



**britishnatureguide.com**

**Our world is worth saving**

**Winter 2019/2010**

**Recommend a nature  
reserve –  
Walthamstow  
Wetlands**

**Our world needs  
your help – Don't  
do nothing!**



**British Nature  
Guide on tour  
in Texas**

**Interesting  
Wildlife facts**



**For fun, for knowledge  
and for nature**

**Adults and teens  
e-magazine #4  
Winter 2019/2020**

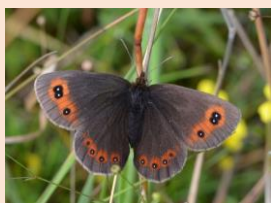
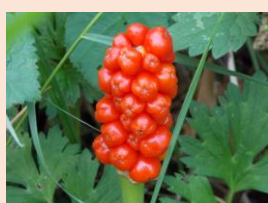
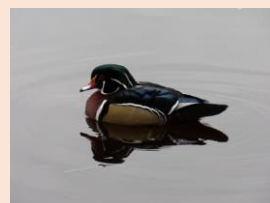
# Welcome to the British Nature Guide e-magazine for adults and teens

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.

## Just a few of the species that feature in this magazine.



You will find lots of interesting snippets of information about nature and our wildlife in this magazine.



British Nature Guide

There are pictures of 68 different species of birds in this magazine, including some which do not occur in Britain.

This magazine has been created for fun, for knowledge and for nature.

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Cover photo  
Black-headed  
Gull taken on  
the Wirral in  
Merseyside in  
December  
2017



You have probably heard the expression 'Ne'er cast a clout till May be out'. But do you know what it means?

(Go to page 25 to find out)

## What you will find in this issue

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# On a serious note

There are so many causes and so many things that need to be protected, saved or restored to ensure that future generations can live fulfilling and prosperous lives in a world where they can take for granted what we take for granted. A world where they will see Swallows arriving from Africa in the springtime and hear bees buzzing around swathes of wildflowers as they walk through the countryside.

Each cause is just as important as each of the others, and each is interlinked. Each problem that is encountered is not just a problem for one of them, it is a problem for all of them.

No one individual can hope to save the whole world, but they can provide a safe haven in their garden for Hedgehogs, birds, pollinators, wildflowers, butterflies and moths. If enough individuals care, positive change can be achieved.

Without losing sight of the overall goal we should concentrate our efforts on where we can do the most good.

**There are so many things we can do to help. Here are a few suggestions.**

Buy local produce when you can.

Walk or take the bus to school or work.

Don't buy bottled water.

If you like take away coffee, buy a reusable cup.

Don't buy plastic cutlery or paper plates that will be thrown away after one use.

Don't release balloons or lanterns. Both can kill our wildlife.

We don't all have a garden big enough to plant an Oak Tree for future generations to play under. Most of us might just be able to fit in a small fruit tree in a large tub on the patio.

Three of the major issues facing the world where actions of individuals can make a difference.

Single use plastic and plastic waste.

Dwindling numbers of pollinating insects threatening food production.

'Greenhouse Gas' emissions.

How can one person make a difference?

We might not think that we can do much to help. But it is vital that we always do whatever we can, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem.

If we do nothing the situation will only get worse.

**Do what you can,  
when you can**

**More things we can all do to help.**

Raise awareness of the issues

Discuss the problems with colleagues, friends and family

Lobby local politicians.

Write to your MP and tell them that you want them to back environmental protection legislation

Support wildlife charities

Volunteer at local wildlife reserves

Pick up litter

Make your garden wildlife friendly

Let your lawn grow wild

Feed garden birds in the winter months



# On a serious note (continued)

**Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is a 'Greenhouse Gas' and it is causing the atmosphere to heat up. What can we do to reverse this trend?**

## **A lot of people fly, either for work or holidays.**

One easy way to make a difference is to reduce the number of flights you take. An internal flight produces more than 200kg of CO<sub>2</sub> for each passenger. A flight to Australia produces more than 3000kg for every person on board. To give you an idea of the scale of the problem there will be around 40 million flights worldwide in 2019.

Travel by train if you can. On average this produces less than half of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per passenger for the same distance.

## **Eat less meat**

Cows, sheep and other livestock produce Methane, Nitrous Oxide and CO<sub>2</sub>. These are all 'Greenhouse Gases'.

As the world demand for meat increases, so does the production of these dangerous gases.

An additional factor to take into consideration is that rainforests are being cleared for cattle ranches. Most of this clearance is done by burning, which releases even more gases into the atmosphere.

## **Use less petrol or diesel**

Every gallon of petrol used in a car produces about 9kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. An average car produces around 4000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, as well as many other dangerous emissions including carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and particles of soot and brake dust.

## **Small changes can make a big difference**

Technology is improving all of the time. If enough pressure is exerted on industry changes can be made to produce more energy efficient planes, trains and cars.

The two most obvious technological advances in recent years have been with electric powered vehicles and electricity production. In time petrol and diesel engines will be phased out altogether.

Another positive factor is that more people than ever before are choosing to become vegetarian or vegan.

**Please don't do nothing**

## **A final thought**

Perhaps the most important thing we can do is to teach others to value the natural diversity that is all around us.

## **Use less electricity**

A positive trend over recent years has been the rapid increase in the generation capacity of electricity from wind turbines and solar panels.

Energy production is still one of the largest producers of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Britain and the rest of the world.

We can all help by not wasting energy and by making our homes as energy efficient as possible.

## **Some good news**

In 2017 the estimated amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced in Britain dropped by about 3%. In total about 367 million metric tons. Down from 594 million tons in 1990. Much of the improvement was the move away from coal-fired power stations.

In 2017 other greenhouse gases produced in Britain amounted to about 89 million tons, down from around 200 million tons in 1990.

Sadly the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced in the world as a whole is still on the increase.

# Recommend a nature reserve – Walthamstow Wetlands

10 different reservoirs are within the London Wildlife Trust reserve of Walthamstow Wetlands. Covering more than 200 hectares, it is the largest urban wetland reserve anywhere in Europe.

The main entrance is 2 Forest Road, London N17 9NH. Two rail stations are within walking distance of the reserve, Blackhorse Road and Tottenham Hale.

Some of the butterfly species you should look out for:- Brimstone, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Speckled Wood, Comma, Small Copper, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Painted Lady, Clouded Yellow, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper.

A few dragonfly species you might find:- Banded Demoiselle, Common Darter, Broad-bodied Chaser, Four-spotted Chaser, Emperor Dragonfly, Emerald Damselfly, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Small Red Damselfly and Southern Hawker.



Foxes are a regular sight



Comma Butterfly



Common Tern



Scaup



Dunlin



Greylag Goose

Birds to look out for at Walthamstow Wetlands in the winter months:- Scaup, Barnacle Goose, Egyptian Goose, Greylag Goose, Goosander, Goldeneye, Shelduck, Gadwall, Shoveler, Teal, Wigeon, Red-crested Pochard, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Mute Swan, Great Crested Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat, Linnet, Grey Wagtail, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Fieldfare, Redwing, Mistle Thrush, Snipe, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Peregrine, Ring-necked Parakeet, Great Black-backed Gull and Common Gull.

Lesser Redpoll



Some special migrant birds to look out for next year:- Spotted Flycatcher, Hobby, Arctic Tern, Common Tern, Ring Ouzel, Wheatear, Whinchat, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Reed Warbler, Sand Martin, House Martin, Swallow, Swift, Yellow Wagtail, Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Garganey and Osprey.

# Interesting facts about our wildlife

**Which of our birds of prey used to be called a Glead?**

(go to page 12 for answer)

**What is the collective noun for a group of Ferrets?**

(go to page 12 to find the answer)

**In Britain we have tiny Arachnids called Pseudoscorpions which look a little like scorpions. They are harmless to people.**

**Yellow-tailed Scorpions have colonised some small areas in southern Britain. They only grow to about 45mm in length. A sting from one does not normally pose a serious threat to human health, but medical advice should be sought if you are stung.**

**'Grow us bran' is an anagram of which British butterfly species?**

(go to page 25 for answer)

**In Britain we have a Brimstone Moth and a Brimstone Butterfly. Both are yellow and quite widespread during the summer.**

**Centipede is normally interpreted as an insect species with 100 legs. There are lots of different species of Centipede. Some with as few as 30 legs, others with more than 200, but it is very unusual to find a species with exactly 100 legs.**

**Until 1938 the Little Ringed Plover was only a rare passage migrant in Britain. Now it is well established as a summer migrant breeder.**

**In a bird, what are the nares?**

Go to page 12 for the answer

**In Britain we have seven species of mustelids (carnivorous mammals).**

**The largest is the Badger and the smallest is the Weasel. In between are the Otter, Stoat, Polecat, Pine Martin and the introduced Mink.**

**Britain is getting warmer, as a direct consequence of human induced climate change, and as it does so more species are colonising the country from Europe.**

**Over the last few years we have seen Little Egret, Great White Egret and Cattle Egret establishing themselves as breeding species. White Stork is likely to spread more widely across the country over the next few years.**

**Long-tailed Blue and Geranium Bronze Butterflies are being seen more frequently, and moths that were once only rare migrants are now becoming more regular and even overwintering.**

**If you think that these are positive consequences of climate change and global warming, think again.**

**Our sub-species of Swallowtail butterfly could be pushed to extinction if the country continues to get warmer.**

**Many of our seabirds including Puffins, Kittiwakes and Shags are under threat because our warming seas no longer provide enough fish for them to feed and successfully raise young.**

**67 of our bird species are now on the Birds of Conservation Concern Red List and considered to be in danger of extinction in Britain. Some of these species have been threatened for many years, but the effects of climate change could be the final nail in their coffins.**

**Our cetaceans like the White-beaked Dolphins are finding it harder to find enough fish in our waters.**

**We could lose birds such as the Ptarmigan and butterflies like the Mountain Ringlet Butterfly as suitable breeding habitat becomes less common in the hills and mountains.**

**As sea levels rise our estuaries will become less able to support large numbers of migrant and winter waders.**



## More interesting facts about our wildlife

As recently as the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the Puffin had the local name in parts of Britain of the Coulterneb because of its large beak. The name means the “cutting edge of a plough”.



While most birds seek cover when they sense severe weather approaching, the Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) seems positively cheerful and often breaks into a song that continues through wind and rain.

This unusual trait has earned this much-loved species the colloquial name “stormcock”. The most likely explanation stems from Mistle Thrushes being fiercely defensive of their territory (berry-laden trees and bushes) through the winter so that they can reap the benefits come spring. Thus as early as January they will begin their song of spring to establish their presence and make it clear they will not be moved.

We have around 1600 species of wildflowers in Britain. Some are only hanging on as breeding species in a few locations. One of these is the Red Helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*)



The cheerful two-note song of the Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) heralds the arrival of spring for those enjoying English country walks or visits to nature reserves. Elsewhere though this species is viewed just as affectionately leading to its being known by equally evocative names such as Zilpzalp in Germany, Tjiftjaf in the Netherlands and Siff-saff in Wales.

Endearingly Chiffchaffs sometimes appear to have forgotten their own name with several “chiff” sounds preceding a “chaff” or by repeating each sound in succession. Either way this tiny unobtrusive warbler leaves no doubt as to its presence.

The Red-backed Shrike was once reasonably common as a summer breeding migrant over much of England and Wales, but by 1960 the breeding population had dropped to around 250 pairs.

Changes in farming practices, cool and wet summers, egg collecting and capture for the cage bird trade all took their toll on the dwindling population. The decline continued and by 1989 this beautiful shrike was lost as a breeding species.

# Moth trapping news – Cheshire

## What to expect from December to February

The three quietest months for moths in my garden. Even on clear dry nights very few moths are attracted to light. On some mornings the moth trap is completely empty.

### What to look out for in December

Herald, November Moth, December Moth, White-shouldered House Moth, Red-green Carpet

### What to look out for in January

Satellite, Winter Moth, Mottled Umber, Pale Brindled Beauty, Brick, Brown House Moth, Silver Y

### What to look out for in February

Dotted Border, Twenty-plume Moth, Light Brown Apple Moth, Small Quaker, Early Grey, Early Thorn, Common Quaker

Below are photos of some of the moths you should look out for over the winter. Most winter moths are quite drab in appearance. If you find any moths hibernating in sheds or outbuildings please do not disturb them.



Red-green Carpet



Small Quaker



Early Thorn



Winter Moth



Dotted Border



December Moth



Satellite Moth



Light Brown Apple Moth

### Responsible moth trapping

If you try moth trapping please make every effort to release any moths that you catch unharmed.

Avoid holding moths by their wings as they are very easily damaged.

Research the type of trap that would best suit you on the internet.

Do not use your trap every night. Birds quickly realise that your garden is a good place to find lots of tasty snacks.

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>



# Recommend a nature reserve for spring/summer 2020

## Brockholes in Lancashire

We have included this site because we know that people get enjoyment out of planning their bird, butterfly, wildflower and dragonfly trips in advance for the coming year.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust manages this 250 acre woodland and wetland reserve.

It is on Preston New Rd, Preston PR5 0AG, just off the M6.

For directions go to [www.brockholes.org](http://www.brockholes.org)

If you visit this reserve make sure to allow plenty of time to explore. There are good paths and trails leading through woodlands and grassy areas and past large expanses of water. You will find good concentrations of ducks, coots, herons, warblers, hirundines, finches and often see birds of prey overhead. Expect to encounter a wide range of insects including dragonflies, shieldbugs, butterflies, bees and hoverflies. Wildflowers abound with banks of Bluebells and Wood Anemones. If you arrive early enough you might even find Hares in the car park and Bank Voles in the woodland. There are toilets, and a restaurant with views over the lake.



Nuthatch



Bank Vole

**Some Butterflies to look out for**

Orange-tip, Painted Lady, Meadow Brown, Red Admiral, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak, Gatekeeper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Green-veined White, Small White, Large White, Speckled Wood, Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Ringlet, Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Comma.



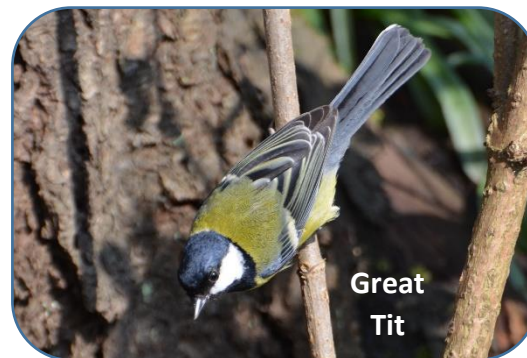
Large Red Damselfly



Common Blue Butterfly



Wood Anemone



Great Tit



Hare

# A taste of India – species introduced to Britain



The **Indian Peafowl** (*Pavo Cristatus*) has been the National bird of India since 1963, having been chosen as a symbol of love, pleasure and grace. Valued for its great beauty since ancient times, this species is generally thought to have first been brought to Europe in the fifth century BC. Its first appearance in Britain came in Roman times and it is now a familiar but always striking sight in the grounds of our finest stately homes. The *Peacock* or *Indian Blue Peacock* as it is usually known in the UK is a sight to savour whether in its most colourful form or in its all-white variant plumage. While not a wild bird it has room to roam, dine and display at its leisure as befits a bird of such regal appearance.



The **Rose-ringed Parakeet** (*Psittacula kramera*) originates from southern India but now has an established feral population across Western Europe. Known as the *Ring-necked Parakeet* in the UK, this highly intelligent species has proven remarkably adaptable with a breeding population having spread from the south-east of England as far north as Edinburgh. Belying their tropical appearance, these colourful birds are well equipped to cope with our cold winters having long survived a harsh climate in the Himalayan foothills. Legends abound as to when parakeets were first released into the wild here (surrounding some escaping from the set of *The African Queen* in 1951 or being released by Jimi Hendrix in the 1960s) but they appear to be here to stay. While closely monitoring their impact on other species, the RSPB has thus far not favoured a cull.



# Photo identification quiz

Fifteen species to identify



Each of the above species occur in Britain.

Go to page 24 where you will find the answers.



# Questions and Answers page

The scientific name for this bird species is *Cinclus cinclus*.

In the Netherlands it is called Waterspreeuw.

In France it is called the Cincle Plongeur.

What do we call this species in Britain?

(Go to page 24 for the answer)

This insect species may have become extinct in Britain over the last 20 years. It could still be clinging on in small numbers in remote areas of the New Forest in Hampshire. The call is so high-pitched and cannot be heard by most adults.

(go to page 25 for answer)



'What's the birdie?'

(Go to page 24 to check your answer)

Answer to question on page 6

The nares are a bird's nostrils.

Answer to question on page 6

A group of Ferrets is called a 'Business' or a 'Busyness'.

Hepialidae, Sesiidae, Saturniidae, Sphingidae and Ctenuchidae are all families of which type of insect?

(Go to page 24 for the answer)

Answer to question on page 6

The Red Kite used to be called the Glead (from the old English word glidan, meaning to glide)

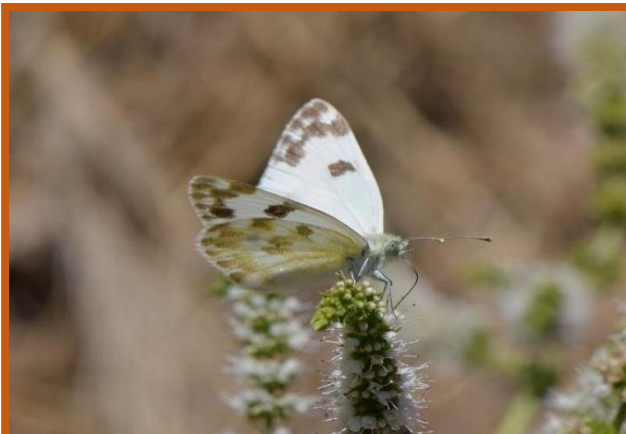
*Puffinus puffinus* is the unlikely scientific name for which British species of bird?

(go to page 25 for the answer)



The species pictured above is an accidental visitor to Britain and Europe from North America. Can you identify the species?

(go to page 24 for the answer)



The Bath White (*Pontia daplidice*) is a widespread species in Europe. It has reached Britain in the past, sometimes in reasonable numbers during good summers, but does not seem to be capable of overwintering in this country. Over the last 70 years there have been very few sightings.

There are only three species of Phalarope in the world and they all occur in Britain.

What are the common names for these species used in Britain? (One of the common names used in North America is different)

Go to page 24 for the answers

# Winter Birds in Britain

A clear crisp winter's day is a great time to go birdwatching.

The coast for sea ducks, geese, gulls, divers, grebes and waders.

What will you need to take with you?

- Telescope and binoculars
- Camera if you like taking photos
- Warm clothes and hat

A local reserve or reservoir for winter thrushes, finches and Waxwings.

- A hot flask of tea/coffee and a cup. Not only to drink, but also to warm your hands.

Your garden or local park for Nuthatches, Wrens, Robins, woodpeckers and other garden birds.



Waxwing



Turnstone and  
Black-headed Gull



Barnacle  
Goose



Whooper  
Swan

Wherever you decide to go there is always something interesting to see in the winter.

If you are going any distance it is usually worth doing some research before you head out. Check the latest sightings on the website for the reserves you are considering visiting. It might just be that a rarity has dropped in at one of them.

If you are going to the coast, check the tide timetable. It is always disappointing to arrive when the tide is already halfway out. To see the most species of birds at close range make sure to arrive at least a couple of hours before high tide.

Please remember migrating waders need to conserve their energy when they can't feed, so don't get too close. It's not worth making them fly off just for the sake of a photo.

Just about anything can turn up on lakes and reservoirs in the winter. Look out for Great Northern Diver, Red-throated Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Scaup, Smew, Pintail and Long-tailed Duck.



Great Northern Diver



Fieldfare



Purple  
Sandpiper

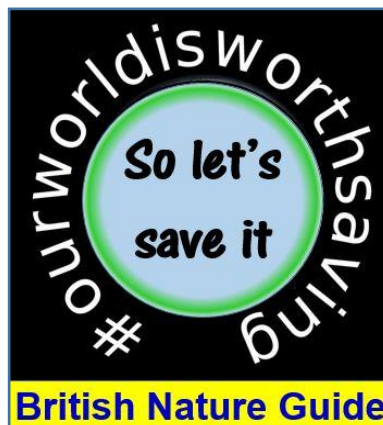


Pochard

Make sure to have a bird reference book with you. Winter ducks, grebes and divers can be tricky to identify.



# British Nature Guide on tour



## A look at wildlife and wild places outside Britain



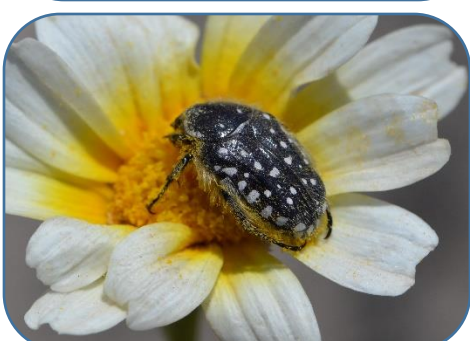
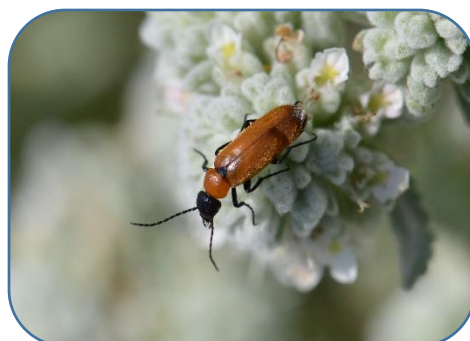
From July to October the sheltered waters of Hervey Bay are a great place to see Humpback Whales. Located 200kms north of Brisbane the bay is next to Fraser Island, the largest sand Island in the world.



## Beetles around the Mediterranean

Even if they are not on a nature watching holiday most people enjoy looking at the birds, butterflies or wildflowers when they visit holiday destinations around the Mediterranean. Very few people that I meet look at the Beetles. That is such a shame. There are so many wonderful species to enjoy, and they are far easier to find than here at home.

If you like a challenge you might like to try to identify these six species. The photos were taken in Kos. I have no idea what most of them are.





# *British Nature Guide on tour*

Continued from the autumn magazine

## Birds of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico

Grey Plover



Green Jay



Eleven of the species featured on this page were seen at our resort complex on the Riviera Maya. The others were seen on day trips further afield.

Green Heron



Tropical Kingbird



The best time to see birds and other wildlife on the resort was undoubtedly just after dawn. As it got later and more people appeared, the birds tended to drift away.

Black Vulture



Plain Chachalaca



Double-crested Cormorant



Common Black-hawk



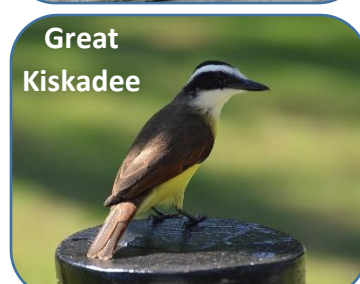
Great Blue Heron



Reddish Egret



Great Kiskadee



After a few days you will start to get used to the different bird calls. You might even find yourself dismissing the commoner species as just another Kiskadee or Mockingbird.

Osprey



Melodious Blackbird



Wood Stork



Gray Catbird



One of the memorable holiday experiences for me was watching Magnificent Frigatebirds, Brown Pelicans and Royal Terns flying overhead on the beach.

Tropical Mockingbird

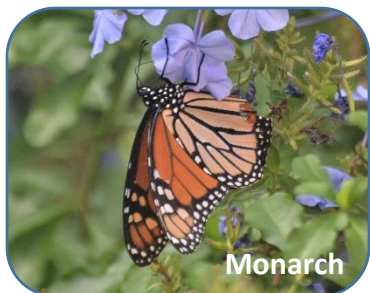


With a bird list in excess of 500 species the Yucatan peninsula is a great place to go. Even if you just sit on the beach and wander around your hotel complex you are bound to build up a respectable list in a two week stay.



# British Nature Guide on tour

## Continued from the autumn magazine Butterflies of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico



Monarch

I was on holiday in the Yucatan peninsula for two weeks and photographed 68 species which I was able to identify either at the time or on my return home.



Zebra  
Cross-streak



Transandean Cattleheart



Susanna's Groundstreak



Zebra Heliconian

Most of these photos were taken in Quintana Roo state. I had one trip with a local guide to the wetland area of Ria Largartos in Yucatan state.



Ruddy Daggerwing



Malachite

Even if you are going to the Riviera Maya in Mexico for a family holiday you will still find plenty of butterflies in the gardens around your hotel.



Ceraunus Blue



Dina Yellow

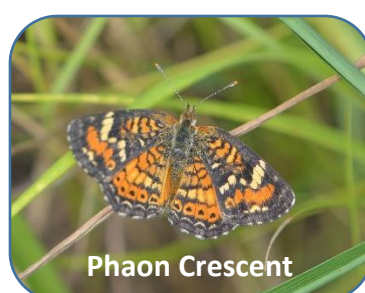


Gulf Fritillary



Lantana Scrub-Hairstreak

If you can find a hotel with fields, or better still a forest area nearby, you will see different butterflies passing through the gardens almost every day.



Phaon Crescent



Guatemalan Cracker

Access to the internet at your hotel will certainly help you to identify what you see, but make sure that you take a good field guide with you as well.



Queen



Sharp Banded-Skipper

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the numbers and variety of butterflies in the Yucatan. In just two weeks spent mainly around the hotel I saw ten more species than we have in the whole of Britain. Make sure you are well prepared by doing some research before you go.



# British Nature Guide on tour

# State profile: Texas



Eastern Gray Squirrel



White-winged Dove



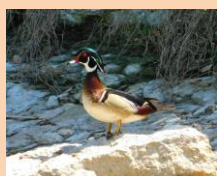
White-tailed Deer

## The birds of Texas

Texas offers many welcome wildlife surprises even on a general spring sightseeing tour if opportunities are taken to explore. Below are Green Heron and Snowy Egret at sunset on the shore of Clear Lake in Houston, a short distance from the NASA Space Center and a real haven for a wide range of birdlife.



Nearby were an Osprey, Spotted Sandpiper, Brown Pelicans, Boat-tailed Grackles, Laughing Gulls and Forster's Terns while Turkey Vultures circled overhead – so much to keep an eye on. Below are Northern Mockingbird (the Texas state bird) also seen in Houston along with Wood Duck and Guinea fowl, both seen by the riverside near the stockyards in Fort Worth.



Boat-tailed Grackles.  
Male (left) & female  
(right).



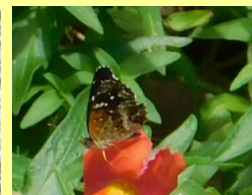
Even heading into a city it is worth watching the roadside wires for birds, this observer having spotted the highly exotic species Scissor-tailed Flycatcher en route into downtown Dallas.

## Spring butterflies

Even early in the season there are numerous butterfly possibilities including Checkered White and the rather inconspicuous Orange Sulphur (below).



On a more colourful note you may encounter a Red Admiral as a reminder of home or a Texan Crescent amidst the flowers in San Antonio.



## Other wildlife

Below are Yellow-bellied Sliders in Fort Worth and Prickly Pear Cactus (the state plant of Texas) in the grounds of the Alamo in San Antonio.



For more photos taken in Texas please visit

<http://www.britishnatureguide.com/texas-georgia-tennessee-and-louisiana-species-gallery.html>

Some of the birds enjoyed by this observer in Texas during a spring 2017 visit:-

Blue Jay, Boat-tailed Grackle, Brown Pelican, Carolina Chickadee, Domestic Mallard, Eastern Bluebird, Green Heron, Guinea fowl, Laughing Gull, Northern Mockingbird, Osprey, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Snowy Egret, Spotted Sandpiper, Turkey Vulture, White-winged Dove, Wood Duck

Butterflies seen: American Lady, California Sister, Checkered White, Orange Sulphur, Red Admiral, Texan Crescent



# British Nature Guide on tour

## International scientists, naturalists and explorers

### Steller's Jay



Georg Wilhelm Steller was a German Zoologist and Naturalist in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He died at 37 years of age.

During his short life he described and named many creatures which were new to science. Some of these species were named after him including Steller's Eider, Steller's Jay, Steller's Sea Eagle and Steller's Sea Lion.

In August 1741 he claimed to have seen a species in the waters off the coast of Alaska which is known as Steller's Sea Ape. There have been no other sightings of this creature and it is assumed that it was actually a Fur Seal.

He also discovered a mineral which was named after him – Stellerite.

A huge mammal species discovered by him in 1742, and named after him, was declared extinct in 1768.  
(Go to page 24 to find out what this species was).

Famous naturalists often have newly discovered species named after them as a sign of respect by the scientists who made the discovery. Sometimes it is the common name, but more often as part of the scientific name.

Charles Darwin has had more than 300 species named after him.

Sir David Attenborough has had at least 18 species and a scientific research vessel named after him.

John James Audubon is one of the most famous American ornithologists and natural history painters. He lived from 1785 to 1851 and had two bird species named after him Audubon's Shearwater and Audubon's Oriole.

He produced an epic book 'Birds of America' containing 435 watercolour paintings of North American birds.

### Audouin's Gull



This elegant gull was named after the French naturalist Jean Victor Audouin. Charles Payraudeau discovered the species, but he named it after Audouin, a greatly respected ornithologist and entomologist in Paris in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

David Gruby a Hungarian mycologist who was working in Paris at the same time as Audouin named the fungus species *Microsporum audouinii* in his honour.

This practice often means that the discoverer's name is all but forgotten by history.

Carl Linnaeus was born in Sweden in 1707 and is famous for developing the Linnaean system of classification of species which is still used today.



Unmistakeable in appearance and aptly named for the male's bright red plumage and crest (resembling a Roman Catholic Cardinal's cloak and cap), it is hard to imagine a more delightful bird species than the Northern Cardinal. Equally striking in sight and sound the male Cardinal has a beautiful fluting song with many variations while the female is rare among songbird species in also singing, producing a flurry of notes reminiscent of a Nightingale. A treat then for the eyes and ears!

### **Range and behaviour**

This species has a strong contingent in the warmer southeast of the United States but has expanded its range upwards as far as southern Canada, partly due to being well-provided for at bird tables to which it is a frequent visitor. Being non-migratory, Cardinals do not travel far and often join flocks of mixed species in the winter before pairing off in the spring. As devoted parents they typically have three broods per year and share evenly in the care and early upbringing of their young. Males are vigorous in defending their territory during this time though have an unfortunate tendency to mistake their own reflection in windows for an aggressor which can lead to injury and their expending valuable energy.

### **Diet and feeding**

Northern Cardinals dine mainly on sunflower seeds, fruit (including a wide range of berries) and insects such as beetles, centipedes and moths in low lying shrubs while also being drawn to feeders or foraging on the ground. They regularly use bird baths for sustenance and maintaining their feathers.

Photographs in this feature taken in Tennessee, spring 2017



### **A bird for all seasons**

Within its range the Northern Cardinal's image is as ubiquitous during the festive season as that of the Robin in the UK, while in local tradition seeing a cardinal on Christmas Day is believed to bring good luck throughout the following year. The same popularity prevails throughout the year for a species that is the state bird of seven interconnected states (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia). The Northern Cardinal is also a popular emblem amongst sports teams, most notably in the NFL and Major League Baseball via the Arizona Cardinals and St Louis Cardinals respectively. For now, this is reflected in its current least concern conservation status and happily so!



# *British Nature Guide on tour*

## Winter birds in British Columbia

If you visit Vancouver and the Rockies in the winter months you can expect to see some wonderful birds. You will find just a few of them below.



American Wigeon



Song Sparrow



Spotted  
Towhee



Harlequin  
Duck



Wood Duck



Anna's  
Hummingbird



# *British Nature Guide on tour*

## Majorca in Springtime

There is far more to Majorca than crowded beaches, noisy bars and endless restaurants. You will find plenty of wildlife in the outskirts of the popular resorts. All of these species were seen on my last visit to the island in 2016. Some might come as a bit of a surprise.



Hermann's  
Tortoise



Spotted  
Flycatcher



Lang's  
Short-tailed  
Blue



Bellardia  
trixago



Mole Cricket



Red-knobbed  
Coot

# British Nature Guide on tour

## Birds of Andalucia

There are many colourful species to be found in Andalucia and a summer sightseeing tour of the region can provide plenty of opportunity to experience birdlife. En route between the great cities of Cordoba, Granada and Seville this observer was fortunate enough to enjoy views of Bee-eater, Woodchat Shrike, Crested lark, Egyptian Vulture and Greater Flamingo while exploring on foot during excursions brought rewarding encounters with the species below.



**Black Redstart (Phoenicurus ochrurus)**

**Black Redstart** is an Old World Flycatcher shown here high on Torcal de Antequera, a site which presents ideal habitat for a species that favours stony ground. **Red-rumped Swallow** is distinguished from the Swallows we see in the UK by its bulkier appearance and shorter tail streamers. A breeding species in Southern Spain and seen here roosting in Antequera.



**Red-rumped Swallow (Cecropis daurica)**



**Spotless Starling (Sturnus unicolor)**

**Spotless Starlings** are widespread in Andalucia and identifiable by their dark sheen and ruffled throat feathers. They have adapted to urban living and are seen here in Antequera. **Yellow-legged Gull** (right) is a common Mediterranean coastal species, shown here in Malaga, with its own distinct features including light grey shading around the eye.



**Yellow-legged Gull (Larus michahellis)**



**Monk Parakeet (Myiopsitta monachus)**

**Monk Parakeet** (left, in Seville) is a South American species now well-established in Spain's southern cities. Their large well-insulated colonial nests enable survival through cold winters. **Choughs** (or *Red-billed Choughs*) are resident across much of the Iberian region. Rocky inland crevices such as those in Ronda (right) provide ideal habitat for nesting bird colonies.



**Chough (Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax)**

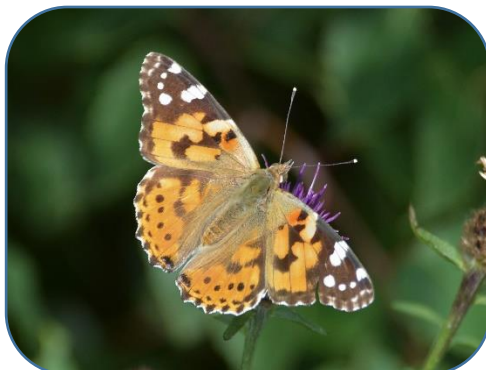


# British Nature Guide review of 2019

Species included based on observations (or lack of observations) by our team in areas of suitable habitat and in places where we had seen them before. It may be that in the parts of the country we did not visit the picture was different.

## Species which were found easily in Britain in 2019

Painted Lady  
Small Tortoiseshell  
Red Admiral  
Holly Blue  
Large Yellow Underwing  
Silver Y  
Large Blue  
Egyptian Goose  
Mullein Moth (caterpillar)  
Buzzard  
Redshank  
Marbled White  
Small Blue  
Cockchafer Beetle  
Harebell  
Robin's Pincushion  
Evening Primrose  
Hairy Shieldbug  
Seven-spot Ladybird  
Harlequin Ladybird  
Yarrow



## Species which were difficult to find in Britain in 2019

Red Squirrel  
House Martin  
Cuckoo  
Skylark  
Hedgehog  
Kestrel  
Greenfinch  
Water Vole  
Sand Martin  
Garden Tiger Moth  
Dingy Footman  
Marbled Beauty  
Lesser Redpoll  
Short-eared Owl  
Brambling  
Nightingale  
Yellow Wagtail  
White-Letter Hairstreak  
White Admiral  
Curlew  
Garden Warbler

# Odds and Ends page

Answer to question on page 12

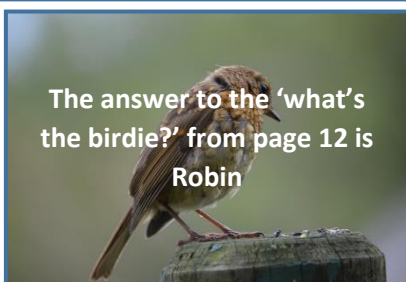
The bird with scientific name - *Cinclus cinclus*.

What do we call this species in Britain?

Answer – Dipper



Dipper



The answer to the 'what's the birdie?' from page 12 is Robin

Answer to question on page 12

**Hepialidae, Sesiidae, Saturniidae, Sphingidae and Ctenuchidae are all families of moths.**

Want to see a Large Blue butterfly next year?

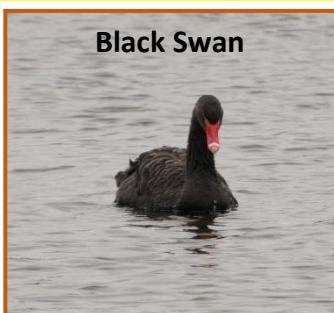
Visit Collard Hill in Somerset or Daneway Banks in Gloucestershire on a sunny day in June and you will have a very good chance of seeing one.

The answer to question on page 18

The species named after Georg Steller which became extinct in 1768 was the Steller's Sea Cow.

It was hunted to extinction only 27 years after it had been discovered.

The Little Owl was only introduced into Britain from Europe in 1889.



Black Swan

The smallest species of moth to occur in Britain is the Pygmy Sorrel *Enteucha acetosae*.

With a wingspan of 4mm or less it is one of the smallest moths in the world.

## The plastic predicament

Alarmingly, plastic production is expected to double from current levels within the next 20 years. Unless ways are found to recycle it effectively the problems it causes are going to become even more severe.

Answers to photo identification quiz on page 11

- A - Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
- B - Cream-spot Tiger Moth *Arctia villica*
- C - Mole *Talpa europaea*
- D - Marbled White Butterfly *Melanargia galathea*
- E - Judas' Ear Fungus (Jelly Ear) *Hirneola auricula-judae*
- F - Sainfoin *Onobrychis vicifolia*
- G - Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*
- H - Orange-tip Butterfly (female) *Anthocaris cardamines*
- I - Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
- J - Bronze Shieldbug *Troilus luridus*
- K - Wild Arum (Lords & Ladies) *Arum maculatum*
- L - Scotch Argus *Erebia aethiops*
- M - Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
- N - Buff-tip Moth *Phalera bucephala*
- O - Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis*



The answer to the photo quiz from page 12 is Varied Thrush.

It is possible to see 4 species of swans in Britain in the winter. The resident Mute, the Whooper and Bewick's which are winter visitors, and the Black. Three of the species are truly wild, but the Black Swan is a native of Australia which has escaped from wildfowl collections. The Black Swan does breed in Britain in small numbers.

The answer to the Phalarope question on page 12 is Grey, Red-necked and Wilson's.



## British Nature Guide on tour in Cuba

Photo  
identification  
quiz

Photos  
from  
Australia

In  
our  
spring  
e-magazine

Recommend a nature  
reserve – Fermyn Wood

The  
early  
bird

Great  
explorers  
of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
century

### Information about the British Nature Guide website

[www.britishnatureguide.com](http://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 1800 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 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



Answer to butterfly anagram  
from page 6 is Brown Argus.

The answer to the mystery insect  
question on page 12

The New Forest Cicada  
*Cicadetta Montana*, the only  
cicada species native to  
Britain.

Answer to question on page 12

*Puffinus puffinus* is the  
unlikely scientific name for the  
Manx Shearwater.

The meaning of 'Ne'er  
cast a clout till May be  
out' from page 2.

There are in fact two  
possible meanings,  
both quite similar. You  
can pick whichever  
you prefer.

1/ Either don't put  
away your winter  
clothes until the month  
of June because of  
unpredictable weather.

2/ Or don't put away  
your winter clothes  
until May blossom (the  
flowers on Hawthorn)  
is out.

Please remember to  
leave a few undisturbed  
piles of leaves in your  
garden over the winter  
if you have space. They  
could be a home to a  
Hedgehog, a mouse,  
reptile or some  
hibernating insects.

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.

Our world needs your help – Don't do nothing!