

# natterchat

Froglife's newsletter - amphibians, reptiles & nature news

spring/summer 2013

£2.50

## the natural childhood issue



Froglife's  
My Wild Life  
project

education  
research &  
policy

toads on  
roads in  
Hungary

plus... volunteering tips : Jules Howard : ponds in Glasgow : Steve Backshall book offer



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## from the CEO



Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of Natterchat. The theme for this edition is natural childhood, connecting with Froglife's environmental education work. We have been working in this sector for a long time, and there is now more information than ever showing how important access to wildlife and green spaces is for young people.

There are also lots of ideas about what prevents families and young people

getting out and about and appreciating nature, and what we as organisations and individuals can do about it.

This edition's feature shares the findings of Froglife's *My Wild Life* project (p. 8), with the Research Round Up and Policy Page (p. 10 & 11) featuring further work and information highlighting the need for action.

It comes as a surprise then that as we go to print government is looking at removing teaching young people to care for the natural world from the National Curriculum in England. There are some positives in the suggested curriculum changes, including teaching about local environments and animals, but it is very

concerning that the current phrasing on young people learning to care about the environment and its need for protection are threatened with removal. Jules Howard (The Spotter, p.5) has started a petition to keep this important element of children's learning and I urge you to sign it - you can find out more at [www.juleshoward.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.juleshoward.blogspot.co.uk). You could also contact your MP to let them know that you want protecting the natural world to remain on the curriculum.

However, it's just as well it's not all down to institutions, or even organisations such as Froglife to help inspire the next generation of wildlife lovers. *My Wild Life* also found that there is an important role to be played

by adults with a passion for wildlife in becoming 'Nature Mentors' for the next generation - taking young people outside and teaching them how to have fun and take care of what they find.

So, whatever you do this Spring and Summer, please take action to make sure that young people in general or a young person in particular gets to enjoy the great outdoors, whatever the weather!

Kathy Wormald, CEO  
[kathy.wormald@froglife.org](mailto:kathy.wormald@froglife.org)

## froglife news : spring / summer 2013

### Natural Talent in Scotland

We were lucky enough to have Faith Hiller support the Scottish team as part of a Natural Talent apprenticeship with The Conservation Volunteers for a year. As part of her community engagement role, Faith worked with the local community to introduce them to the wildlife of Ravenswood Local Nature Reserve. The 'Local Nature Reserve' designation is due to its variety of habitats including an orchid meadow, woodland and wet meadow.



This reserve has been chosen for pond creation as part of Froglife's North Lanarkshire Living Water project. Faith undertook a survey of residents to gauge their opinions of the reserve, how they use it, how often and what they would like to see happen there in the future. In order to share the delights of this special place, a series of events were held, followed by a meeting to discuss how the community could come together to raise the profile of the reserve. It was decided that the group would join with the Seafar and Ravenswood Community Council to encourage more people to visit the reserve and discover its nature. This is to be done through citizen science, with a range of surveys that people can take part in, including schools and youth groups. A Friends Group has also been established, meaning that hopefully this project will continue well into the future, encouraging people of all ages to go out to look for and record wildlife following Faith's hard work.

### John Shuttleworth Falls for Frogs

Froglife staff in the Peterborough office had a surprise visit from cult comic musician John Shuttleworth (aka Graham Fellowes). Graham has been bitten by the amphibian conservation bug, and donated the profits from a gig with a raffle at his home town. Dressed up as his alter ego, he popped into the office to pose with some of the team and present a cheque for an amazing £2,800.



Find out more about how you can support Froglife, and the difference your money can make at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)

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Cover photo: Jules Howard

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# project profile



Here we zoom in on one of Froglife's conservation and learning projects around the UK. This time, Iain Maclean fills you in on our Glasgow and North Lanarkshire-based work creating and restoring fresh water habitats.

**Froglife project:** Glasgow and North Lanarkshire Living Water.

**Staff and volunteers involved:** Robert Williams, Conservation Co-ordinator; James Stead and Iain MacLean, Fieldworkers. We are also supported by many volunteers.

**How long has the project been running:** Since 2009.

**The aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes:** Living Water aims to create, restore, maintain and promote wetland wildlife habitats on a variety of sites in Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. We work with a wide range of partners, community groups, volunteers and schools

in order to engage people with their local wetlands and raise awareness of their value, biodiversity and vulnerability.

**The results to far:** The project is quite varied the results are similarly so! On any given day we might be out with contractors doing large-scale pond creation, running a volunteer session creating wildlife habitats by hand, running an education session with schools or, when the season allows, wandering about at night surveying for amphibians. So far we have created 94 new ponds, restored or enhanced 37 ponds, created over 100 scrapes, created 29 hibernation sites, completed 113 amphibian surveys, provided 20 survey training nights, provided

500 conservation tasks for volunteers, been active at 17 events, engaged over 3,000 people in education and awareness raising, involved over 600 school children in activities and completed over 270 hours of youth volunteering. Whew! The project was also awarded the 'highly commended' award for Rebuilding Biodiversity in 2012 from Biffa Awards.

**Any highlights?** Volunteer days are always fun; it's enjoyable to be out and about with nice people digging ponds. It has been very interesting to monitor ponds the after creation and see amphibians, invertebrates and plants establish, it is very satisfying to create habitat and see it provide a home for a wide variety of wildlife.

**Funded by:** Living Water in North Lanarkshire is funded by WREN, Scottish Natural Heritage and North Lanarkshire Council. Living Water in Glasgow is funded by Biffa Awards, Glasgow City Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Glasgow Natural History Society and Landfill Communities Fund.

**How Froglife supporters can get involved:** We are always looking for volunteers to help give us a hand. Donations to help us buy tools, plants and other materials are also welcome!

**For more information:** [Iain.Maclean@froglife.org](mailto:Iain.Maclean@froglife.org)

people / places / culture

## the spotter: jules howard

Spotting amphibians, reptiles and people who are passionate about them



*Jules Howard is a freelance zoologist (and former Froglifer). His first book 'Sex on Earth' (Bloomsbury) comes out in spring 2014. Here he shares a great spot for snake spotting in Northamptonshire.*

"At about this time each year I visit my local patch, to celebrate their quiet surfacing. This is Pitsford Water, in Northamptonshire. I look specifically for grass snakes. Though their population here appears relatively spread out across the water's edge, there are some places where individuals repetitively sit and bask.

I pick my April day, check the weather (bright morning sun, not too hot) and tread the paths. Most people you bump into will be head-up, chatting or looking out at the water wistfully, taking in the view. Not me. I'll be facing the other way. My laser eyes will be pointing downwards and left, scanning the

bank vegetation for tell-tale clefts and sunlit pockets that basking grass snakes favour.

Most days, you won't see them. Some days you'll see two or three.

And what does one do when they see a grass snake? Well, the funny thing is that I choose not to do anything. I stand still and go into a sort of reptile-induced trance. I watch, taking in its scales, its colour, its size. I don't edge near it. I don't take photos. I don't grab it. I just, well, have a moment with a wild snake. (What could be better?).

Sometimes curious passers-by will stop and follow my eye-line, joining me in my moment of wonder. (It's interesting how many people exclaim surprise that there are wild snakes here, only miles from Northampton town centre). I hope the snakes remain. It's a popular place with plenty going on: cycling, dog-walking, boating. I hope the snakes can flourish alongside it all.

And that's the thing about snakes in Britain. In many places they are like a pack of sad loners, often restricted to tiny pockets of heathland or ancient woodland, or water bodies like this. Isolated, they are like shipwrecked sailors on a chain of desert islands, drowning

under the increasing water-level of human interference. One-by-one, the islands are disappearing. Nationally we might expect further losses but, managed correctly, sites like this where people and nature overlap can flourish. Fingers crossed.

So look out for me at Pitsford Water. I'll be the man standing alone gormlessly, silently staring at a patch of undergrowth on the bankside with my back to the water.

Perhaps you'll join me?"

*Pitsford Water in Northamptonshire is open to the public, with parking, pic nic areas and paths suitable for people with a range of access needs. You can find out more at the Anglian Water website: [www.anglianwater.co.uk/leisure/what-to-see/water-parks/pitsford/](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/leisure/what-to-see/water-parks/pitsford/)*



Photos: Emma & Jules Howard

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what I'm up to...

# Discovering Dragons

Volunteering on Froglife's flagship project, London Dragon Finder

Public Engagement Officer Sivi Sivanesan has been chatting to Vicki Mercer, our first volunteer on the exciting new London Dragon Finder Project. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and will be creating and restoring habitats as well as running fun and educational events across the capital. Vicki shares how she got involved and what she is looking forward to.

"I have always had a love for wildlife and nature," explains Vicki. "I started volunteering when I was 18, on a family holiday to South Africa. My passion for horses led me to find a volunteer programme there. The

planned 3 month volunteering trip soon turned into a 6 month placement; I was hooked!"

Vicki was lucky enough to take a life-changing volunteering trip to the Ecuadorian Amazon two years ago; it was here she found her passion for amphibians and reptiles. "They are absolutely incredible creatures, I don't know how anyone could not love them, they are AMAZING! On the research station I was surrounded by scientists who were so enthusiastic about conservation that it became infectious. I returned to the Amazon to do a 6 month conservation and biodiversity internship, I learnt more

than I thought I ever would."

Volunteering in general has shaped Vicki's life. "I would never have pursued a degree in Zoology if I hadn't done any volunteering. It is because of volunteering that I know what I want to do."

Finding out about London Dragon Finder and volunteering opportunities via the internet, Vicki has been volunteering with the newly launched project since it started in October 2012.

"My first day at Froglife was awesome! I was set a research

Find out more at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)

Every edition, we feature a Froglife supporter taking action to help amphibians and reptiles. This time, Public Engagement Officer Sivi Sivanesan finds out about a volunteer with London Dragon Finder.

If you would like to let us know what you're up to or to suggest a friend who should be featured please email [sivi.sivanesan@froglife.org](mailto:sivi.sivanesan@froglife.org).



Photos: Dave Kilbey, Sam Taylor & Alex Draper

*London Dragon Finder will restore 49 habitats across the City and engage thousands of people in fun events at nature reserves, parks and swimming pools*

project which I really enjoyed. I love spending my Thursday afternoons here."

London Dragon Finder will be reaching out to engage new audiences in wildlife conservation. It will train and inspire a new generation of Dragon Finders to go out looking for amphibians and reptiles. Vicki will be one of the many volunteers participating as Dragon Finder develops. "The project will make a huge difference to the herps in the London area," concludes Vicki. "It's refreshing knowing that I am helping contribute to the conservation of these incredible species."

Find out more at the new Dragon Finder area of our website: [www.froglife.org/dragonfinder](http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder)

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## Vicki's Top 5 Tips for volunteering

1. Just do it! Volunteering can lead you on an incredible journey and provide you with unforgettable memories. The memories I cherish the most have all been when I am volunteering.
2. Try everything once; you won't know what anything is like until you've given it a go. You will be surprised at what you can do and love it.
3. You learn so much by volunteering.
4. Volunteering is enjoyable, you meet lovely people, do something worthwhile, and occasionally glimpse incredible wildlife.
5. Not all wildlife conservation volunteering involves getting muddy outside! If that isn't for you, search around as there are so many opportunities.



You can get involved with Dragon Finder by becoming a volunteer on the London project like Vicki, coming to one of our events (see page 14), or by using the Dragon Finder app to identify and record any amphibians and reptiles you see anywhere in the UK.

**Download the Dragon Finder app for free here:**

[www.froglife.org/dragonfinder](http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder)





*Jodie Coomber has just finished working on our My Wild Life project. Here she summarises some of the activities, results and discussion points from this intergenerational work.*

### Nature deficit disorder

The term 'nature deficit disorder' was coined in 2005 by author Richard Louv to describe the negative effects a lack of contact with nature can have on children. In recent years a wide range of evidence has been presented by a variety of concerned organisations which suggests that Britain's children today are being starved of contact with nature by a growing number of barriers. There has also been a growing drive to address this problem so that children's lives can be improved and nature can be protected and conserved for the future.

### My Wild Life

In 2011 Froglife launched the My Wild Life project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund for two years. The project investigated how biodiversity and the way children experience nature have changed over time. Froglife's work with disadvantaged young people not only made us aware of the negative impacts a lack of contact with nature can have on children, it also took us to public events where people ask "where have all the newts gone?". The stark contrast between older people asking concerned questions about animals they played with as children, and the young people we work with not having heard of newts encouraged us to create an intergenerational project specifically concerned with wildlife and wild play.

Froglife ran reminiscence sessions and events engaging with a wide variety of community groups of all ages in and around Peterborough,

London and Glasgow. We collected a huge range of nature memories which were recorded either on film or in writing to create an oral history archive in the form of a book and film. They show how contact with nature has changed within living memory and provide real-life examples that help to explain complex issues such as biodiversity and habitat loss.

### My Wild Life Report

The My Wild Life film and book are powerful tools for inspiring the next generation to conserve their natural heritage, but Froglife also wants to use the information collected by the project to inform what we do in the future. We have therefore analysed the nature memories collected by My Wild Life and compiled the report to present the findings publicly. In producing this report, Froglife aims to add something new to the debate about childhood and nature whilst offering practical ideas

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for engaging young people with the natural world.

### Creating lasting memories

Over 300 childhood memories of nature were analysed to find out what species featured in them, what settings they were created in, who was there when they were made, and what level of interaction was involved. For example, someone's strongest memory might have been watching a fox in the woods with their grandfather. We then use this information to suggest ways in which today's children can meaningfully engage with the natural world, based on what had an impact on previous generations.

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### Meeting the neighbours

Our **species analysis** showed that amphibians and reptiles featured in over a third of the childhood memories collected. A bias towards these creatures was to be expected, but this is still a high proportion of memories. Many of these memories were of collecting frogspawn and watching tadpoles develop. A wide variety of birds and plants also featured very strongly.

### Out and about

Our **settings analysis** showed that the top three places where memories were created were ponds, woods and fields. It also showed that these places tend to be romanticised so that 'the woods' could refer to a few trees at the end of the lane, but could also refer to Epping Forest.

### Getting hands-on

Our **actions analysis** looked at what level of interaction people had with nature in their childhood memories. These interactions were grouped into levels; active and hands-on, active and hands-off, and passive. Active hands-on interaction such as feeding or catching occurred in the highest proportion of memories, whilst passive interaction such as reading or drawing occurred in very few. This raises some interesting questions about how to provide up close, interactive opportunities for young people, whilst protecting wildlife and habitats.

### Nature mentors

Finally, we analysed **who people were with** when their memories were created. This revealed a relatively equal split between children being alone and being in company. Of those that were in company, most were with peers. The analysis also showed that adults in the role of 'nature mentors', helping young people have positive and educational experiences outdoors play a very important role in creating lasting memories of the natural world.

### The Future

My Wild Life and the report have shown that there are many ways to engage children with nature in order to create lasting memories and inspire future conservationists, but engagement with nature doesn't necessarily mean we are more likely to conserve it. Older generations appear to have had contact with wildlife, yet many of our species and habitats are in decline. Clearly there needs to be more research into how we value nature and what makes a conservationist. There are many opportunities for families, nature organisations, schools and policy-makers to introduce children to nature in simple ways. We need to look more closely at the memories children today are making to ensure that they carry conservation messages, so that future generations are able to create nature memories of their own.

Find out more at [www.froglife.org/mywildlife](http://www.froglife.org/mywildlife)





# research round up

## a summary of the science: nature & children

by Rebecca Neal



The benefits of an outdoor life are summarised eloquently by my hero David Attenborough: "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced" in a speech at the Communicate conference, Nov 2010

### Nature Deficit Disorder

There have been several studies conducted by organisations in the UK on Nature Deficit Disorder. All of these studies have concluded the same basic points; that there are huge benefits to young people connecting with nature; that currently there are barriers to this happening and there are things that can be done about this at different levels. Here is a summary of the research and findings from two of the most high profile studies - *Natural Childhood* by the National Trust and *Every Child Outdoors* by the RSPB.

### Key findings about the benefits of contact with nature

**Education:** young people exposed to the outdoors achieve better across the curriculum.

**Physical health:** being active outdoors reduces obesity.

**Mental health:** spending time in nature reduces mental health problems and increases confidence and happiness.

**Behaviour:** connecting with nature reduces aggression.

**Social and life skills:** outdoor activities provides an ideal situation for informal learning about risk assessments, opportunities for team work and to help others.

Of course, anyone who has ever been outside with a young person already knows this; and it's why Froglife has such success with our projects. The magic of nature doesn't just work on young people - all ages benefit from a bit of fresh air, bird song, frog watching or splashing in a muddy puddle.

### Key findings about the barriers that prevent young people accessing outdoor sites and activities

A heightened perceived risk of injury and stranger danger.

Traffic.

Increased access to indoor entertainment.

Reduced curriculum time and flexibility.

Reduced access to green space through transport issues or poor town planning.

Socio-economic and cultural issues (conservation is seen as a white middle class domain).

### What can we do?

#### As an individual:

- Slot outdoor play into the family routine
- Take a child on a picnic
- Increase the range your children can roam
- Limit your children's indoor time
- Buy a child some wellies and waterproofs
- Become a child's role model or nature mentor

#### Communities/ NGOs and policy makers

- Improve school grounds for nature exploration
- Promote local green spaces
- Increase playtime (not decrease this as some schools have)
- Provide activities for families
- Workshops for parents and teachers
- Subsidies for activities and transport
- Give pedestrians priority
- Better town planning
- Better budgets to maintain greenspaces

#### References:

*Natural Childhood* by Stephen Moss for the National Trust [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)  
*Every Child Outdoors* by the RSPB [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Find out more at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)

## policy page nature & children



by Vanessa Barber

Access to an outdoor education is important for people of all ages, ability and expertise. Such activities foster an enthusiasm and interest in the natural world, which not only benefits the individual, but is good news for wildlife and biodiversity too. Here are just a few of the policies and strategies which are shaping the landscape of outdoor education provision in England and Scotland.

### 'Outdoors for All'. Defra, 2008

In 2008 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published the 'Outdoors for All' strategy. It describes the best approach for organisations to adopt in order to 'increase the number of people from diverse groups who participate in outdoor recreation and have access to the natural environment'. It was drawn up in response to evidence that not all groups feel confident in accessing the outdoors, even though they may want to. 'Outdoors for All' made a recommendation that government departments work together to create relevant strategies and policies that promote equal opportunities in accessing the natural environment. It also provided guidance for outdoor education providers in how to run more opportunities for under-represented groups.

### 'Learning Outside the Classroom' report. OFSTED, 2008.

This major report from OFSTED in 2008 evaluated the importance of 'Learning Outside the Classroom' in primary and secondary schools. The report concluded that learning outside the classroom was most successful when it was an integral part of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities. The report advised schools and colleges to ensure that their curriculum planning included opportunities for all pupils to engage in learning outside the classroom, as part of their learning experience. The report also advised outdoor education providers to make activities for schools as accessible as possible by stream-lining any 'red-tape' causing barriers to access, while still maintaining best practice in health and safety.

### 'Biodiversity Segmentation Study'. PEG, 2013.

In 2011 Defra launched 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services' - a detailed road map of measures to halt the loss of England's biodiversity and to improve the quality of our environment over the coming decade. Last year the People Engagement Group (PEG) was created by Defra to support 'Biodiversity 2020' in achieving its aims. PEG's aim is 'for significantly more people to be engaged with biodiversity issues, aware of its value, and taking positive action by 2020'. To achieve this huge goal PEG are conducting a major piece of audience research called the 'Biodiversity Segmentation Study', which will provide them with a better insight into the attitudes, values and behaviours of different audiences in relation to biodiversity, and the obstacles and barriers towards action. The findings of the research will be published in April this year, and will offer advice on best practice when engaging with hard to reach audiences, as well as how to develop momentum and unite people with the conservation movement.

#### References:

*Learning Outside the Classroom*. OFSTED, 2008. [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Defra, PEG: Communicate 2012 conference notes [www.bnhc.org](http://www.bnhc.org)  
*Outdoors for All*. Defra, 2008.  
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/countryside/recreation/outdoors.htm>





Every edition we feature news from the world of Toads on Roads - a national project through which Froglife supports volunteers who rescue toads from busy roads during the breeding season. This time, we hear from an exciting project along similar lines in Hungary from Norbert Florian, which also runs an education programme.



# Toad Patrols: The Next Generation

by Norbert Florian

"In Hungary there have been amphibian rescue actions involving volunteers since the middle of the 1980s. In our area, in the south-eastern part of the county of Pest, amphibian migration was first observed in 2007.

In 2008 the organised rescue program was established and it runs every spring, coordinated by the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate, the Hungarian Jane Goodall Institute and Tápió Nature Conservation Association.

In the beginning, many volunteers joined the rescue programme randomly. Families, children and groups from schools were interested and came to help us. We won a Hungarian tender in 2009 and since then the environmental education programme has been given greater emphasis, with advertising meaning that more school groups joined us.

The educational programme for young people is more and more popular each year. But why?

First of all, it is free, thanks to our volunteers. The area is located close to Budapest and school groups can reach it easily. A drift fence begins at the railway station and the area is very safe; the road is mainly straight and the children can walk inside the fence, they only have to cross the road twice. We work in the daytime and with the children we collect amphibians from pit-fall traps, count them and bring them into the swamp. After the work we can offer excursions and the opportunity to visit an exhibition at the House of Waterside Life.

Environmental education requires much effort for the volunteers as well as for the conservation practitioners, therefore we cannot undertake as much research as we would like to. This may get easier in



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**95%**  
of the amphibians  
collected at the  
crossing site are  
common spadefoot  
toads

**63,608**  
the maximum number of  
spadefoot toads  
collected in a year

**44%**  
of male young  
people said they  
liked amphibians  
in the  
questionnaire

**462**  
the maximum number of  
European tree frogs saved  
in a year

**33%**  
of female young people  
said they liked amphibians

**17**  
of 178 young people  
said they would help  
the patrol  
voluntarily before  
they tried the activity

**149**  
young people said they  
would come back  
voluntarily after  
their first patrol

future as we recently trained the first young volunteers - the older students can already direct the rescuing programme, as well as guide, coordinate and teach the younger children without any professional help.

For environmental education and for endearing amphibians to children we found the common spadefoot toad *Pelobates fuscus* is the best amphibian species. It is very calm during the work and has big eyes and a lovely face.

It is important to highlight that in our case the easy accessibility of the rescue site and the safe work circumstances were suitable for an environmental education purpose.

As a conclusion, we emphasise that in similar circumstances it is highly recommended to focus on the establishment of environmental education programs."

*The project is coordinated by Norbert Florian, Alexandra Kavecsánszki and András Németh.*

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## FROG PHOBIA?

*Using simple questionnaires, Norbert and the team have found some interesting results about how children view amphibians before and after their involvement in this conservation project. They have also found that they can engage those who come with an initial fear or dislike of the animals.*

"Before working with our rescue program, most of the children came because their teacher obliged them to or they found it a good reason to get out of classes. After their involvement, children's motivation and interest have significantly been increased and their attitude towards amphibians has improved.

They clearly understood the aim of our work and the reasons behind it, but only half of the children could answer why it is so important to save amphibians. They know that frogs eat mosquitoes and storks eat the frogs, but they find it hard to link these facts together. They are attached to the frogs emotionally, so it could be hard to tell them that frogs are not only predators but prey as well. However, every child found our work useful and many of them would take part next time.

Those who were scared of amphibians or were disgusted by them would still like to come and help rescue frogs with us again. They said maybe next time they could manage to overcome their fears.

We used multivariate analysis to find out which factor is correlated with their disgust towards amphibians looking at the children's age, sex and parents' attitude. In the investigated groups no significant correlation between these factors and the children's attitude towards amphibians was detected. For example, being scared of amphibians is independent of a child's sex.

Overall, it seems to be rewarding to involve children into conservation work and improving the general evaluation of conservation work in this way. We need not necessarily involve only interested children, because according to our experience, reluctant children can get to be motivated for conservation work and they can become a valuable member of the "green society."

Photos: Norbert Florian





out and about with froglife events / volunteering / talks / training

We have an exciting diary of opportunities for you to meet some of the Froglife team, get involved with projects or help out through volunteering. More information on our events can be found on the website at [www.froglife.org/events](http://www.froglife.org/events)

Date	Event	Details	Type
Every Thursday & every other Saturday	Hampton Nature Reserve Volunteer Sessions, Peterborough	10.30am-2.30pm on Thursdays and 9.30am-3.30pm on Saturdays. Please contact paul.furnborough@froglife.org or 07977 250048 if you would like to get involved. Find out more at <a href="http://www.froglife.org/hnr">www.froglife.org/hnr</a>	Practical volunteering open to all adults
Wednesday 3rd April to Sunday 6th April 2013	Life Under The Surface family days at the London Wetland Centre, Barnes	4 days of family fun. Craft sessions, stalls, pond dipping, and much more, with the unveiling of the Life Under The Surface exhibition recreating life within a pond on Saturday 6th April. Find out more at <a href="http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder">www.froglife.org/dragonfinder</a>	Fun event, open to all ages
Wednesday 3rd April 2013 2pm to 10pm	Evening Great Crested Newt Training at Gart Cosh Nature Reserve, North Lanarkshire	Learn identification, survey techniques and help gather new data about these amazing amphibians. Please contact James Stead <a href="mailto:james.stead@froglife.org">james.stead@froglife.org</a> or 01413 390737 to book your place before attending.	Free training, open to all adults
Thursday 4th April 2013 2pm to 10pm	Evening Great Crested Newt Training at Gart Cosh Nature Reserve, North Lanarkshire	Another chance to join this informative course. Please contact James to book as above.	Free training, open to all adults
Saturday 6th April 2013 5.30pm to 9.30pm	Evening Training on Amphibian Surveys & Identification Techniques at Pollok Country Park, Glasgow	Learn about the identification and ecology of Scotland's native amphibians during an informative theory session and then put your new survey skills into practice during a night time visit to ponds in Pollok Park. Please contact James to book as above.	Free training, open to all adults
Sunday 7th April 2013 10am to 3pm	Daytime Training on Amphibian Surveys and Identification Techniques at Hogganfield Loch, Glasgow	Learn about the identification and ecology of Scotland's native amphibians during an informative theory session and then put your new survey skills into practice during a day time visit to ponds around Hogganfield Loch. Please contact James to book as above.	Free training, open to all adults
Saturday 27th April 2013 12pm to 4pm	Save the Frogs Day, London Natural History Museum	Celebrate Save the Frogs Day and learn more about amazing amphibians. Find out more at <a href="http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder">www.froglife.org/dragonfinder</a>	Fun event, open to all ages
Monday 27th May to Saturday 1st June 2013	Life Under The Surface family days at the Horniman Museum & Gardens, London	5 days of family fun. Craft sessions, stalls, pond dipping, and much more, with the unveiling of the Life Under The Surface exhibition on Saturday 1st June. Find out more at <a href="http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder">www.froglife.org/dragonfinder</a>	Fun event, open to all ages
Wednesday 5th June to Sunday 9th June	Life Under The Surface family days and Open Day at the Sutton Ecology Centre, London	5 days of family fun. Craft sessions, stalls, pond dipping, and much more, with the unveiling of the Life Under The Surface exhibition on Saturday 8th June. Find out more at <a href="http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder">www.froglife.org/dragonfinder</a>	Fun event, open to all ages
Friday 14th June 2013 10am to 3pm	Daytime Training on Amphibian Surveys and identification Techniques at Pollok Country Park, Glasgow	Learn about the identification and ecology of Scotland's native amphibians during an informative theory session and then put your new survey skills into practice during a visit to ponds in Pollok Park. Please contact James to book - <a href="mailto:james.stead@froglife.org">james.stead@froglife.org</a> or 01413 390737 before attending.	Free training, open to all adults
Saturday 15th June 2013 10am to 3pm	Daytime Training on Amphibian Surveys and identification Techniques at Hogganfield Loch, Glasgow	Learn about the identification and ecology of Scotland's native amphibians during an informative theory session and then put your new survey skills into practice during a visit to ponds around Hogganfield Loch. Please contact James to book as above.	Free training, open to all adults

Find out more at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)

staff / volunteers

froglifer factfile: lin

amphibians & reptiles, chickens & children



Name: Lin Wenlock

Volunteer role: Chair of Trustees

What does that involve? Chairing the Trustee meetings, being in close contact with the CEO, supporting her in her role and acting as a channel of communication between board and staff. Ensuring that decisions made by the board are carried out. Taking urgent action between meetings, and last but not least representing the charity at functions and at meetings.

How long have you been volunteering with Froglife? It must be about 10 years now.

What else do you do? I juggle my days between Froglife, acting as an advisor on churchyard conservation for Diocese paperwork for my husband's business and looking after our flock of geese and chickens. All unpaid, but exciting and no two days are the

same.

What makes you get up in the morning? Sometimes it's traffic noise, the cockerels crowing (5 of them!), my husband's snoring, but the underlying factor is always the shrill calling of the geese waiting to be fed.

What do you love about amphibians and reptiles? I could say a lot of things here, but my true answer would be that they have a place with all the other species in the world, but they are in need of protection with particular emphasis on snakes because of fear and predation by man, and amphibians were one of the first things to emerge onto land after the ice age. They are not cuddly or fluffy creatures which gain the most attention, so they need me and others to champion their cause.

Had a great wildlife moment? I've had many, but I suppose the best was discovering seven

tiny, tiny golden slow-worms all not bigger than a piece of gold thread earlier this year, when I was undertaking my daily seasonal task of recording numbers of reptiles in our field, and wondering if the grass snake about a foot away would think they were a worthwhile feed. Obviously he didn't as they were still there a few days later.

What's the number one bit of kit that helps you do your job? A good pair of wellies and a set of spare clothes. I have been in many muddy slippery places and have slipped into more ponds than most.

What could Froglife Supporters do to help the work you do? Do some of your shopping on the Froglife website, or set up Give as You Live so that we benefit from donations when you shop online.

Find out more at [www.froglife.org/shop](http://www.froglife.org/shop) [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com)

Lin's book review

Title: Steve Backshall's Deadly Factbook: Reptiles and Amphibians

Published by Orion Children's Books, London. ISBN 978-1-4440-0831-9

"Reading this book as an adult and trying to picture it through the eyes of a youngster was interesting.

It will appeal to those interested in Natural History and is very educational, with many fascinating facts on various species of amphibians and reptiles. It is a lively, colourful book, with some very good photos and drawings. The content is taken from the experiences of Steve Backshall and will be a sure win with his many young fans, who live in awe of his fearless activities with many dangerous species.

However, whilst I did enjoy reading the facts, I was not so impressed with some of the photographs, for example where Steve has pythons and boa constrictors around his body, or is holding venomous snakes. This, I know, is to add excitement, but does it teach that this is the right thing to do, does it encourage youngsters respect for the animals, or will they poke them to see what the reaction is? I'm not sure.

Would this stop me buying the book for my grandson who is of the age who treats Steve as a hero? No, it would not, it is an informative publication, and will hopefully introduce more young people to the amazing world of amphibians and reptiles.

However, I would be tempted to add a warning - look, but don't touch!"



Thanks to Orion Publishing, we have a free copy of the Deadly Factbook: Reptiles and Amphibians, and a copy of the Mammals Factbook too.

To be entered in the free prize draw, please send an email to [sam.taylor@froglife.org](mailto:sam.taylor@froglife.org) by 28th June 2013 with your name, address and the subject line.

Photos: Rob Williams, Sam Taylor, Daniel Plec



We have a range of cards, books and gifts suitable for a variety of occasions in the revamped Froglife shop. There are some examples below - do have a look to see what else is on offer at [www.froglife.org/shop](http://www.froglife.org/shop). All funds raised support our conservation and education work.



Father's Day Card designed by Sam Taylor  
£1.50 + p&p

We also have cards  
for weddings,  
birthdays and other  
occasions!



Free information and advice  
booklets including Amphibian  
Health and Diseases



Great Crested Newt  
Conservation Handbook  
Buy one, get one free  
£2 + p&p



Raising Tadpoles and  
other Field Studies  
Council Guides from  
£3.50 + p&p

Free  
delivery for  
orders over  
£50



United Colours of Toads  
A glossy print of this great photo by  
Oliver Kratz  
42cm x 30cm  
£25.00 + p&p

NATURAL  
ENGLAND



AND

Better Together Volunteers ~  
Biffa Awards ~ Big Lottery Fund:  
Awards for All ~ City Bridge Trust  
~ Co-op Community Fund ~ Cory  
Environmental ~ Defra ~ The  
Ernest Cook Trust ~ The Esmée  
Fairbairn Foundation ~ Garfield  
Weston Foundation ~ Glasgow City  
Council Landfill Community Fund  
~ Glasgow Natural History Society  
~ Mears Ltd ~ Natural England ~  
J.Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust ~  
Northamptonshire County Council  
~ North Lanarkshire Council ~ O&H  
Hampton Ltd ~ Patagonia ~ Perkins  
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~ Daniel Piec ~ Natalie Pretsell

## TRUSTEES & VOLUNTEERS

Lin Wenlock, Frank Clark, Roger  
Downie, Heather Jones, Rob Oldham,  
Desmond Quinn and Inez Smith;  
Ashlea Jarvis and all the other  
volunteers we couldn't do without!