

JOHN MUIR AWARD

wild places:
DISCOVER
EXPLORE
CONSERVE
SHARE

Our Conserve Audit shows the value and impact of John Muir Award participation and how it has made a difference to wild places in 2011. It demonstrates the collective effect of individual responsibility and action across the UK.

Jacks Clark



John Muir Award Conserve Audit 2011

What is the John Muir Award?

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme that supports and encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places. Four Challenges are at its heart – each participant:

- Discovers a wild place
- Explores its wildness
- Conserves – takes personal responsibility
- Shares their experiences

johnmuiraward.org

What is a Conserve Audit?

A Conserve Audit is a monitoring exercise used to identify the amount of activity carried out to meet the Conserve Challenge of the John Muir Award. Throughout 2011, groups and individuals participating in the Award captured and quantified what they did to make a difference to wild places by completing a simple form.

749 Conserve Audits were received out of a possible 1206 Award Proposals registered and completed in 2011. Data can be used to summarise Conserve activity by region and by organisation.

The John Muir Award is the main engagement initiative of the John Muir Trust, the UK's leading wild land charity. The ambitions of the Trust are to protect, enhance and care for nature, and encourage people to connect with wildness – from what's on our doorsteps to remote coastlines and mountain landscapes. This year-long initiative highlights a substantial and positive contribution to these aspirations.

18,777 people are represented in the Conserve Audit via 749 Audit responses, a sample of 81% of all those involved in the John Muir Award in 2011 (23,153 Awards achieved).

5,216 were from socially excluded backgrounds, many who would not normally engage in positive action for the environment.

This Conserve Audit demonstrates that **24,432 days of 'conserve' activity** were completed by all participants in 2011 – an average of over **7 hours of dedicated activity** for each individual involved. This can be valued at **£977,280 worth of activity for the environment** based on Heritage Lottery Fund figures.

Activity took place over an extensive **range of geographical locations** and across a rich **diversity of habitats**, from mountain landscapes and coastal plains to woodlands and school playgrounds. Groups were involved in an **extensive range of projects**. Examples of cumulative activity include:

- **32,373 metres of footpaths maintained and created** – equivalent to more than four tourist paths up Ben Nevis.
- **An area the size of 100 football pitches cleared** of invasive species, including rhododendron, Himalayan balsam, snowberry and sea buckthorn.
- **82,451 bin bags of litter cleared** – more than the capacity of the Olympic Stadium.

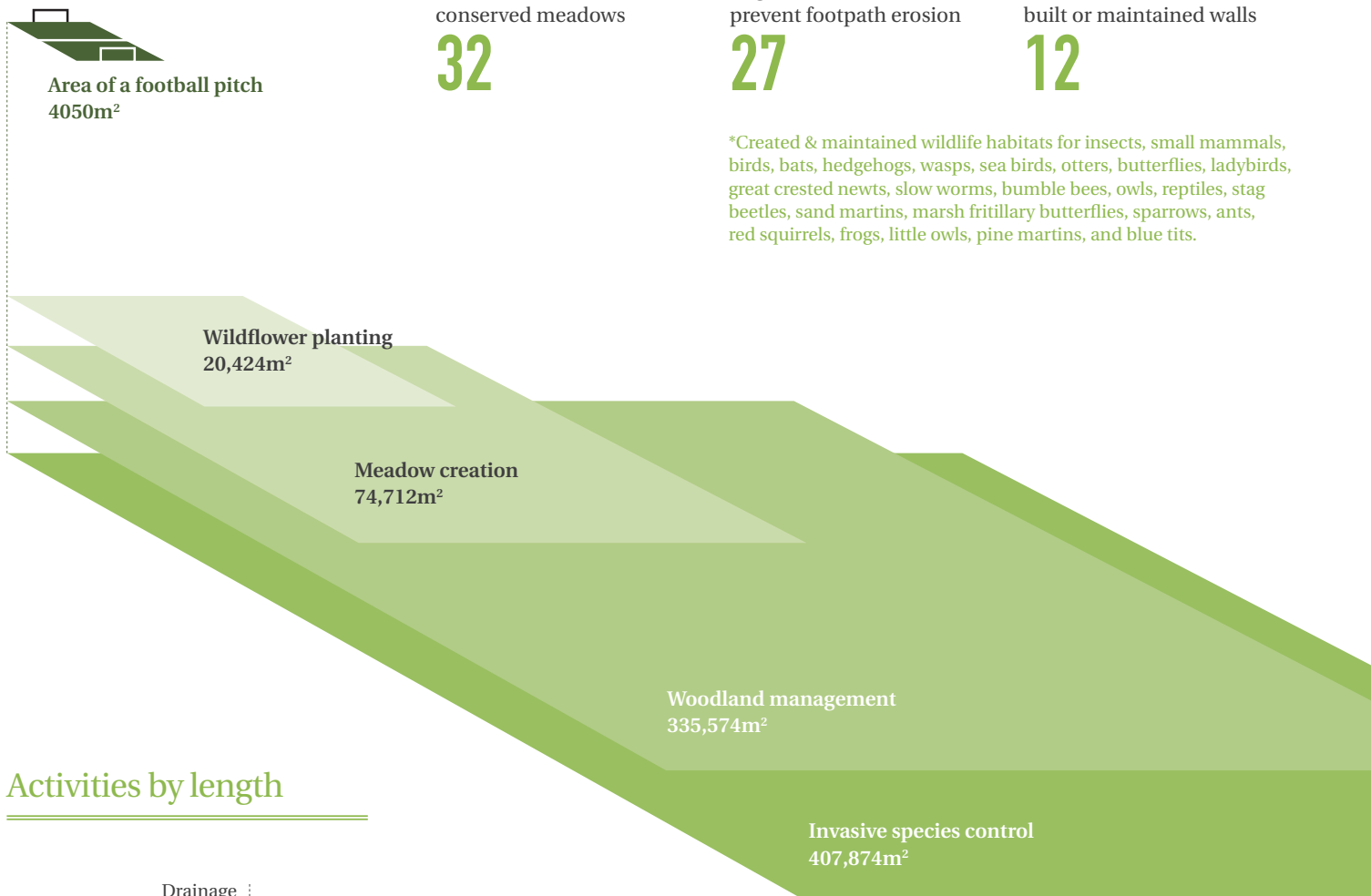
What was done?

The John Muir Award doesn't tell people *what* to do for wild places, but it does ask people to do *something* for wild places.

Number of groups who:

removed litter	created wildlife habitats*	cleared invasive species
374	212	183
maintained footpaths	actively encouraged new woodland	were involved in woodland management
151	134	124
planted or reseeded native wildflowers	made feeders for birds, bats, squirrels and butterflies	maintained fences
87	72	56
created compost heaps	created or maintained ponds	created hedging
52	46	45
conserved meadows	dug or cleared ditches to prevent footpath erosion	built or maintained walls
32	27	12

Activities by area

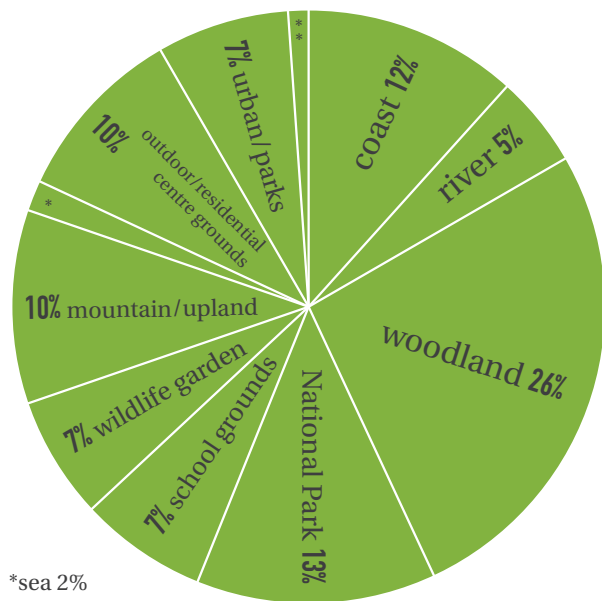


*Created & maintained wildlife habitats for insects, small mammals, birds, bats, hedgehogs, wasps, sea birds, otters, butterflies, ladybirds, great crested newts, slow worms, bumble bees, owls, reptiles, stag beetles, sand martins, marsh fritillary butterflies, sparrows, ants, red squirrels, frogs, little owls, pine martins, and blue tits.

Activities by length



Habitats used as activity locations



*sea 2%

**wetland 1%

Award activity in 2011 can clearly be seen to relate to a broad range of habitats across the UK – ranging from protected and designated landscapes to urban derelict sites.

11 key habitats were identified as places where people helped 'put something back'. Woodlands were the most popular areas for activity, with coasts and National Parks identified as the next most popular.

Activities by number

Compost heaps created

147



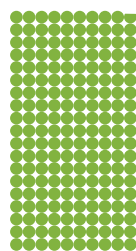
Feeders constructed

1321



Wildlife habitats created

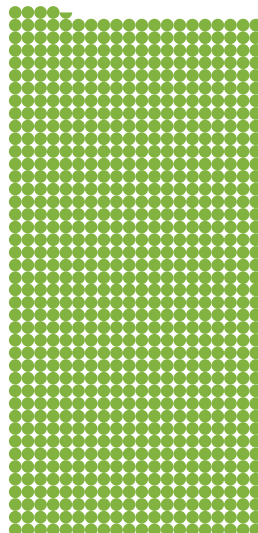
2464



Trees planted

18,967

● = 100



Bin liners of litter collected

82,451

Issues & Impact

Meeting the Conserve Challenge created effective contributions to regional and national campaigns, surveys and studies led by partner organisations and others including: Big Spring Clean, Conserve the Bees, Earth Hour, Walk to School Week and RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.

Survey topics included: air quality, biodiversity (including contributions to Local Biodiversity Action Plans), ancient trees, red squirrels, soil and earth worms, litter, glaciers, and many others.

Groups actively took care to manage their impact on wild places by ensuring that they:

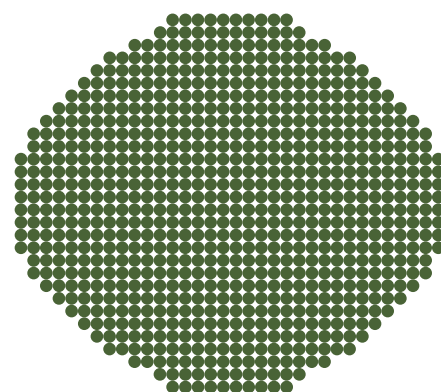
- applied 'Leave No Trace' principles to their activities (272 groups)
- followed Countryside Codes (351 groups)
- adhered to minimum impact principles (213 groups)
- travelled by 'Green' transport (72 groups).

There was a commitment by 475 groups to reduce, reuse, and recycle – at home, work and school.

Sustainable approaches to buying food (transporting and packaging) were also evident with some groups reducing consumption (36 groups), and others auditing their activity (2 groups). 39 groups even began to grow their own foodstuffs.

Energy reduction was also tackled with 67 groups reducing or auditing consumption, whilst a further 17 groups actively used alternative energy forms.

A number of groups created or upheld an Environmental Policy (3 and 63 groups respectively), whilst others created and upheld Procurement Policies (2 and 6 groups respectively).



Capacity of Olympic Stadium, London

80,000

Footpaths maintained

32,373m

Overall total

40,008m

Length of Marathon

42,195m

Conclusions

The Conserve Audit has provided a comprehensive insight into the contribution of John Muir Award participants to maintaining, enhancing and restoring wild places during a full calendar year.

It has demonstrated that individuals and groups can make a significant impact on their environment – locally and, cumulatively, nationally. The financial value of this activity, estimated at almost £1 million, is significant.

It also highlights the merits of working in partnership to achieve mutual benefits, with many examples captured by the Conserve Audit. Cross-sector partnerships are very much in evidence – the John Muir Award can be seen as a catalyst for making links between the environmental sector, formal education, youthwork, a broad range of ‘inclusion’ audiences, outdoor learning/outdoor centres, and health. It helps to connect NGOs, charities, schools and youth groups, families and individuals with national policies, initiatives, plans and indicators.

Findings are being used to demonstrate outputs of using the John Muir Award in a particular region and by specific organisation. The exercise is usefully informing and supporting a number of key working relationships.

Fundamentally, carrying out a Conserve Audit over a full year has shown that people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy and value exploring their relationship with wild places by taking responsibility, by making a contribution, by getting their hands dirty. The John Muir Trust would like to thank the hundreds of respondents for contributing and enabling us to demonstrate the impact that the John Muir Award can help them to have.

“It is not enough for people to be in sympathy with the plight of the natural world, but that they must become ‘active conservationists’, as campaigners, as practical project workers, as scientists, as artists, as writers.”

John Muir

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“It’s not just about me, I am doing something that really means something, that makes a difference to this place.”

Phoenix Futures Service User



Keith Brame

“Hopefully I’ve done enough to gain old Mr Muir’s respect.”

Award Participant



The John Muir Trust is the leading wild land conservation charity in the UK. We love wild places and are dedicated to protecting and improving them for people and wildlife. Over 10,000 members support us in our work. Find out more at johnmuirtrust.org

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