



my wild winter

– A WINTER WILDLIFE AND ACTIVITY GUIDE –



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wildlifetrusts.org/Christmas

Brrrr! The coldest and darkest months of the year are here, and it might be tempting to curl up indoors to wait for spring to arrive but DON'T! There are loads of things to do outdoors, and lots of wildlife to spot at this time of year.

This booklet is packed full with ideas from The Wildlife Trusts to help you explore nature and wild places, either at home or on days out. We're on a mission to help keep families wild and connected with nature, whatever the weather. So grab your gloves and pull on your wellies, it's time to begin your wild winter.



Wildlife to look out for in winter

- Ducks, geese and swans all visit the UK in winter. Look out for large flocks of migratory geese, especially at the coast.
- Winter is the best time to spot footprints in mud and snow, great for practising your wildlife tracking skills.
- Listen for woodpeckers drumming on trees in January and February.
- Grey seals breed during November and December around the coasts of Britain.
- Tawny owls call more in winter than at other times of year. Listen for the familiar twit-twoo.
- Look out for starling 'murmurations' where hundreds of birds swoop through the sky together before settling down to roost for the night.
- Snowdrops flower in late winter – one of the first signs that spring is on its way.
- Redwings and fieldfares look a bit like thrushes and they visit the UK in winter. They love eating juicy red berries on rowan and hawthorn trees.
- And finally, keep your eyes on the sky for those flying reindeer.



Starling murmuration



Red deer

Great Wildlife Trust places to visit in winter

Our nature reserves are great places to visit all year round, with loads to see and do even in winter. Try a frozen wetland for a chance to see secretive bitterns. Be amazed by flocks of winter waders at the coast. Explore a woodland under snow and look for fox and badger footprints. And don't forget to stop at one of our cafés to warm up afterwards!



Montrose Basin

Potteric Carr

Beautiful whooper swans are just some of the winter visitors to stop at Scottish Wildlife Trust's Montrose Basin

Rye Harbour

Find a Wildlife Trust reserve near you at wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/reserves

Sussex Wildlife Trust's Rye Harbour is the perfect birdwatching spot at any time of year

A young child with blonde hair is running through a snowy field. The child is wearing a green and brown camouflage jacket, black pants, and red boots with green and black patterns. The child is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred winter scene with snow-covered ground and bare trees.

my playground

- ACTIVITIES -



How to make your own bird feeder



wildlife
watch

What you need:

- dry ingredients
 - dried fruit
 - bird seed
 - cooked rice
 - bread/crumbs
 - grated cheese
 - chopped nuts
- hard cooking fat (lard or dripping)
- a fir cone, coconut shell or yoghurt pot



- string



- 1 Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl

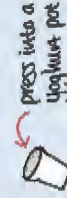


- 2 Add the fat and give it a good mix around

- 3 Choose your feeder



put it round the inside of a coconut shell



press into a yoghurt pot like a ball or turn it out like a cake

- 4 Hang your feeders with string (you may need to make holes and tie the string in before adding the mix)



Hang your feeder where you can watch birds without disturbing them

If you need to mix the fat, use a bowl



Make a pine snow globe

wildlife
watch



You will need

- Couple of small pine branches



- Plastic bottle (cleaned and label removed)



- Water



- Glitter or Christmassy sequins



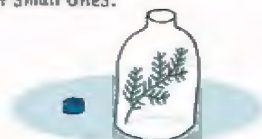
- Strong glue



- 1 Collect your pine branches (these could be snipped from your Christmas tree or from a dropped branch on the ground).



- 2 Insert pine clippings into your bottle. You might want to add one branch, or lots of small ones.



- 3 Fill up your bottle with cold water (almost to the top).



- 4 Add your wintry decorations - a spoonful of glitter, loose needles or Christmassy sequins.



- 5 Apply strong glue to the inside of your lid. Screw your lid onto the top of your bottle.



- 6 Give your snow globe a shake. Ahhh.... pretty!





Discover animal tracks and signs

wildlife
watch



Look for animal footprints
in mud, sand or snow



Owls spit out bits (pellets)
of their prey they can't digest.



Look under hedges and in
banks for rabbit holes.



Animal fur can get caught
on barbed wire and fences.



Birds shed their feathers
when they are damaged.



Look for hedgehog poo with
bits of beetles in it.



Look for pine cones that have
been stripped by hungry Squirrels.



If the trail is continuous, it's
a slug. If broken, it's a snail.



Nests are a surefire sign that
birds are breeding. Hooray!



Molehills are signs that
moles are nearby



Mammals can leave flattened
grass in their tracks.



Song thrushes leave behind
broken snail shells after meals.

Make your own winter bird bath

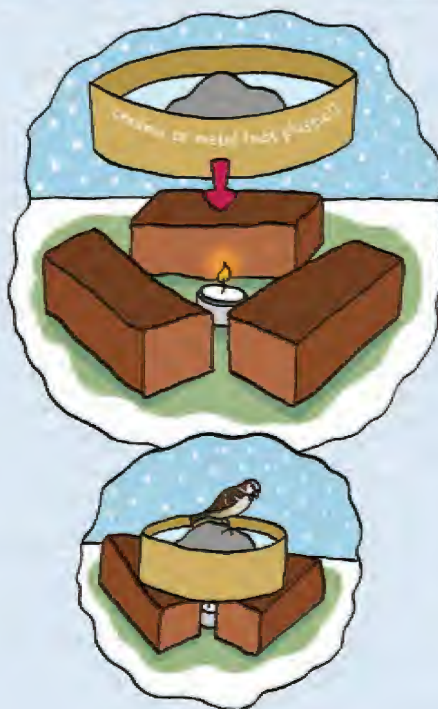
wildlife
watch



You will need:

- Three bricks 
- Trowel (if it's been snowing) 
- Shallow dish, pet bowl or dustbin lid 
- Tealight candles and matches 
- Warm water (not too hot) 
- A large stone 
- Warm clothes 
- An adult to help you

- 1 Find a flat area sheltered from the wind. Clear any snow and make a level patch.
- 2 Arrange the bricks in a triangle.
- 3 Ask an adult to light a tealight and place it in the middle.
- 4 Rest a metal or ceramic dish on the bricks, and fill with warm water.
- 5 Place a stone in the middle for birds to sit on.



How to make ice decorations

wildlife
watch



You will need:

- Saucers



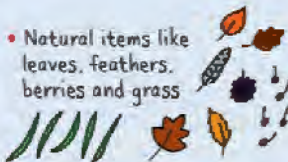
- Kettle



- Boiled water that has been allowed to cool



- Natural items like leaves, feathers, berries and grass



- String or wool



- A freezer (if the weather isn't cold enough!)



- 1 Place your saucers on a flat surface and put the end of your string into the saucer, making sure a long piece is left dangling over the edge.



- 2 Lay natural items in the saucer over the string.



- 3 Gently pour in cooled water (boiling it first helps to remove any bubbles).



- 4 Put the saucers outside on a frosty night (or in the freezer).



- 5 In the morning put the saucers in a tub of cold water to separate the ice.



- 6 Hang them around your garden as decorations.



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Snow, ice and the dark

SNOW ANIMALS

Have you ever built a snowman? Well this year we're challenging you to try something different! Why not see if you can build a wild animal from snow instead. You could have a go at building any sort of creature but if you're stuck for ideas, we've come up with a few suggestions of animals to try:

Difficulty rating

Easy: Hedgehog (use sticks for the spines), caterpillar, snail

Medium: Owl, rabbit (if the ears are bit tricky, use sticks instead of snow for these), dolphin

Tricky: Squirrel, octopus, swan



NIGHT WALK

During the winter the nights are long and dark but that doesn't mean you have to stay indoors. It can be exciting to explore outside at night time.

Things to do:

- Try switching off your torch to see how dark it is: what is the darkest place you can find?
- Take binoculars and look in detail at the craters on the moon, or learn to identify some star constellations – Orion's Belt and The Plough are both good ones to start with. It is believed that some birds use the stars to help them navigate during migration. Do you think you could use the stars to find your way around?
- Listen out for nocturnal wildlife like owls and foxes.
- Play 'sardines'. One person goes outside and hides somewhere in the garden (they can take a torch to help find their hiding place, but then they will need to switch it off once they are hidden). Everyone else must count to 20 before going outside to try to find them (no torches!). You must sneak round quietly on your own, and if you find the hidden person you hide with them. Eventually everyone will be squeezed into one hiding place.

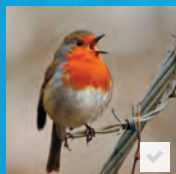
TOP TIPS FOR NIGHT TIME ADVENTURES:

- Wrap up warm
- Take a torch
- Wear bright, light clothing near roads so that cars can see you.

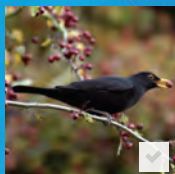


Spotting winter wildlife

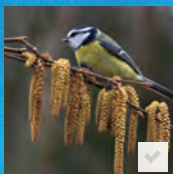
Tick off the wildlife you see this winter



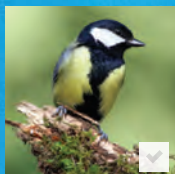
Robin



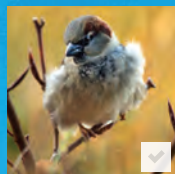
Blackbird



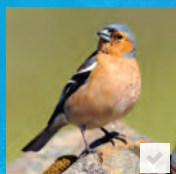
Blue tit



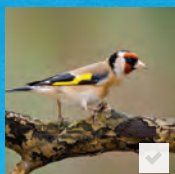
Great tit



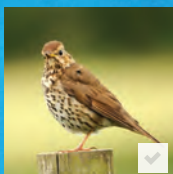
House sparrow



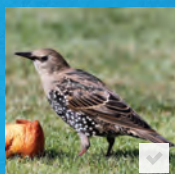
Chaffinch



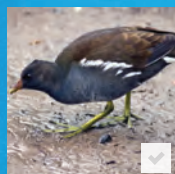
Goldfinch



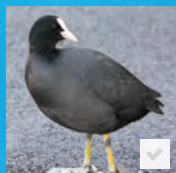
Song thrush



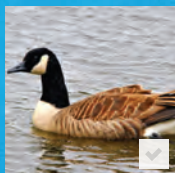
Starling



Moorhen



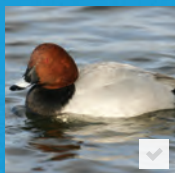
Coot



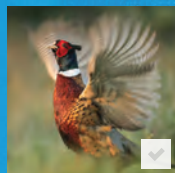
Canada goose



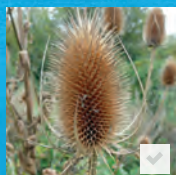
Mute swan



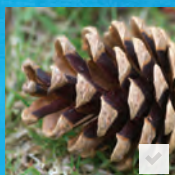
Pochard



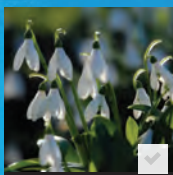
Pheasant



Teasel



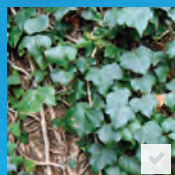
Pine cone



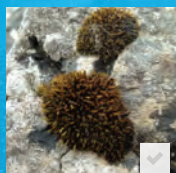
Snowdrop



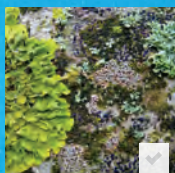
Mistletoe



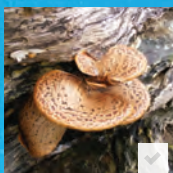
Ivy



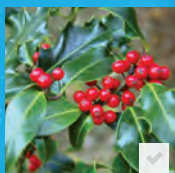
Moss



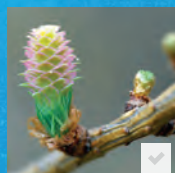
Lichen



Bracket fungi

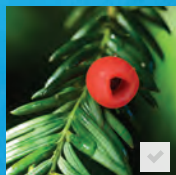


Holly

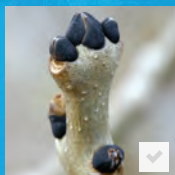


Larch

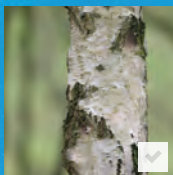
Download a poster of this page at
wildlifetrusts.org/winterspotting



Yew



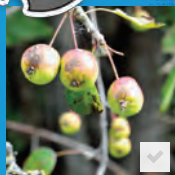
Ash tree



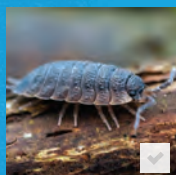
Silver birch



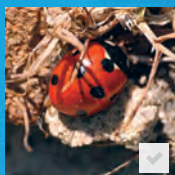
Rowan tree



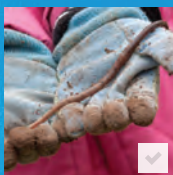
Crab apple



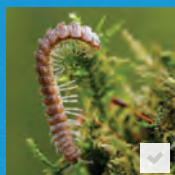
Woodlouse



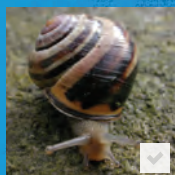
Hibernating ladybirds



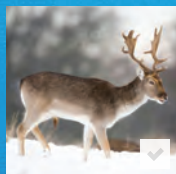
Earthworm



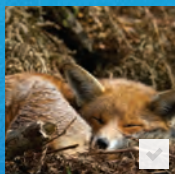
Millipede



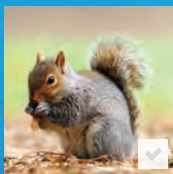
Snail



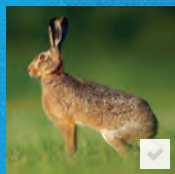
Fallow deer



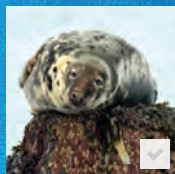
Fox



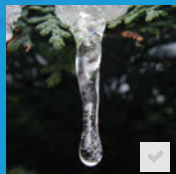
Grey squirrel



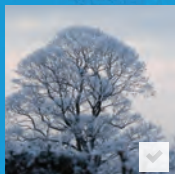
Brown hare



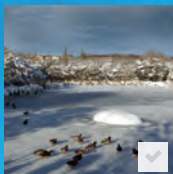
Grey seal



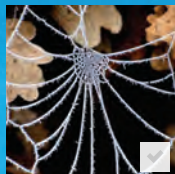
Icicle



Tree covered in frost



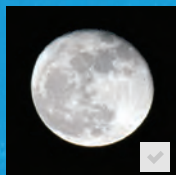
Frozen pond



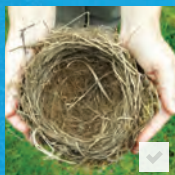
Cobweb



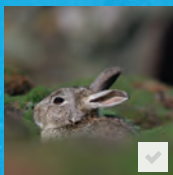
Snow



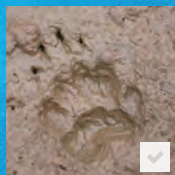
Moon



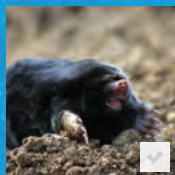
Empty bird's nest



Rabbit hole



Animal tracks



Mole hill

Jokes

**WHAT DO YOU
DO WITH A
SICK INSECT?**

Take it to waspital

**IN WINTER,
WHAT FALLS
BUT DOESN'T
HIT THE
GROUND?**

The temperature

**WHAT
HAPPENED
WHEN THE
OWL LOST
HIS VOICE?**

He didn't give
a hoot



**WHAT TYPE
OF SNAKE
IS GOOD AT
MATHS?**

An adder



**WHAT IS A
HEDGEHOG'S
FAVOURITE
FLAVOUR OF
CRISPS?**

Prickled onion!

**WHERE
DOES IVY GO
TO BECOME
FAMOUS?**

Holly-wood

**HOW DO BEES
TIDY UP THEIR
APPEARANCE?**

They use a
honeycomb

**WHY DOES
SANTA HAVE A
GARDEN?**

So he can hoe
hoe hoe

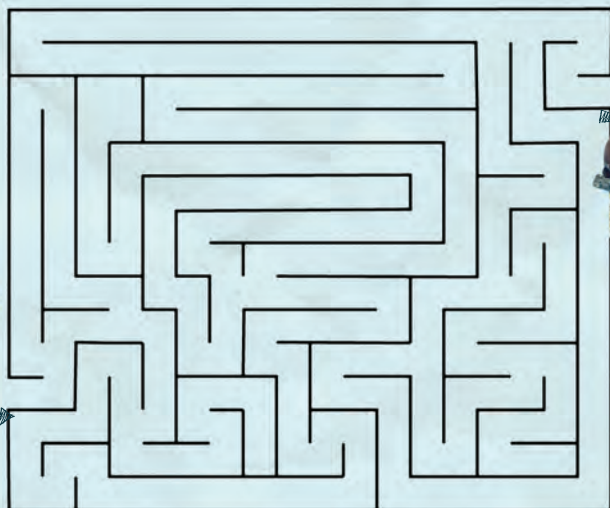
**WHY IS A
FISH EASY
TO WEIGH?**

It has its own
scales



PUZZLE

Can you help
the jay find
the way to the
hidden acorns?



COLOURING IN

Get creative and colour in some wildlife!



About The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts are the UK's largest people-powered organisation caring for all nature – rivers, bogs, meadows, forests, seas and much more. There are 47 Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK with a shared mission to create an environment rich in wildlife for everyone and to inspire people to value and take action for wildlife.

We work to connect children with nature through our inspiring education programmes and protect wild places where they can spend long days of discovery. We want children to go home with leaves in their hair, mud on their hands and a little bit of nature in their heart.

Make more of Your Wild Winter with The Wildlife Trusts

- 1) Visit one of our 2,000+ nature reserves. Find them at wildlifetrusts.org/reserves-wildlife or download our free app at wildlifetrusts.org/app
- 2) Take part in a Wildlife Trust event. Everything from pond dipping to walks at wildlifetrusts.org/whats-on
- 3) Love wildlife, wild places and making new friends? Then Wildlife Watch is the club for you! Find a kids' nature club near you. Try our interactive map at wildlifetrusts.org/natureclubs
- 4) Earn a Wildlife Watch award. Start the Hedgehog award at wildlifewatch.org.uk/awards-information-page
- 5) Become a Wildlife Watch or family member. Join today at wildlifetrusts.org/join

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