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Sandhill Primary School.

Biodiversity Report.

Species and habitats that are part of the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) are marked in **bold**. Nest boxes to be given to the school are underlined.

Present: Colin Graham, Martin Towers, Amy Stewart.

Dear Amy - Thank you for making us very welcome at your lovely school.

You asked us to consider the wildlife possibilities for a healthy biodiversity in the fenced Wild Life Area next to the school field.

It is largely a healthy deciduous mix of young Holly, Cherry, Silver birch, Field Maple, Rowan, Hazel, Hawthorne, Gelder Rose and Bramble amongst other scrub species. The whole area is overlooked by six mature Sycamore trees. Around the school grounds there are other fenced-in areas of healthy scrub which would provide food (**invertebrates**, seeds and berries) for birds.

The pond area is being well looked after and the 'please lift me' boards are full of 'hibernating' snails. This bodes well for the **Song Thrush**, an RSPB red listed species.

You informed us that during the Spring and Summer there is evidence of smashed snail shells in the pond area. This sounds as if **Song Thrushes** are using the hard surfaces as a 'song thrush anvil', something that I have not seen in years! In fact, while in the Wild Life Area we found the remains of a **Song Thrushes** nest! This very exciting news for the school in that it is helping a threatened species of bird to survive.

The Wild Life Area.

We would recommend that 5 **Tree Sparrow** and 4 **Bat boxes** be placed on the large Sycamore trees and that 6 **Bee boxes** be placed in the healthy scrub area. The existing pathway along the fence line should be maintained to facilitate study. Without interfering with nesting birds several narrow pathways could be mown through the

scrub for the same purpose. The area is already good for **invertebrates** but an 'insect hotel' could be developed for educational purposes, using wooden pallets.

Hedgehogs have declined in numbers from 30 million in the 1950s to 1 million today. They are in danger of extinction and many of our schools are thinking of running local community campaigns to help this iconic British species. They are largely a suburban species and school grounds can be ideal places for them to forage and hibernate. However the fencing, walling and tarmac of both school grounds and nearby gardens is not helpful to a creature that can travel 2kms per night. Because of this the Wildlife Area is not a good place for **Hedgehogs**. However, we could place one Hedgehog box, especially if spaces under fences are created, and see what happens.

Under one of the sycamore trees are some snowdrops. This space could be planted with native **English Bluebells**, Wood anemones and more snowdrops.

It is important that children take ownership of a long term project like this and I look forward to meeting your class on March 13th at 9.30am.

If this report/survey is agreed by children, staff and governors then the proposed nest boxes would be presented in a whole school assembly. They would then be placed and recorded on a map with the help of children and volunteers. The process of observing, recording and data collection would then begin with our initial help. They could then be sent to the central Barnsley Wildlife Record Centre.

Ongoing support will be given to the school including nest box cleaning in the Autumn, always an exciting activity for children and adults alike.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Colin Graham

Biodiversity in Schools