

The John Muir Award

Conservation Action in Telford & Wrekin



- **1, 514 young people** from Telford & Wrekin achieved their John Muir Award
- **12, 054 hours** (over 1,506 days) of environmental volunteering & social action.
- **21%** of this activity was undertaken by young people experiencing some form of disadvantage.
- An average of **8 hours** per person taking responsibility for wild places in Telford & Wrekin and beyond.
- In total this conservation activity is **valued at £56,400**, (based on Heritage Lottery Fund figures)

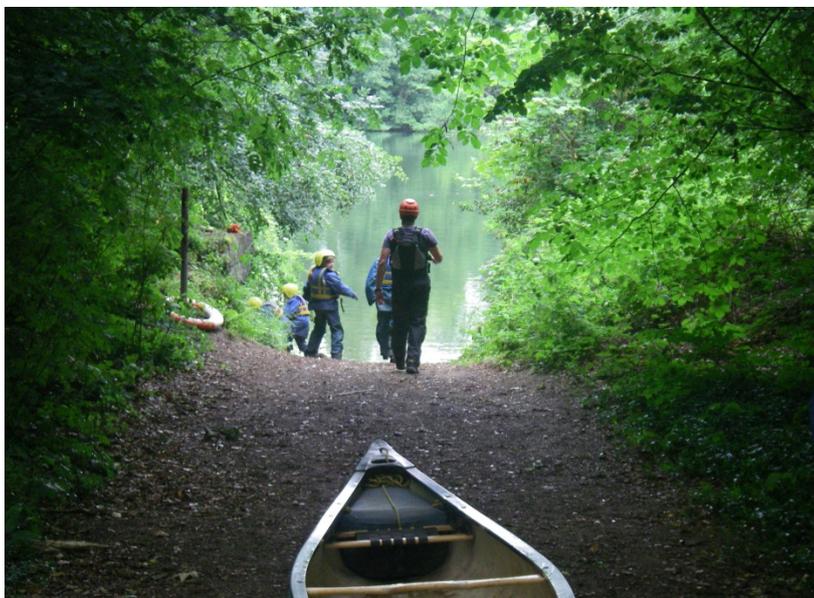
What is a Conserve Audit?

A conserve audit monitors the amount and type of activity carried out to meet the Conserve Challenge of the John Muir Award. This includes practical action, campaigning, and minimising impact, and captures how participants make a difference to wild places. For more information on the John Muir Award and other Conserve Audits visit www.johnmuiraward.org.

Who was involved?

1,514 participants from 44 groups from across Telford & Wrekin (39 Primary Schools, 2 Secondary School and 2 Special Schools) were monitored throughout their John Muir Award activity. Telford and Wrekin Borough Council have been working in partnership with the John Muir Trust since 2016, building on over 12 years of collaborative working. The partnership provides opportunities for High Quality Outdoor Learning experiences and meaningful, long term connections to nature for people of all ages and backgrounds from across Telford and Wrekin and beyond.

- **84%** of participants got involved as part of residential experiences with Arthog Wales Outdoor Education Centre
- **13%** of participants completed their John Muir Award with the support of Shropshire Wildlife Trust.
- Other groups completed their activity closer to home through regular visits to Arthog Outreach in Wellington.



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. It is the main engagement initiative of the John Muir Trust.

The Award is based around Four Challenges:

Discover a wild place

Explore it

Do something to **Conserve** it

Share your experiences.

Conserve Activity – a catalyst to ‘Be the Change’

Participating in Conserve-related activities through the John Muir Award provides young people with a platform to take personal responsibility for the natural environment. It gives opportunities to take action, develop a wide set of skills, make decisions and voice opinions as part of a collective. This can help to create a positive and lasting impact on their communities, and on themselves. Such pro-environmental action contributes directly to the youth social action movement and connects young people to national Initiatives such as the #iwill campaign. Many organisations also use social action through the John Muir Award as a central approach to developing skills for life, learning and work. The ethos of the John Muir Award underpins all aspects of the Telford & Wrekin Outdoor Education Service,

adding value to each individual's outdoor learning experience, recognising their engagement and achievement with a John Muir Award Certificate.

Impact on Wild Places in the community

- 120 bags of plastic waste were removed from a 10 mile stretch of coastal habitat between Fairbourne and Tywyn, North Wales
- 5000m² of encroaching scrub cleared and habitat piles for wildlife created
- 1.6k of wild flower seeds sowed
- Over 20 artificial nesting pods for newts installed to lay their eggs
- Over 60 bird boxes and bug boxes created
- Thinning out and coppicing small fast growing tree species to open up ancient woodland ground flora for bluebells and wild garlic
- Board walk created to prevent erosion of the geologically renowned pathway within the Ercall nature reserve, Telford
- Almost 200 participants took part in citizen science surveys including; biodiversity within streams, collecting and dissecting barn owl pellets to establish food sources.

Throughout their Award groups actively took care to manage their impact on wild places with over **84% of participants** (1272 young people) learning about the principles of **Leave No Trace, The Countryside Code and Minimal Impact**. 37 groups committed to continue with sustainable approaches once they returned to school by taking time to plan how they will increase the amount of waste they will reduce, reuse and recycle. Whilst exploring the wild places in Snowdonia, participants visiting Arthog Wales Outdoor Education centre also focussed their attention on plastics, how it comes to pollute the environment and the actions they can take to clear plastic waste from our rivers and coastlines, protect wildlife and reduce plastic use; both at Arthog, school and back at home in Telford & Wrekin.

“It was fantastic to see young people having a direct impact on their local area. During one visit to the Wrekin the group gathered a huge amount of rubbish. When I walk up the Wrekin this evening it will be a better place because of the hard work of these young people.” – Alan Braybrooke, Arthog Outreach

Conclusions

Completing a Conserve Audit over a full year shows the significant contribution young people of Telford and Wrekin, from all walks of life, can have on the natural environment, communities and themselves. Achieving a John Muir Award provides opportunities for young people to show their commitment to making a difference. It's a positive example of youth social action.

This audit has given snapshot of what meaningful social action in the environment can look like, through involvement in the John Muir Award. It particularly demonstrates the merits of working in partnership and the impact that Award participation has on wild places.

#iwill Campaign

The efforts of participants from Telford & Wrekin groups contribute significantly to the [#iwill campaign](#), a national youth social action initiative the which promotes the value of social action to young people and communities. It aims to ensure that all young people can access social action opportunities, wherever they live and whatever their background – including activities such as campaigning, fundraising and volunteering. The John Muir Trust has pledged to work with our partners to help 100,000 young people over 4 years (2016-2020) achieve their John Muir Award, engaging in practical conservation activities that make a difference to wild places in their own community and further afield - Inspiring youth social action by encouraging young people to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places. Read the Trust's [#iwill campaign pledge](#) and find out more [here](#).

