

Caring for Scotland's natural environment through the John Muir Award



Conserve Audit 2015 reveals that in Scotland

- 17,558 John Muir Award participants made a positive difference to wild places
- Activity was valued at £709,825 based on Heritage Lottery Fund figures (19,991 days)
- 33% of Conserve activity carried out by people experiencing disadvantage
- Conserve activity participation is closely split between males (52%) and females (48%)

What's a Conserve Audit?

It's a monitoring exercise to identify the amount and type of activity carried out to meet the Conserve Challenge of the John Muir Award. A summary of UK-wide activity carried out during 2015 is available here www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/conserve-audit-2015.

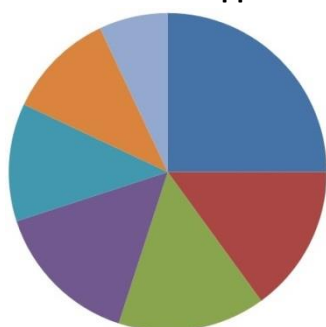
82% of all participants who achieved their John Muir Award in Scotland during 2015 had their Conserve Activity captured in this exercise, through 536 completed Conserve Audits.

Conserve Activity in Scotland

This Audit shows that participating in Conserve activities gives people the opportunity to connect with and care for biodiversity and our natural environment regardless of background or place. We found that a third of time invested into Conserve activities was by people experiencing disadvantage – many who would not normally engage in positive environmental action. This activity helps deliver Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, and demonstrates Learning for Sustainability in action. We've also seen that taking responsibility for nature helps establish aspirations for healthy behaviour, and improves wellbeing in-line with Scottish Government SHANARRI indicators.

"It was good to get to use and understand tools I've never used before. I actually enjoyed hard work, getting stuck in."

Where did this happen?



25% woodlands ■ 15% school grounds ■ 15% centre grounds ■
15% urban/parks and wildlife gardens ■ 12% on the coast ■
11% Scotland's National Parks & mountains/uplands ■ 7% other ■

What did this look like on the ground?

Activity was widespread, from remote Shetland beaches to Glasgow inner-city greenspaces. Most activity was through groups, including schools, colleges, outdoor centres, adult learning and youth clubs. Other activity was by families or individuals.

A summary of activity that benefitted nature and biodiversity conservation across Scotland shows:

- General habitat management – 134,118m² including bracken, gorse, beech, sedge, bramble, rosebay willow herb, ragwort, sea buckthorn
- Woodland activity – 30,565m² of felling, coppicing and brashing
- Wildflowers – 13,179m² of planting and reseeding, + 783m² specific meadow management
- Alien invasive species – 10,046m² were cleared including Rhododendron, Himalayan balsam, lodgepole pine, Japanese knotweed, bamboo, western hemlock, gunnera and snowberry
- Footpath – 24,148m maintained, created or improved, 79m of walls created or restored
- Tree-planting – 7,282 trees planted and 937m of hedges maintained or planted
- Litter – 4,431 black bin bags removed (with 15% being recycled)
- Fencing – 3,401m maintained, created or removed
- Ponds – 3,382m² restored or created

Citizen Science

The Conserve Audit demonstrates the momentum behind Citizen Science in Scotland, with 4,364 participants gathering, recording and analysing environmental data. This contributes directly to sciences, literacy, numeracy, social studies and health & wellbeing curriculum areas – good news for Scottish Government prioritisation of STEM learning (an interdisciplinary approach to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths education), and a focus on subject gender equality.

“It helps you when you’re outside, to think about things.”

Campaigns

2,216 people engaged with environmental awareness and action campaigns. This helped deliver measurable partnership outcomes with agencies including National Parks, Marine Conservation Society, and Keep Scotland Beautiful.

“By getting actively involved in putting something back, John Muir Award participants really help to look after the landscapes and wildlife within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park – contributing to *Wild Park 2020*, our nature conservation strategy.”

Linda Winskill, Biodiversity Officer, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Impact & Access

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code continues to be a key tool to help introduce outdoor rights and responsibilities and consider our impacts on wild places. 45% of all participants were introduced to the Code, and 43% to Leave No Trace principles supporting people’s use of Scotland’s outdoors.

“We definitely noticed a change in their attitude towards the end... They really took ownership of their wild place.”

Conclusions

Carrying out a Conserve Audit in Scotland over a full year demonstrates a significant contribution towards Scottish Government National Indicators, particularly a healthy environment that people feel better being connected to. It also shows that people from all backgrounds can improve educational attainment through real world experiences – building essential skills for life, learning and work.

The Conserve Audit shows how the John Muir Award can help make meaningful connections between formal education, youthwork, and inclusion audiences, and across health and environmental sectors – notably in Scotland’s National Parks.



A full report on the John Muir Award UK-wide Conserve Audit 2015 can be downloaded at www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/conserved-audit-2015

The John Muir Trust would like to thank the hundreds of Provider organisations for contributing and enabling us to demonstrate the impact that the John Muir Award can help them make.

The John Muir Award in Scotland has significant support from Scottish Natural Heritage, Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Parks, Scottish Government, The Gannochy Trust, and The Robertson Trust.

www.johnmuiraward.org


Scottish Natural Heritage
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All of nature for all of Scotland
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