

RSPB's 'Digging for Diversity' Project draws to a close



A two-year project that has helped young people across Edinburgh to connect with the city's wildlife and green spaces is coming to an end this September.

'Digging for Diversity', funded by the [Heritage Lottery Fund's](#) Young Roots grant programme, offered learning experiences in practical conservation, wildlife events, and education initiatives.

Over 2500 volunteer hours were donated during the course of the project, and several schools became involved as ambassadors for struggling urban species, such as bumblebees and house sparrows.

The project was a partnership between [RSPB](#) Scotland, The Dirty Weekenders from the University of Edinburgh, Friends of

Figgate Park, Bridgend Inspiring Growth, The Health Agency and The Duddingston Field Group.

Laura Goble, RSPB Scotland's Community Green Space Officer in Edinburgh, said: "Digging for Diversity has been a fantastic project, and it's been really rewarding to see so many people becoming involved, and getting so much out of it.

"We've been able to offer all sorts of training and volunteering opportunities, including tree management, wild-flower meadow creation, fungi identification and the removal of invasive non-native species. Not only has this been beneficial for the communities and sites involved, but it's also helped young people to gain experience in conservation, and forge links with environmental organisations.



"The project has also supported some of Edinburgh's most vulnerable wildlife, and helped to create a wider awareness of some of the challenges faced by nature."

Lizzie Rhoades, the former president of the Dirty Weekenders, said: "It's been a fantastic two years, with many new skills learned by everyone involved! Since the project began, a vast amount of time has been given towards conserving the city's natural environment, enabling several of the students to achieve a John Muir Award.

"We've also created some really great connections with different community groups, and this has helped so many of our members feel more at home in Edinburgh. I hope we'll be able

to continue similar projects in the years to come.”

As part of the project, the students from the University of Edinburgh helped co-design and produce site interpretation and accompanying leaflets, as well as a short documentary film about their experiences. This can be viewed on Youtube by searching ‘Digging For Diversity’.