

Green Tiger beetle North East Wildlife

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership has announced that next year will see the start of a five-year science and arts initiative, called Cold Blooded and Spineless.

Confirmation of a £400,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) means that children and community groups in the North Pennines will benefit from investment into educational activities, themed events and interpretive science to bring the wonder of the invertebrate kingdom to life for all. Working with local artists, permanent art installations will be created to tell the stories of iconic invertebrates in our local communities.

The aptly titled project, the first of its kind in the North East, will record and celebrate invertebrates and aim to develop public support for insect life, which is not generally appreciated for its contribution to the biodiversity of the landscape.

Jon Charlton, Programme Development Manager, from the AONB Partnership, said: “This is a really important step towards better understanding our landscape by uncovering the invertebrate world that lives around us and beneath our feet. It’s a unique opportunity for amateur invertebrate enthusiasts and our local communities to begin a journey of learning to greatly improve our knowledge of micro wildlife in the North Pennines.”

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “We have some incredible wildlife in the North East, especially across the North Pennines, but the often hidden invertebrates and their habitats are under constant threat. We hope that with the financial support announced today, communities across the region will be inspired and

empowered to safeguard the existence of these rather unglamorous, but critically important, creatures."

A significant proportion of the grant will provide workshops to develop volunteers' identification skills so they can survey insects.

Cold Blooded and Spineless will build on momentum gained through the successful AONB Partnership's WildWatch recording project which trained hundreds of people to better understand wildlife in the North Pennines and its surrounding areas.

The data collected through Cold Blooded and Spineless, over time, will contribute to mapping Sites of Invertebrate Significance (SIS). Recorders will continue to be able to share sightings for insects and all species via the North Pennines AONB's website, where records are sent onwards to local record centres for verification by experts.

Notes to editors

- The **North Pennines** is one of England's most special places – a peaceful, unspoilt landscape with a rich history and vibrant natural beauty. It was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1988. The purpose of this nationally recognised designation is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Tumbling waterfalls, sweeping moorland views, dramatic dales, stone-built villages, snaking stone walls and friendly faces – the North Pennines has all this and more. The North Pennines lies between the National Parks of the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, and Northumberland with the urban centres of County Durham away to the east. Parts of the AONB are within the boundaries of five local authorities; the three counties of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland, Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council.
- **The North Pennines AONB Partnership** is an alliance of 24 public, statutory and voluntary sector bodies with an interest in the future of the AONB. The work of the Partnership is carried out by its Staff Unit which takes action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, to raise awareness of its special qualities and to improve the quality of life for local people.

Further information

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