

Derbyshire Survey on Volunteering for Wildlife Conservation Summary of Results

Over the summer of 2009 Volunteer Centres Derbyshire (VCD), with help of organisations and groups across the county, completed a survey of volunteering within wildlife conservation.

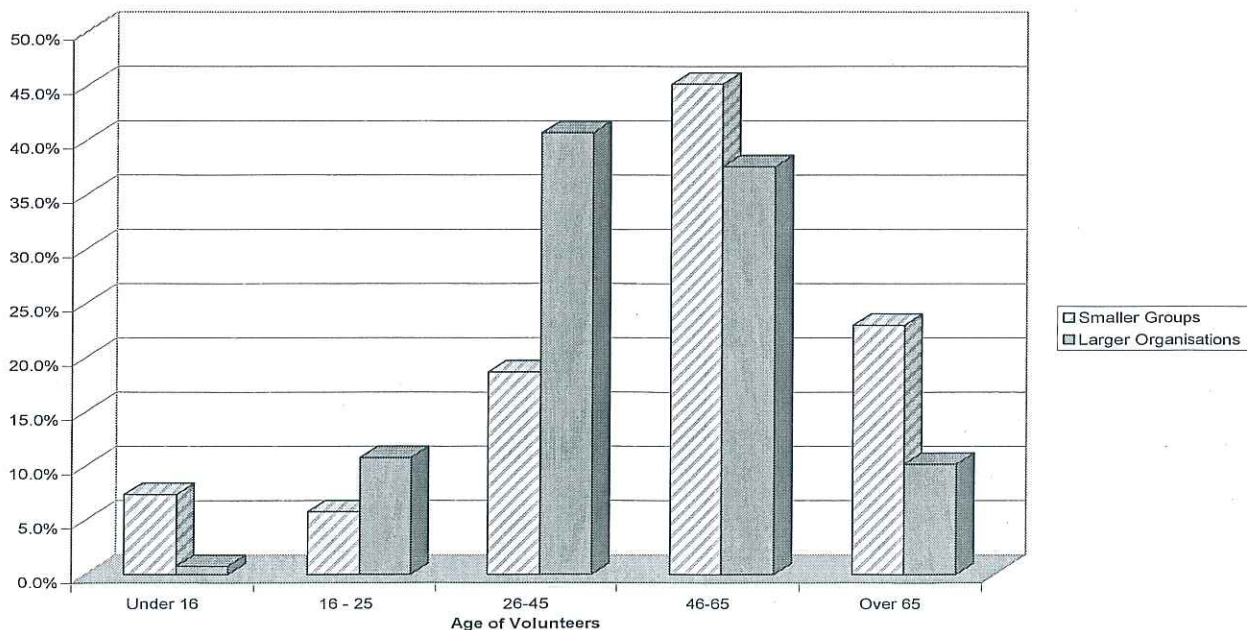
Questionnaires were sent to 94 voluntary groups and small organisations across the county and as a result 30 responses were received. Given the similarities between many of these groups, it was felt that it was reasonable to extrapolate the results to give county wide figures for volunteering.

At the same time, larger organisations were contacted with a similar questionnaire. Responses were received from the majority including: BTCV, Carsington Water Volunteer Rangers Service, Cresswell Heritage Trust, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire, Moors for the Future Project, Natural England, The National Trust, The Peak District National Park Authority and Rosliston Forestry Centre. It should be recognised that some organisations such as the WildDerby Project and the National Forest Company do not directly manage volunteers but instead offer to support to a variety of small voluntary groups.

The results demonstrate the huge contribution made by volunteers to wildlife conservation across the county. A summary of the main results are presented in the table below, with further information contained within the full survey report.

	Groups and Smaller Organisation	Larger Organisations	Totals
Number of Volunteers	1,819	4,095	5,914
Hours Volunteered Annually	70,333.3	147,607.0	217,940.30
Days Volunteered Annually	10,047.6	21,086.7	31,134.3
Annual Value – hours x minimum wage.	£407,933.14	£856,120.60	£1,264,053.74
Annual Value - days at £50 per day.	£502,380.71	£1,054,335.71	£1,556,716.43

Unfortunately out of a total of 5,914 volunteers reported, the age range of 821 is known. The age profile of these volunteers is shown in the following chart.



The questionnaires also included a number of questions about how volunteers are recruited and managed. This was supplemented by site visits by VCD staff and a training session delivered to 7 groups who responded to the survey.

It was shown that smaller groups and organisations tend to rely on a relatively small core of volunteers who perform a broad range of tasks associated with both running the group and managing conservation related tasks. Many groups indicated an interest in training and other assistance to help them recruit and retain volunteers with a broad range of skills and abilities; to aid this has VCD identified the need to develop more focused role descriptions.

Many larger conservation organisations have developed their own expertise in volunteer management. In all cases designated staff are responsible for overseeing the volunteer management process, volunteer policies tended to be in place and roles were narrower and more clearly defined. While training needs have been identified, these are more focused on helping staff stay up to date with good practice.

In Response to the above Volunteer Centres offer a number of services:

- Training on volunteer management issues.
 - One-to-one support in developing good practise.
 - Help with publicising volunteer opportunities.
 - Advice on developing volunteer opportunities.
 - A volunteer referral service.
 - Forums for volunteer coordinators.
- ❖ In addition, VCD can work in partnership with organisations to provide bespoke training to meet the needs of an organisation and/or groups that it supports.

To find out about the Volunteer Centre in you area, including information on scheduled training and coordinators forums visit:

www.volunteercentresderbyshire.co.uk

To find out more about your local vinvolved project, which promoted volunteering by young people between 16 and 25, visit the above website and click on the link for vinvolved for the Derbyshire-wide project, or the Derby Volunteer Centre link for the Derby City project.

VCD would like to thank all groups and organisations who took part in this survey. The full survey report will be posted on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website. Any questions relating to the survey should be addressed to Emma Dagless: emmad@gvb.org.uk

Volunteer Centres Derbyshire receives funding from Capacity Builders and the Derbyshire Children's Trust.



This survey was supported by the Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnerships.



There are eight Volunteering England Accredited Volunteer Centres operating across Derbyshire, and a ninth applying for accreditation. Volunteer Centres Derbyshire (VCD) is the network that links these centres.