



a million  
voices for  
nature

# INVOLVE

The RSPB's Volunteering Newsletter  
Northern England  
Winter 2011

## Welcome to the December issue of Involve Northern England – for all volunteers across the region.

This is my last newsletter for a while as I will be on maternity leave from mid-January for a year. Josie Fowler will be covering as Volunteer Development Officer whilst I am off, so if you have any questions or queries about volunteering, or just want to get in touch please contact her at [Josie.fowler@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Josie.fowler@rspb.org.uk) or telephone 01524 581001.

Don't forget, if you are on Facebook and want to find out what other volunteers in Northern England are up to, we have a Northern England Volunteers Group you can join.

Thank you for all your support of RSPB by volunteering, and I look forward to finding out what you've been up to when I return!

Best wishes

**Kirsten Whittaker**

Volunteering Development Officer



Edwin Kats



# Saving Nature

**The RSPB is about to take another bold step for nature. We will increase support, build more partnerships and carry out even more conservation. ‘Saving Nature’ represents our strategic priorities up to 2020 – our vision for a world richer in nature, and how together we can save nature.**

The new strategy sets out an exciting and challenging programme between now and 2020. We will only achieve our vision if we can get more support from more people. If all RSPB staff or volunteers work together with a common sense of purpose and direction and if we can work in more effective and innovative partnerships.

The role of volunteers in helping us to achieve our vision is bigger than ever. We need to do more to engage the public. We need to do more to increase our income. As we grow there will be ever more need for volunteers to help us to continue to do what we are already doing; managing our nature reserves and running our conservation and education projects, campaigning for public and political support and helping us to run the whole operation as effectively as possible.

These are tough economic times, but they are also tough times for nature. There are fewer birds, bees and butterflies in our hedgerows than ever before. The destruction of the world’s tropical forests continues at an alarming rate, threatening not only the future of all the different species that rely on them but also the long-term stability of our climate. Our ever-increasing ability to exploit the resources in and under our seas makes our marine wildlife more vulnerable than it has ever been.

The RSPB is working to address all these challenges and more, working with farmers to put the life back into our countryside, securing the future of the Gola and Harapan rainforests, working with trawler fishermen across our oceans to secure a future for albatrosses and working with many marine industries closer to home to secure effective Marine Protected Areas in our own waters. With your help, we can do more of this vital work.

As a volunteer for the RSPB you are already Stepping up for Nature and I would like to thank you for the vital contribution you make. If you are able to do more, then that would be brilliant, and if you can’t do anymore but know someone else who might like to share the kind of volunteering experience that you have had, then why not invite them to join us in fighting for a world richer in nature?

**Peter Robertson** Regional Director, Northern England





## Dee Volunteers Help to Smash Records

**The RSPB's latest visitor reserve, Burton Mere Wetlands threw open its doors on 24th September and immediately begun to re-write the Dee Estuary record books.**

Only a few hours after opening its doors, Burton Mere had smashed all previous records for visitor numbers on a reserve, and continued to break records throughout its first week.

The record numbers of visitors were met by friendly, well-informed volunteers who were able to show them close-up views of wildfowl and wading birds, whilst engaging positively with them about the work of the RSPB.

In total, throughout the opening week, the volunteer team contributed a staggering 170 hours of work, breaking another record. 25 brand new members were also recruited, which is yet another record broken!

And, it wasn't only during the opening week that our volunteers helped. They have been fully involved with the development and creation of the new reserve, from dry stone wall construction, to the creation of an artificial badger sett, to the planting of over 13,000 reeds! Just where would we be without our volunteers?

If you think you have what it takes to join our fantastic team, then please get in touch; [deeestuary@rspb.org.uk](mailto:deeestuary@rspb.org.uk)

Paul Brady Visitor Development Officer, Dee Estuary

## Thank You 'A Date with Nature' Volunteers!!

All across the UK the RSPB is engaging and inspiring the public through events called 'A Date with Nature'. In the North of England we have lots of these events taking place, from the peregrines of Manchester, Malham and Scarborough to the ospreys in the Lake District, the herons of Blackpool, the avocets of Marshide and the seals of Saltholme.

This year, we met over 125,000 people through our projects. So far, we have raised over £4500 in donations and pin badge sales, and have inspired over 950 people to support the RSPB through membership. Not only does this directly help the projects, but these donations and new members also help this region - and the wider RSPB - achieve its conservation ambitions. From the continued success of our gorgeous reserves, to supporting field teachers to inspire children with nature, to assisting the RSPB's conservation officers in their frequently challenging, but always rewarding, work to protect wildlife for us all to enjoy.

None of these events could be run, or achieve half as much, without the support and dedication of their volunteers, with over 8,000 hours clocked so far. So for all those involved, and to all those who will

become involved, thank you from the RSPB and all our project partners, including the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Forestry Commission, Lake District National Park, Manchester City Council and Scarborough Borough Council.

We look forward to seeing you next season! (Though keep your eyes and ears peeled for any local winter projects).

Best wishes

Carolyn Jarvis and the People Engagement Team



## Discover your own V&FA Moment

*“It was early morning and that special light you often get around sunrise was illuminating the trees and hedgerows, which were still bathed in low level mist. A barn owl was quartering the field in which I was carrying out my survey when suddenly it plunged down, shortly to rise with a mouse or vole in its talons. It flew at low level, hedge-hopping, still holding its prey and suddenly from nowhere a kestrel rose up and highjacked the owl with the obvious intention of taking the prey. They tussled and went down behind the hedge. Shortly they came up again separately but without the prey and flew off, so the kestrel’s plan failed and the owl lost out too*

*“A memorable incident, which it was a privilege so see, more especially as I was the sole observer thanks to the opportunity presented to me by being a V&FA volunteer.”*

David Howlett, Volunteer & Farmer Alliance, Volunteer 2011

**Moments like this are just one of the benefits of becoming a Volunteer & Farmer Alliance (V&FA) surveyor. Making a real difference to farmland bird conservation and supporting the local farming community are two more.**

The Volunteer & Farmer Alliance project offers farmers around the UK a free farmland bird survey carried out by enthusiastic local volunteers. Full survey-training is provided and volunteers are only asked to commit roughly one morning a month between March and June. After the survey, farmers receive a final species list and bird map, and can avail of specialist RSPB advice on how to maintain and enhance



Andy Hay

important habitats for farmland birds on their land. They can also use the results to support applications to agri-environment schemes benefiting both wildlife and the farming economy.

**If you’re confident in your knowledge of countryside birds, we’d love to hear from you!**

**Geraldine Straker** in the Northeast, Yorkshire & the Humber on **0191 233 4332** or email **geraldine.straker@rspb.org.uk**

**Carol Coupe** in the Northwest on **01995 642551** or email **carol.coupe@rspb.org.uk**



# Dove Stone Day Out!

We like to reward our volunteers at Dove Stone for their great work and commitment in helping us manage the site. So, we invited them to a thank you event over at the Eastern Moors Reserve near Sheffield, to watch the red deer rut on Big Moor. We took along plenty of food and drink for a very blustery picnic at the trig point on White Edge. The deer didn't disappoint and we saw good numbers of hinds watching the magnificent stags strutting their stuff.

Afterwards we took a walk up 'Owler Tor' above Hathersage to enjoy the fantastic 360° view.

The joint working between reserves is not just about days out; it also includes some serious work. The previous week Andrew Carson from Eastern Moors came over to Dove Stone to give a team of our volunteers a lesson in dry stone walling. It was a beautiful day and we all had fun and learnt a great deal – and the wall doesn't look bad for a first effort!

Kate and I are hoping to take a team from Dove Stone to the Eastern Moors to reciprocate by helping the team there with some of their woodland management.



**Jon Bird**  
Dove Stone Warden