

FREE!

FOX
POSTER



**BEACHCOMBING
BOUNTY**

Where to find a
mermaid's purse!

**HARE-RAISING
HEIGHTS**

Discover some
mountaineering mammals



Issue 104 **Winter 2022**

Wildlife Watch

MAG

HIGHLAND HUNKS

Meet the capercaillie, one
of the UK's rarest birds!

The 
Wildlife
Trusts



Editor's corner

TOM HIBBERT
Editor, Wildlife Watch

I want to start this issue by saying a huge thank you. Wildlife is facing lots of threats at the moment, from the climate crisis as well as other issues, like potential changes to our laws. By being members of a Wildlife Trust, you and your family are helping us to protect the UK's struggling wildlife. We couldn't do it without you, so thank you!

Winter can be a tough time for wildlife in general, but many animals have special skills to help beat the cold. Turn to page 16 to meet some of our toughest creatures, including the almost indestructible tardigrade! We're also shining a spotlight on two animals that spend the winter in the snowy Scottish Highlands – capercaillies (page 22) and mountain hares (page 18).

Enjoy the magazine, and I hope you have a wonderfully wild winter!

Tom



GET IN TOUCH

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- @wildlifetrusts
- thewildlifetrusts
- WildlifeWatchUK

WILD THINGS

News from our Wildlife Watchers



PARK PICKER

Ten-year-old Lana from Dorset has been doing a sponsored litter pick in over 40 local parks! She's cleaned up the environment and raised £296 for Dorset Wildlife Trust.

CRICKET FAN



Liam (aged 8) from Bristol spotted a speckled bush cricket and was delighted to show it to his brother Javier (aged 5).

ACORN ARTISTS

Fraya (aged 14) and Emily (aged 12) from Kent created some natural art. Here they are admiring their handiwork!



BECOME A JUNIOR EDITOR!



Would you like to help make our magazine even better? We're looking for people to become junior editors of Wildlife Watch! It's a chance to tell us what wildlife you'd like to read about, and what you'd like to see more of in the magazine. All you'd need to do is complete a short survey after reading each issue. To find out more, just email watch@wildlifetrusts.org and tell us you want to be a junior editor!



Dormouse © Terry Whittaker / 2020VISION

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WILDLIFE WATCH 104

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Check out wildlifetrusts.org/privacy-policy to find out how we keep your information safe.

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What's Wildlife Watch?

Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts. Join Wildlife Watch and start your nature adventure. Prices range from £10-£24 per year for child-only membership and £30-£60 for family membership.

You'll receive a starter pack and four issues of Wildlife Watch magazine a year. This is

packed full of amazing pictures, posters and competitions. We also have a really wild website and e-newsletter full of wild ideas and nature-spotting tips. Plus you get access to local events and groups. Go to wildlifewatch.org.uk to find out more.

KEEP WATCHING!

Cover pic of capercaillie © Peter Cairns / 2020VISION

Mountain hare © Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION

The Science Section

In every issue this year we'll be bringing you a fact-packed science section, sharing recent discoveries about weird and wonderful wildlife and explaining the meaning of some scientific words.

WILD WORDS

Impress your friends with new words from the world of wildlife science!

AQUATIC

(uh-kwa-tik)
Aquatic means connected to water. An aquatic animal or plant is one that lives in water for most or all of its life.

MIGRATION

(my-gray-shuhn)
Moving from one place to another for different seasons. Many birds spend the summer in the UK and migrate to Africa for the winter.

INVERTEBRATE

(in-ver-tih-bruht)
The term used to describe any animal without a backbone. Examples of invertebrates include insects, snails, worms, and crabs.

RECENT DISCOVERIES

© Ian Lindsey from Pixabay



MIGHTY MOTHS

Some insects make incredible migrations, but we don't know much about them. Because insects are so small, they are much harder to study than birds and mammals. People used to think that migrating insects get blown around a lot, and don't have much control over the direction

they fly. But a recent experiment has shown they can actually be very good at flying in a straight line!

The study focused on the death's-head hawk-moth, a large moth that migrates between Europe and Africa (they're rare visitors to the UK).

Scientists attached tiny radio tags to adult moths and released them. They waited for the moths to fly, then followed them in a small airplane! The tags sent out signals that were

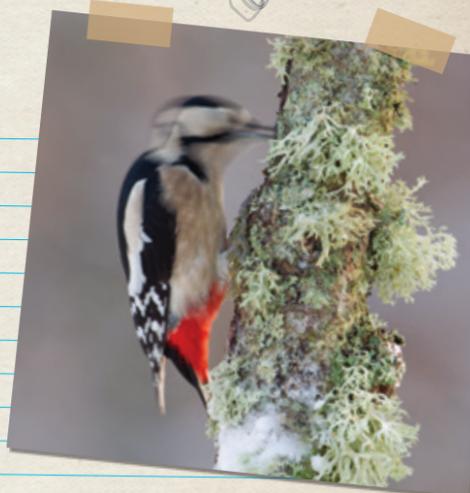
picked up by antennas on the plane, telling scientists exactly where the moths were every 5-15 minutes.

The scientists managed to follow 14 moths, each for up to 80 kilometres – the furthest any insect has ever been continuously tracked. They found that the moths flew in perfectly straight lines, even if the wind was blowing the wrong way. When it got really blustery, they flew faster and closer to the ground, making it easier to stay straight.

HEADBANGERS

Woodpeckers spend a lot of their time hammering their beak into bark. If a human did that, they'd really hurt themselves, but woodpeckers fly away unharmed. Some scientists think that they have a special spongy skull that soaks up some of the shock of the impact, like a safety helmet. But a new study suggests this may not be

true! By carefully monitoring the movement of woodpeckers' heads whilst hammering, the study found that the skull didn't seem to absorb the shock. Instead, these scientists say the size and shape of the woodpecker's brain protects it. We might need more evidence before we know for sure – we still have a lot to learn about woodpeckers!



© Peter Cairns / 2020VISION

YOUR PHOTOS



We were sent so many wonderful photos this issue, we just had to share them with you. So instead of Your Stories, here are **Your Photos!**



James (aged 7) snapped this spider on his way to school with his brother Lucas (aged 4). They counted all the webs as they walked, recording 341 webs in 20 minutes! This one is a garden spider – have you ever seen one?



Jasmine (aged 7) took this lovely photo of a roe deer. We can tell it's a male (called a buck) because of its antlers!



Grace (aged 13) spotted this grey dagger caterpillar munching on some leaves. They get their name because the adult moth has dagger shaped markings on its wings!



Martina (aged 11) and Toby (aged 5) captured this fantastic photo of a southern hawker dragonfly, freshly emerged from their small garden pond.

Send your stories, ideas, and photos to watch@wildlifetrusts.org!

Life in the wild is full of dangers. You never know when a bigger creature is going to try to eat you! Some animals have weapons to defend themselves, like spikes or poison, but many prefer to try and hide from potential predators.

Let's take a look at some of their tricks...



CRYPTIC CREATURES

Some animals take hide and seek to the extreme!

PICK YOUR HIDING PLACE

When they need to blend in, many animals will deliberately choose a background that matches their body colour. Most moths fly at night and spend the day resting. They don't want a bird to snaffle them whilst they're snoozing! To stay safe, they often choose a resting spot where they will blend in. A green moth will hide in grass or on fresh leaves, whilst a brown moth might land on a tree trunk or amongst dead leaves.

BLUR YOUR EDGES



Some animals have another trick to help them blend in even more. They have spots, stripes, or other patterns that break up their shape. When a predator looks at them, it's harder for them to see the shape of the animal because of all the patterns. Some creatures take it to the next level and have bumps or wavy edges to look more like a plant. Quite a few caterpillars pretend to be twigs to hide from predators!

WEAR A DISGUISE

For some creatures, having a camouflaged pattern isn't enough. They actually pick up objects and attach them to their body! Sponge crabs wear a sponge as a hat, holding it on top of their shell to disguise themselves. Some caddisfly larvae crawl around wearing well-camouflaged tubes made from pebbles and other bits they find. Young tortoise beetles prefer to hide themselves with a coat made of their own poo. Gross but effective!

HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT



Some animals avoid predators by pretending to be a different species. Harmless creatures sometimes evolve to look like a more dangerous animal, so that predators leave them alone. Hoverflies are a good example. Many hoverflies are black and yellow, so they look a bit like wasps or bees. As a result, some predators mistake the hoverflies for stinging insects and avoid them.

CAMO QUIZ

See the answers on page 23!

1 Can you tell what kind of creature is hiding on this tree?



2 One of these twigs is not a twig! Can you spot it?



3 Can you find the moth in this photo?



4 How many ptarmigans can you see hiding in the snow?



MASTERING MOUNTAINS

This year, **BRYONY CARTER** completed her quest to climb every mountain over 2,000 feet in England and Wales – that's 446 mountains! We caught up with her to ask about her adventures...



Bryony is just the 40th woman to climb all 446 mountains.

Hi, Bryony, tell us a bit about yourself!

I'm Bryony and I work for The Wildlife Trusts. I love insects, especially dor beetles and caddisflies. The outdoors makes me feel free and always puts a smile on my face. I also like that when you're exploring outside, you always meet so many friendly people along the way.

What inspired your quest?

I remember seeing a large map of the UK. It was dotted with clusters of mountains, spread all across the different regions. And I had never been to any of them! At this point, I had never climbed anything higher than my local hill. I knew very little about walking in the mountains, but in one of those crazy moments I set myself a challenge. I decided I was going to climb all the mountains in the UK — starting with England and Wales.

But what is a mountain?

There are lots of different definitions. After a little research, I came across a book that listed all the summits in England and Wales that are over 2,000 feet – these are known as the Nuttalls. In Scotland there are Munros, which are mountains over 3,000 feet! I decided to start by climbing all 446 Nuttalls.

Did you see any cool wildlife?

So much cool wildlife! Lots of mammals like mountain hares, red deer and fallow deer, wild ponies, and red squirrels, as well as birds like peregrine falcons. I saw thousands of moth caterpillars and butterflies. The flowers and plants found in the mountain habitats are also unique. As you walk along you can spot plants like sundew and butterwort, which are both carnivorous.

What was the toughest moment?

Climbing conditions were often tough. Our weather can be unpredictable. But if I had waited for good weather every time I went to climb a mountain, I would never have completed this mammoth task!

There were days when I could not see a metre in front of me, and others where it was so hot that I felt dizzy.

Also, mountains are not always big triangles of jagged rocks! Some had flat boggy ground, stretching for miles. It can take hours to get across this terrain as you clamber out of tall, peaty holes called peat hags. These would often drain my energy and crush my spirit – and sometimes there was hardly any summit point or cairn (a stack of stones used as a marker) waiting for me at the top!

Bryony carried a sign up each mountain, showing the number of the peak she was climbing!



Which was your last mountain?

My final mountain was Moel Siabod (pronounced 'moy-ul sha-bod') in Snowdonia National Park, on the 31st of July this year. I was joined by about 20 people and my two doggy companions, Eddie and Dave, who have between them hiked most of the 446 mountains with me. It felt very emotional reaching the top – it has been a very long seven-year journey!

What advice would you give to young explorers?

Learn map skills! Whether you like to climb mountains or just enjoy general exploring, being able to use a compass with an Ordnance Survey map opens up so many ways to explore.

What's next for you?

Now I have completed all 446 mountains in England and Wales I have to set my sights further north. I am off to conquer Scotland, where there are over 700 mountains for me to climb. I expect it will take me the rest of my life!!



WETLANDS

by Ali Morse

I'm Ali from The Wildlife Trusts. I love visiting wetlands to spot the brightly coloured dragonflies flying skilfully overhead.



Fen wetland © Mark Hamblin / 2020 VISION

What are wetlands?

Wetlands are places where the land is covered by water. They're found along the edges of rivers, at the coast, and in low points in the landscape where water collects. All sorts of plants live in wetlands, meaning that there are lots of different types, including reedbeds, mudflats, bogs, wet woodlands, wet grasslands, and saltmarshes.

What wildlife lives there?

A huge variety of wildlife lives in these different habitats. In terms of the number and variety of species supported, wetlands are as rich as rainforests! The watery parts of wetlands are home to fish, aquatic insects, and amphibians like toads and newts. Wading birds feed across the wet soils, using their beaks to probe the soft mud for insects. And wetlands provide food and shelter for mammals like otters and water voles.

How do they fight the climate crisis?

All wetlands, and especially peatlands, can lock away carbon. Plants take up carbon dioxide and when they die, wet conditions mean that the dead plants don't fully rot away, trapping the climate-altering carbon in the wetland soils. This reduces the risk of climate change.

Wetlands can also help us to cope with the effects of climate change. Along the coast, wetlands reduce the power of storms coming in from the sea, protecting coastal towns from flooding. Inland, wetlands capture water and allow it to filter through into porous rocks below, called aquifers, that store water. A lot of our drinking water comes from these underground stores, and wetlands are important for topping them up when there's a drought, meaning our water supplies don't run out.



How can we help them?

In the UK we've lost 90% of our wetlands in the last 100 years. They have been drained to allow the land to be farmed or built on, so it's important to protect the wetlands that we've got left.

The water we use in our homes comes in part from those spongy rocks underneath wetlands. If we take too much, this can suck the wetlands dry! There are lots of ways to save water, from keeping a water bottle in the fridge so that you don't have to run the tap until the water gets cold, to getting a water butt to capture rain for watering your garden.



Some wetlands can store 50 times more carbon than rainforests.

Freshwater wetlands host more species per square kilometre than land or oceans!

Wetlands can trap pollutants in their soils, cleaning up the water.



Otter © Andy Rouse / 2020 VISION



© Jon Hawkins / Surrey Hills Photography

Wonderful Waxwings

Waxwings are winter visitors to the UK from Scandinavia and Russia. In some years they're very rare, but in other years hundreds or even thousands can arrive! They love feasting on berries.

MERMAID'S PURSES

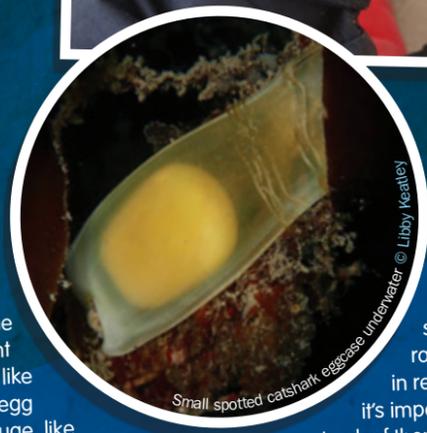
by Erin McKeown



Erin loves sharks because they're super important for keeping our oceans healthy. She worked on an Ulster Wildlife project called Sea Deep, protecting sharks and skates in Northern Ireland.

Did you know some sharks lay eggs?

Have you ever come across a strange, leathery pouch on a trip to the beach? Some people call them mermaid's purses. Did you know, these eggciting finds are actually the empty egg cases of a shark or one of their close relatives, rays and skates? There are lots of species found in UK waters! These fantastic fish lay eggs underwater and when the young hatch, the empty cases wash up on the shore for us to find!



Where can you find them?

You can find egg cases on both rocky shores and sandy beaches all around the UK. The best place to look is within the strandline – the seaweed washed up at the top of the shore. Some may also be blown into the crevices between rocks at the top of the beach. They are well camouflaged so keep your eyes peeled!

Not all sharks lay eggs, some give birth to their young.

When can you find them?

You can find egg cases throughout the year. The best time to look is after stormy weather when lots of seaweed and debris has been thrown up on the beach. Make sure you bring warm clothing and good shoes if you're going on an egg hunt!

What do they look like?

Each egg case is unique to the species that laid it. They might be small, with curly tendrils, like a small-spotted catshark egg case. Or they could be huge, like the rare flapper skate egg case! Check out our egg case guide to see what you might find.

Why record egg cases?

The number of sharks, skates, and rays has gone down in recent decades, so it's important that we keep track of them to help protect them. Finding loads of their egg cases could mean that the seas nearby are nursery grounds for young shark pups!

By recording egg cases found on the beach you can help us learn more about these species, such as where they live and where they have their young. Finding these sites helps us to call for their protection and for measures to be put in place to keep sharks and rays safe during one of the most vulnerable phases of their life.

RECORD YOUR EGG CASES...

For Northern Ireland, go to seadeepni.org/submiteggcaserecords

For everywhere else, visit sharktrust.org/great-eggcase-hunt

Egg case identification!



Only measure the capsule, not the horns!

SHARKS

Blackmouth catshark 3-7 cm



Small-spotted catshark 5-7 cm



Bull huss 8-10 cm



SKATES AND RAYS

Spotted ray 5-6 cm



Cuckoo ray 5-6 cm



Thornback ray 6-7 cm



Undulate ray 7-8 cm



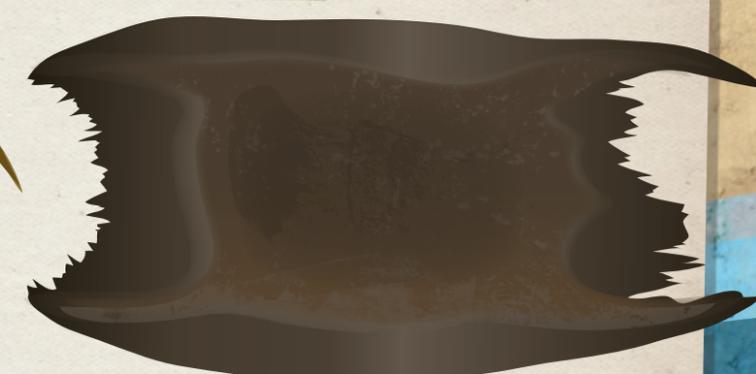
Small-eyed ray 7-8 cm



Blonde ray 10-12 cm



Flapper skate 15-20 cm



Illustrations © Rachel Hudson Illustration

GALLERY

Send in your photos, poems, artwork and letters for your chance to feature in the gallery. If your artwork is picked as the star entry you'll win your very own drawing kit! **The perfect starter set for any budding wildlife artist.**

1



2



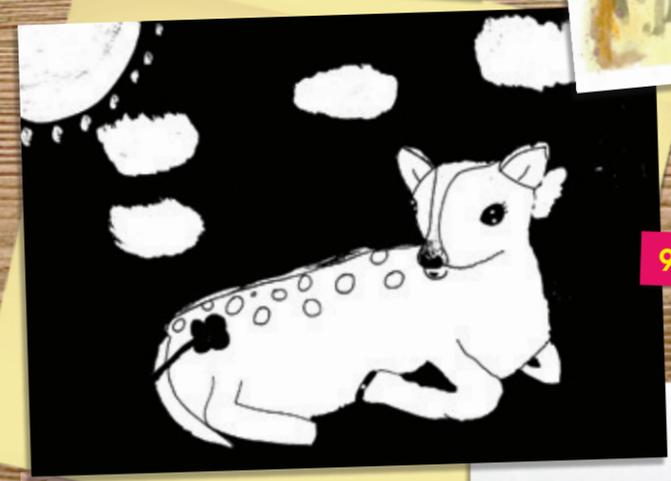
7



8



9



10



4

3



6



11



12



1) Hare by Eva, aged 9



What a fabulous hare! We absolutely love this work of art.

2) Hedgehog by Valentina, aged 6

We love the detail in the spines of this happy hedgehog.

3) Golden eagle by Hanna, aged 10

This eagle looks so regal! Great job, Hanna.

4) Blue tit by Ida, aged 8

This is a very wintry scene, with a blue tit adding a splash of cheery colour to a dark day.

5) Hawk-moth by Ceyone, aged 6

A great photo of an eyed hawk-moth, showing the eye spots on its hindwings.

6) Ladybird by Orla, aged 7

Orla has drawn a wonderful 7-spot ladybird.

7) Fox by Sara, aged 12

Just look at this gorgeous fox! Fantastic detail on the fur.

8) Owl by Hugo, aged 8

What a fantastically fierce stare!

9) Deer by Poppy, aged 10

We love this unusual black and white approach. Very striking!

10) Bittern by Oscar, aged 11

The posture is perfect! We can imagine it creeping through the reeds.

11) Bumblebee by Violet, aged 9

This bright bee brings a smile to our faces!

12) Puffin by Lucy, aged 12

A puffin to be proud of! Great work, Lucy.



If we feature your artwork we will need your first name and your age, so don't forget to include them. We might also share it on our website and social media.

HOW TO ENTER

Email watch@wildlifetrusts.org with the subject line 'Gallery entry' or write to us at:
Wildlife Watch Gallery
The Wildlife Trusts
The Kiln, Mather Road
Newark
Notts NG24 1WT

WEIRD NATURE

Winter is no time for wild wimps!



THIS ISSUE: TOUGH ANIMALS

PTARMIGAN



These gutsy grouse spend the winter high up on Scottish mountains. They dig through the snow to find food, as well as to make hollows to sleep in. Their bright white feathers help them hide from predators. They have feathery feet that help them stay warm and also act as snowshoes!

COMMON LIMPET



Limpets are the small, grey-white dome shaped shells you might have seen clinging to rocks on the coast. They survive on some of our most exposed shores, where big waves regularly crash over them. They feed on algae, scraping it from the stone with a tongue that's covered in teeth!

PURPLE SANDPIPER



These stocky wading birds also spend the winter on rocky coasts, mostly in the north of the UK. They happily scurry about, feeding on shelled creatures, as huge waves batter the rocks behind them. These little birds are so tough that some stay in the Arctic all winter!

EXMOOR PONY



True wild horses went extinct in the UK a long time ago, but free-roaming Exmoor ponies live a similar lifestyle. These are hardy horses, with thick winter coats that protect them from rain, ice, and snow. They also grow special tail hairs that channel water away from their more sensitive underbelly.

BROWN RAT



Brown rats are the ultimate survivors, scraping a living almost anywhere they can find food and shelter. They originally come from Asia, but spread all over the world by stowing away in ships and surviving long voyages at sea. Their tough teeth can even chew through bricks!

GREY SEAL



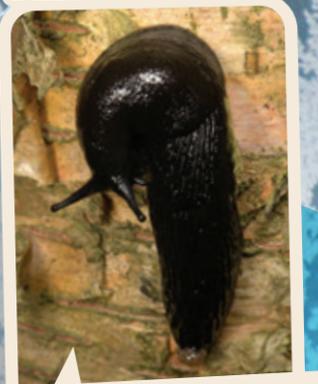
Grey seals are so tough that they have their babies in autumn and winter! Just imagine being a new-born seal pup, on a freezing cold beach in December. Luckily they have a thick, fluffy white coat to keep them warm. Their mothers also feed them incredibly fatty milk that provides lots of energy.

TARDIGRADE



At less than 1mm long, tardigrades are mini but mighty! They're also called water bears, as they live in damp places - like wet clumps of moss. Tardigrades are one of the toughest creatures on the planet. They can survive freezing, drying out, extreme radiation, and even being out in space!

GREAT BLACK SLUG



They might not look that tough, but these slugs have a secret superpower. They can survive being frozen! If they get too cold, for too long, it can still be deadly - so they tuck themselves away in the soil where the temperature is a little more stable.

Pine cone creatures

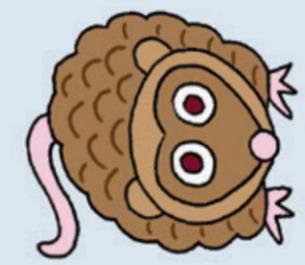


- You will need**
- Pinecones
 - Craft foam, felt or card
 - Scissors
 - PVA glue and double-sided sticky tape
 - Various things (as many natural as possible) to make your animal, such as:
 - Leaves
 - Acorn cups
 - Berries or googly eyes

Always check what berries are before you pick them because some can be harmful to people!

- 1 Decide what animal you want to make. If you want it to stand, pick a pine cone that will stay upright and make and glue on the feet first.
- 2 Add legs or wings and eyes and ears using the materials you've collected.

Here are a few examples to get you inspired...



mouse



fox



owl

PVA should stick most things, but ask an adult to help if you need to use a hot glue gun.

Acorn cups with berries or googly eyes in the centre make great eyes!

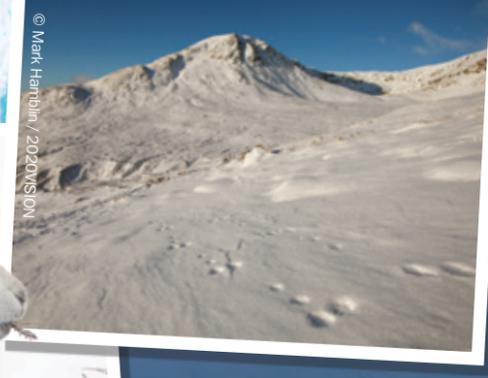
Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2018

HIGH LIVIN' HARES!



Mountain hares are a wild sight not to be missed... but they're hard to spot in their white winter coats!

by Pete Dommett



LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

These high-rise hares inhabit the cold north of Europe – from Scandinavia to Siberia. In Britain, they're mostly found in the mountains of Scotland. There's also a small population in the Peak District in England and another on the Isle of Man. They hang out on hilly, snow-covered slopes, high moors and heathland.

The Irish hare is a subspecies of mountain hare only found on the island of Ireland. It lives in lowland habitats, as well as on hills and mountains.

HARE COMES TROUBLE!

Mountain hares make a tasty meal for foxes, stoats, and buzzards. They're also a favourite prey of golden eagles! If the hares sense danger, they crouch motionless with their ears flat, hoping not to be noticed. If that doesn't work, they 'hare' off uphill as fast as they can!

SCRAPING A LIVING

Mountain hares are nocturnal – they come out at night to feed and rest up during the day. But they don't dig burrows to sleep in like rabbits do. Instead, they shelter in shallow scrapes in the ground or grass called 'forms'. These shy animals mainly live alone, but sometimes gather in groups to graze on moorland plants, such as heather and bilberry.

VANISH INTO THIN HARE

These clever creatures turn white in winter to blend in with their snowy surroundings – it's the perfect camouflage for hiding from predators. But only if there's snow around of course! Climate change is causing warmer winters and snow is arriving later, melting earlier or even not falling at all in mountain hare habitat. And a snow-free landscape means a bright white hare is less camouflaged and more visible to hungry predators. Bad news!

Mountain hares are native to the UK. Brown hares and rabbits were both introduced by humans.

Baby mountain hares (called leverets) are born in spring and summer. They arrive fully-furred and with their eyes open!

HARE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW?

How can these mountain-dwelling mammals adapt to their changing environment? Are they able to turn white later in winter and change back to brown earlier? Can they stop changing colour altogether? Just how well mountain hares cope with climate change remains to be seen. In the meantime, these snow-loving specialists will be dreaming of a white Christmas this winter!



© Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION



THE HARE ESSENTIALS

How to ID a mountain hare

Mountain hare

© Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION



Size – Smaller than brown hare, bigger than rabbit.

Ears – Longer than rabbit's, but shorter than brown hare's. With black tips.

Eyes – Brown (eyes of brown hare are amber).

Coat – Pale grey-brown in summer, white in winter. Always has white tail.

Legs – Long back legs (longer than rabbit's).

Brown hare



© Andrew Parkinson / 2020VISION

Rabbit



© Guy Edwardes / 2020VISION

Buds reveal the secret identities of bare branches!

Trees in Winter

by Brian Eversham

Many of our trees have lost their leaves. Their branches are bare, like skeletons, waiting for spring. But you can still tell the trees apart! Some are tall and thin, others have thick trunks and branches. Some have smooth white bark, others are rough and grey. We can learn a lot by looking at the buds on a twig! The biggest buds are at the end: how many are there? One? Two? A bunch of buds? There are also smaller buds along each side of a twig. Are these buds growing side by side (opposite)? Or do they go left then right then left up the twig (alternate)?

Alder tree © Pete Riechman



Brian Eversham has loved trees (and all wildlife) as long as he can remember. He also likes insects, so learnt to name trees so he knew what to feed to his caterpillars!

- = Trees with **OPPOSITE** buds
- = Trees with **ALTERNATE** buds

ASH



This tree has dull black buds that are not like any other tree! Young ash trees have smooth, grey bark. Bigger trees have rough bark with cracks running up and down the trunk. Look for last summer's seeds, called 'keys', hanging in bunches.



HORSE CHESTNUT



This tree has the biggest, stickiest buds, up to 3cm long! Look for conkers and the spiny conker cases on the ground. It has rough bark with cracks running up and down, and across, making flat rectangular plates.



BEECH



This tree has long, thin pointy brown buds, on zigzag twigs. It has very smooth, grey bark. Look under the tree for pointy brown nuts in a spiky pod.



OAK



This tree has bunches of little, round brown buds, a thick trunk with cracked bark, and big fat branches reaching out sideways.



SYCAMORE



This tree has small, round green buds and smooth grey bark. Look for any helicopter seeds (called keys) left on the tree.



SILVER BIRCH



This tree has pointy buds and catkins in winter. It has smooth white bark, rough twigs, and its thin branches often curve downwards.



LIME



This tree has round red buds on reddish zigzag twigs, grey bark with up-and-down cracks, and often, lots of thin twigs growing from the bottom of the trunk.



ALDER



This tree has pale purple buds, each on a little stick. Young alders have smooth grey bark. The bark of big alders is cracked into square plates.



CAPERCAILLIE



Male capercaillie © Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION

A LITTLE HORSE

The capercaillie is a big bird – in fact, it's the world's biggest grouse! Males often weigh over 4 kg, though females are usually about half this size. Their name comes from the Scottish Gaelic words capall-coille, which means 'horse of the forest'. You might think they got this nickname due to their large size, but it's thought to be a reference to their call – a deep, clicking sound a bit like the clapping of hooves.

HIGHLAND HOME

In the UK, capercaillies are only found in the Highlands of Scotland, where they live in pine woods. They like forests with lots of blueberry bushes, as they eat the leaves and berries in summer. Chicks also eat a lot of insects, including moth caterpillars. Capercaillies have a slightly stranger diet in winter – they survive by feeding on pine needles!

LEKS GO!

In spring, capercaillies gather at special locations in the forest where males try to impress females with a fancy display.

ESSENTIAL FACTS

Scientific name

Tetrao urogallus

Size

Up to 90 cm long

Amazing fact

Despite being heavy birds, capercaillies can fly and will spend the night sleeping high up in a tree.

FEMALE CAPERCAILLIE



© Andy Rouse / naturepi.com

This is called a lek. The lekking males strut around, fan their tails, and sing their strange, gurgling, popping song. If two males get too close to each other, fights can break out. After mating, females lay their eggs in a nest on the ground. They raise the chicks on their own, with no help from the male.

THE CAPER CRISIS

Capercaillies were driven to extinction in the UK in the 1700s. Luckily, they were reintroduced in the 1800s. Birds were collected in Sweden and brought back to Scotland, where they were released into the wild. Sadly, our capercaillies are now at risk of going extinct in Scotland for a second time. The latest survey revealed there are only around 542 capercaillies left. They face lots of threats, including adults crashing into fences, and cold and wet weather making it harder for chicks to survive.

Unfortunately, disturbance can also be a big problem. They are very shy birds, and noisy people can scare them away. As wonderful as capercaillies are, it's important that we give them lots of space, stick to paths in their woodlands, and don't go wandering into forests to look for them – especially in spring when they're busy breeding.

HOW MANY ANIMALS HIBERNATE?

We think of hibernation as a deep sleep, but it's a bit more complicated than that...



Dormouse © Terry Whittaker / 2020VISION

WHAT IS HIBERNATION?

Hibernation is a state in which an animal spends a long period of time in one place, barely moving, with all its bodily functions either stopped or slowed down. This means its breathing and heart rate slow down, and its body temperature drops. If you saw one, you might think it was dead! It can take a hibernating animal up to an hour to fully 'wake up'.



Brown long-eared bat © Tom Marshall

WHICH ANIMALS HIBERNATE?

In the UK, only dormice, hedgehogs, and bats truly hibernate. Lots of other animals go into a similar state, where their body slows down, but this isn't true hibernation. Some go into a state called torpor, which is a bit like a mini hibernation that doesn't last as long. Reptiles and amphibians have their own version of hibernation, which is called brumation. Insects do something a little different, called diapause – this is basically like pushing the pause button on their life cycle. They can do this as eggs, larvae, pupae, or adults. They shut down and wait until spring to become active again.

CAMO QUIZ ANSWERS!

From page 7.

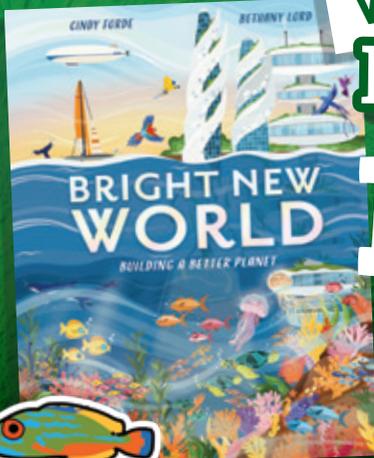
- 1 It's the caterpillar of the September thorn moth! They feed at night and spend the day pretending to be a twig.
- 2 There's a buff-tip moth on the pile. They're perfectly camouflaged as a birch twig!
- 3 It's a Chinese character. These cute little moths hold their wings up to look like a piece of bird poo!
- 4 There are six ptarmigans! They turn white in winter to help them hide from predators.



COMPETITIONS

WIN

BRIGHT NEW WORLD



Bright New World by Cindy Forde is a climate change book with a difference. It's a vision of a not-so-distant future, in which young people have helped tackle the climate crisis – beautifully illustrated by Bethany Lord. This book doesn't just dwell on the problems we face, it looks at some of the amazing solutions being developed to solve them.

We've got **FOUR** copies to give away, courtesy of Welbeck Publishing Group.

Buy online at: wtru.st/bright-world RRP: £18.99

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

Tell us about one thing you do at home to help the environment! For example, do you recycle? Litter pick? Try to save water?

WIN

WHEN THE STORKS CAME HOME

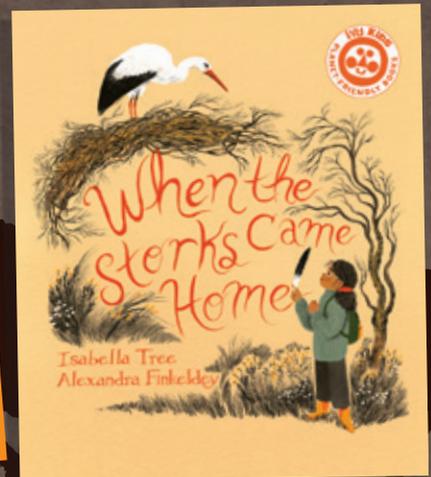
This gorgeously illustrated picture book retells the true story of white storks returning to Britain after 600 years! It's written by Isabella Tree, who led their real-life reintroduction at Knepp Estate, Horsham. It contains facts and photographs at the back of the book, and delivers a wonderful message that together, we can bring nature back from the brink.

We've got **FIVE** copies to give away!

Buy online at: wtru.st/storks-home RRP: £9.99

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

Just answer this question!
When were capercaillies reintroduced to Scotland?
a) The 1800s
b) The 1900s
c) The 2000s
Clue – the answer is in the magazine!



WIN

GIANT OCEAN ORIGAMI



Make your own super-sized sea creatures with this fun origami set! With the easy-to-follow instructions you're just a few folds away from creating a blue whale, great white shark, seahorse, turtle, crab, and sea lion. The pack's also stuffed full of ocean facts!

We've got **THREE** sets to give away.

Buy online at: clockworksoldier.co.uk RRP: £10.50

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

Just tell us what your favourite sea creature is and why!

If you're sending multiple entries, please try to put them in one email to save energy!

COMPETITION RULES

Send your competition entries to us: **By email** watchcomps@wildlifetrusts.org **By post** Wildlife Watch, The Kiln, Mather Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1WT
Don't forget to include your name, age and a way of contacting you about your entry! **DEADLINE: 28 February 2023**

Competition entries may be used on our website and social media channels.