

Wildlife-friendly attitudes and practices in British gardens

Wildlife Gardening Forum Omnibus Survey: Interim report

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1. Summary

on 3rd & 4th Dec 2020, YouGov conducted an Omnibus survey on behalf of the Wildlife Gardening Forum, interviewing a randomised sample of 2027 adults from England, Scotland and Wales about their attitudes to and uptake of wildlife-friendly gardening.

Understanding how much the British public is doing to help garden wildlife, what they are doing, the barriers to them taking action, and the attitudes that underpin this, is essential if those advocating the practice are to tailor their information and advice to best effect.

The initial results of the survey showed the following:

- 47% of people with access to an outside space are doing at least 'A fair amount' to help wildlife (Table 1).
- 84% of people with access to an outdoor space are doing at least something to help wildlife in their outside space.
- 13% of people don't have an outdoor space of their own.
- Women appear to be more likely than men to do something to help wildlife in their outside spaces.
- There is no apparent difference between how much people do for wildlife in their outside spaces based on whether they are in ABC1 or C2DE social groupings
- London stands out as the geographical area where least is done for wildlife in people's outside spaces
- Even among those who say they do 'A lot' or 'A fair amount' for wildlife in their outside spaces: less than half have a birdbox, leave areas of grass to grow long, have a log or stick pile for insects; only about two in five have a compost heap, and only one in five have a pond.,
- There are a range of barriers to people doing more to help wildlife in their outside spaces, the most frequent answers being that they don't have enough knowledge about what to do (22%), they don't have enough space (21%) and they don't have enough time (19%).
- Overall, 91% were in agreement that gardens are important places for lots of wildlife, with 60% strongly agreeing.
- Almost two thirds of people (63%) strongly agree that they like seeing and hearing wildlife, with 87% agreeing to some level and only 3% disagreeing.
- 88% of people agree that we all need to do what we can to help wildlife thrive in gardens and local greenspaces.

Note that a full statistical analysis of key results will be undertaken to inform the final report. However, already it is possible to conclude that the results are highly encouraging. They suggest that the majority of people who have a garden or outside space are engaged with the wildlife there, at least to some extent, and many people are already putting in considerable effort to help their wildlife. People clearly enjoy experiencing wildlife around them, and there is widespread belief that we all need to do what we can to help garden wildlife thrive. Therefore, by addressing the barriers to them doing more, it seems very possible that more people can become further engaged and deliver more actions for nature in the future, and in doing so benefit everyone.

2. Introduction

The Wildlife Gardening Forum ('the Forum') is the UK's only charity dedicated to wildlife-friendly gardening. Its mission is "to help everyone make their gardens better for wildlife by:

- raising awareness and understanding of the importance of gardens for wildlife and people
- providing impartial evidence-based information and advice
- inspiring and supporting the wildlife gardening community."

Having a good grasp of the nation's attitudes to and uptake of wildlife-friendly gardening is important to help the Forum decide the best approach to take to advance this mission. Therefore, in November 2020 the Forum commissioned YouGov to conduct an Omnibus survey of a randomised sample of people from England, Scotland and Wales, asking four questions that the Forum felt would reveal important information.

The survey was conducted by YouGov on 3rd & 4th Dec 2020; 2027 people were interviewed. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

3. Method

The four questions were as follows:

1. How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space?

The exact wording was: "For the following questions, by "help wildlife" we mean taking steps to provide a suitable habitat and environment for a whole range of wild creatures, such as birds, bees, butterflies etc... How much, if at all, do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space (e.g., garden, balcony, yard or roof terrace etc)?"

The aim was to find out the relative level of effort that people are putting in to helping wildlife in their gardens. For this, it was necessary to allow people to judge their own level of activity, based on a simple Likert scale of A lot/A fair amount/A little/Not at all, plus Don't know.

The question was phrased in terms of 'your own outside space', as the term 'garden' does not encompass every type of private outdoor space that people might have available to them. The question would also therefore highlight the proportion of people who don't have access to their own outside space.

2. Which, if any, of the following measures do you take to help the wildlife in your own outside space? (10 measures were listed)

The exact wording of the question was, "You previously mentioned that you try to help wildlife in your own outside space (e.g., garden, balcony, yard or roof terrace etc.). Which, if any, of the following measures do you take to help the wildlife in your own outside space? (Please select all that apply. If your answers aren't shown in the list below, please type them in the 'Other' box provided)."

The Omnibus survey only allows for a question to have 10 possible answers, so the measures were chosen because they were thought to give a broad range of types of activity known to be beneficial for wildlife. This question was only asked of those people who had previously said they do 'A lot' or 'A fair amount' in Question 1, on the recommendation of YouGov; with hindsight it would have been better to ask every participant with access to their own outside space, irrespective of their answer in Question 1. Because of this, the percentages in the results cannot be used to estimate what proportion of the population as a whole is undertaking those ten measures.

3. Which, if any, of the following are barriers to you doing more to help wildlife in your outside space? (10 possible barriers were listed)

The exact wording was, “Which, if any, of the following are barriers to you doing more to help wildlife in your outside space? (Please select all that apply. If your answers aren't shown in the list below, please type them in the 'Other' box provided. If there are no barriers please select the 'Not applicable' option).”

Little is known about what inhibits people from undertaking various of the actions, so the list was chosen to try and pre-empt what those barriers might be.

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

a) In general, gardens and urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks) are important places for lots of wildlife.

This statement was chosen to try and determine what impression people have of the wildlife value of gardens and similar urban greenspaces. This might reveal whether gardens are seen as being substandard or lacking in wildlife.

b) I like to see and hear wildlife in my garden or local urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks)

This statement was chosen to determine whether experiencing the wildlife immediately around people matters to them, or whether it is of little importance.

c) It is important that we all do what we can to help wildlife thrive in gardens and urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks)

This statement was chosen to see if people felt that helping wildlife in gardens and similar urban places was socially/morally the right thing to do. The statement was purposely worded strongly in terms of ‘we all’ need to do what we can, i.e., some of the onus is on us as individuals.

4. Results and discussion

The results were interrogated via YouGov’s Crunch statistics portal, which allows for data analysis against the following variables: Gender; Age; Social grade; Region; Government Region; Working status; Marital status; Children in household; Parent/guardian; Social media/messaging service) in last month); Income (gross household and gross personal); House tenure; and Living in urban/rural/town & fringe. The results below draw out the analyses thought to be most pertinent.

Because this was the first such survey the Forum has undertaken, the results provide a baseline, but with no direct comparison to establish whether attitudes and practices are changing. However, it is possible to make value judgements about whether the results are encouraging or not.

4.1 Question 1: How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space

4.1.1 Overall result

- 47% of people with access to an outside space are doing at least ‘A fair amount’ to help wildlife (Table 1). This seems an encouraging figure.
- 84% of people with access to an outdoor space are doing at least something to help wildlife in their outside space. This again is very encouraging.
- 13% of people don’t have an outdoor space of their own. This is consistent with the 12.3% in the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment survey results who say they don’t have access to a private garden.ⁱ
- Women appear to be more likely than men to do something to help wildlife. In particular, this was marked in those who say they do ‘A lot’, with 19% of women compared with 15% of men (when those who don’t know and don’t have access to an outside space are removed from the calculation).

Table 1: How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space, overall and by gender? (figures in brackets show the percentage when adjusted to remove those who don't have access to an outside space)

| | All | Gender | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Male | Female |
| A lot | 15% (17%) | 13% (15%) | 17% (19%) |
| A fair amount | 26% (30%) | 25% (29%) | 27% (31%) |
| A little | 32% (37%) | 33% (38%) | 31% (36%) |
| Not at all | 11% (13%) | 13% (14%) | 10% (12%) |
| Don't know | 3% (3%) | 3% (4%) | 2% (3%) |
| Not applicable - I don't have access to my own outside space | 13% | 13% | 14% |
| Total respondents | 2027 | 925 | 1102 |

Chart 1

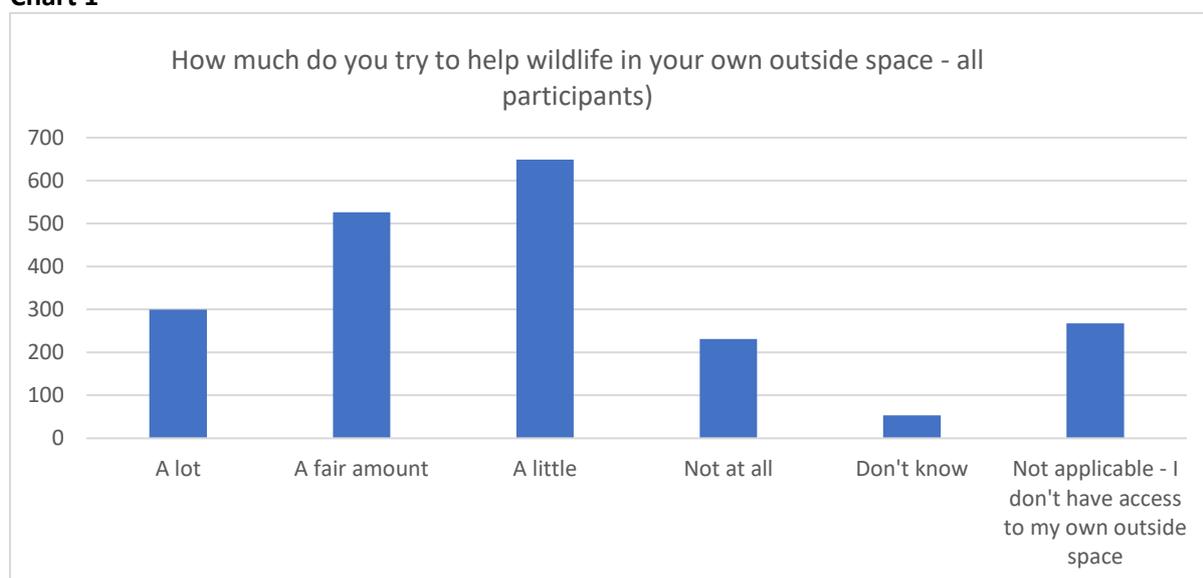
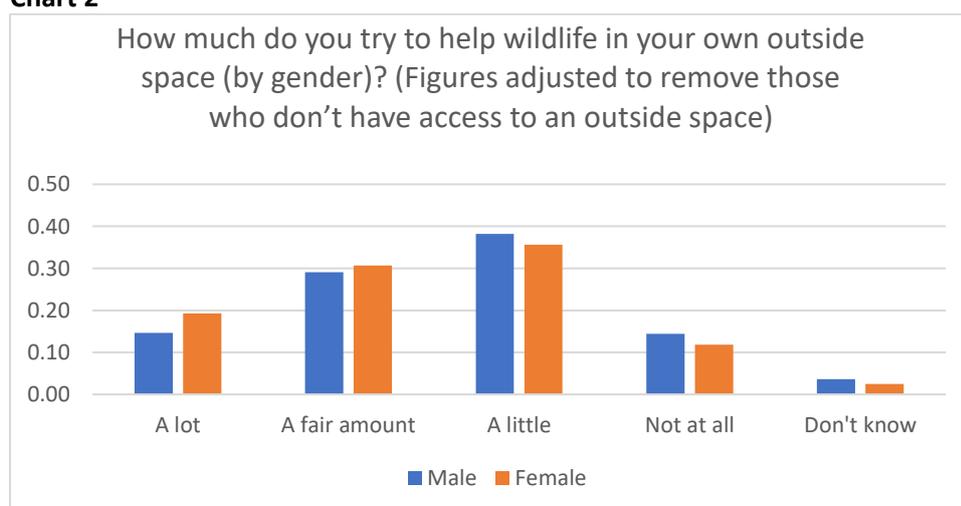


Chart 2



4.1.2 Effect of age

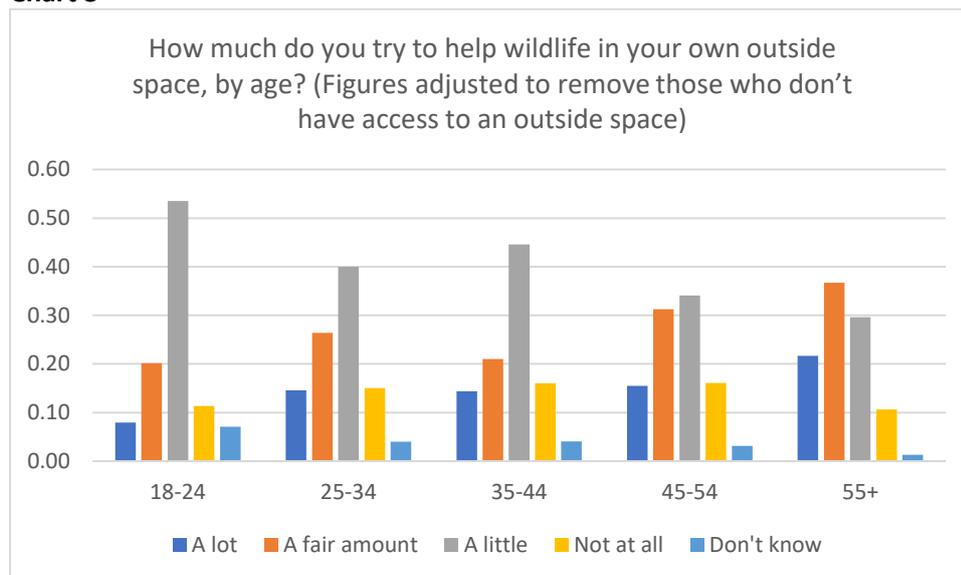
The likelihood of doing 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' to help wildlife increases markedly and almost sequentially with age, such that 59% of those aged 55+ with access to an outside space do 'A lot' or 'A fair amount' for wildlife, compared to 32% of those aged 18-24. Having access to your own

outside space also increases sequentially with age. However, note that the age categories with the least percentage doing nothing at all are the 18-24s and 55+; it appears that most young people are trying to do something.

Table 2: How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space, by age?
 (figures in brackets show the percentage when adjusted to remove those who don't have access to an outside space)

| How much do you do | Age | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55+ |
| A lot | 6% (8%) | 12% (15%) | 12% (14%) | 14% (15%) | 20% (22%) |
| A fair amount | 16% (20%) | 21% (26%) | 18% (21%) | 28% (31%) | 34% (37%) |
| A little | 41% (54%) | 32% (40%) | 38% (45%) | 31% (34%) | 27% (30%) |
| Not at all | 9% (11%) | 12% (15%) | 14% (16%) | 15% (16%) | 10% (11%) |
| Don't know | 5% (7%) | 3% (4%) | 3% (4%) | 3% (3%) | 1% (1%) |
| Not applicable - I don't have access to my own outside space | 22% | 21% | 15% | 10% | 8% |
| Total respondents | 151 | 325 | 365 | 291 | 895 |

Chart 3



4.1.3 Effect of social grade

There is no apparent difference between how much people do for wildlife in their outside spaces based on whether they are in ABC1 or C2DE social groupings (Table 3). This matches the finding of Gaston et al (2017) who found that “There was no evidence for strong effects of ... the socio-economic status of householders on the prevalence of wildlife friendly features in gardens or on the participation by householders in activities to encourage wildlife”. However, those in C2DE are considerably less likely to have access to their own outside space.

Table 3: How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space, by social grade? (figures in brackets show the percentage when adjusted to remove those who don't have access to an outside space)

| | ABC1 | C2DE |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| A lot | 15% (16%) | 15% (18%) |
| A fair amount | 27% (31%) | 24% (29%) |
| A little | 33% (37%) | 30% (36%) |
| Not at all | 11% (13%) | 11% (13%) |
| Don't know | 2% (3%) | 3% (4%) |
| Not applicable - I don't have access to my own outside space | 11% | 16% |
| Total respondents | 1232 | 795 |

4.1.4 Regional and country differences

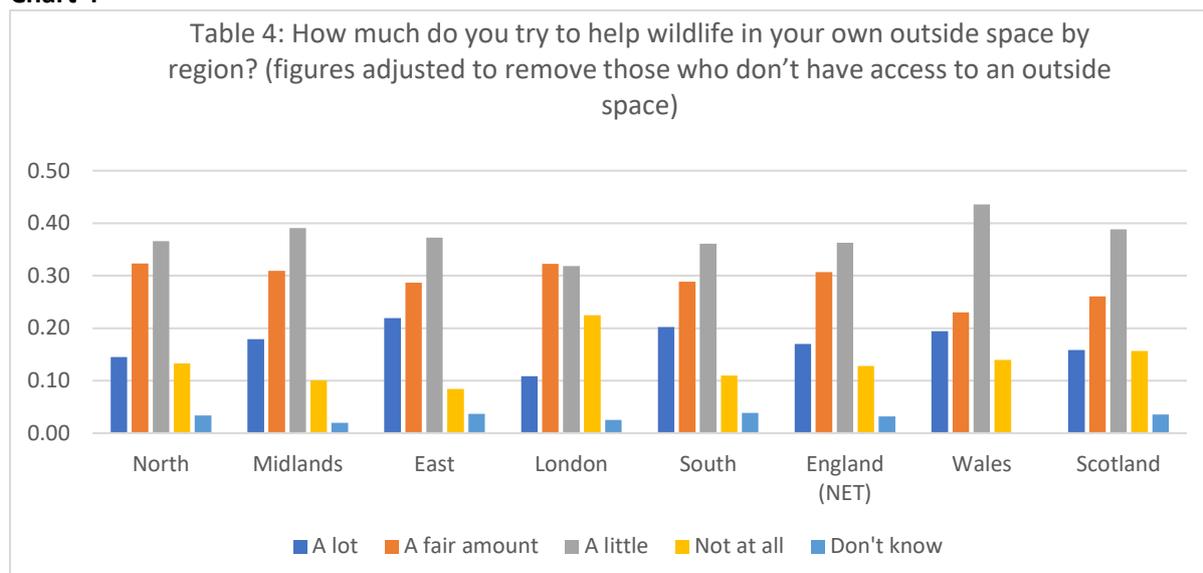
Sample sizes for most areas are relatively small, so great care must be taken in drawing too many conclusions from the data.

- Nevertheless, after adjusting for those who do not have access to an outside space (which is particularly prevalent in London), the data show that London is the geographical area where least is done for wildlife; for example, 11% do 'A lot' compared to 17% nationally, and those who do nothing is 22% compared to 13% nationally.
- Also, the proportion doing 'A lot' in the East appears higher than other regions, and also had the lowest proportion doing nothing at all.

Table 4: How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space by region? (figures in brackets show the percentage when adjusted to remove those who don't have access to an outside space)

| | North | Midlands | East | London | South | England (NET) | Wales | Scotland |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| A lot | 13% (14%) | 15% (18%) | 19% (22%) | 9% (11%) | 18% (20%) | 15% (17%) | 17% (19%) | 14% (16%) |
| A fair amount | 29% (32%) | 26% (31%) | 25% (29%) | 26% (32%) | 26% (29%) | 27% (31%) | 20% (23%) | 23% (26%) |
| A little | 32% (37%) | 33% (39%) | 33% (37%) | 25% (32%) | 32% (36%) | 32% (36%) | 37% (44%) | 34% (39%) |
| Not at all | 12% (13%) | 9% (10%) | 7% (8%) | 18% (22%) | 10% (11%) | 11% (13%) | 12% (14%) | 14% (16%) |
| Don't know | 3% (3%) | 2% (2%) | 3% (4%) | 2% (3%) | 3% (4%) | 3% (3%) | 0% (0%) | 3% (4%) |
| Not applicable - I don't have access to my own outside space | 11% | 15% | 12% | 21% | 10% | 13% | 14% | 13% |
| Total respondents | 507 | 351 | 166 | 266 | 454 | 1744 | 102 | 181 |

Chart 4



4.1.5 Effect of urban vs town & fringe vs rural

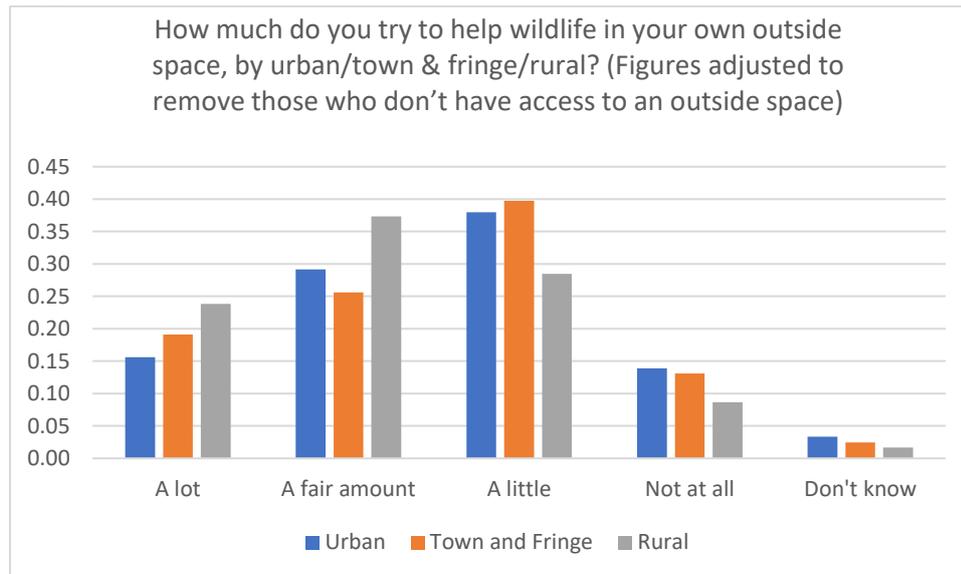
Even after adjusting to remove the much higher numbers of people in urban locations who don't have access to their own outside space, the results show a clear pattern of higher levels of action to help wildlife in rural locations, decreasing in town & fringe locations, down to lowest in urban locations. The YouGov definition of urban/town/rural is based on an ONS postcode dataset.

The proportion of people who do 'a lot' in Urban, Town and Fringe and Rural locations are 16%, 21% and 25% respectively; those who don't do anything at all are 14%, 13% and 9% respectively. This is more marked if you take those who do 'a lot' or 'a fair amount', where the relevant figures are 28%, 40% and 59%.

Table 5: How much do you try to help wildlife in your own outside space, by urban/town & fringe/rural? (figures in brackets show the percentage when adjusted to remove those who don't have access to an outside space)

| How much help wildlife | Urban | Town and Fringe | Rural |
|--|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| A lot | 13% (16%) | 17% (19%) | 23% (25%) |
| A fair amount | 25% (29%) | 23% (26%) | 36% (37%) |
| A little | 32% (38%) | 36% (40%) | 28% (28%) |
| Not at all | 12% (14%) | 12% (13%) | 8% (9%) |
| Don't know | 3% (3%) | 2% (2%) | 2% (2%) |
| Not applicable - I don't have access to my own outside space | 15% | 10% | 3% |
| Total respondents | 1573 | 205 | 248 |

Chart 5



4.2 Question 2: Which, if any, of the following measures do you take to help the wildlife in your own outside space?

This question was asked only of those who state they do 'A lot' or 'A fair amount' for wildlife in their gardens, which was 45% of those with access to an outside space. *This should be borne in mind in all the figures below, as they relate only to this subset and not to the population as a whole.*

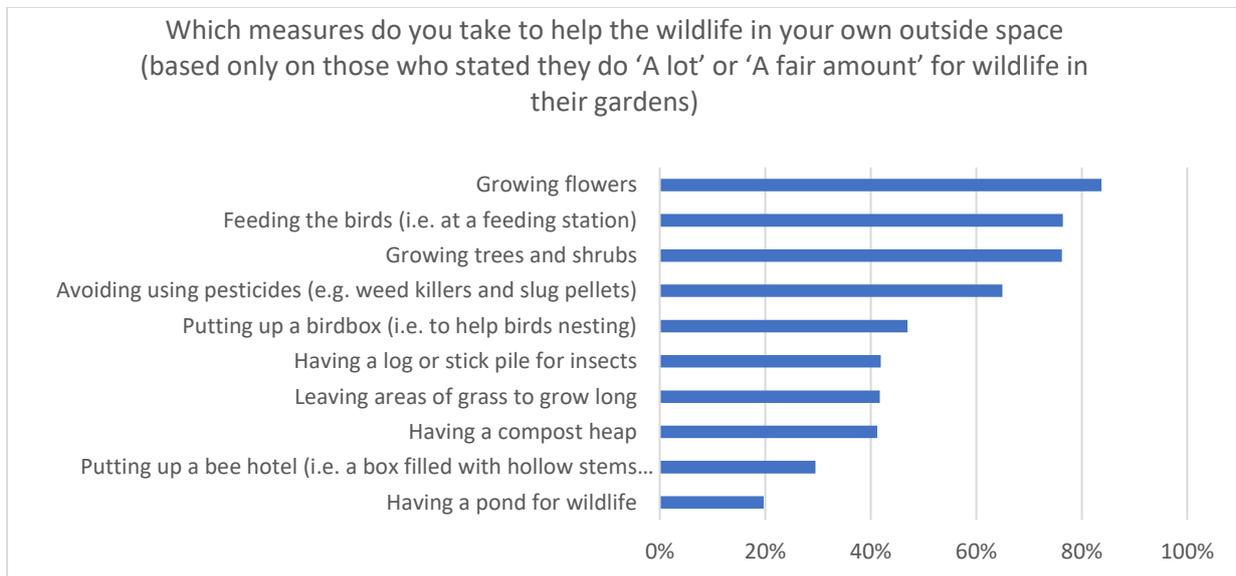
4.2.1 Overall result, with gender breakdown

- Growing flowers was the most popular activity, undertaken by 84% of the subset, although we cannot say from the results how appropriate the flower choice is for wildlife. (Table 6).
- Over three quarters feed the birds and grow trees and shrubs. Again, the survey does not reveal details such as how often birdfood is provided.
- Two thirds of those who do a fair amount or a lot for wildlife in their outdoor spaces avoid using pesticides.
- However, less than half put up a birdbox, only two fifths have a compost heap, and only one in five has a pond for wildlife, despite these being the most committed audience; there is clearly something inhibiting these activities.
- Women were more likely to do all the activities than men in all the categories except for putting up a birdbox, and the difference was especially marked with regard to growing flowers, having a pond, and avoiding pesticides.
- When looking at the activities done by those who do 'a lot' for wildlife in their outside space, the relative order of the activities is the same but the proportion who do the activities is higher in every case than those who do 'A fair amount', and particularly so for those who avoid using pesticides (79% compared to 57%), who leave areas of grass to grow long (54% compared to 34%) and who have a bee hotel (41% compared to 23%). However, the proportion with a pond is low (just 27% of those who do 'A lot' compared to 16% who do 'A fair amount').
- The fact that every activity is done by a considerably smaller proportion of people who say they do 'A fair amount' gives us confidence that indeed participants have, in general, accurately gauged the right level of activity they do in Question 1.
- The proportion of people who say they do 'a fair amount' who avoid using chemicals is especially reduced compared to those who do 'a lot' (57% compared to 79%). Leaving grass to grow long is also clearly much less favoured by that audience.

Table 6: Which measures do you take to help the wildlife in your own outside space (based only on those who stated they do 'A lot' or 'A fair amount' for wildlife in their gardens)

| | All | Male | Female | Those who do 'A lot' | Those who do 'A fair amount' |
|--|-----|------|--------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Growing flowers | 84% | 80% | 87% | 88% | 82% |
| Feeding the birds (i.e., at a feeding station) | 76% | 75% | 77% | 83% | 73% |
| Growing trees and shrubs | 76% | 75% | 77% | 82% | 73% |
| Avoiding using pesticides (e.g., weed killers and slug pellets) | 65% | 61% | 68% | 79% | 57% |
| Putting up a birdbox (i.e., to help birds nesting) | 47% | 48% | 46% | 58% | 40% |
| Leaving areas of grass to grow long | 42% | 40% | 43% | 54% | 34% |
| Having a log or stick pile for insects | 42% | 42% | 42% | 52% | 36% |
| Having a compost heap | 41% | 39% | 44% | 49% | 37% |
| Putting up a bee hotel (i.e., a box filled with hollow stems or logs drilled with holes) | 29% | 28% | 31% | 41% | 23% |
| Having a pond for wildlife | 20% | 16% | 23% | 27% | 16% |
| Total respondents | 858 | 375 | 483 | 300 | 526 |

Chart 6



4.2.2 Effect of urban vs rural

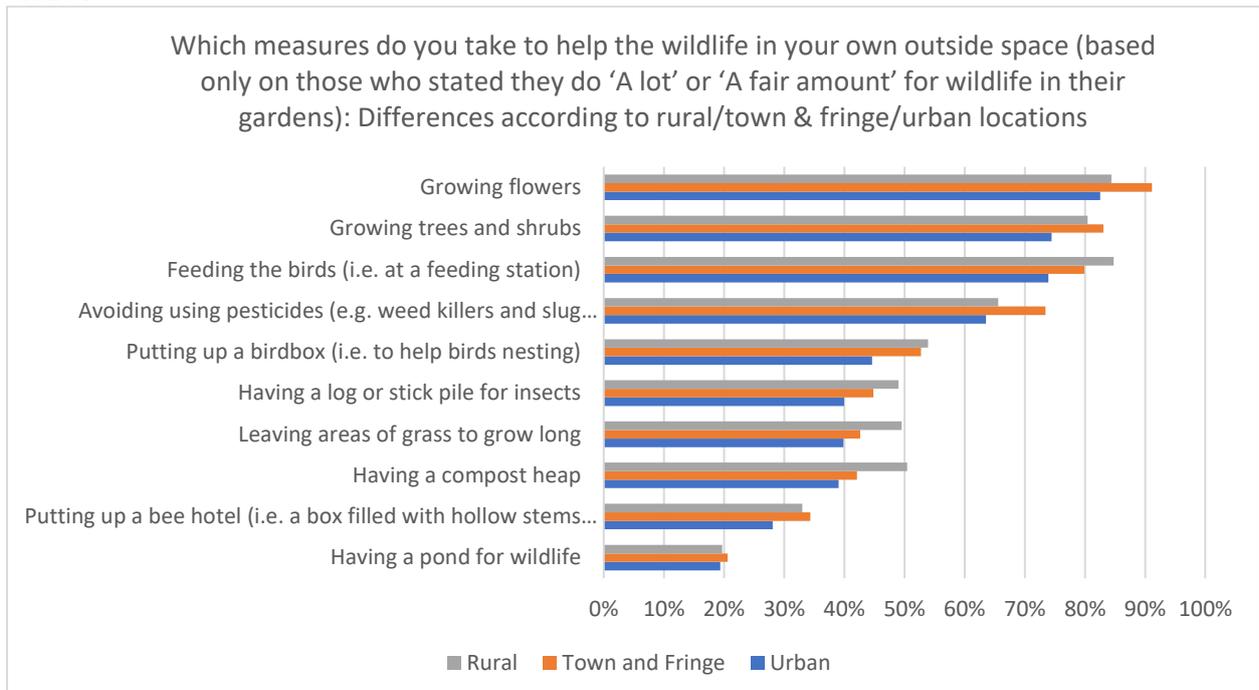
Of those who do a fair amount or a lot for wildlife in their outside spaces, those in urban situations were less likely to do each of the ten measures than their counterparts in town & fringe and in rural locations (Table 7). This corresponds to a study by Gaston et al (2017) who carried out a questionnaire survey of ca. 4400 households in inner, middle, and outer areas across five UK cities

In particular, those in rural locations were considerably more likely to feed the birds, have a compost heap and leave areas of grass to grow long. However, those in town & fringe came out top for growing flowers, growing trees and shrubs, and avoiding using pesticides.

Table 7

| Measures to help wildlife | Urban | Town and Fringe | Rural |
|--|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Growing flowers | 83% | 91% | 84% |
| Feeding the birds (i.e., at a feeding station) | 74% | 80% | 85% |
| Putting up a birdbox (i.e., to help birds nesting) | 45% | 53% | 54% |
| Growing trees and shrubs | 74% | 83% | 80% |
| Leaving areas of grass to grow long | 40% | 43% | 50% |
| Having a pond for wildlife | 19% | 21% | 20% |
| Having a log or stick pile for insects | 40% | 45% | 49% |
| Having a compost heap | 39% | 42% | 50% |
| Putting up a bee hotel (i.e., a box filled with hollow stems or logs drilled with holes) | 28% | 34% | 33% |
| Avoiding using pesticides (e.g., weed killers and slug pellets) | 64% | 73% | 66% |
| Other | 5% | 4% | 5% |
| Don't know | 1% | 0% | 0% |
| Total respondents | 615 | 89 | 153 |

Chart 7



4.3 Question 3: Which, if any, of the following are barriers to you doing more to help wildlife in your outside space?

The full question was, “Which, if any, of the following are barriers to you doing more to help wildlife in your outside space? (Please select all that apply. If your answers aren't shown in the list below, please type them in the 'Other' box provided. If there are no barriers, please select the 'Not applicable' option).” The results are shown in Table 9.

In terms of the greatest barriers, the most frequent answers were that

- they don't have enough knowledge about what to do (22%)
- they don't have enough space (21%)
- and they don't have enough time (19%).
- A quarter of all participants said that there was no barrier.

In a study in Leeds (Goddard et al, 2012), such barriers were discussed in interviews and 13 out of 20 interviewees thought that they did not have enough information on wildlife friendly gardening. The study also found that garden size was an important predictor of the number of wildlife friendly features found in gardens. This suggests continuing to provide good, simple, clear messaging about what to do and why is important but needs to be married with messaging about what can be done in small spaces, and on quick and easy wins that don't take much time.

Encouragingly, smaller numbers of people talked about barriers in terms of cost (10%), only 9% felt they had other priorities for their outside space and a mere 1% didn't know where to find garden supplies and tools.

When broken down into age categories (Table 9):

- Cost is a much greater factor for 18-24s (23%)
- More younger people felt they didn't have enough knowledge compared to older people
- Time was clearly much more of a factor for working age people
- But conversely not having enough energy or physical capability was most marked in the 55+ age group
- Only 13% said that they did not have an interest in gardening.

When the results are examined based on those people who say they only do 'A little' or 'Not at all', a lack of knowledge remains the top item, with a third of those who do a little saying that this is a barrier.

Table 8

| Barriers to helping wildlife | All | Age | | | | | A little | Not at all |
|--|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|----------|------------|
| | | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55+ | | |
| It is too expensive | 10% | 23% | 14% | 13% | 9% | 5% | 12% | 6% |
| I don't have enough knowledge about what to do | 22% | 23% | 35% | 29% | 19% | 16% | 32% | 29% |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I don't have enough practical skills | 15% | 20% | 16% | 18% | 16% | 12% | 20% | 20% |
| I don't have enough space in my garden/ outside space | 21% | 18% | 26% | 25% | 19% | 19% | 18% | 16% |
| I don't have enough time | 19% | 26% | 31% | 30% | 21% | 8% | 24% | 19% |
| I don't have enough energy or physical capability | 11% | 10% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 16% | 13% | 10% |
| I don't know where to find garden supplies or tools | 1% | 3% | 3% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 0% |
| I have other priorities for my garden/outside space | 9% | 10% | 8% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 11% | 17% |
| I'm not interested in gardening | 13% | 13% | 18% | 16% | 15% | 10% | 17% | 30% |
| I am not in charge of maintaining the outside space/ I share the outside space with others (e.g., another family member, communal garden etc.) | 10% | 34% | 15% | 8% | 7% | 4% | 13% | 15% |
| Other | 4% | 3% | 4% | 6% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 4% |
| Don't know | 4% | 7% | 3% | 5% | 5% | 3% | 3% | 4% |
| Not applicable - there are no barriers to me helping wildlife in my outside space | 25% | 14% | 12% | 14% | 24% | 36% | 13% | 17% |
| Total respondents | 1769 | 114 | 258 | 313 | 263 | 821 | 649 | 231 |

4.4 Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

The full wording of the introduction to these three statements was as follows: "As a reminder, by "help wildlife" we mean taking steps to provide a suitable habitat and environment for a whole range of wild creatures, such as birds, bees, butterflies etc... To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Please select one option on each row)."

4.4.1 In general, gardens and urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks) are important places for lots of wildlife.

Overall, 90% were in some level of agreement that gardens are important places for lots of wildlife (Table 10). The fact that 60% 'strongly agree' is very encouraging, given that the value of gardens for wildlife is still being revealed after having been largely ignored as a wildlife habitat previously; one might have expected that many people would think that gardens are poor habitats compared to e.g., nature reserves or 'the countryside'.

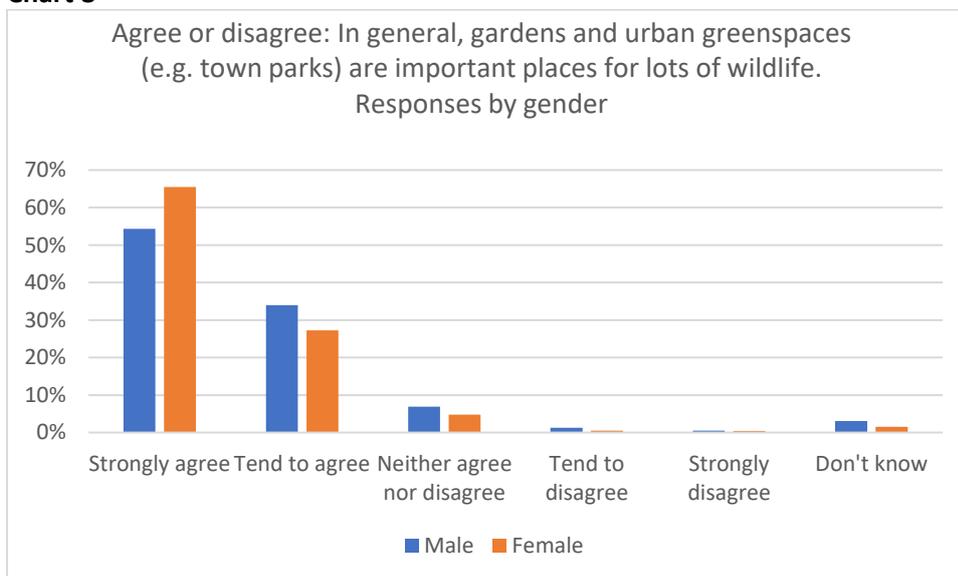
There was a strong difference between male and female responses in terms of the number who strongly agree, with a greater proportion of women than men in this category. This was even more marked with age – the number who strongly agree and are aged 55+ was 21 percentage points higher than those aged 18-24.

However, there was very little geographical difference. Despite the *relatively* low numbers of people in London undertaking activities in their outside spaces to help wildlife, they still understand the importance of gardens for wildlife.

Table 9: Agree or disagree: In general, gardens and urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks) are important places for lots of wildlife. All participants, by gender and by age.

| | Gender | | | Age | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | All | Male | Female | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55+ |
| Strongly agree | 60% | 54% | 65% | 44% | 59% | 60% | 59% | 65% |
| Tend to agree | 30% | 34% | 27% | 37% | 29% | 30% | 35% | 28% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 6% | 7% | 5% | 7% | 6% | 8% | 5% | 5% |
| Tend to disagree | 1% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 0% |
| Strongly disagree | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| Don't know | 2% | 3% | 2% | 9% | 4% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Net: Agree | 91% | 88% | 93% | 81% | 88% | 90% | 94% | 93% |
| Net: Disagree | 1% | 2% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Total respondents | 2027 | 925 | 1102 | 151 | 325 | 365 | 291 | 895 |

Chart 8



4.4.2 I like to see and hear wildlife in my garden or local urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks).

It is very encouraging that almost two thirds of people strongly agree that they like seeing and hearing wildlife, and 87% agree to some level, with only 3% disagreeing (Table 11). Experiencing wildlife in and around where people live is clearly very important.

There was, as in the previous statement, an apparent gender difference in terms of strength of agreement, with the percentage of women who strongly agree being some nine percentage points higher than men.

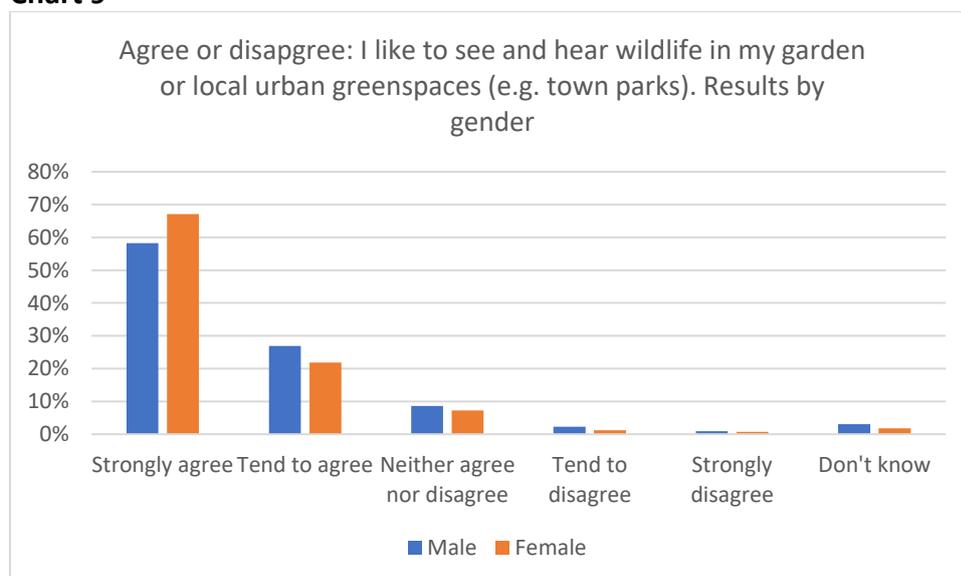
There is also an increasing strength of agreement with increasing age, but it is still encouraging that 77% of 18–24-year-olds agree to some extent, rising to 85% for 25–34-year-olds.

Note that the survey described ‘wildlife’ as ‘birds, bees, butterflies etc’. It would be interesting to explore further whether some other wildlife not included in the prompt might have elicited a different response.

Table 10: Agree or disagree: I like to see and hear wildlife in my garden or local urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks). All participants, by gender and by age

| | All | Male | Female | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55+ |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 63% | 58% | 67% | 50% | 60% | 60% | 62% | 69% |
| Tend to agree | 24% | 27% | 22% | 27% | 25% | 23% | 25% | 24% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 8% | 9% | 7% | 7% | 8% | 12% | 11% | 5% |
| Tend to disagree | 2% | 2% | 1% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Strongly disagree | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| Don't know | 2% | 3% | 2% | 9% | 4% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Net: Agree | 87% | 85% | 89% | 77% | 86% | 83% | 86% | 92% |
| Net: Disagree | 3% | 3% | 2% | 6% | 3% | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| Unweighted N | 2027 | 925 | 1102 | 151 | 325 | 365 | 291 | 895 |

Chart 9



4.4.3 Agree or disagree: It is important that we all do what we can to help wildlife thrive in gardens and urban greenspaces (e.g., town parks).

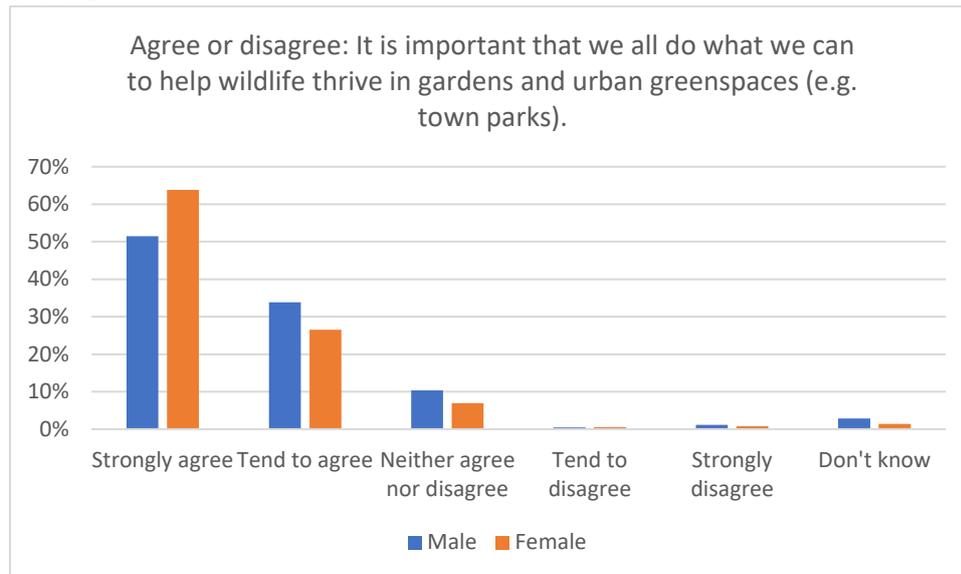
Some 88% of people agree to some level that we all need to do what we can to help wildlife thrive in gardens and local greenspaces (Table 12). This is a powerful message to those in local government in charge of such places, and to the housing industry to encourage them to make great effort to ensure that new communities live in places that are designed to be wildlife rich.

Once again, the gender difference and age differences are apparent as with the previous two statements, and as with the previous statement there was very little geographical difference.

Table 11

| | All | Male | Female | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55+ |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 58% | 51% | 64% | 44% | 58% | 54% | 57% | 64% |
| Tend to agree | 30% | 34% | 27% | 33% | 30% | 31% | 33% | 28% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 9% | 10% | 7% | 14% | 7% | 11% | 9% | 6% |
| Tend to disagree | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% |
| Strongly disagree | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| Don't know | 2% | 3% | 1% | 8% | 2% | 3% | 1% | 1% |
| Net: Agree | 88% | 85% | 90% | 78% | 88% | 84% | 89% | 92% |
| Net: Disagree | 1% | 2% | 1% | 0% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Unweighted N | 2027 | 925 | 1102 | 151 | 325 | 365 | 291 | 895 |

Chart 10



5. Conclusions

Understanding how much the British public is doing to help garden wildlife, what they are doing, the barriers to them taking action, and the attitudes that underpin this, is essential if those advocating the practice are to tailor their information and advice to best effect.

It is also important when advocating the multiple benefits – to wildlife and to people – to those in positions of power and influence, whether that be national and local government, society leaders, or the media.

Clearly, engaging with garden wildlife and trying to do something to help it, is a very widespread and much enjoyed activity, perhaps more so than might generally be understood. Some 84% of people with access to their own outside space do at least something for wildlife there. This seems to confirm that we are indeed a nation of nature-lovers, and that love is very strong in our gardens and local greenspaces, the places where we get to experience (and enjoy experiencing) wildlife first-hand.

However, there are interesting demographic differences, especially with regards to age and gender. Those aged 55 and over, and women, consistently come out as doing more for and having stronger positive feelings about garden wildlife than younger people and men respectively, but there are many factors why this could be the case that deserve further investigation.

There are also some differences in whether you live in rural, town or urban locations; London is a good example of how, in such a predominantly urban area, the rates of participation in wildlife-friendly measures all show lower values than other areas, but this is not reflected in attitudes to wildlife – Londoners still enjoy experiencing wildlife around where they live, they recognise the importance of gardens for wildlife, and still think as much as possible should be done to help garden wildlife.

However, it is encouraging that there is no apparent difference in levels of activity between social grades as the benefits of engaging with nature should be accessible to all.

The barriers to people doing more to help wildlife in their outside spaces are varied, with no stand-out factors and none registering more than 21% of respondents. However, despite all the

information available these days across the media and internet, there is still a job to be done to help people understand what they can do to help garden wildlife. Some also need help to recognise that some wildlife-friendly measures need not take much time (or can indeed save time) and that a perceived lack of space should not deter them from doing things. Some activities are clearly considered demanding or unappealing for some reason, especially creating a pond, and to further understand what prohibits people from doing these would be helpful.

In general, most people understand that private gardens and similar greenspaces are important places for wildlife. The vast majority of people also appreciate seeing and hearing wildlife around them where they live. Most people also think that there is a clear need to all do what we can to look after the wildlife in our gardens.

What we do not know is whether Covid has had an impact on people's attitudes, given that many of us have had to spend more time in their gardens over the last year; it is possible that the results have been inflated by that level of contact, and it would be interesting (if funding allows) to repeat the survey in future to see if this is the case.

Alongside all the positive results, we need to be mindful that one in six respondents didn't have access to their own outside space; they are denied the pleasure that most of those who have an outside space enjoy from helping wildlife. Given that this proportion is likely to increase, it would seem important to seek and promote other ways that allow them to engage with garden wildlife and wildlife-friendly gardening activities.

6. Recommendations for future surveys

It would be very beneficial to seek to repeat the survey in the future, perhaps every five years.

Although asking exactly the same set of questions is clearly desirable, there are some improvements or additions that (with the benefit of hindsight) would be good to make:

- It would be helpful if Question 2 was asked of everyone who had access to their own outside space, irrespective of whether they felt they did things to help wildlife or not. Some may do activities without recognising that they are helping wildlife at the same time, and it would allow national estimates of the numbers doing each activity. Changes in the response of those who did look after the wildlife could still be assessed from the full data.
- If funding allowed, it would also be interesting to get a better sense of the size of people's outside space, and then analyse how this affects the results.
- It would be good to explore further why some activities have poor take-up
- It would be worthwhile including Northern Ireland in a repeat survey.

The results also point to other areas of research that would be interesting to complement this survey, such as reasons for the gender, age, and rural/urban differences in the results.

Natural England (2020) Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: Access to a garden (question E7) Respondent Data

K.J.Gaston et al. (2017) Urban domestic gardens (XI): variation in urban wildlife gardening in the United Kingdom.

M.A.Goddard, A.J.Dougill, T.G.Benton (2012). Why garden for wildlife? Social and ecological drivers, motivations and barriers for biodiversity management in residential landscapes