



THE PEATLANDS  
PARTNERSHIP

# Volunteering in the Flows

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THE FUTURE PROJECT  
PLAN TO THE FUTURE PROJECT

PENGUINS

Adult









Birdwatching is a team effort for RSPB local volunteer Brian Johnston and Wix pupil.

## Connecting with nature is all good fun for kids

LYBSTER and Halkirk primary schools have been doing their bit for local birds by making bushes and helping to count them.

To support the RSPB's Big Schools' Birdwatch Campaign, members of the Forthside Partnership project at Forthside visited the pupils and helped them discover that birds are specially adapted for the environment they live in and come in all shapes and sizes.

Learning development officer Hilary Wilson said that it had been wonderful working with so many enthusiastic children, while helping them connect with the Flow Country by learning about birds in their local environment.

The school visit and activities were provided as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project.

Schools have until February 12 to take part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch, in which pupils are encouraged to spend an hour watching and counting birds in their school grounds and send their results to the RSPB, helping to build a picture of trends in bird populations across the country.

The Birdwatch is part of the RSPB's Giving Nature a chance campaign aimed at tackling the housing crisis facing the UK's threatened wildlife.

The charity is also asking people to provide a place for wildlife in their school grounds, own gardens and outside space - whether it's putting up a nest box for birds, creating a pond for frogs and toads or building a logpile for a hedgehog.

Further information can be found at [www.rspb.org.uk/schools/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/schools/birdwatch) and at [www.rspb.org.uk/home](http://www.rspb.org.uk/home)



A Lybster pupil concentrating on his task.



A Lybster pupil concentrating on his task.



Look up there!

# John O'Groat Journal

## Queens of the bog



# Kids inspired by RSPB Flows

## Flow Country project proves tree-rrific for local schools



Callum Brennan and John Mullan get to grips with the kypers.

A GROUP of pupils from Flow and Lybster primary schools recently teamed up to help with the restoration of the Flow Country peatlands at Loch Mhor, near Wickburgh.

Pupils had a great day converting invasive reedbeds which are spreading onto the open peatland from a nearby plantation.

Yvonne Lavelle, PE/7 teacher at Lybster Primary, called the excursion a "truly excellent part of school events".

"Our pupils and staff loved every moment."

"It was a very different hands on activity that will remain in our memories for a long time."

Caroline Dickie, the wider programme manager for the Flows to the Future Project, said the pupils learned how to

use tools and between them removed more than 2500 reeds. "If left to grow, these reeds would soon start to dry out the peat, preventing the special peatland plants and animals from doing their job," she said.

The trip was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and organised by Hilary Wilson, learning development officer with the Future project at Forthside.

Ms Wilson also led visitors in both schools about why the Flow Country peatlands are so important for wildlife and how the peat stores carbon, which makes it really important as a buffer against climate change.

They were joined by staff and weekenders between from the RSPB Flow Field Centre at Forthside, and local volunteers.



Amy Greig and Lucy Coe hard at work.



A well-earned hot chocolate break. Front row, from left: Savannah Green, Ethan McDermott, Lucy Coe, The Wynne (all Lybster); The Miller, and Amy Greig (both Flow Primary); Sarah and Callum Brennan, Robin Carmichael, John Mullan, James Smith, Rebecca MacLennan, Kaye Budge (all Flow Primary).

## Flow Country wildlife lessons



Primary school pupils on the north coast have been learning about the creatures to be found in the Flow Country. Hilary Wilson, Flows to the Future project learning development officer, and residential volunteer Sydney Henderson paid visits to Farr and Melvich primary schools and taught the youngsters, through games and costumes, about hen harriers, frogs, deer and dragonflies. The sessions finished with arts and crafts workshops when the children made their own dragonflies.

# Guides go with the flow to Forsinard











Over 100 volunteers

over 10,000 hours