



Get involved in biodiversity

Teacher notes

Getting students involved in local projects to improve or promote biodiversity can be rewarding and has long term benefits for your students and the environment. Here are a number of ways to get involved:

Beach clean

Beach cleans are a great way for young people to take action to improve their environment and contribute towards biodiversity by removing beach litter. These events are beneficial for both the community and wildlife, and participants develop a sense of environmental responsibility, experience success and achievement, and are active outside and having fun. Many schools over the years have taken part in beach cleans organised by HWDT; please [contact us](#) if you would like to participate. Beach cleans are easy to organise independently and can contribute to national surveys such as the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch event. Entanglement and ingestion of marine litter are real threats to wildlife. Removing litter reduces these threats to local biodiversity and promotes healthier ecosystems.

School visits with HWDT

Learning about marine biodiversity, especially cetaceans will increase students' awareness and interest in caring for local biodiversity. Come and visit us for an educational workshop, or invite us into your school. Perhaps we can bring *Silurian* to your school for inspiring workshops aboard.

Sightings

HWDT's Community Sightings Network involves hundreds of people every year in reporting their cetacean sightings to us. The information is collated and used to investigate distribution and to identify key habitats in the region for different species. By comparing sightings data over recent years, we can begin to identify important areas for cetaceans and monitor changes in distribution over time. This information can be used to develop practical management strategies and to advise on conservation policy issues. The data we collect is not only important in the Hebrides, but also on a national scale. As the regional coordinator for the Hebrides, HWDT forward all the information from the Hebridean database to a National Sightings Database, held by the Sea Watch Foundation. Make students aware of our sightings network and help them understand the importance of this data for the long term conservation of cetacean species. Involve them in reporting their sightings - this can be done online. Check out identification tips for all of the main species using the kids' site, or adult species pages if appropriate.



National Whale and Dolphin Watch

Every year towards the end of June is National Whale and Dolphin watch week, a nationwide survey co-ordinated by the Sea Watch Foundation to monitor whales, dolphins and porpoises around the UK coast. The results of the nationwide watch provide a snapshot of the distribution of whales, dolphins and porpoises around the British Isles and are helping inform scientific debate on any change in the range and distribution of species. This is a great opportunity to find out about events that are organised and join in with students, or to organise your own watch. As regional co-ordinators, HWDT organises several watches during this week. Usually we run one specifically for school children so keep an eye out on our news page online or [contact us](#) to get involved.

Join HWDT

School or individual 'friendship' contributes towards our project work to conserve biodiversity and raise awareness of cetaceans. Friends of HWDT also receive our newsletters which will inform about the marine environment in western Scotland and keep readers updated about current issues. Find out more about the benefits of [joining us](#).

Sponsor a dolphin or whale

Involving students in fundraising activities to benefit the environment and maintain biodiversity is another great way to get involved. Find out about how your class or school could [sponsor](#) a whale or dolphin.