecosystems in Gola, Sierra Leone. Drawing on datasets provided by the RSPB — including acoustic recordings, bird survey data, and site-level habitat attributes — the research is firmly grounded in real-world conservation monitoring needs and directly addresses the challenge of scalable biodiversity assessment in data-limited tropical regions.

The dissertation is clearly structured and exceptionally well written, with a strong synthesis of aims, methods, and findings. The literature review demonstrates excellent engagement with contemporary research in bioacoustics, tropical ecology, and conservation monitoring, effectively positioning the study within current debates surrounding the use and limitations of acoustic indices in complex ecosystems.

Methodologically, the project is highly robust. Adam applied a range of analytical approaches to explore relationships between soundscape metrics, bird communities, vegetation structure, and forest protection type. He also showed exceptional initiative in independently contextualising datasets using satellite imagery, species guides, and external ecological resources, ensuring a strong understanding of site conditions and ecological variation across the study area.

A notable strength of the work is the integration of additional publicly available datasets, including species guild classifications and morphological traits, which enriched the analysis and demonstrated advanced independent thinking. Despite having no prior experience in acoustic analysis or advanced statistical modelling, Adam successfully applied these techniques with a clear understanding of their assumptions and limitations.

The results provide novel insights into the relationship between soundscapes, habitat quality, and bird community composition in West African rainforest systems. The discussion is thoughtful and critical, acknowledging methodological constraints while clearly articulating the applied value of remote acoustic monitoring for conservation practice.

Overall, this is an exceptional postgraduate dissertation that makes a meaningful contribution to the development of innovative, scalable tools for biodiversity monitoring, and exemplifies the highest standard of applied ecological research. A well-deserved Winner!

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Trait-based evaluation of species prioritisation in onshore windfarm EIAs: Do current scoping and collision-risk assessments reflect ecological vulnerability?

Cheuk-chi Yau

Cheuk-chi Yau's dissertation explores a timely and highly relevant question in applied ecology and environmental planning: whether current ornithological collision-risk assessment practices within Scottish onshore wind farm Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) genuinely reflect ecological vulnerability, or are primarily shaped by compliance requirements. Positioned at the intersection of conservation science and infrastructure planning, the work is particularly significant given the accelerating expansion of onshore wind energy in Scotland.

The dissertation is clearly structured across six chapters, with a coherent narrative linking research aims, methods, and findings. A focused literature review demonstrates strong engagement with peer-reviewed evidence on bird–turbine collision risk, species traits, and modelling approaches, alongside up-to-date consideration of evolving NatureScot guidance. Three clearly defined research questions underpin the analysis, which draws on data extracted from 20 Scottish Environmental Impact Assessment Reports.

Methodologically, the project develops an original multi-variable bird species trait matrix to derive a Collision Risk Score (CRS), enabling comparison between ecological vulnerability and species selection within EIAs. This framework was applied across 287 records and 52 species, supported by appropriate statistical testing, including Mann–Whitney U and chi-square analyses. The approach is transparent, well justified, and demonstrates a strong command of applied ecological data analysis.

The findings indicate a statistically significant tendency for EIAs to prioritise species with higher CRS values, suggesting partial alignment with ecological risk. However, the research also identifies a notable compliance-driven influence, with some lower-risk species included due to statutory designation requirements, highlighting a potential gap between ecological vulnerability and assessment practice. The analysis further demonstrates limited sensitivity testing of key assumptions — such as avoidance rates and flight height — representing an important source of uncertainty in collision modelling.

The discussion provides a thoughtful and critical evaluation of these findings within the context of emerging regulatory guidance, while also considering their implications for improving the robustness and consistency of EIA practice. The dissertation makes a clear applied contribution by proposing a replicable, evidence-based benchmark for assessing collision-risk decision-making.

Overall, this is an excellent example of postgraduate research in applied ecology, combining methodological rigour with clear relevance to current policy and practice in a rapidly evolving sector.



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TETRA TECH

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

WINNER

Range Shift or Return to an Historic Baseline in Northeast Atlantic Basking Shark Population?

Sasha King



Sasha King's undergraduate dissertation represents an exceptional achievement in applied marine ecology and was regarded by her supervisors as one of the strongest undergraduate research projects they had encountered across decades of university teaching. Combining scientific rigour, technical sophistication, and professional maturity, the project makes a significant contribution to understanding long-term changes in basking shark ecology across the Northeast Atlantic.

The dissertation explores climate-driven phenological change and shifting distribution patterns in basking sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*), addressing a major gap in existing research. Following initial scoping work, Sasha independently identified the absence of any large-scale, long-term study examining basking shark phenology using combined citizen science and environmental datasets. She subsequently secured formal data-sharing agreements with six major wildlife and conservation organisations, alongside zooplankton abundance data from the Marine Biological Association's Continuous Plankton Recorder survey — an extraordinary level of stakeholder engagement for an undergraduate researcher.

The study compiled and quality-controlled more than 79,000 citizen science sightings spanning nearly four decades. Using advanced statistical and spatial analysis techniques in R and ArcGIS, Sasha investigated long-term changes in shark migration timing, habitat use, and environmental drivers. Her methodological approach demonstrated exceptional analytical ability, particularly in addressing sampling bias and integrating complex multi-organisational datasets.

The research revealed that basking sharks are arriving significantly earlier each year and shifting their distribution westwards, likely in response to climate change and changing prey availability. The study also identified the emergence of a new aggregation hotspot along Ireland's west coast, providing compelling evidence of recolonisation following the cessation of commercial hunting. These findings have important implications for marine conservation planning, protected area designation, and adaptive management for this globally endangered species.

Throughout the dissertation, Sasha demonstrated a highly professional and critical approach, carefully evaluating limitations while clearly articulating the ecological significance of her findings. The project is now being prepared for submission as a peer-reviewed scientific paper — a remarkable outcome for undergraduate research.

This outstanding dissertation exemplifies innovation, scientific excellence, and meaningful contribution to contemporary conservation science.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

An investigation into wildfowl populations at Tophill Low Nature Reserve

Jemima Beynon

This highly commended undergraduate research project explored the long-term drivers of wildfowl population decline at Tophill Low Nature Reserve, using more than 60 years of ecological data to investigate changes in species abundance, habitat availability, and environmental pressures. The study has already provided valuable evidence for the local Wildlife Trust, informing ongoing reserve management and future conservation planning.

The dissertation demonstrated an exceptional standard of academic writing, analysis, and interpretation. Professionally structured and clearly argued throughout, the project combined strong ecological understanding with a high level of technical competence. The quality of the work was further recognised through its inclusion within the Trust's own reporting on the reserve.

Drawing on extensive peer-reviewed literature, the study critically examined local and national drivers of wildfowl decline, including habitat change, disturbance pressures, and water quality. The research effectively contextualised site-specific findings within broader national trends, demonstrating a mature and thoughtful understanding of applied ecology and conservation science.

The project integrated long-term quantitative datasets with GIS spatial analysis and advanced statistical testing, reflecting the growing importance of digital analytical skills within modern ecological practice. Methods included Pearson's correlation testing, ANOVA, and spatial mapping, all applied appropriately and with clear justification.

The analysis identified significant changes in Gadwall and Shoveler populations over time, highlighting habitat availability as a key influencing factor. Detailed GIS mapping and robust statistical assessment strengthened the findings, while careful consideration was given to the use of non-parametric testing where appropriate. The project also demonstrated critical ecological thinking beyond purely statistical interpretation, particularly in discussions surrounding recent Tufted Duck declines and potential emerging trends.

Importantly, the research translated directly into practical conservation value. By providing robust evidence of the impacts of habitat loss and human disturbance on wildfowl populations, the project has enabled the Wildlife Trust to better understand ecological pressures at the reserve and support evidence-based management decisions.

Overall, this dissertation is an outstanding example of undergraduate ecological research, combining technical excellence, critical evaluation, and genuine applied conservation impact.



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EXPERTS IN ECOLOGY

NGO IMPACT AWARD

WINNER

Riverlands

National Trust

Riverlands, the National Trust's flagship freshwater initiative delivered in partnership across multiple catchments, represents a significant step change in NGO-led landscape restoration and is a worthy winner of the CIEEM NGO Impact Award. The programme has helped redefine river conservation in the UK, shifting from isolated site interventions towards a hydrologically led, catchment-scale approach grounded in natural processes, collaboration, and long-term resilience.

Working across five catchments in England and Wales — including Holnicote, the Upper Bure, the Upper Conwy, Ullswater, and Derwent — the first phase of Riverlands has delivered more than 25km of river restoration, alongside 29ha of new wetlands, 89ha of peatland restoration, and the creation or enhancement of over 100 ponds. Hundreds of interventions have reconnected floodplains, slowed water flows, and restored ecological function, delivering measurable improvements in biodiversity, water quality, and climate resilience.

At Holnicote, the UK's first main river "Stage Zero" restoration transformed 1.2km of the Aller into a dynamic wetland system, resulting in rapid ecological recovery, including significant reductions in peak flows and turbidity, alongside a substantial increase in wetland habitat. In the Upper Conwy, extensive peatland restoration and river reconfiguration have rewetted upland systems and reduced downstream flood risk, while in the Upper Bure, collaboration with more than 200 farm holdings has driven widespread improvements in water quality and habitat connectivity.



In Cumbria, large-scale re-meandering and wetland creation have restored natural river processes, increased habitat capacity, and improved sediment dynamics, contributing to internationally recognised river restoration practice.

Beyond physical restoration, Riverlands has delivered a systemic shift in how catchments are planned and governed. By embedding partnership-led delivery with land managers, communities, and statutory bodies from the outset, the programme has strengthened trust, improved decision-making, and enabled long-term stewardship. Adaptive, co-designed approaches have ensured ecological ambition remains aligned with local livelihoods and practical delivery.

Riverlands has also advanced technical practice through pioneering Stage Zero methodology, beaver-informed hydrological design, and long-term monitoring, while actively sharing learning through study visits, publications, and international collaboration. Its integration of creative engagement, citizen science, and cross-sector funding has further extended the programme's reach and influence.

Riverlands now stands as a nationally significant exemplar of catchment restoration, demonstrating how collaborative, science-led, and nature-based approaches can deliver lasting environmental and societal benefits at scale.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

The African Ocean Biodiversity Atlas

Ocean Rock Base

The African Ocean Biodiversity Atlas, implemented by Africa Ocean Alliance and led by Ocean Rock Base in partnership with One Green Africa (OGA) and Nature Cares Resource Centre (NCRC), receives a Highly Commended Award for NGO Impact in recognition of its transformative contribution to marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable ocean management across Africa.

The initiative has established one of the first continent-wide, community-driven biodiversity databases focused on Africa's coastal and marine environments. Using verified, geo-referenced data, it documents fisheries and blue carbon ecosystems, engaging more than 800 active users and mapping fisheries across 10 African countries. The project has also piloted 30 coastal blue carbon sites across four regions of Ghana, with ambitions to extend coverage to 20 African coastal nations.

At its core, the initiative delivers practical conservation outcomes through improved evidence for Marine Protected Areas, strengthened sustainable fisheries policy, and enhanced understanding of ecosystem health across habitats including mangroves, seagrasses, seaweeds, and algae. It also provides an important foundation for climate change mitigation by generating blue carbon data to inform marine carbon management and restoration strategies.

A defining feature of the project is its community-led approach. Indigenous and local coastal fishers are central to data collection, verification, and interpretation, ensuring traditional ecological knowledge is embedded within scientific mapping and policy-relevant outputs. This participatory model strengthens local stewardship while ensuring conservation strategies reflect lived experience and local priorities.

The project's success is underpinned by strong cross-sector collaboration across more than 20 African coastal states, involving government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and private sector partners. Ongoing stakeholder engagement has shaped both technological development and data application, helping to build trust, ownership, and long-term sustainability.

Innovation is central to delivery, particularly through the use of low-cost, locally developed ocean technologies that enable large-scale participation in data collection and mapping. By integrating community knowledge with scientific analysis and providing open-access, policy-ready outputs, the African Ocean Biodiversity Atlas offers a scalable and replicable model for inclusive marine conservation.

Through its combination of technological innovation, community empowerment, and cross-border collaboration, the initiative demonstrates significant and measurable impact on biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and sustainable resource management across the African continent.



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CLIMATE AND NATURE ACTION 2030

WINNER

Peatland Restoration Roadmap

Dialogue Matters working with EnvSys and Natural England

The National Peatland Restoration Roadmap received Winner recognition for its transformative, systems-based approach to addressing the interlinked climate and biodiversity crises at a national scale. The project brought together a broad range of stakeholders to co-create an evidence-based and widely supported framework for accelerating peatland restoration across England.

Commissioned to support the ambitions of the England Peat Action Plan to restore 280,000 hectares of peatland by 2050, the Roadmap recognises peatlands as the UK's largest terrestrial carbon store and as critical ecosystems for biodiversity, water regulation, flood mitigation, and landscape resilience. The project focused on overcoming barriers to delivery while ensuring restoration activity maximised co-benefits for climate, nature, and socio-economic outcomes.

A particular strength of the initiative was its inclusive and deliberative approach, engaging 52 stakeholders through structured workshops and a further 126 participants through surveys. Contributors included landowners, farmers, conservation organisations, statutory bodies, contractors, researchers, and representatives from the green finance sector. Through a series of regional and national dialogues, participants shared practical experience, explored trade-offs, and co-developed shared priorities for large-scale peatland recovery.



The process combined innovative facilitation techniques with spatial data analysis, integrating GIS-based mapping of restoration potential alongside qualitative stakeholder insights. This enabled participants to connect local realities with national strategy, supporting the development of a credible and delivery-focused roadmap grounded in both scientific evidence and lived experience.

The outcome is a nationally significant evidence base, including agreed definitions of peatland restoration, a mapped pipeline identifying 191,000 hectares of restoration opportunity, and 64 stakeholder-led offers of action. The Roadmap has also influenced policy development, with outputs informing future funding mechanisms, consenting approaches, and national delivery planning.

Beyond its technical outputs, the project has strengthened collaboration, built trust across sectors, and enhanced institutional capacity, including the training of Natural England staff in deliberative facilitation methods to support ongoing engagement and dialogue.

By embedding co-creation, systems thinking, and consensus-building into national decision-making, the National Peatland Restoration Roadmap has become a catalyst for action — translating shared understanding into practical delivery and accelerating progress towards a more resilient, nature-positive future.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit

LUC and The Wildlife Trusts

LUC received Highly Commended recognition for the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit for The Wildlife Trusts — a nationally significant resource designed to strengthen resilience across the organisation's network of nature reserves in response to the accelerating climate and biodiversity crises.

The toolkit provides a structured and user-friendly approach to climate adaptation planning, enabling local Wildlife Trust teams to understand climate risks, assess vulnerabilities, and identify appropriate management responses at site level. It also supports national coordination across multiple Trusts, helping to embed a consistent and strategic approach to adaptation planning throughout the organisation.

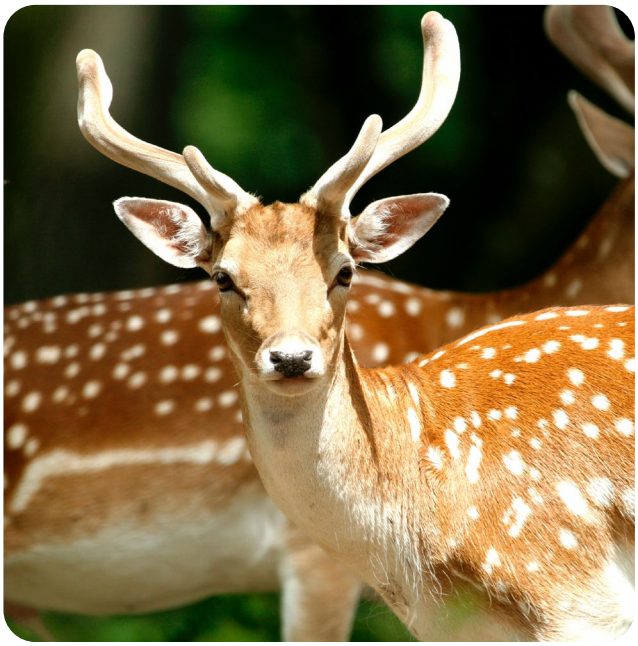
Developed through close collaboration between LUC's planning, ecology, and GIS specialists, the toolkit integrates national climate risk datasets with a practical Excel-based interface designed for ease of use and long-term adaptability. Users can input site information and select relevant climate hazards, warming scenarios, and timeframes, generating spatially mapped risk outputs that support a clear understanding of local climate impacts.

At the heart of the toolkit is a comprehensive library of more than 200 adaptation actions covering a wide range of hazard types, habitats, and management contexts. Using the internationally recognised RAD (Resist–Accept–Direct) framework, the tool automatically generates and refines tailored adaptation options, supported by case studies and prioritisation prompts to help users identify the most appropriate interventions for their sites.

A key output is the creation of bespoke "Adaptation Action Pathway" reports and accompanying monitoring logs, enabling consistent tracking of progress across multiple adaptation measures. This supports not only individual reserve planning, but also wider organisational reporting and shared learning across the Trusts network.

The toolkit is already being widely adopted across The Wildlife Trusts and is referenced in their 2025 *Resilient Nature Report,* where it is credited with improving climate risk assessment capacity and supporting the delivery of key adaptation actions across reserves, people, and operational sites.

By improving access to climate risk information and embedding nature-based solutions at the centre of decision-making, the toolkit is helping to build long-term organisational resilience and foster a culture of proactive climate adaptation across one of the UK's leading environmental organisations.



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PROMISING PROFESSIONAL

JOINT WINNER

Charlotte Hogg



In just 15 months of professional practice, Charlotte Hogg has already established herself as an exceptionally capable and highly regarded early-career ecologist, making significant contributions across several major infrastructure projects while demonstrating impressive technical versatility, initiative, and professionalism.

Charlotte has played an integral role in nationally significant projects including Sizewell C and the M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme, rapidly developing expertise in protected species licensing, ecological survey coordination, and mitigation delivery. At Sizewell C, she supported one of the UK's most complex bat mitigation licences, contributing to licensing applications, annual reporting, and innovative mitigation approaches. Her work included coordinating extensive bat survey programmes, radiotracking, compensation feature monitoring, and practical fieldwork, alongside supporting pioneering techniques such as tree veteranisation and Potential Roost Feature translocation.

Her work on the M5 Junction 10 scheme further broadened her technical capability, including hibernation surveys, Preliminary Roost Assessments, and Ground Level Tree Assessments, alongside coordination of aquatic ecology surveys and subcontractor management. Colleagues and senior technical staff have consistently recognised her diligence, strong work ethic, and ability to respond confidently to challenging project demands.

Across projects in Wales and England, Charlotte has demonstrated a remarkable breadth of ecological skills, contributing to Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, ornithology surveys, Habitats Regulations Assessments, and protected species surveys covering bats, dormice, badgers, reptiles, amphibians, otter, and water vole.

She has also undertaken Ecological Clerk of Works responsibilities during night-time infrastructure works, demonstrating adaptability and confidence while working independently in complex environments.

Alongside technical delivery, Charlotte has shown strong commercial awareness through tender preparation, subcontractor coordination, and client engagement. Her commitment to professional development is equally impressive, including extensive health and safety training, active volunteering with bat and dormouse monitoring programmes, and progression towards protected species licences and further specialist qualifications.

Charlotte's rapid progression, broad technical competence, and clear enthusiasm for ecological practice mark her out as an outstanding emerging professional with enormous potential within the sector, making her a highly deserving winner of this award.



Equally notable is Amy's contribution to team development and professional standards. She actively mentors graduates and interns, develops practical guidance documents and toolbox talks, and is widely recognised for her collaborative and approachable manner. Her enthusiasm for learning and commitment to continuous professional development further demonstrate her potential as a future leader within the profession.

Amy's combination of technical ability, professionalism, and passion for ecology has already made a significant impact across multiple sectors, making her a highly deserving recipient of this award.

JOINT WINNER

Amy Pinkney ACIEEM

Since joining the Arcadis Ecology Team, Amy Pinkney has rapidly established herself as a highly capable and influential early-career ecologist, delivering technical excellence across major infrastructure, energy, residential, and industrial projects.

Amy has played a key role in nationally significant schemes, including the Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order, where she authored technical appendices covering habitats and protected species. Her work included the development of an Ancient Woodland and Veteran Tree Strategy, a Landscape Ecological Management Plan, and a pioneering strategic water vole licence. Her Ancient Woodland Mitigation Strategy was commended by the Forestry Commission as an industry benchmark, reflecting both innovation and a strong commitment to best practice.

Amy has demonstrated impressive technical breadth, undertaking UKHab and NVC surveys, bat monitoring, otter and water vole surveys, badger surveys, dormouse nest box checks, and Ecological Clerk of Works supervision. Her work on projects for National Grid, Homes England, and UK Power Networks has consistently balanced ecological protection with practical project delivery.

Alongside her field expertise, Amy has shown strong reporting and project management skills, producing Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Biodiversity Net Gain baselines, and mitigation strategies to a high standard, often within demanding timescales.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Matt Jones

Since joining Bowland Ecology as a Graduate Ecologist in 2022, Matt Jones has rapidly established himself as an exceptional botanical ecologist, demonstrating outstanding technical ability, enthusiasm, and professional growth. Promoted to Botanical Ecologist within just one year, Matt has already built an impressive portfolio of specialist habitat survey and monitoring experience across the UK.

Originally beginning his career outside the sector as a Royal Mail postal worker, Matt balanced part-time work with completing a First Class BSc in Wildlife Conservation, alongside extensive conservation volunteering with organisations including the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Trees for Life, and research projects at Cwm Idwal. This dedication and passion for ecology continue to define his professional approach.

At Bowland Ecology, Matt quickly demonstrated an exceptional aptitude for botany, bryophytes, and fungi, identifying species and habitat features to a very high standard. He has since led and contributed to numerous technically complex projects, including SSSI condition assessments for Natural England, detailed National Vegetation Classification surveys of wetland and mire habitats, peatland vegetation monitoring for Natural Resources Wales, and ecohydrological studies of lowland raised bog systems for Defra.

His work has involved surveying a wide range of Priority and Annex 1 habitats, often within highly complex ecological mosaics. Recent projects have included detailed vegetation monitoring of blanket bog restoration sites in Wales, fungal monitoring for Severn Trent Water, and wetland habitat surveys focused on Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems for the Environment Agency.

Matt is recognised for his meticulous field skills, strong ecological understanding, and ability to interpret habitat condition and management requirements with confidence and accuracy. His enthusiasm for ecological science, combined with his commitment to conservation and continuous professional development, make him an outstanding emerging professional and a highly deserving recipient of this Highly Commended recognition.



COMMENDED

Ester Konecna

Ester Konecna has rapidly established herself as an outstanding early-career ecologist since joining Severn Trent's Biodiversity and Ecology Team in 2023. Having first joined the organisation through a university placement, Ester quickly demonstrated exceptional enthusiasm, technical ability, and professionalism, progressing into a permanent role where she has consistently exceeded expectations.

Ester has played a leading role in Severn Trent's ambitious grassland enhancement programme, independently managing projects across more than 20 operational and visitor sites. Her work has transformed areas of treatment works and reservoirs into species-rich grasslands that provide valuable habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, while supporting key commitments to the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Ofwat. Her leadership contributed to securing more than £92,000 in Outcome Delivery Incentive rewards.

Managing annual budgets exceeding £250,000, Ester has coordinated contractors, volunteer groups, regulators, and internal stakeholders with confidence and professionalism well beyond her career stage. She has continually improved delivery methods, strengthened contractor relationships, and introduced site-specific management approaches to maximise biodiversity outcomes.

Ester has also driven improvements in ecological monitoring, establishing a robust grassland survey programme and helping to build ecological skills within the wider team through mentoring and knowledge sharing. Her enthusiasm for botany inspired the creation of an internal botany club, encouraging colleagues to further develop their field skills and ecological understanding.

Alongside habitat enhancement work, Ester supports Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring, habitat classification, and ecological quality assurance, while also providing practical ecological advice across the business on habitat management and protected plant species.

Ester's initiative, technical capability, and passion for biodiversity have already made a significant contribution to Severn Trent's ecological ambitions, making her a highly deserving recipient of this Commended recognition.

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MEMBER OF THE YEAR

WINNER

Dr Sarah Cox CEcol CEnv FCIEEM

Sarah Cox is recognised as Member of the Year for her sustained and wide-ranging contribution to advancing ecological practice across the UK, underpinned by more than two decades of technical excellence, leadership, and sector influence.

Her career began at the University of Sheffield, where she developed advanced GIS and statistical modelling approaches to strategic conservation planning for mobile species. This early work established a strong foundation in ecological connectivity and spatial analysis — principles that continue to inform her approach to complex, nationally significant infrastructure projects including HS2, East West Rail, and major energy and housing developments.

Throughout her career, Sarah has led ecological strategy and delivery across large-scale transport, aviation, and infrastructure programmes. She has played key roles in ecological aspects of Development Consent Orders and Parliamentary processes, consistently embedding high standards of ecological evidence, assurance, and design integration. Her work has helped shape how ecology is considered within major infrastructure planning, strengthening both environmental outcomes and delivery confidence.

A defining feature of Sarah's contribution is her ability to bring together ecologists, engineers, and planners to develop practical, collaborative solutions. She has been instrumental in shifting perceptions of ecology from constraint to enabler, promoting early engagement and evidence-led decision-making that reduces risk while enhancing environmental value.



Sarah is also widely recognised for her commitment to capacity building and professional development. She mentors across multidisciplinary teams and has delivered structured training programmes that have demonstrably improved technical quality, consistency, and performance.

Her leadership within a major consultancy has strengthened capability across large teams and supported the development of future ecological leaders.

Her technical innovation includes the development of ecological connectivity modelling tools for linear infrastructure, integrating habitat suitability and field data to inform design and mitigation strategies. These approaches have been described as highly influential in improving clarity and decision-making on complex schemes.

Beyond project delivery, Sarah contributes extensively to the wider profession. She has authored technical guidance, contributed to sector publications, supported accreditation initiatives, and developed widely used tools to simplify understanding of Biodiversity Net Gain. She also serves as Chair of the CIEEM Registration Authority and is regularly engaged as an expert witness across major planning and infrastructure processes.

Alongside her technical work, Sarah is a committed advocate for inclusion, mentoring, and community engagement, actively supporting underrepresented groups within the profession and contributing pro bono expertise to community and environmental causes.

Her combination of technical leadership, professional integrity, and commitment to both people and nature exemplifies the values of the profession, making Sarah a highly deserving Member of the Year.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Dave Lewns MCIEEM

Dave Lewns is recognised as Highly Commended for Member of the Year in acknowledgement of his exceptional and sustained contribution to UK ecology over more than three decades, particularly through specialist bat and badger conservation, practical mitigation delivery, and professional knowledge sharing.

Throughout his career, Dave has played a key role in safeguarding biodiversity through pragmatic, evidence-led ecological solutions. His long-standing expertise in bat ecology — particularly lesser horseshoe bat conservation — is reflected in both his field practice and his proactive approach to professional development. Anticipating forthcoming licensing changes in 2025, he designed and delivered specialist training from a maternity roost he established, enabling more than 10 colleagues to gain essential survey experience while strengthening wider organisational capability.

His practical impact on infrastructure delivery is significant. At complex sites such as Ogmore Viaduct, Dave enabled construction to proceed within strict ecological constraints by applying detailed behavioural knowledge of roosting bats and delivering tailored mitigation solutions. His calm, informed decision-making has repeatedly allowed projects to progress without compromising species protection. His work with badgers is equally influential, including the design and delivery of artificial sett creation programmes and the transfer of best practice to engineers and contractors, building long-term sector capacity.

Dave is recognised for his ability to balance conservation outcomes with operational realities. At Skewen Bridge, he supported refinement of an over-precautionary roost classification through robust survey design, ensuring mitigation remained proportionate and evidence based. His collaborative approach with engineers at Neath Loop Line Bridge further demonstrates his ability to develop solutions that maintain ecological integrity while enabling construction activity.

A committed mentor and trainer, Dave has developed and delivered extensive internal training programmes in bat and badger ecology, combining classroom learning with practical field demonstrations. His willingness to support colleagues informally on site — often turning operational challenges into learning opportunities — has significantly strengthened professional competence across teams. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he also provided voluntary training sessions to support continuing professional development during periods of restricted fieldwork.

Beyond project delivery, Dave actively contributes to professional standards through involvement in guideline development, case studies, and competency frameworks for ecological practice. He also supports colleagues pursuing professional advancement, providing guidance on licensing and membership development.

Dave's career is defined by technical excellence, generosity of knowledge, and an unwavering commitment to biodiversity. His influence extends across individuals, projects, and the wider profession, making him a highly deserving recipient of this recognition.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Dr Caroline McParland CEnv MCIEEM

Dr Caroline McParland is recognised as Highly Commended for Member of the Year in acknowledgement of her exceptional contribution to ecological policy, professional standards, and the advancement of the CIEEM community in Scotland over many years.

Her career reflects a consistent commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity through evidence-based practice and strategic influence. She has worked across a wide range of ecological and environmental contexts, translating scientific understanding into practical, nature-positive outcomes that inform both policy and delivery. Her ability to bridge technical ecology with real-world application has strengthened decision-making and supported improved environmental outcomes across Scotland.

A defining aspect of Caroline's contribution is her influential leadership within CIEEM. Over six years as Vice-President of CIEEM Scotland, following a term as Vice-President Elect and earlier service on the Scotland Committee, she has played a central role in shaping professional dialogue and policy engagement. She has reviewed numerous consultation responses and briefing papers, and contributed extensively to discussions with the Scottish Government, NatureScot, and other key stakeholders during a period of significant legislative change.

Her work on the National Planning Framework 4 Technical Advisory Group and the Natural Environment Bill has been particularly impactful. Caroline has provided clear, evidence-led input to parliamentary processes, including formal evidence to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, helping to ensure ecological considerations are robustly represented within evolving policy. Her continued engagement beyond her formal term demonstrates a sustained commitment to supporting the profession and influencing positive legislative outcomes.

Alongside her policy work, Caroline contributes to the In Practice editorial board, where she helps promote knowledge sharing and raise professional standards. She brings a valuable Scottish perspective and places strong emphasis on accessibility, ensuring technical content remains meaningful for early-career ecologists as well as experienced practitioners.

Caroline is also a visible and approachable advocate for the profession, regularly supporting members, contributing to events, and encouraging engagement across the CIEEM community. Her leadership has helped strengthen collaboration, increase member involvement, and reinforce CIEEM's presence and influence in Scotland.

Her combination of technical expertise, policy influence, and dedicated service to the profession has made a lasting and influential contribution to ecology in Scotland and beyond.



THE PHIL COLEBOURN AWARD
FOR THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF IRREPLACEABLE HABITATS

CIEEM is proud to introduce the Phil Colebourn Award for the Conservation and Restoration of Irreplaceable Habitats. Inspired by Phil's lifelong passion for landscape history. Phil spent much of his professional life studying and promoting the protection and conservation of ancient woods, meadows, bogs and other irreplaceable habitats and the award recognises exceptional ecological projects dedicated to protecting and restoring those irreplaceable places such as ancient woodland, species-rich meadows, and blanket bogs, that cannot be recreated within a human lifetime.



WINNER

Moor Green Investment – Combs Moss

Moors for the Future Partnership

The winner for the Phil Colebourn award is Moor Green Investment – Combs Moss, From April 2023 to July 2025, Moors for the Future Partnership (MFFP), in collaboration with Nestlé Waters & Premium Beverages, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, and Harris & Sheldon Group, delivered an innovative large-scale restoration project at Combs Moss in the Peak District. The project exemplifies outstanding practice in the conservation and restoration of irreplaceable blanket bog habitats, combining scientific rigour, ecological restoration, and pioneering natural capital finance.

Combs Moss is one of the few remaining areas of recovering blanket bog within a landscape heavily degraded by over 150 years of industrial atmospheric pollution. The project undertook comprehensive baseline assessments, including NVC surveys, LiDAR-derived hydrological modelling, peat depth analysis, and Biodiversity Net Gain-aligned habitat mapping, to inform targeted restoration design.

Key interventions included gully blocking, bunding, and large-scale Sphagnum plug planting, restoring hydrological function, raising water tables, and accelerating peat-forming conditions. These measures are already enhancing biodiversity and improving downstream flood attenuation for communities such as Buxton.

A defining feature of the project is its pioneering BACI-designed monitoring programme, developed with the University of Derby, tracking vegetation change, hydrology, greenhouse gas flux, invertebrates, and bird populations. This robust evidence base underpins an innovative "stacked ecosystem service" financing model, integrating biodiversity, carbon, water quality, and flood mitigation benefits.

By linking ecological restoration with measurable ecosystem services and blended public–private investment, Combs Moss provides a nationally significant and replicable model for future peatland restoration and landscape-scale nature recovery.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

WINNER

Alexa Culver

This year, CIEEM's Governing Board introduced the Special Recognition Award to acknowledge exceptional individuals outside CIEEM membership who have made a significant contribution to advancing the profession and supporting the work of the Institute over a defined period or through a specific piece of work. The award is made at the discretion of the Governing Board and is not necessarily presented every year.

The award was established to recognise contributions that may not reflect the lifetime achievement recognised by the CIEEM Medal, but which nevertheless deserve formal recognition for their impact, innovation, and service to the profession. It reflects CIEEM's commitment to celebrating individuals who strengthen and support the ecological and environmental management sector beyond the Institute's membership.

Alexa Culver is the inaugural recipient of the CIEEM Special Recognition Award for her outstanding contribution to the profession during 2025.

Through the application of her legal expertise, Alexa played a central role in supporting the ecological sector's response to proposed environmental deregulation, particularly in relation to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and Biodiversity Net Gain.

She provided clear, detailed legal analysis and briefings that enabled members, stakeholders and decision-makers to better understand complex legislative proposals and their implications for nature and the profession.



A defining feature of Alexa's contribution has been her ability to bring people together. She helped to coordinate collective responses across a wide range of organisations, experts and sectors, strengthening the impact and consistency of engagement at a national level.

Her work also extended to public and professional communication, including webinars, articles, media engagement and contributions to sector discussions, helping to ensure that ecological considerations were clearly represented in wider policy debate.

Through her commitment, clarity and professionalism, Alexa significantly enhanced the effectiveness of both CIEEM's policy work and the wider sector response at a critical time.

Her contribution exemplifies the purpose of this new award, recognising those whose focused and impactful work helps to advance the profession and support better outcomes for nature.

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BEST PRACTICE

SMALL-SCALE PRACTICAL NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECT

WINNER

The Puddington Habitat Bank

Environment Bank

The Puddington Habitat Bank is a 10-hectare (25-acre) exemplar of rapid nature recovery, transforming exhausted arable land in Mid Devon into a thriving mosaic of species-rich neutral grassland and native scrub within the wider Culm landscape.

Only a few years ago, the site was intensively farmed for root crops, leaving heavily enriched soils and minimal biological activity. From this starting point, the project has delivered a remarkable ecological turnaround. Restoration began in 2021 with a nutrient-stripping spring barley crop, reducing soil phosphorus from index 4 to 2, followed by green hay spreading from a nearby Culm donor site, targeted scrub establishment, and the creation of shallow wet scrapes.

In under three years, the site has developed into a structurally rich, flower-filled grassland supporting an average of 12 plant species per square metre, with strong establishment of key Culm indicators including black knapweed, bird's-foot trefoil, and sneezewort. Negative indicators have rapidly declined, replaced by increasing botanical diversity and vibrant seasonal colour.

The ecological response has been equally striking for fauna. Skylark and yellowhammer now breed on site, while winter surveys regularly record up to 70 roosting snipe alongside barn owl, meadow pipit, and occasional short-eared owl. The return of these species reflects a recovering food web, with increasing vole populations supporting hunting raptors and barn swallow benefiting from abundant invertebrate life across the site.



Hydrological function has also visibly improved, with reduced soil erosion and clearer downstream water following vegetation establishment. Natural browsing by roe deer is further shaping scrub structure, adding additional habitat complexity.

Delivered at a capital cost of just £10,943.60, the scheme demonstrates exceptional value for money. Now secured under a 30-year management agreement, the site forms a long-term biodiversity asset and an important ecological stepping stone linking Dartmoor and Exmoor within the wider Culm SAC landscape.

Puddington demonstrates how quickly nature can recover when opportunity, simplicity, and landscape-scale thinking are successfully combined.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Limb Brook Nature-based Solutions Demonstrator Project

Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Sheffield City Council.

The Limb Brook catchment project is a partnership between Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Sheffield City Council, and local communities, demonstrating how nature-based solutions (NbS) can address flooding, biodiversity loss, and climate resilience within an urban catchment in Sheffield. Delivered between 2022 and 2023 at a cost of £98,000, the scheme combined feasibility studies, baseline monitoring, and community co-design to inform delivery.

A suite of NbS interventions was implemented across the catchment, including more than 50 leaky dams constructed from woody material, multiple “spilly dams” designed to divert high flows into woodland storage areas, and timber “dammy dams” to support the expansion of a SSSI sphagnum bog at Lady Canning’s Plantation. In total, 16 attenuation ponds, linked swales, and reopened drainage pathways at Whirlow Playing Fields now store and slow surface water before it reaches the main channel. Cross-slope placement of felled larch further reduces runoff and enhances infiltration.

These interventions sit upstream of a densely populated urban area, making the site highly significant for flood risk reduction. Hydrological monitoring undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University recorded changes in runoff behaviour, including delayed peak flows during storm events, indicating improved catchment storage and response. Complementary research also suggests that the nature-based solutions implemented at the site deliver strong long-term economic returns relative to investment.

Ecological monitoring has demonstrated positive outcomes for aquatic biodiversity, with white-clawed crayfish populations persisting and increased abundance and diversity of riverflies recorded following intervention. Habitat improvements also extend across terrestrial and wetland systems, with attenuation ponds supporting amphibians, invertebrates, and species including grass snake and snipe.

Community engagement has been central to the project, with citizen science monitoring, guided walks, and volunteer involvement increasing understanding of ecosystem services while strengthening local stewardship.

Overall, the Limb Brook project demonstrates how relatively low-cost, catchment-scale nature-based solutions can deliver measurable reductions in flood risk while simultaneously enhancing biodiversity, ecosystem function, and community resilience, providing a highly replicable model for integrated urban catchment management.



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BEST PRACTICE AWARD

LARGE-SCALE PRACTICAL NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECT

WINNER

Broughton Sanctuary

Broughton Sanctuary

Broughton Sanctuary, near Skipton in Yorkshire, is one of the UK's most ambitious and holistic landscape-scale nature recovery projects, integrating rewilding, regenerative farming, public access, and nature-based wellbeing across a 1,030-hectare privately owned estate. It represents a compelling demonstration of how multiple land uses can be combined to deliver biodiversity, climate, and social benefits at scale.

Since 2021, around 80% of the estate has been transformed from intensively sheep-grazed land into a diverse mosaic of habitats including wildflower meadows, wetlands, ponds, wood pasture, and expanding native woodland. This has included the planting of approximately 350,000 native trees and shrubs across 400 hectares, the creation of 70 hectares of wildflower grassland, and the reintroduction of beavers alongside rare-breed livestock within a mixed management system designed to support ecological resilience.

The project has been enabled through significant partnership funding, including £3.5 million from the White Rose Forest to support planting and 25-year maintenance, alongside £1.3 million for development of the "Odyssey" permissive path network, which has already exceeded its target of 10,000 annual visitors. Additional investment has supported natural flood management interventions including leaky dams, soil aeration, and stream restoration, contributing to improved water retention and reduced local flood risk.



Ecological outcomes have been substantial. The removal of intensive grazing has triggered rapid habitat recovery, with dramatic increases in invertebrate abundance, expanding raptor populations — including 13 recorded species — and the establishment of all five UK owl species on site. More than 1,750 species have now been recorded, alongside notable increases in butterfly diversity, breeding birds, and rare plant and moss records.

The introduction of beavers and creation of wet woodland have further enhanced ecosystem function, improving habitat complexity and supporting species such as otter, dragonfly, and little egret. Early evidence also suggests significant carbon sequestration and wider ecosystem service benefits, alongside strong growth in visitors, employment, and volunteer engagement.

Broughton Sanctuary demonstrates how integrated land management can deliver measurable biodiversity recovery, climate benefits, and socio-economic value, providing a powerful model for large-scale nature restoration in the UK.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Chalksole Farm Habitat Bank

Biodiverse Consulting

Chalksole Farm Habitat Bank is a pioneering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) project located in the North Kent Downs, transforming 33 hectares of intensively managed arable and pasture land into Kent's first formally registered habitat bank. Strategically positioned between ancient woodland parcels within the Lydden, Alkham and Swingfield Woods SSSI landscape, the project delivers landscape-scale ecological restoration while strengthening habitat connectivity across fragmented chalk downland systems.

The project's core objective was to prioritise ecological integrity over short-term commercial optimisation, creating a high-distinctiveness habitat bank capable of delivering meaningful biodiversity uplift. Following detailed baseline ecological surveys and soil analysis in 2024, the site was registered under a Section 106 Agreement with Dover District Council and entered onto the DEFRA Biodiversity Gain Site Register in March 2025.

Habitat creation commenced in late 2024 and includes lowland calcareous grassland, neutral grassland, mixed scrub, broadleaved woodland, ponds, and species-rich hedgerows. Works have involved planting more than 30,000 native whips, 300 standard trees, and over 1.5km of hedgerows, alongside the importation of chalk substrate to support establishment of calcareous grassland. By year 30, the site is expected to deliver more than 233 biodiversity units and 26 hedgerow units.

A defining strength of the project is its strategic ecological positioning, reconnecting ancient woodland and chalk grassland habitats across multiple valleys within the East Kent Downs landscape. Habitat design has been informed by the requirements of species including bats, dormice, and turtle dove, ensuring functional ecological corridors and improved landscape permeability.

The project is underpinned by a 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, with both formal and ongoing informal monitoring involving Natural England, the local authority, and ecological advisors. Early indicators already show rapid habitat establishment and emerging ecological value across grassland and scrub systems.

Beyond biodiversity outcomes, Chalksole Farm is already supporting local development through the provision of off-site BNG units for multiple schemes, demonstrating how development funding can directly enable strategic nature recovery. The site has also become a model of best practice, hosting national and international visits alongside knowledge-sharing events.

Chalksole Farm demonstrates how high-integrity habitat banking can deliver measurable biodiversity gains, restore ecological networks, and provide a scalable, replicable model for nature recovery funded through sustainable development.





HIGHLY COMMENDED

Bucklebury Common heathland and wood pasture restoration

The Bucklebury Estate

Bucklebury Common is a 340-hectare registered common in West Berkshire, forming part of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Once extensively covered in open heathland, this habitat has declined to around 30 hectares, although the site remains the largest surviving heathland resource in the area and an important stronghold for associated biodiversity.

In 2022, a multi-partner vision was developed by a steering group comprising local authorities, environmental NGOs, statutory bodies, and community representatives. Informed by historic mapping and ecological surveys, the vision established an ambitious programme to maintain the remaining heathland, restore a further 30 hectares of open habitat, and convert approximately 200 hectares of secondary woodland into structurally diverse wood pasture.

Delivery began in 2023–2024 through a combination of Countryside Stewardship, FiPL, and Species Survival funding. Works included large-scale birch clearance to restore heathland, creation of open glades and wetland scrapes, veteran tree haloing, pond restoration, leaky dam installation, and targeted woodland management. A new herd of Belted Galloway cattle was introduced using NoFence technology to reinstate conservation grazing across heathland and wood pasture habitats.

Ecological enhancements have already delivered measurable outcomes, including expansion of open heath beyond its previous extent, rapid heather regeneration, and early establishment of key indicator species. Woodlark territories are forming within newly created habitat, snipe numbers have increased, and Annex I species including Dartford warbler and nightjar are expected to benefit from improved habitat structure and connectivity.

A structured monitoring programme is being delivered in partnership with local expert groups, including ornithological transects, reptile surveys, and botanical assessments, ensuring robust evaluation of ecological change over time. The project also supports wider landscape-scale connectivity, strengthening habitat linkages along the ridge between the River Pang and River Kennet.

Alongside biodiversity outcomes, Bucklebury Common has delivered significant public and social benefits, including improved access infrastructure, interpretation materials, guided walks, and volunteer engagement led by a dedicated ranger. These interventions have strengthened community connection to the landscape while helping to protect sensitive habitats through improved visitor management.

By combining ecological restoration, heritage management, and community engagement at scale, Bucklebury Common demonstrates a highly integrated approach to landscape recovery, delivering long-term benefits for biodiversity, people, and place.



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BEST PRACTICE AWARD

SMALL-SCALE PROJECT MITIGATION, COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT

WINNER

Burnley Road Pipe Bridge Removal

Mott MacDonald Bentley

Mott MacDonald Bentley (MMB) delivered an innovative and environmentally responsible solution through the Burnley Road Pipe Bridge Removal project, significantly reducing ecological impact while improving the long-term resilience of infrastructure along the River Calder. The scheme demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable development by successfully balancing environmental protection, engineering innovation, and operational efficiency.



Central to the project was the removal of the existing pipe bridge and installation of a new below-ground pipeline using Horizontal Directional Drilling techniques. This approach enabled the pipeline to be installed more than 10 metres beneath the riverbed, substantially reducing the risk of future contamination reaching the watercourse while removing the long-term structural vulnerabilities associated with an above-ground crossing.

MMB also challenged the original design proposals, which would have required extensive vegetation clearance and significant habitat loss. By reassessing the solution and adopting innovative construction techniques, the team avoided the removal of approximately 200 trees, with only 16 ultimately removed across the scheme — a reduction of around 92%. This preserved important riverside habitats and significantly minimised biodiversity impacts throughout delivery.

Environmental considerations remained central during construction. Innovative cantilever scaffolding eliminated the need for supports within the river channel, preventing disturbance to spawning fish and sensitive aquatic habitats. Ecological surveys also informed construction activities, helping to reduce night-time working near potential bat roosts and minimise disruption to local wildlife.

The project further embedded long-term sustainability within its operational design. The gravity-fed inverted syphon system removed the need for pumps and associated electrical infrastructure, delivering a low-maintenance, energy-efficient solution with reduced operational costs and a lower carbon footprint.

Through innovation, environmental stewardship, and sustainable engineering, the Burnley Road Pipe Bridge Removal project has delivered lasting ecological and operational benefits, demonstrating how infrastructure schemes can successfully minimise impacts on the natural environment while improving long-term resilience.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Cheltenham Crematorium

RSK Biocensus and Cheltenham Borough Council

Cheltenham Crematorium received Highly Commended recognition for its innovative and carefully managed bat mitigation project, which successfully balanced redevelopment of a heritage building with the long-term protection of important bat populations. Working within a complex listed structure, the project demonstrated exemplary ecological stewardship, technical expertise, and collaborative problem-solving.

A key challenge involved safely excluding lesser horseshoe bats and brown long-eared bats from the cremator building during a narrow seasonal window between hibernation and breeding periods. This enabled essential refurbishment works and removal of cremator equipment to proceed while minimising disturbance during one of the bats' most vulnerable periods. The exclusion process required detailed ecological oversight, adaptive planning, and the use of infrared cameras and remote monitoring technology to carefully manage bat movements over several nights.

The project team developed bespoke exclusion methods and enhancement measures to ensure bats could continue using the site safely in the long term. Existing winter roosting provision was retained and enhanced, while improvements within the roof void created a range of microclimates, access routes, and perching opportunities designed to support future bat populations. Recycled materials were also incorporated wherever possible within the mitigation works.

Although the intention had been to gradually encourage bats to use a newly created access point, the lesser horseshoe bats adapted rapidly and naturally returned to the enhanced loft space. Monitoring confirmed the return of up to 11 bats, including evidence of breeding activity and establishment of a satellite roost, providing encouraging signs for the long-term resilience of the colony.

The project also delivered wider social and economic benefits by enabling Cheltenham Borough Council to safely progress plans for the building's future use, creating a valuable community asset and potential income source while safeguarding protected species and habitats for years to come.



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BEST PRACTICE AWARD:

LARGE-SCALE PROJECT MITIGATION, COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT

WINNER

Chalksole Farm Habitat Bank

Biodiverse Consulting



Chalksole Farm Habitat Bank is a pioneering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) project in the North Kent Downs, transforming 33 hectares of intensively farmed arable and pasture land into Kent's first registered habitat bank. Strategically located between ancient woodland parcels within the Lydden, Alkham and Swingfield Woods SSSI landscape, the site delivers off-site biodiversity mitigation for local developments while enabling landscape-scale ecological restoration.

Historically, the site supported intensive cereal production, resulting in simplified field systems, fragmented hedgerows, and nutrient-enriched soils with associated runoff impacts. Through a design-led and evidence-based approach, Chalksole has been reimagined as a connected mosaic of high-distinctiveness habitats, prioritising ecological function and long-term resilience over minimum compliance.

Baseline ecological surveys and soil analysis undertaken in 2024 informed habitat design and spatial planning, supported by early engagement with Natural England, Dover District Council, and Biodiverse Consulting. The scheme was subsequently approved through a Section 106 agreement and registered on the DEFRA Biodiversity Gain Site Register in March 2025.

Habitat creation commenced in late 2024 and includes lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadow, neutral grassland, mixed scrub, broadleaved woodland, ponds, and species-rich hedgerows. Delivery has included planting more than 30,000 whips, 300 standard trees, and over 1.5km of hedgerows, alongside the importation of approximately 2,000 tonnes of chalk substrate to support calcareous grassland establishment. By year 30, the site is expected to deliver more than 233 biodiversity units and 26 hedgerow units, representing a net gain exceeding 300%.

A key strength of the project is its commitment to high-distinctiveness habitats, advanced establishment techniques, and adaptive management. Higher-quality seed mixes, increased sowing densities, and structural planting using larger trees have all been employed to accelerate ecological function and long-term resilience. Challenges including soil constraints, invasive grasses, and grazing pressure have been addressed through responsive, evidence-led management.

Beyond habitat delivery, Chalksole is already supporting multiple developments through off-site BNG units and is increasingly recognised as a model habitat bank. The site has hosted national and international visits, knowledge exchange events, and practitioner workshops, demonstrating how development-led funding can be channelled into genuine, long-term nature recovery.

Chalksole Farm exemplifies how strategic and collaborative habitat banking can deliver measurable biodiversity gains, strengthen ecological networks, and provide a scalable model for high-integrity landscape restoration.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Stroud Sewer Strategy: River Frome Water Vole Mitigation Project

Wildwood Ecology, Galliford Try & RammSanderson

The River Frome Water Vole Mitigation Project formed a key ecological component of Severn Trent's Stroud Sewer Strategy, a £30 million infrastructure programme delivered between 2021 and 2025 to reduce flood risk and improve water quality across the Five Valleys and wider Severn catchment. Led by RammSanderson, with specialist support from Wildwood Ecology and principal contractor Galliford Try, the scheme required careful management of protected species within a 3.5km sewer upgrade corridor that included two crossings of the River Frome.

A Natural England-licensed water vole displacement programme was delivered using a phased vegetation manipulation approach that avoided captivity and encouraged natural dispersal. Works were undertaken under ecological supervision, supported by burrow closure confirmation and pre-construction monitoring. In-channel works were facilitated through temporary bypass channels and PortaDams, enabling dry working conditions and the safe relocation of more than 1,500 fish — including eel, trout, lamprey, and bullhead — via electrofishing, with no recorded mortality.

Habitat reinstatement exceeded compliance requirements through engineered riverbank reprofiling and coir matting seeded with native riparian flora. This improved bank stability, forage availability, and shelter provision, supporting rapid recolonisation. Post-construction monitoring recorded new water vole burrows, latrines, and territory re-establishment within months, alongside returning fish spawning activity and improved riparian vegetation structure. Extensive removal of invasive Himalayan balsam further strengthened ecological resilience and reduced erosion risk.

Voluntary biodiversity enhancements included pollinator planting, bat and bird boxes, dormouse and otter surveys, and artificial badger sett creation. Monitoring continues through fixed-point photography, vegetation surveys, and seasonal protected species checks, supporting ongoing adaptive management. The project was delivered without licence breaches or enforcement actions despite complex hydrological constraints and significant programme pressures.

Close collaboration between ecologists, engineers, regulators, and local stakeholders underpinned the project's success, with strong engagement from Natural England, the Environment Agency, and the local community. The scheme demonstrates how major infrastructure projects can integrate robust ecological mitigation and enhancement, achieving regulatory compliance while delivering measurable biodiversity uplift, improved ecosystem function, and long-term resilience for the River Frome catchment.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Mansfield Sustainable Flood Resilience

Severn Trent Water

Mansfield Sustainable Flood Resilience is the UK's largest Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) retrofit programme, delivered by Severn Trent in partnership with Mansfield District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council between 2022 and 2025. The £76 million programme introduced nature-based infrastructure across the town, including rain gardens, bioswales, and detention basins, delivering more than 27,000m³ of surface water storage across 343 interventions while restoring green infrastructure within a highly urbanised catchment.

Early design stages used spatial analysis to identify opportunities for SuDS while explicitly avoiding high-value habitats and incorporating exclusion zones around sensitive ecological features and mature trees. This ensured ecological protection while maximising opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. A standardised design approach enabled efficient delivery across 12 detention basins and 143 bioswales, while still allowing site-specific ecological and hydraulic optimisation.

Biodiversity Net Gain principles were embedded throughout the programme, including within interventions where this was not legally required. More than four hectares of low-distinctiveness amenity grassland were transformed into species-rich wildflower meadows, supported by extensive plug planting and perennial meadow establishment. Rain gardens and tree pits replaced more than 2,500m² of

impermeable surfacing, intercepting almost one million litres of runoff and improving water quality through natural filtration before infiltration or discharge.

Flood risk reduction outcomes have been substantial: 96 households are now better protected from flooding and a further 128 households have been moved into lower future-risk categories. These outcomes were achieved through targeted interventions at known flood hotspots and by replacing reliance on conventional drainage systems with distributed nature-based solutions.

Monitoring and research are central to the programme. Partnerships with the Universities of Nottingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool through the EUGINE project are supporting long-term analysis of hydraulic performance, ecological outcomes, and social value. Innovative tools including BNGAi Earth Observation and B£ST Lite have also been used to quantify wider natural and social capital benefits.

Overall, the programme demonstrates how large-scale SuDS retrofit can successfully integrate flood resilience, biodiversity enhancement, and measurable social value at town scale, delivering long-term environmental and community benefit.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

The Outstrays Managed Realignment Scheme

Environment Agency, JBA Bentley, Jacobs, Associated British Ports

The Outstrays Managed Realignment Scheme is a landscape-scale habitat creation project delivering more than 250 hectares of compensatory intertidal and terrestrial habitat on the north bank of the Humber Estuary. Delivered jointly by the Environment Agency and Associated British Ports, with design input from Jacobs and ABPmer and construction by JBA Bentley, it is one of the largest managed realignment schemes undertaken in the UK.

The project forms part of the Humber flood risk management strategy, Planning for the Rising Tides, providing strategic compensation for habitat losses associated with flood defence and port development. Construction, undertaken between 2021 and 2025, included a new 5.5km flood embankment and controlled breaching of existing defences, enabling tidal inundation of 175 hectares of former arable land. The site is now rapidly transitioning to intertidal mudflat and saltmarsh habitat, with early colonisation by species including glasswort and sea aster.

In addition, 87 hectares of freshwater wet grassland, scrapes, lagoons, and islands have been created to provide high-tide roosting and functionally linked habitat for waders and wildfowl. More than 14,200 trees and 700 metres of hedgerow have also been planted to strengthen ecological connectivity and improve long-term landscape resilience.

The ecological component represented approximately 10% of the £18 million project cost and included protected species surveys, mitigation design, Ecological Clerk of Works oversight, and long-term monitoring. Delivery was coordinated within a highly designated estuary landscape — including SAC, SPA, and Ramsar designations — requiring seasonal working restrictions and bespoke mitigation for species such as marsh harrier, water vole, badger, reptiles, and the sea aster mining bee.

Innovative approaches included habitat-based success criteria developed in partnership with Natural England, replacing rigid species targets with measurable habitat condition indicators such as sward structure and hydrological regime. Novel translocation trials for the sea aster mining bee and reptile receptor site strategies were also implemented.

Sustainable construction principles were embedded throughout the scheme, including reuse of 2.1 million tonnes of site-won material, avoiding imported armourstone and significantly reducing carbon impacts. The project also delivers wider socio-economic and access benefits, including public footpaths, bird hides, and interpretation infrastructure.

The scheme demonstrates how large-scale managed realignment can successfully integrate engineering, ecology, and climate resilience to deliver long-term, self-sustaining estuarine habitat alongside strategic flood risk management benefits.

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BEST PRACTICE AWARD:

INNOVATION

WINNER

Waxcap Detection Dogs

Kirsten Oliver & Steve Pullan (Severn Trent Water) Kat Janczur (Canine Detection Solutions)

Severn Trent Water, in partnership with Canine Detection Solutions, has pioneered an innovative approach to ecological surveying through the use of a Conservation Detection Dog (CDD) trained to identify waxcap fungi. The project was inspired by a 2024 incident that highlighted the challenges of detecting these cryptic species before development work commenced on a sensitive site.

Training and field trials were undertaken at Leasowes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the West Midlands, a nationally important grassland recognised for its fungal diversity. Using specialist scent-imprinting techniques, the dog was successfully trained to detect Honey Waxcap in both controlled trials and natural environments, including fruiting bodies concealed beneath dense grass sward.

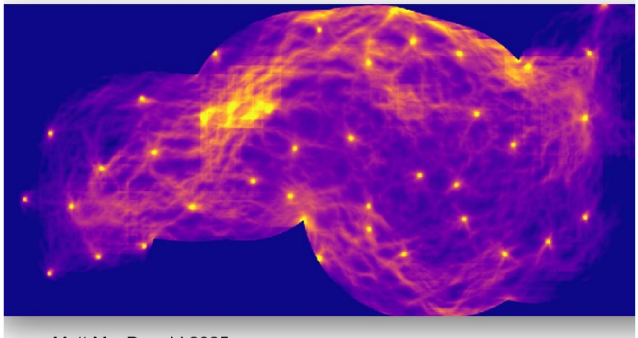
The results have been remarkable. During testing across multiple sites in Warwickshire, Clee Hill, and Wyre Forest, the conservation detection dog consistently identified known waxcap locations within minutes. Further line-up trials achieved a 100% success rate, with the dog accurately distinguishing target fungi from soils, mosses, leaves, and non-target fungi without a single false identification.



This pioneering work demonstrates how trained dogs can transform fungal surveying by providing a faster, non-invasive, and highly cost-effective alternative to traditional methods such as eDNA sampling and seasonal fruiting body surveys. The approach enables ecologists and developers to make earlier and better-informed decisions around route design, mitigation, and habitat protection, while significantly reducing survey times and associated costs.

As one of the first projects of its kind worldwide, the initiative represents an exciting step forward in biodiversity monitoring and conservation. By improving detection of threatened waxcap grasslands, Severn Trent Water and

Fig 5. Example Circuitscape output for connectivity corridors. The below output area extract from a 7km buffer from the proposed alignment combined with a 10km buffer f Special Area of Conservation (SAC)



ɔurce: Mott MacDonald 2025

its partners are helping to safeguard some of the UK's most valuable and under-recorded habitats for future generations.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Innovation at Scale: Habitat Suitability and Connectivity Modelling

Mott MacDonald

Mott MacDonald's Innovation at Scale: Habitat Suitability and Connectivity Modelling represents a significant step forward in ecological assessment for large-scale infrastructure, demonstrating how integrated ecological and data science approaches can improve biodiversity evidence, survey efficiency, and decision-making.

Delivered in 2025 for a major UK railway scheme, the project developed a cross-disciplinary workflow combining ecology, geospatial analysis, and advanced statistical modelling to establish a robust baseline for bat populations. A key innovation was the use of Local Pivotal Method (LPM) sampling to design a spatially balanced network of static bat detectors. Rarely applied within UK ecological survey design, LPM ensured even landscape coverage, reduced spatial autocorrelation, and improved data representativeness while minimising unnecessary survey effort.

The resulting dataset supported habitat suitability modelling using Integrated Nested Laplace Approximation (INLA), enabling explicit treatment of spatial dependence and uncertainty that is often overlooked in conventional approaches. Ecological expertise guided variable selection and model structure, ensuring outputs remained biologically meaningful and directly applicable to environmental assessment and design development. The resulting habitat suitability maps provided a clear and defensible evidence base to inform targeted surveys and mitigation planning.

To extend understanding beyond habitat presence, Circuitscape connectivity modelling was applied to assess landscape permeability and functional movement. Using circuit theory to represent conductors (habitats) and resistors (barriers), the model identified key movement corridors, pinch points, and areas of severance risk for bat species. These outputs directly informed mitigation prioritisation and infrastructure design.

Together, LPM, INLA, and Circuitscape formed an integrated and scalable workflow that reduced uncertainty, improved evidence quality, and delivered actionable ecological insight. The approach enabled more targeted surveys, reduced the number of static detectors required, and generated multi-million-pound cost savings through increased efficiency.

Crucially, the workflow is open-source, modular, and fully documented, built in R and Python and designed for replication across projects of varying scale. It can also incorporate citizen science and Environmental Records Centre data, widening access to advanced modelling techniques.

By embedding ecological expertise throughout, the project avoided "black-box" outputs and ensured robust, defensible conclusions. This work sets a new benchmark for evidence-led ecological modelling, demonstrating how innovation can enhance both environmental outcomes and infrastructure delivery.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Biodiversity Net Gain Insurance Product

DUAL Climate Risk & Resilience and Stantec

DUAL, supported by Stantec's ecology team, has developed the UK's first Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) insurance product, representing a major innovation within the emerging natural capital market. Designed to support nature-positive development, the product provides financial assurance for habitat creation and biodiversity uplift projects, helping to unlock investment in long-term ecological restoration.

Initially applied to Highlands Rewilding's Bunloit estate in Scotland, the pioneering insurance product protects landowners and biodiversity unit purchasers by covering the cost of acquiring substitute biodiversity units should ecological targets not be achieved. This creates greater confidence for investors, developers, and landowners operating within the rapidly expanding BNG market established through the Environment Act 2021.

Stantec played a critical role in bringing the product to market. In early 2025, the ecology team undertook detailed research quantifying the costs and financial risks associated with habitat creation and enhancement across a range of BNG projects. This evidence-based work enabled DUAL and its insurance carrier to better understand the scale of potential ecological liabilities and the practical application of a BNG insurance solution.

Stantec subsequently carried out an independent ecological review of the Bunloit rewilding project, assessing habitat baseline data, condition assessments, and proposed biodiversity uplift calculations. The review confirmed that the proposed habitat enhancements were reasonable, achievable, and suitable for informing long-term BNG delivery, providing confidence that the project was insurable.

The initiative demonstrates how collaboration between ecologists, insurers, and sustainability specialists can unlock innovative solutions for nature recovery and sustainable development. By combining ecological expertise with financial assurance, the project helps reduce investment risk, support large-scale habitat restoration, and strengthen confidence in biodiversity markets.

Importantly, the methodology is transferable and scalable, providing a replicable framework for future BNG and natural capital projects across the UK. This landmark initiative highlights the increasingly important role of ecological professionals in shaping emerging environmental markets and enabling long-term biodiversity recovery.



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BEST PRACTICE AWARD:

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

& TONY BRADSHAW AWARD WINNER

The Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Derby City Council, & University of Derby

The Allestree Park Community Rewilding (APCR) Project received the Best Practice Stakeholder Engagement Award for its outstanding commitment to inclusive engagement, collaboration, and community-led decision-making throughout the programme. From the earliest stages of development, the project team demonstrated a transparent and responsive approach, ensuring stakeholders were actively involved in shaping both the project's direction and its outcomes.

Extensive consultation enabled community opinions, concerns, and ideas to be embedded directly into the project, with only proposals achieving positive consensus progressing into delivery. Strong governance structures, regular partnership meetings, and integrated workstreams ensured information flowed efficiently between stakeholders and project teams, allowing issues to be addressed openly and collaboratively.

Central to the project's success has been the development of trusted relationships across a broad range of stakeholder groups. Dedicated community engagement roles provided consistent points of contact, helping to build confidence and foster a genuine sense of shared ownership. Representatives from community and wildlife organisations were also invited to participate directly within project workstreams, ensuring local knowledge and



lived experience informed decision-making throughout the programme.

The project successfully engaged more than 4,000 individuals from diverse backgrounds and age groups, including schools, young people, parents, ethnic minority communities, and groups focused on accessibility and inclusion. Initiatives such as Junior Rangers, Nature Tots, outdoor learning spaces, and creative rewilding activities enabled people with little previous experience of conservation to participate actively in nature recovery.

Particularly notable was the project team's response to concerns surrounding proposed cattle grazing within the park. Through open dialogue, public discussions, and collaborative workshops, the team worked constructively with stakeholders to explore alternative approaches. This led to the innovative "Ecosystem Engineers" initiative, through which local communities replicate the ecological role of grazing species through practical conservation activities.

By placing collaboration, inclusion, and transparency at the heart of delivery, the project has created an approach that not only supports nature recovery, but also builds lasting community ownership and long-term social value.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

The Gadebridge Park river restoration project

Environment Agency

The Gadebridge Park River Restoration Project received Highly Commended recognition for Best Practice Stakeholder Engagement, reflecting a consistently transparent, structured, and inclusive approach to collaboration throughout the planning, design, and delivery of the scheme.

From the outset, a Project Board was established comprising representatives from project partners and consultants, supported by regular strategic meetings to review progress, address issues, and make joint decisions. This governance structure ensured clear accountability and enabled efficient, evidence-based decision-making across all stages of the project. Wider engagement with Environment Agency specialists, Dacorum Borough Council officers, and Affinity Water also ensured technical design development benefited from a broad range of expertise and local operational knowledge.

Early in the project, a steering group was formed involving key stakeholders including the Bowls Club, Hemel Hempstead Local History & Museum Society, Friends of Gadebridge Park, and Dacorum Environment Forum. The group met regularly to discuss progress, identify challenges, and ensure stakeholder priorities were fully understood and integrated into project development.

A comprehensive public consultation programme was delivered through online engagement, press releases, digital promotion, and in-park events, attracting strong participation and positive feedback. Of the 147 consultation responses received, 85% supported the project's objectives, with comments helping to refine design elements including wildlife enhancements, seating, and environmental monitoring. A dedicated mailing list was also established and continues to provide updates to nearly 250 stakeholders.

Throughout periods of delay, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, communication was maintained through virtual meetings, digital updates, and drop-in events, ensuring stakeholders remained informed and engaged. Engagement activity was further expanded during construction through on-site information boards, social media updates, newsletters, and guided tours for local groups, councillors, and MPs.

The project also demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, supported by an Equality Impact Assessment and the use of multiple engagement formats, both online and in person. Targeted engagement with community groups and schools helped ensure broad representation, including initiatives such as the Junior River Wardens scheme and an educational chalk stream trail.

By embedding open communication, responsive decision-making, and proactive stakeholder involvement throughout delivery, the project has demonstrated a model of best practice engagement, strengthening trust, reducing conflict, and building lasting community support.

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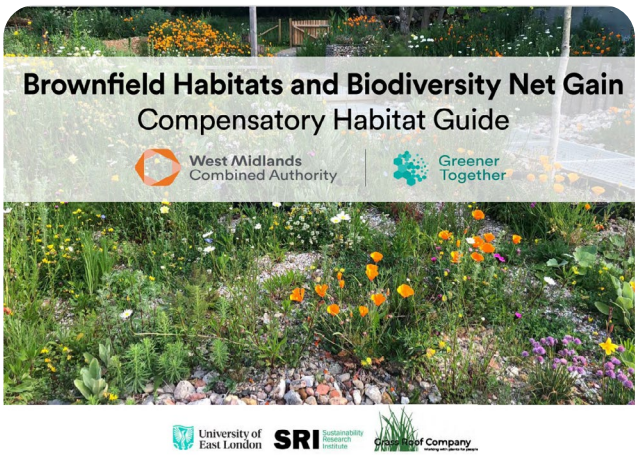
BEST PRACTICE AWARD:

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

WINNER

Brownfield Habitats and Biodiversity Net Gain Compensatory Habitat Guide

West Midlands Combined Authority



The Brownfield Habitats and Biodiversity Net Gain Compensatory Habitat Guide is a pioneering research and guidance project addressing one of the most significant emerging challenges in ecological planning: balancing brownfield regeneration with nature recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

Led by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in partnership with a specialist consortium headed by the University of East London, the project was developed to address a major knowledge gap surrounding Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMH). These habitats can support exceptionally rich biodiversity and are recognised as Habitats of Principal Importance, yet they are frequently placed under pressure by housing and regeneration policies prioritising brownfield development.

Published in 2025, the project produced two landmark resources: an Introduction and Context report and a practical Brownfield Habitats and BNG Design Guide. Together, these provide ecologists, planners, developers, and urban designers with a comprehensive evidence base and clear practical guidance for assessing, compensating for, and recreating brownfield habitats within the framework of BNG.

A particular strength of the work is its interdisciplinary approach, bringing together expertise from ecology, landscape architecture, urban design, horticulture, and the green roof industry, alongside input from Natural England and local authority specialists. The guidance promotes innovative “eco-mimicry” techniques designed to recreate the ecological characteristics of brownfield habitats while supporting development and long-term biodiversity recovery.

Importantly, the reports were designed to be freely accessible and widely applicable. Their publication was supported through a national webinar hosted with CIEEM, attracting hundreds of professionals from the ecology, planning, and development sectors, alongside extensive engagement across professional networks.

Arriving at a critical time for BNG implementation and Local Nature Recovery Strategies, the project provides a vital new framework for best practice. It equips practitioners with the tools and confidence to address complex brownfield biodiversity challenges while supporting sustainable regeneration and nature-positive development across the UK.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Assessing the Multiple Benefits of Natural Flood Management.

Wildlife Trust, Intact Insurance and Stantec

The *Assessing the Multiple Benefits of Natural Flood Management* project is helping to transform understanding of how nature-based solutions can support flood resilience, biodiversity recovery, and community wellbeing. Delivered in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts, RSA, and supported by Stantec, the initiative addresses one of the key barriers limiting wider uptake of Natural Flood Management (NFM): the lack of robust and standardised evidence demonstrating its full economic, environmental, and societal value.

Delivered between 2024 and 2025, the project combined evidence synthesis, community engagement, and site-level assessment to evaluate the benefits of 10 NFM schemes across England and Wales. The work explored how interventions such as wetland restoration, tree planting, and leaky dams can reduce peak water flows while also delivering wider ecosystem services including biodiversity enhancement, carbon storage, and improved wellbeing.

A major strength of the project was its cross-disciplinary approach, bringing together expertise in ecology, hydrology, economics, finance, and stakeholder engagement. Through collaboration with local Wildlife Trust teams and a national Stakeholder Advisory Group, the project gathered evidence from practitioners, communities, insurers, investors, and public bodies to assess both the technical performance and wider public perception of NFM schemes.

The findings demonstrated that NFM can deliver meaningful flood risk reduction in both rural and urban settings while generating multiple environmental and social benefits. However, the research also highlighted inconsistencies in monitoring and baseline data collection, leading to a key recommendation for a standardised national framework for NFM monitoring, valuation, and reporting.

Importantly, the project has already begun influencing future investment-readiness work and policy discussions surrounding blended finance for nature-based solutions. By translating complex evidence into practical recommendations for decision-makers, the initiative is helping to build confidence in NFM as a scalable, evidence-led approach to flood resilience.

This work provides an important blueprint for integrating ecology, finance, and community engagement to support sustainable water management and accelerate delivery of nature-based solutions across the UK.

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SMALL CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

WINNER

Keystone Environmental Ltd

Keystone Environmental's ecology team was awarded Small Consultancy of the Year in recognition of its outstanding contribution to integrating ecological expertise with practical environmental delivery, ensuring that policy and planning commitments are translated into high-quality, measurable outcomes for nature recovery across the UK.

As a 14-strong specialist team embedded within a wider environmental contracting business, Keystone has developed a clear and purposeful model built around technical excellence, innovation, and long-term ecological stewardship. What began as a small collaboration has evolved into a nationally respected consultancy, recognised for consistently delivering nature-positive outcomes at scale.

The organisation is guided by five core values — People, Partnerships, Integrity, Innovation, and Community — which underpin all aspects of its work and shape both internal culture and external delivery.

A key strength of Keystone is its people-focused culture, supported by structured development pathways, regular communication, and a strong commitment to wellbeing. Initiatives including annual strategy sessions, employee surveys, internal publications, and recognition awards help foster an inclusive environment in which staff are supported to develop their skills and contribute meaningfully to project delivery.



Long-term partnerships form the foundation of Keystone's success, with multi-decade relationships established with major clients and developers. These enduring collaborations enable continuity of approach, shared learning, and delivery of consistently high ecological standards across complex, multi-phase projects such as Wichelstowe and other nationally significant developments.

Integrity is embedded within decision-making, with the team committed to delivering robust, evidence-led ecological solutions while declining work that does not align with its ethical or quality standards. This principle helps ensure outcomes remain scientifically sound and environmentally responsible.



Innovation is actively promoted through investment in advanced technologies including UAVs, thermal imaging, GIS, bioacoustics, and data analytics. These tools improve data quality, streamline delivery, and enable earlier and more informed ecological decision-making, supporting better outcomes for both clients and biodiversity.

Community engagement also sits at the heart of Keystone's approach, with the team contributing actively to education, outreach, and knowledge sharing. This includes school engagement, university partnerships, apprenticeships, public talks, and collaborative community initiatives designed to inspire the next generation and broaden understanding of ecology and conservation.

Through its integrated approach to people, partnerships, innovation, integrity, and community, Keystone has demonstrated how a consultancy can drive meaningful, long-term impact for nature recovery while setting a benchmark for excellence in ecological practice.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Nicholsons

Nicholsons Ecology Team received Highly Commended recognition for Small Consultancy of the Year, reflecting its rapid growth, integrated service model, and strong commitment to delivering high-quality ecological outcomes that place nature recovery at the centre of development and land management across the UK.

Since its acquisition in 2022, the ecology team has become an increasingly influential part of a wider multidisciplinary organisation, embedding ecological thinking across all service areas. This integrated approach ensures biodiversity considerations are incorporated from project inception through to delivery, supporting genuinely nature-positive outcomes across development, landscape, forestry, and estate management workstreams.

The team delivers a broad range of ecological surveys and assessments in line with evolving best practice guidance, proactively adapting to industry standards and sharing knowledge internally to maintain consistency and technical excellence. The consultancy is currently progressing towards CIEEM Registered Practice status, further demonstrating its commitment to professional standards and continuous improvement.

Nicholsons works across both development and non-development sectors, delivering projects with measurable environmental gains. Notable examples include large-scale commercial and film-set developments delivering significant biodiversity net gain through new woodland, wetland creation, and habitat corridors, alongside sensitive holiday park and estate projects that enhance ecological connectivity while protecting priority species and habitats.

Beyond project delivery, the consultancy plays a wider role in shaping environmental outcomes through advisory work, habitat banking, rewilding initiatives, and landscape-scale restoration projects. This includes supporting woodland creation programmes, habitat banks, and nature recovery schemes that generate long-term benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience, and ecosystem services.

A strong culture of collaboration underpins delivery across disciplines, with ecological expertise actively informing forestry, landscape design, and estate management. This "one team" approach strengthens environmental outcomes and ensures ecological priorities remain embedded throughout operations.

Nicholsons also demonstrates a strong commitment to community engagement and knowledge sharing, delivering education programmes, public events, CPD sessions, and school outreach activities, alongside participation in national consultations and sector guidance development. Staff are actively encouraged to engage in volunteering, mentoring, and public-facing initiatives that promote wider understanding of ecology and conservation.

Through its integrated delivery model, commitment to sustainability, and focus on long-term environmental outcomes, Nicholsons has established itself as a leading consultancy driving meaningful progress for nature recovery, climate action, and sustainable development.



COMMENDED

Burton Reid Associates

Burton Reid Associates received Commended recognition for Small Consultancy of the Year, reflecting its consistent delivery of high-quality ecological consultancy and its commitment to enabling nature-positive development across the South West and beyond.

Founded in 2013 as a values-led practice, the consultancy has grown into a trusted team of ecologists and technical specialists supporting around 150 projects annually. These range from small residential assessments to major infrastructure, heritage restoration, and strategic public-sector commissions. Across all scales, the team combines scientific rigour with practical problem-solving to ensure development is both deliverable and beneficial for biodiversity.

A key strength of the consultancy is the integration of ecological expertise into real-world planning and construction. This includes bespoke mitigation for protected species, innovative survey approaches in constrained environments, and complex bat roost retention strategies. The team has developed novel solutions for technically challenging sites where standard approaches are not viable.

Burton Reid Associates has also played an important role in embedding Biodiversity Net Gain into development planning, supporting both private and public-sector clients with ecological advice, policy development, and measurable habitat enhancement. Its work includes strategic support to local authorities and delivery of significant biodiversity uplift on large-scale schemes.

Beyond individual projects, the consultancy contributes to wider nature recovery through landscape-scale planning, habitat banking, and nature recovery strategy support. A notable example is its work on Plymouth Nature Recovery, helping translate strategic ambitions into practical and deliverable action.

The consultancy also contributes actively to sector learning through engagement with Natural England, the Bat Conservation Trust, and CIEEM, helping to shape best practice guidance and regulatory improvement.

A strong culture of professional development underpins the organisation, with structured CPD, clear progression pathways, and active support for accreditation helping to maintain consistently high standards.

Through technical excellence, innovation, and collaboration, Burton Reid Associates continues to deliver meaningful outcomes for nature, people, and sustainable development.



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MEDIUM CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

WINNER

Ecology by Design Ltd

Established in 2015, Ecology by Design has developed a strong reputation for delivering high-quality, practical ecological consultancy that enables sustainable development while securing measurable benefits for biodiversity and people's connection with nature. The practice has grown steadily in response to increasing demand for proportionate, commercially informed ecological advice, particularly across renewable energy, strategic housing, minerals, and mixed-use developments where environmental requirements must be integrated without compromising delivery.

The consultancy's approach is rooted in early engagement and close collaboration with clients, engineers, planners, and regulators. By understanding commercial drivers, phasing constraints, and operational realities, Ecology by Design ensures ecological requirements are embedded from the outset, reducing risk, avoiding delay, and maximising opportunities for nature recovery. This balance between practicality and ambition underpins its work across a diverse project portfolio.

In the minerals sector, the team provides long-term ecological strategies that align extraction design with hydrology, restoration planning, and regulatory requirements. At large-scale sites such as Purple Haze in Hampshire, early baseline work and targeted survey design reduced unnecessary costs while ensuring robust mitigation for sensitive habitats and species. Integrated approaches to Biodiversity Net Gain and phased restoration have provided certainty for both clients and regulators while safeguarding long-term ecological outcomes.

In the renewable energy sector, early ecological input has enabled major infrastructure to proceed with minimal



conflict. At Culham Battery Storage, proportionate survey work and design refinement allowed ecology to be largely scoped out of the Environmental Impact Assessment process, supporting a successful planning appeal while still delivering a 61% biodiversity net gain through habitat enhancement. Similar principles have been applied across urban regeneration schemes, where ecological design input has strengthened planning outcomes and improved amenity and long-term value, including substantial net gain delivery on constrained brownfield sites.

A consistent feature across all projects is the consultancy's ability to translate ecological complexity into clear and deliverable strategies that support investment confidence and programme certainty. Strong client retention reflects this approach, alongside growing recognition of Ecology by Design's role in enabling both development and nature recovery at scale.

Beyond project delivery, the consultancy plays an active role in shaping sector practice through training, knowledge sharing, and professional engagement. The team delivers regular CPD sessions on Biodiversity Net Gain, nutrient neutrality, and evolving ecological legislation, supporting clients and partners to navigate change confidently. Team members also contribute to industry forums, academic

partnerships, and professional bodies including CIEEM, helping to develop guidance, support apprenticeships, and improve standards across the sector.

The organisation also invests significantly in internal development, with comprehensive training programmes, supported licences, and structured mentoring ensuring continual professional growth. Staff are encouraged to engage with field-based learning, external courses, and interdisciplinary collaboration, helping to build a highly skilled and adaptable team.

Alongside this, Ecology by Design demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental responsibility within its own operations. A published ESG strategy, investment in carbon reduction measures, reduced travel emissions, renewable energy use, and habitat creation initiatives all contribute to a measurable reduction in environmental impact, reinforcing the consultancy's ethos of leading by example.

Through this integrated approach — combining technical excellence, commercial understanding, and a genuine commitment to nature recovery — Ecology by Design continues to demonstrate how modern ecological consultancy can enable development while delivering lasting benefits for biodiversity, people, and place.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Bowland Ecology Ltd

Bowland Ecology Ltd has developed significantly since its formation, establishing a reputation for delivering high-quality, pragmatic ecological consultancy underpinned by technical excellence, collaboration, and a strong commitment to both people and nature. The consultancy has moved away from traditional timesheet-driven structures, instead adopting a trust-based and flexible working culture that prioritises staff wellbeing, coordinated delivery, and professional autonomy. This approach has supported a motivated and highly skilled team capable of delivering complex ecological solutions across the UK.

The business has expanded its technical capability across a broad range of disciplines including ornithology, botany, entomology, fish ecology, peatland restoration, and protected species licensing, supported by early adoption of advanced technologies such as GIS, UAV surveys, infrared imaging, and thermal imaging. This breadth enables the team to provide proportionate, innovative, and robust ecological advice across diverse project types, from infrastructure and energy schemes to sensitive habitat restoration and regeneration projects.

Long-standing client relationships demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. Framework partnerships with organisations including ScottishPower, BAE Systems, and United Utilities span more than a decade, reflecting confidence in Bowland Ecology's ability to balance ecological integrity with delivery constraints. Projects such as major onshore cable routes, brownfield regeneration at Bishopton, and strategic water infrastructure programmes have all benefitted from early ecological input, reducing risk, improving regulatory confidence, and securing measurable environmental gains.

The consultancy's work is also strongly rooted in research and innovation. Collaboration with universities, conservation organisations, and industry partners has supported advances in peatland ecology, invertebrate monitoring, and Biodiversity Net Gain delivery, while internships and paid graduate programmes ensure emerging talent is actively developed within applied research settings.

Community and sector engagement are central to Bowland Ecology's ethos. The team supports youth leadership programmes, local wildlife groups, educational outreach, and paid training opportunities, alongside active participation in professional bodies such as CIEEM. Staff regularly contribute to knowledge sharing through talks, publications, and collaborative research projects, strengthening both professional standards and cross-sector understanding.

Sustainability is embedded across operations, from responsible procurement and renewable energy use to travel reduction and carbon reporting aligned with parent company targets. Participation in peatland restoration and habitat creation initiatives further demonstrates a commitment to insetting and nature-based solutions as part of everyday practice.

Staff development remains a defining strength. Structured CPD, internal training events, early careers forums, and accredited learning pathways ensure continuous professional growth, while a culture of peer learning supports technical excellence and confidence across the team.

Through its combination of technical capability, trusted partnerships, innovation, and values-led practice, Bowland Ecology Ltd continues to demonstrate how medium-sized consultancies can deliver meaningful outcomes for clients, communities, and the natural environment.



COMMENDED

JBA Consulting

JBA Consulting Ltd has delivered an exceptional year of high-quality ecological and environmental consultancy, demonstrating how technical excellence, collaboration, and innovation can deliver measurable benefits for nature, climate resilience, business, and people. Across a diverse portfolio of infrastructure, restoration, and strategic planning projects, JBA continues to place ecology at the centre of decision-making to support sustainable outcomes at scale.

A flagship achievement is the Outstrays Managed Realignment Scheme on the Humber Estuary, where long-term interdisciplinary collaboration enabled the creation of more than 260 hectares of new intertidal and freshwater habitat on former arable land. JBA ecologists worked closely with engineers, regulators, and contractors to embed ecological priorities from the outset, going beyond compliance to enhance biodiversity outcomes. Design refinements included increased woodland planting for functional connectivity, reuse of site-won materials to create reptile and amphibian refugia, and bespoke habitat creation for nationally important invertebrate species. Early monitoring already demonstrates strong colonisation by intertidal birds and target species, supported by an innovative 20-year ecosystem-focused monitoring framework co-designed with regulatory partners.

The scheme also delivered significant climate benefits, saving approximately 23,000 tonnes of carbon through low-carbon design decisions and material reuse, while providing enhanced flood resilience and long-term economic protection for local communities. Stakeholder engagement ensured inclusion of public access features such as bird hides, interpretation boards, and accessible pathways, strengthening connections between people and nature.

Beyond this flagship project, JBA continues to support major national infrastructure and energy transition schemes. In renewable energy developments, early ecological input has enabled sensitive solar farm proposals to avoid key habitats while delivering measurable biodiversity net gain through habitat creation and landscape-scale enhancement.

In the minerals and remediation sector, JBA has supported long-term habitat restoration planning across complex post-industrial landscapes, including rare grassland restoration and mine water treatment schemes that combine pollution reduction with biodiversity recovery and community benefit.

JBA also plays a leading role in advancing industry knowledge and practice. In 2025, the team contributed to national conferences, published technical papers on river restoration and metallophyte habitats, and released a series of climate resilience podcasts exploring innovation, adaptation, and cross-sector collaboration. The consultancy has also supported collaborative software development and tool refinement to improve field data collection and consistency across the sector.

Sustainability is embedded throughout operations, with continued progress towards Net Zero by 2040 supported by renewable energy use, fleet electrification, carbon reduction initiatives, and supply chain engagement. Major projects demonstrate tangible emissions reductions, including a 15.4% reduction against carbon budgets on the Outstrays scheme through innovative design and material optimisation.

Staff development and professional engagement remain central to JBA's culture. Structured training pathways, mentoring, graduate schemes, and interdisciplinary secondments ensure continuous development, while a strong ethos of knowledge sharing supports professional growth across all levels of the organisation. In 2025 alone, JBA recruited multiple graduates and apprentices, reinforcing its commitment to building future ecological capacity.

Through its integration of ecological expertise, climate resilience thinking, and collaborative delivery, JBA Consulting continues to demonstrate how consultancy can deliver meaningful, long-term outcomes for nature, people, and the economy at landscape scale.

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LARGE CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

WINNER

RSK Biocensus

RSK Biocensus Ltd has been awarded Winner in the Large Consultancy of the Year category, recognising a year in which the organisation delivered high-impact ecological outcomes at scale, supporting both economic development and nature recovery across the UK and internationally.

With 17 Chartered professionals, including four CIEEM Fellows, RSK Biocensus brings exceptional technical depth to some of the country's most complex environmental challenges. Its work increasingly focuses on enabling the transition to renewable energy and critical infrastructure, ensuring biodiversity enhancement is embedded within nationally significant development. In 2025, the consultancy supported 17 renewable energy schemes and five major power transmission projects across Great Britain, alongside strategic advisory roles on National Grid programmes and appointment to its Biodiversity Net Gain Framework.

A defining strength of the organisation is its ability to combine large-scale delivery with measurable environmental gain. The Outstrays Managed Realignment Scheme exemplifies this approach, delivering more than 260 hectares of new intertidal and freshwater habitat through close collaboration with the Environment Agency and Natural England. The scheme integrates ecological design with engineering and long-term monitoring, assessing ecosystem function alongside species response while delivering significant carbon savings. Similar approaches with water companies and local authorities have embedded Biodiversity Net Gain and nature recovery into long-term investment programmes, strengthening resilience while meeting regulatory requirements.



Innovation and evidence-led practice underpin delivery throughout the business. RSK Biocensus is a leading Responsible Body within the BNG market, helping establish habitat banks and share best practice across the sector. Its work also extends internationally through regenerative land-use projects in Uganda, alongside research partnerships, PhD co-supervision, and contributions to national guidance and professional standards.

Collaboration is central to the consultancy's approach, with active engagement across regulators, industry partners, and conservation organisations, supported by widely accessed knowledge-sharing initiatives including the First Thursday Club webinar series and national conferences.

Alongside technical excellence, the organisation demonstrates strong environmental leadership through its Second Nature strategy, committing to science-based carbon reduction, renewable energy uptake, and low-carbon operations.

Through a structured programme of training, mentoring, outreach, and early careers support, RSK Biocensus continues to strengthen the profession while delivering lasting benefits for people, nature, and the economy.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Arcadis

Arcadis has been Highly Commended in the Large Consultancy of the Year category for their pioneering environmental consultancy work, delivering a demonstrable positive change for nature, climate, and society across the UK and internationally. In 2025 alone, the team supported 278 unique projects, delivering over 73,000 project hours safely while embedding biodiversity enhancement and nature-positive outcomes at the heart of delivery.

Their work spans from complex, high-profile programmes including safeguarding protected species and restoring a Kent SSSI Ancient Woodland in partnership with the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and local authorities and many more. The team has delivered four Nutrient Management Action Plans across West and North Wales, advancing catchment-scale Nature-based Solutions to improve ecosystem health.

As key contributors to the UK energy transition, the team has supported major infrastructure programmes including the Great Grid Upgrade achieving measurable Biodiversity Net Gain whilst ensuring sensitive species thrive during construction, including successful breeding outcomes for protected birds and mammals.

Across transport and infrastructure schemes, over 5,000 Biodiversity Units have been designed, with enhancements such as wetlands, ponds, hedgerows, and habitat connectivity delivered beyond minimum requirements.

Arcadis's client partnerships continue to expand globally, supporting organisations such as Jaguar Land Rover with biodiversity roadmaps, delivering environmental and social impact assessments in Mongolia, and co-developing eco-city visions in Eswatini in collaboration with UN-Habitat.

The team's commitment to climate leadership is demonstrated through PAS 2080 accreditation, science-based net zero targets, and large-scale nature-based carbon sequestration initiatives. This is complemented by extensive contributions to CIEEM, government policy, and sector-wide knowledge sharing.

Through technical excellence, innovation, and leadership, the Arcadis Ecology and Arboriculture Team continues to shape a restorative, low-carbon future, delivering lasting value for nature, climate resilience, and society.



COMMENDED

Jacobs

Jacobs has been awarded Commended in the Large Consultancy of the Year category, recognising a year of outstanding delivery in which technical excellence, innovation, and collaboration were applied at global scale to achieve measurable benefits for nature, climate, and society.

With a national ecology team of 212 professionals and a wider global network of more than 600 ecologists, Jacobs brings exceptional depth and breadth of expertise to some of the UK's most complex infrastructure and environmental challenges. Sustainability and nature-positive outcomes sit at the centre of its approach, supported by the Beyond If programme, which invests in innovation through initiatives such as the Rethinking Ecology Toolkit and Nature Focused Approach Playbook. These tools improve the efficiency, quality, and proportionality of ecological delivery, ensuring decision-critical data is prioritised while reducing unnecessary survey effort and environmental impact.

This innovation-led approach is embedded across major national programmes. Jacobs is supporting the design of large-scale reservoir developments in East Anglia, integrating Biodiversity Net Gain, hydroecology, and habitat creation with recreational access and community benefit. On HS2 Phase One, the repurposing of construction arisings has delivered more than 127 hectares of new habitat mosaics, combining woodland, wetland, and chalk grassland while improving biodiversity outcomes and reducing long-term management costs.

Technical leadership is further demonstrated through pioneering bat survey methodologies developed in partnership with regulators and now being scaled nationally, delivering both cost and carbon savings while improving ecological understanding. Alongside this, Jacobs continues to advance Biodiversity Net Gain delivery across sectors, supporting clients and regulators in achieving measurable, long-term ecological improvements.

Knowledge sharing and collaboration are central to the organisation's impact. Jacobs contributes actively to national guidance, professional bodies, and academic partnerships, while supporting CIEEM working groups, conferences, and training programmes. Its structured ecology career framework, global communities of practice, and apprenticeship routes provide strong professional development pathways and support continued growth of the sector's future workforce.

Environmental leadership is underpinned by a science-based net zero commitment, ISO 14001 certification, and the Plan Beyond 2.0 strategy. Low-carbon survey methods, digital tools, and sustainable travel practices are embedded into day-to-day delivery, while wider initiatives such as Blue Carbon leadership and carbon reduction tools support clients in reducing whole-life emissions.

Through its combination of global scale, technical innovation, and collaborative working, Jacobs continues to demonstrate how infrastructure delivery can be aligned with nature recovery, climate resilience, and lasting public value.



COMMENDED

AtkinsRéalis

AtkinsRéalis has been awarded Commended in the Large Consultancy of the Year category, recognising a year of exceptional delivery in which engineering excellence and ecological innovation have been combined to deliver measurable benefits for nature, climate, and society at scale.

A standout achievement is the Old Tampa Bay Water Quality Improvement project, where a nature-based design replaced a section of embankment with a bridge, restoring tidal exchange to a previously isolated 130-hectare bay. Three years post-completion, monitoring confirms substantial ecological recovery, including an 80% reduction in nitrogen and chlorophyll-a, restored salinity regimes, and significant seagrass expansion. These improvements have increased biodiversity, enhanced fisheries habitat, and supported wider ecosystem resilience, while also delivering major economic value and influencing regional environmental permitting and transport guidance.

In the UK, AtkinsRéalis continues to demonstrate how infrastructure can actively restore nature while enabling growth. The Cockrow Green Bridge, the UK's first heathland green bridge, has reconnected 75 hectares of habitat across a major transport corridor, supporting protected species while improving landscape quality, air pollution mitigation, and active travel opportunities. Similarly, work on the TransPennine Route Upgrade embedded innovative, regulator-approved bat survey methodologies, ensuring rail upgrades proceed lawfully while strengthening ecological evidence and reducing environmental risk.

Innovation in ecosystem valuation and digital tools is further transforming decision-making. The ECOV4R framework, developed with the International Union of Railways, has been applied across thousands of hectares in the UK and Spain, demonstrating significant increases in biodiversity value and carbon reduction alongside multi-million-euro natural capital gains. In parallel, digital platforms such as Hab Studio and River Restoration Studio are enabling ecosystem services to be quantified and integrated into investment decisions, supporting more transparent and sustainable land-use planning.

AtkinsRéalis also plays a leading role in shaping policy and professional practice, contributing to national guidance on biodiversity, nature recovery, and infrastructure planning, while engaging with government and sector partners to embed ecological principles within legislation and delivery frameworks.

This technical leadership is underpinned by strong sustainability performance, including significant operational carbon reductions, science-based net zero commitments, and widespread adoption of low-carbon design tools. Alongside this, the organisation invests heavily in people, skills, and outreach, supporting STEM engagement, mentoring, and community initiatives that help build the next generation of environmental professionals.

Through this combination of innovation, collaboration, and large-scale delivery, AtkinsRéalis continues to demonstrate how infrastructure can be designed to restore ecosystems, support climate resilience, and deliver long-term public value.

Awards sponsors

CIEEM Insurance Services

Headline Sponsor

CIEEM Insurance Services is pleased to once again sponsor the CIEEM Awards, and it is a genuine honour to support the 2026 Awards as Headline Sponsor. These awards play a vital role in recognising and celebrating the outstanding individuals, projects, and organisations whose work is shaping the future of ecology and environmental management.

The CIEEM Awards highlight excellence, innovation, and commitment across the profession, and we are proud to be associated with an event that champions such high standards. The nominees and winners represent the very best of the sector, and their achievements deserve both recognition and celebration.

As specialists in insurance for environmental and ecological professionals, CIEEM Insurance Services understands the unique risks faced by CIEEM members. We provide a comprehensive suite of insurance solutions, claims support, and risk management services, including a bespoke Professional Indemnity Insurance scheme available exclusively as a membership benefit to CIEEM members.

Key benefits of the scheme include competitive premiums, a wide civil liability Professional Indemnity policy with exclusive enhancements for CIEEM members, access to a free legal helpline, and a free contract review service. Members also benefit from having a dedicated Client Advisor, meaning no call centres and no need to explain your circumstances to a different person each time you call.

In the event of a claim, our in-house claims team is on hand to guide and support you throughout the process, advocating on your behalf so that you are never on your own. Members can choose the covers and limits that suit their needs, with flexible payment options available, including finance or payment by credit or debit card.

If you have any questions or would like to obtain a quotation or advice, please feel free to contact us on 0161 233 4499.

Wildcare

Gold Sponsor

Small, Medium and Large Consultancy of the Year

Wildcare is proud to be returning as a sponsor of the CIEEM Awards for 2026 and to work alongside the ecologists and consultancies driving the sector forward. Our mission is to support the people and projects that give wildlife a future by providing reliable ecology, conservation and survey equipment, fast delivery, excellent customer service, and trusted Service & Repair support.

Partnering with CIEEM is something we value highly, and we're delighted to see the work of the sector recognised through these awards. Good luck to all the nominees!

Arcadis

Gold Sponsor

Best Practice Knowledge Sharing, Stakeholder Engagement and Innovation

The Arcadis UK ecology team combines the depth and reach to deliver meaningful impact on major plans and projects, with the close-knit culture of a team where people know and support one another. We work nationally and internationally and have recently worked on projects in India, Mongolia, Ukraine, Slovakia and Uganda.

We deliver from strategy through to implementation, covering all sectors, including energy transformation, water quality and security, land redevelopment and regenerative nature design and operation for some of the largest UK and global clients.

Our success is powered by our people and we continue to demonstrate our commitment to safety and excellence via high quality training and accreditations, including tree climbing, protected species licensing, FISC botany; all while driving our expertise in Natural Capital and Biodiversity Net Gain via global nature advisory services.

We invest in the future of the profession through advocacy, internships and industry wide early career development. Arcadis works closely with CIEEM and shares its goal of "enhancement of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecological processes and life support systems essential to a fully functional biosphere". Our colleagues support CIEEM via training, supporting and promoting the protection of nature in legislation; through the Standards Committee, the Advisory and Fellows Forums, the Welsh, English and Scottish Boards, the Strategic Policy Panel, Special Interest Groups, CIEEM assessors and early careers outreach. We are proud to be sponsoring the Best Practice awards. We are excited by the potential for inspiration, action and legacy that the ecology profession can deliver.

Tetra Tech

Silver Sponsor

Student Project (Postgraduate and Undergraduate)

Tetra Tech is a leading provider of high-end consulting and engineering projects. Our operations in the UK include working alongside local, national and international clients to develop their strategies and provide the services they need to take plans forward.

Our Nature team supports local and national projects through feasibility, planning, and beyond from habitat surveys to protected species licensing. We work on projects across all sectors: defence, nuclear, property, government services, energy and utilities, transport and residential. We have specialist expertise in Arboriculture, BNG, Nutrient Neutrality, Natural Capital, Peatland Restoration and HRA. Notable projects include the United Utilities Better Rivers framework to reduce Combined Sewer Overflows spills across the northwest improving water quality and numerous large renewable projects helping our transition to cleaner energy.

At Tetra Tech we focus on positively impacting the lives of those around us by protecting our natural environment by developing and designing nature positive and sustainable solutions to help address the current biodiversity and climate crisis. With the current biodiversity and climate crisis CIEEM, and everyone involved in the awards, have a crucial role to play in shaping the future and our sponsorship is a small part we are taking to thank everyone involved.

CSA Environmental

Silver Sponsor

Best Practice Small and Large-Scale Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement

CSA Environmental is delighted to sponsor this year's CIEEM Awards. We are keen supporters of the work and leadership that CIEEM provides for the ecology and

environmental management sector, and of the positive influence it continues to have across our profession. By supporting the CIEEM Awards programme, we are pleased to help shine a spotlight on the excellence, professionalism and innovation demonstrated throughout the sector. Each year, the quality of submissions highlights the strength of professional standards, the value of robust evidence, and the power of collaboration within our industry. The awards also provide a valuable opportunity to celebrate meaningful actions that deliver lasting, positive outcomes for the environment.

At CSA Environmental, we share CIEEM's commitment to professionalism, continual learning and integrity. We place real value on our Registered Practice status and on creating a happy and healthy environment for our employees.

For more than 25 years, across our disciplines of ecology, landscape, heritage and master planning, we have been fortunate to employ scores of talented graduates and to help nurture their careers. We are proud of the culture we have created and proud that our team is helping to achieve better outcomes for people, places and nature.

RammSanderson

Silver Sponsor

Best Practice Small and Large-Scale Practical Nature Conservation

RammSanderson is proud to sponsor the CIEEM Awards category for Best Practice in Practical Nature Conservation, recognising excellence in both small-scale and large-scale conservation delivery. As an environmental consultancy working across ecology, arboriculture and environmental planning, we understand the importance of practical, evidence-based solutions in helping to address the biodiversity crisis and create more resilient natural environments.

Whether through targeted habitat enhancements on constrained sites or ambitious landscape-scale restoration projects, practical conservation plays a vital role in protecting species, strengthening ecological networks and delivering measurable biodiversity gains. Projects of all scales require technical expertise, innovation and collaboration to achieve successful and lasting outcomes for nature and communities alike.

At RammSanderson, we work closely with clients and stakeholders to integrate ecological principles into projects from the earliest stages through to implementation and long-term management. We recognise the dedication, creativity and commitment required to deliver meaningful conservation outcomes within complex environmental and planning contexts.

We are delighted to support these awards and celebrate the outstanding work being delivered across the sector. The shortlisted entries demonstrate the high standards, ambition and practical leadership needed to create lasting positive change for biodiversity and the wider natural environment.

Binnies

Silver Sponsor

Member of the Year and Promising Professional

Binnies are delighted to sponsor the Promising Professional Award & Member of the Year Award. We celebrate professionals whose curiosity, integrity and commitment are helping to shape the future of the sector and recognise a talented individual whose exceptional contribution has advanced the profession, delivering real benefits for nature and society.

Emerging practitioners bring fresh thinking, energy and a determination to keep raising standards, while dedicated professionals make a truly outstanding impact. This combination strengthens the advice we provide and the outcomes we achieve for nature and people. Congratulations to all shortlisted nominees.

We work in a world where pressures of climate change, biodiversity loss and social inequality demand bold, integrated responses. Binnies delivers insight-driven solutions that support sustainable, low-carbon infrastructure across the full asset life cycle.

Our approach combines award-winning expertise, digital innovation and regulatory understanding to de-risk development, unlock opportunity and build inclusive wealth for clients, stakeholders and communities. Across every discipline, we transform environmental challenges into opportunities for low-carbon innovation and regenerative growth.

Aligning our expertise with the latest thinking, from nature-positive design and green finance to digital foresight and inclusive engagement, we are shaping a resilient, equitable, sustainable future where infrastructure and environment thrive together.

RSK Biocensus

Bronze Sponsor

NGO Impact award

RSK Biocensus is a leading UK ecological consultancy, providing specialist survey, assessment and advisory services to the public and private sectors. We are committed to evidence-based practice and integrating research into our work, developing innovative services and contributing to industry best practice.

We are proud to sponsor the CIEEM NGO Impact Award. Our nature NGOs make an invaluable contribution to nature conservation and the restoration of biodiversity, across a huge variety of innovative projects and initiatives. Their leadership, commitment and ambition have led to positive nature outcomes across many terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and this award is an opportunity to highlight and celebrate these achievements.

NHBS

Bronze Sponsor

Climate and Nature Action 2030, and After Party Sponsor

NHBS Ltd is honoured to serve as a sponsor for this year's CIEEM Awards, celebrating the exceptional achievements of professionals dedicated to ecology and environmental management. For over 40 years, our mission has been to support the conservation community by providing the essential tools, books, and equipment required for vital fieldwork and research.

We recognise that the work of CIEEM members is fundamental to protecting biodiversity and navigating the complex environmental challenges of the 21st century. By sponsoring these awards, we aim to highlight the innovation, expertise, and tireless effort displayed by individuals and organisations across the sector.

From pioneering projects to inspiring stewardship, the nominees represent the very best of our industry. NHBS remains committed to being your trusted partner in the field, and we extend our warmest congratulations to all the finalists. Your dedication ensures a more sustainable future for the natural world.

Stantec

Bronze Sponsor

In Practice

At Stantec, we put the environment at the heart of everything we do - bringing holistic, nature-first principles to the planning, design, and delivery of the places and infrastructure communities rely on. We are a global leader in sustainable engineering, architecture, and environmental consulting, with around 4,000 professionals across the UK & Ireland working in integrated regional teams. We help clients protect and enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, reduce flood risk, and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon, resilient future -delivering measurable benefits for people, place, and nature. As a sponsor, we're proud to support initiatives that raise ambition, share best practice, and accelerate positive environmental impact across the sector.

Cura Terrae

Drinks Reception Sponsor

Cura Terrae is an environmental services provider and consultancy operating across sectors including energy, highways infrastructure, development, conservation, and local government. Our consultants guide clients through complex legislation and consenting processes, ensuring projects meet rigorous environmental requirements while maintaining commercial viability. We bring decades of expertise to delivering solutions that address habitat loss, deterioration, and environmental impacts.

Our in-house UK teams specialise in ecology, landscape architecture, habitats, arboriculture, and the historic environment. By managing these disciplines under one roof, we streamline projects from inception to completion. For broader support, our wider group offers expert-led services in water, air, marine and coastal management, and environmental compliance.

We are proud to sponsor the CIEEM Awards and celebrate excellence within the ecological profession. Our team looks forward to connecting with fellow industry leaders to discuss how we can work together to better protect our environment.

JUDGING PANELS

We are very grateful to the following members who volunteered their time to judge the awards:

Student Project Awards

Dr Mark Webb CEcol CEnv FCIEEM
Dr Heather Rumble MCIEEM
Dr Eirene Williams CEnv FCIEEM (rtd)
Chiara Magliozzi MCIEEM
Charlotte Hobbs BSc (Hons) MScR MCIEEM

Climate and Nature Action 2030

Victoria Hooper BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol CEnv FCIEEM
Clare May BSc (Hons) MSc CEnv CIEEM
Faye Durkin MCIEEM
Alexandra Jeal, BSc MSc MCIEEM CEnv
Hattie Spray CEnv MCIEEM

Best Practice

Dr David Parker CEcol CEnv FCIEEM (rtd)
Charlotte Rimmer CEnv MCIEEM
Rob Marrs DSc FCIEEM CEcol FRSB
Steph Renshaw MCIEEM
Kathryn Edwards CEcol MCIEEM

Member of the Year

Laura Grant MCIEEM
Candice Howe CEcol MCIEEM
Joanne Rathbone CEnv MCIEEM
Sally Cowley CEnv MCIEEM
Matthew Hanson CEcol MCIEEM

Promising Professional

Nina Birkby MCIEEM
Dr Pat White PhD FCIEEM
Dr Sue Lawley CEnv MCIEEM
Daniel Gotts CEnv MCIEEM
Dr Aidan Marsh CEcol CEnv MCIEEM

NGO Impact

Jo Rockingham MCIEEM
Lisa Kerslake CEcol FCIEEM
Dr Emma Stevens CEcol CEnv MCIEEM
Jan Collins CEcol MCIEEM
Dr Alex Wilson CEcol MCIEEM

Consultancy of the Year

Dr Ben Aston CEnv MCIEEM
Roz Smallshaw CEnv MCIEEM
Felicite Dodd MCIEEM(rtd)
Cody Levine CEcol CEnv MCIEEM
Sarah Jane Chimbwandira CEnv MCIEEM

In Practice (Editorial Board)

Dr Iain Adderton CEnv MCIEEM
Tobias Betts ACIEEM
Dr Phoebe Carter CEcol MCIEEM
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Ursula Digby CEnv MCIEEM
Dr Sally Fraser CEnv MCIEEM
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Dr Sue Lawley CEnv MCIEEM
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Dr Caroline McParland CEnv MCIEEM
Ian Morrissey CEnv MCIEEM
Charlotte Rose MCIEEM

Phil Colebourn Award

Dr Tim Rich MCIEEM
Dr Keith Kirby FCIEEM
Dr Philip Wilson MCIEEM
Neil Sanderson'



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