

WILDLIFE WATCHING



# WILDLIFE ACTIVITY PACKS

*A fun guide full of activities you can do at home  
to get creative and learn about wildlife.*



# ACTIVITY 1

## Winter wildlife

Age  
10 and  
under

**With less leaves on the trees and fewer people around, winter can be a great time to start getting interested in wildlife.**

Although there aren't as many brightly coloured flowers and insects around, winter has its own wildlife wonders. From frosty cobwebs to large gatherings of birds, there is plenty to look at during the colder months of the year. Check out the estuary this time of year, as it will be packed with large groups of wading birds, ducks and geese.

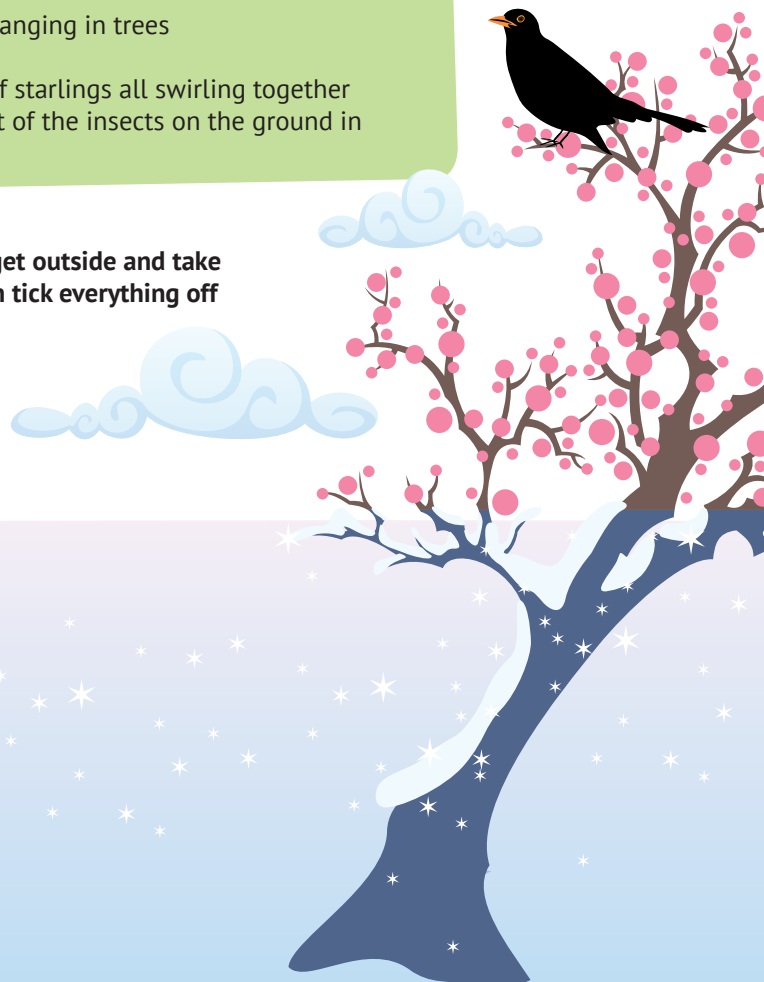
Winter is the perfect time to learn some animal calls too! From the "twit twoo" of tawny owls, the sound of thrushes singing or the sound of barking foxes, the cool winter air helps the sound carry further. Pay extra special attention to trill bird sounds as you may see the winter migrating waxwing as they pass through from Scandinavia.

**Here is our list of TOP 10 winter wildlife spectacles to look for both in your garden and in our parks:**

- 1 Frosty cobwebs
- 2 Migrating fieldfares and redwings eating berries
- 3 Blackbirds and song thrushes singing early in the morning
- 4 Grey squirrels on the hunt for tasty snacks left over from autumn
- 5 Snowdrops poking their heads out of the frosty ground
- 6 Greater spotted woodpeckers drilling into trees and, towards spring, drumming to find a mate
- 7 Big, bright green balls of mistletoe hanging in trees
- 8 Holly with bright red berries
- 9 Starling murmuration – big groups of starlings all swirling together
- 10 Green woodpeckers making the most of the insects on the ground in dewy weather

**So, you see, winter can still be a great time to get outside and take interest in the world around you! See if you can tick everything off that list!**

**Good luck with number 8, you will have to get there before the thrushes and redwings eat all the berries!**





# ACTIVITY 2

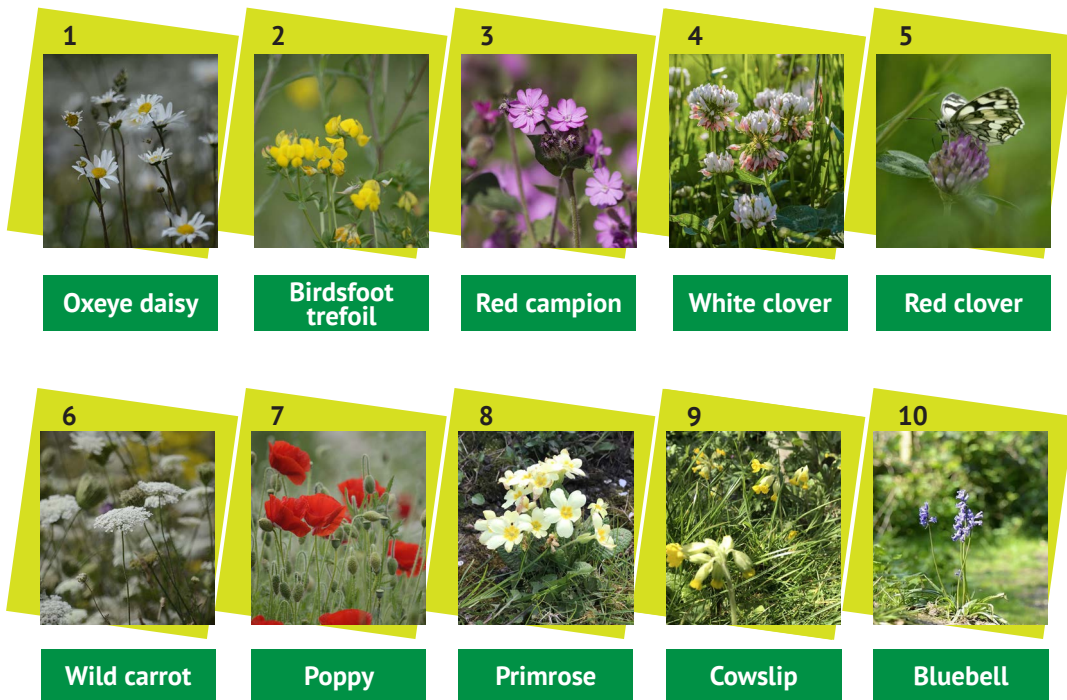
## Learn about wildflowers

Age  
10 - 15

Wildflowers are a fantastic way to get into learning about wildlife. Plants are often the bottom of the food chain, providing food for insects which are eaten by birds, which are eaten by mammals.

Starting at the bottom of the food chain and working your way up can really help you start to understand ecology (that's the study of animals and the way they interact with the world around them). Plants are also all around us, so there is always something to try and identify.

Here are our Top 10 plant species to try and learn across the Spring and Summer months:



# ACTIVITY 3

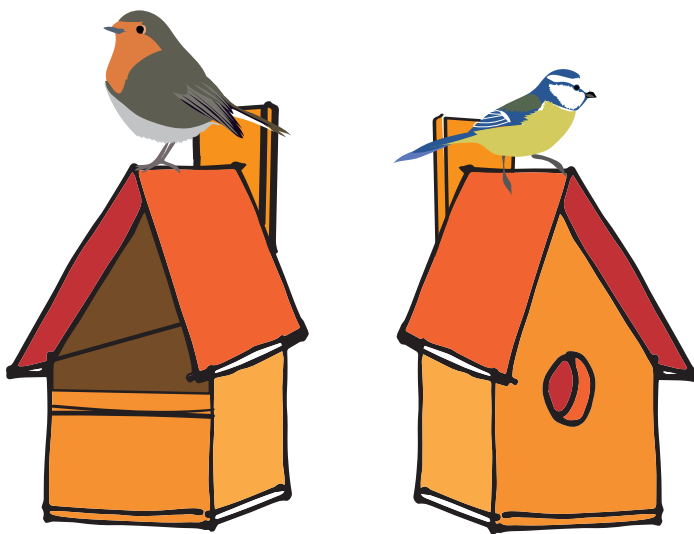
## Signs of spring wildlife

Age  
10 and  
under

Spring is when wildlife jumps back into action – the trees produce leaves, wildflowers start to appear, birds are busy nesting and baby animals start to appear. This abundance of wildlife makes spring a great time to look for wildlife in our gardens and parks.

HERE ARE OUR TOP 10 SPRING WILDLIFE THINGS TO LOOK FOR:

- 1 Catkins
- 2 Blossom on trees
- 3 Cowslips and primroses
- 4 Daffodils
- 5 Frogspawn
- 6 Bluebells
- 7 Squirrels chasing each other
- 8 Birds using nest boxes
- 9 Hedgehogs carrying leaves to make nests
- 10 Woodpeckers drumming



See if you can tick everything off on this list this Spring!

You could also try and make your garden more wildlife friendly in springtime by planting some of these plants, putting out bird and hedgehog nest boxes and creating a mini pond for the frogs!

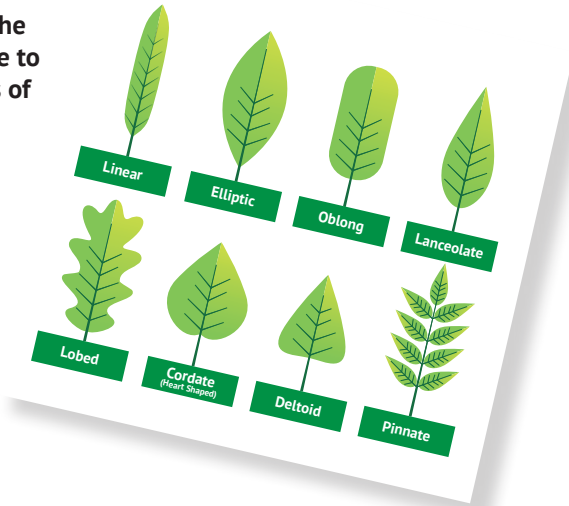
Check out our Wildlife Gardening pack for more ideas.

# ACTIVITY 4

## Learn leaves on trees

Age  
10 and  
under

If you saw our activity on learning the shapes of leaves, now is your chance to learn which of these different types of leaves comes from which tree.



Below are six easy to identify leaves. Take this guide with you next time you visit the park or go for a walk and see how many of these leaves you can see and identify!  
Can you spot them all in one walk?



Oak



Birch



Field Maple



Ash



Horse  
Chestnut



Holly

# ACTIVITY 5

## *Nut, seed or berry*

Age  
10 and  
under

**In autumn and winter, mammals and birds feast on the wealth of nuts, seeds and berries produced by trees.**

Whether its squirrels feeding on conkers and chestnuts, mice nibbling on hazel nuts or birds feeding on blackberries, wildlife can't get enough of this food source. But that's what the tree has developed these for – the tree wants the animal to eat the seed or fruit and carry the seed somewhere further away so another tree will grow nearby. This spreads the trees and stops too many small trees all trying to grow under the parent tree, which will be using all the light and space itself.

**Below are six easy to identify berries, nuts and seeds. Take this guide with you next time you visit the park or go for a walk and see how many you can identify! Can you spot them all in one walk? Pay special attention to what kinds of animals are eating them.**



**Acorn**



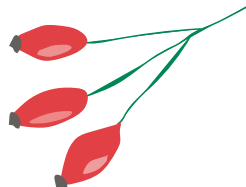
**Chestnut**



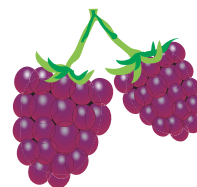
**Hazlenut**



**Sycamore  
helicopter**



**Dog rose  
rosehip**



**Blackberry**

# ACTIVITY 6

## Night-time nature

Age  
10 - 15

A perfect activity for the school holiday, this activity encourages you to stay up a little late and look for wildlife! Our gardens and parks are havens for wildlife at night. Although you can't visit the park at night, you can sit in the comfort of your home and watch for wildlife. You might just be surprised what is using your garden at night.

- Bats
- Hedgehogs
- Foxes (and badgers if you are very lucky)
- Moths
- Maybugs
- Stag beetles

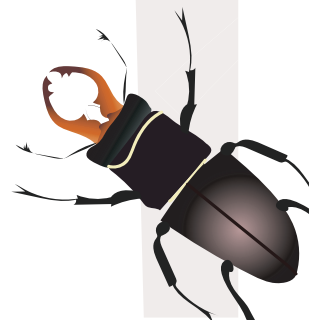
Remember that a dark garden will be best for wildlife as it makes them feel safer knowing that there are no people around. But having a few small solar powered lights around your garden won't affect the wildlife too much and it will allow you to see the wildlife that visits. For moths, these lights can be very distracting and although it's great for seeing moths (which will entice bats to your garden) always remember that we don't want to interfere with wildlife too much.

Garden chafers (also known as maybugs) are best seen in spring, whilst stag beetles are better seen in mid to late summer. Both beetles spend their younger years underground before emerging as adults for just a few weeks. Both can be seen just as it is getting dark often buzzing around the tops of trees. As the UK's largest beetle, the stag beetle is quite impressive in flight, buzzing around a bit like a helicopter.

To see bats, you will need to look up around dusk! If you are lucky, they may be using a bat box in your garden or living in a hole in a roof nearby. If you live near a park you are also very likely to see bats over your garden. Remember that bats love to eat insects so the more insect friendly your garden is, the higher your chance of seeing bats.

For mammals in the garden, putting out some dry meaty cat or dog food and a bowl of water will help entice them in. But if there are no holes between your garden and the next, the animals will struggle to make their way through to your garden. But be persistent, put your food out at the same time each night and eventually the animals will start to get use to both you and the food.

Good luck on your night-time wildlife watching safari! Who knows, you may just see something new that you can't see during the day!





# ACTIVITY 7

## *Under the log pile*

Age  
10 and  
under

Have you made a log pile in your garden? They are really easy to do and are great for all kinds of wildlife! From amphibians and reptiles to creepy crawlies and the animals that eat them, log piles create their own mini ecosystem in your garden.

Have a look under the logs in your garden and see what wildlife you can find!

Here are our top species to look for:

- 1 Millipedes and Centipedes
- 2 Woodlice
- 3 Leopard slugs
- 4 Garden snails
- 5 Stag beetle larvae
- 6 Slow worm
- 7 Garden spiders
- 8 Frogs and toads
- 9 Common newts
- 10 Devil's coach horse

Always remember to put logs back the way they were when you found them, whether in your garden or in a park because wildlife will have made their homes under the log and they won't be very happy if they come home to find their house on its roof!

