

Natural History Society of Northumbria

Annual Review 2023/24



Thanks to your membership, donations and volunteering, NHSN is doing more than ever to connect people and nature. This has never been more important.

Thanks to you, this year, more local people experienced nature, exciting new projects were launched, and regional citizen science continued revealing new information about North East wildlife. You also made a difference closer to home, helping protect Gosforth Nature Reserve as it celebrated its 100th birthday.

This year you've made possible our largest community programme to date, helped launch the first NHSN Field Skills Programme nurturing young talent and continued to inspire school children through a growing education programme.

None of this would be possible without your support.

Thank you so much.



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

Recording Regional Wildlife

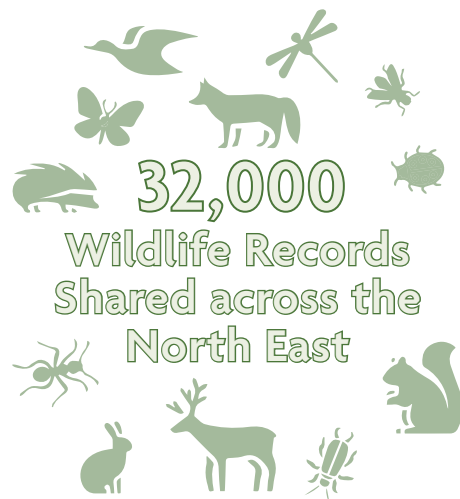
From the Tees to the Tweed, your sightings are increasing our understanding of North East nature

This year, over 328 of you shared your sightings of local wildlife, in doing so, providing important information to help project nature.

Together, you shared over 4,000 sightings of bees, ladybirds and orchids across the North East and at Gosforth Nature Reserve, captured over 1,700 sightings of everything from rare flowers to fish – including Gosforth Nature Reserve's first Eel in many years!

In urban Tyneside, over 200 of you shared the nature you noticed close to home as part of Gosforth's Wild Web, helping show the importance of the city's urban nature corridors, and from Holy Island to Upper Teesdale, many of you joined surveys and events bringing nature closer than ever before.

Your support also enabled NHSN's Dickinson Memorial Fund to support the Bedlington and District Red Squirrel Group, herbarium volunteers to repackaging valuable specimens and bird hide improvements.



“I have really enjoyed contributing to NHSN's Gosforth's Wild Web project. Spending time outdoors, slowing down and really noticing nature around me has increased my feeling of nature connectedness and improved my overall physical and mental wellbeing. It's been a fun introduction to wildlife recording, helped improve my identification skills and given me confidence to share my observations with others.”

Claire Partleton, NHSN Member

Bug spotting on a Gosforth's Wild Web Bioblitz in Leazes Park



Gosforth Nature Reserve

Despite the wider challenges facing nature, your support ensured Gosforth Nature Reserve thrived in 2024, its centenary year!



This year's centenary celebration was marked with exciting events and a special film watched by over 1,000 people. Volunteer Education Rangers inspired 824 school children about local nature and 299 attended the reserve's annual open day.

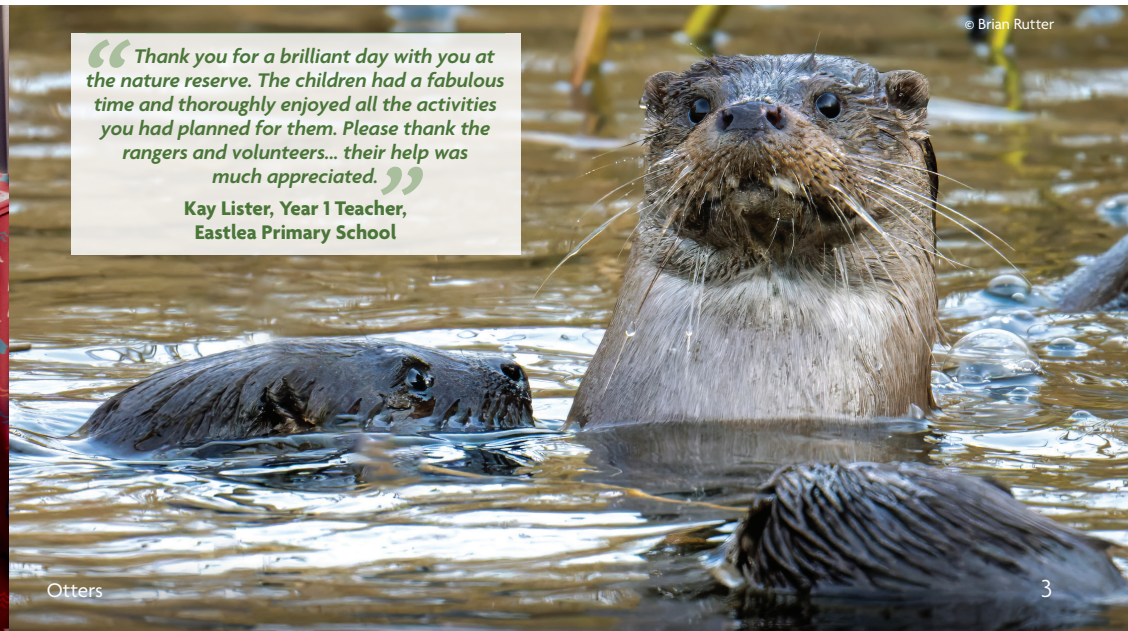
Volunteer Rangers warmly welcomed visitors and Conservation Volunteers carried out important works including accessible footpaths, seating and habitat improvements. More community groups visited too with the Field Studies Room hosting team away days and art courses and identification sessions.

This year proved to be a good one for wildlife too with favourites such as Otter, Kingfisher and Barn Owl delighting visitors, plus the first Marsh Tit spotted in several decades.

Wildlife monitoring continued with student research projects on beetles, footfall and otters. Surveys were carried out with partners including the Environment Agency, Newcastle University and Tyne Rivers Trust.

“Thank you for a brilliant day with you at the nature reserve. The children had a fabulous time and thoroughly enjoyed all the activities you had planned for them. Please thank the rangers and volunteers... their help was much appreciated.”

**Kay Lister, Year 1 Teacher,
Eastlea Primary School**



A Team Effort

Volunteers are the heart of what we do. Without your help, NHSN could not do so much for people and wildlife.

Each bring their own unique blend of skills, experience and knowledge, NHSN volunteers make an incredible difference across the North East each year. Together, they contribute to all NHSN activities, inspiring children, recording wildlife, leading events and much more. This year, over 200 passionate individuals gave their time as:

- Members' mailshot Volunteers
- Conservation Volunteers
- Volunteer Rangers
- Education Rangers
- Trustees
- Special Interest Group Coordinators
- Event leads
- Library & Archive Volunteers
- Student Naturalists
- Editors

Our heartfelt thanks go to every person who shared their time, skills and enthusiasm, in doing so, continuing a long history of volunteering dating back almost 200 years.

“I really enjoy delivering the newsletters. I discover areas and streets I'd never have known and the exercise is good for me as well.”
Linda Tindley,
Mailshot Volunteer



Volunteer Education Rangers at Gosforth Nature Reserve

Nurturing Young Naturalists

You told us again in 2024 that nurturing young naturalists is a top priority for you.

Thanks to you, this year we supported 286 young people through NHSN's Young Naturalist Appeal, welcomed 824 school children to Gosforth Nature Reserve and carried out 64 sessions in local schools, reaching another 490 children as part of the Gosforth's Wild Web project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Supporting students and early-career naturalists is important too. This year, NHSN's first Field Skills Programme was launched with the support of the John Spedan Lewis Foundation, providing valuable training to 25 early-career naturalists and nurturing their skills in wildlife identification.

Your 1829 Talks continued to provide more opportunities and new Student Naturalists joined NHSN on two long-term placements bringing new skills and a fresh perspective to our work.

“I really enjoyed my time on the field trips, especially as they gave me an opportunity to meet like-minded people interested in developing their species identification skills and to learn about their particular interests and career aspirations.”
Katie Burns,
Field Skills Programme participant



Local children enjoy bird spotting at this year's Gosforth Nature Reserve Open Day

© Eyera Images

Early-career naturalists on NHSN's Field Skills Programme visit Lindisfarne



© NHSN

People and Nature

Your membership is helping spread the joy of local nature.

Thanks to you, this year saw NHSN's largest and most diverse programme to date, connecting more people with nature on their doorsteps and far beyond. Opportunities this year included education courses, walks, talks, blogs, videos and so much more. Highlights include:



“ We have learnt so much from our walks and talks with NHSN this year. No matter what season, there is always something to discover. We have really appreciated the generosity and expertise of the NHSN team. They have opened our eyes to the treasures in our local area that we wouldn't have noticed without their guidance. ”

Di Thurston, Friends of Hebburn Riverside Park



Friends of Hebburn Riverside Park enjoy a nature walk as part of Gosforth's Wild Web

© NHSN

Exploring Heritage

Your support is helping share the stories of local naturalists.

This year NHSN's Nature's Cure in Times of Need project continued, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Workshops were held with community groups, collecting the stories of how nature has helped people during difficult times.

Using material from the North East Nature Archive, blogs shared the hidden gems of the collection and events sharing history, heritage and writing were held in the Great North Museum: Hancock including fascinating evenings with authors, Noreen Masud and Marek Bidwell.

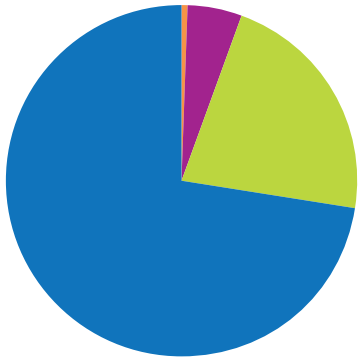


6 NHSN's 1829 Forum enjoying some treasures from the North East Nature Archive

© NHSN

Finances

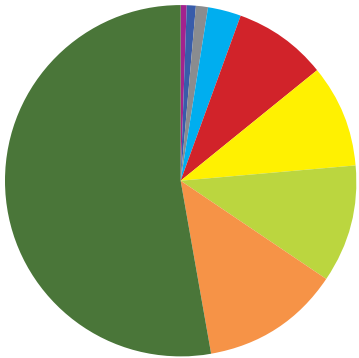
Income



Donations & Legacies	£213,000	72%
Charitable Activities	£64,000	22%
Investment Income	£15,000	5%
Other	£1,000	1%
Total income	£293,000	

Thanks to previous legacy-givers NHSN has been able to pursue an agreed plan to spend more income than received to deliver priorities set in Action for North East Nature 2022-25. Some expenditure relates to specific funded project costs where income has yet to be claimed.

Expenditure



Staff & Volunteer Costs	£235,000	53%
Overheads	£57,000	13%
GNR & Conservation	£48,000	11%
Marketing & Publications	£42,000	9%
Depreciation	£38,000	9%
Events	£13,000	3%
Governance Costs	£6,000	1%
Investment Fees	£3,000	<1%
Library & Archive	£2,000	<1%
Total expenditure	£444,000	

GNR = Gosforth Nature Reserve

“ I loved the bird spotting ”

Pupil aged 7

Thanks to a generous donation from Tony Tynan's family hundreds of children experienced nature at Gosforth Nature Reserve.

A special thanks to our funders



Percy Hedley
1990 Charitable Trust

Tony Tynan family

Thank You

As we all navigate a chapter of biodiversity decline, worrying news about the natural world is never far away. You may have heard that 2024 was one of the worst years on record for butterflies, but more broadly, nature across the UK is in trouble. Together, we must do all we can to help, and we are incredibly grateful for your support.

Grow Your Impact

There are lots of ways to help local nature.

Please share your passion for North East nature with friends and family. Would they enjoy NHSN membership themselves, or a relaxing visit to Gosforth Nature Reserve?


Grow your field skills with courses, events and citizen science across the North East. You could even become an NHSN volunteer and help inspire others.


Please spread the word by following us on social media, leaving comments and sharing your moments in nature.

Bee Orchid

Keep up to date with NHSN by following us on

 @NENature_


 @northeastnature_


 @northeastnature_


 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

 www.nhsn.org.uk



Natural
History
Society of
Northumbria

 Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR
Registered Charity:
1204306