

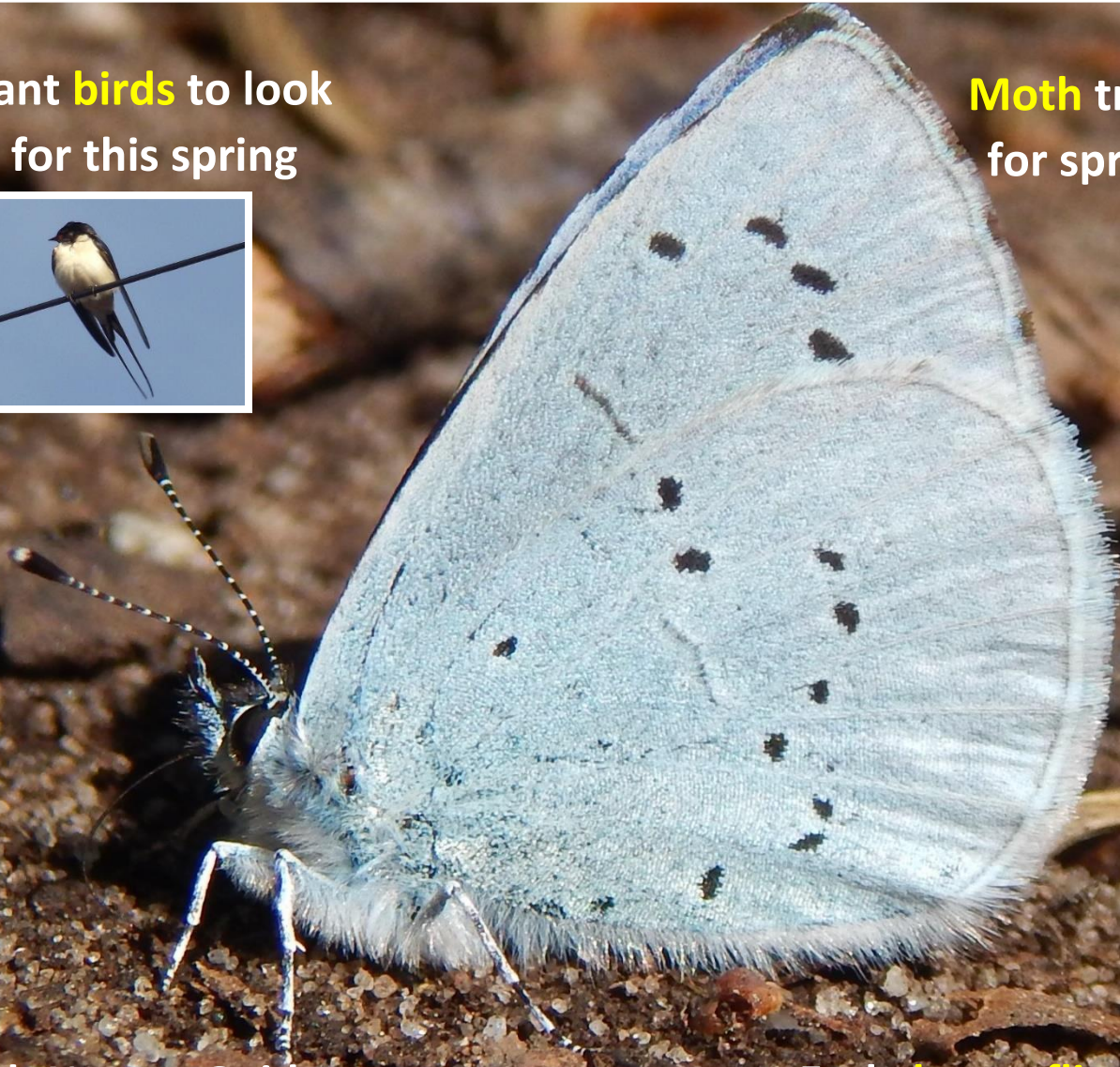
britishnatureguide.com

Our world is worth saving

Migrant **birds** to look
out for this spring



Moth trap news
for springtime



British Nature Guide on tour
Tennessee, California & the
Azores

Early **butterflies** and the
wildflowers they need to
survive



For fun, for knowledge
and for nature

Trip Report
Bowers Marsh RSPB
Reserve

Adults and teens e-magazine #1 – Spring 2019

Welcome to the first British Nature Guide e-magazine for adults and teens

Our aim is to encourage a wider appreciation of nature in all of its forms. You will find topical features about British wildlife, as well as articles about threats to our natural environment.

For those who like to see wildlife abroad, the British Nature Guide on tour pages will include profiles of some of the species our team have seen and information about the places we have visited.

We hope that you discover something new in the magazine, but most of all we hope that you enjoy reading it and that it inspires you to get out and to spend quality time with nature.



Cockchafer
or May Bug

Did you know?

The smallest butterfly in Britain is the Small Blue with a wingspan of around 2cm.

The largest butterfly in Britain is the Swallowtail with a wingspan of around 9cm.

Cover photo

Holly Blue
taken at
Shakerley
Mere Cheshire
in April 2017



Recent arrivals in Britain

Harlequin Ladybirds are native to Asia. Since the 1980s they have been deliberately introduced to North America and Europe to control aphids.

The first Harlequins arrived accidentally in Britain in 2004. They have now spread all over the country.



They are very variable in appearance, some are black with random red spots, others red with two or four black spots.

It is not yet clear how much damage will be done to our native species by this invader.

What you will find in this issue

Page 3 – Trip report for Bowers Marsh RSPB Reserve in Essex

Page 4 – Six butterflies to look for in springtime

Page 5 – Interesting wildlife facts

Page 6 – Wildlife photo quiz

Page 7 – Summer migrant bird list

Page 8 – Sixteen things to look for with children in March

Page 9 & 10 – Climate Change – Don't do nothing!

Page 11 – Climate Change, the consequences of inaction

Page 12 – Moth trapping: Cheshire

Page 13 – Record breaking birds

Page 14 – Four species to look for in springtime

Page 15 – wildlife & wild places outside Britain

Page 16 – British Nature Guide on tour: Tennessee

Page 17 – British Nature Guide on tour: California

Page 18 – Cuban endemics

Page 19 – The Blue Jay: An appreciation

Page 20 – British Nature Guide on tour: The Azores

Page 21 – Information about our website

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Youtube British Nature Guide

And our website <http://www.britishnatureguide.com/>

Recommend a nature reserve – Bowers Marsh

Bowers Marsh (RSPB)

Location: Bowers Gifford, Essex

Directions by public transport:



Pitsea station (London, Tilbury and Southend line) is around 3.3km from the reserve. On leaving the station walk to the end of Station Approach and turn right to follow the path around 0.5km to the underpass beneath the A13. On the other side of the underpass turn right past Lidl onto London Road which stretches 1km until a right turning onto Church Road (you will come across a Bowers Marsh RSPB sign at this point). Follow the footpath over the A13 and then turn left. With Pitsea Cemetery on your right walk along the road another 0.5km until you reach a right turning which leads down a continuation of Church Road a further 1km towards the reserve. Once past St Margaret's Church walk under the railway bridge and you will see the reserve entrance on your left.

Birds

Bowers Marsh can host a wide range of waders including Avocet, Redshank, Greenshank, Lapwing, Dunlin, Grey Plover, Oystercatcher, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Snipe, Green Sandpiper and Ruff. Occasional rarer species have also occurred in recent years including Red-necked Phalarope, Glossy Ibis, Black-winged Stilt, Spoonbill, Black-necked Grebe and Little Stint. Recurrent duck species include Garganey, Pintail, Gadwall and Shoveler with Wigeon present in large numbers through the winter months.



The reserve is a notable haven for Corn Buntings with Bearded Tit, Skylark, Stonechat, Reed Bunting and Meadow Pipit also present throughout the year. Barnacle Geese and White-fronted Geese can sometimes be found amidst the large gatherings of Canada Geese while Rooks and Jackdaws sometimes feature amidst a mixed flock of corvids. The marsh offers fertile ground for raptors with Sparrowhawk, Marsh Harrier and Short-eared Owl all possibilities.

Approaching the reserve on foot can have its advantages as a pleasing range of species can often be seen en route including Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Greenfinch, Song Thrush, Kestrel, Buzzard and Pheasant. A winter visit is likely to bring Fieldfares and Redwings in the adjacent fields while you might be fortunate enough to find a Lesser Whitethroat in the hedges lining the road during the late spring.



Other wildlife

Bowers Marsh hosts a wide range of standard butterflies including Brown Argus while Small Tortoiseshells can be notable for their abundance early in the season. As at nearby Vange Marsh, Wall Browns occur in small numbers though can be elusive. It is worth keeping an eye out for moths including Clouded Silver and the more common dragonflies including Common Darter and Black-tailed Skimmer. Once within the reserve it is not unusual to find a Red Fox trotting along the path ahead.

Pros and cons

As RSPB wardens will helpfully point out, it is a long walk from Pitsea to Bowers Marsh. Once familiar with the route however it is a far from disagreeable one as once across the A13 flyover the approach to the reserve becomes ever more serene until the sound of traffic completely fades. If in need of recuperation there are benches within the peaceful grounds of St Margaret's Church a short distance from the reserve.

Few wildlife reserves provide the same sense of quietly enjoying a vast open space and being at one with nature as Bowers Marsh. So remote is the setting that there is little prospect of an unwelcome diversion when viewing or photographing birds. While the walking involved in getting there and back via public transport may not be ideal (fatigue can begin to set in on the return leg), the effort involved can feel well worthwhile after a well-timed visit.



*Feature contributor can be found on
Twitter @Apturailia15*

Six butterflies to look for in springtime in Britain

Find the flowers that they feed on and the host plants for the caterpillars and with luck you will find the butterflies

Brimstone – *Gonepteryx rhamni*

Found over most of England and Wales. Often seen flying on sunny days before the end of February. Will feed on a large number of early flowers including Red Deadnettle, Knapweed & Dandelions. They lay their eggs on Buckthorn or Alder Buckthorn.



Orange-tip – *Anthocharis cardamines*

Found over most of Britain, only absent from the north of Scotland. Usually some are on the wing before the end of March. Orange-tip have a particular liking for Lady's-smock where it lays its eggs, but will also feed on other wildflowers including Greater Stitchwort and Dandelions.



Holly Blue – *Celastrina argiolus*

Found over most of England and Wales. The first brood of the year can be seen from the end of March until the end of May. They will feed on a wide variety of flowers including Blackthorn, Cotoneaster and even the first of the year's Rosebay Willowherb. Eggs are laid on Holly in the early part of the year and on Ivy later in the year. Should really be called the Holly and Ivy Blue.



Peacock – *Inachis io*

Found over most of Britain, only absent from northern Scotland. With its wings open it is one of our most colourful butterflies. In contrast, the underwings are almost black allowing this species to hibernate unseen in dark outbuildings over the winter. They feed on many plants including Dandelions, Knapweed and Hemp Agrimony, and lay their eggs on Stinging Nettles.



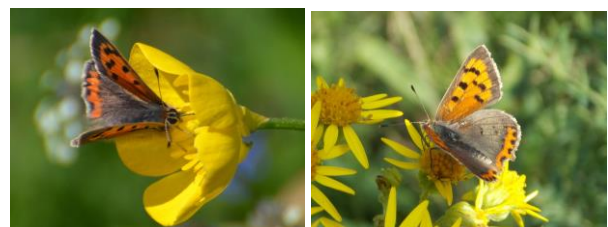
Small Tortoiseshell – *Aglais urticae*

Found all over Britain, but numbers have reduced considerably over the last few years. Feeding on lots of flowers including Brambles, Thistles, Dandelions and Ragwort. Lays its eggs on Stinging Nettles.



Small Copper – *Lycaena phlaeas*

Found over most of Britain, absent from the Highlands and north of Scotland. This tiny butterfly likes areas with low cropped vegetation and will feed on Daisies, Ragwort, Thistles and Dandelions, laying its eggs on Sorrel.



Some interesting facts about our wildlife

A sad fact

Only one species of bird which has bred in Britain during the last two hundred years has since become extinct.

Can you name the species?

The answer is on page 11

Just for fun

What is Nidification?

You will find the answer on the last page

A few Mole facts

They can live for more than 5 years.

They can tunnel through the ground at more than 10 metres an hour.

There are thought to be more than 30 million Moles in Britain.

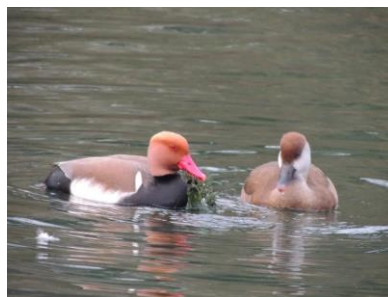
They are only about 12cm long.

Males are called Boars and females are called Sows



Mole *Talpa europaea*

Two species which have become established in the wild in Britain during the last 30 years



Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

An introduced species. Quite large numbers of this duck winter in Britain and a few dozen pairs do breed. Its stronghold is East Anglia and South-east England.



Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

This species naturally colonized Britain from mainland Europe. Until 30 years ago it was a rarity, but now it can be found all over the country, with a breeding population approaching 1000 pairs.

Did you know?

Spiders are invertebrates but they are not insects.

Insects have three body segments and six legs, most have antennae and wings.

Spiders are Arachnids. They have only two body segments, no antennae or wings, and eight legs.

Do you know which species of bird had the alternative name of Jack Curlew in Britain up to the middle of the 20th century?

You will find the answer on page 7

British Wildlife Quiz – Spring is here

For fun, for knowledge and for nature

Test your knowledge. How many can you identify?

The answers (common names) are on the next page



British Nature Guide



One



Two



Three



Four



Five



Six



Seven



Eight



Nine



Ten



Eleven



Twelve

All of the birds on the list below are summer visitors to Britain

Why not do some citizen science of your own and record when you first and last see them this year?

Get children involved if you can and encourage the next generation of naturalists.

Species	Date first seen	Date last seen
Swallow		
House Martin		
Sand Martin		
Swift		
Garden Warbler		
Chiffchaff		
Willow Warbler		
Lesser Whitethroat		
Reed Warbler		
Sedge Warbler		
Blackcap		
Whitethroat		
Grasshopper Warbler		
Cuckoo		
Redstart		
Pied Flycatcher		
Whinchat		
Spotted Flycatcher		
Yellow Wagtail		
Ring Ouzel		
Wheatear		
Arctic Tern		
Common Tern		
Sandwich Tern		
Common Sandpiper		
Turtle Dove		

Always a favourite bird, the Robin, no matter what time of year.



Answer to question on page 5

The bird once known as the Jack Curlew was the Whimbrel. Like the Jack Snipe it was a slightly smaller version of a familiar bird.

Answers to Quiz 42

Photo one - Colt's-foot

Photo two - Primrose (pink variant)

Photo three - Green Shieldbug (still in winter colour)

Photo four - Song Thrush

Photo five - Horse Chestnut Blossom

Photo six - Wood Aven

Photo seven - Alder Fly

Photo eight - Green-veined White

Photo nine - Hebrew Character

Photo ten - Brown Argus

Photo eleven - Reed Warbler

Photo twelve - Banded Demoiselle

Spring is a great time to encourage children to get out to see nature

16 Interesting things to look for in March

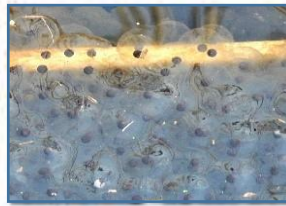
Look for a woodland area with clearings for flowers and insects as well as slow running streams or natural ponds



Scarlet Elf Cup fungi



Wrens singing



Frogspawn in ponds



Broom in blossom



Brimstone



Red Deadnettle



Colt's-foot



Seven-spot Ladybird



Primrose



Early Bumblebee



Bluetit



Garden Snails



Lapwing breeding plumage



Lesser Celandine



Bushes in bud



Bracket Fungi on dead wood & trees

March is when nature really starts to come to life after a long cold winter. It is warmer and the days are longer. Early flowers such as Lesser Celandine and Colt's-foot start to appear. The birds start to develop their brighter breeding plumages and bushes start to bud.

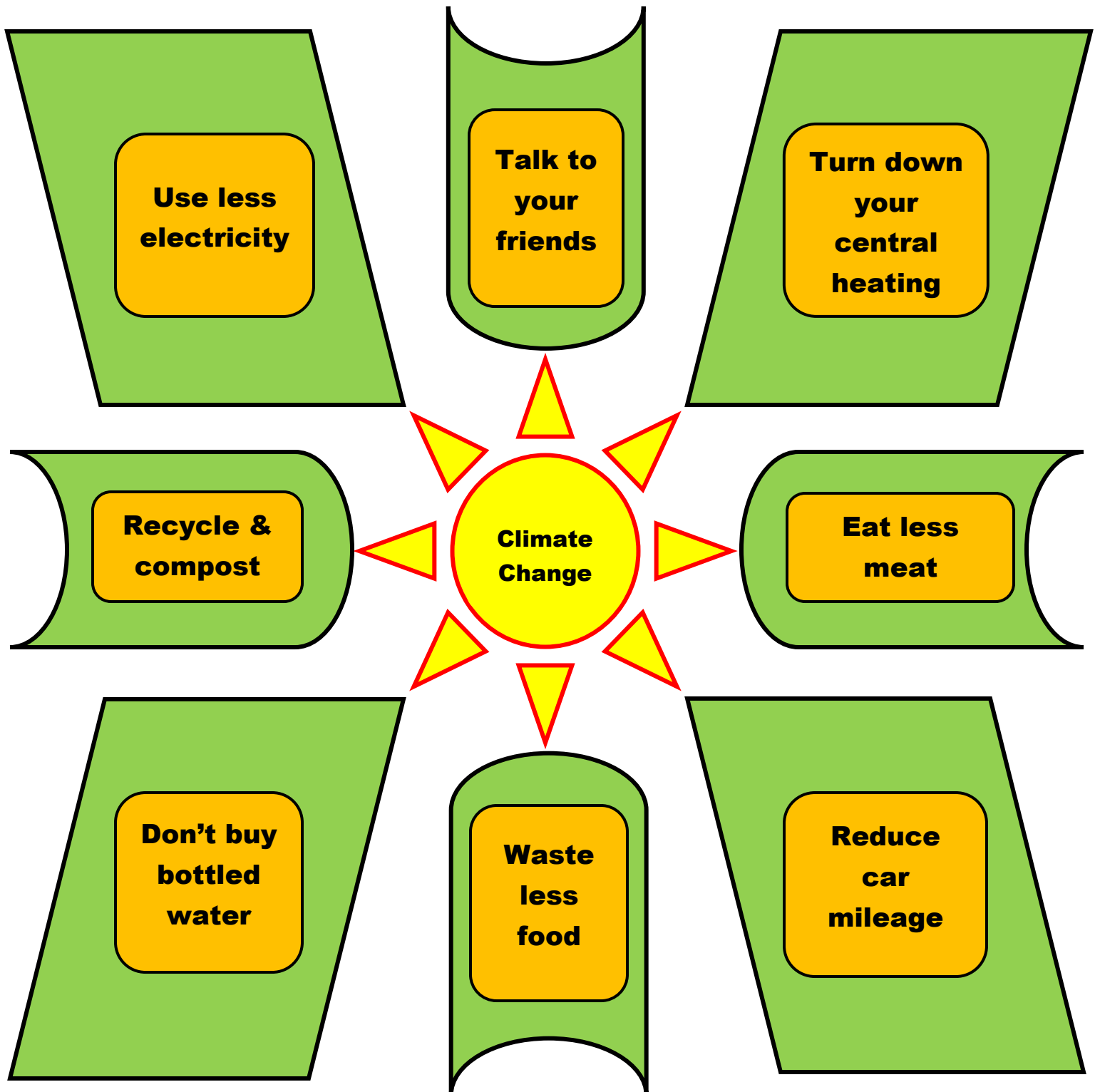
You can still see plenty of fungi from the previous autumn, with Bracket Fungi being the most obvious. Spring fungi like Scarlet Elf Cups can brighten woodland floors.

Some insects are starting to emerge and there are usually a few bees and ladybirds around on sunny days. Frogs are already breeding and with luck Frogspawn can be found.

Our world is worth saving – Don't do nothing!

Eight things we can all do to slow down the rate of Global Warming and to lessen the effects of Climate Change

Go to the next page for more information about each of the headings



Our world is worth saving - Don't do nothing!

Use less electricity

Use energy efficient light bulbs and electrical appliances.

Turn off lights and appliances when not in use. (Do not leave on standby)

Only boil the water you need. (kettles use a lot of electricity)

Always do full loads in dishwashers and washing machines and use the most economic cycle.

Don't wash clothes after a single use.

Dry washing outside when the weather is fine rather than using a dryer.

Don't do nothing!

Talk to our friends

Not just friends, talk to family, acquaintances, work colleagues, in fact anyone who will listen.

Let everyone know that the situation is far too serious to be ignored and that it is not going to go away, or get better on its own.

Don't do nothing!

Turn down your central heating

This one is easy to do, it doesn't have to be much. Just 1°C can help to save the environment and reduce your bills at the same time.

Turn radiators down in rooms that you are not using, and don't leave the heating on full while you are away from the house.

Don't do nothing!

Eat less meat

A third of farmland is used to produce feed for animals. Livestock farming consumes huge quantities of water, needing around 5000 gallons to produce one pound of beef.

Forests are destroyed to create more grazing land to produce 'cheap' beef.

Burning forests adds CO₂ to the atmosphere and reduces oxygen production.

Farm animals produce greenhouse gases.

Have meat free days, even one a week will help and try to eat smaller portions of meat and less dairy products.

Don't do nothing!

Recycle & compost

Most of us are used to sorting our waste for collection by the council, but there is more that we can do.

Set up your own compost bin to recycle your garden and food waste.

Buy loose fruit and vegetables in quantities you can use.

Buying locally produced food reduces the number of lorries on the road.

Look for shops where you can take and fill your own containers.

Don't do nothing!



Waste less food

Between 70-100kg of food is wasted by each person in the UK each year.

About 30% of all food bought is thrown away.

More than 300,000 tons of potatoes and a similar amount of bread are thrown away each year, and nearly 200,000 tons of apples are wasted.

Overall more than 4 million tons of food is thrown away every year in Britain.

This is a terrible waste. Just think how much fossil fuel was used to transport it from where it was produced to the shops, and then on to our homes.

If food waste was halved it would prevent millions of tons of CO₂ from being pumped into the atmosphere.

Don't do nothing!

Reduce car mileage

There are over 30 million cars in the UK. If each car did two miles less a week that would equate to 3 billion miles a year saved. The numbers are staggering.

Try to walk, cycle or use public transport for one journey a week. Get the most out of your car, drive for best fuel efficiency.

Car share if you can, or just do a couple less leisure miles. Together we can reduce CO₂ emissions by huge amounts and improve our air quality.

Don't do nothing!

Don't buy bottled water

Bottled water is heavy, bulky and expensive and needs thousands of lorries to distribute it through the UK.

Using bottled water creates thousands of tons of CO₂ emissions and huge amounts of unnecessary plastic waste.

Please do your bit by drinking tap water whenever you can.

Don't do nothing!

Climate Change – it's time to take it seriously

Even if we did everything suggested on the previous page it would not be enough to stop Climate Change. It would be a few steps in the right direction, but we must do far more.

A few of the consequences of not taking action

Temperatures will rise causing severe fluctuations in weather patterns

Hurricanes and storms will become more deadly and frequent

Wildfires will burn down forests

Farmland and woodland will be lost to desertification

The ice will melt in the Arctic and Antarctic, and glaciers throughout the world will retreat

Sea levels will rise, low lying coastal areas will flood and some islands will become uninhabitable

Answer to the question on page 5 – the Great Auk is only bird which has bred in Britain over the last 200 years and since become extinct. It last bred in Britain in 1840. On 3rd June 1844 both members of the last known breeding pair were clubbed to death on Eldey Island near Iceland.

Such a sad way to end millions of years of evolution.

Recent arrivals in Britain

Rosemary Leaf Beetles

These beautiful beetles were first recorded in Britain in 1994. They feed on Rosemary as their name would suggest, but will also feed on Sage, Thyme and Lavender.



They can be found over most of England and Wales. Not popular with gardeners as both the beetles and their larvae eat the new shoots on plants.

Herb-Robert



Geranium robertianum

Did you know?

In 1800 the Passenger Pigeon in North America was the most numerous bird in the world? The population was estimated at more than five billion. Forest clearance and industrial scale hunting decimated their numbers. The last wild bird died just a hundred years later. The last member of the species died in captivity in 1914. Gone forever.

A special thank you to all litter-pickers

Have you ever gone for a walk in the countryside or on the beach and had the whole experience ruined by litter that has been thrown from cars, washed up on the shore, or been discarded thoughtlessly by other pedestrians? Yes of course you have. We all have.

I would just like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to each and every person who gives up their own free time to pick this litter up. It is an unpleasant, thankless and never ending task. These wonderful individuals and groups of volunteers set an example to us all.

Moth trapping news – Cheshire

What to expect from March - May

What to look out for in March

March is usually a quiet month in my garden with mainly dull-coloured moths in the trap. Expect Common Quaker, Dotted Border & Twenty-plume Moth. You might also see a few Pale Brindled Beauties and micro moths such as *Acleris notana*.

What to look out for in April

Numbers start to improve in April. Still plenty of Common Quaker, joined by Hebrew Character, Early Grey, Double-striped Pug & Clouded Drab. Look out for Common Plume and Black Sexton Beetle scurrying around the bottom of the trap. With luck you might see a Lunar Marbled Brown or a Brimstone.

What to look out for in May

Things start to hot up in the trap in May as the weather warms and the days get longer. Expect Spectacle, Shuttle-shaped Dart, Bee Moth, Clouded Bordered Brindle, Common Pug, Garden Carpet, Grey Pine Carpet, Light Brown Apple Moth, Mottled Pug, Scalloped Hazel, Powdered Quaker, Herald, Muslin Moth, Brimstone, Miller, Peppered Moth, Green Carpet, Double Square-spot, Common Swift, Seraphim, Flame Shoulder, Alder Moth, Angle Shades, Buff Ermine, Heart & Dart, Pale Tussock, Poplar Grey, Silver-ground Carpet, Spruce Carpet, Small Magpie, Treble-bar, Silver Y, Lime Hawk-moth & Chocolate-tip. Still some Black Sexton Beetles, but outnumbered by Cockchafer (May Bugs).



Far left Lunar Marbled Brown. Near left Hebrew Character. To the right Chocolate tip.



Far right Buff Ermine. Near right Lime Hawk-moth. To the left Herald.



Responsible moth trapping

If you do try your hand at moth trapping please make every effort to release the moths unharmed. Research the type of trap that would best suit you best on the internet. Do not use it every night. Please record what you find and share your records with your county moth group.

To discover what else has been trapped in Cheshire by our team over the last few years go to <http://www.britishnatureguide.com/moths.html#>

Record breaking birds

The Elephant Bird

Until about 400 years ago the heaviest and tallest bird in the world was the flightless Elephant Bird from Madagascar. It was over 3m in height and weighed as much as 500kg. As the human population increased they cut down the forests where the birds lived, and collected their eggs for food. The eggs were over 30cm in length and weighed as much as 10kg. The eggs were popular because each one provided the same amount of food as about 160 chicken's eggs.

The Ostrich

When the Elephant Bird died out the Ostrich became the heaviest and tallest bird in the world. The Ostrich lives in Africa. It is a very fast runner and can reach speeds of about 40 miles an hour. Most Ostriches are under 2.5m in height but some males can reach 2.8m tall. Weighing up to 120kg they are nowhere near as heavy as the Elephant Bird was. The Ostrich's eggs weigh just over 1kg. Each Ostrich egg provide the same amount of food as 20 chicken eggs.

The Wandering Albatross

The bird with the longest wingspan in the world is the Wandering Albatross. It has a wingspan of 3m. They can live for more than 60 years and fly as far as 10,000 miles in a single journey to collect food for their chick. The chick stays on the nest for 300 days, during this time they depend on their parents for food. They eat fish and jellyfish. Over the last few years lots of Albatrosses have been caught accidentally in fishing nets and killed. Wandering Albatrosses are now an endangered species, threatened with extinction.

The Bee Hummingbird

The smallest bird in the world is the Bee Hummingbird from Cuba. It weighs less than 2g and is only about 5cm long. Hummingbirds beat their wings more than 50 times a second, so fast that all you can see is a blur. They are the only birds that can fly backwards. Bee Hummingbird eggs are about 6mm in length, the same size as a pea. The nest is made out of cobwebs, twigs and lichen and is less than 3cm across.

Did you know?

More than 2600 species of moths have been seen in Britain.

The Brimstone – Butterfly or Moth?

The answer is both.



On the left is the Brimstone Butterfly
Gonepteryx rhamni.

On the right is the Brimstone Moth
Opisthograptis luteolata.

Both are fairly common species in Britain in the springtime.

Just for fun

Can you guess which species of bird breeding in Britain has the highest population?

To find the answer go to page 21

What's the birdie?

Two photos of a British bird. All you have to do is identify it.



Not sure, you will find the answer on
page 21

Four species profiles

Lesser Celandine - *Ranunculus ficaria*

One of the most widespread early flowering wildflowers in our woodlands, meadows and damp areas near streams and ponds. The glossy yellow flowers can often be found covering large areas.



Look out for them from February to May. Check for the heart-shaped, slightly mottled leaves. Because this species makes such an early appearance it is also known as the Spring Messenger.

It is in the same family as two other yellow flowers which can be found in similar habitats, the Buttercup and the Marsh Marigold.

Hedgehog – *Erinaceus europaeus*

Hedgehog numbers have been dropping in this country since the 1950s when there were thought to be over 30 million. It is hard to know exactly how much the population has declined, but it is likely that there are now less than a million left in Britain.



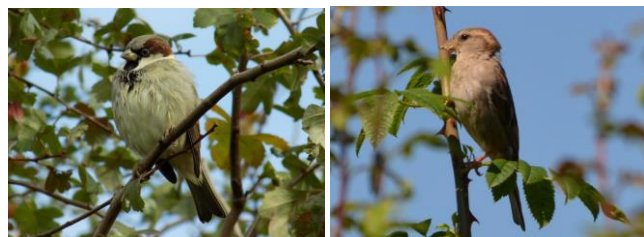
Hedgehogs need large territories to find enough food. They like overgrown gardens and eat a wide variety of things including worms, slugs and fruit.

With more roads and houses being built there is less space for them to hunt, and fewer places where they can overwinter safely.

Try to put a hole in your fences big enough for a Hedgehog to get through, leave piles of leaves undisturbed over winter, and perhaps even build a Hedgehog house.

House Sparrow – *Passer domesticus*

In the last 40 years there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of House Sparrows in Britain. The population is now only a third of what it was in the mid 1970s.



House Sparrows are often dismissed as dull grey birds, but in fact they are quite attractive, especially the male with its chestnut and grey crown and black bib. They are not great songsters, but they are world-class chirpsters.

Their numbers have reduced because of the lack of nesting sites in modern buildings, predation by cats and squirrels and avian diseases. There is also less food available, due partly to changes in farming practices.

Common Lizard – *Zootoca vivipara*

Also known as the Viviparous Lizard this species is found over much of Britain. In the spring and summer they will find a spot, sometimes a few feet off the ground to bask in the sun, flattening out their bodies to collect as much heat as they can.



Once they are warm they can move quickly enough to catch the insects, flies and spiders that they eat.

They can be found on heaths, grasslands and moorlands, but are not always easy to see. Look for them on sunny days on logs or large rocks. Approach slowly and quietly. Any sudden movement and they will quickly disappear from view.

The female incubates her eggs inside her body and gives birth to live young. This is quite unusual in reptiles. She can produce as many as ten young.

British Nature Guide on tour



A look at wildlife and wild places outside Britain



Black-winged Stilt

If you go to any wetland reserve in Southern Spain or the Balearic Islands you will almost certainly come across this species.

The long-legged adults are very noisy and aggressive and will mob any bird or animal that approaches their nest or chicks.

As you can see, when they first leave the nest the young (left) look nothing like their parents (right).



Raining Monarchs

At least it used to seem like that in North America, but in the last 25 years the estimated population of this iconic butterfly has dropped from a billion individuals to less than 100 million.

Changes in farming practices, Climate Change, pesticides and insecticides have all taken their toll on this once abundant species.

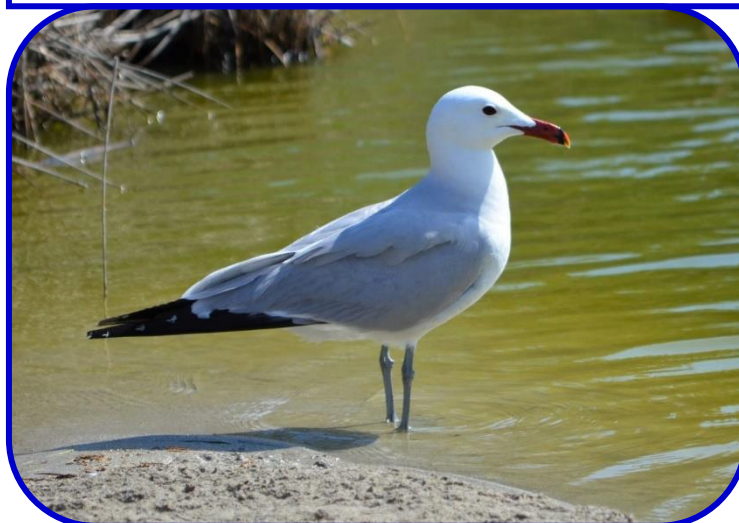
Efforts are being made to restore habitats and to plant Milkweed which is the food plant for the caterpillars.



Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*

Found along the West African coast and throughout much of the Mediterranean. The population has increased over recent decades, but still remains at less than 70,000 birds.

Audouin's Gull is one of Europe's most attractive gulls. Adults are easy to identify with their pure white head, red bill and blue legs.



British Nature Guide on tour

USA State profile: Tennessee



Northern Cardinal



Pearl Crescent



Woodchuck

There is no need to be on a specialist tour to enjoy the wildlife of Tennessee, just a gentle stroll along the riverfronts of Chattanooga, Nashville and Memphis can be rewarded with a pleasing view of any number of species. You are sure to encounter all of America's signature birds somewhere along the way combined with many others and there is always the prospect of a memorable chance encounter with other wildlife, whether a Woodchuck burrowing near the shore or an exotic butterfly such as Pipevine Swallowtail.

Here are Savannah Sparrow in Memphis, along with the wonderfully named Indiscriminate Cuckoo Bumble Bee and Yellow-Bellied Sliders in Chattanooga.



Below are Tennessee's state bird Northern Mockingbird in Memphis and the delicate Mourning Dove in Chattanooga.



Audubon and Memphis



Nearly two centuries after naturalist and painter John James Audubon chose the Memphis riverfront as a sketching location in compiling his seminal volume *Birds of America* it is easy to see why. To this day residents of Memphis take great pride in maintaining their tradition as "the nation's cleanest city" and walks along the shore can be idyllic in bringing close encounters with numerous bird species and migrating Monarchs flying overhead.



For more photos taken in Tennessee please visit
<http://www.britishnatureguide.com/texas-georgia-tennessee-and-louisiana-species-gallery.html>

Some of the birds enjoyed by this observer in Tennessee during a spring 2017 visit

American Coot, American Goldfinch, American Robin, American Kestrel, Black Vulture, Blue Jay, Blue-winged Teal, Brown-headed Cowbird, Carolina Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Common Grackle, Double-crested Cormorant, Field Sparrow, Great Blue Heron, House Finch, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal, Northern Mockingbird, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-winged Blackbird, Rough-winged Swallow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Tennessee Warbler, Turkey Vulture, Yellow-rumped Warbler.

British Nature Guide on tour

USA State profile: California



Sea Otter



Golden Poppy
Californian state flower



Yellow-billed Magpie

The birds in California are remarkably approachable. Species that would be wary in Britain seem confiding along the West Coast of the USA.

Here are Black-crowned Night Heron, Eared Grebe (our Black-necked Grebe) and Great Egret. All just a few yards away from a busy path.



Below you can see just how close this Californian Thrasher and Steller's Jay allowed us to get.



Spring is a great time to visit California if you like watching wildlife. There is so much to see.

Near the shore you will find Elephant Seals, Sea Lions, Sea Otters. Further out, migrating Gray Whales and resident pods of Bottlenose Dolphins.

There are plenty of land mammals including Skunks, Raccoons, Ground Squirrels, Mule Deer and Bobcat.

In early spring make sure you visit one of the roosting sites for Monarch Butterflies.

If you like your trees big, then visit one of the stands of Coastal Redwood and Giant Sequoia.

If you would like to see more photos taken in Spring in California go to
<http://www.britishnatureguide.com/california-species-gallery.html>

Some special birds to look out for in spring in California

Acorn Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Oystercatcher, Brewer's Blackbird, Bufflehead, Bushtit, California Quail, California Thrasher, California Towhee, Cooper's Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, Heermann's Gull, House Finch, Lincoln's Sparrow, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Mountain Bluebird, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Oak Titmouse, Pacific Loon, Pelagic Cormorant, Phainopepla, Say's Phoebe, Steller's Jay, Surf Scoter, Vermillion Flycatcher, Western Bluebird, Western Gull, Western Meadowlark, Western Scrub-Jay, White-crowned Sparrow, Willet, Wrentit and Yellow-billed Magpie.

British Nature Guide on tour

Cuban wildlife

A taster of what can be found on a holiday to Cuba and
nowhere else

(More to come in future magazines)



Cuban
Tody



Cuban Land
Crab



Cuban Brown Curlytail



Cuban Tree Frog



Cuban
Calisto



Cuban Green
Woodpecker

British Nature Guide on Tour

Species facts and photos

Did you know?

The bird known as Slavonian Grebe in Europe is known as Horned Grebe in North America.

A great many species have different common names in different parts of the world. Some even have names that vary within the same country. To avoid confusion all species are given a scientific name, often called a Linnaean name.

The Slavonian Grebe and the Horned Grebe both have the same scientific name – *Podiceps auritus*.



**Common Dolphin
in the Azores**



**The White Peacock, a common butterfly in
Cuba**

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*): an appreciation



"Now there is more to a bluejay than any other animal ...whatever a bluejay feels he can put into language."

Since Mark Twain's paean to the Blue Jay in 1880, there have been too many eyewitness accounts of remarkable behaviour to leave any doubts as to this handsome species' mischievous intelligence.

Blue Jays are highly talented mimics known for specialising in the calls of birds of prey. Not only can they produce uncanny imitations of Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk, they can also achieve a near likeness to the calls of six other species including Osprey, American Kestrel and Eastern Screech-Owl.

Close observation has discerned method in their mimicry, from warning other Blue Jays of the presence of hawks to misleading other birds into believing a hawk is around. One researcher's account describes a Boat-tailed Grackle abandoning food on hearing a 'hawk' only for a Blue Jay to appear and claim the readymade meal.

Blue Jays tend to cause a mass exodus when they first arrive at a feeder, though other birds usually soon return to feed alongside them. They are slow flyers (hence their vulnerability to hawks) and late risers compared to other birds.

Blue Jays and fake news

While not beyond reproach in their interaction with other species, the image of Blue Jays has been unfairly maligned by their reputation for eating eggs and nestlings. In truth they have a largely vegetarian diet comprising acorns, nuts and seeds supplemented by large insects. Blue Jays are loyal and mate for life, sharing in nest building with the male bringing food for the female throughout the egg incubation period.

Where to find Blue Jays

You are likely to encounter Blue Jays in parks, gardens and forest edges from southern Canada through the central and eastern United States where some remain throughout winter with others migrating. Studies have shown individual Blue Jays to migrate south in each alternate year and remain north through the winter the next year - this being a mystery that remains unresolved about this endlessly fascinating and enchanting bird.

Why visit Sao Miguel Island in the Azores in the spring for wildlife?

The Azores are an archipelago of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, just a 4 hour flight from the UK. Direct flights are available with Ryanair from Manchester and Stanstead. Sao Miguel is the largest and most populated of the nine volcanic islands and holds a variety of different habitats and is home to various species of bird, mammal and fish.

If you are interested in walking, wildlife and food, then look no further than Sao Miguel Island. With picturesque mountain top walks, mixed forests and hot springs, there is plenty to keep you busy.



The Azores are home to only around 30 resident species of birds, but because of its location in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean there have been recorded sightings of around 400 species of migrants and vagrants.

Sao Miguel is the only place in the world where the Azores Bullfinch (also known as the Sao Miguel Bullfinch) can be found. This bird is one of the rarest birds in Europe, and can only be found in a small area in the east of the island. It is a beautiful bird and worth making a special trip to see.



At different times of the year the waters off the Azores Islands play home to a variety of different species of whales, including Sperm Whales, Fin Whales, Sei Whales, Blue Whales and Humpback Whales. Some members of the Sperm Whale population are year-round residents of these waters, which makes taking a whale and dolphin watching tour a must-do. The waters are also home to many different dolphin species. Three species are residents all year around, Bottlenose Dolphin, Common Dolphin and Risso's Dolphin.

There are several companies who offer whale and dolphin tours from Ponta Delgado, however the company we used was <http://www.futurismo.pt/en/activity/whale-watching>. They provided a responsible whale and dolphin watching tour, following WCA guidelines.

The Azores are also home to a species of bat which is primarily active during the day, the Azorean Noctule Bat. It is a fairly common sight on the island of Sao Miguel, but numbers have been reducing in recent years.

If you are looking for somewhere a bit different and exciting to explore on your next vacation, look no further than the Azores.

Information about the British Nature Guide website

www.britishnatureguide.com

If you have enjoyed reading this e-magazine then you might like to check out our website. It is a photographic record of the wildlife seen by our team, focusing mainly on British species, but also including some species seen on trips abroad.

More than 1700 species of British invertebrates, birds, plants, mammals, reptiles, fungi and amphibians are featured.

There are moth trap record pages, photographic site reports for some great places to see wildlife, photo quizzes and individual species pages for all of the species we have seen in this country.

To encourage children to develop a love for nature we have set up a Resources for Children section where you will find photographs, fact sheets and activity sheets about mini-beasts, birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and plants. This section is aimed mainly at children from 4-12 years old. All of the resources are free to enjoy, download and to use for non-profit purposes by teachers, childminders, parents and all other child-carers.

All of the photographs in this e-magazine are © Nature Apps UK

It might surprise you to know that the most abundant bird in Britain is the wren with more than 8 million pairs breeding each year.



If you would like to download our spring e-magazine for children go to

www.britishnatureguide.com

You will find a link on the home page

It includes activity, factsheets and articles aimed at children aged from 4 to 12 years

In our next magazine

The plastic crisis facing the world

Rock-pooling on the Welsh coast

Hoverflies – marvellous mimics

South Stack on Anglesey trip report

Moth trapping in Cheshire June to August

The summer blues, four special butterfly species to look out for

Dragonflies, Hawkers, Skimmers, Emperors, Chasers, Darters & Damselflies

British Nature Guide on tour in Portugal and Vancouver

What is Nidification? From page 5

Answer – Nidification is the process of nest building.

What's the birdie?

Answer to quiz on page 13 is Nuthatch
Sitta europaea



Thank you from all of our team for taking the time to read this e-magazine.

If you have enjoyed it please tell your friends about it.