



a million voices for nature



A little time makes a  
world of difference

Volunteering with the RSPB



## A world of opportunity

Around one third of all the people in the UK volunteer in some way. Why? Because it gives them a chance to do something different and learn new skills. Because they meet new people. Because they know they're making a difference to the world we live in.

We want you to experience all these things and more when you volunteer with the RSPB. Whether you enjoy getting smelly in wellies, helping children identify minibeasts or helping to save wildlife from the comfort of your own home, we've got a volunteering position waiting for you.

*"In my teens, and later, I was a regular volunteer helping to look after peregrine falcons, red kites, stone-curlews and red-backed shrikes. I had some fabulous times, formed lots of friendships and learnt plenty too. Best of all, of course, I played a small but significant part in conserving these birds. I hope you will volunteer for the RSPB to help conserve wild birds and their habitats."*

Chris Packham, Vice President

## Local groups and youth work

Want to give something back to your local community? RSPB local groups promote and represent the RSPB in their area and organise a number of activities, such as slide shows, quizzes and field trips. Local groups are run entirely by volunteers, so they are always looking for people like you to keep the show on the road. They need secretaries, sales people, treasurers, fundraisers, newsletter editors and computer geniuses, to name but a few.

### By being involved in a local RSPB group you can:

- offer conservation help in local areas
- help organise events in your local community
- help fundraise for wild bird conservation
- help people to enjoy birds and other wildlife
- learn about birds from those more experienced than you
- enjoy common interests with other people.

If you enjoy working with young people, there are a number of ways you can help us to develop our work. We work with children and young people in schools and the community. We have a network of RSPB Wildlife Explorers groups for 8–12-year-olds. Activities that these groups get up to include bug and bat hunting, pond dipping and birdwatching. Could you help out?

To find out more, visit

[www.rspb.org.uk/communitygroups](http://www.rspb.org.uk/communitygroups)

*“RSPB local groups are a wonderful way to meet other people who are only too happy to pass on their enthusiasm for birds. They can also be great fun. We liked birds but didn't feel we could go to the local group because we thought they all must be experts and we certainly weren't. A neighbour took us to one of the meetings. Now we wish we had gone before. They made us very welcome.”*

Brian Sivyer, Lowestoft RSPB Local Group





## Volunteer on our nature reserves

RSPB nature reserves are home to some of the UK's most wonderful wildlife. You can make a real difference to protect it, so why not get involved at your local reserve?

The RSPB manages over 200 reserves and, if you like to get active, then you can help us to create and manage the habitats that are essential for birds and other wildlife. Tasks can include planting seeds, clearing bracken, creating ponds, planting hedges and putting up nestboxes.

Understanding how well birds and other wildlife are doing on our reserves is important so that we can manage habitats correctly. So, if you are a brilliant birder, passionate about plants, fascinated by fungi or bowled over by butterflies, then you could get involved in surveying the wildlife on a reserve. And if you're a whizz on the computer, you could help us record the data.

Each year, over one million visits are made to RSPB nature reserves. Volunteers help visitors to enjoy their time on the reserve by running guided walks, providing activities for children and offering a reception service at our visitor centres. Does this sound like your cup of tea?

*"Working on my local reserve has given me the opportunity to make new friends, use my skills, give something back to the community and care for the environment at the same time. It gives me great satisfaction to know that future generations will continue to see and share in the diversity of nature due to this work."*

John Boxall, volunteer at RSPB Otmoor nature reserve, Oxfordshire

## Residential volunteering

Want to get away from it all? Fancy a holiday with a difference? If you have more than a day or two to spare, then come and spend a week or more living and working as a volunteer on one of our reserves.

You can choose from over 40 reserves around the UK, with accommodation provided on or near the reserve.

The tasks are wide-ranging and can include:

- practical management
- working with visitors or giving guided walks
- survey, protection and monitoring work
- farm/stock work
- habitat management.

Work varies from season to season, and from reserve to reserve, but there is something suitable for volunteers of all ages (you have to be over 16).

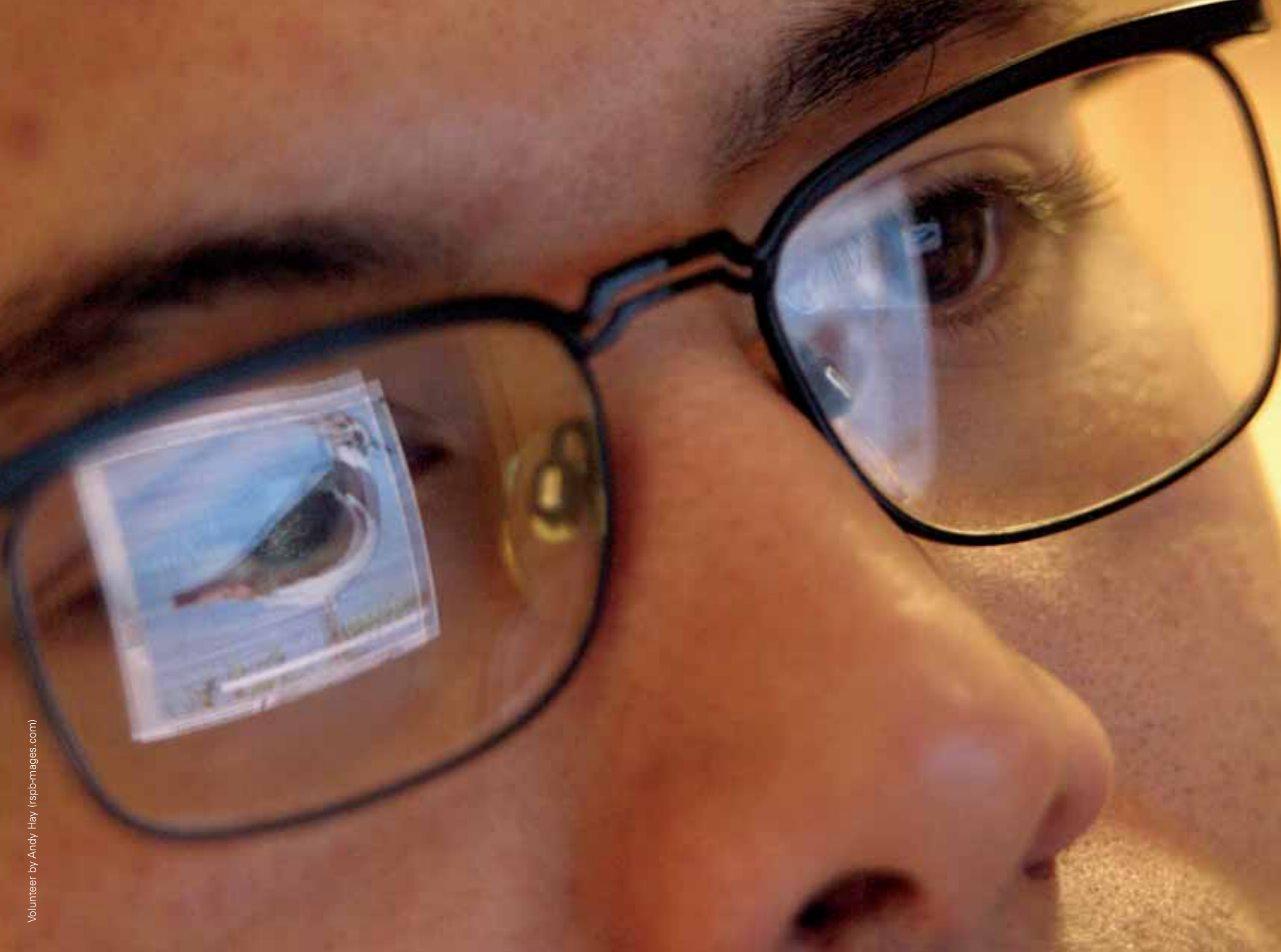
Bookings are made by the week, Saturday to Saturday. Long-term placements (by arrangement) are ideal for those planning a career in conservation.

Ask for our residential volunteering brochure to find out more, or visit [www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering/residential](http://www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering/residential)

*"It was a really great week. I absolutely loved it. The wardens were excellent and I have recommended it to all my friends. It was fantastic. Thank you."*

Sarah Burke, residential volunteer at RSPB Havergate Island nature reserve, Suffolk





Volunteer by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

## Regional and country offices

If donning boots and binoculars is not for you, there's a whole host of opportunities in our offices around the UK. Writing press releases, creating a publications database, monitoring newspapers, inputting scientific data, designing posters and cataloguing the slide library may not be what you immediately think of when you consider volunteering for the RSPB. But these are just some of the tasks that volunteers have recently undertaken in just one of our offices.

With country offices in Sandy, Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff, and a host of regional offices from Shetland to Devon, there's likely to be something near you that you can get involved with.

If you like sharing your enthusiasm for wildlife, you could get involved in one of our "date with nature" projects. We run these events in city centres, on boats, in forests – anywhere we want to show people a great natural spectacle.

Whether you're a bird expert or a complete novice, a younger person wanting to enhance your CV or an older person with a little bit of time on your hands, we've got a role for you.

*"I started by offering to help catalogue the bird slide collection and, since then, I have moved on to creating CD presentations for staff. I've learnt so much since I started and I really do feel part of the team. Whatever skills and experience you have, I'd say give it a go."*

Alison Fox, volunteer at RSPB Scotland HQ in Edinburgh

## Fundraise for wildlife

Are you a great people person? We need your creative ideas and enthusiasm to help us fundraise for wildlife and wild places. Without this cash, we simply wouldn't be able to carry out the conservation and education work, political lobbying and species protection that we do.

There are lots of ways you can help, from just a couple of hours a month looking after pin badge boxes, to organising local events. Get involved in as much or as little as you like.

*"From small beginnings, our involvement in placing and looking after pin badge boxes grew. By finding new locations when we were out and about looking after our boxes, it made the trip worthwhile. For us, a great day out, and for the RSPB, more cash."*

Margaret and Derek Cook, pin badge box hosts

## Help farmers, help birds

Over the past 25 years, many of our farmland birds, such as lapwings, have halved in number. You could help stop this decline. We pair volunteers with local farmers who want a free survey of the birds on their farm. We then give them information so that they can help these birds.

You don't have to be a bird expert to take part in the Volunteer & Farmer Alliance, as we can give you training before you start.

*"All you do is look for and map birds. There is no canvassing. Whatever happens, you will have seen areas not open to others and know that you have done something to help our feathered friends and a local farmer."*

Peter Clayton, volunteer for Volunteer & Farmer Alliance





Letter writing by Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

## Volunteering from your own home

Volunteering doesn't necessarily mean wearing green wellies and wielding a chainsaw, or joining RSPB staff in office-based activities. Many RSPB activities can be carried out from the comfort of your own living room and still provide us with your gift of time.

A lot of people give invaluable support to the RSPB's conservation lobby by writing letters to MPs, MEPs and influential groups about issues of current and prime importance – your help could make a difference.

If you have a specialist skill, give us a call to see if we could use it. For example, a number of people volunteer with us as translators, other people design websites, raise money, enter data and edit/write reports from their own home. Other ways you could help include distributing leaflets to assist us in recruiting members or giving talks in the community or in schools. A small team of volunteers also make props and toys for use with our educational work.

*"As a sufferer of mental health problems, I wanted to do something useful for others and to help build my confidence. I started by entering all the region's press clippings onto a spreadsheet and analysing the information. I then helped to get the south-west region online. I learnt so much. There is so much more to RSPB work than meets the eye."*

Alison Terry, media volunteer for the RSPB's South West Regional Office

To find out more about how you can help, contact the Volunteering Development department at our UK Headquarters address below. Or contact your nearest regional office to see what's available. You can see all our volunteering opportunities at [www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering)

## The RSPB

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The RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.

We belong to BirdLife International, the global partnership of conservation organisations.

Front cover: dandelion by [www.photodisc.com](http://www.photodisc.com)

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