



Title

Monday 5th December was International Volunteer Day (IVD), an annual event organised by the United Nations that provides an opportunity to celebrate the incredible contribution that volunteers make to the global society. Volunteers are particularly invaluable within conservation and they are the life-blood of many BirdLife Partners. For example, the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) has at least nine volunteers for every paid member of staff, whilst Forest & Bird (BirdLife in New Zealand) calculate that their network of volunteers contribute 864,000 hours each year towards protecting New Zealand's wildlife. When the BP oil spill devastated the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, more than 13,000 people signed up with the Audubon Society (BirdLife in the US) to help with the clean-up. Volunteers also play an important role in monitoring bird populations and, around the world, hundreds of thousands participate in citizen science projects. The enormous benefits that volunteers provide to conservation organisations are clear; however, there are also significant rewards for those who volunteer, as well for the wider society. It is now widely recognised that volunteering can play an important role in improving health and happiness and building community cohesion. To learn more about the ways in which volunteers are benefiting the BirdLife Partnership and to discover how you can help, [click here](#).