



**wildlife  
watch**



**Scottish  
Wildlife  
Trust**

# **Guide to Setting Up a New Wildlife Watch Group**

Are you interested in the Wildlife Watch but can't see a group near you? Wildlife Watch groups can be set up anywhere!

Setting up a Wildlife Watch group is a fun way to help connect children in your community with nature at your doorstep. Join our network of nature clubs all over Scotland to support the next generation discover the importance of wildlife!

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## How are new Wildlife Watch groups supported?

The groups are run by volunteers with the support of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Each new group gets:

- A £50 start-up cheque.
- A resource box filled with identification guides, activity ideas, and fun equipment, such as pond dipping nets and bug pots!
- Regular communication with the Engagement Officer at the Scottish Wildlife Trust and support setting up the group.
- A page on our website to advertise the group and share activity photos.
- The opportunity to attend Wildlife Watch Training days, which are full of skill sharing, training in outdoor skills, and other useful things for running Wildlife Watch sessions.
- To join a network of Wildlife Watch groups all over Scotland! The benefit of joining the Wildlife Watch rather than starting your own nature club is the support and the chance to connect with like-minded Leaders all over Scotland.



Wildlife Watch © Anne Stubbs

## What is expected of a Wildlife Watch group?

Wildlife Watch groups deliver fun and engaging nature-themed activities. To maintain high-quality programmes of activities, we expect groups to be guided by the principles below.



There are 5 principles which underpin all Watch activity:

- 1) Increasing understanding of our whole environment
- 2) Fostering awareness and feeling for the world we live in
- 3) Encouraging a caring attitude towards wildlife and participation in conservation
- 4) Creating factual, informal, fun ways to investigate our surroundings
- 5) Ensuring that young people's environmental concerns, ideas and opinions are recognised and developed, and opportunities are created to act upon them.

Whilst these principles guide activities, every group is different and has its own personality. There is a lot of flexibility in how frequent the sessions are, what ages the group is aimed at, the name of the group, and the activity programme.

	Most Wildlife Watch groups...	But it's up to the Leaders!
<b>Frequency?</b>	Run once a month.	Have the sessions as frequent as you want.
<b>Age?</b>	Are aimed at 5-12 year olds.	Groups can be aimed at anyone under the age of 18.
<b>Name?</b>	Are named after the location.	Groups can be named anything - local animals or the members can choose!
<b>Activities?</b>	Have their own programme of events and activities.	All Wildlife Watch groups have different programmes of activities that the Leaders plan.





Left: Jenny McAllister leading her wildlife watch group. © Mark Ferguson

Right: Newcastleton Wildlife Watch group © Jamie Grant

## How can I set up a Wildlife Watch group?

The Engagement Officer at the Scottish Wildlife Trust supports the Scottish Wildlife Watch groups as they are set up. Wildlife Watch Leaders are given an induction that explains the process in depth.

In general, groups can be categorised as a community, partnership, or school Wildlife Watch group. See below to find out what group category applies to you and the checklist for setting each group up.

### Community Wildlife Watch group

Community Wildlife Watch groups are groups set up by adults in the community for children in the community.

#### Start-up checklist

- ☐ At least two registered Leaders and a third adult Helper
- ☐ Land-owner permission for session location and completed risk assessment
- ☐ At least one first aid trained Leader
- ☐ Receive support and resources for starting
- ☐ Plan the programme of sessions and prepare materials
- ☐ Advertise group sessions and launch date

## Partnership Wildlife Watch group

Partnerships Wildlife Watch groups are groups set up informally with another organisation. One member of staff will usually run the groups alongside volunteers to children in the community.

### Start-up checklist

- ☐ At least two registered Leaders and a third adult Helper
- ☐ Informal agreement with partner organisation
- ☐ Land-owner permission for session location and completed risk assessment
- ☐ At least one first aid trained Leader
- ☐ Receive support and resources for starting
- ☐ Plan the programme of sessions and prepare materials
- ☐ Advertise group sessions and launch date

## School Wildlife Watch group

School Wildlife Watch groups are set up by a school for the children attending the school. Unlike the other types of Wildlife Watch groups, school groups are run under the school's insurance and health and safety policies. The only registration tasks the Leaders at schools need to do is the application form and induction talk.

### Start-up checklist

- ☐ At least one registered Leader with the Trust
- ☐ Have a signed Association Agreement with the Head Teacher
- ☐ Receive support and resources for starting
- ☐ Plan the programme of sessions and prepare materials

For enquiries about starting a Wildlife Watch group, please contact the Engagement Officer (Rachel Faichnie – [rfaichnie@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:rfaichnie@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk))