

**FREE!**

BEETLE  
POSTER

**MAKING  
A SPLASH**

A guide to whales  
and dolphins



**SHEAR  
DELIGHT**

Meet the marvellous  
Manx shearwater



**Issue 106** Summer 2023

# Wildlife Watch

**MAGAZINE**

# BUZZ BUDDIES

Discover why wasps are wonderful!



The  
**Wildlife**  
Trusts





# Editor's corner

**TOM HIBBERT**  
Editor, Wildlife Watch

Summer is here! Have you got any wonderfully wild plans for your summer holidays? You could try and find a different plant or animal every week – or even every day if you fancy a tougher challenge! If you have a garden, you can encourage butterflies, bees, and other insects to visit by letting the grass grow a little longer and letting wildflowers bloom. Head to page 18 to see some of the beautiful flowers that might pop up in your lawn.

Summer is also a time for seeing wasps. They have a bad reputation, but they're incredible insects – they're architects, artists, and pollinators. On page eight you can discover more about what makes wasps wonderful and why it's good to have them around.

Lots of people head to the seaside in summer. The UK is one of the best places in Europe for seeing seabirds, dolphins and even whales! Turn to page 20 for a guide to eight of the magnificent marine mammals that live in our seas.

Whatever you do this summer, I hope you have a wild time!

Tom

## GET IN TOUCH

Email us at: [watch@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:watch@wildlifetrusts.org)

Ring us on: 01636 677711

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Wildlife Watch  
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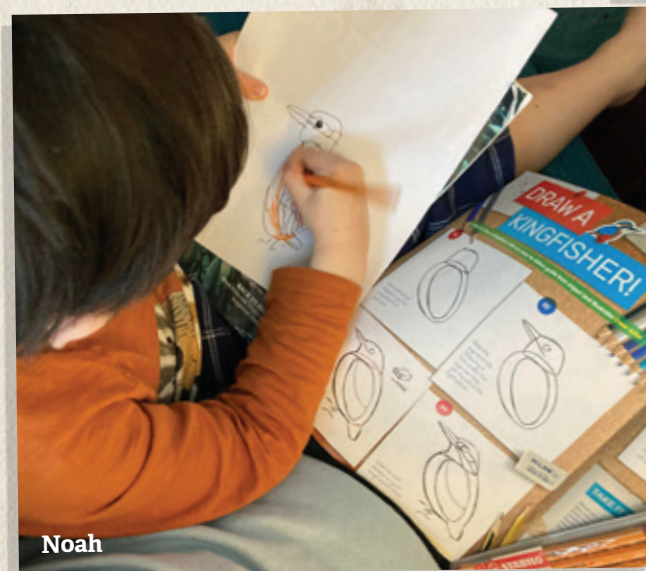
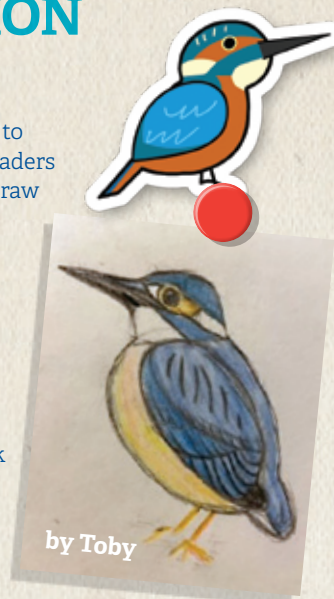
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# WILD THINGS

News from our Wildlife Watchers

## KINGFISHER COLLECTION

We were thrilled to see so many readers enjoying our 'draw a kingfisher' guide in the spring issue. Here's Thea (aged 6) from Surrey and Noah (aged 5) from Cornwall drawing their kingfishers, as well as artwork from Bertie (aged 6), Molly (aged 11), and Toby (aged 11). Thank you to everyone that sent in a kingfisher, we wish we could feature all your drawings!



## MINIBEAST MAD

Three-year-old Edward from Kent is a huge Wildlife Watch fan. Here he is admiring a caterpillar he found in his granny and grandpa's vegetable patch. We love seeing our readers getting out and enjoying nature!



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## WILDLIFE WATCH 106

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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](https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk) to find out more.

KEEP WATCHING!



# The Science Section

Always wondered what that weird-sounding word meant or desperate to know what the latest wonderful wildlife discovery is? Well, here we bring you a fact-packed science section so you can impress your friends with your knowledge!

## WILD WORDS

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

### DORSAL FIN (daw-sul fin)

The (usually large) fin on the back of many fish, porpoises, dolphins and whales.

### LARVA (lar-vuh)

The young form of an insect or other animal that transforms into a completely different looking adult. A caterpillar is the larva of a butterfly or moth. The plural is larvae (lar-vee).

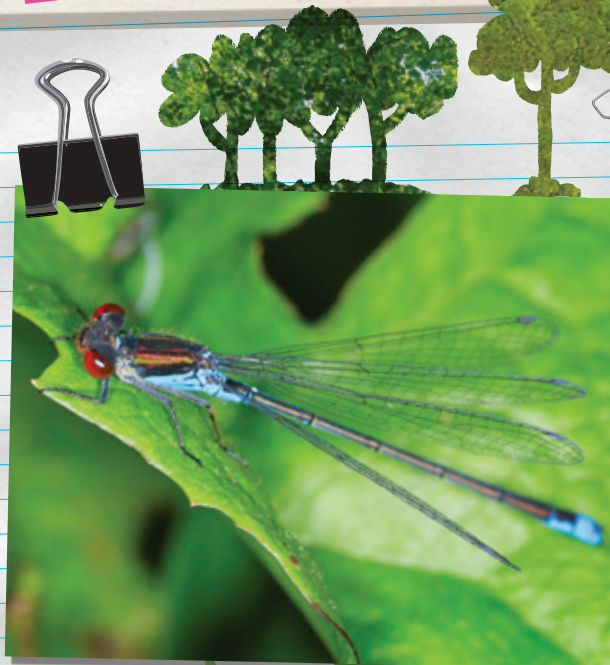
### EPIPHYTE (epi-fight)

A plant that grows on the surface of another plant but doesn't steal water or food from it, like moss growing on trees.

## RECENT DISCOVERIES

### RED-EYED ROOMMATE

As climate change makes the world warmer, many animals are moving to new locations. Sometimes when this happens, it can make life harder for some of the wildlife that already lives there. The small red-eyed damselfly used to be found only in the Mediterranean, but it spread northwards as Europe became warmer. Since 2002, it has been living in the UK. Scientists have studied dragonfly and damselfly numbers to see if this new arrival had an effect on the species that already lived here. Fortunately, they found that red-eyed damselflies pose very little risk to most of our dragonflies and damselflies, meaning they should be able to live alongside each other happily!



Small red-eyed damselfly © Frank Porch

## PRICKLY PENSIONER



A study in Denmark has uncovered the world's oldest known European hedgehog. It lived to the age of 16! Two other hedgehogs were found to be 13 and 11 years old. The study examined hedgehogs that had been found dead. They worked out the age of the hedgehogs by counting growth lines in their bones, like counting the rings in a tree. They discovered that on average hedgehogs only live for around two years.



# YOUR PHOTOS

Keep sharing your amazing photos with us, we love to see them all!



Harrison (aged 12) shared a scenic shot of two grey seals lounging on a rock. It's amazing how seals can make even a barnacle-covered rock look comfortable!



Oscar (aged 8) took this photo showing just how much moth wings can look like wood! This privet hawk-moth would be really well camouflaged on the right tree.



Rosie (aged 7) did brilliantly to spot this southern hawker dragonfly resting on a fern. It's even more impressive that she managed to get a photo before it flew away!

Irie (aged 11) snapped some towering trees. The different shades in the clouds make the sky seem really dramatic. You can imagine sitting on the grass, looking up at this scene.



Send your stories, ideas, and photos to [watch@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:watch@wildlifetrusts.org)!





**LISA** works for the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales and looks after their island nature reserves. She first volunteered on Skomer Island as a teenager and the summer resident Manx shearwaters have been her favourite bird ever since.

Meet the secretive seabird that only visits land in the dark!

# MIGHTY MANXIES

by  
Lisa  
Morgan

I will always remember the first time I heard a Manx shearwater. I was so spooked that I sat bolt upright in bed and hit my head hard on the bunk above! I was a student volunteering on Skomer Island in Wales and it was my first night in the biggest Manx shearwater colony in the world. Let me tell you all about these amazing birds...

## SHEAR PERFECTION

**M**anx shearwaters or 'Manxies' as we like to call them, are black above and white below. They're roughly the same size as a pigeon, but with incredibly long wings. They are true seabirds, graceful over the water but clumsy on land. They fly just above the waves, often gliding for long stretches without flapping. Sometimes they twist from side to side, so it looks like their wingtips are cutting through the water. This type of flight is known as shearing, which is why they're called shearwaters.

Manxies weigh the same as a can of coke.

## BURROW BABIES

**M**anx shearwaters, like puffins, lay their single egg underground in a burrow. The burrow should be at least as long as a person's arm, to keep the egg and chick safe from the weather and any passing gulls or ravens on the lookout for a meal. Even more important is the burrow location. It needs to be close to the sea, but also somewhere with no land predators like rats, cats, stoats or hedgehogs. All of these animals can easily climb into a burrow and steal an egg. For this reason, Manx shearwaters choose to nest on islands just off the coast, where they are as safe as possible. We look after many of these islands as nature reserves, to keep the birds safe whilst they nest.

A chick waiting to be weighed to help monitor the population.

## OLD BUT ACTIVE

**M**anx shearwaters live a very long time. The oldest bird ever recorded in the UK is a Manxie! It was at least 50 years old when it was last seen, still breeding on Bardsey Island in North Wales. They also migrate over huge distances each year. They fly between their burrow in Britain and their winter feeding grounds off the coast of South America and back again. So our 50-year-old Manxie may have travelled over eight million kilometres in its lifetime!

## NATURE'S NAVIGATORS

**M**y favourite thing about Manxies is that they know exactly where home is. They somehow manage to find the same burrow each year on an island full of burrows that all look the same to you and me. Even more amazing is that they only ever return to their burrows at night. They can find their nest burrow in the dark and will never have seen it in the daylight! It is possible that young Manx shearwaters study the stars before leaving for the first time and this star map guides them for the rest of their lives.

## SEABIRD SAFETY

**I**n the UK, we are responsible for most of the world population of Manx shearwaters. West Wales alone is home to over 50% of all nesting Manxies. We must do all we can to look after them. We can help by making the lights on ships and coastal buildings less bright. This stops young Manx shearwaters becoming confused and crash landing. At home we can all recycle our plastic rubbish to stop it getting into the sea, where seabirds and other wildlife can eat it or get tangled up in it.

Manxie calls are a noisy muddle of howls and screams – enough to scare even the toughest sailors and even Viking invaders.



© Chris Lawrence



© Chris Gomersall / 2020VISION



© Ed Marshall

© Chris Gomersall / 2020VISION

© Giselle Eagle & Richard Brown / WTSW





**RACHEL** works for The Royal Parks in London. She learned to love social wasps from her grandma, who used to feed them ham!

# WONDERFUL WASPS

by Rachel Dowse



**B**ees aren't the only black and yellow gardener's friend. There's another flying insect that pollinates flowers and builds beautiful nests – social wasps!



© Pete Richman



Inside a home nest © Brian Everham



Wasp nest © Bob Coyle



GERMAN WASP

© Will Adkins



COMMON WASP

© Frank Porch

## WHICH WASP?

As the name suggests, social wasps live in big groups in a nest. There are nine species of social wasp naturally found in the UK. The three you're most likely to see are common wasps, German wasps and hornets. Common wasps and German wasps look very similar, but you can tell which one is which from their faces! Common wasps have an anchor-shaped mark in between their eyes, while German wasps have three black dots in a triangle shape in the same place.

Hornets are much bigger, and more orange than yellow, with a red middle. They can look scary, but they're actually the calmest wasp species and the least likely to sting you! They are also much rarer than other social wasps, so seeing one is really lucky.

Just like bees, wasps are important pollinators, spreading pollen between plants as they look for tasty nectar!

## ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

Like bees, social wasp nests start out when a queen wakes up in spring after hibernating over winter. She'll search out a good place for a nest, then build herself a small shelter where she can lay her first eggs. These will hatch out into workers, who work together to build the full-sized nest, making lots of room for new larvae. Some of the larvae will turn into new

queens and male wasps, and at the end of the summer, they will fly off and mate. The males, old queen, and workers then die, leaving the new queens to find somewhere to hibernate, and start the cycle all over again.

Altogether, social wasps in the UK catch about 14 million kilograms of insects like aphids and caterpillars each summer to feed to their young – making them the gardener's friend!

Their black and yellow stripes are there to warn us and other animals about their sting!



Wasp chewing wood © Frank Porch

## ARCHITECTS

Wasps build their nests out of a kind of paper, which they make in a very similar way to humans! While we mash up wood pulp to make paper, wasps scrape flakes of wood from dead trees and fence posts and chew it up to make a paper pulp.

## TINY ARTISTS

Wasp nests can be really beautiful, with wonderful stripes and swirls, depending on where they've scraped their pulp from. Each different coloured stripe will have been made by a different worker. The places where they've scraped off the wood can also create the perfect conditions for lichens to thrive. If you see lots of green or yellow streaks on an old fence post, that might mean wasps have been collecting wood for their nest there!

## STING TO SURVIVE

Adult wasps don't just have a sting to defend themselves, it's also a hunting weapon! Wasps use it to catch smaller insects like caterpillars and aphids, which they feed to the larvae in their nest. The larvae then make a sweet syrup that the adult wasps feed on. At the end of the summer, as the nest comes to an end and the queen dies, there are no more larvae to produce the syrup. The wasps get hungry and start looking for sugar in other places – including our picnics and fizzy drinks. This is when people are most likely to get stung, as the wasps are tired and hungry, and humans can scare them if we panic about them coming close.



© Mike Snellie



# KELP FORESTS

by Dani Clifford

I'm Dani, the marine conservation officer for The Wildlife Trusts, and I love all the amazing wildlife that can be found in kelp forests.



Kelp forest © Alex Mustard / naturepl.com

## What are kelp forests?

Kelp is the name given to several species of large brown seaweeds. Kelps look similar to trees, with a base (called a holdfast) that attaches them to the seabed, a thin hard stalk (called a stipe) and large fronds that spread out like leaves. When there are lots of kelp seaweeds together, they form dense underwater forests. Kelp forests can be found on rocky coasts all around the UK. Like plants, kelps depend on sunlight for energy. This means they only grow in shallow waters where the sunlight can reach them.

## What wildlife lives there?

Kelp forests provide food and shelter for thousands of animals, making them one of the most wildlife rich habitats in the world! The many gaps at the base of the kelp provide shelter for creatures such as crabs, jelly-like anemones and starfish. Smaller seaweeds and animals attach to the stipe. Lots of fish swim among the fronds, which are often munched by blue-rayed limpets. The many animals here attract marine mammals and birds to feed, too – kelp forests are often a seal's favourite place!

## Can they help fight the climate crisis?

Kelps take up carbon dioxide through photosynthesis (find out more on page 23) to help them grow. Scientists are still learning about kelp's role in the carbon cycle. While some of the carbon will be re-released, it's thought some pieces of kelp that have broken off may eventually be buried in the seafloor. Once here, some of the carbon may be locked away for many years. This would stop the carbon from entering the atmosphere and causing global warming. Scientists are still figuring out how much kelp gets buried and how much carbon from kelp is locked away.

## How can we help them?

Climate change is making our seas warmer, which could be bad for some kelps. You can help by doing your bit to fight climate change. Turn off lights when you don't need them and ask if you can walk to nearby places instead of driving.

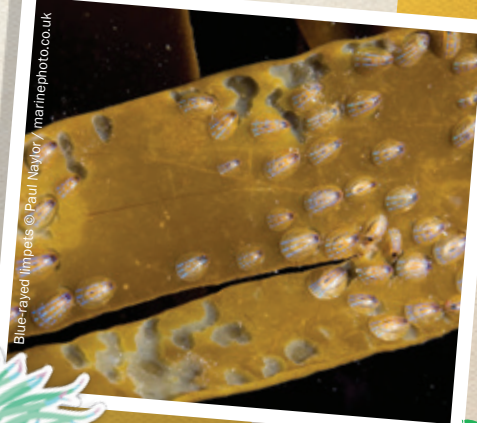
Blue-rayed limpets are only found on kelps. They love munching themselves into little holes as they feed!

The leaf-like fronds of kelp contain pockets of air that help them float upright in the sea.

Take a dive in a kelp forest!  
[wtru.st/kelp-dive](http://wtru.st/kelp-dive)



Grey seal © Alexander Mustard / 2020VISION



Blue-rayed limpets © Paul Naylor / marinephoto.co.uk

# PINING FOR A COMEBACK

Pine marten © Terry Whitaker / 2020VISION



**PINE MARTENS** are mighty mammals that live in forests. They're mostly found in Scotland and Ireland, but wildlife experts are helping them make a comeback in Wales and England.



Let's marvel at  
some **AMAZING**  
animal super-powers!

# SUPER SENSES

by Pete Dommert

**O**ur five senses serve us well, but they're nothing compared to nature's. Some species take these senses to the max, while others have evolved extra ways of experiencing the world around them!

## VISION IMPOSSIBLE

**H**umans can only see a limited range of light waves (this is called the 'visible light spectrum' and appears as the different colours of the rainbow from red to violet), but some animals' sense of sight goes way beyond this.

Kestrels have ultra-violet (or UV) vision. They use this to track down voles by following their trails of wee, which glow brightly in UV! Bees can also see in UV. This allows them to spot brightly-coloured patterns on a flower's petals that point them to the nectar-filled centres. Bee-eautiful!

When salmon migrate from the sea to breed in freshwater rivers and streams, they switch to infra-red vision. This helps them to find their way through the murkier water – it must be like putting on a pair of night-vision swimming goggles! Mosquitoes use infra-red sense for a different purpose – to detect the warm blood of their tasty targets. Ouch!



Robin © Tom Hibbert

## ANIMAL MAGNETISM

**M**any animals – such as sea turtles, birds and butterflies – can sense the magnetic force or field that surrounds the Earth. This is known as magneto-reception. They use this magical ability to make a 'magnetic map' of the world around them.

Migrating birds have a brilliant built-in compass that guides them on their long-distance journeys, but exactly where this is found in their bodies is a bit of a mystery. Some scientists think a chemical called *cryptochrome* – which has been discovered in the eyes of robins – could be the source of this super-power, while others believe a pigeon's incredible sense of direction is due to a magnetic material called *magnetite* hidden somewhere in the bird's head! Coo-!!



Salmon © Linda Pittin / 2020VISION



Kestrel © Luke Massey / 2020VISION



A bat's ultrasonic squeals can hit 140 decibels (that's louder than a motorbike!), but most are too high-pitched for humans to hear.

## ECHO, ECHO, ECHO...

**A** super sense of sound, called echolocation, helps some creatures hunt in a world of darkness! Dolphins and porpoises, searching for fish in the gloomy depths of the sea, send out beams of sound waves, which bounce off anything that blocks their way. Listening to these invisible echoes gives the marine mammals lots of information about any potential prey out there – what it is, where it is and even which species of fish it is!

Bats also use echolocation. Their high-pitched squeaks reflect off flying insects and back to their sensitive ears, helping them to hone in on these miniature midnight snacks (and avoid any obstacles in their flight path) in the dark dead of night. Sonar, so good!



Blue shark © Dan Bolt / underwaterpics.co.uk

## SMELL

Salmon can remember the scent of the stream in which they were born – even after four years at sea!

## SOUND

Many moths have super-sensitive hearing that can pick up a bat's high-pitched squeaks. But the greater wax moth can hear sounds higher than any bat can produce!

## SIGHT

A buzzard's eyesight is eight times sharper than yours!



## TASTE

Wels catfish (which were introduced to the UK over 130 years ago) have over 250,000 taste buds! Humans only have about 10,000.

## TOUCH

A common seal uses its incredibly sensitive whiskers to 'feel' the wake a fish leaves behind as it swims. There are 1,500 nerve cells in each whisker!

## ELECTRO INFO

**S**harks (and their relatives, skates and rays) possess a shocking superpower! These fish (which belong to a group called *elasmobranchs*) can sense the tiny electric currents produced by the moving muscles of prey. This amazing skill is called electro-reception. The electrical signals are picked up by special sensory organs on the shark's snout called *ampullae of Lorenzini*.

This electrifying sense works well in water because it's a good conductor of electricity, but bumblebees also use electro-reception in mid-air! Fine hairs on the bee's body can sense changes in the static electricity that surrounds a flower. This tells the bee if the flower has already been visited by another insect or whether it's worth landing on!

Mosquitoes can sense the carbon dioxide that a person breathes out!

Buff-tailed bumblebee © Vaughn Matthews





# 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



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wildlifewatch.org.uk

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12



1) Peregrine by Joseph, aged 6

We love the way Joseph brought this peregrine falcon to life in 3D!

2) Wildcat by Cara, aged 7

We're thrilled Cara was inspired to draw the Scottish wildcat, one of the UK's rarest animals.

3) Foliage by Lucy-Grace, aged 8

This gorgeous scene from Lucy-Grace shows true creativity!

4) Great bustard by Rowan, aged 9

A fantastic painting! These enormous birds are being reintroduced in southern England.

5) Ringed plover by Emily, aged 9

Emily has shared a fantastic fact file on her chosen bird!

6) Barn owl by Edith, aged 7

This is a spectacular nighttime scene, with an owl tucked away safely in a tree.

7) Seahorse by Erin, aged 11

Who doesn't love a seahorse! Did you know there are two species in UK seas?

8) Peregrine by Florence, aged 11

Another perfect peregrine falcon! The level of detail in Florence's drawing is incredible.

9) Pheasant by Poppy, aged 9

Poppy has done an amazing job of recreating the golden glow of a male pheasant.

10) Goldcrest by Phoebe, aged 12

A wonderful drawing of our smallest bird. It feels right at home in a fir tree.

11) Squirrel by Shreya, aged 10

This squirrel looks very pleased with itself for finding a tasty acorn.

12) Wildlife by Signay, aged 9

Signay has done a great job on all three animals – a grey heron, a wasp, and a kingfisher.

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](mailto: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

If we did any of this it would be called bad manners, but for wild animals it's a way of life!



## THIS ISSUE: HORRID HABITS by Tom Hibbert

### FULMAR



When fulmars feel threatened, they have a sick solution. Both adults and chicks can vomit a stream of stinking oil. They aim at whatever disturbed them – whether it's a predatory bird or a seabird scientist – and can hit targets two metres away! If a bird is hit, the oil can stick its feathers together and eventually cause its death.

### SCORPION FLY



Scorpion flies have a habit of stealing. They sometimes creep onto spiderwebs and eat the insects that the spider has caught. Males might offer this pilfered prey as a present to a female – or they might offer a bubble of their own spit instead!

### RABBIT



Rabbits eat plants that can be hard to digest. Their stomach can't get all the nutrients out of them. But as the food turns to poo, it breaks down and makes more nutrients available. By now it's too late for the rabbit to absorb them, so it eats its own poo to get the extra nutrients. Hares do this too.

### FIELDFARE



Poo can also be used as a weapon! Some birds will fly above predators and fire poo at them, trying to chase them away from their nest. Fieldfares often call for backup, with whole flocks poo-bombing predators that threaten the colony.

### BLOODY-NOSED BEETLE



Lots of people get nosebleeds, but bleeding from your face on purpose is a bit odd! When bloody-nosed beetles feel threatened, they ooze a bright red liquid from their mouth. The liquid tastes terrible, causing predators to think twice before eating them.

### FLIES



Last issue we talked about flies tasting with their feet, which is kind of gross. But it's not as gross as what some flies do with their food. Before eating, they vomit all over it! The juices help make dry and solid food easier for the fly to suck up.

### STARFISH



If you think vomiting on your food is disgusting, starfish take it to another level. They use their strong arms to pry open the shells of mussels and similar sea creatures. They then push their stomach out of their body and into the shell, to digest their prey.

### HOOPOE



Hoopoes are rare visitors to the UK, but common in southern Europe. When nesting, the female covers herself and her eggs with a stinky brown liquid – it smells of rotting meat! This goo is full of good bacteria that helps protect the bird, and probably the eggs, from harmful bacteria in the nest.

## Bioblitz your grass: set up a quadrat

Finding out what's in your grass is the first place to start when measuring its biodiversity.

- You will need
- Four pegs or sticks
  - Brightly coloured string or wool
  - A measuring stick or ruler
  - 10X hand lens
  - Notebook and pen
  - Camera or smartphone (to document your findings)
  - Spotter guides to help identify what you find

- 1 Firstly decide on the size of your quadrat (we recommend creating a square at least 50cmx50cm) and select a random spot in a grassy patch.
- 2 Push your pegs or sticks into the ground to form the four corners. Wrap your string or wool around the outside of all four pegs to create a square.
- 3 Use the spotter guides to identify the different plants and insects within the square and note down how many of each species you see.
- 4 Repeat on a different patch of grass and/or at a different time of day. The more you repeat, the more accurate your biodiversity snapshot will be!
- 5 Why not survey the area several times throughout the year? You'll be amazed what appears as your grass grows.



Setting up a quadrat is a great way to get a snapshot of what's living in your grass. You might be able to identify different leaves, wildflowers and wildlife depending on whether your grass is long or short, in sun or shade, wet or dry.



www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk Join the nationwide lawn bioblitz! Show us what you've found using #WildAboutLawns







I'm **Magdalena** and I am a scientist in the Plant Health Team at the RHS garden Wisley. I am constantly in awe of nature and fascinated by the relationships between plants and insects.

Lawns are fun for playing games, picnicking and feeling cool grass between your toes. If we let them grow a little longer, they reveal their hidden flowers and transform into mini animal havens, full of scurrying, buzzing, and chirping wildlife.

# LIVING LAWNS

by Dr Magdalena Boshoff



Ask your parents to check out our guide to growing a wilder lawn at [wildaboutgardens.org.uk](http://wildaboutgardens.org.uk)

Six-spot burnet on red clover © Guy Edwardes / 2020VISION



## EGGS AND BACON

Also known as bird's-foot-trefoil, eggs and bacon is a plant related to peas. It has clusters of deep yellow flowers tinged with red (like the colour of eggs and bacon). Its seedpods resemble a bird's claws. The leaves have five oval leaflet sections. It's loved by all kinds of bees for its nectar and pollen. The leaves are food for the caterpillars of the common blue, silver-studded blue and wood white butterflies.



## CLOVERS

Look out for two types of clovers in your lawn: white clover and red clover. Their strong-smelling flowers can be white, pink or red. Each stem has three small leaves (or leaflets) with a white "v" pattern. Clovers make soil healthier and support large numbers of insects, including common blue butterflies and the five- and six-spot burnet moths.



## AUTUMN LADY'S TRESSES

If you're really lucky you might find an orchid in your lawn. Autumn lady's tresses is a delicate orchid with white flowers that grow in a tightly packed spiral around a short stem. Each flower has a green-centred lip with a frilly white edge, smelling of coconut! It's mainly pollinated by bumblebees. It's increasingly rare, but prefers short grass so can be found in garden lawns.



## CREEPING BUTTERCUP

The glossy, butter-yellow flowers of creeping buttercups shout summer and sunshine. Lots of insect life loves this plant, from fly larvae living inside the leaves to shiny beetles feeding on the pollen. Pollinators feed on nectar from under a small flap at the bottom of each petal. These include hoverflies, sawflies, long-tongued mason or bumblebees, small moths, butterflies, and wasps.



## DAISIES

These cheerful and loveable flowers open as the day brightens and close as the day fades, like eyes! That's why they're called day's eyes or daisies. Each flower has a bright yellow center that's rich in nectar and pollen, surrounded by two to three rows of white and pink-edged petals. The stem grows from a group of dark green, spoon-shaped leaves. They're a food fest for lots of insects, from hoverflies to bees and pollen beetles.



## DANDELION

The bright yellow blooms of dandelions are a sure sign of spring. Popping up overnight creating a cheerful display followed by bouncy seed heads floating on long stalks. The word "dandelion" means "lion's tooth," named due to its jagged leaves. The leaves are a tasty treat to caterpillars of the shears, dotted rustic, ruby tiger, and buff and white ermine moths.



## TOUCH-AND-HEAL

Selfheal, also called touch-and-heal, is a plant known for its healing properties. The small, tubular flowers have two lips and grow in clusters on a spire-like stem. They start with a flush of pink, turning purple, then maroon before fading to brown. Hairs inside the flower stop smaller insects getting to the nectar whilst bees with stronger mouthparts feast away!



## GERMANDER SPEEDWELL

Germander speedwell takes its name from the saying "speed you well" because it grows along roadsides, encouraging travelers on their way. It has bright blue flowers, with four petals and a white middle. The flowers are particularly attractive to small solitary bees, such as the tiny mining bee *Andrena labiata* – although hoverflies also visit them. Ants eat the seeds, which helps spread them around.

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Discover the dolphins and their relatives that live around the UK!

# A Whale of a Time

by Gemma Newman

**HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A DOLPHIN?** In summer, the warm water around the UK is home to huge shoals of small fish – and up to 28 species of dolphins, whales, and porpoises that hunt them! When grouped together, these species are often called cetaceans. Many can be seen from the coast, especially with a pair of binoculars. Next time you are near the sea, see if you can spy any of these cetaceans:



I'm **Gemma** and I'm part of Cornwall Wildlife Trust. I love standing on clifftops with my binoculars, watching super pods of common dolphins having fun at sea.



## Harbour porpoise



**T**he smallest cetacean in the UK, growing up to 1.9 metres long. They have a short, triangular fin on their back (dorsal fin) that can be seen when they come to the surface. This shy species is usually found in small groups, making it difficult to spot even though it is Europe's most common cetacean. In the UK, you can see harbour porpoises from most coasts, though they're rarer around southeast England.

## Bottlenose dolphin



**T**hese large dolphins are serious ocean acrobats! They are playful and live in groups, often of around 10 dolphins, but sometimes more. They are grey all over and have a large curving dorsal fin in the middle of their back. You can find them all around the UK, especially in the Moray Firth in Scotland, Cardigan Bay in Wales, and off the coast of Cornwall in England.

## White-beaked dolphin



**W**hite-beaked dolphins enjoy the cooler waters of the UK. They can regularly be spotted in Lyme Bay in Devon, the Hebrides and northeast England. They are black dolphins with white sides and a noticeable white beak; another feature to look out for is their tall curved dorsal fin. These dolphins live in groups of around 10 animals and love to bow ride at the front of boats. In summer, they can often be seen with young calves.

## Orca



**O**rcas are sometimes known as killer whales. Although we call them 'whales', they're actually the world's largest dolphin species! They can grow up to 9.8 metres long and are mostly black with a white eye patch. You can recognise them by their enormous dorsal fin halfway along their back. They live in tight family groups with their own language of whistles and can be found in Northern Scotland.

## Common dolphin



**S**hort-beaked common dolphins spend most of their time out at sea. We see them closer to shore when they are hunting together and rounding up fish into big balls to eat. These dolphins can make super pods of hundreds of individual animals! They have an hourglass pattern of dark grey, light grey and yellow on their side. They're most common along the west and south coasts of the UK.

## Risso's dolphin



**I**f you see a big, blunt white head pop up, it could be a Risso's dolphin. These dolphins can launch out of the water and slap their tails on the surface, making an almighty splash! Risso's are born dark grey but as they age can turn white with scratches and scars from fighting and hunting squid. They like the deep water offshore and are mostly seen around the north of the UK and sometimes in Cornwall, western Wales and Ireland.

## Minke whale



**T**he northern minke whale is the most common whale species in the UK, and also the smallest. They have long, grey bodies with a 'C' shaped fin near their tail. Minke have white bands on their side fins nicknamed 'minke mittens', which help them trick little fish into swimming straight into their mouth in one massive gulp. They can be spotted near the shore around the UK, but they are rare in the English Channel.

## Humpback whale



**H**umpback whales are around twice as long as minke whales – up to 18 metres. They migrate worldwide, hunting along the west and north coasts of the UK. They have knobby heads and front flippers that are so long they look like wings! They give an explosive, three-metre-tall blow of water when they come to the surface. They also have distinctive markings on their tail that scientists can use to tell them apart.



# STONE CURLEW



## HIDE AND SEEK CHAMPIONS

**S**tone curlews are bizarre birds, with long yellow legs and huge, bulging yellow eyes. They belong to a group of birds known as wading birds, but you won't find these waders on a lake or seashore. They like dry, stony ground. In the UK they're only found in eastern and southern England, on sandy heaths, farmland and short, dry grassland.

Stone curlews nest on the ground, out in the open. They rely on their amazing camouflage to keep them safe – their sandy feathers blend in perfectly with the ground. Their eggs are so well camouflaged that if an adult sees a predator, they'll creep away from the nest and leave the eggs exposed. This might seem risky, but the predator will have a much harder time finding the nest if there's no bird sitting on it.

## BOUNCING BACK

**S**tone curlews are rare in the UK. There are only around 360 pairs that nest here. But they used to be even rarer. They struggled because farm machinery was accidentally destroying their well-hidden nests, but also because we lost lots of the short grassy areas they like to live in.



### ESSENTIAL FACTS

**Scientific name**  
*Burhinus oedipnemos*

**Size**  
Length: 38-45cm

**Amazing fact**  
Sometimes stone curlews decorate their nest with rabbit poo!

Luckily, conservationists stepped in to help. They worked with farmers to find stone curlew nests and mark them, so they wouldn't be destroyed by machinery. They also used grazing animals like sheep to create short grasslands where stone curlews could nest. In some places, rabbits help keep the grass nice and short, just the way the stone curlews like it.

## GOGGLE EYES

**T**his strange looking bird has been given some equally unusual names in the past, including the wailing heath chicken and the goggle-eyed plover. Those big, goggle-like eyes come in useful. Stone curlews like to feed at night and their big eyes help them spot worms, beetles and other prey when there isn't much light.

## WINTER SUN

**S**tone curlews don't usually spend the whole year in the UK. They arrive around March to nest and raise their chicks. In autumn, they leave again, heading south to find a warmer place to spend the winter. They head to southern Europe or northern Africa, visiting countries including Spain, Portugal, Algeria and Morocco.

# HOW DO PLANTS GET ENERGY?



**W**e get our energy from breathing oxygen and eating food, but plants don't have mouths – so where does all their energy come from?

## FUN IN THE SUN

Most plants have an incredible superpower. They can turn sunlight into food! This amazing process is called photosynthesis. The plants take in water, mostly through their roots, and a gas called carbon dioxide, mostly through their leaves. Special structures called chloroplasts capture the energy from sunlight, then the plants use that energy to turn the water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and sugars. These sugars give them the energy they need to live and grow.

## SUGAR STEALERS

Some plants have evolved a super sneaky method of getting their food. They steal it from other plants! Around 1% of the world's flowering plants get their food in this way. They connect themselves to the host plant and take water, sugars and nutrients from them. Some of these plants can make their own energy from photosynthesis and just top up their supply with stolen sugars. Other plants have lost the ability to photosynthesise completely and must steal to survive. A few weird plants around the world even grow inside the host plant, only appearing on the outside when it's time to flower.

## FATAL FLOWERS

Plants might not have mouths, but that doesn't stop some species from 'eating' insects! We call these carnivorous plants. There are hundreds of them around the world and they've developed wonderfully weird ways of catching prey. Some trap them in liquid-filled pockets, others snare them with sticky substances. Once they've caught an insect, they digest it and soak up the nutrients. We have carnivorous plants right here in the UK, like sundews and common butterwort.

Broomrape © Vaughn Matthews



Broomrapes steal food from other plants



Sundews snag insects with sticky droplets

Red and white clover © Vaughn Matthews

Sundew © Ben Hall / 2020VISION



# COMPETITIONS

WIN

## OLIVER THE OTTER BUNDLE!

**I** am Oliver the Otter is a heart-warming rhyming story about a little otter called Oliver, written by beloved poet Pam Ayres and beautifully illustrated by award-winning artist Nicola O'Byrne. It's full of nature details and fun facts about otters. Our lucky winners will get a copy of the book, a sticker sheet, and an *I am Oliver the Otter* art print.



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

Buy the book online at [wtru.st/oliver-otter](http://wtru.st/oliver-otter)  
RRP: £12.99

**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:**

Just answer this question. Which bird is also known as a goggle-eyed plover? (Clue: the answer is in the magazine)

WIN

## A LITTLE DOSE OF NATURE!

**A** Little Dose of Nature is a gentle guide to being outside that helps young children make the most of all the good that nature can do for our mental health. It's packed full of activities, from squelching in mud to using paper cones to listen in on the inside of a tree!



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Tell us your favourite activity to do in nature!

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**G**et closer views of your favourite wildlife with this easy to assemble binoculars kit! Made from sustainable cardboard, the pieces just slot together with no glue, no mess and no fuss.

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**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:**

Answer this question. What is an orca?  
a) A fish  
b) A dolphin  
c) A porpoise

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](mailto: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: 31 August 2023**

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