

Two outstanding Edinburgh volunteers recognised by Scottish Wildlife Trust

Two volunteers from Edinburgh have been recognised as outstanding by leading nature conservation charity, Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT).

Both Charlie Drapala and Charlie Darling have spoken out about environmental issues and collected vital data for the wildlife charity.



Charlie Drapala

Charlie Drapala (26) joined the SWT Young Leaders programme in 2018. She has championed for greater inclusion and

accessibility to increase the impact of what SWT does. She has advocated for wildlife at political level and share her knowledge about environmental issues at public events. She is now studying Animal and Conservation Biology at Edinburgh Napier University.

She said: “I joined the Young Leaders programme to become a driver for change and help provide a platform for youth voices to be heard. Through the role, I’ve had many opportunities to lead projects and collaborate with other conservation-based agencies, which has greatly increased my confidence and skills for my future career.

“I would really encourage other young people to get active in nature, if you don’t know where to start you can get involved in a local initiative. It’s so rewarding to know that you’re making a difference in your community, and knowing that you’re not alone in your mission to improve the world we live in.”



Charlie Darling

Since 2006 Charlie Darling has volunteered to process species records gathered from across the Scottish Wildlife Trust's 115 reserves.

To date he has checked, digitised and uploaded more than 145,000 vital species records totalling more than half of the

Trusts' total record count. He has also collected around 7,000 records on the reserves mostly in the Edinburgh area, such as [Bawsinch and Duddingston](#) Loch, which is his favourite local wildlife reserve due to the wide variety of species that can be found there, such as kingfishers, otters and nuthatches.

Charlie has a keen interest in all wildlife with invertebrates being his key passion. He said: "When I am recording, I am also photographing wildlife, mostly invertebrates, with solitary bees being a particular interest. I enjoy finding species which are new to reserves and most of the time new to me as well. I like being outdoors in the fresh air too.

"I wouldn't say digitising records is enjoyable, but somebody must do it. However, the interest for me is in new or rare or unusual species being recorded.

"For anyone who records wildlife sightings but doesn't log them I would suggest they submit their records to the Scottish Wildlife Trust if they are on one of their reserves, or if not to [The Wildlife Information Centre \(TWIC\)](#) or online with [iRecord](#) so that they eventually get on to the [NBN Atlas](#). I believe that people should be able to use the Atlas to find places where they can see species which interest them."

Tim Duffy, Vice Chair of the Scottish Wildlife Trust is impressed with the difference local volunteers are making. He said: "The Trustees' Awards for Volunteering have been presented to inspiring people who are making a big difference in their local area. It is important that volunteers are recognised for their collective contribution to supporting the Trusts' work across Scotland managing reserves, sharing valuable wildlife data, enabling more people to learn about the wildlife on their doorstep and to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of spending more time in nature.

"They are all shining examples of active citizens who understand the importance of taking local direct action to

help wildlife thrive across Scotland.

“All volunteers are crucial to the work of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. I would encourage everyone to get involved caring for their local wildlife. The Trustees’ Awards for Volunteering 2022 show that there are numerous ways people can help nature.”

Five Trustees’ Awards for Volunteering 2022 have been presented as follows:

Young Volunteer Charlie Drapala, Edinburgh

Volunteer Group Award Castlemilk Explorers Wildlife Watch Group, Glasgow

Species Champion Charlie Darling, Edinburgh

Lifetime Achievement Award Mary and Tom Harwood, Dundee

Special Lifetime Achievement Award Allan Bantick OBE, Boat of Garten, Highland

Read more about each winner [online](#).

The Trustees’ Awards are supported from players of People’s Postcode Lottery to enable more environmental action and develop volunteers’ skills, knowledge and community connections.

Laura Chow, Head of Charities at People’s Postcode Lottery is impressed with the range of activities volunteers have undertaken.

She said: “This unique opportunity benefits the conservation and protection of our environments and fosters new connections and skills. We are thrilled that players of People’s Postcode Lottery are supporting the Scottish Wildlife Trust in pursuit of a healthy, resilient ecosystem across Scotland. In fact, by playing together and winning together, our players across Britain have now raised a total of more than £950 million for over 9,000 good causes, including the care of our local

wildlife.”