



## Teaching children to be messy

School challenge: how hard is that?

Convincing children not to clear up too much, not to be too neat and tidy, doesn't sound like much of a challenge. But it's deadly serious for wildlife in North Somerset.

The Hawk and Owl Trust has launched the School Wildlife Challenge to help pupils and their teachers relish a bit of natural chaos, at least outdoors, so that we don't tidy our birds and mammals, and the insects and grubs they feed on, into oblivion.

Thanks to support from North Somerset Council's Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund the Trust will be rolling out the project to schools in North Somerset throughout 2010.

"We want to encourage children to think about how tidy our countryside is becoming and how we as humans feel the need to manage and control everything," says Chris Sperring, the Trust's South West conservation officer.

"If we leave the management of some habitats to nature, a much greater diversity of plants and animals will thrive, and even a small amount of 'wild' habitat can attract and help plants, invertebrates and birds that are becoming rare.

"Through school visits and workshops we will be challenging schools to create new habitats within their grounds, and challenging pupils to study the wildlife that exists in the new areas before and after they have been left to become wild.

"They will also be challenged to create wild areas in their own gardens, with competitions and prizes for photographic evidence of new habitats created at home (even if it is only a window box planted with weeds - or should we say wild flowers)."

Anyone who wants to nominate a school in North Somerset to take up the challenge should contact the Trust on 01275 849287 or email Chris Sperring [here](#).

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