

Volunteering

A VOLUNTEERS PERSPECTIVE



Introduction

- Volunteer with RSPB Scotland for last two years
- Volunteer with the Scottish Wildlife Trust / Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape Project for nine months
- Member of and volunteer with the Highland Ringing Group
- Member of and volunteer with the Highland Raptor Study Group
- Volunteered with the British Red Cross between 2009 - 2012
- Saltire Awards Ambassador

A Volunteers Perspective



What Works?

Firstly, what have I got from volunteering?

Networking:

Meeting and connecting with people -

- Within the RSPB, Scottish Wildlife Trust and CALL
- Within Forestry Commission Scotland and SNH
- Within community groups and charities
- Have met landowners, estate workers, stalkers, crofters, and farmers
- Meeting other volunteers



What Works?



What have I got from volunteering?

Experience:

- Highland wildlife (knowledge)
- Highland land management (crofting, farming, estates, tourism)
- Surveying - both wildlife and habitats
- Public affairs, writing for the press, and dealing with the public
- Being involved in partnership and project work

What Works?

What have I got from volunteering?

Personal Benefits:

- Increased confidence
- Increased fitness (during survey season anyway!)
- Mental health benefits
- Building and developing skills set
- Social aspects - friends and connections
- Choice and time



What is Challenging?

What have I (and others) found difficult and frustrating as a volunteer?

- Lack of official training
 - “Can’t justify the cost of training you”
- Lack of information / support
- Exclusion
- Lack of trust
- Wasted days
 - “Here comes the free labour”

Looking Forward

Possible solutions to these issues could include:

- A set standard of training for long-term and residential volunteers
- Including those volunteers who have been present for over a year in decisions and meetings
- Keep long termers up to date with conferences, training, meetings, events, learning opportunities, networking events, etc.



Thank You

