

# JOHN MUIR AWARD

*wild places:*  
DISCOVER  
EXPLORE  
CONSERVE  
SHARE

## John Muir Award News Spring 2011

The John Muir Award is the main educational initiative of the John Muir Trust. It encourages people to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.



love  
value  
enjoy  
appreciate  
enthuse  
inspire  
excite  
celebrate

This edition of our bi-annual newsletter celebrates love and enjoyment of wild places...



# 'Delight and pleasure'



## 'We change people by delight and pleasure'.

So said St Thomas Aquinas, theologian and philosopher, back in the 13th century.

This thinking is increasingly evident in relation to the outdoors, sustainability and conservation. From 'Branding Biodiversity' work by communications agency Futerra – 'we need 'Love not Loss!' - to the Scottish Natural Heritage campaign to highlight 'Simple pleasures, easily found', advocating love of nature is seen as a powerful driver of public behaviour. It's attracting attention from playground to policymakers.



©Andrew Duke/SNH

'Rather than sob stories of rainforest depletion, the most powerful agent for change will be people's love of nature and the feeling of awe and amazement it brings.' Futerra

This edition of our bi-annual newsletter celebrates enjoyment of wild places... Look out for enjoyment ideas and examples as you browse...

'Rather than sob stories of rainforest depletion, the most powerful agent for change will be people's love of nature and the feeling of awe and amazement it brings'

Futerra sustainability communications



Peter Cairns - www.northshots.com

### Attitude and activity

Enjoyment of the outdoors can have a variety of facets. Our recent winter weather has inspired a range of emotional responses. Here's the caption introducing the Northshots Image of the Month for January:

'We've had the Big Freeze followed by the Big Thaw... Whoever is to blame for the weather - and let's face it someone always is, such is our intolerance of any inconvenience - I for one was grateful to them for a prolonged spell of stunning arctic-like conditions. No-one enjoys being stuck in traffic or going without water, but this country would surely be a poorer place without the spectrum of weather conditions served to us across the varied seasons. Standing by, actually no, standing on Loch Morlich in the heart of the Cairngorms, it was bitterly cold. It was cold and it was silent. And it was magical.'

For informed enthusing and insight, the BBC's Nature UK Blog is a wonderful reference point. Here's a blog entry from 8 February:

'Whisper it quietly, spring is on its way... the snowdrops are well and truly here, frogspawn is very slowly spreading from the west, the bluebells are beginning to awaken and song thrushes are starting to sing.'

It's not hard to find outdoor activities that are enjoyable and accessible. Whilst on the BBC Nature UK website look at their Get Involved pages. Visit the Nature Detectives site for ideas and resources. View and record seasonal sightings and events at Natures Calendar. And go to the Woodland Trust 'Kids and Schools' pages for loads of ideas that aren't just for youngsters.

[www.bbc.co.uk/nature/uk/getinvolved](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/uk/getinvolved)

[www.naturedetectives.org.uk](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk)

[www.naturescalendar.org.uk](http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk)

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/learning-kids/Pages/children.aspx](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/learning-kids/Pages/children.aspx)

### Enjoyment and the John Muir Award

It's official. People enjoy doing their John Muir Award. A Glasgow University study found that 95% of Award participants enjoyed their experience – the activities, making a difference, and the sense of achievement.

Since its launch 15 years ago, fun has been at the heart of the John Muir Award. Its aim still is to support activity that combines enjoyment, connections with wild places, and care for nature. Regular anecdotal evidence, from all sorts of backgrounds and locations, backs this up.

**On Islay:** "This place means excitement, enjoyment, exercise and learning new skills, and since we've been here it has been very strange away from civilisation. But it was fun as well. I feel so calm being here and I now know the proper value of nature, and I think more people should come on an experience like this."

**Kester, Stramash Bushcraft Course**

**In Drumchapel, Glasgow:** "I've changed my mind from before all the way. It's safer [in the woods], you know the boundaries, it's a good place to be, you get to jump in mud and have fun. You get to jump in school but it's mostly on concrete, but here, there's grass that's softer and it's good for nature."

**Forest School Participant, St Clare's Primary School**

**Across the North York Moors National Park:** "For me the week gets to the heart of what the John Muir Award is - it isn't about record keeping but all about the feelings they get when they are part and parcel of nature. To see the smiles on their faces when the water splashes on their feet - that is what it is all about for me."

**Mick Prior, special needs group leader**

**In a local nature reserve:** "By having fun exploring their local nature reserves through such activities as stream walking, shelter building, and pond dipping the John Muir Award group has developed a deeper sense of connectedness with the natural world. For me, it was particularly rewarding to see a group of teenagers laughing and shrieking with delight as they waded through the stream, tracing it to its source."

**Sue Habgood, Education Officer, Somerset Wildlife Trust**

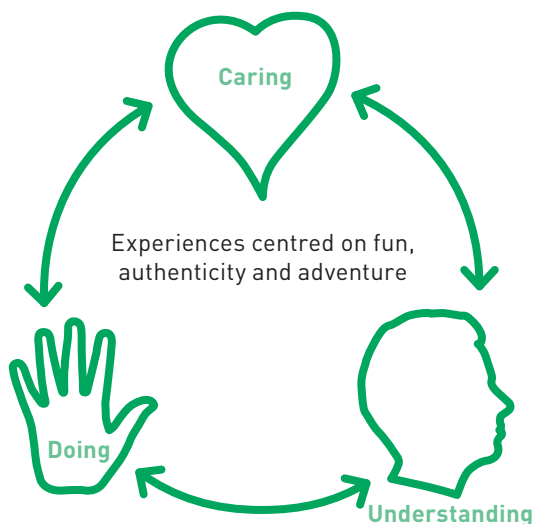
**In school:** "The John Muir Award offers an excellent framework for learning out of doors. It hits a spot that is often missing in education today - it is a fun way to learn."

**Duncan Cameron, Lochaber Pupil Support Unit, Highland Council**

### Enjoying wild places – so what?

Having fun in nature can be enough in itself. But it can stimulate understanding and action for wild places. A model of learning promoted in the 1800s by the Scottish innovative thinker Patrick Geddes - 'Heart, Head, Hand' – shows how.

Our interpretation of it is that experiences – infused by fun and adventure - should encourage people to Care (Heart), promote Understanding (Head) and give opportunities for practical Doing (Hand).



Based on an educational model promoted by Patrick Geddes

**Heart** – Develop strong feelings about nature, or about a particular place. People will care about it, want to know more, and want to do something to protect it.

**Head** – Understand and develop knowledge about nature and wildness, the inter-dependence of living systems, and the threats to wild places. This will encourage a sense of responsibility and stronger feelings.

**Hand** – Get actively involved and take practical action for a place or issue. A sense of 'putting something back' or ownership helps people to enjoy and value the experience more.

### And finally...

"Few outdoor leaders will be trained biologists or ecologists. But that should not inhibit them from sharing with others their own enthusiasms and specific interests."

**Rob Collister, Mountain Guide**

It's often leaders, teachers, volunteers, rangers and parents who set the tone, who set up the safe boundaries, who enthuse and inspire love and action for the natural world. There are a lot of you out there. Keep up the good work.

### References

'Branding Biodiversity', futerra sustainability communications, 2010  
[www.futerra.co.uk/revolution/leading\\_thinking](http://www.futerra.co.uk/revolution/leading_thinking)

Health impacts of the John Muir Award, Dr Richard Mitchell & Dr Rebecca Shaw, Public Health and Health Policy, University of Glasgow - commissioned by Glasgow Centre for Population Health 2008

## Mapping Happiness?

### There's an app for that

Mappiness, an iPhone app mapping happiness across the UK, is helping researchers at the London School of Economics understand how people's feelings are affected by their immediate environment.



The app, which is the first of its kind, pings users daily to ask how they're feeling, and uses satellite positioning (GPS) to discover their location while they answer. Response locations are linked to environmental data, and used to help estimate statistical models of wellbeing.

Professor Lord Richard Layard: "Mappiness is a revolutionary research idea. It is the best method so far devised for understanding how people's emotions are affected by the buildings and natural environment in which they move".

What's exciting in this research is the addition of the spatial dimension. By tracking across space as well as time, and by making novel use of a technology that millions of people already carry with them, we hope to find better answers to questions about the impacts of natural beauty, environmental problems – maybe even aspects of climate – on individual and national wellbeing.

To date, over 36,000 participants have volunteered over 2 million responses. Preliminary results indicate that people are happier outdoors in green and natural environments than in cities, even after controlling for a wide range of other factors (including weather, companionship, activity, time of day and day of week). The difference can be up to 5 points on a 0 – 100 scale.

National happiness levels are updated in real-time on the project website, alongside maps and timelines derived from the response data.

Article by George MacKerron, London School of Economics at [www.sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/03/mapping-happiness-theres-an-app-for-that](http://www.sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/03/mapping-happiness-theres-an-app-for-that)

See [www.mappiness.org.uk](http://www.mappiness.org.uk) for more.



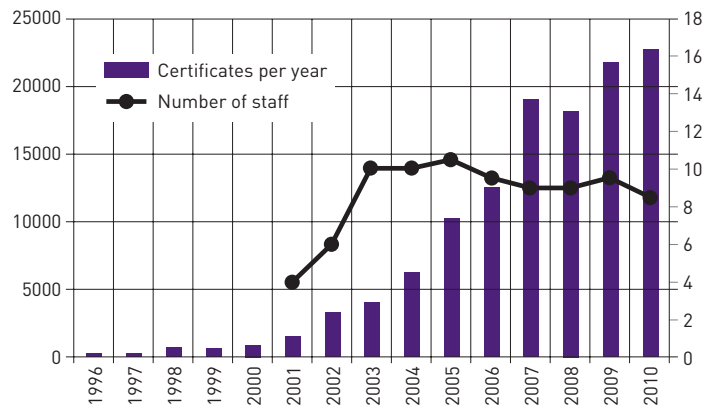
# John Muir Award news

## John Muir Award in 2010

As the John Muir Trust's main educational initiative, the John Muir Award invites diverse audiences to contribute to its vision that 'Wild land is protected throughout the UK, and Wild Places are valued by all'. The John Muir Award engages a broad cross-section of society and influences at individual, organisational, network and political levels.

2010 began with a major milestone, with the 100,000th John Muir Award presented in Cumbria and a celebration event held at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh. Over 23,000 Awards were achieved throughout the year, a 4% increase on 2009, our highest ever annual take-up and the tenth year out of the last eleven to show a year-on-year increase. This was realized through working with 629 organisations/Providers, reflecting continued engagement across a range of sectors – schools, youth work, environment, inclusion. 30% of Awards achieved in 2010 were by individuals from socially excluded backgrounds; 53% of participation is by males, 47% by females, identical to 2009.

Annual John Muir awards and staffing levels



Three of our major partnerships – in the Cairngorms, Cumbria, and with YHA – have been reviewed and renewed to offer exemplary and sustainable models of collaborative working. Strong working links have also been set up with 2020VISION. A focus of 2010 has been on relating stories from Award Providers and networks, via 'Views from 2050', a growing portfolio of case studies, newsletters and e-bulletins, and a Biodiversity Stories publication.

## Cairngorms National Park Authority presents its 10,000th John Muir Award

Ballater Primary School pupil Michael Mitchell became the 10,000th person to achieve a John Muir Award in the Cairngorms National Park in November. Michael was presented with his Award by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Environment, who said:

"Learning in the outdoors can make significant contributions to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The John Muir Award plays an important part in this by motivating people to get outdoors and make the most of their natural environment. It's wonderful to see the pupils at Ballater Primary getting involved and learning about nature and conservation in a way that is fun and meaningful. As Ballater Primary has discovered, the Cairngorms National Park has much to offer and I would encourage other schools to explore how this environment can help them to deliver Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning. Congratulations to Michael and his schoolmates on their achievement."

When the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) was established in 2003, one of its first decisions was the appointment of someone to run the John Muir Award in the Park. The current John Muir Award Manager is Alan Smith, CNPA Outdoor Learning Officer. He said: "The Cairngorms National Park is the perfect place to run a scheme like this as it's all about wild places, the environment and getting out exploring. Everyone who's taken part in the scheme shares in this milestone and the achievement it represents."



Broombank Productions

## John Muir Award in Cumbria

Having enjoyed eight successful years hosted by Cumbria Youth Alliance, the John Muir Award in Cumbria is to be integrated into the Lake District National Park Authority's Learning Service from April 2011. We're looking forward to exploring the new opportunities offered by working with the Learning Service team, and highlighting the special qualities of the Lake District National Park – the lakes, fells and woodlands in a truly diverse and beautiful landscape accessible to all Cumbrians. New office arrangements will be in place from April, for full contact details see back page.

## Conserve Audit 2011

We don't tell groups and participants what to do to meet the Conserve Challenge of the John Muir Award, which means that a wide and wonderful array of activity is undertaken. In 2011 we'd like to capture, quantify, and accumulate all of the tree planting, footpath maintenance, bird box building, litter picking, wild flower surveying and everything else that is done.



Christopher McCrory

We will summarise and share the results to demonstrate the contribution that Award participants make to wild places. You can help with this by monitoring your own activity and keeping a note of what you achieve. Your Award contact will help you collect this data.

To find out more, and view an example of what folk have recorded click on the Conserve Challenge button at [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org).

## Training

John Muir Award training isn't essential to delivering the Award, but courses enable leaders to find out more about the practicalities of the Award, network with others, and develop their own skills and confidence. Click on the 'Training and Events' button at [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org) to find out more.

**Leader Training** – This two-day residential course gives a thorough introduction to the relevant skills, knowledge and approaches needed for delivering the John Muir Award. This Spring there are courses in the Scottish Borders, Cairngorms, Northumberland, Cumbria and Wales.

These two-day residential courses give a thorough introduction to the John Muir Award.

### April

Sat 2 & Sun 3 – Wiston Lodge, Biggar, Scottish Borders

Tues 5 & Wed 6 – Once Brewed Youth Hostel, Northumberland

Weds 6 & Thurs 7 – Cumbria Outdoors, Hawse End Centre, Keswick, Cumbria

Weds 27 & Thurs 28 – Craggan Bunkhouse, near Grantown on Spey, Cairngorms

### May

Sat 7 & Sun 8 – FSC Rhyd-y-Creiau, North Wales

Cost: £120 for two days, including food and accommodation. Reduced rate of £80 for charity representatives and those attending in an individual capacity.

How to Book? Email [info@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:info@johnmuiraward.org) the date and venue to confirm that spaces are available.

### Introducing John Muir – Dunbar – 26 March

Jo Moulin (Manager, John Muir's Birthplace) will give an alternative overview of John Muir's life, with stories of some of Muir's wildest boyhood adventures.



Find out about the resources and activities used by Birthplace staff with visiting John Muir Award groups and explore Muir's boyhood haunts.

"Thanks for a fantastic insight into Muir's Dunbar" – previous participant.

Saturday 26th March, 10am to 1pm, at John Muir's Birthplace, Dunbar, East Lothian. Please email [info@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:info@johnmuiraward.org) to book a place. Cost £5.

### Bird Watching for Beginners – Edinburgh – 2 April

An introduction to the how, why and where of bird watching - top tips and practical ideas.



Delivered by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) for John Muir Award Providers, the day includes practical bird identification in a garden parkland setting and ways of adding value to your bird watching experiences by taking part in surveys and online recording.

Saturday 2nd April at The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Please email [info@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:info@johnmuiraward.org) to confirm space availability. Cost £20.

### Reviewing Outdoor Experiences with Roger Greenaway – Cairngorms – 12 May

Back by popular demand, this day explores reviewing techniques and top tips on evaluation and reflection. This practical (and slightly theoretical) introduction will offer tools and ideas for sharing experiences that can be used both indoors and outdoors.

Thursday 12th May at Glenmore Lodge, Cairngorms, Highland Scotland. Please email [info@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:info@johnmuiraward.org) to confirm space availability. Cost £60.

### Keith Brame's John Muir Trust images

For the last couple of years, Keith Brame has been taking photographs of the land that the Trust protects, and the people who live, work and volunteer on that land. John Muir Award groups also feature, including a recent session with the Green Team in Vogrie Park, near Edinburgh, below. Keith's blogspot website features a fascinating commentary on the land and the people [www.kbrame.blogspot.com](http://www.kbrame.blogspot.com).

His Photoshelter website [www.brame.photoshelter.com](http://www.brame.photoshelter.com) also includes a stunning range of wild land images – some you may recognize from past newsletters.



Keith Brame

### UK Big 3 challenge

Keri Page, a supporter of the Trust is undertaking a 'UK Big 3 Challenge' in May. This includes the Bob Graham Round (England), Paddy Buckley Round (Wales) and Ramsay Round (Scotland). Overall this amounts to 187 miles, 113 mountain summits and 83,000ft of ascent (that's about 3 times Everest). She is raising money for the John Muir Trust and Water Aid. Her training and progress can be followed at: [www.ukbig3challenge.blogspot.com](http://www.ukbig3challenge.blogspot.com).



Keri Page

## New Information Handbook available online

The Information Handbook is the main port of call for background information on running the John Muir Award. It outlines its ethos, structure and process for getting involved. It includes an explanation of Award Criteria and the four Challenges that need to be met, case studies, and overviews of links between the John Muir Award and the Curriculum, Youth Work, Outdoor Learning, Health, Biodiversity, Sustainability and Outdoor Access. There's also background on John Muir and the John Muir Trust.

Download the newly revamped edition via the Resources & Links page at [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org).





# 2020VISION

See how 'Britain's most ambitious conservation multi-media initiative... ever!' is taking shape.

- Visit [www.2020v.org](http://www.2020v.org)
- Sign up for future newsletters if you haven't already
- Stay in touch on Facebook via the home page

'2020VISION is about many things, but at its core, it is about how people (as well as wildlife) can benefit from a wilder landscape where the conditions for the provision of vital "services" (pollination, clean air and water, energy and carbon storage, for example) are enhanced. In short, this is about landscape restoration so that we don't have to end up paying for what we currently get for free.

2020VISION needs some pictures of charismatic wildlife and dramatic landscapes in beautiful light: they are inspiring. But what it needs much more are pictures with a strong narrative

content. And the story that needs to be told is why these wild places matter to everyone, not just people who like nature.



[Here] the viewer is asked to wonder about what development in this context could mean. 'Ecosystem Services Ltd – Serving You Since the Beginning of Time' – is a "company" made up for 2020VISION to help get across the idea that we are in debt to nature and that our credit is in danger of running out unless we start repaying some "interest" – by rewilding landscapes.'

From Feb 7th 'A flash of inspiration' blog of professional photographer Niall Benvie.

## 2020VISION Young Champions

'The 2020VISION team consists of far more than the headline grabbing 20 strong pro-photographer line-up. We've got the management team, writers, editors, musicians, cameramen, sound-recordists, the list goes on and we're all committed to showing the value of natural Britain.

But perhaps the most exciting team within the team are the 20 young nature photographers: 2020VISION's Young Champions, each mentored by one of the pro-photo team. Not only are they precociously (annoyingly) talented with

their cameras, they are also highly motivated and clearly know the value of communication (their Facebook group is always buzzing with chatter, most have websites, many have blogs).

The Young Champs have been tasked not only with producing stunning and original imagery for the project, but also going out and spreading the word about 2020VISION and its conservation message amongst their age-group.'

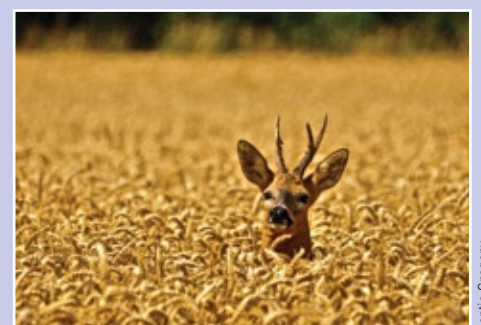
Alex Mustard's March 5th Blog 'Back to school – lessons in communication with a Young Champion'



Taken by Bertie Gregory en route to interview for Young Champion placement



Young Champion Bertie Gregory with mentor Alex Mustard... and pig



Roe deer in agricultural setting



**Simple pleasures...** Find out the age of a living tree • Write your name in the sand • Make the sound of an owl in the woods • Go rock pooling • Collect wild fruit • Make a daisy chain • Freewheel down a hill • Collect seeds • Take a magnifying glass for a close look at flowers and insects • Make a picture on the beach with shells, pebbles and driftwood • Watch the sunset • Watch the sunrise • Feel the wind in your hair • See sunbeams coming through trees • Make shadows of animals • Sit on a bench and watch the world go by • Lie in a field and watch the clouds go by • Smell wild flowers • Watch a river flow • Play Pooch sticks • Make snow angels • Follow a rainbow • Star gaze • Choose to get wet in the rain • Make home made soup and take it with you in a flask

## Simple pleasures, easily found

Research shows we aren't getting into the outdoors often enough. In fact in Scotland more than half the population are accessing the outdoors less than once a week, so Scottish Natural Heritage is working hard to try and change this.

Encouraging more people to get outdoors more often is a key national target for the Scottish Government. Through various initiatives and partnerships the aim is to make Scots more active and access the outdoors more often. The 'Simple pleasures, easily found' campaign is carefully targeted at geographical areas where current participation is lower than the national average. Getting outdoors needn't be a big adventure with lots of planning or serious equipment. SNH want to inspire people to enjoy the outdoors right on their doorstep with simple, doable, achievable and desirable activities. So rather than sitting watching

TV or playing computer games, why not get outdoors and reap the benefits, both physically and mentally, from life's simple pleasures. Try some of the activities suggested as part of the Explore Challenge of your John Muir Award: Climb a tree, make the most of the rain and follow a rainbow, jump in a puddle, collect fallen leaves to use as clues to identify trees, count how many bird songs you can hear... or find your own Simple Pleasures and share them with others.

[www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/simple-pleasures/](http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/simple-pleasures/)

**NB: the top tips ideas – all 50 of them, above – can be done anywhere, not just Scotland.**



Alan Smith

## The Outward Bound Trust - Free Taster Weekends



To find out more about the benefits of outdoor learning, why not attend one of The Outward

Bound Trust's taster weekends?

It's not only a great opportunity to meet

the Outward Bound® instructors, but you'll also get to explore the beautiful lochs, lakes and hills that surround each of The Trust's centres.

The taster weekends, running from Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon, are designed for school staff, youth workers and

community learning and development staff.

8 - 9 Apr 2011, Aberdovey, Snowdonia  
30 Sep - 1 Oct 2011, Howtown, the Lake District

For more information and to reserve your place, contact: 01931 740000 or [enquiries@outwardbound.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@outwardbound.org.uk)

## Nature's Calendar

The Nature's Calendar survey is your opportunity to record and view seasonal events that show the impact of climate change on our wildlife.

It's free, it's about what's on your doorstep, and it's all year round. If you'd like to see when frogspawn is appearing in ponds or when snowdrops have been popping up in the woods, Nature's Calendar is for you. Visit [www.naturescalendar.org.uk](http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk)



## A Dip in the Ocean – Sarah Outen

A story of extreme physical exertion, 3 Guinness world records, 1 incredible journey, an inspirational young woman, and 500 Mars Bars. Life affirming, funny and poignant, Sarah's tale of courage and endurance will inspire, astonish and touch everyone who reads it.

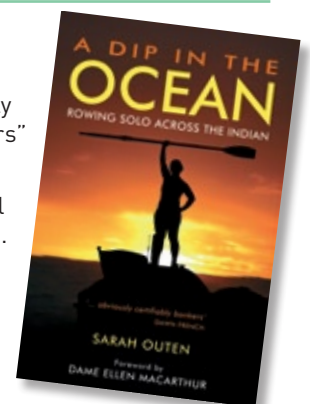
Twenty three year old Sarah rowed her tiny boat, Dippers, across 4000 miles in memory of her father. Her book was written whilst preparing for her next incredible challenge – circumnavigating the globe by human power.

"Sarah's row across the Indian Ocean should be recognized as one of the most inspired and tenacious expeditions of a generation." Mark Beaumont, BBC presenter and round the world record holder

"You are obviously certifiably bonkers" Dawn French

Available from all good booksellers.

Sarah's next big expedition starts on April 1st 2011.



'London2London:Via the World' leaves from Tower Bridge on a bid to loop the planet entirely under her own power - rowing the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, cycling the continents in between and kayaking various bits along the way. Follow Sarah at [www.sarahouten.co.uk](http://www.sarahouten.co.uk)





- Comb a beach for treasure
- Draw your favourite simple pleasure; be it an animal, plant, insect or view
- Learn the names of trees
- Go fishing
- Collect conkers
- Keep a nature diary and update it through the seasons
- Climb a hill and enjoy the view
- Skim stones
- Ride a bike through a puddle
- Climb a tree
- Put on your wellies and splash in puddles
- Blow a dandelion clock
- Feed the ducks
- Have a picnic
- Fly a kite
- Chalk out and play hopscotch
- Do cartwheels and handstands
- Play tig
- Look for a lucky four-leaf clover
- Balance on a log
- Breathe in really fresh air
- Spot fish in a river
- Roll down a hill
- Play hide and seek
- Go sledging
- Make a sandcastle

## What a difference a year makes?

In November Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, praised the 'fantastic' UK International Year of Biodiversity programme, 'having raised biodiversity issues to the top of the agenda in the UK'. Key points have been raised during 2010 in both public and political circles. Biodiversity:

- is fundamental to our continued existence
- is crucial to the quality of our lives
- underpins all our economic activity
- defines our national identity
- is irreplaceable when extinct
- is impossible to replicate

The year has highlighted some important changes in the public narrative around how biodiversity, and the issues around it, are being understood. The Nagoya Biodiversity Summit generated targets much wider than previously, acknowledging that the underlying causes of biodiversity loss are within society. A strategic aim is that understanding of biodiversity has to be embedded across society.

'One of the great achievements of this [Nagoya] conference has been to highlight the fact that biodiversity is not just about

saving a few cute animals, but about preventing risks to entire ecosystems, economies and ultimately human life. As a result, bird-lovers and tree-huggers have started to find common cause with insurers and investors.'

Jonathan Watts, *The Guardian*



This will be both an exciting and a daunting challenge for our elected leaders and for all of society. It will require an unprecedented drive to improve biodiversity literacy in schools and to build expertise and capacity in the workforce and understanding in society at large.

**The International Decade of Biodiversity** will be officially launched on 22nd May this year (the International Day of Biodiversity, appropriately enough). It coincides with the duration of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted in Nagoya. 'Building on the momentum generated by the International Year of Biodiversity 2010, the Decade will spur efforts to meet the ambitious targets in the Strategic Plan and ultimately secure the future of our planet's Biodiversity – the basis of life on Earth.' (Convention on Biological Diversity)

## Creating a social buzz about biodiversity

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has released a short animated film about biodiversity on YouTube. You can see this Partner Film at [www.youtube.com/johnmuiraward](http://www.youtube.com/johnmuiraward).



### BIODIVERSITY BEGINS WITH A B.

**Biodiversity begins with a B** is a darkly comic look at the importance of bees to our natural environment. With the voice of Scots comedian Phil Kay, the film features cartoon bees which come to untimely ends. It shows that some bees are not doing so well, and easy actions we can take to help support the variety of living things around us.

The film aims to boost wider public awareness of biodiversity by enabling internet users to embed the film on their own social networking profiles and blogs to share online with friends.

To find out more about how you can help biodiversity, visit [www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk).

## What's on the web?

### Nic Marks: The Happy Planet Index

Statistician Nic Marks asks why we measure a nation's success by its productivity - instead of by the happiness and well-being of its people.



He introduces the Happy Planet Index, which tracks national well-being against resource use ('because a happy life doesn't have to cost the earth'). Which countries rank highest in the HPI? You might be surprised. [www.ted.com/talks/nic\\_marks\\_the\\_happy\\_planet\\_index.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/nic_marks_the_happy_planet_index.html)

### The plastic cycle of life!

This 4 minute 'nature mockumentary', narrated by Academy Award-winning actor Jeremy Irons, tracks the "migration" of a plastic bag from a grocery store parking lot to the so-called Great Pacific Garbage Patch in the Pacific Ocean. [www.tinyurl.com/386cmng](http://www.tinyurl.com/386cmng)



### Choir create a rainstorm

See what happens when an American Choir (Perpetuum Jazzile), a rainstorm, and the song 'Africa' by Toto come together... No, really... [www.tinyurl.com/mpgrvo](http://www.tinyurl.com/mpgrvo)



### Garden of Earthly Delights

An experimental slideshow of flowers, bees, butterflies and wildlife - all taken in a small garden in Berwickshire. [www.tinyurl.com/6eohwng](http://www.tinyurl.com/6eohwng)



### Double Rainbow

25 million YouTube hits and counting... an exuberant appreciation of nature's wonders! [www.tinyurl.com/33byfwr](http://www.tinyurl.com/33byfwr)



And don't forget to check out Auto Tune Double Rainbow song [www.tinyurl.com/27hldfh](http://www.tinyurl.com/27hldfh)

# Pieces to ponder

## The Oneness of Life

By Joseph Cornell

Once while hiking through a remote mountain canyon in California, I could clearly feel all the flowers, stones, and cascading stream laughing and joyfully singing. Every blade of grass, every tiny waterfall and mossy rock, seemed an expression of universal joy—and was blissfully proclaiming this joy to the world.

After a while, I sat beside a small, snow-fed pool, walled in by glacial boulders almost as high as a house, still delighting in the joy around me. I was rewarded by a visit from a dark, gray fellow with wings—a dipper. This robust, cheery little bird came within a few yards of me and began singing. His clear, melodious voice echoed superbly against the rock-lined walls of my cozy little chamber. The dipper's vibrant song and its resounding echo greatly amplified the joy I felt that day on the mountain.

John Muir said there is "an essential Love, overlying, underlying, pervading all things." All my life I've tried to feel the joy that animates nature and share it with others.

How can we help others feel the joy in nature? Henry David Thoreau gave us the secret: "In self-forgetfulness, we draw closer to nature." Everyone wants happiness, and happiness and joy are the result of self-forgetfulness. The less self-involved and preoccupied a person is, the greater is his awareness of life and his sense of joyful kinship with it.

Li Po, the Chinese poet, beautifully expresses how the mind becomes mirror-like when our thoughts become still. It is only then that we can fully commune with the world around us:

"The birds have vanished in the sky, and the last cloud drains away.

We sit together, the mountain and I, until only the mountain remains."

I've come to realize that it is not so important to change the world, as it is to become it—in one's consciousness. Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." Those who deeply feel and perceive Life's unity and goodness have the greatest impact on others. John Muir is a perfect example.

No one brought nature to life like Muir. His great love for all living things gave him a rare understanding of the natural world. Birds, bears, and flowers all revealed their secret lives to him. When Muir spoke of his encounters with wild animals, trees, and mountain storms, his listeners said it felt as if they were there.

Robert Underwood Johnson, a leading conservationist of Muir's day, spoke of the tremendous influence Muir had on everyone. He said appreciatively, "Muir's writings and enthusiasm were the chief forces that inspired the conservation movement. All other torches were lighted from his."

Our effectiveness as Sharing Nature leaders depends on the depth of our experience of nature. It would be good if every Nature Game instructor practiced an inspirational nature activity or meditation every day to expand his or her awareness and love for nature.

I suggest using one of the following Sharing Nature activities, or choosing another reflective practice that inspires you:

Expanding Circles

Nature in Me

Vibrant Peace Walk

I Am the Mountain

Stillness Meditation

Hong Sau Meditation

Silent Sharing Walk

John Muir's Game

Trail of Beauty

Poetry (Vertical, Haiku, etc.)

John Muir said that to know trees (and all of nature) we must be as free of cares and time as the trees themselves. To quiet my thoughts so I can appreciate more fully a beautiful landscape, I often repeat a poem inspired by a visit to the Grand Canyon.

Let my mind become silent,  
And my thoughts come to rest.

I want to be

All that is before me.

In self-forgetfulness,

I become everything.

May you feel and share the joy in Nature every day.

Peace and best wishes,

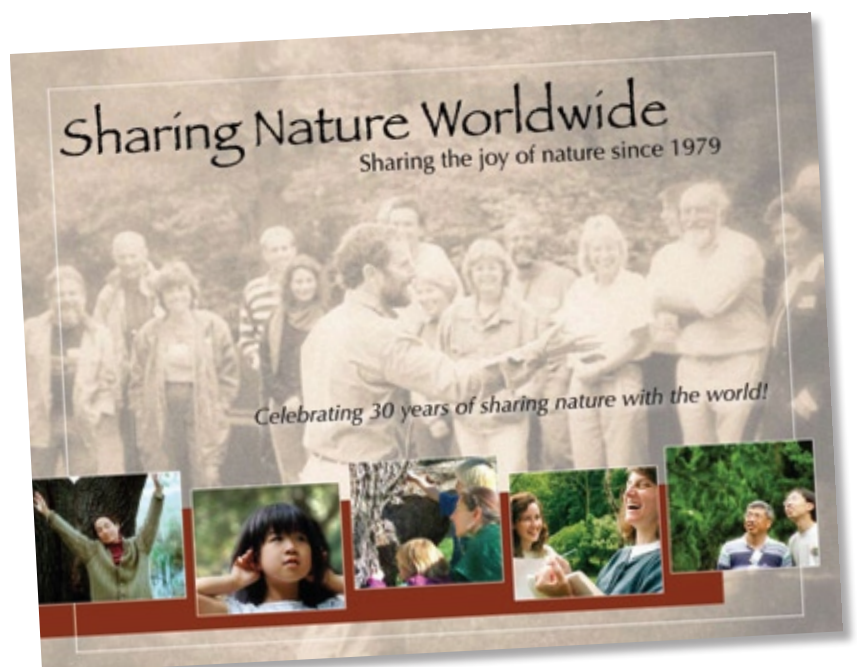
Joseph Cornell

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"Joseph Cornell is one of the most highly regarded nature educators in the world today." Backpacker magazine

His first book, *Sharing Nature with Children*, sold 500,000 copies in over 20 languages, sparking a worldwide revolution in nature education and becoming an instant classic. Joseph's books now serve as popular nature-education resources all over the globe.

See [www.sharingnature.com](http://www.sharingnature.com) for a range of activities and a 30th Anniversary Booklet telling the inspiring story of *Sharing Nature* around the world.





## Turn Things Around

by Tamsin Ireland, age 14,  
Kingswood School, Bath

This poem won the 2009 Young People's Climate Change Conference competition. It is a poem that is best read out loud and shows how important it is to see things from the right perspective. Stick with it as there is a clever twist...

We have to see things the right way round

There is no hope

It is not true that

It is always possible to get out of bad situations

We must acknowledge that

We have made many mistakes

Although in the past

We knew the consequences

We didn't change then even though

The air grew thicker and

Made the seas rise

Because of our lack of care in 2009 we

Have nothing left

It is wrong to believe that we

Can make a difference as individuals

All around the world people should know that we

Cannot bring back what we had

Even though we

Made an effort

As people together we

Became less and less powerful

The droughts, the hurricanes, the floods

Grew larger and larger

And our will to make things right

Disappeared completely before 2020

Selfish attitudes

Make things difficult for future generations

Some ways we found to create energy did not

Ensure that our children can live as well as we do

We must

Turn Things Around

*Confused? Now read the poem from the bottom up again.*

## Something To Think About...

In Washington, DC, at a Metro Station, on a cold January morning in 2007, this man with a violin played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, approximately 2,000 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

### After about 3 minutes

A middle-aged man noticed that there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, and then he hurried on.

### About 4 minutes later

The violinist received his first dollar. A woman threw money in the hat and, without stopping, continued to walk.

### At 6 minutes

A young man leaned against the wall to listen to him, then looked at his watch and started to walk again.

### At 10 minutes

A 3-year old boy stopped, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. The child stopped to look at the violinist again, but the mother pushed hard and he continued to walk, turning his head the whole time. This action was repeated by several other children, but every parent, without exception, forced them to move on quickly.

### At 45 minutes

The musician played continuously. Only 6 people stopped and listened for a short while. About 20 gave money but continued to walk at their normal pace. The man collected a total of \$32.

### After 1 hour

He finished playing and silence took over. No one noticed and no one applauded. There was no recognition at all.



No one knew this, but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the greatest musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Two days before, Joshua Bell sold-out a theatre in Boston where seats averaged \$100 each to sit and listen to him play the same music.

This is a true story, organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and people's priorities. It raised several questions:

- In a common-place environment, at an inappropriate hour, do we perceive beauty?
- If so, do we stop to appreciate it?
- Do we recognize talent in an unexpected context?

One possible conclusion reached from this experiment could be this:

If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ever made... How many other things are there that we have been missing as we rush through life?



Steve Wade

**Footnote**  
Get out and enjoy  
wild places...

# John Muir Award Biodiversity Stories Leaflet

During International Year of Biodiversity 2010 ([www.biodiversityislife.net](http://www.biodiversityislife.net)), we wanted to see how people were enjoying nature and landscape across the UK. We have collected a wide range of Biodiversity Stories showing how groups have engaged with Biodiversity through their John Muir Award activity. Download an e-version by clicking the button on the John Muir Award home page [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org). You can click on each story to find out more.



**JOHN MUIR AWARD**  
wild places:  
DISCOVER  
EXPLORE  
CONSERVE  
SHARE

**Ballinkrain Special School, Stirling Residential School pupil catches the Ladybird survey bug!**  
"Bugs are so important to our lives. They are fascinating, they are beautiful, and they provide many services, such as pollination, that we simply can't do without." Craig Macadam, Buglife

**Noranside Open Prison, Forfar New pathways in Cairngorms National Park**  
"I'll certainly be making space for this sort of activity in future. I want my kids to grow up aware of the world in ways I never was. I want them to have a world with wild places for them to go to and take their children and grandchildren." Innate

**Pembrokeshire Youth Service, South Wales Ysgol Bro Gwaun multi-activity 'John Muir Award week'**  
"We all thought the week was amazing - we had lots of fun learning about our environment and looking after it."

**Katy Standish, Northumberland and beyond From fungal forays to balsam bashing and hay meadow reseedling - a personal Award blog**  
Find out about Katy and her boyfriend Sam's Discovery and Explorer Awards at [www.hikinghdrian.wordpress.com](http://www.hikinghdrian.wordpress.com)

**YHA Do it 4 Real, England wide Summer camps prove fertile adventure and biodiversity**  
1,000s of young people discover adventurous activities and put conservation volunteering and Conserve Audit.

**Branching Out, Glasgow**  
"I opened my eyes to the outside a bit more and eh, it's not all hustle and bustle. You can do things at your own pace."

**Caroline Standing, Scotland A personal journey connected by water**  
"The cure for anything is saltwater - sweat, tears, and the sea."

**YHA Do it 4 Real at Gradbach Mill, Derbyshire Historical watercress beds restored - for habitat and hostel menu**  
"The work by the John Muir Award participants has been really beneficial to the hostel. The watercress beds can now be used as an educational resource for school groups, as well as an attraction for our regular guests." Mark Wallis, Hostel Manager

**Plas Gwynant Outdoor Education Centre, Snowdonia Ponds, orchard, a bog garden, long grass areas, reptile cairn, log piles, bird boxes and a 'Bingham Palace'**  
"The young people involved have loved creating something lasting in Snowdonia." Debs McKeown, tutor

**Burnfoot Community School, Scottish Borders From neglected playground to biodiversity haven - with a focus on literacy skills**  
"Being an Explorer has made me more confident. It makes you look at things outside yourself. It has helped me write better. It means the world to me. We do lots of different things, like sketching to relax our minds. I feel happy and excited being an Explorer." Bryce, P6 pupil.

**Rothbury and Coquetdale, Northumberland Chevots Champs**  
"We worked with Nature to remove cow parsley from the area. It competes with less desirable plants and has the ability to spread rapidly." Adventure Champs

**Ardersier Common, Fort George Highland environmental children's group with rare sawfly sighting**  
"I feel extremely proud to have our own ISF sighting. It was a great dedication and how so many people have taken an interest. It was so great to be mentioned in glowing terms on the Highland Biodiversity Recording Group's web site. I feel proud and overwhelmed that our discovery was described as a 'significant observation'." Jessica, 12

**Slamannan, Falkirk Weekly woodland visit**  
"No matter how often you visit your wild place and think you know it, there is always something new to discover, almost as if I'm discovering it for a first time."

**Cockburnspath Primary School, Scottish Borders Weekly woodland visit**  
"We walked silently through the woodland and noticed that there were animals living there. We realised that we are connected in the same way as the trees are connected too." P6

**Hunter How Primary School, Emmerdale, Cumbria Working with Flora of the Fells and Wild Emmerdale to reintroduce the Marsh Fritillary**  
"It was a fantastic day! We released 92 flying Marsh Fritillaries at Mireside Common. It was a fantastic day! We released 92 flying Marsh Fritillaries at Mireside Common. It was a fantastic day! We released 92 flying Marsh Fritillaries at Mireside Common." Steve Clarke, Butterfly Conservation

**Abbey Hill School and Technology College, Stockton on Tees Vocational Fridays improve practical skills and confidence**  
"Not only did we improve our practical skills and confidence, but we also improved our literacy skills. We were working with a teacher who was very helpful and encouraging." Adventure Champs

**Shannagh-More, Northern Ireland Bringing biodiversity to life**  
"It was very exciting to see the children realise why we need to protect our natural world." Adventure Champs

## Get in touch with the John Muir Award — the educational initiative of the John Muir Trust

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