



Generation Wild Project Manager **Grade: 9**

Directorate: Operations

Location: WWT Slimbridge
Wetland Centre, WWT London
Wetland Centre, WWT Martin
Mere Wetland Centre and / or
hybrid working

Reporting to: Head of Learning

Main function of post: To manage WWT's *Generation Wild* project. To support the Head of Learning in managing the national learning programme as required.

Generation Wild is WWT's nature connection project for children and families in economically disadvantaged areas. The project improves child wellbeing whilst creating the next generation of nature lovers. It creates a level playing field in terms of nature connection opportunities for young people, with participation being completely free for eligible schools.

Further details can be found in the appendix and at the project website:

www.generationwild.org.uk

Supervisory responsibilities: Line Management of the Generation Wild Administrator. Functional supervision (but not line management) of centre-based Learning Managers, responsible for implementing the project at their sites.

Person Specification

1. Motivation

Essential:

- A passion for connecting children and families with nature
- A commitment to opening up nature for all, irrespective of background

2. Qualifications

Essential:

- Relevant degree or equivalent experience in a relevant field

3. Knowledge and understanding

Desirable:

- Understanding the barriers to disadvantaged groups connecting with nature
- Understanding the pressures facing schools and those that work in them
- Knowledge of nature connection approaches and activities, particularly those designed for young people

4. Experience

Essential:

- Experience of working with young people or with those who support them
- Experience of handling and analysing large amounts of data, particularly using Excel.
- Experience of producing high-quality written reports for a range of audiences
- Experience of carrying out evaluation of projects or services

Desirable:

- Experience of delivering nature-based learning
- Experience of working within either formal or informal education
- Experience of working with disadvantaged children and families
- Experience of managing a large-scale project, ideally with a focus on nature / the environment
- Experience of marketing a service to schools or other education providers

5. Managerial & Supervisory

Essential:

- Strong leadership and people management skills.
- Ability to lead, inspire and motivate others.

Desirable:

- Leading multi-disciplinary project teams.
- Supervising work of external organisations or creative partners.
- Supervisory / line management responsibilities:

Type of staff	Number managed	Number supervised
Employed Staff	1	7
Volunteers / Casual Workers	0	1
Contractors	3	0

6. Responsibility

Essential:

- Ability to manage a budget of up to £500,000 annually.

Desirable:

- Experience in managing externally funded projects.

Levels of Responsibility:

Type of Responsibility	Level (£'s)
Expenditure (exc. payroll)	£0.5 million per year
Cash Handling	£100
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings)	Computer; telephone; WWT uniform
Visitors (per annum)	15,000 GW participants

7. Creative Ability

Essential:

- Ability to work with others to create and deliver inspiring and engaging experiences for children and families.
- Ability to inspire others with new and creative approaches.

Desirable:

- Experience of co-designing activities with teachers, children and families.

8. Contact

Essential:

- Ability to travel to sites across the UK.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of internal and external audiences, from funders and high level stakeholders to teachers, parents and children.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Excellent presentation and communication skills – verbally, visually and in writing with the ability to work and communicate at all levels across the organisation.

Responsibilities of the post

Planning and implementation

- Evaluate the current phase of the project and use the learning from this to develop a project plan for the next three years.
- Lead on the delivery of the project plan, managing the day-to-day operational aspects and recording progress against key milestones.
- Work closely with site-based teams to ensure that activities are delivered to the highest standards.
- Work with the Head of Learning and the WWT Marketing Team to effectively promote the project to schools.
- Manage school and family award schemes, ensuring that action taken by teachers and children is recognised and rewarded.

Communications and reporting

- Oversee communications with teachers, ensuring they are able to implement the project effectively in their schools.
- Lead project board meetings, updating the board on progress, celebrating achievements and highlighting any issues.
- Write and submit regular funder reports, updating them on progress and any project changes.
- Promote the project internally, ensuring WWT staff and volunteers are aware of the project and can talk about it in an informed way.
- Promote the project externally, sharing key achievements and learning across the conservation, education and health sectors.
- Support funding applications to help secure further funding for Generation Wild and other similar projects.

Line Management and supervision

- Line manage the Generation Wild Administrator.
- Work within a matrix management system, overseeing work on the project by learning teams across seven WWT wetland centres.
- Work with external contractors to support project development.

Finance

- Manage the project budget, monitoring spending and re-forecasting projected spend to ensure the project stays on track.
- Produce financial reports for the project board, WWT senior managers and funders.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Work with researchers at Cardiff University to deliver robust and comprehensive evaluation of the project.
- Monitor the number of project participants against target. Celebrate where targets are being met and take appropriate action where participation levels are falling below target.
- Monitor teacher, pupil and family feedback, identifying key area of success as well as areas for improvement.

- Monitor levels of engagement with the project's digital platform, taking action to ensure this is maximised.

Other

- Provide leadership to all project staff and volunteers enabling every team member's contribution to be maximised by ensuring that the appropriate levels of direction and support are provided through professional line management in line with WWT's people frameworks.
- Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in your team is an integral part of how they work, creating a safe environment for staff, volunteers and visitors by implementing WWT's health and safety policies and guidelines.
- Be responsible for ensuring that your team engage with the WWT Sustainability Statement, being aware of negative environmental impacts and incorporating sustainable ways of working.
- Ensure that your team engage and interact with our visitors and supporters in a positive way, shaping unforgettable experiences and helping them understand and connect to wetlands.
- Ensure that everyone in your team adheres to WWT's Data Protection policy and GDPR standards as an integral part of how they work.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed, the post holder is required to perform any other reasonable duties that may be assigned by the supervisor shown above, from time to time.

General Notes

This position involves some travel to WWT sites located across the UK.

The job holder may choose to work from our Slimbridge, London or Martin Mere sites with much of the work carried out from home should they wish.

Date raised: April 2023

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Appendix:

Project outline: Generation Wild

‘Inspiring a new generation of nature lovers’

Summary

Generation Wild is the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust’s nature connection project for children and families in economically disadvantaged areas. The project improves child wellbeing whilst creating the next generation of nature lovers. It creates a level playing field in terms of nature connection opportunities for young people, with participation being completely free for eligible schools.

It achieves this through a unique and innovative approach, creating lasting and meaningful connections with nature through storytelling and adventure. The project has been designed in partnership with creative agencies alongside children, parents and teachers from disadvantaged communities meaning that we now have a proven model that we know works for the intended audience.

Evaluation of the first year of project delivery shows that the project is meeting its aims. 12,500 children have taken part. These children and their teachers are reporting significant emotional and wellbeing benefits. Children are demonstrating a care and concern for nature that will stay with them throughout their lives. In addition, teachers are reporting that the project has opened open new opportunities for these children, opportunities that would otherwise have been missed.

See: www.generationwild.org.uk

Where does it run?

Generation Wild uses a visit to our wetland centres as a springboard to further activity back in the local community. It runs across seven of our UK wetland centres:

- Arundel Wetland Centre, West Sussex
- Castle Espie Wetland Centre, Northern Ireland
- Llanelli Wetland Centre, Wales
- London Wetland Centre, Barnes
- Martin Mere Wetland Centre, Lancashire
- Slimbridge Wetland Centre, Gloucestershire
- Washington Wetland Centre, Tyne and Wear

Why was the project developed?

At WWT, we believe that nature is for everyone, not just the privileged few. Evidence shows that children from economically disadvantaged communities have fewer opportunities to connect with nature whilst having the most to gain from this connection¹. Nature connection has been shown to improve learning and wellbeing² whilst developing a love and care for nature³; a win-win for both children and the natural world.

¹ [Natural England: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment \(MENE\) Children’s Report 2018-19](#)

² [Mental Health Foundation; Journal of Environmental Psychology; Natural England; Journal of Happiness Studies](#)

³ [Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology; Journal of Environmental Psychology](#)

Connecting with nature can open up a whole new world of opportunities for children; opportunities that should be available to all. In the words of Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*:

“Every child needs nature. Not just the ones with parents who appreciate nature. Not only those of a certain economic class or culture or set of abilities. Every child.”

How is this project different?

Generation Wild breaks new ground, both for WWT and for the conservation education sector as a whole. Traditionally, learning programmes have taken a largely knowledge and facts-based approach. This means they’re less accessible to children who aren’t as academically minded or who don’t learn in a pre-defined way. On top of this, evidence is now showing that it’s not enough to simply learn about nature⁴. If people are to come to truly love and protect the natural world, they need to experience it directly; see it, hear it, smell it, touch and taste it. Most importantly, they need to feel part of nature. Generation Wild is based on the five pathways to nature connection identified by the University of Derby: senses, beauty, emotion, meaning and compassion⁵. We believe it is this approach that will open up access to all children, improve their wellbeing and create the next generation of nature lovers.

We also recognise that we can’t do it alone. We can create the initial spark of inspiration but it is teachers and parents who will ultimately have the ability to provide nature connection experiences for their children in the long term. Generation Wild uses a visit to our wetland centres as a springboard to further activity back in the local community. It aims to show both parents and teachers that nature connection needn’t be difficult. You don’t need the latest clothes and equipment and you don’t need to know everything about the plants and animals you see. Nature connection can be as simple as walking across a field barefoot or rolling down a hill. In fact, these experiences are often much more powerful than looking at a bird sat miles away through an expensive telescope.

With Generation Wild, we’ve chosen to take a story-based approach that effectively melds the arts and the sciences and creates a sense of magic and adventure that appeals to all children. We have used story, music, art, performance and puppetry to engage a wide range of children irrespective of their background, ability or preferred learning styles.

This is a completely new approach to conservation education.

Development of project concept

The first year of the project was used to develop the project concept. This was developed with [Stand and Stare](#), a creative design studio; [Fieldwork](#), a design and technology studio; teachers, children and parents from schools in economically disadvantaged areas.

Stand and Stare worked with us to develop the over-arching project concept and the assets and materials needed to deliver this. They brought in expertise from the arts, performance, design and technology sectors that have enabled us to create a magical project that brings a story to life and creates unique and unforgettable experiences for the children.

Working with *Fieldwork*, we have been able to design and create a website that enables this sense of magic and adventure to continue back at school and in children’s own homes. It enables us to monitor levels of post-visit activity so that we know children are engaging with the project and that they and their families are benefiting from taking part.

Most importantly, the project has been co-developed with the intended audience. We worked with three schools, all in areas of high economic deprivation. These consisted of a large city school, a medium-sized suburban school and a small village school. We worked with a range of age groups across Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers, children and parents from these

⁴ [Beyond knowing nature](#)

⁵ [University of Derby: Nature Connection Handbook](#)

schools worked with us as we developed the project concept and we feel we now have a project that works for economically disadvantaged children and families across a range of school types and sizes.

We gained additional support to ensure that the project is fully inclusive. The fact that Ava is an osprey was a deliberate decision. Ospreys migrate between the UK and West Africa. This enabled us to create in Ava a dual-heritage character that many of the children have been able to identify with. It was important that we got this right, as the internal project team was exclusively white. Therefore, we worked with cultural advisors and members of dual heritage communities to ensure that we got the look and feel of Ava right and created a project that made the most of these dual heritage elements in a culturally sensitive way.

In addition, we employed an access consultant to ensure that the project materials and on-site experiences could be fully accessed by all children and families, including those with a range of physical and learning disabilities.

How does the project work?

The project is based around the story of Ava the bird girl. The children are first introduced to her through an interactive digital storybook that they read together as a class. Ava starts life as an osprey. She is warned not to get too close to humans because they have become disconnected from nature. But when she sees a mysterious giant nest, the temptation is just too great. She lands on the nest and falls into a deep sleep. When Ava awakes, she has magically transformed into part-osprey, part-human girl. She can't remember who she is or how she got there.

The children visit the wetland centre where they unexpectedly stumble across Ava in life-size puppet form, asleep in her giant nest. She explains that she has made magical listening devices called translatorphones that will enable them to hear and understand what the animals are saying.

She challenges them to complete an activity trail and discover some of the secrets of her story from the animals they encounter. They discover that Ava's Destiny is to re-unite humans and the rest of the natural world. This task has been endowed on her by the Guardians of the Wild, a great movement of animals that work to protect the earth and all of its inhabitants. If the children connect with nature where they live, they too can become Guardians - the first human members for thousands of years. Because Ava is an osprey, she needs to migrate to West Africa. On the way, she must recruit other children as Guardians, creating a mass movement of children in support of nature.

Back at school, the children log into our specially designed website. Here they track Ava on her journey and evidence nature activities completed in their school grounds, gardens and local greenspaces. Any child that completes ten activities becomes a Guardian and receives their certificate and membership badge in assembly.

Children also have the option to return to the wetland centre for a free visit with their family. Here, they can share the wonder of Ava's story with their families and show them how easy it is to connect with nature. The project has been designed to work both with and without this return visit.

Impact on participants

During the first year of the project, 12,500 children took part. These children completed 25,000 nature activities and over 1,000 children went on to become 'Guardians of the Wild'. In addition, 1,600 children and 1,400 adults returned for a free family visit.

Feedback from teachers and parents was excellent. 100% of teachers surveyed said they would recommend the project to a colleague and 100% of parents surveyed would recommend it to families like theirs.

We are working in partnership with Cardiff University on evaluation of the project. They have recruited two PhD students to work on this alongside senior university staff based in their Psychology, Geography and Planning departments.

During the first year, which was still being impacted by Covid, we developed, trialled and refined the methodology to be used in the quantitative research as well as beginning some of the qualitative elements. We hope to have some preliminary findings from the quantitative research by the end of year two delivery.

Qualitative evaluation of year one delivery shows that the project is having the intended impact both in terms of improving children's wellbeing and inspiring the next generation of nature lovers.

Teachers reported a range of behaviour and wellbeing benefits experienced by the children. They witnessed particularly profound changes in children with behavioural or emotional difficulties. They highlighted that what their pupils are suffering from is a lack of experiences and that Generation Wild was helping to overcome that. Some of these things, most of us would take for granted but the children were experiencing them for the very first time. Many teachers indicated that without Generation Wild being made available free of charge, they would not have been able to provide their children with these experiences.

The children referred to moments of calm that they don't often get in their lives. Nature provided a space to escape the stresses and strains of everyday life as well as providing opportunities to slow down and reflect. The project has given children a sense of freedom, fun and happiness and made them feel good about themselves. They have begun to appreciate the wonder and beauty of nature and have experienced real moments of awe and wonder. It's made them feel part of nature where before many felt separate from it. They've come to appreciate its importance and many have overcome a fear of creatures that they now love but would previously have tried to destroy.

For some, this has led to a sense of kinship with nature. They've come to see other creatures and even plants as their friends. One of the activities was to make friends with a tree by experiencing it with all of your senses. For some children, this tree has developed a special meaning for them and a special place in their lives. It has become somewhere to go when they are feeling lonely, something that is always there for them; something that makes them feel safe.

Sample quotes from teachers⁶

"I worked with a group of four children. [They have] hugely traumatic lives. Two of them were selective mute. [The first week] they'd been really quiet. I took them out the next week, and when I came in [their teacher] said, 'How've they been?' I said, 'They've never shut up!' They said, 'You're lying?' I said, 'God's honest truth!' I took my iPad out the following week, and I videoed their voices. When I came in, the teacher cried. She'd never heard this little girl's voice! Now that little girl sits in school and puts her hand up in class and asks questions. That's how much it works!"

"Some of the children we work with may not be living with parents, and some of them may be going through trauma. They may have huge fears about things, but when they have the opportunity to lift up a stone and find a worm, and then you say, 'Wow, you're absolutely fearless!' It gives them that confidence, that self-esteem."

"He had some of the most severe behavioural difficulties I've ever seen in seventeen years... but he would sit and he would build this bug hotel beautifully, and even make little beds to put in it, in case they wanted to go to sleep... you know, and so for a child who... he's

⁶ Note: Quotes from teachers are taken either from interviews conducted by Cardiff University or from feedback received via our online teacher surveys. Children's quotes are from the project website where they are asked how they found carrying out each nature-connection activity. Parent quotes are taken from our online parent survey.

incredibly difficult... and you know, he doesn't show emotions. Well, he's showing a lot of empathy!"

"It was allowing the children that opportunity to go out into the world and see animals and creatures that they've never seen before. Most of them... live in a high-rise blocks, in flats. [For the first time] they could see things in their natural habitat instead of, 'Here's a photo of a duck on a lake.' You know, it doesn't mean anything. Because they only see the photos... but they were actually there!"

"Our families are living in poverty and asking them for... even small amounts [towards a trip] is difficult. Often they simply phone their child in sick rather than saying they can't afford to pay. This was the only time that we had 100% attendance on a trip."

Sample quotes from children

Moments of calm

"It got my brain working, while it keeps me calm on another level, distracting me from my bad thoughts."

A sense of fun, happiness and freedom

"It gave me a moment to just feel happy. I liked how live and free I felt."

Feeling good about themselves

"It made my heart feel good inside."

Noticing nature

"It brings so much attention to animals and plants when they're always there but you never notice."

An appreciation of the wonder, beauty, magic and awe of nature

"It was so overwhelming for me. It was magical."

New perceptions of nature

"I learnt that some animals might seem dangerous but in the inside they are kind."

Developing empathy

"It made me feel like I was an actual bug. I liked being in the animal's mind. I could think what the animal was thinking."

A sense of kinship with nature

"It made me feel like a friend to all animals."

A sense of meaning

"She [their special tree] doesn't talk but she is always there in the same place."

A love of nature and a desire to protect it

"I love to look at nature and see the meanings of it. Looking at the stream makes me think more about the important meanings of nature and how to keep it safe."

Sample quotes from parents

The best bit was seeing the excitement on my children's faces.

My child has loved interacting with nature.

[My son] has become more interested in conservation.

From what he's seen at Washington [Wetlands Centre] and is learning at school, he has developed a real love and interest in animals.

Project Improvements made in light of year one feedback

We have learned a great deal about the challenges of engaging schools with longer-term nature connection projects in the face of significant pressures on their time.

Our evaluation of year one delivery highlighted a number of potential improvements to the programme. These mainly related to improving levels of post-visit activity by both teachers and families. In year one, those children that engaged back at home demonstrated a high depth of engagement, completing an average seven nature-connection activities each. However, a significant proportion didn't engage back at home. We knew this was going to be one of the key challenges and are working to address this in year two.

One of the main reasons for this was a lack of teacher activity following the visit meaning that the website and activities weren't as effectively promoted and facilitated as they could have been. We have taken a number of steps to address this.

1. Incorporating project activities into existing work plans

At the beginning of the project, we promoted the programme on a 'first-come-first-served' basis and encouraged schools to book and start their involvement immediately. This meant that for many it was seen as an add-on and wasn't planned into their curriculum work effectively. Therefore, we have adapted our communications with schools to ensure that the post-visit commitment is clear and to emphasise the importance of thinking ahead and planning the project into existing work plans. Some schools did so very effectively in year one and we have showcased this to other schools looking to participate.

2. Setting up pupil log-ins

A significant number of teachers weren't setting up website log-ins for their pupils. This was partly because they were asked to do so either just before or just after their visit when there are lots of other bits for them to think about. We now ask teachers to set these up much earlier in the process. This means children are able to log-in and start completing activities immediately following the visit.

3. Encouraging and supporting activity in school

Our evaluation showed that some children were unable to carry out the activities at home. For these children, it is important they are provided with the opportunity to complete them in school. In order to encourage this, we have developed a prize draw for schools showing high levels of in-school activity and, in our communications around this, we emphasise the benefits for child wellbeing, particularly for those children unable to engage at home. Our communication with schools post visit have also been improved with a series of emails promoting the prize draw as well as encouraging and offering support for follow-up activity.

4. Improving communications

We felt that our communications with teachers were too complex. We have simplified these to make it really clear what we're asking them to do and ensure they feel supported in doing so.

Further planned changes

All of the above changes were quick wins and have now been implemented. We will monitor their impact over the second year of project delivery. There are some more significant changes that we will develop in partnership with our creative partners during year two, ready for year three delivery.

1. Simplifying the narrative

Our evaluation shows that the storyline is too complex for some children, meaning that the key messages are getting lost. One of the most important roles of the story is to promote the concept of the Guardians of the Wild and the opportunity for the children to become one. This is key to achieving high levels of post-visit engagement. Therefore, we want to make sure that, by the end of the school visit, children have a clear concept of the Guardians and are clear that they can become one by completing ten nature activities.

2. Making better use of Ava and other on-site characters to communicate the key messages

We know that children really buy into Ava and the other on-site characters. They hold onto their every word. Therefore, we will re-write and record the Ava puppet audio so that the message of the Guardians and how to become one comes from Ava herself. We will also re-write and record the listening device audio to further reinforce this message.

3. Simplifying the activity trail

This enables us to simplify the on-site activity trail. At the moment, there are set activity posts the children must visit in order to discover different parts of Ava's story. This element will be removed so that children can visit any number of posts according to the time they have available.

4. Simplifying Ava's Journey

Ava's journey on the website will also be simplified, enabling it to be completed in a single session should schools wish. The story will then have a clear three-part structure; an introduction in school which is built upon through the on-site experience and rounded off in a single post-visit session.

5. Ensuring all project elements are age appropriate

At the moment, some teachers feel that the puppet performance is too young for years 5 and 6 and that language used in the listening device audio is too complex for some KS1 children. We will work with our creative partner to create an alternative to the puppet performance for older children, using different props that still retain the element of magic that makes the project so special. Changing the listening device audio provides us with the opportunity to record differentiated versions; a simpler version for KS1 and a more complex version for KS2.

6. Creating a school visit badge

In order to further increase post-visit engagement, we will add a school visit badge that the children can claim as soon as they log in at school. This provides a clear incentive to log in for the first time.

Project Promotion

We have worked hard to disseminate the project methodology and impacts across the education, conservation and health sectors. To date, the project has been presented at 15 conferences and events. These have included the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom National Conference, the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) Education Conference and several university-hosted academic conferences. The focus has varied according to the audience, meaning we have been able to share learning from the project in relation to health and wellbeing, the melding of the arts and sciences, the use of technology as an enabler of nature connection and achieving conservation outcomes.

We have also presented the project to members of many different groups including STEM Ambassadors, the Primary Science Teaching Trust, the Geographical Association, the Royal Geographical Society and various teacher subject groups.

We have had 42 articles published in various magazines, websites and newsletters. These include articles in The Times newspaper and Outdoor Practitioner magazine as well as features on the 'Wow Science' and 'Transform Our World' websites. The project has been used as a case study in the University of Derby / Natural England Nature Connection Handbook.

Generation Wild has featured on London Live and the Get Birding podcast hosted by Hamza Yassin (of Strictly Come Dancing fame).

Learning from the project has also fed into consultation on the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change strategy through one-to-one consultation meetings with staff from their Sustainability and Climate Change Unit.

By sharing our learning in this way, we have started to influence the way organisations develop and deliver conservation education projects whilst increasing our influence among government departments.

We intend for the results of the Cardiff University research to be published in academic journals as the research progresses and this will provide further opportunities for us to share key learning from the project.

Project Legacy

The programme will leave a lasting legacy for WWT, the wider conservation and education sectors and most importantly for the disadvantaged children that have taken part.

Through designing the project in partnership with the target communities, we have learnt a great deal about the barriers to disadvantaged communities connecting with nature. Importantly, we have found that it is not necessarily lack of access to nature that is the main issue but rather that these communities don't feel these spaces are for them. Not only do they not feel at home in these spaces, they don't feel they will be welcomed there. In addition, they worry that it will be frowned upon if they don't have the right clothing or the latest equipment. They worry they will look stupid if they don't know the names of all of the animals they see.

The success of Generation Wild is inspiring wider cultural change within our organisation. We are working to ensure that these communities feel welcomed at our sites and that they feel comfortable there. We are encouraging families to use the bird hides and access the wilder areas of our sites showing that they are not reserved for specialist birders; they are available to everyone.

The project has marked a change in direction for our learning programme; a change that we feel will enable us to more effectively meet the needs of young people, wetlands and wider nature moving forward. This is the first time we have explicitly made nature-connection the focus of our learning activities rather than using a predominantly knowledge or facts-based approach. We believe that it is only through experiencing nature directly that people will come to love and care for it. It's not enough to simply teach people about nature. They need to see it, feel it, hear it, smell it, taste it and ultimately feel part of it. It is also nature connection that will have the most significant wellbeing benefits for those who practise it.

Generation Wild has been our first foray into this new way of engaging people with nature and we are already using its success to inspire others in the organisation to use nature connection approaches in their work. This approach has been written into our learning strategy and during financial year 2023-24 we will be trialling learning sessions with a specific nature connection focus. We are working closely within our Experience and Engagement team to share learning from the programme as well as drawing on learning from our wider engagement programme to inform how we take the project forward.

If we are able to demonstrate that this approach is more effective than traditional knowledge-based approaches in terms of increasing wellbeing and creating a love of nature, this could have significant ramifications across the conservation, education and health sectors. For too long we have been tied to approaches that have proved to have limited efficacy and this could mark a huge change for the better in how learning and mental health services are designed and implemented, potentially leading to wider policy changes.

For the children that have taken part, we have seen the huge wellbeing benefits of them connecting with nature. This has been important for these particular children who we believe have the most to gain from this connection. They've developed a real love of nature that will stay with them throughout their lives. Some may go on to become the conservationists of the future but many more will be the nature-lovers of the future - people that will stand up for nature and fight to protect it. As one child wrote in his letter to the insects - 'Nature - We've got your back!'

