

Citizen science project to care for ‘uncharismatic’ creatures

02/11/2015



Young people studying insects

Today, we're announcing £1.2m support for the Field Studies Council (FSC) to expand its biodiversity training work.

The BioLinks project will provide more taxonomic training for underrepresented, ‘uncharismatic’ species, especially those which are more difficult to identify. It will support and mentor 2,000 new volunteers to help them become more proficient biological recorders.

Tom Tew, Heritage Lottery Fund Trustee, said: “Our support will get the BioLinks project off the starting blocks and will enable large groups of volunteers – from dedicated and skilled amateur enthusiasts to schoolchildren and communities just starting - to learn about and better record their local insects and plants.”

FSC has been providing volunteer training in biological recording for many years. An HLF development grant of £41,000 will help it to prepare to deliver this innovative ‘citizen science’ pilot project in London and the South East from January 2016.

Activities like bioblitz events, creating and consulting species reference collections, developing species distribution atlases and using identification resources will be part of the project alongside

traditional day and weekend courses learning how to identify plants and animals.

Sue Townsend, FSC Biodiversity Manager said: “I am so pleased that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. It will help FSC to make sure as many people as possible can get involved in biological recording and identification.”

Tom Tew added:“The Heritage Lottery Fund supports a wide range of natural heritage projects, and that includes those that protect the 'uncharismatic' parts of our environment such as beetles and bees – these groups are poorly understood and poorly recorded, but are threatened by habitat loss and development just as much as otters and orchids.”

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