



Annual Report 2025

Charity Name: The Starlight Trust

HMRC Registration Number: EW16594

Charity Objectives & Activities

Charity Objectives

For the benefit of the public, to relieve the suffering and distress of animals in such ways as the trust shall decide including (but not exclusively) the following ways: -

- (a) to rescue, take in and provide care, shelter and sanctuary for stray, lost, neglected, abandoned, ill-treated and unwanted pets, primarily small pet rodents, and to rehome these animals wherever possible.
- (b) To promote humane behaviour towards animals by providing appropriate care, protection, treatment and security for animals which are in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment, poor circumstances or ill usage.
- (c) to educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals.

Activities Undertaken

Founded in 2008, the trust operates a rescue and sanctuary for small pets and feral pigeons from founders Sarah and Dave Argrave's home. Since 2020, due to the risk that COVID-19 poses to the health of the Managing Trustees, the trust's main focus has switched to online work, advising the public and supporting other animal rescues. These activities include

- Operating HelpWildlife.co.uk which provides advice to members of the public who find wildlife casualties and publishes a directory of UK wildlife rescue organisations
- Providing bespoke advice and support to wildlife casualty finders through the HelpWildlife.co.uk helpdesk
- Funding the transport of wildlife casualties to rescue where other options have been exhausted
- Making small grants to wildlife rescues to support their work
- Providing free and discounted testing for pigeons in other rescues

Foreword

In 2025, we continued with the path we've followed since 2020 – focusing on online work and supporting the work of other rescues. Although we miss 'hands-on' animal work, we continue to be very proud of what we have achieved with this new direction. We had expected to be moving house but this is now on hold, which allowed us time to complete a couple of big projects – redesigning the HelpWildlife directory and finally launching a new project which had been in planning for several years and which has given us the opportunity to make a real difference to pigeons in rescue.

The continuing risk is that this less 'obvious' work, especially coupled with our step back from social media, makes it harder to attract financial support. Discounting the monies raised for UK Wildlife Rescues, expenditure on our own activities was about 126% of income raised for those purposes.

As always, our sincere thanks go to the volunteers who have worked with us to deliver these aims this year and to all who have supported our work with donations – we literally could not have achieved any of what we have covered in this report without you.

Sarah & Dave Argrave
The Starlight Trust



Animal Rescue & Sanctuary

Hands on animal rescue is no longer the main focus of our work due to lack of space and the health status of the Managing Trustees. However, we continue to house non-releasable pigeons across two aviaries and have a pair of degus who will live out their days with us. We also take in the occasional pigeon which looks as though they may benefit from our particular experience and ethos, on average about one or two a month. Sometimes these birds are with us from start to finish, and others just join us from partner rescuers to spend some time in our aviary for assessment or pre-release.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

99

ANIMALS CARED FOR

Challenges

Fundraising continues to be our main challenge. Our Amazon Wishlist used to be an excellent way for people to support our animal rescue work but ongoing technical issues with the feature mean this is no longer an option.

Our expenditure on animal rescue work was 139% of donations received for this purpose so it's urgent that we increase donations here.



Highlights

Our permanent resident sponsorship scheme found its feet with 43 sponsorships in 2025 raising a much appreciated £860!

Altogether we cared for or supported the care of 99 animals in 2025. These were

- 40 permanent residents admitted in previous years (2 degus and 38 pigeons)
- 32 pigeons in need of ongoing support or sanctuary who are cared for at Linjoy Wildlife Rescue with our financial support
- 27 new pigeon admissions, of which 4 died, 8 were reallocated to other rescues, 5 were released, and 10 are still here.

HelpWildlife.co.uk

HelpWildlife.co.uk is the website we founded in 2005. Its purpose is to provide a complete source of advice and support for members of the public who find sick or injured wildlife. It includes

- A library of advice articles, explaining when an animal needs help and when they should be left alone
- A searchable directory of wildlife rescues in the UK
- An email helpdesk providing bespoke advice and support where a finder is unable to find the information and help they need on the website

Since 2023, the site has also encouraged visitors to donate to support the work of the rescues listed, with monthly grants made to rescues who maintain a listing in the public directory.

Challenges

- Volunteer shortages and intense work on the website, meant we had to reduce HelpDesk availability
- 58 rescues were removed from our directory. Many closed due to avian flu, ill health, or lack of funds
- Record numbers of listings in the directory are putting a lot of pressure on volunteers tasked with ensuring the listings are up to date.

Highlights

- We undertook a complete rebuild of the directory website this year, redesigning the listings and adding new features
- Ads on the directory site and our £1 for Wildlife scheme raised a total of £2621.13 for UK Wildlife Rescues. This means next year we'll be able to increase our monthly donations to rescues to £150!
- 114 new listings were added to the directory
- We were able to secure a 100% discount on our helpdesk software, saving nearly £400. This means HelpWildlife is running at about £500 in credit which will be added to the rescues fund and distributed to UK Wildlife Rescues.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

£2621.13

RAISED FOR RESCUES

114

LISTINGS ADDED,
MAKING A TOTAL OF

753

LIVE DIRECTORY LISTINGS

The Pigeon Project

Finally, after years of wishing, 2025 was the year we launched The Pigeon Project. It's still **very** early days and, currently, its only activity is providing free and discounted testing for pigeon rescues, but already, in just 3 months, a lot has been achieved.

The Pigeon Project is now the home of the free microscopy testing we've offered to pigeon rescues since 2019. In September 2025 we also added lateral flow tests. Sourced wholesale from China, these tests provide a quick and low-cost way to screen pigeons in rescue for common illnesses such as Adenovirus, Candida, Psittacosis, Rotavirus, Salmonella and Trichomonas.

Professional testing for parasites, bacterial infections and viruses usually costs anything from £15 to £200 putting it out of budget for most rescues. By providing free parasite testing and cost price lateral flow tests, we are able to open up testing to many more pigeons, helping to ensure they get the best possible care and treatment.

Challenges

The tests we purchase are, unsurprisingly, not manufactured for pigeons. Consequently, there has been some trial and error in seeing which work well and will be useful to rescues in the future.

Given minimum order numbers and shipping costs, each batch of tests means an outlay of over £1000. That's a big risk for a tiny charity like ours. Luckily, we received a very kind grant from Wing and a Prayer Rescue which covered most of the first order. Nevertheless, this fund in our accounts is running at a £1200 deficit which is a little scary, though most of this should be recouped as the tests are purchased by rescues.

Highlights

Demand for the lateral flow tests exceeded our wildest expectations and we made a second order just two months after the first.

In the last 6 years our testing service has saved rescues over £30,000. The new lateral flow tests have contributed close to half this figure in just the last 3 months! And that's a conservative estimate based on £15 per test – in reality many alternative tests would cost upwards of £100.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

232

SAMPLES TESTED

570

DISCOUNTED LTFs SOLD

£13,425

SAVED

Plans for 2026

Animal Rescue & Sanctuary

It's likely things will stay much the same here. We have found our groove with our online work, and we can help many more animals by focusing our time and energy there. We will continue to take in very small numbers of pigeons as and when space allows as well, of course, as continuing to offer the best possible care to our permanent residents. going forward.

HelpWildlife.co.uk

Our next project will be a major redesign of the HelpWildlife advice library. The hope is to make this more visual, to plug gaps in articles, and to more clearly signpost next steps. We'll also be doing this without the use of the current plugins which will save funds.

We want to complete this by Spring so it's ready for the baby rush. The new article format will direct people to our helpdesk more clearly and we'll be reviewing the help request form. We had made some changes to encourage more people to use the website information first and it feels, from the fall in contacts this year, as though this may have gone too far. We may create two forms so we can have one version for use in busy periods which helps encourage visitors to help themselves with the information on the site, and one version for quieter times which is more accessible. If we're going to let the numbers of helpdesk contacts increase, we'll need some help. We'll review the set up of the helpdesk to create a role for non-rescuers who can signpost to rescues and help us with follow up work.

The Pigeon Project

We want to expand on the success of our pigeon testing service, adding new tests to both the microscopy and lateral flow offers.

We then want to get registered rescuers more involved in the project. To facilitate this, we'll be adding a discussion forum to the site. We hope this will also provide a safe, regulated place to share information, away from the often toxic social media environment.

With the help of partner rescuers, we'll then look to build information into the site for the public, including busting pigeon myths, advice on when and how to help pigeons, and highlighting our pigeon specific helpdesk.