

Remote delivery & the John Muir Award

- adapting during Covid-19 restrictions



Use this guide to:

1. see how John Muir Award Providers across the UK are adapting the way they deliver the Award
2. find examples of nature connection ideas and activities suitable for you
3. recognise the benefits for practitioners, parents and participants

With support from the John Muir Trust, many groups are continuing to help the people they work with through nature connection outdoor activities during times of reduced face-to-face contact. We've collated stories from a range of settings [here](#).

1. Adapting to remote John Muir Award activity – tips and things to consider

The Four Challenges of the Award are very flexible, so you're welcome to adapt plans, activities or extend proposed finish dates as necessary to ensure participants are able to complete their Award. Below we share some tips, ideas and things to consider that have been working well for others.

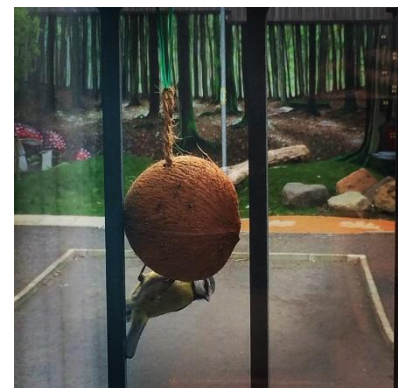
Nearby nature – A good starting point is chatting to participants about what wild places they can safely access in their local area. This may vary greatly within a group, but might include gardens, window/herb boxes, local parks, waterways or beyond. Identifying nature nearby helps form creative ideas and plans.

Set expectations – Introduce participants to the Award and what's involved, or recap what they've done already if you're resuming activity. Our short animation [John Muir Award: What's it all about](#) can help.

Daily/weekly activity prompts – Offering regular outdoor challenges or prompts helps focus participants. This could be a specific activity to do, a short video introducing a task, or simply a topic or question to consider whilst outdoors – e.g. using senses in nature.

Leaving scope for challenges to be open helps participants make activities work for them and their wild place.

Making a difference in your local community – Participants may require extra support to meet the Conserve Challenge remotely. Signposting ideas to self-directed practical activities suited to



anywhere can help, such as feeding birds, making wildlife homes or planting for pollinators. Some tips from existing Providers:

- Activities using recycled household materials (e.g. bird feeders from milk bottles) can make them more accessible.
- Using apps to engage with nature (e.g. [Zepto](#)), identify wildlife and undertake citizen science surveys in local environments (e.g. [RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch](#)) can be a good way of using available technology.
- Encourage participants to consider campaigns and sustainable household lifestyle choices that help protect wild places (e.g. [Food Revolution Network](#); [Mission Explore Food](#)).

Keep in touch – Use the communication platforms and channels available to you. If digital access is limited, be creative with post, text messages or phone calls to offer support and encouragement. Invite participants to choose how they want to share – such as nature journals, scrapbooks, blogs, artwork, writing, creating videos, virtual chats with family and friends or sharing on social media. Consider the John Muir Award [Record eBook](#) (for sharing group entries) or printing off the hard copy [Record Book](#).

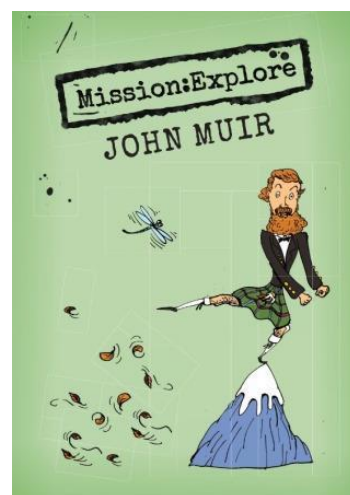
Reflection and engagement – Build in opportunities for participants to share how they're finding remote working and encourage discussion to overcome any common challenges. Use the simple [Four Challenge Review](#) tool to help gauge how participants are getting on.

Safety – Always follow current and local [Government guidance](#) and the relevant health and safety procedures for your organisation/group. See [Learning through Landscapes](#) for advice on managing risks associated with Covid-19 in the outdoors.

2. Nature connection ideas and activity links

There's a wide range of activities, resources and initiatives that can help. Below, we've collated a few popular starting points to help search and find the things engaging and relevant to suit you.

- [Mission:Explore John Muir](#) – A freely downloadable book with unique challenges to inspire people to get outdoors and have fun.
- [John Muir Award Resource Guides](#) signpost to popular activities and initiatives on topics including biodiversity, sustainability, outdoor learning, wildlife gardening, surveys, campaigning, literacy & nature, upland commons, National Parks, AONBs and John Muir.
- **Staff tips** – Try ideas on [making language fun in the outdoors](#) or [Field Notes from a parent](#).



- **Health and wellbeing** – for inspiration, try [Five Ways to Wellbeing & wild places](#); The Wildlife Trust's activities for [looking after yourself and nature](#); or the [Thriving with Nature guide from the Mental Health Foundation](#) with tips and seasonal ideas to keep connected.
- **Things to do** - [Creative Star Learning](#) is a great launchpad for ideas, including [100s of wonderful outdoor and nature activities](#); or have a look through The Wildlife Trust's suggested [actions to help wildlife](#).
- **Seasonal tips** – try ideas for [making space for nature](#) through (NatureScot) the year, or [Nature's Calendar](#).
- **Pool your ideas** - [Learning through Landscapes](#) have created two Facebook groups for sharing ideas, tips and advice - one for families, one for educators and teachers.
- **Books**, such as [Learning with Nature](#) and [Dirty Teaching](#) are also a good source of ideas offline.

3. Benefits for practitioners, parents and participants:

The John Muir Award can:

- promote health and wellbeing through accessing nature and the outdoors (including gardens and local greenspaces).
- encourage a participant-led approach, allowing people to follow their own interests.
- engage families in enjoying time together in nature through a [Family John Muir Award](#).
- build community spirit, a sense of ownership and pride, while helping enhance local wild places.
- develop inquiry or problem-solving skills and meet curriculum outcomes, including literacy and numeracy skills – (e.g. [John Muir Award and Education Recovery, Scotland](#)).



Stay in touch with the John Muir Trust:

- Follow John Muir Trust social media ([@JohnMuirTrust](#) and [#JohnMuirAward](#)).
- [Sign up](#) to the John Muir Award e-bulletin and e-newsletters.
- Browse the Trust's [Wild Inside](#) email to help bring a little joy and wildness closer to home - [sign up here](#).
- For more information and answers to common questions about the John Muir Award (including Covid-19 updates), see our [FAQs](#).