

# Action for **North East** Nature

**Our plan for 2022 to 2025**  
Action for the climate  
and ecological emergency

Inspiring wonder in the natural world, from the Tees to the Tweed since 1829

 Natural  
History  
Society of  
Northumbria



# Summary

Action for North East Nature is NHSN's plan to grow and widen public support to help tackle the climate and ecological emergency that threaten our region's wildlife and wild places that society depends upon.

## Our region's amazing wildlife and wild places are under threat

Between the rivers Tees and Tweed, the North East is home to an amazing variety of landscapes, habitats, flora and fauna. Many are rare and some are iconic. All play an important part in sustaining a healthy environment that benefits society.

There is growing evidence that a global climate and ecological emergency is causing too much of our region's wildlife and wild places to vanish or decline. The losses are worrying, especially when people are witnessing declines in wildlife in their lifetimes. There is so much to protect and restore. Time is running out but we still have time to turn things around for the better.

## We need more people enjoying, understanding and protecting north east nature

People protect what they care about. However, too many people, especially young people, are lacking the opportunities to experience wildlife and wild places. Engaging more people with nature is vitally important wherever they are in the North East.

COVID-19 led many people to reconnect with nature on their doorstep. We saw a rise in visits to our own Gosforth Nature Reserve. We need to

grow, sustain and deepen this reconnection between people and nature. To do that NHSN will grow its impact through Gosforth Nature Reserve, citizen science, indoor and outdoor public engagement, publications, digital channels and our regional natural history archive and library collections. We can only do this because of hundreds of fantastic volunteers - the beating heart of NHSN – supported by a small staff team.

## Thanks to you

Thanks to your membership and support, NHSN will engage at least 25,000 people a year throughout the North East to take action for North East nature.

This is a big goal for a small regional charity but NHSN has achieved big success in the past. In 1884, NHSN members and supporters created the Great North Museum: Hancock. Since then, millions of people, especially young people have been inspired to learn and protect nature across the North East.

Today, NHSN focuses on reaching people throughout the region to enjoy, understand and protect nature wherever they are – all thanks to your support and membership!

“ No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.

Sir David Attenborough

”









# Our region's amazing wildlife and wild places are under threat

**The North East is home to spectacular wildlife and wild places. But a climate and ecological crisis, caused by human activities, is threatening the region's natural environment.**

## **A region rich in natural diversity**

Between the rivers Tees and Tweed, are the lowland and upland landscapes together with the North Sea marine environments. Within these land and seascapes are a mosaic of smaller urban, rural and coastal, semi-natural and artificial habitats. These include farmland and forests, villages and towns, parks and gardens, wetlands and rivers, moorland and meadows, beaches and dunes. Wildlife rely on this rich variety of habitats to provide their homes and food. Society relies on this natural diversity for the resources and beauty it provides.

## **A region's wildlife under threat**

The health of our region's landscapes, habitats and wildlife is highly influenced by our climate, our land use and other human activities. However, in 2019, scientists from 70 environment organisations across the UK showed that too much of Britain's wildlife

is at risk of vanishing or declining<sup>1</sup>. Some people are witnessing these declines in their own lifetime because of the fast pace of climate change and the human destruction and degradation of wildlife and wild places in our region.

Our own Gosforth Nature Reserve is under pressure from these threats. Located north of Newcastle, our Reserve is enjoyed by people because of its wildlife and tranquillity. Its role as a site of high biodiversity value supports wildlife moving around between a network of gardens and greenspaces in the surrounding wildlife corridor.

## **We still have time to protect and restore nature**

The natural environment and climate have constantly changed since life began. But we are now seeing the negative impacts of the last 100 years from carbon emissions, urbanisation, poor land management and pollution. There is so much to protect and restore back to a healthier environment. We still have time to turn things around if enough people get involved and take action for nature.

<sup>1</sup>State of Nature (2019)





### Did you know?

Rising to meet the challenges facing the natural world is nothing new to NHSN. From papers on acid rain, to campaigns against the shooting of birds, NHSN members have always sought to protect nature. Today we work together to meet the challenges of the climate and ecological emergency.



A 1961 poster produced by NHSN members to discourage the killing of wild birds





# We need more people enjoying, understanding and protecting North East nature

Despite human activities being the cause of the climate and ecological emergency, growing and widening the engagement of more people with nature is our solution to protect and restore wildlife and wild places.

## The power of individuals and people working together

Around the world and in the UK, there are inspiring people and organisations that have mobilised public action in tackling the climate and ecological crisis. Actions including rewilding, school strikes for climate, nature friendly farming, wilder cities and wildlife gardening show that people, especially young people, are engaged in making positive change happen. The COVID19 pandemic also saw many people slow down, stand, stare and listen to nature all around them on their doorstep. We need to sustain, deepen and grow this reconnection with nature.

During COP26, the international climate change conference, NHSN asked members and supporters what they think should be our 'Plan A for North East Nature'? Ideas suggested included:

- Make nature more accessible to the younger generation
- Inform people about places of beauty, especially in the North East
- Changing the way we travel, especially helping people enjoy and create more nature where they are

- Learning to love insects as they are an indicator of the health of the environment
- Rewilding our personal greenspaces
- Encouraging young people to make a difference through practical conservation and citizen science
- Recognising the importance of the local and wider landscape and the importance of wildlife corridors

These ideas shaped this plan and programme of action for 2022 to 2025.



“

*Large 'flagship' nature reserves are great, but I would like to see our local wild spaces get the recognition they deserve; for their importance to wildlife and conservation but also in raising the next generation of nature lovers.*

Sam Fisher, NHSN member

”





## Thanks to you

NHSN is a North East charity and has existed for 193 years only because of the generosity and enthusiasm of members and supporters. With your ongoing support, NHSN has set a new goal to directly engage with 25,000 people a year throughout the North East.

That's ambitious for a small regional wildlife charity but we have achieved major success in the past. NHSN created the Great North Museum: Hancock in 1884 to inspire public interest in nature and science. Today, the museum welcomes nearly half a million visits a year – thanks to its current management by Newcastle University and TWAM<sup>2</sup>.

Today, NHSN focuses on reaching people throughout the region to enjoy, understand and protect nature wherever they are – all thanks to your support and membership!



*I have learned so much about nature by simply talking with other volunteers and visitors from all walks of life, both expert and amateur. What we all have in common is a love and appreciation for nature.*

**Chung Chung Stockman, Volunteer Ranger at Gosforth Nature Reserve**

## Did you know?

Throughout the pandemic, NHSN's natural history talks were watched a record 22,000 times, bringing learning opportunities to more people than ever before. Across the North East, it is vital that we build on this success to provide more opportunities for people, wherever they are, to experience and understand nature. Only by encouraging more people to understand the natural world will we ensure that more people are empowered to protect it in the future.



<sup>2</sup>Type and Wear Archives and Museums





# NHSN plan for the climate and ecological emergency 2022 to 2025

Action for North East Nature is NHSN's response to the climate and ecological emergency.

## Our vision

Many more people and a wider range of people enjoying, understanding and protecting North East nature

## Our purpose

Inspiring wonder and collective action in all aspects of North East natural history through delivery of high quality communications, events, lifelong learning, citizen science, Gosforth Nature Reserve and a regional natural history archive & library.

## Our goal

To engage 25,000 people a year to take action for North East nature.

## Our values

- We're locally focussed
- We're welcoming to all
- We help each other
- We inspire wonder
- We encourage learning

## Our aims

We are:

- Widening and growing people's connection with nature wherever they are, especially young people
- Growing people's awareness and enjoyment of North East natural history
- Growing people's skills and knowledge of North East natural history
- Ensuring NHSN thrives, sustaining our size and growing our impact

Our focus across all NHSN activities will be:

- North East Nature: Celebrating the region's natural history, and the natural history community of people and organisations
- Climate and biodiversity emergency: Raising awareness of the challenges and opportunities for all
- Everyone's a naturalist: Supporting people to notice and protect nature wherever they are and whatever their abilities and interest in natural history





# Our Core Activities for 2022 to 2025

**NHSN is passionate about all aspects of the region's natural history: the ecological, the social history of naturalists and wildlife organisations and the cultural representation of nature in the arts.**

## **Celebrating nature conservation and citizen science**

### **North East Nature Conservation**

- Regional citizen science for bees, ladybirds and orchids
- Improving NHSN Friday Night Talks and 1829 Talks and other wildlife videos.
- Bringing together the region's naturalists through events, field trips and courses
- Producing better publications that celebrate the region's wildlife and people and organisations active in natural history.
- Inspiring young naturalists through the Young Naturalists Lantern Fund Appeal and Young Naturalist Certificate & Awards
- Increasing grants from the Dickinson Conservation Fund
- Representation on the Coquet Island Advisory Group

### **Gosforth Nature Reserve**

- Improving visitor facilities, accessibility and community engagement
- Seeking to extend our influence in the neighbouring wildlife corridor
- Campaigning for its protection from urbanisation and other local pressures.
- Improving habitat and species management and long-term environmental monitoring







© TWAM

## Natural History Archive & Library Collections

- Appointing a new Project Archivist for the North East Natural History Archive and Library Collections
- Continuing 'Talking Naturally' interviews with the region's naturalists
- More events through Tuesday Evenings at the Hancock and presence in the museum
- Reimagining the Hancock Essay
- Promotion of North East wildlife artists

## Strengthening NHSN

- Ensuring our work removes barriers to people wanting to participate in natural history in order to grow and widen engagement.
- Improving how we run our specialist interest groups and citizen science
- Reviewing membership packages, education courses and events programme
- Widening and diversifying our sources of financial support
- Updating our legal structure and associated governance improvements
- Reducing our own carbon footprint





# More about what we are doing between 2022 and 2025

## Volunteering and engagement

We love providing opportunities for people to volunteer their time, enthusiasm, skills and knowledge to inspire action for North East nature. Our small staff team are here with the focus of growing and supporting volunteering.

Everyone can be a naturalist, beginners to experts, generalists to specialists. Our central purpose is to grow and widen engagement to enjoy, understand and protect nature, especially in the North East. We will do this by improving our indoor and outdoor programme of events, activities, courses and more.

## Gosforth Nature Reserve

Managed by NHSN volunteers since 1929 and loved by visitors. We aim to upgrade the Geoff Lawrence Hide and improve path accessibility to the Ridley and Beck viewing hides. The new management plan will improve conditions for wildlife and people. We will extend our influence beyond the reserve boundaries into the wildlife corridor, engaging with people to inspire local action.

## Young North East Naturalists

The new Field Studies Room at Gosforth Nature Reserve will welcome many more schools and community groups. In 2022 we have two part time Nature Rangers to engage 204 children from five schools to develop a toolkit to show 'How To Be A Young North East Naturalist'.

The Young Naturalists Lantern Fund will continue to seek donations to provide nature activity bags and field trips for young people who have less access to nature, to help them discover their inner naturalist.

## Regional Citizen Science

We will build on the success of our regional citizen science projects for bees, ladybirds, and now orchids in 2022. They will be continued for up to the next three years. Citizen science plays a crucial role in nature conservation by showing the distribution and abundance of flora and fauna throughout the North East.

## Regional Natural History Archive and Library Collections

We aim to secure funding for a Project Archivist to capture and tell the stories of North East Naturalists and natural history organisations. This includes the cultural representation of the region's natural history including wildlife art, poetry and stories.

## Friday Night Talks and 1829 Talks

We will continue to publish talks online as this makes them freely accessible to more people across the North East. These provide access to some of the most talented naturalists from across the region, their organisations and action for natural history. 1829 talks promote the latest environmental research by early career scientists from across the North East.

“ *no one is too small  
to make a difference.* ”

Greta Thunberg,  
young climate activist

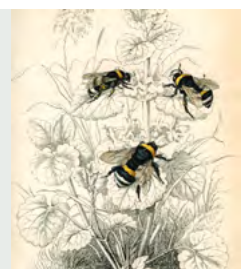




© Charlotte Rankin

### Did you know?

The earliest North East bee records come from Albany Hancock, brother of John Hancock, in 1827. Since then, many bee species have declined due to human actions and, thanks to climate change, new species have colonised our region. Almost two hundred years after these initial records, local naturalists taking part in NHSN's North East Bee Hunt continue to monitor these colourful pollinators, revealing new information about their distribution and tracking their response to climate change.





# Our values

Our members, volunteers and staff shaped our values, which we apply to everything we do.



## **We're locally focussed**

We are a local independent wildlife charity, led by volunteers, celebrating all aspects of North East natural history – the nature, the naturalists and organisations and the culture, such as wildlife art and nature notebooks.



## **We're welcoming to all**

Since we formed in 1829 our purpose has been to widen and grow a passion for North East natural history by welcoming people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.



## **We help each other**

We listen and respond to people's needs and aspirations and help fulfil their potential by tailoring and improving what we offer across the region.



## **We inspire wonder**

We engage people to discover and nurture their passion for natural history through a constantly evolving programme of events, publications and more.



## **We encourage learning**

Our core purpose is to help people understand and protect nature through gaining skills and knowledge through lifelong learning and first-hand experience of nature.

Bee Orchid







Keep up to date with happenings at NHSN by following us on

 [@NEE\\_Naturalist](#)  [@naturalhistorynorthumbria](#)  [@nee\\_naturalist](#)  
 [NaturalHistorySocietyOfNorthumbria](#)  [natural-history-society-of-northumbria](#)

The Natural History Society of Northumbria | Great North Museum: Hancock  
Barras Bridge | Newcastle upon Tyne | NE2 4PT

0191 208 2790 | [nhsn@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:nhsn@ncl.ac.uk) | [www.nhsn.org.uk](http://www.nhsn.org.uk)