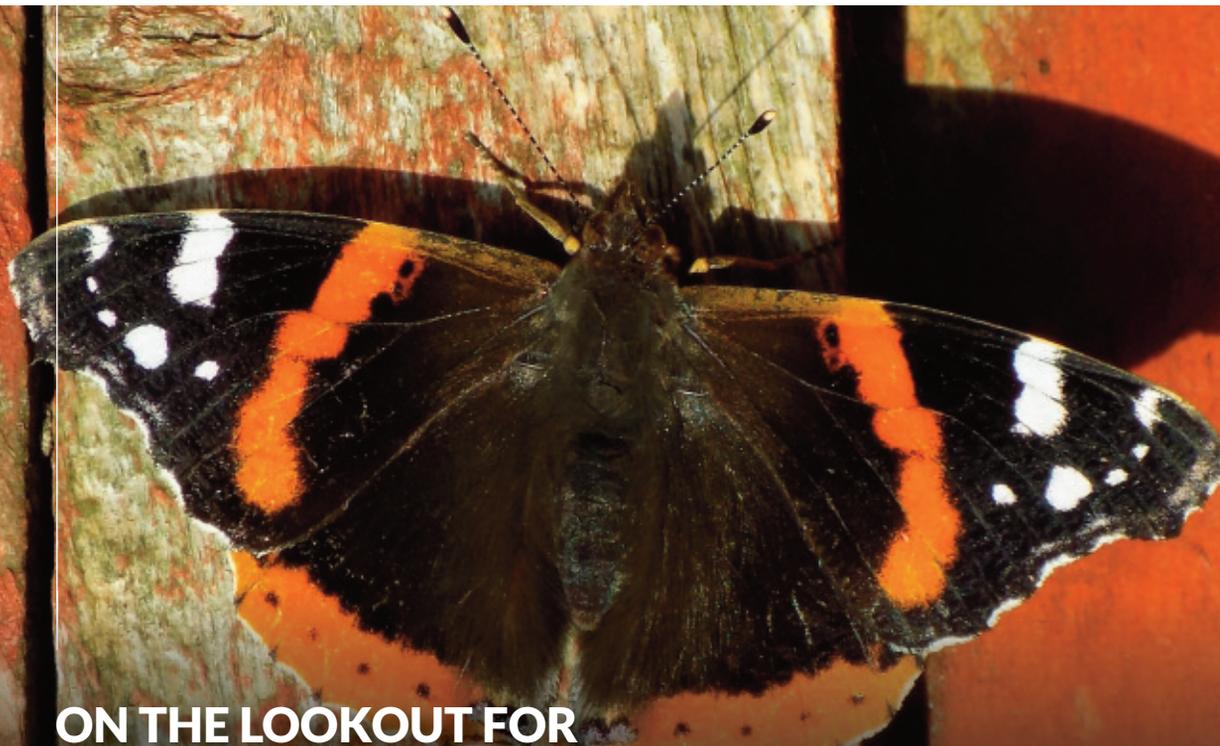


The British Nature Guide



Our world is worth saving - so let's save it!

Autumn 2020 e-magazine



ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE LAST BUTTERFLIES OF THE YEAR

INSIDE

Special feature

Bird Songs

Nature as inspiration



For fun, for knowledge and for nature. Our 'all in one place' magazine for children, families, teens and adults



Welcome to the latest British Nature Guide e-magazine

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 it inspires you to get out and spend quality time with nature.



Cover photo:
Red Admiral Butterfly taken in Cheshire in November 2018

Issue designed by: Lee Wood, Ember Designs.
www.emberdesigns.co.uk

Articles on page 20, 21, 26, 32, 33 & 38 were written by our London based website partner. Check out his Twitter account **@Apaturailia15**

- Britnatureguide
- @Britnatureguide
- www.britishnatureguide.com

Mini Quiz: Answers on page 42



1: Can you identify the bird in the photo above? It can be found on lakes.

Something beginning with 'H'

I can think of a Hare.
How many animals, plants, insects and birds can you think of with names that begin with the letter H?
Write them down on a piece of paper.
If you can think of more than five you have done very well.
There are a few more that I have thought of on page 40. Perhaps you have thought of some others.



Slow Worm

The Slow Worm is found in Britain. It can grow up to 10cm in length.

2: What do these wildflowers in the UK all have in common? You might have to look them up in a book, or on the internet, to find the answer. Coltsfoot, Lesser Celandine, Gorse and Bird's-foot Trefoil.

3: Where in the world would you find a Walrus? Around the North Pole, or around the South Pole?

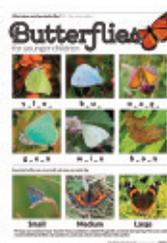
4: Who am I? I only live in Australia. I am a marsupial. I am nocturnal. I am not usually very active during the day. My baby is called a Joey. I eat eucalyptus leaves. I am sometimes called a bear, even though I am not a bear. Go to page 12 for the answer.

5: The birds listed below all have the letter 'r' in their name. What else do they have in common? Osprey, Kingfisher, Heron, Cormorant, Goosander

6: Anagram. Rearrange these letters to find the name of a bird that visits Britain in the winter.

D I N G R E W

highlights



04 NATURE CROSSWORD

Fill the grid, find the clues

08 WHAT'S IN A SONG

Identifying Bird calls

15 NATURE GUIDE

Things to look for in October

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The female of the species

22 INTRODUCED WILDFLOWERS

How many can you spot?

29 RESERVE REVIEW

RSPB Arne in Dorset

Look . read . copy

first steps

into nature



Look	read	copy
	Goose	
	Flower	
	Beetle	
	Lizard	
	Snail	

The British Nature Guide Autumn 2020 Page 7

Information about the British Nature Guide website
www.britishnatureguide.com

If you enjoy 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 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.



32 NATURE LOCKDOWN
A North London experience

34 ON TOUR
Wildlife in Botswana

38 BIRDSONGS
Nature as inspiration

39 BIRDING ABROAD
All you need to know

41 KINGFISHERS
In profile

42 TELL US ALL
Quiz answers from the issue

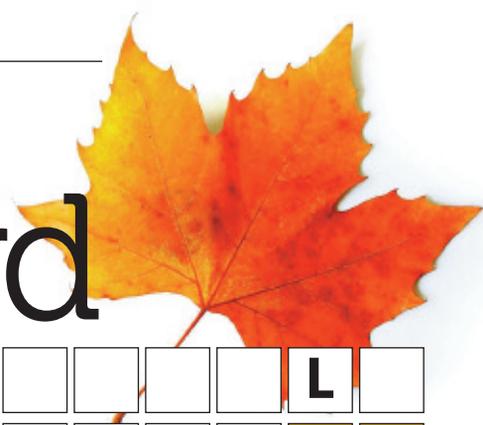
IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mammals in Botswana**
- **The Wirral coast in winter**
- **Photo Quiz & Wordsearch & lots, lots more.**

OUT DECEMBER

For adults & older children : Fill in the missing letters

Nature CROSSWORD



A reptile with strong jaws and sharp teeth		R						L	
Bear with white fur					A				
Spiny creature or a grubby child			C	H					
Popular as a house plant	O					D			
Small primate in Asia with big eyes			R				R		
Will lose its tail and turn into a Frog		A				L			
A type of grass grown in paddy fields					R				
A prickle on a rose				T				N	
A north American weasel in Britain						N			
Small aquatic crustacean with 10 legs					W				
A large constricting snake		Y							
An enormous mythical bird of prey					O				
A tree not a sandy shore						E			
These grow on Vines					G				S
Where peat is found							G		
Like a Snail without the shell							L		
A tall flightless bird in Australia								U	

Have you filled in all the letters? Well done. Now all you need to do is find these three words hidden in the answers on the page, **Dandelion, Rhinoceros and Eagle**. Finished? Now go to page 42 to check your answers

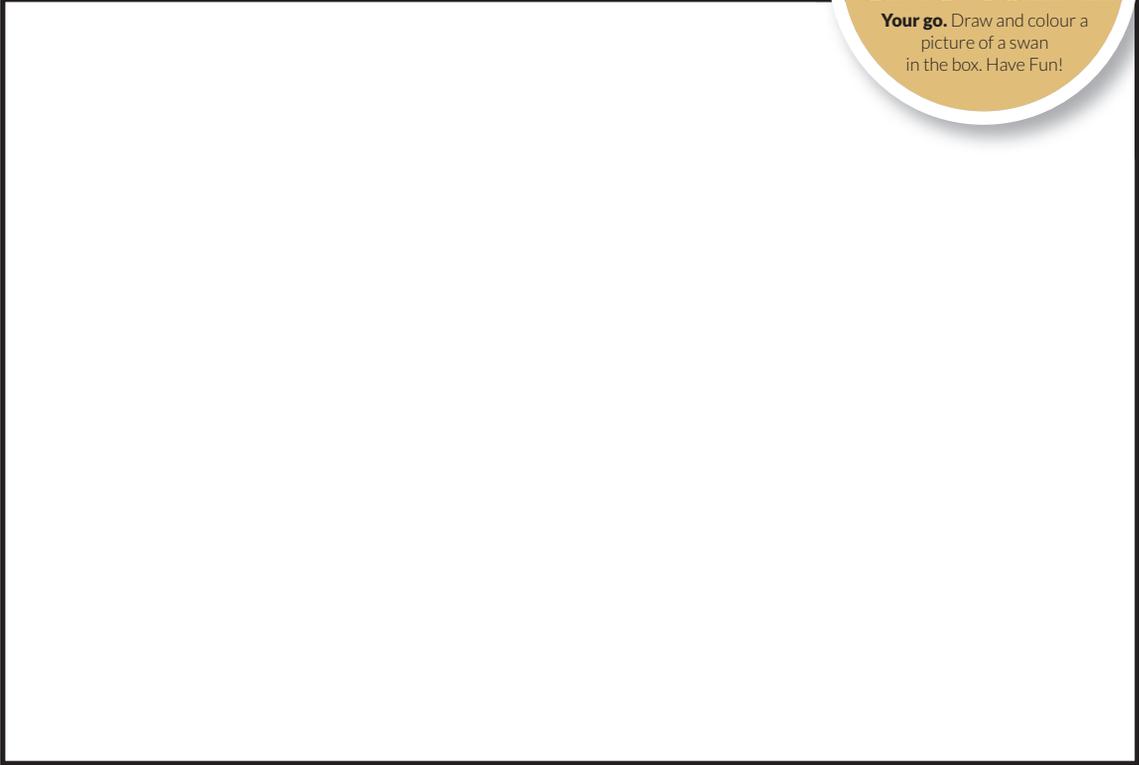
- I am a swan.
- I have white feathers.
- I have an orange bill.
- Swans have long necks.
- Young swans are called cygnets.



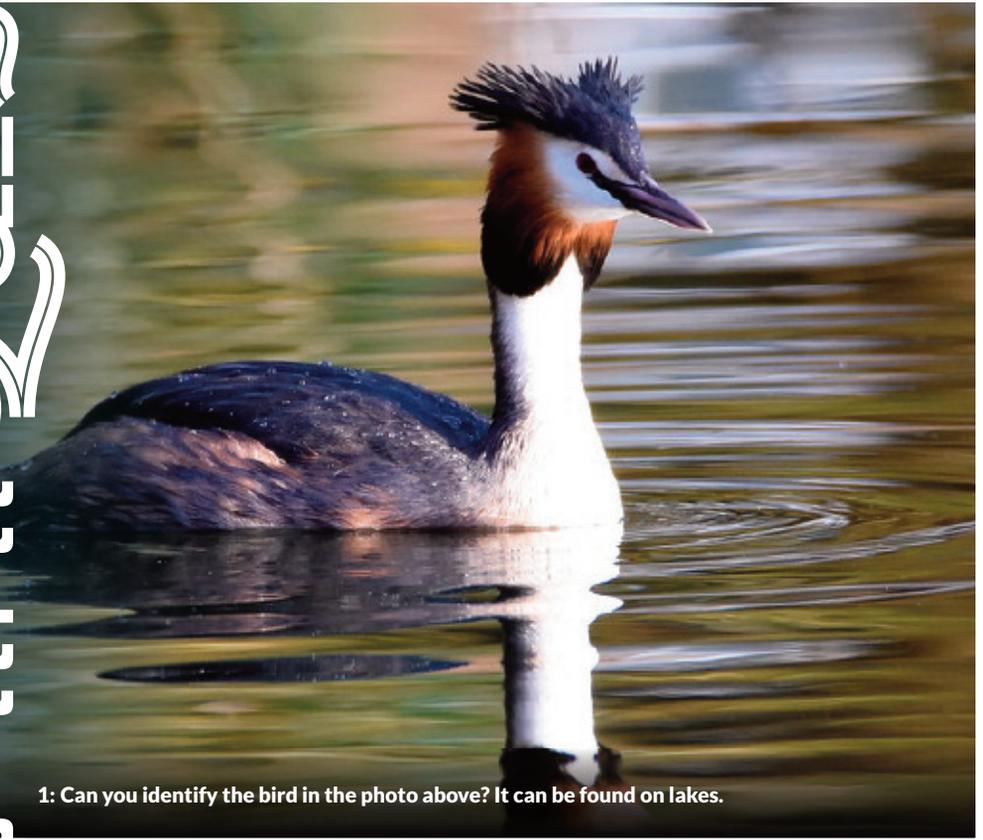
I am a swan

**Draw
a blank**

Your go. Draw and colour a picture of a swan in the box. Have Fun!



Mini Quiz



1: Can you identify the bird in the photo above? It can be found on lakes.

Something beginning with 'H'

I can think of a Hare.

How many animals, plants, insects and birds can you think of with names that begin with the letter H?

Write them down on a piece of paper.

If you can think of more than five you have done very well.

There are a few more that I have thought of on page 42. Perhaps you have thought of some others.



What is a Slow Worm?

The Slow Worm is found in Britain. It can grow up to 50cm in length.

Is the Slow Worm, a Worm, a Snake or a Lizard?

2: What do these wildflowers in the UK all have in common? You might have to look them up in a book, or on the internet, to find the answer. Coltsfoot, Lesser Celandine, Gorse and Bird's-foot Trefoil.

3: Where in the world would you find a Walrus? Around the North Pole, or around the South Pole?

4: Who am I? I only live in Australia. I am a marsupial. I am nocturnal. I am not usually very active during the day. My baby is called a Joey. I eat eucalyptus leaves. I am sometimes called a bear, even though I am not a bear.

5: The birds listed below all have the letter 'r' in their name. What else do they have in common? Osprey, Kingfisher, Heron, Cormorant, Goosander

6: Anagram. Rearrange the letters below to find the name of a bird that visits Britain in the winter.

D I N G R E W

Look. . read. . copy

first steps

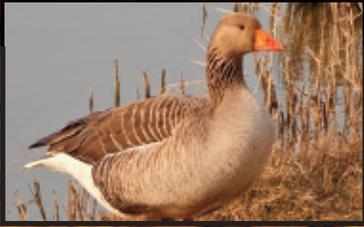
into nature



LOOK

READ

COPY



Goose



Flower



Beetle



Lizard



Snail

What's in a song?

Identifying birds by their calls



Yellowhammer:

'a-little-bit-of-bread-with-no-cheeeeeese'



Great Tit:

'tea-cher, tea-cher, tea-cher'

Even if you can't see a bird you may still be able to identify it from its call or song. Some birds have been named after their call. It can help if you try to remember the call as words.

In Britain one of the easiest birds to recognise by call is the Chiffchaff, which repeats its own name, 'chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff, chiff-chiff-chaff'. (But take care, as the Great Tit can sound very like a Chiffchaff)

The Great Tit's call sounds like 'tea-cher, tea-cher, tea-cher'.

The Cuckoo calls 'cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo'. There is very little chance of mistaking a Cuckoo for any other bird. The call of Yellowhammer is said to sound like 'a-little-bit-of-bread-with-no-cheeeeeese'.

Listen carefully and see if you can hear the Collared Dove saying 'no stew, cook'.

Why not listen to other bird calls and try to make up words for their calls? It might help you to remember them next time you hear them.

It is not just British birds that we remember by putting words to their songs and calls.

In Botswana the Ring-necked Dove is said to announce where it is, by calling 'Botswana, Botswana', and the Red-eyed Dove tells you its own name 'I am a Red-eyed

Dove'. The Emerald-spotted Wood Dove has a more mournful offering 'Mother is Dead, Father is Dead -- dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead.....'

In the USA the Golden-crowned Sparrow's song is said to sound like 'oh dear me'.

In Europe the Common Rosefinch's call is referred to as 'pleased to meet you'.

You need to take care about identifying birds by their call alone, even if you are familiar with it. Some species mimic the calls and songs of other species.

In the UK the Starling can mimic lots of bird calls, including, Blackbird, Tawny Owl, Magpie and Curlew. It can also mimic other sounds, like mobile phones and sirens if it hears them often enough.

In Australia the Superb Lyrebird is an accomplished mimic and can copy a wide range of other bird calls. It can even copy the sound of a car alarm or a chainsaw cutting down a tree.

What colour are these butterflies? Fill in the missing letters.

Butterflies

for younger children



y _ l _ o _



b _ u _



o _ a _ g _



g _ e _ n



w _ i _ e



b _ o _ n

Some butterflies are very small and some are quite big.



Small



Medium



Large

Perhaps you could ask your teacher if you could plant a butterfly garden at school next spring. Then you could record which butterflies visit and try to work out which colour flowers they prefer.



Photo identification quiz



Guess Who?...

Below are pictures of nine birds which can be seen in Britain. They are not very common, but if you are really lucky you might see one of them. How many can you identify? Write your answers in the boxes under the pictures.



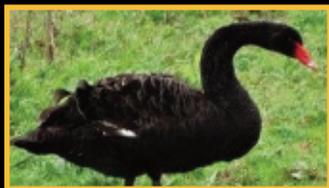
1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

ht

heads or tails for young birdwatchers

Can you identify these birds from the pictures below? Answers are on page 43



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15

This is a list of the birds pictured above

- Mute Swan
- Greylag
- Grey Heron
- Mallard
- Lapwing
- Woodpigeon
- Herring Gull
- Magpie
- Blackbird
- Hooded Crow
- Oystercatcher
- Great Tit
- Ring-necked Parakeet
- Great Crested Grebe
- Pheasant

Expressions

with animals, insects or birds in them



On a wild chase?

All you have to do is fill in the missing words

If you give away a secret, someone might say that you have let the ___ out of the bag.

If you don't sit still, you might be told that you have ___ in your pants.

If you want someone to be patient, you could tell them to hold their _____.

When you are sure that someone is trying to trick you, you could tell them that you smell a ___

When it is raining very hard, someone might say that it is raining ___ and _____.

If you don't want to leave somewhere because you are enjoying yourself so much, you might say that you want to stay until the ___ come home.

If someone was having a short sleep, you might say that they were having a ___ nap.

When someone is very keen to get on with a job you might say that they are an eager _____.

If you spend a lot of time looking for something, but can't find it, you might say that it has been a wild _____ chase.

If someone tells you a fact that misleads you, you could say that it was a red _____.

When someone is in lots of trouble, you might say they are in the ___ house.

If you are annoyed about something, you might be told you have a ___ in your bonnet.

If you start a task very enthusiastically, you might be told you are behaving like a ___ in a china shop.

If someone is very clever and comes up with lots of good ideas, you might say that they are cunning as a ___



Go to page 43 to check your answers

Black birds

in the UK

Starling



Blackbird



Coot



Cormorant



Crow



Jackdaw



Rook

The species on this page have mainly glossy black feathers. There are quite a few more black birds that visit, or are resident in the UK, including Black Tern, Chough, Common Scoter, Black Grouse, Capercaillie and Ring Ouzel.

Many other birds, like the Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Tufted Duck, Magpie and Great Spotted Woodpecker have some black feathers in their plumage, often with white or blue contrasting feathers.

You might think that birds with black feathers would be difficult to tell apart. As you can see from the species shown here, they are all easily distinguishable from each other.

Are there any advantages in having black feathers? Here are a few ideas. Black absorbs more heat from the sun's rays, so it might be useful to have black feathers if you are resident in a

country with long cold winters. This is why most of the birds on this page do not skulk away in bushes, and are usually seen in the open where they can make best use of any sunlight.

Black feathers might help birds to roost more safely in long dark nights, making them less noticeable to predators. Black feathers heat up more quickly than other colour feathers. This means that the muscles in the wings will be slightly warmer and allow black birds to take flight quicker.

In all of the species on this page, except the Blackbird, both the female and male have black plumage. In the case of the Blackbird, the male has black feathers, and the female has dark brown feathers.

Some have colourful beaks, which are hidden when the birds are resting to make them less conspicuous.

first steps

into nature



I am a Fox.
I live in a den.



I am a Squirrel.
My tail is bushy.



I am a Hare.
I have big ears.



I am a Hedgehog.
I have prickles.

NINE THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN OCTOBER

Lots of different Fungi in the woods

On this sheet you will find nine things to look for in October. Look out for the wildflowers and butterflies at the beginning of the month. When you find one, underline the name in the box in the corner of the picture. At the bottom of the page say how many you found during October, say which you liked the best, and say why you liked them so much.

The British Nature Guide

Guide



Harlequin Ladybird



Garden Cross Spider



Oak Marble



Yellow-wort



Speckled Wood



Horse Chestnut - Conker



Red Admiral



Young Toad



How many did you find?

My favourites were ...

Why I liked them ...



Common Frogs can be seen during the day, but are most active during the night when they hunt insects, worms and slugs. In the winter they hibernate in mud or under damp leaves, Frogspawn and tadpoles are eaten by Grass Snakes, birds, dragonfly larvae and fish. Adult Frogs are preyed on by many species including Herons and Otters. With so many things making a meal of them it might surprise you to hear that Common Frogs can live for up to 10 years. Most do not live for more than 5 years.



How long does our Wildlife live for?

This is not a quiz page, but if you want you can cover the answers and test your own knowledge.



Gatekeeper Butterflies can be seen flying in July and August, but this is only one part of the life cycle of this species. They start as eggs laid by the adults in the summer. The eggs hatch into caterpillars. The caterpillars hibernate deep in vegetation over winter, then in spring they continue feeding until June when they turn into a chrysalis. The adult butterfly emerges from the chrysalis and the life cycle starts all over again. Overall they live for up to 12 months.



Blue Tits are a common sight in parks and gardens the UK. They can be seen all year round and readily use garden feeders. Eggs are laid between April and July. The eggs take about two weeks to hatch and the chicks then take about three weeks to fledge. Many young birds do not survive their first winter. Adult Blue Tits usually live for 3-5 years, but if plentiful food is available, and the winters are not too severe, they can live for up to 10 years.



The Red Fox is in the same family of animals as domestic dogs, and in captivity they can live for 12 years or more, just like a pet dog. In the wild they can live for up to 5 years, although most will live for less than 3 years. Urban Foxes eat pigeons and rodents but also scavenge for scraps. Rural Foxes hunt rabbits and birds. Foxes have no natural predators in the UK. Large numbers are killed on roads by cars, many are shot, and others die of disease.



Damselflies lay their eggs in standing water during the summer, the eggs hatch and the nymphs spend up to 3 years as predators in ponds. When the nymphs are fully grown they climb out of the water and the adult damselfly emerges. Damselflies can be seen flying in late spring and right through the summer months. Overall Damselflies live for around 3 years but as adults, only for a few weeks.



Common Lizards feed on small invertebrates, such as flies and spiders. They give birth to live young in the late spring. Cats, rats, foxes, crows and birds of prey will all catch and kill them. They hibernate in the winter. They can often be seen basking in the sun during the summer months. If they can avoid their predators, Common Lizards can live for up to 5 years in the wild.

HOW WELL DO YOU
KNOW YOUR

Bugs

All of these shield bugs can be found
in the UK. Why not see how many
you can find in 2021?



Parent Bug
Elasmucha grisea



Common Green Shield Bug
Palomena prasina



Red-legged Shield Bug
Pentatoma rufipes



Birch Shield Bug
Elasmotethus intersinctus



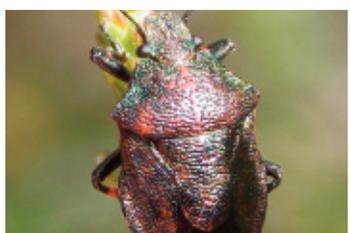
Woundwort Shield Bug
Eysarcoris venustissimus



Hairy Shield Bug or Sloe Bug
Dolycoris baccarum



Hawthorn Shield Bug
Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale



Heather Shield Bug
Rhacognathus punctatus



Spiked Shield Bug
Picromerus bidens

Why not become a Citizen Scientist in 2021?

You don't need qualifications to get involved in Citizen Science, just enthusiasm. On this page you will find information about a few of the organisations that need our help in order to be able to monitor and protect our wildlife. If you are under 18 years of age please speak to an adult before registering with any of the websites mentioned on this page.

The British Trust for Ornithology, RSPB and their partners need help recording migrant birds. To join in you have to register an account with the BirdTrack website.

Once you are registered you record your bird sightings, including the date, time and place they were seen.

You will also be able to see information about other species and sites.

THE NATIONAL WATER VOLE MONITORING PROGRAMME

This survey is organised by the People's Trust for Endangered Species. You can find full details of what is involved in this survey, and details of other wildlife surveys that they run by checking their website. ptes.org/get-involved/surveys

THE GREAT BRITISH WILDFLOWER HUNT.

This survey is organised by Plantlife. Taking part will help you to learn more about our wildflowers as well as providing valuable data about the distribution of our wildflowers.

To find out more, have a look at Plantlife's website. plantlife.org.uk/wildflowerhunt/

If you like spiders, you might like to get involved in the Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme, or perhaps a survey of Cellar Spiders.

To find out more about the spider surveys run by the British Arachnological Society, have a look at their website. britishspiders.org.uk

As you can see there are lots of surveys taking place all of the time, being run by lots of different organisations. They all need the help of committed Citizen Scientists. The surveys on this page are just a few of the opportunities available. If none of these appeal to you, then check out the internet for more.



Looking for something to take part in next year? If you are interested in Butterflies you could contribute data to the Butterfly Count, which is organised each year by Butterfly Conservation. Your contribution helps to establish how well, or badly, our butterflies are doing.

Butterfly Conservation also needs citizen scientists to record sightings of two migrant species, the Painted Lady and the Hummingbird Hawk-moth. On the website you will find details of the previous year's survey, and be able to keep up to date with sightings in 2021.

THE BRITISH DRAGONFLY SOCIETY

They need records of all kinds of Dragonflies. With this information they can establish where individual species occur. There is even advice and help available with identification.

To find out how to record your sightings go to british-dragonflies.org.uk/recording/

THE NATIONAL MOTH RECORDING SCHEME

This online recording scheme is run by Butterfly Conservation. If you like moths, then this is the perfect scheme for you. You do not need your own moth trap. There are dozens of day-flying moths you can look out for and their distribution needs to be recorded. Verified records will be added to the National Moth Recording Scheme database. For more information check online at mothscount.org





Teen Teasers

A test of your wildlife knowledge. All answers are on page 43

Half and Half

Can you identify the two species of butterfly merged together above?



How does the middle photo above link the top and bottom photos together?

The answer is in their names.

- Which of these is not a species of dolphin? Risso's, Striped, Fraser's, Henry's or Bottlenose.
- Which of these birds is a winter migrant to the UK? Swallow, Cuckoo, Redwing, Ring Ouzel or Whinchat.
- Which of these is not a type of dragonfly? Skimmer, Hawker, Chaser, Goldenring or Courser?
- On which of these islands would you find Ring-tailed Lemurs? Sumatra, Iceland, Madagascar, Tasmania or Barbados.
- In Africa an Eland is a type of what? Deer, Giraffe, Antelope, Camel or Buffalo?
- If you saw a Tiger, an Elephant, a Hummingbird, a Kitten and a Leopard, what type of insect would you be looking at?
- Skippers, Admirals, Emperors, Dukes and Ladies are all types of what insect you can find in the UK?
- What is the link between the Emu, Ostrich, Penguin, Kiwi and Dodo?
- Which of these is not a species of tree in the UK? Alder, Box, Wainscot, Larch or Hornbeam?
- Which of these is not a species of grass in the UK? Timothy, Yorkshire Fog, Cocksfoot, Spindle and Meadow Foxtail.
- How many species of Rhinoceros are there living in the wild in the world? How many of the species can you name?

What am I?



Butterflies

Females of the species - part 2

So often in butterfly watching our eyes are drawn to the males whose bold markings and behaviour make them stand out, but it can be just as rewarding to seek out their female equivalents whose subtler patterns can sometimes make them harder to spot.

In some cases their features provide hints as to their male counterparts (or even directly echo them) but with others gender distinctions are striking.

In this second part of a running feature on the females of the species, we enjoy a taste of the summertime blues.

Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)

A widespread species that flies from May through to October.

Far from “common” in appearance, the males are strikingly colourful though it is worth taking the time to take a close look at the predominantly brown females with their own splash of blue spreading from the thorax and orange spots echoing those of Brown Argus. Favours Common Bird’s-Foot-Trefoil as its food plant.

Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

The first of the blues to emerge, this enchanting species has extended its range and prospered in recent years.

Emerging on holly in its spring brood and ivy in its second brood, the female is easy to distinguish when allowing a view of the prominent black margins on its upperside, while the male has more prominent black spots on the underside.

Small Blue (*Cupido minimus*)

The UK’s smallest butterfly depends on sheltered grassland and an abundance of its favoured food plant Kidney Vetch which limits the sites where it can be seen.

The female lacks the vivid splash of blue that characterizes the male. A species now flourishing in some areas with vast numbers on the scrape at Hutchinson’s Bank NR, New Addington in recent summers, a sight to behold.



Common Blue female



Common Blue male



Holly Blue female



Holly Blue male



Small Blue female



Small Blue male



Adonis Blue female



Chalkhill Blue female



Silver-studded Blue female

Butterflies

Females of the species - part 2



Adonis Blue male



Chalkhill Blue male



Silver-studded Blue male

Adonis Blue (*Polyommatus bellargus*)

A contender for our most beautiful butterfly, this species has broods in early and late summer though is confined to chalk downlands in the south.

No words can describe the dazzling pure blue of the male but the female should not be overlooked, brown in colour but echoing the male with black veins on its outer fringes.

Chalkhill Blue (*Polyommatus coridin*)

A species that emerges at the height of summer on southern chalk downlands which the silvery features of the male (and to a lesser extent the female) emulate perfectly.

As with Adonis, favours Horseshoe Vetch and when present in large numbers, as at Denbies Hillside in Surrey, a stunning sight.

Silver-studded Blue (*Plebejus argus*)

A species with a wide but sparse distribution, characterized by the silver spots on its underside but most easily distinguished via the striking sheen on the upperside of the male within its prominent black borders.

The female is a rather faded brown with the exception of the separate Great Orme race (*caernensis*) which is mainly blue.

Quiz Question

To the right are two of the female species featured in the last issue of this magazine. Can you name them? Check your answers on page 43

A



B



Wildflowers

which have been introduced to UK



Himalayan Balsam



Evening Primrose



Fox-and-cubs



Phacelia



Dame's-violet



Spanish Bluebells

Top to bottom

Himalayan Balsam was introduced from Western Himalayas in India in 1830s. **Fox-and-cubs** was introduced to UK from the Alpine Region in Europe in the 17th century. **Dame's-violet** was first brought to the UK in the 14th century from Southern Europe.

Top to bottom

Evening Primrose, several species occur here, introduced from North America from 1700s onwards. **Phacelia** was brought to UK in 1830s from North America. **Spanish Bluebells** were introduced from Iberia as a garden plant from 1700s onwards.

Birds and science

Scientific or Linnaean names for birds

Scientific names may be difficult to remember, but they are vital to avoid confusion, especially if you travel abroad to watch birds. Here are a few examples of why they are so important.



In the Netherlands what we know as the Purple Sandpiper (pictured) is known as Paarse Strandloper, in Italy it is the Piovanello Violetto, and in Germany it is called the Meerstrandläufer. Luckily, the scientific name for this species is the same wherever you go, *Calidris maritima*.

In North America what we know as the Goosander is known as the Common Merganser, in Italy it is called Smergo Maggiore, in the Netherlands you would be told it was Grote Zaagbek. If you check the scientific name you will find they are all *Mergus merganser*.

In Italy what we call the Short-eared Owl is called Gufo di Palude, in Germany it is Sumpfohreule, and in France Hibou des Marais. The scientific name of *Asio flammeus* is the same in all of the countries.



Species which might be split in the future

There are dozens, if not hundreds of bird species which might find themselves split in the future, making life more difficult for birdwatchers.

The White-breasted Nuthatch (above) in North America might find itself split into three species. Watch out for the Atlantis and the Pacific forms of the Fulmar.

The European and North American versions of the Moorhen might well find themselves split at some point.

The Eastern and Western forms of the Willet are another candidate to be split.

The Greenland White-fronted Goose might find itself being granted species, rather than sub-species status.

To split or not to split

In recent years scientists have been looking closely at our bird species. They have used DNA testing and other modern techniques to prove that some species should be split into several distinct species. As a result, many of what were previously considered to be merely sub-species or races of wide-ranging species, are now species in their own right.

It can take time for all scientific bodies or organisations to agree on whether species should be split. It can create problems for birdwatchers when one organisation considers something a full species, and another still considers it to be a race of an existing species.

Two recent splits in North America mean that European birdwatchers



have to look more carefully at Herring Gulls and Sandwich Terns, in case one is a transatlantic migrant. The Herring Gulls in North America are considered by some organisations to be a species in their own right, American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*, and by others to be a race of the widespread Herring Gull *Larus argentatus smithsonianus*.

The same applies to what in Europe is the Sandwich Tern. In North America this species is now considered a separate species and known as



Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acuflavidus*. With this species there is an additional complication as the family name has also changed, so what was *Sterna sandvicensis* is now *Thalasseus sandvicensis* or *Thalasseus acuflavidus*.

It can be hard to keep up, even for serious birders. Reference books quickly become out of date, and new books do not always have the latest information, especially when a species split has not been agreed by all of the relevant bodies and organisations.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT BIRDS

■ Barnacle Goose – a fish or a bird?

In medieval times people did not know that Barnacle Geese bred in Greenland, Svalbard and Novaya Zemlya in the Arctic. It was thought that adult geese hatched from Goose Barnacles, this myth continued to be believed for more than 700 years. Historically the Christian religion saw Friday as a day for fasting, and people were expected to refrain from eating meat on Fridays. Until the early 20th century Barnacle Geese were eaten on Fridays in many places, because they were thought of as fish, and not fowl.

■ Pectinate claw

Some bird species have what is known as a 'pectinate claw'. These claws have serrations along the side that in some species actually look like a comb. The 'pectinate claw' is used in plumage maintenance, for straightening feathers, and combing out dirt and parasites. Next time you watch a bird preening, pay special attention to how they use their claws.

■ Up until the middle of the 20th century, Ploverspage and Stonehatch were commonly used as alternate names for the Ringed Plover in the United Kingdom.

■ The Waxwing

The bird we know as Waxwing in Britain is known as the Bohemian Waxwing in North America. It was once known as the Bohemian Chatterer. The scientific name for this species is *Bombycilla garrulus*. The word *garrulus* comes from Latin and means to chatter, to gossip, or to babble.

■ The phrase 'Birds of a feather flock together' has been in use since the 16th century. It does not refer to birds, as you might expect, it refers to people. People are said to seek out the company of people with similar backgrounds or similar interests. It could perhaps be used to describe a birdwatcher who enjoys the company of other birdwatchers.

■ The Bonaparte's Gull is not named after the Emperor Napoleon of France as you might expect. It is named after his nephew, Charles Lucien Bonaparte, who was an

ornithologist. Charles spent several years in North America in the early 1800s studying the birds.

■ Blue Tits feed their young on caterpillars. Each young bird can eat about 100 caterpillars a day. If you have a brood of 8 chicks in a nest box in your garden the adult birds need to find 800 caterpillars a day to feed them. Considering it takes the chicks about 3 weeks to fledge that is a lot of caterpillars.

■ In the first half of the 20th century Red-backed Shrikes bred all over England and Wales. They were a summer migrant. By 1969 they were down to around 50 pairs in East Anglia and Hampshire. By 1989 they were extinct as a breeding species. They are now only seen here as spring and autumn migrants along the coasts in the south and East of the UK.

The Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* is a large woodpecker species with a tongue about 13cm long.



The tongue is sticky and covered in tiny barbs. The bird can probe deep under loose bark and into rotten wood to search out termites, larvae and bugs. When the tongue is not in use it is wrapped around the inside of the bird's head. In Britain the Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* has a similar length tongue and uses it in the same way.

The Northern Flicker (below) and the Green Woodpecker (above) will both also use their long tongues to feed on ants which they hunt on the ground.





White Stork



Black Kite



Greater Yellowlegs

The British Nature Guide

A few of the rarities that have been spotted in Britain this year

2020 has been an interesting year for birdwatchers, unfortunately because of the covid-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown not as many people have been able to enjoy them.

Most of the birds we see in this country are resident breeders, or regular summer or winter migrants, however as a birdwatcher you have to be ready for the unexpected, as almost anything can turn up, anywhere, at any time.

Some vagrants are small brown skulking birds like the Blyth's Reed Warblers that turned up in numbers in the spring, and the Song Sparrow on Fair Island in April. Melodious Warbler was also seen this year.

Waders like the Long-billed Dowitcher that visited Cumbria in July are regular visitors and can be quite easy to see in the shallow edges of lakes, estuaries or reservoirs. Western Sandpipers, Pectoral

Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Black-winged Stilt and Greater Yellowlegs have also visited the UK this year.

White Storks bred in West Sussex this year, the first breeding record for this species in England for 600 years. The first chicks hatched in May.

A Bearded Vulture was found in Derbyshire and Yorkshire in July, presumably a bird from a reintroduction programme in Europe.

White-tailed Sea-eagles were reintroduced into Western Scotland a few years ago.

More recently several have been released on the Isle of Wight, these birds were fitted with satellite tracking devices and have been seen wandering all over Southern England.

A Black-browed Albatross from the South Atlantic appeared at Bempton Cliffs in July and was seen regularly with the Gannets.

A Brown Booby was found in Cornwall, this species ranges widely but is usually found in tropical seas. The huge red-billed Caspian Tern was seen in July in Lincolnshire.

A Great Shearwater was seen off the coast of Cornwall in July.

There was something of an influx of Rose-coloured Starlings, originating in Asia, they worked their way across Europe and quite a few reached Britain. It is hard to mistake a full adult bird.

Ducks are common long distance migrants and there have been several notable species this year including Steller's Eider, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Ring-necked Duck and Green-winged Teal.

Several species of unusual gulls have also been seen including Laughing Gull and Sabine's Gull. Gulls can be more difficult to identify than you might imagine as they are often immature or winter plumage birds which merge in with our resident gulls.

Several regular visitors, including the Glossy Ibis, Lesser Grey Shrike and the Black Kite all visited this year.

The fact that they occur here quite often doesn't mean that they are not a very welcome addition to a bird watcher's year list.

I wonder what bird surprises 2021 will bring.

recommended nature reserve

Welsh Harp SSSI



Location: Hendon, London Borough of Barnet
Size: 9.43 hectares
Management: Canal and River Trust, Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Opening times: Free access all year round
How to get there: Ten-minute walk from Hendon Station (Thameslink)

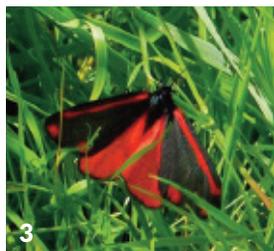
The Welsh Harp (named after the popular tavern which once stood nearby) is a designated SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), having long been an important breeding site for waterbirds including Great Crested Grebe, Gadwall, Tufted Duck and Common Tern.

A wide range of warblers also breed on site including Cetti's Warbler, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler



and Blackcap. A well-timed visit can also bring one of the rare visitors to the site which have included Caspian Gull and Cattle Egret in recent years.

There are two hides overlooking the East Marsh which require keys but are often to be found open at weekends.



Ferruginous Duck (1) was a notable visitor in July 2016, a species whose breeding range extends from Central Europe to Central Asia. **Ring-necked Duck** (2) made a rare appearance in 2017. A species generally found in North America.

The Cinnabar (3) seen in June 2019, an attractive moth species whose caterpillars can be found in large numbers on the reserve. **Purple Hairstreak** (4) seen in June 2018 is worth looking out for high in oak trees but occasionally descends.



(Left to Right) **Left to right above: Gatekeeper, Speckled Wood, Ringlet and Painted Lady**

Other wildlife: Butterfly enthusiasts might find the site well worth visiting during the warmer months with twenty-four species having been recorded in recent years. These include White-letter Hairstreak, Purple Hairstreak and a large colony of Marbled Whites which can form a striking carpet of white in their hundreds from late June. There have also been thirteen species of dragonfly recorded including Ruddy Darter. As the seasons change a wide range of flora can be found, from Pussy Willow in spring, Yellow Iris in summer, Puffballs in autumn to Norfolk Reed in the cold of winter.



WORD Search

There are 20 words related to nature and the seasons hidden in the grid below. They can be spelt forwards or backwards, and they can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal. All you have to do is find them. If you need any help the names you are looking for are in the box below

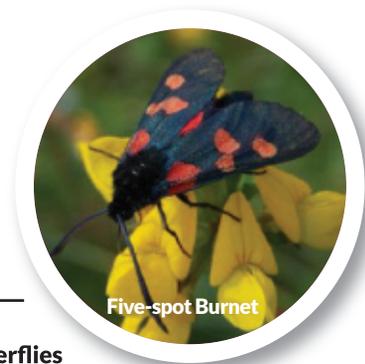


- Spring Roots Oak Leaves Branches Trees Plants Blossom Winter Pollen
 Light Stem Water Toadstool Seed Summer Petal Fruit Mushroom Fungi

Don't be surprised if you find other words that are not mentioned above. You will find the answers on page 44.

Moths

in Britain



Moths can be more colourful and far more varied in appearance than butterflies

Here are 10 species to watch out for in Britain, with luck you might be able to see some of them next year. The species below can all be attracted to light.



The Garden Tiger flies at night in July and August. It is a lot less common than it used to be.



The Large Emerald flies between June and August. Seen all over the UK.



The Barred Yellow can be seen all over the UK and flies from June to August.



Look for the September Thorn in the southern half of the UK from June to October.



Look out for the Swallow-tailed Moth from June to August. It can be seen all over the UK.



The Bordered Beauty can be seen all over the UK between July and September.



The Clouded Border can be seen almost anywhere in the UK flying between June and August.



The Angle Shades can be seen all year round in the UK, but is usually found in the summer months.



The Elephant Hawk-moth flies from May to August over most southern parts of the UK.

Responsible moth trapping: If you try your hand at moth trapping please make every effort to release the moths unharmed. Research the type of trap that would suit you best on the internet. Do not use it every night. Please record what you find and if possible, 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>

RSPB Arne in Dorset

birds and so much more

Arne RSPB reserve covers more than 5 square kilometres. The area was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1986. The entrance is from Arne Rd, Arne, Wareham BH20 5BJ

Over 500 species of plants have been recorded on the reserve and it is also possible to see a dozen species of butterflies on a visit in the summer.

Special breeding birds at Arne include Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark.

Other birds to look out for are kingfishers, woodpeckers, warblers and waders. There are regular sightings of Osprey on the reserve and with luck they will breed in the next few years.

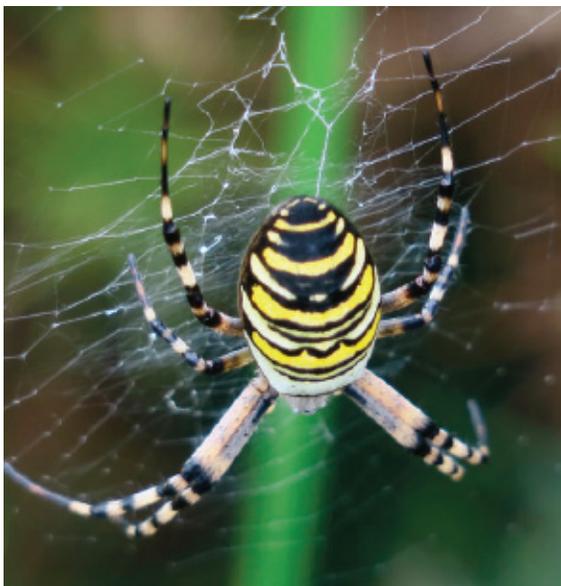
The reserve is not just good for birds, if you keep your eyes open you will see large numbers of butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles, plants, fungi and mammals.



In the autumn look out for the Sika Deer rutting, and the large flock of Spoonbills.

If you look carefully you should find both Wasp and Raft Spiders. If you have never been, you really should plan a visit to the reserve. You will not be disappointed.

The photos on this page were all taken at Arne by Lynda Lambert





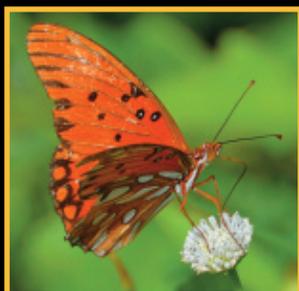
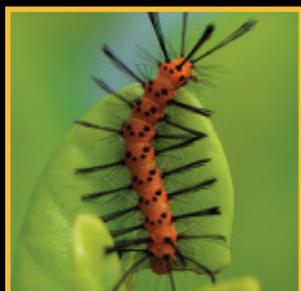
British Nature Guide

On Tour:



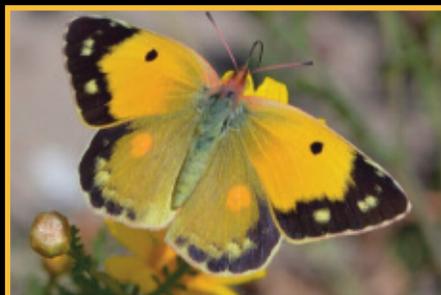
A look at wildlife and wild places beyond the UK

We found this caterpillar in Mexico. It was only when we got home that we discovered that it was from a commonly seen species of butterfly, the Gulf Fritillary.



The male and female Clouded Yellow have different patterns on their wings. Because this species always settles with its wings closed it is difficult to get a good look at the open wings.

With patience it is possible to catch a glimpse as they take off. These photos were taken in Kos where the species was numerous during our visit. Above is the male, below is the female.



Right is the Blue Hound's-tongue seen on Majorca. It is a native of Southern Europe. →



The Skylark and the rarer Woodlark breed in the UK, but when you travel to Europe there are lots more species to look out for including the Crested Lark pictured above.



Something that you might not have expected to see on Majorca, the European Pond Terrapin, seen at the Albufera Marshes.

In our next magazine we will be featuring some of the mammal species which live in Southern Africa, including the African Elephant pictured right. Sadly, many of these iconic species are threatened with extinction. Within just a few decades there might be nowhere left for them to roam in the wild.



British Nature Guide and friends on tour

Photo identification quiz:

Nine North American bird species to identify (They have all visited Britain)

Rarities can turn up almost anywhere in the UK, but there are some hotspots that get more than their fair share of North American vagrants. The Scilly Isles in the autumn attracts birds and birdwatchers and a visit during the 'Scilly Season' is highly recommended. Fair Island is another well known hotspot, and many 'firsts' for Britain have been found there.

The most commonly seen American visitors are gulls, ducks, waders and terns, but almost any North American migrant can get blown off course and turn up in the UK. **Answers can be found on page 42**



1



2



3



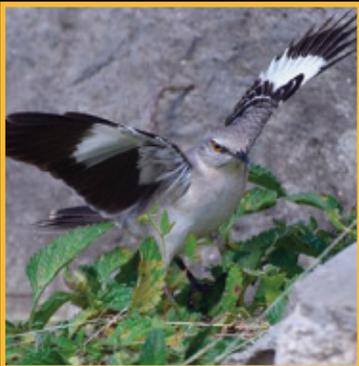
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5



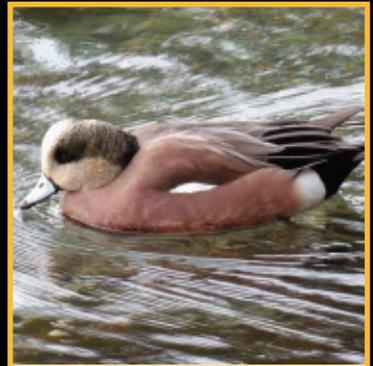
6



7



8



9

Nature during lockdown



A North London experience

For London's butterfly enthusiasts, spring is normally the time to plan outings to the home counties and beyond in search of the rarer of the UK's fifty-nine species. This year however, nature watching, along with so much else, was unavoidably transformed by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic with horizons narrowed overnight and safety considerations rightly becoming paramount.



Peacock



Comma



Small Tortoiseshell



Red Admiral



Brown Argus



Green Hairstreak



Marbled White



Clouded Yellow



Common Carpet



Yellow Shell



Burnet Companion



Jersey Tiger

This left only the solitary freedom of a daily local exercise walk, a most unpromising start as it seemed to what is traditionally a joyful season of the year. Yet slowly but surely within lockdown restrictions, nature came to the fore with the opportunity to discover overlooked and hidden treasures on a local level.

In the case of this observer, daily walks to Walthamstow Wetlands or Tottenham Marshes brought the full range of standard butterflies and some unexpected appearances, with twenty-five species seen at the two sites by mid-July. While finding each new species has been rewarding, it has also been a pleasure to witness an abundance of our most colourful butterflies with Peacocks everywhere to be seen from early season, followed by Commas, Small Tortoiseshells and Red Admirals in large numbers.

Then came the challenge of seeking out the more elusive species, at quiet times with a due emphasis on social distancing. On that note it was pleasing come late May to encounter Brown Argus and Marbled White at Walthamstow Wetlands, species normally ticked off on visits

to Surrey or Essex. The highlight of the season came in the same week, a solitary Green Hairstreak (worse for wear but a delight to see) which was kindly confirmed by local birdwatchers as a site first. By June, Essex Skippers were pleasingly numerous around the wetlands and on 12th July Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady both showed on the same walk, a pairing to brighten any outing.

Meanwhile a good range of day-flying moths made appearances with numerous dazzling Yellow Shells at both sites. Common Carpet, Burnet Companion, Cinnabar and Silver-Y duly emerged though honours were stolen by a handsome Jersey Tiger on 11th July, a new species for this observer and now becoming established in the capital.

With lockdown now easing it is again possible to venture safely slightly further afield (a late July visit to Trent Park bringing a memorable parade of active Purple Hairstreaks), but for four months when so many were in isolation, nature showed just how much comfort and hope it can bring even within confined local boundaries.

Species factfiles

Jersey Tiger

With a flight period from July to September, the Jersey Tiger (*Euplagia quadripunctaria*) was until recent times largely confined to Devon and Dorset. Having initially expanded its range to Sussex and Kent, the first recorded London sighting occurred around a decade ago.

Now established in pockets of the capital (with the above photograph taken in Walthamstow this summer), it is well worth keeping an eye out for this strikingly beautiful moth on any nature walk where the habitat is suitable.

While mainly a daytime flyer (feeding on herbaceous plants such as Common Nettle, Borage, Ground-ivy and Bramble), this species is also active at night and sometimes makes a welcome appearance in moth traps.

Common Tern

The springtime appearance of the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) on our inland waterways is always a cause for celebration. The sight of these graceful birds hovering and careering acrobatically in mid-air before plunging into the water for a catch is one to cherish.

This ground-nesting Amber List species (medium conservation concern) has been given a helping hand through the provision of rafts on some nature reserves including RSPB Rye Meads in Hertfordshire.

Sometimes present alongside the rarer Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), from whom the Common Tern can be distinguished by a black-tipped bill, longer legs and dark band on the underwings.



The Dandelion is a wildflower, not a weed.

The humble Dandelion is one of the most important sources of nectar for hundreds of our invertebrate species, including Peacock, Brimstone, Orange-tip, Small Copper and Green-veined White butterflies, Honey Bees, Common Carder, Red-tailed and White-tailed Bumblebees.

They are also vital for beetles, bugs, sawflies and hoverflies. Next year, why not keep a record of the species you see on Dandelions in your garden or local park?

Make space for a Dandelion in your garden





British Nature Guide

On Tour:



Birds of the Okavango Delta in Botswana (part 1)

Botswana is a magic country for watching wildlife – and especially mammals and birds in the Okavango Delta. Okavango safaris tend to be a bit different from a 'normal' African safari in that:

- There are no roads – travel is normally by small planes, helicopter and 6-seater (or so) land-cruisers.
- The lodges are so remote, electricity is normally provided by generator and goes off at night, and Wi-Fi is uncommon. (But the situation is improving markedly as solar panels are starting to replace generators.)



Ostrich



Ground Hornbills



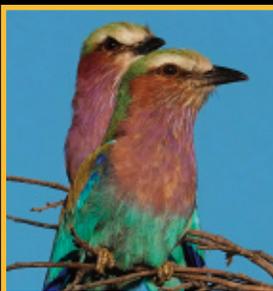
Southern Carmine Bee-eater



European Bee-eater



Hamerkop



Lilac-breasted Roller



Marabou Stork

British Nature Guide and friends on tour

Birds of the Okavango Delta in Botswana (part 2)

Botswana is just over 600,000 square kilometres in size and has a population of just over 2 million people. This leaves plenty of space for wildlife. (By comparison the UK is less than 250,000 square kilometres in extent with a population of over 66 million people.) There are more than 600 bird species which are either resident, vagrant or migrant visitors. It is also home to around 170 species of mammal. If you are ever lucky enough to visit Botswana you are sure to be astounded by the sheer variety of wildlife on show.



Burchell's Starling



Black-winged Stilt



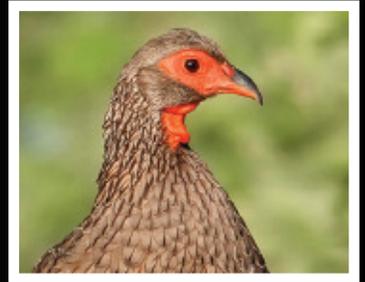
European Roller



African Spoonbill



Southern Red-billed Hornbill



Swainson's Spurfwow



Grey Go-away-bird



Saddle-billed Stork



Green Wood Hoopoe



Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill



Double-banded Sandgrouse



Helmeted Guineafowl

In our next magazine you will find more photos of the birds, as well as some of the mammals you might find in Botswana



British Nature Guide

On Tour: Cyprus



Lizards, Geckos and Skinks on Cyprus

In the UK we are not used to seeing reptiles scurrying for cover whenever we approach an exposed rock or wall, but in many Mediterranean countries Lizards, Geckos and Skinks can be seen on a daily basis.

Here are 5 species we encountered on a fortnight's trip to Paphos in Cyprus a few years ago.



Snake-eyed Lizard



Kotschy's Gecko



Striped Stink



Turkish Gecko



Magellanic Penguin colony, Magdalena Island



British Nature Guide

On Tour: Chile



Wildlife of Chile: Photos by Tony Chandler



Far left – the Black-faced Ibis is found in grasslands in Argentina and Chile.



Near left – the Black-necked Swan is the smallest of the six swan species in the world. It is found on bodies of fresh water in Chile, Argentina and the Falklands.

Far right – the Black-crowned Night Heron can be found all over North and South America, as well as Africa, Europe and Asia.



Near right – Guanacos are in the same family as Llamas, Vicuna and Alpaca. They are found only in South America.



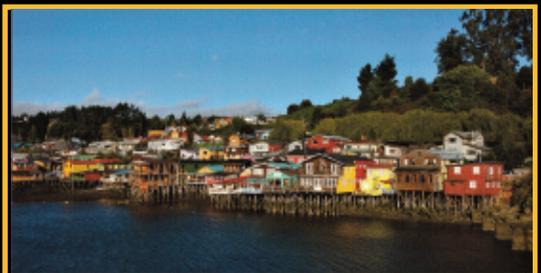
Far left – the South American Tern occurs on the coasts all around South America.



Near left – the Black-chested Buzzard Eagle occurs all over the bottom half of South America, and can also be found all along the Andes and in eastern Brazil.



South American Sea Lions, Pulluche Channel



Castro, Chiloe Archipelago

BIRDSONGS

nature as inspiration

A much-loved American standard composed in 1941, *Skylark* combines a soaring yet wistful melody by Hoagy Carmichael with a yearning lyric by Johnny Mercer, said to have been inspired in part by an ill-fated affair with Judy Garland. For Hoagy Carmichael, it became the second of a trilogy of bird songs he composed along with the less renowned *Mr Bluebird* (1935) and the evergreen *Baltimore Oriole* (1942).



Skylark (Hoagy Carmichael/Johnny Mercer)

“Skylark, have you anything to say to me?”

While Mercer denied the lyric was inspired by Percy Bysshe Shelley’s poem “To a Skylark” (1820), there are undeniable echoes. The poem too describes the Skylark’s song vividly, “as from thy presence showers a rain of melody” and asks questions of the hovering songster “...how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?” Both similarly evoke a sense of wonderment at the bird’s enchanting refrain.

“Skylark, have you seen a valley green with spring?”

As the song unfolds, the Skylark becomes a symbol of hope in the face of what seems a lost cause. This echoes the bird’s appearance in the poems of the First World War, notably the Canadian poet John McRae’s *In Flanders Fields* (“the larks still bravely singing, fly, scarce heard amid the guns below”) viewed through the eyes of North

American servicemen far from home. Thus emerges an expression of nature at its purest, offering comfort and escapism amidst the darkest circumstances, while in Mercer’s lyric the imagination takes flight “over the shadows and the rain, to a blossom covered lane.”

“I don’t know if you can find these things, but my heart is riding on your wings”

While a Eurasian songbird, so celebrated is the Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) that nineteenth century settlers in North America made repeated attempts to introduce the species, though they were only successful in British Columbia where a small population remains to this day in the Vancouver area.

“Wonderful music, faint as a will o’ the wisp, crazy as a loon, sad as a gypsy serenading the Moon”

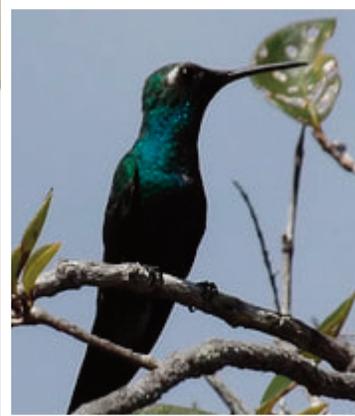
Since its first release in 1942, Skylark has been recorded by

countless leading vocalists including Dinah Shore, Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae, Aretha Franklin and Gregory Porter. Its timeless quality has made it as enduring as the song of the bird it celebrates but therein lies cause for reflection. Due to changes in farming methods, this ground-nesting species has suffered an alarming decline in recent decades and is now on the Red List (highest conservation priority).

Encouragingly the RSPB’s Hope Farm Project in Cambridgeshire has actively promoted wildlife-friendly farming methods including spring crops better suited to the Skylark’s nesting cycle which depends on adequate cover and minimal disturbance. For the time being then we can cherish the song of the Skylark in its myriad variations.

The British Nature Guide

Birding abroad - Make sure you are well prepared before you go



Endemic bird species

Endemics are species with a very restricted range. They are usually at the top of any birdwatcher's wanted list when they visit a new country or region.

A few years ago, I was lucky enough to visit Cuba, where I knew that there are quite a few endemic species. I bought a book on the birds of Cuba, and did some research into species distribution and habitat

preferences. I managed to identify a reputable local guide on the internet who helped me to find some of the more elusive species.

I saw some, and even managed to get photos of a few of the endemics. Above are the Cuban Pygmy-owl, the Cuban Tody and the Cuban Emerald Hummingbird. Seeing the endemics, even though some were relatively common, were the birding highlights of the trip.

A trip to North America

Planning and preparation are the key components for a successful bird watching trip. Find out which species are likely to occur in the area you intend to visit. Remember many species are migratory, so timing is important.

Many of the families of birds you encounter in the USA and Canada will be familiar to British birdwatchers. Some species may have unfamiliar names like Flickers, Sapsuckers, Loons and Whip-poor-wills, but most are similar enough in appearance to species found in Britain and Europe for a British birdwatcher to be able to work out what they are likely to be by referring to a field guide.

There are some families of birds in North America which do not occur in Europe. These can be quite difficult to identify, even for experienced birders, so make sure you study information about Hummingbirds, Tyrant Flycatchers, Anis, Babblers, Jacanas, Caracaras and Thrashers before you set out.

During your trip you might talk to an American birder who has a bird list including Parasitic Jaeger, Black-bellied Plover, Dovekie, Common Murre, Tundra Swan, Eared Grebe and Common Loon. Your own list might not include any of these names, but could include Arctic Skua, Grey Plover, Little Auk, Guillemot, Beswick's Swan, Black-necked Grebe and Great Northern Diver. It is only by checking the scientific names that you realise these are the same species.

Tenerife, Canary Islands

A family holiday to Tenerife might not sound promising from a bird watching point of view, until you look at the species on offer in a relatively small area.

If you can put a little bit of time aside for birding you might well be lucky enough to see some of these species, most of which cannot be seen in mainland Europe. Blue Chaffinch, Tenerife Goldcrest(Kinglet), Bolle's Pigeon, Laurel Pigeon, Canary Islands Chiffchaff, Canary, Berthelot's Pipit, Trumpeter Finch, Plain Swift, Tenerife Blue Tit and Tenerife Robin.

Some sea watching or a boat trip around the coast might, with luck, add Great Shearwater, Little Shearwater, Madeiran Petrel and Bulwer's Petrel.

Butterflies

to look out for in November



Red Admiral



Painted Lady



Brimstone



Clouded Yellow



Small Tortoiseshell



Speckled Wood



Large White



Small White

A sunny day in early November can sometimes encourage a few hardy butterflies to take flight.

The further south you are in the country, the more chance you will have of seeing one or two.

Red Admiral and Painted Lady are the most likely species to be encountered basking in the sunshine.

Brimstone, Clouded Yellow, Speckled Wood, Small Tortoiseshell, Large White and Small White can also be seen. Many of the butterflies seen will be ragged and worn.



Two winter waders to identify. Both can be found along shores and estuaries all around the UK.

Answer on page 44



A look at Kingfishers

World

There are currently thought to be around one hundred and fourteen species of kingfisher in the world. This number may well grow as several species are being looked at closely by scientists, and some of what are currently considered as races of wide-ranging species might be recognised as distinct species.

The greatest numbers of species can be found in countries around the tropics. No kingfisher species occur in the Arctic or Antarctic.

Africa

There are eighteen species of kingfisher in Africa, including the world's smallest species, the African Dwarf Kingfisher which weighs 12 grams or less.

Australia

Ten species of kingfisher occur in Australia, including the largest species in the world the Laughing Kookaburra, which can have a body weight of 490 grams.

Indonesia and Pacific

There are many species of kingfisher which are endemic to specific islands or island groups in this area.

South America and the Caribbean

Surprisingly there are only six kingfisher species in this region, most living in the tropical areas.



The species with the largest distribution

The Eurasian Kingfisher ranges across Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, India, China, Eastern Russia, Japan, Indonesia, and most of the other tropical countries in South-east Asia. It migrates south from northern areas in the winter, some travelling up to 3000 km.

A versatile family of birds

Not all kingfishers are reliant on water, and some have adapted to eat food other than fish.

In Australia, the Kookaburra is found in open forest and woodland, and eats snakes, rodents, insects and young birds.

Also in Australia, the Red-backed Kingfisher inhabits dry open woodland, eating locusts, grasshoppers and other large insects. It is very successful and

is the most widely distributed species on the continent.

In Africa the widely distributed Woodland Kingfisher prefers drier habitats and can often be found well away from any open water.

Europe

Only three species of kingfisher occur in Europe. The Eurasian Kingfisher can be found over most of the continent, the Pied and the White-breasted have an eastern distribution and are rarely seen outside Turkey.

North America

There are only three species of kingfisher found in North America. The most common is the Belted Kingfisher, the other two, the Ringed and the Green, are restricted to the Southern US states and Mexico.

India

There are twelve species of kingfisher found in India, including the Blue-eared Kingfisher which is very similar in appearance to the Eurasian Kingfisher.

Thailand

Sixteen species of kingfisher have been recorded in Thailand.

The rarest species

The Tuamotu Kingfisher *Todiramphus gambieri* is critically endangered with only about 50 birds remaining in the wild. This species is restricted to the island of Niau in French Polynesia.

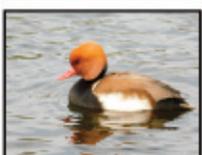
the answers



● **Page 3:** Nature Crossword

A reptile with strong jaws and sharp teeth	C	R	O	C	O	D	I	L	E
Bear with white fur			P	O	L	A	R		
Spiny creature or a grubby child	U	R	C	H	I	N			
Popular as a house plant	O	R	C	H	I	D			
Small primate in Asia with big eyes	T	A	R	S	I	E	R		
Will lose its tail and turn into a Frog	T	A	D	P	O	L	E		
A type of grass grown in paddy fields					R	I	C	E	
A prickly rose				T	H	O	R	N	
A north American weasel in Britain				M	I	N	K		
Small aquatic crustacean with 10 legs	P	R	A	W	N				
A large constricting snake	P	Y	T	H	O	N			
An enormous mythical bird of prey			R	O	C				
A tree not a sandy shore				B	E	E	C	H	
These grow on Vines				G	R	A	P	E	S
Where peat is found				B	O	G			
Like a Snail without the shell					S	L	U	G	
A tall flightless bird in Australia						E	M	U	

● **Page 10:** Bird photo identification quiz

		
White Stork	Black-winged Stilt	Egyptian Goose
		
Black Swan	Hoopoe	Night Heron
		
Red-crested Pochard	Brambling	Mandarin

● **Page 6:** Mini-Quiz

● **Something beginning with H**

Here are a few more animals, plants, insects and birds with names that begin with a H.

Hedgehog, Hippopotamus, Hawthorn, Hummingbird and Honey Bee.

Well done if you got all of the ones I thought of, and congratulations if you have thought of any others.



● **1: Name that Bird:** The bird pictured on page 6 is a Great Crested Grebe.

● **2:** Coltsfoot, Lesser Celandine, Gorse and Bird's-foot Trefoil all have yellow flowers.

● **3:** You will find a Walrus in the seas around the North Pole.

● **4:** The nocturnal marsupial with a baby called a Joey is a Koala.

● **5:** What do these birds have in common? Osprey, Kingfisher, Heron, Cormorant and Goosander They all catch and eat fish.

● **6: Anagram:** The answer to the muddled up letters is REDWING

● **Slow Worm:** The Slow Worm is a type of legless Lizard.



● **Page 11:** Photo ID

● **Page 12 Missing words**

If you give away a secret, someone might say that you have let the **CAT** out of the bag.

If you don't sit still, you might be told that you have **ANTS** in your pants.

If you want someone to be patient, you could tell them to hold their **HORSES**.

When you are sure that someone is trying to trick you, you could tell them that you smell a **RAT**.

When it is raining very hard, someone might say that it is raining **CATS** and **DOGS**.

If you don't want to leave somewhere because you are enjoying yourself so much, you might say that you want to stay until the **COWS** come home.

If someone was having a short sleep, you might say that they were having a **CAT** nap.

When someone is very keen to get on with a job you might say that they are an eager **BEAVER**.

If you spend a lot of time looking for something, but can't find it, you might say that it has been a wild **GOOSE** chase.

If someone tells you a fact that misleads you, you could say that it was a red **HERRING**.

When someone is in lots of trouble, you might say they are in the **DOG** house.

If you are annoyed about something, you might be told you have a **BEE** in your bonnet.

If you start a task very enthusiastically, you might be told you are behaving like a **BULL** in a china shop.

If someone is very clever and comes up with lots of good ideas, you might say that they are cunning as a **FOX**.



Herring Gull



Hooded Crow



Mute Swan



Mallard



Lapwing



Oystercatcher



Woodpigeon



Magpie



Grey Heron



Great Tit



Great Crested Grebe



Ring-necked Parakeet



Pheasant



Greylag



Blackbird

● **Page 19 Teen Teasers**

Half & Half

Comma and Red Admiral.

- 1 Henry's
- 2 Redwing
- 3 Courser
- 4 Madagascar
- 5 Antelope
- 6 Moths
- 7 Butterflies
- 8 They are all flightless
- 9 Wainscot
- 10 Spindle

11 There are five species of Rhinoceros in the world. The Black Rhinoceros, the White Rhinoceros, the Javan Rhinoceros, the Sumatran Rhinoceros and the Greater Indian Rhinoceros. Two of the species, the Javan and the Sumatran, have populations of less than 100 and could soon be extinct.

Page 19 What am I?

Centipede & Goldfinch

What's the connection?

The middle photo is a **Wasp Beetle**, linking it to **Wasp** above and **Beetle** below.



Page 21: Name the species

A is a Gatekeeper

B is a Meadow Brown

● Page 27: Wordsearch



Sixth mass extinction event

This will be the first such event that will have been caused by mankind. We are reaching the tipping point, a point of no return. There will soon be nowhere left for wildlife to live.

If we continue to over exploit the world's resources a million species are likely to become extinct within the next few decades.

Mankind has already been responsible for the extinction of hundreds of species including the Tasmanian Tiger, the Japanese Sea Lion and the Labrador Duck. These species are lost forever.

Some of the species we lose will be gone before they have even been described by science, but most will be species we are all familiar with. Our world will be a poorer place without them.

Will our grandchildren have to live in a world without Polar Bears, Elephants, Dolphins, Turtles and Swallows? Will the only animals and birds they see be in books, or in old films, or in zoos?

The good news is, there is still time to put right a lot of the damage we have done to the world.

Do some research, find out what you can do to help, and then do something positive. Together we can save the world.

The British
Nature
Guide

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

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

● Page 31 North American Birds

- 1 Dark-eyed Junco
- 2 Mourning Dove
- 3 Killdeer
- 4 Least Sandpiper
- 5 Gray Catbird
- 6 Laughing Gull
- 7 Northern Mockingbird
- 8 White-crowned Sparrow
- 9 American Wigeon



● Page 40 Winter Waders - Left Grey Plover, right Black-tailed Godwit.



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