

**CONNECTING SCHOOLS TO NATURE**

**IN NORTH EAST ENGLAND**

**2021/2023**



## About the Project

The British Ecological Society (BES), in partnership with MammalWeb Ltd. and SMASH-UK, is launching a schools outreach project in the North East of England, running until March 2023.

We will work with 50 primary schools in the region, helping to reach more than 10,000 pupils and 350 teachers, as well as providing training to 50 ecologists and aspiring environmental educators in the process.

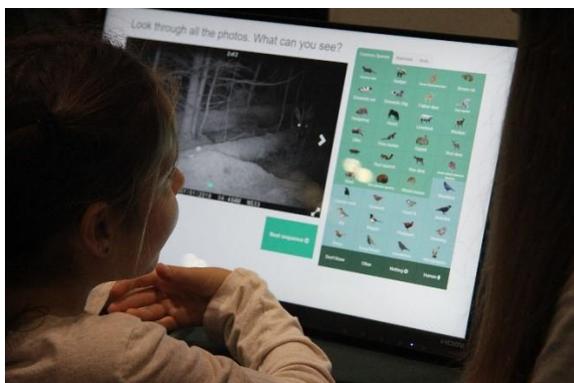
The project will deliver green transformations of school grounds through wildlife-friendly activities such as the creation of wildflower areas and hedgehog-highways to installing bird-feeding stations, nest-boxes and insect hotels. By encouraging the green transformation of school grounds, these workshops will open up the wellbeing benefits of nature to those currently least able to access them.

## Project timeline and format

The project will be made up of three modules covering mammals, invertebrates and birds.

Each module will be made up of a series of workshops and participating schools will receive all the necessary materials, equipment and training needed to take part in these for free.

Each school will also be paired with a dedicated 'Environmental Educator' who will be responsible for maintaining regular contact with their assigned school, coordinating the roll-out of each module, and helping to lead the development and delivery of the different lessons and workshops.



## For Teachers – why should I get involved?

### Project Benefits

On successful application to the project, each school will receive:

- More than **£1000 worth of equipment and materials** e.g. camera traps, bird-feeding stations, litter pickers
- Three **classroom workshops** delivered throughout the year by BES staff and volunteers
- One teacher per school will take part in the full **teacher training program** with access to free teacher training workshops, one-to-one support from ecologists and informal opportunities for professional development
- Access to **tailor-made learning materials and resources**, including lesson plans, with links to the National Curriculum to support wider teaching
- **Access to an online digital hub** to take part in national **citizen science projects**, log your progress, and connect with other participating schools

We recognise that insight and input from teachers will be essential for our project's success and have therefore adopted a co-design approach that looks to consult teachers throughout the development and implementation of the project. The exact details of the workshop content and digital hub for example, will therefore be developed in close partnership with teachers so that we can provide the best experience for each school.

### Schools Selection Process

The BES is specifically looking to receive applications from schools who stand to gain the most benefit from the project (i.e. those who currently have the least access or connection to nature and outreach opportunities or are traditionally under-represented in STEM careers). We welcome applications from any school in the North East region of England.

### Health and Safety

The BES is committed to following the latest COVID guidance and we will keep in regular contact with selected schools to ensure that teachers are happy with arrangements. The project will consist of a mix of both in-person and online events but in the event of increased COVID restrictions, the BES will switch to online formats as appropriate. The BES will also ensure that any in-person events will have appropriate First Aid assurance.

All activities will also be accompanied by full risk assessments that will be circulated along with our relevant Safeguarding and Code of Conduct policies prior to events. All relevant participants and (e.g. staff, environmental educators) will need to agree to these before attending any project events.

## For Ecologists and Environmental Educators

### - why should I get involved?

For the project to reach its full potential, we will be recruiting early career ecologists and training them as Environmental Educators in Residence. Each volunteer educator will be paired with a local school and help lead the delivery of the different workshops. These roles will offer a fantastic chance to engage first-hand with schools outreach and science communication work.

#### Benefits

As part of the project, the BES is also providing training to 50 early career ecologists and upskilling them as environmental educators. These roles will benefit from:

- **Personal and group training** in the development and delivery of schools outreach, covering topics such as science communication, training with ecological equipment, and practical conservation work
- Verification of volunteer effort that can **contribute to your professional development portfolio** e.g. CPD for professionals, logged hours for wider volunteering schemes, or contributions to graduate/PhD portfolios e.g. Researchfish
- **Personalised careers advice on CVs, interviews, and grant-writing**
- **Access to exclusive digital training resources** in science communication and public engagement
- The scope and responsibility **to design, develop and deliver memorable and inspiring activities** for pupils
- The opportunity to develop a close relationship with your assigned school, teachers, and BES staff with opportunities to tap into subsequent **networking opportunities**
- A written **letter of recommendation and/or LinkedIn testimonial**
- Option to enrol in [free 12 month BES membership](#) for first-time student members

#### Working with children

For safeguarding reasons, we require our volunteers to undergo an enhanced DBS check. The cost of submitting the application will be covered by the BES.

#### Expenses

Any expenses incurred during the project will be reimbursed as soon as possible. We ask that volunteers keep all receipts for any travel and/or subsistence and submit the appropriate BES volunteer claims forms so that these can be processed as efficiently as possible. Full details of the role and personal requirements will be made available when recruitment announcements go live. Check out our [website](#) or [twitter](#) for updates.

#### Your information

As part of the recruitment process and for the smooth-running of the project, we will collect relevant personal information from teachers, pupils, parents, volunteers, and other participants where appropriate. You can find the BES privacy policy [here](#) and our project-specific policy [here](#) for more details on how and why we are collecting data.

## About the Outreach Project Team

The British Ecological Society (BES) is the biggest scientific society for ecologists in Europe, with an international membership of over 6000 people. We support the ecology community at all stages of their careers through our journals, meetings, grants, and education and policy work. Founded in 1913, we were the first ecology society to be established anywhere in the world and we have been the champion for ecology ever since.

The BES has dedicated teams that work on careers, education, and public outreach. These teams help share ecological research with diverse audiences through a variety of events designed to increase the public's understanding of what ecology is and why it should matter to them.

### **Sammy Mason, Project Officer**

Sammy is our Project Officer – she loves all things related to schools outreach and public engagement with science. Her PhD at Durham University specialises in monitoring mammals through ‘citizen science’, and assessing how pupils can help local wildlife and improve their personal connection to nature. Sammy has built a number of partnerships with many schools and teachers in the North East, with extensive experience delivering primary school workshops. [sammy@britishecologicalsociety.org](mailto:sammy@britishecologicalsociety.org)



### **Alexa Roditi, Outreach Project Assistant**

Alexa is responsible for organising the logistics and communications sides of the project. She has experience in outreach and science communication, having supported the development and delivery of both in-person and online initiatives on STEM-related topics such as climate science and conservation. You can reach Alexa at with any questions you have about the project. [alexa@britishecologicalsociety.org](mailto:alexa@britishecologicalsociety.org)

