

Sensory feast: A volunteer's John Muir Conserver Award Four Challenge Review



Committed volunteer and environmental enthusiast, Lesley McCue, completed both her Discovery and Explorer John Muir Awards with great enthusiasm. Lesley then progressed to complete her Conserver Award in association with her volunteer position at RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve within the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The Award allowed her to develop a comprehensive project focused around her interests in communicating the importance of conserving wild places through foraging, creating natural recipes, photography and art.



In keeping with Lesley's artistic nature, this Four Challenge Review highlights how Lesley discovered new places, explored and conserved them through the structure of the John Muir Award and ultimately shared her experiences with others.

Discover: RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

"I like how familiar the RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve is, as well as the solitude and escape it offers me... There is nothing that I do not like about my wild places."



"The place is special to me because it is a real haven for all biodiversity."



"I like the quietness and seclusion of the reserve and the fact it is a very new reserve and is therefore relatively undiscovered."

Explore: Increasing awareness and understanding about your wild space



Leading guided walks in the Reserve



Capturing nature's detail



Exploring nature through recipes and art



"I have spent a lot of time at RSPB Loch Lomond observing the changes in the landscape, wildlife and plant life from winter to autumn. I have loved seeing the changes on a weekly basis and spending time alone on the reserve looking for plants in the different areas of the reserve."

Conserve: Caring for your wild place, making a difference and putting something back



"I regularly surveyed plants and flowers at RSPB Loch Lomond."

"The John Muir Award gave me the opportunity to promote the importance of responsible wild food foraging and outdoor access at a RSPB event."

"This Award raised awareness to the importance of wild places and the goodness that nature provides us with."



"I think of myself as a Himalayan balsam vigilante! I make a point of removing invasive species whenever I see them."



"It was important to ensure there were no negative impacts from the Award activity. The focus was on respecting nature, using only small amounts of plants...only harvesting wild plants if there is an abundance ... and considering the wildlife that may rely on the food source first e.g. berries for birds."

Share: Reflect, review and discuss your adventures and experiences in wild places [#JohnMuirAward](#)



Chuffed to receive my [#conserve](#) [#JohnMuirAward](#) today at John Muir training session [@lomondtrossachs](#) with [#RSPBLochLomond](#) [@RSPBGlasgow](#) 🏆❤️😊

"I made a video montage of the photos I took during John Muir Award, and want to share it with anyone that will look at it!"

Birdsong and flowers for [#JohnMuirDay](#) with [#JohnMuirAward](#) pals ❤️ [@alittledrawn](#) [@nssarguroh3](#) [@lomondtrossachs](#) [@RSPBGlasgow](#) [#RSPBLochLomond](#) 😊



"This Award in particular has really opened my eyes to plants and their links to humans. I love when I see a new plant and learn about it. I think about the journeys made by seeds to become the plants that they are today, and how they link with other plants. I could get lost for hours going out into a meadow, on a country walk or an urban park looking at wild plants. There is no better way to relax and forget your troubles."



"I shared my knowledge about healing plants by leading guided walks at RSPB Loch Lomond. The walks were followed by a workshop where we made lip balms and creams using infused oils and tinctures made from plants collected on the reserve, as well as tea bags with the dried herbs we collected."

