

## Meet NHSN's New Assistant Naturalists

12 September 2024

**Recently, we welcomed Emily Anderson and Hollie Muir as NHSN's new Assistant Naturalists. Find out more in their own words below.**



Hollie (left) and Emily (right) exploring Gosforth Nature Reserve

Emily has recently finished a successful birding season with tern colonies in Beadnell bay after completing a master's degree in Conservation and Ecosystem management at Newcastle University. She has a passion for nature and inspiring other to enjoy our wonderful environment. Emily is particularly grateful of how much beauty and nature the North East has to offer on its doorstep and hopes to encourage others to uncover and appreciate this too! Emily is greatly excited to be joining NHSN on the Gosforth's Wild Web project and hopes to share her enthusiasm with local communities, schools, and just about anyone who will listen!

Hollie has recently graduated from Newcastle University with a degree in Zoology and has an interest in conservation and ecology. She has always had a passion for nature from a young age, having visited many beautiful places across the North East. She will be joining NHSN for the next ten months alongside Emily working on Gosforth's Wild Web where she will be out and about in the North East encouraging people to notice and enjoy nature around them.

 Hollie is looking forward meeting new people in schools and community groups, improving her wildlife knowledge and visiting local urban nature sites.

## Highlights So Far

We have both had a great first few weeks as Assistant Naturalists, learning about NHSN, meeting the amazing volunteers and staff, visiting urban nature sites and chatting to locals along the way. We have particularly enjoyed visiting Gosforth Nature Reserve where we got to explore the whole site, visit all the bird hides and see some amazing wildlife such as great spotted woodpeckers, roe deer, buzzards and a little egret. It was also great to chat to volunteers and meet the education rangers, as well as try out some fun activities such as pond dipping, nature walks and bird spotting. It has been fantastic to start our involvement with schools and local community groups and already have lots of exciting things planned for the next few months of Gosforth's Wild Web!

## Site Visits

We have already had a busy start and managed to visit lots of wonderful places. We were lucky enough to enjoy a nature walk with NHSN Senior Naturalist, James Common, along the Quayside, noticing the adaptations nature has made for urban areas. We have also been around Gosforth Nature Reserve a couple of times, discovering more about the rich history the reserve has to offer as well as having the amazing opportunity to meet visitors and get to know more of the incredible volunteers. Another visit we've been able to make in our first two weeks was a trip to Jesmond Old Cemetery to spot ladybirds for the North East Ladybird Spot project. This was such an exciting trip where we managed to find a Creamed-streaked Ladybird, an insect which is scarce in the North East.

We then got stuck into Gosforth Wild Web and have started a couple of pop-up events in our local parks/green spaces. So far, we have ventured to Leazes Park, Exhibition Park, and Killingworth Lake. We have been chatting to lots of park users, encouraging everyone to record their local nature in the Gosforth Wild Web project on iNaturalist. We met lots of interesting people, including a past volunteer of Exhibition Park who shared wonderful stories of previous maintenance he was involved in. We also managed to squeeze in a little bit of iNaturalist recording ourselves whilst also working on our own field ID skills. We particularly enjoyed watching a Great Crested Grebe family fishing at Killingworth Lake.

We are both looking forward to more of these events and meeting more nature enthusiasts!





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