

Buchan Bog Buddies

Update for the Nineveh Charitable Trust, July 2023



The Buchan Bog Buddies have had a truly hands-on experience learning about their local peatlands!

The Buchan Bog Buddies was an immersive peatland education project in northeast Aberdeenshire, helping primary school children learn about the nature and climate emergency and what they can do to help. Over the course of twelve sessions with RSPB staff and volunteers, the pupils learnt about the history of the peat bogs in their area, as well as their importance to local culture. They explored different types of mosses – such as crucially important Sphagnum Moss – and the value of the bogs for wildlife like insects, insectivorous plants, wading birds and Cranes. At the end of the school sessions, classes came together to celebrate their learning in a multimedia community exhibition, inspiring the whole community to take an interest in local peat bogs.

Learning outcomes

The project had two key aims: to help pupils understand the importance of their local peatlands; and to empower them to become community leaders who could inspire others to protect this precious natural resource. To measure these outcomes, we surveyed students before and after the project (please see the appendix at the end of this report for survey results).

We are delighted that the final results showed all the children had increased knowledge and awareness of their local landscape, were more concerned about nature, and in turn expressed higher levels of care for it. The majority felt more empowered by taking part in the project and expressed an increased sense of agency in supporting nature. We hope they will take this learning forward in future, raising their voices for other causes which are important to them.

Feedback from pupils and teachers

The feedback we received from those who took part in the Bog Buddies sessions has been overwhelmingly positive. The children were enthusiastic and engaged throughout, and their survey responses indicate a wide range of learnings.

“I’ve learned there is many types of moss and I enjoyed seeing the bog in real life, it was an experience I will never forget.”

"I liked going to the bog and seeing all the machinery and wildlife, I liked drawing all the animals and making the projects, liked the groups and research, in total I like it all."

"Learning about all the animals has been so frogtastic!"

Both teachers who took part stated that the children had no prior knowledge about their local bogs when commencing the project, and now they have a lot of knowledge. They praised the pupils' hard work and engagement with the project, and both think it would be valuable to provide further sessions with other local schools.

"I would recommend to other schools, absolutely, it's our heritage in this area and needs to be maintained and improved. It's not just peat, it's our wildlife, the environment, history. I thought the whole project was fabulous and I'm so pleased the children had the exhibition to finish with."

Inspiring the whole community

On the 11th of May, the pupils held a community exhibition to celebrate all their learning and inspire the whole community with the importance of local peatlands. It was a fantastic success – over 150 people attended, as well as two classes from Strichen School. The children did an excellent job of sharing their knowledge, and we had wonderful feedback from the community.



Pupils prepared a variety of interactive displays to share their learning about peatlands.

The pupils prepared an exciting range of fun and informative exhibits and activities. There were educational displays, posters and comic strips, plenty of real peat and Sphagnum Moss to touch and explore, games like Bog Snap, a peat cutter fancy dress station and even an animation (which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/FiyThkTYmYM>).

Pupils took their own measures of the success of the exhibition by designing an evaluation form and giving it to visitors. We received 37 responses with a wide range of positive comments; 86% of respondents responded "yes / very much" to the question "did you enjoy our exhibition?"

Feedback showed that visitors thoroughly enjoyed the different displays and activities, and learnt a lot. Several responses mentioned learning about the importance of peat bogs for wildlife and the environment for the first time – one of the key outcomes for this project.

"I did not know before how peatbogs formed and quite how brilliant they are."

Next steps

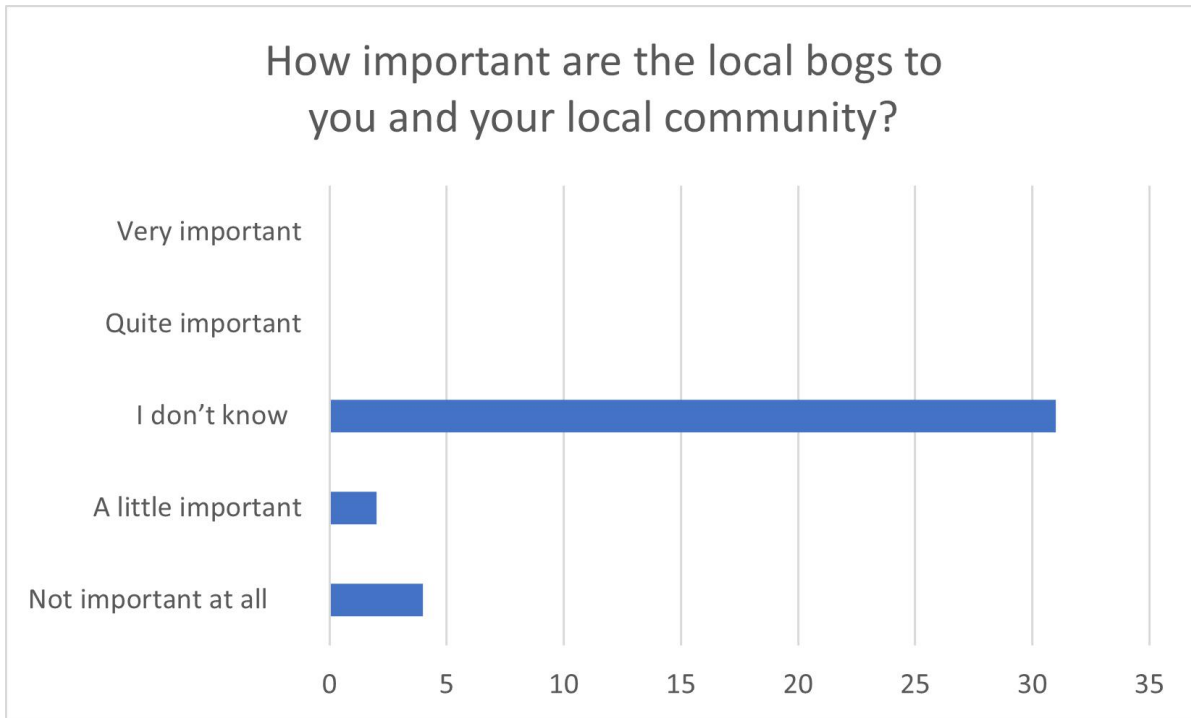
Following the success of these first classes, we hope to offer the Bog Buddies to two new schools in the autumn term. The materials created for the initial sessions will last for a long time, helping us to expand our impact across the local area. We also intend to run a series of events to further engage the community, with the aim of creating a local conservation group.

Thank you to the Nineveh Charitable Trust!

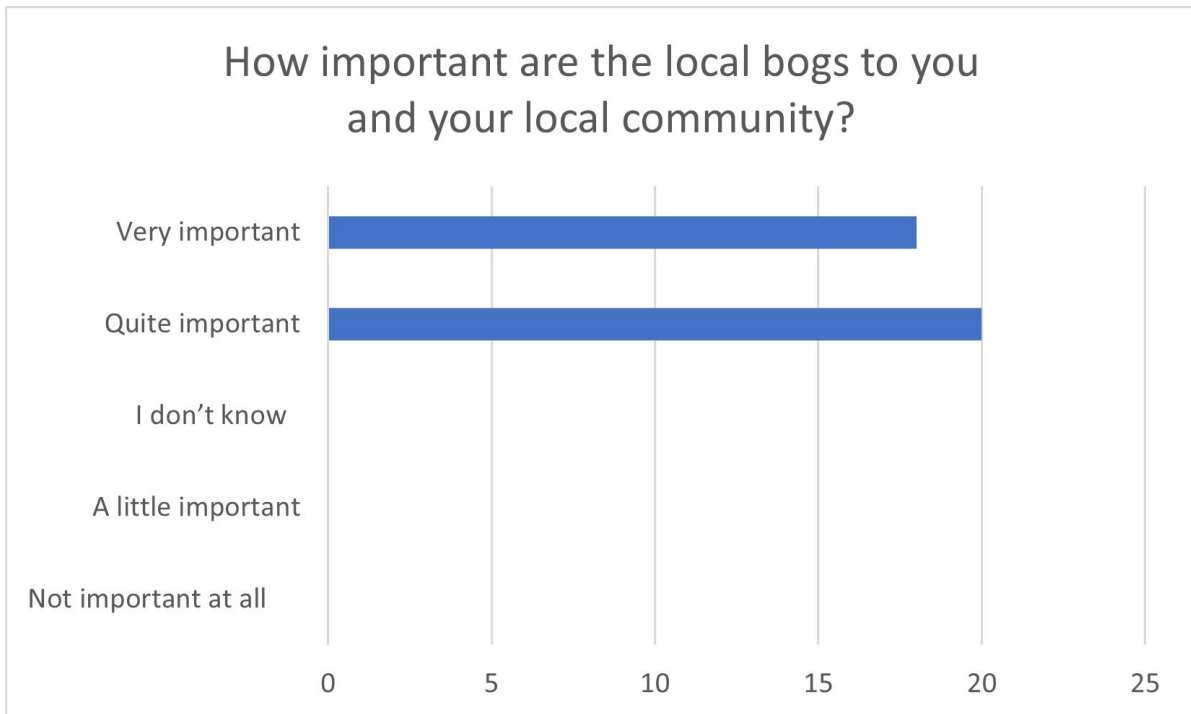
Your support has informed and inspired a whole community to value and protect their precious peatlands.

Appendix – pre- and post project questionnaire results

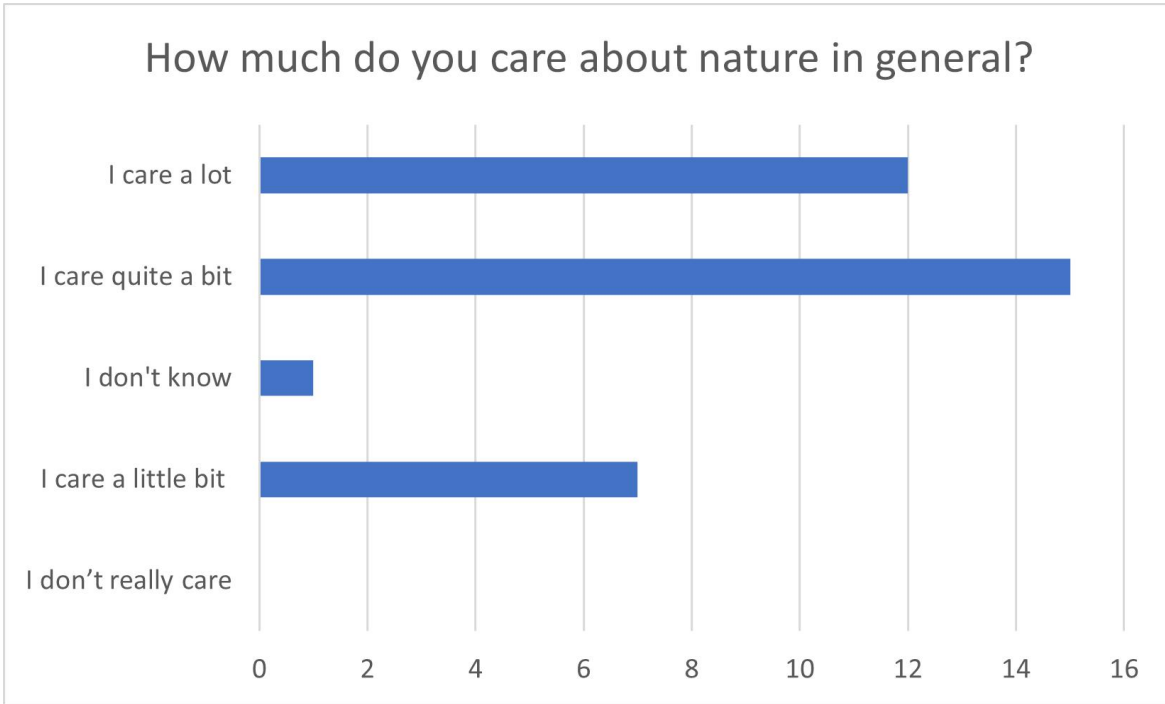
Pre-Project



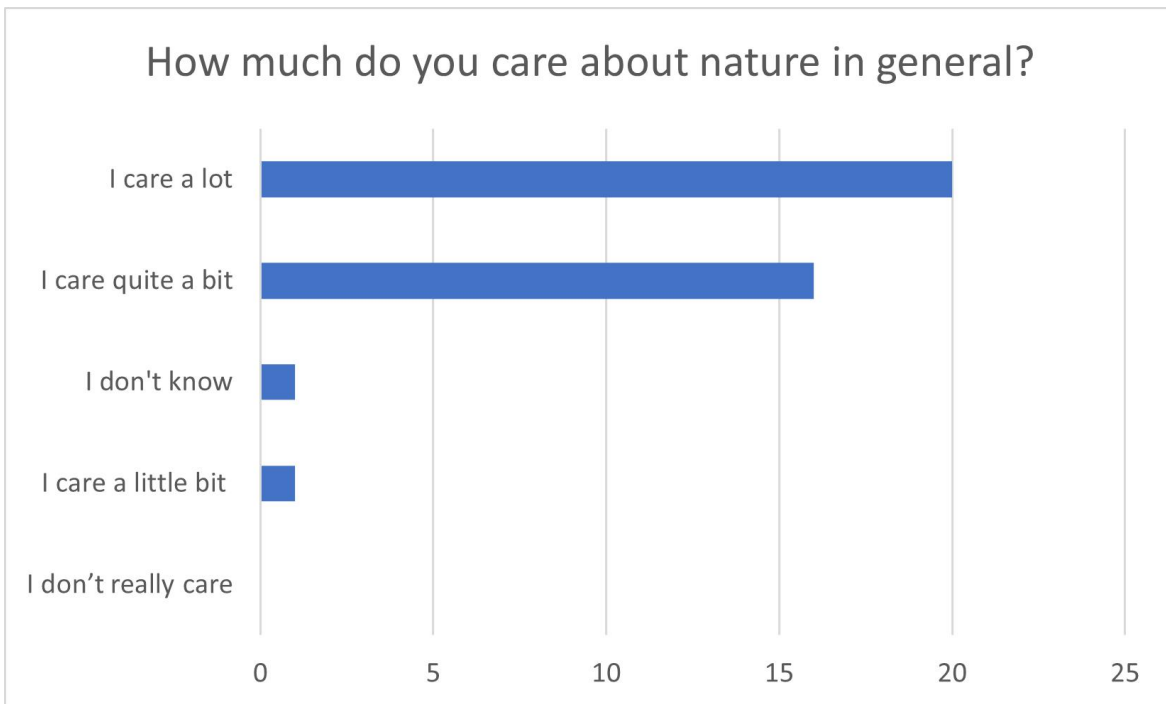
Post Project



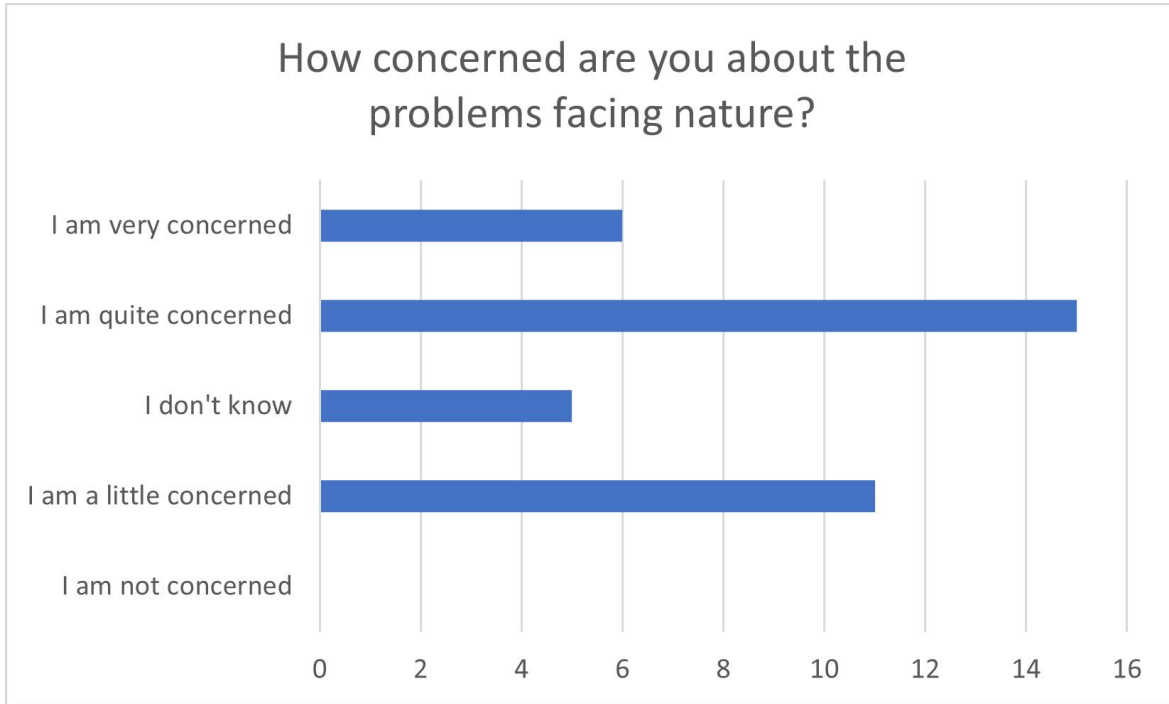
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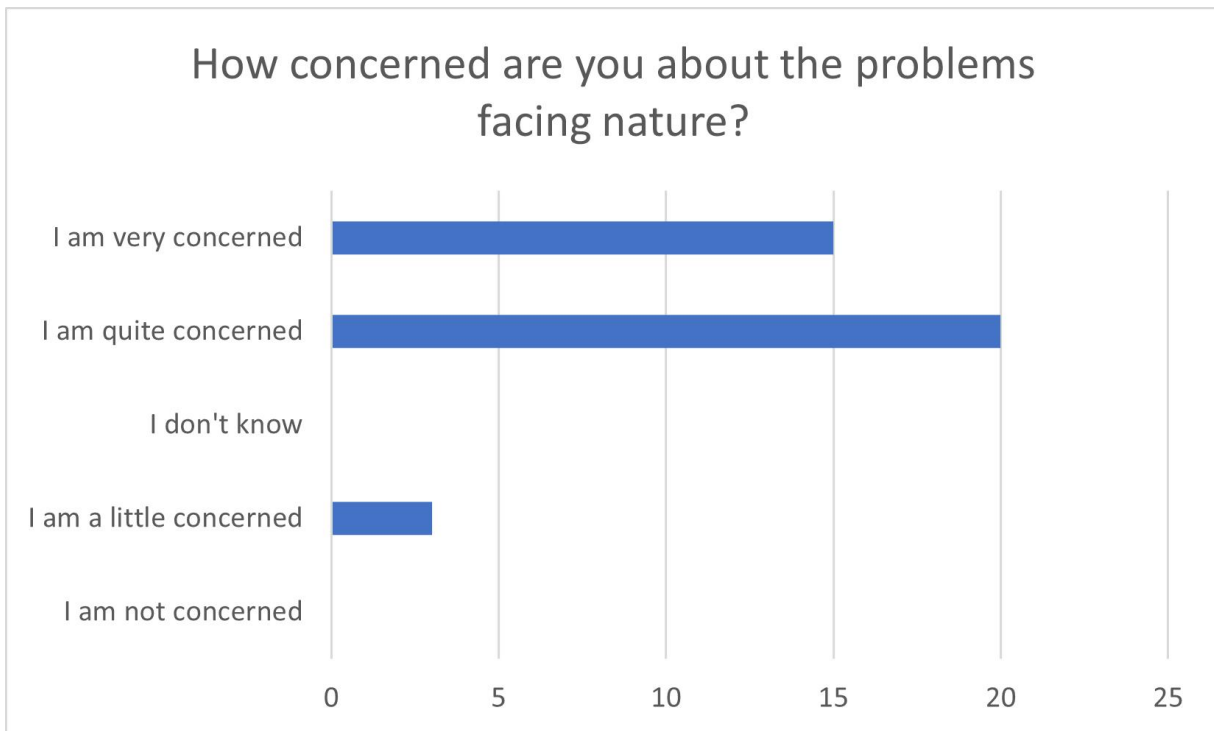
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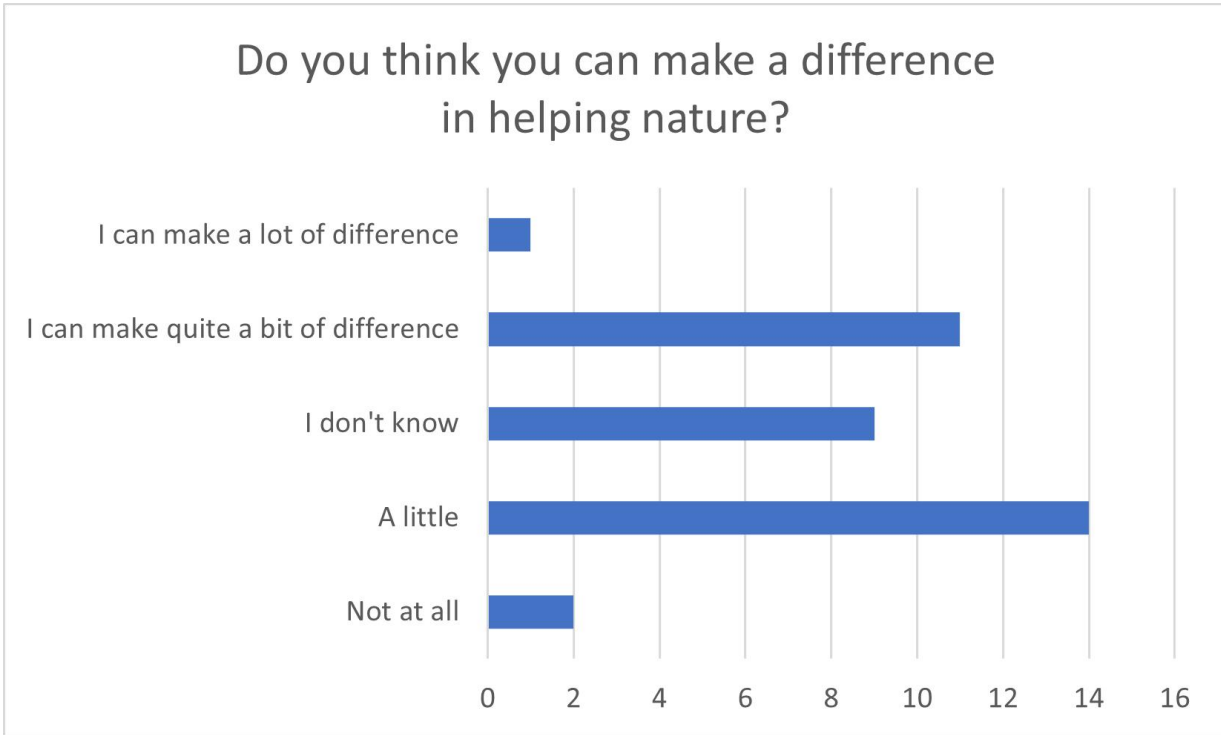
Pre-Project



Post Project



Pre-Project



Post Project

