my wild summer

– A SUMMER WILDLIFE AND ACTIVITY GUIDE –



#WILDSUMMERDAYS
MYWILDLIFE

my magical kingdom

SUMMER'S HERE! Will it rain? Will it shine? Does it matter? Whatever the weather, there's loads to see and do in the great outdoors.

Your Wild Summer booklet is packed with ideas and information from The Wildlife Trusts to help you explore nature and wild places, either at home, on days out, or on holiday. We're on a mission to keep families wild and connected with nature!

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wildlifetrusts.org/mywildsummer

my favourite thing about summer



Nick Baker
Vice President, The Wildlife Trusts

"My favourite thing about summer is getting a full moth trap! I love to set my moth trap on a nice humid, warm, sultry night and when such a night coincides with a weekend all the better - it means I can take my time and sort through the hundreds - sometimes thousands - of different insects that have been lured in during the night. I carefully tip-toe around the chunky, spectacular hawkmoths (I don't want to wake them and set them buzzing around, disturbing all the other heavier sleepers). Anything can turn up - a rarity, a new species, the first of the season or maybe something that isn't even a moth at all. I've had hornets, caddisflies, maybugs and burying beetles to name just a few. It isn't until the very last of the egg-boxes (put in the trap for the moths to settle on) have been turned over, that the adventure is over - at least until the next weekend!"



Simon King
President, The Wildlife Trusts

"My Wild Summer is a feast for all the senses. It is the lazy song of grasshoppers rasping in the grass – the clatter of a dragonfly's wings as it twists to chase a fly. Summer is the soft cheeping calls of baby wrens fluttering through the undergrowth waiting to be fed by their mother or the explosive squawks of young blackbirds hoping for a meal. Long summer days splash joyful to swallows dipping into lakes and rivers for a drink, and enigmatic evenings thrill to the flitting forms of bats. The heat of a summer's day is echoed in the mewing call of a buzzard as it soars on rising thermals answered by the broken repetitive hunger cries of its new fledged young below. The heady scent of meadowsweet, the great white umbrella heads of angelica and all around the delicate paint pallets of butterflies, from the subtle skippers to the gaudy red admirals and more."

Wildlife to look out for in summer

MINIBEASTS OF ALL SORTS!



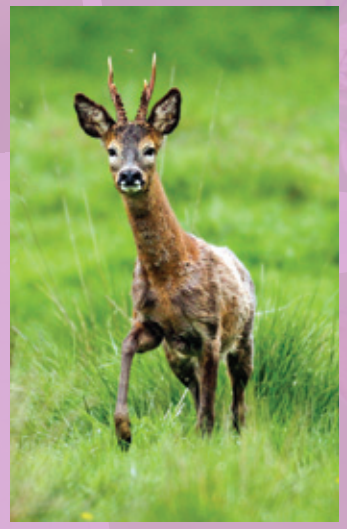
- Butterflies, bees, moths and hoverflies visiting flowers.
- Grasshoppers, crickets, spiders and bugs running and jumping in long grass and meadows.
- Ladybirds and lacewings crawling up stems, searching for aphids! Look carefully and you may see their young larvae too.
- Dragonflies and damselflies hunt near water, while their young (nymphs) grow bigger and stronger in their underwater world, where they will stay for at least a year before emerging as adult insects.
- Wasps come to join in your picnics and drinks! They have been working hard catching caterpillars and flies to feed their young and are looking for sweet things to eat.
- Web-making spiders will be doing their bit to catch as many flies as possible.

ON THE COAST



- Watch out for bottlenose dolphins offshore, and off south and west coasts, you may be very lucky to spot massive basking sharks!
- Rockpool wildlife to spot includes anemones, starfish, limpets and shrimps.
- Watch out for seabirds. Black-headed and herring gulls are sometimes so cheeky they will take your chips! Common terns are elegant fliers, diving for fish.
- Puffins, razorbills and guillemots have left their cliffs so will be fishing out at sea.
- Sea ducks (like eider) have moulted, including their flight feathers, so can't fly for about a month. The males are in eclipse plumage, all brown, which makes them look more like the females.

BIGGER BEASTS!



- Roe deer bucks are defending rutting territories. They are very bad tempered and bark, chase each other, scent-mark trees and fight each other.
- Slow worms are breeding. Look very quietly and carefully on sunny grassy banks.
- Bats are about in the evenings, with young bats being left in the nursery while their mums hunt for insects.
- Baby hedgehogs, shrews, young rabbits and badger cubs are scurrying about.
- Adders are basking in the sun and grass snakes leave shed skins as they grow.
- Bird migration starts – see if you notice when the swifts have flown back to Africa.

WILDFLOWERS, PLANTS AND FUNGI

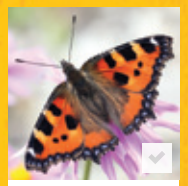


- Many wildflowers have set seed, but there are still plenty about, including harebell, common fleabane, common sea lavender, flowering rush, heather, hemp agrimony, sneezewort, tansy and teasel.
- Watch out for the first berries – a sign that autumn is on the way - such as guelder rose and bryony (take care, both are poisonous!)
- Search for the first acorns and conkers on oak and horse chestnut trees. Sweet chestnuts come in cases with much finer and more tightly packed prickles than conkers.
- After warm, wet days, mushrooms and toadstools start to pop up. Can you find the bright red fly agaric under birch trees or the smelly stinkhorn?

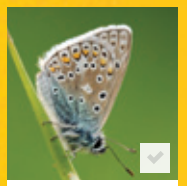
Spotting summer wildlife

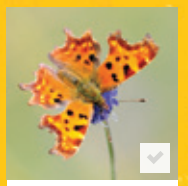
Tick off the wildlife you see this summer


Peacock butterfly


Small tortoiseshell

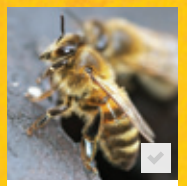

Red admiral


Common blue butterfly

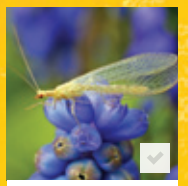

Comma

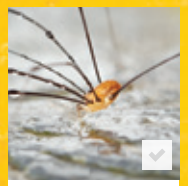

White-tailed bumblebee


Red-tailed bumblebee

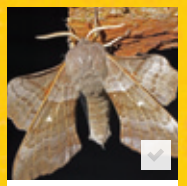

Honeybee

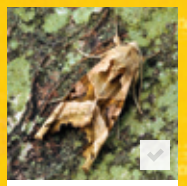

Earwig

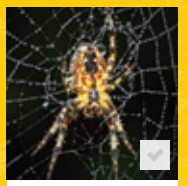

Lacewing

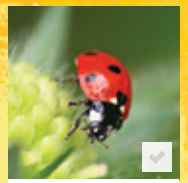

Harvestman

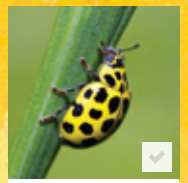

Woodlouse

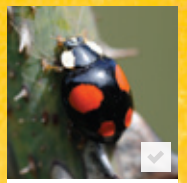

Poplar hawkmoth

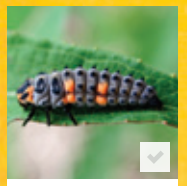

Angle shades

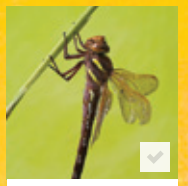

Garden spider

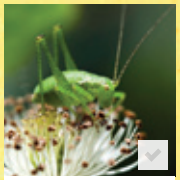

7-spot ladybird

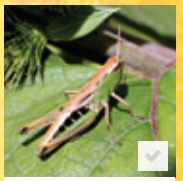

22-spot ladybird

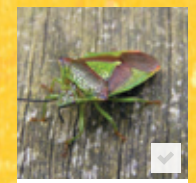

Harlequin ladybird

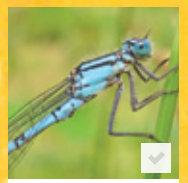

Ladybird larvae

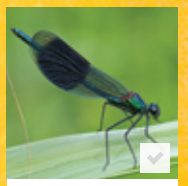

Brown hawker


Speckled bush-cricket


Meadow grasshopper


Hawthorn shieldbug

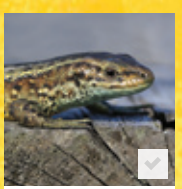

Common blue damselfly

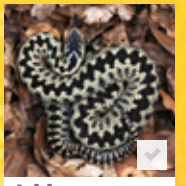

Banded demoiselle

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

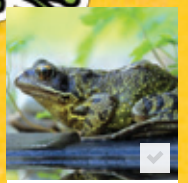


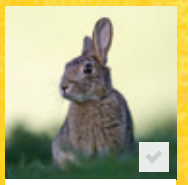

Slow worm


Common lizard

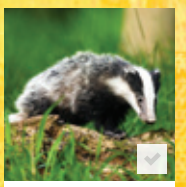

Adder


Smooth newt

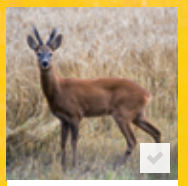

Common frog

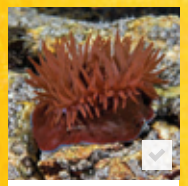

Rabbit

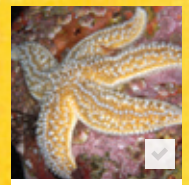

Hedgehog

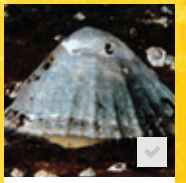

Badger

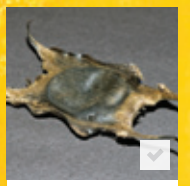

Pipistrelle bat


Roe deer


Beadlet anemone


Common starfish


Limpet


Mermaid's purse

Crab shell

Mussel shell

Cuttlefish bone

Scallop shell

Whelk shell

Oyster shell

Teasel

Bird's-foot trefoil

Dog rose

Heather

Poppy

Habitats to explore in summer

Towns and Gardens

Urban areas and gardens can be teeming with wildlife if they are looked after in a wildlife-friendly way. Watch out for house martins and house sparrows, pigeons and starlings all living under eaves. Bees, butterflies and other insects head for flowery gardens and owls and bats hunt at night. Street lighting means that some wildlife lives a 24/7 lifestyle, feeding on and off all day and night.

Woodland

Where else can you walk through a landscape of plants that weigh tons, can be hundreds of years old, and are taller than houses? Woodlands can be magical places. Even a small group of trees can feel like a different world. Woods are home to many sorts of plants and animals and can be great for exploring and building dens.

Grassland

Brilliant for flowers, especially in the summer, you may spot rare orchids and other wildflowers amongst the grasses. Grassland habitats like meadows are great for insects, especially butterflies, bees and grasshoppers.

Rivers and wetlands

Water and wildlife go together. Rivers, ponds, lakes, marshes and fens are all home to lots of wildlife, from dragonflies and damselflies to kingfishers, herons, water voles, otters and, of course, fish (but they're harder to see!).

Heathland

One of our most threatened habitats, heathlands are aglow with purple flowering heather in the summer. Buzzing with bees, they are also home to the amazingly camouflaged grayling butterfly and reptiles, including lizards and snakes.

Beach, coast and marine

When you explore the beach or rockpools, with seagulls wheeling overhead and the smell of washed up seaweed, it gives you a hint as to what is actually living under the sea - our wonderful undersea wildlife! A secret world of seahorses, dolphins, reefs, and meadows of wafting seagrass is under the waves.

Mountains and moorland

Mountains and moorland make up the largest expanse of really wild land in the UK, with really spectacular scenery. Depending on where you are, you might spot mountain hare, golden eagle or peregrine falcon. But most wildlife on a mountain can usually see you first! Look for purple heather in bloom too.

Our wild places

There are 2,300 Wildlife Trust wild places for you to explore – woods, meadows, moors, lakes and coast. Find one near you: **wildlifetrusts.org/reserves**



Great Wildlife Trust places for all the family

At The Wildlife Trusts, we love wild play. We've got sand pits, mud kitchens, outdoor gyms and even hireable nature packs at many of our nature reserves to encourage young minds to explore, create and discover. Have fun and learn at our nature reserves where it's always okay to play! **Here are five to try:**

1 GREYSTONES FARM

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Off the A429, Bourton-on-the-Water. Postcode GL54 2EN.
gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/reserves/greystones-farm

Escape to Greystones Farm and discover a multitude of wildlife. Spot grey herons, butterflies, otters and even the threatened water vole. Explore the archaeology walk to see an ancient monument surrounded by glorious wildflower meadows.

2 WOLSELEY CENTRE

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
On the A51 near Rugeley.
Postcode ST17 0WT.
staffs-wildlife.org.uk/wolseley-centre

You're free to explore the wildlife-friendly grounds of the centre which has a network of accessible footpaths. Enjoy the woodland, lakes and sensory garden, or take the Play Trail complete with welly ford, musical sculptures and knobbly knoll tunnels.

3 KINGCOMBE CENTRE

Dorset Wildlife Trust.
Toller Porcorum, Dorchester.
Postcode DT2 0EQ.
kingcombe.org

Connect your family to the great outdoors by joining one of the special family events, immerse yourself in the tranquility of 450 acres of stunning nature reserve or simply relax in the on-site cafe with a cup of tea.

4 POTTERIC CARR

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Just off Mallard Way, Doncaster.
Postcode DN4 8DB.
ywt.org.uk/potteric-carr

Pushchair-friendly nature paths lead you through woodlands and wildflower meads, past pond dipping stations and bird hides. There's a sensory garden and natural play area, activity rucksacks for hire plus a podcast tour of the minibeast totem pole trail.

5 WARBURG

BBOWT
4 miles north west of Henley-on-Thames.
Postcode RG9 6BJ.
bbowt.org.uk/reserves/warburg-nature-reserve

Borrow wildlife explorer packs for the day and set out on the nature detectives trail. There are games to try, spotter sheets to help you identify your finds and trail notes for clues through the woods and glades. Look out for rare orchids and butterflies along the way.



For many more reserves with pushchair-friendly paths and boardwalks, play and den-building areas, nature trails for children and other family facilities, visit **wildlifetrusts.org/familyfun**



my investigation – ACTIVITIES

My street tree

wildlife watch

Have you ever stopped to have a good look at your nearest garden or street trees? What sort are they? How old? Are they important for wildlife? Do birds roost or nest in them?

You will need:

- Sheet of blank paper and clipboard
- Extra paper and crayons
- Magnifying glass or bug pot
- Minibeast ID chart or book
- Tape measure (optional)
- Leaf spotting sheet or other tree ID chart

1. Draw your tree in the middle of your paper. Use a leaf spotting sheet to help identify it.
2. Stick a fallen leaf on the paper, or do a rubbing using paper and crayons.
3. Use a magnifying glass, pot or pooter to check out the minibeasts living on your tree.



4. How thick is its trunk? Can you measure it at chest height with a tape measure? Can you hug it?
5. Does your tree have plenty of healthy leaves and soil around its trunk?
6. What other wildlife is living in the tree? Put all your findings on your tree drawing.

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www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

How to make a butterfly feeder

wildlife watch

What you need:

- card
- plastic bottle top
- scissors
- a straw or cane
- sellotape
- a pot with soil in it
- cotton wool
- colouring pens or pencils
- sugar
- water

1. Draw a flower on your card and colour it in with bright colours, then cut it out.
2. Stick a plastic bottle top in the centre.
3. Use sellotape to stick the straw or cane onto the back of the flower, and stand it in the pot of soil.
4. Mix the sugar with some water and soak the cotton wool in the solution.
5. Put cotton wool inside bottle top.



©Corinne Welch 09

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Smelly Cocktails

The sense of smell is very important for wild animals – and for us! Use your nose to discover the hidden scents around you.

You will need:

- One plastic cup per cocktail
- Stirring stick
- Bottle of water
- Your nose!
- Friends to make other cocktails
- A place to walk where you can pick bits of plants

What to do:

1. Get together with some friends and pick bits of leaves, petals and other plant parts.
2. Drop them in the bottom of a plastic cup, add a little water and stir with your stick. Keep adding things until you have a good smell!
3. When you are all happy, pass the cocktails round to sniff (don't drink!). Which is the best? Which is the favourite? Which is the most disgusting?
4. Give each cocktail a name, like 'Fresh and Tangy' or 'Pong'!



Natural rainbows

Rainbows in the sky are wonderful, but can you make your own rainbow in the garden at home?

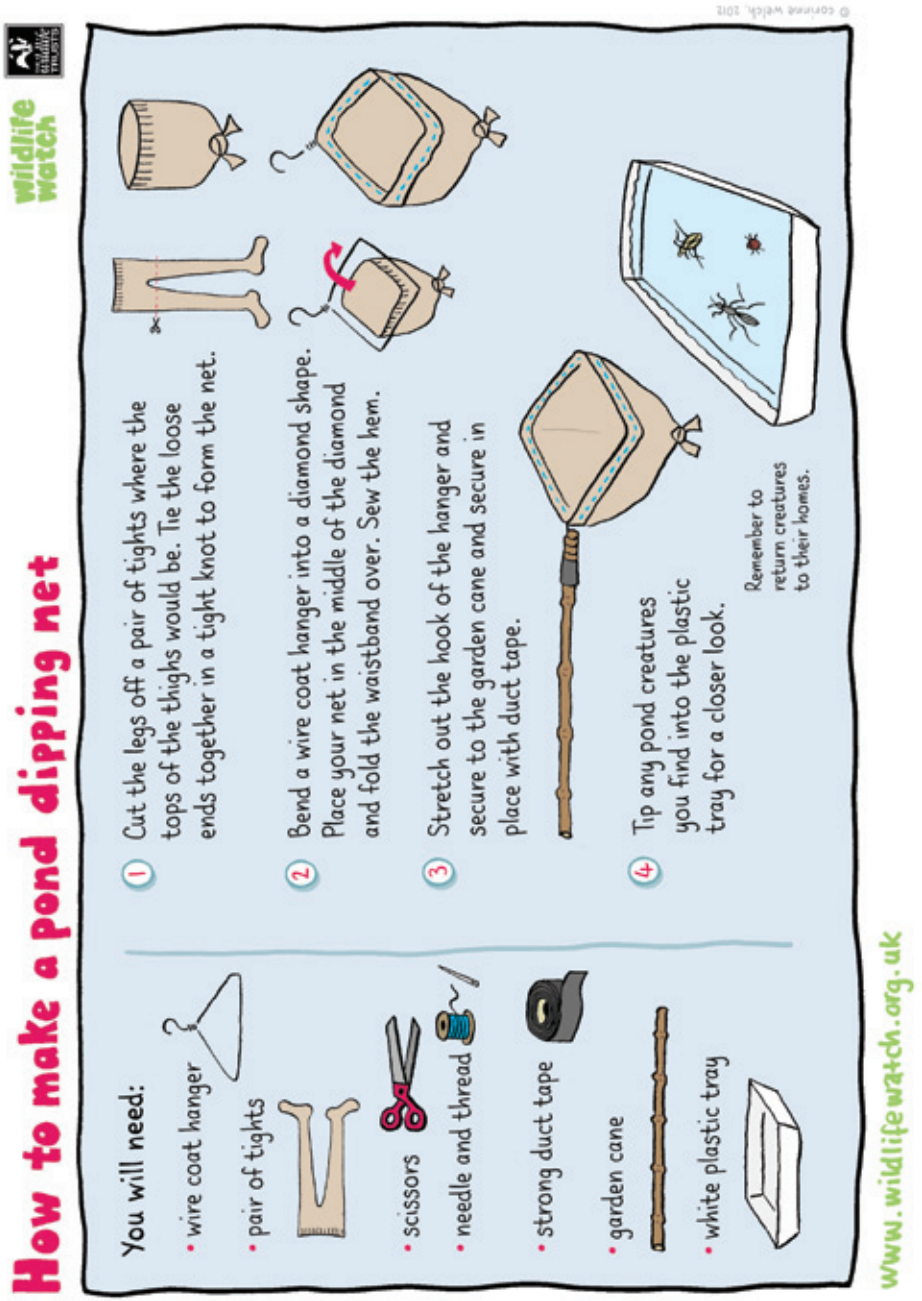
You will need:

- A garden and permission to pick bits of plants
- A flat surface (a path or plank of wood)
- Paper and glue

What to do:

1. Arrange seven bits of paper along a flat surface – one for each colour of the rainbow.
2. Look around and pick bits of plants to make a rainbow. You will need to find examples of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple and pink.
3. Lay them out in the right order on your pieces of paper and glue them in place.
4. You could add extra sheets for white, brown and black.





Wildlife Watch Awards

TRY IT OUT!

Are you looking for a new way to explore wildlife and have fun? Join in the Wildlife Watch Awards to earn awards as you learn and explore more about nature.

HEDGEHOG AWARD

Open to anyone. This is a simple and fun way to earn an award while exploring nature in different ways. Choose and complete eight wildlife activities from a list of choices to collect stamps. You can do this via the Wildlife Watch website **wildlifewatch.org.uk/awards** or some Wildlife Trusts give out Hedgehog cards – ask yours!

KESTREL AWARD

If you are a member of Wildlife Watch and you are over the age of eight, you can take part in the Kestrel award. Complete four wildlife challenges (Create it!, Do it!, Record it! and Shout about it!) to get a certificate and badge and the Kestrel icon will be added to your website profile. To find out more please contact your local Wildlife Trust.

NATURE RANGER AWARD

The highest level Wildlife Watch award you can get. You can only take part in it if you have completed the Kestrel award. To complete the Nature Ranger award you need to study a UK wildlife or conservation topic of your choice and produce a report for your local Wildlife Trust to assess. Award winners recieve a certificate signed by Chris Packham, a badge, an icon on your website profile, a mention in Wildlife Watch magazine and a special prize!

Find out more

wildlifewatch.org.uk/awards-information-page or contact your Wildlife Trust.

Summer days at the seaside are so exciting!

Don't forget to watch out for wildlife too!

my discovery

Before you start exploring, remember the seashore code:

- Be careful not to damage or disturb rockpools when exploring. They are homes for wildlife!
- Always put rocks back in the same place and the same way up as they were when you found them.
- Be very gentle with animals and, if you pick them up, return them carefully to their home.
- Don't take any living things away with you.
- Don't pull seaweed off the rocks.
- Don't try to kick or pull limpets off the rocks.
- Don't frighten sea birds - give them some space!
- Always take your litter home with you.
- Keep an eye on the tide so you don't get cut off.
- Don't get too close to cliff edges.
- Keep away from soft mud and quicksand.
- Wash your hands before you put your fingers in your mouth or eat anything.



STRANDLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

Check very carefully that the tide is going out before starting this!

Wander along the strandline and see what creatures, parts of creatures or seaweed the tide has washed up. Sadly, there will be rubbish there too, so be careful.
What can you find?

Look for turnstones along the strandline



How to go rockpooling

wildlife watch

You will need:

- Buckets or clear Tupperware containers
- A field guide or ID sheet
- Sturdy footwear
- Camera and/or pens and paper
- An adult to help you keep an eye on the tide

1. Half fill your buckets or containers with sea water. Have more than one to keep bad tempered animals apart!
2. Use your hands to carefully lift crabs, starfish and other sea creatures into your containers. Watch out for spines and pincers! Nets can cause damage to rockpools and are best avoided.
3. Use a guide to identify your creatures. Take notes, sketch them or photograph them.
4. Return the animals to where you found them when you've finished looking and wash your hands before eating.



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

How to go eco-friendly crabbing

wildlife watch

What you need:

- line (buy at a seaside shop)
- mesh bag - the sort you get with laundry powder tablets (optional)
- bait - bacon, cheese and fish all work (never use limpets or other wildlife as bait
- net
- large bucket

1. Tie the mesh bag onto the line Put the bait into the bag (If you don't have a mesh bag tie the bait onto the line)
2. Dangle into the water and when a crab finds the bait put the net under it and carefully pull it up
3. Put the crab in the bucket (don't mix small and big crabs because they'll fight)
4. For a closer look, use your thumb and forefinger and gently pick it up from the back at widest part of shell

Don't keep the crabs out of water for long, and put them back gently

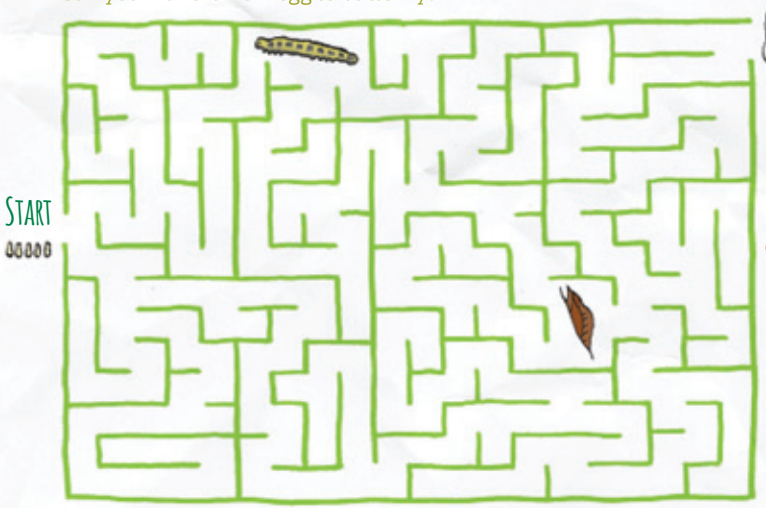


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Puzzles THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU'RE STUCK INDOORS!

Butterfly life cycle maze

Can you make it from egg to butterfly?



EGG
Life begins as an egg laid on a food plant

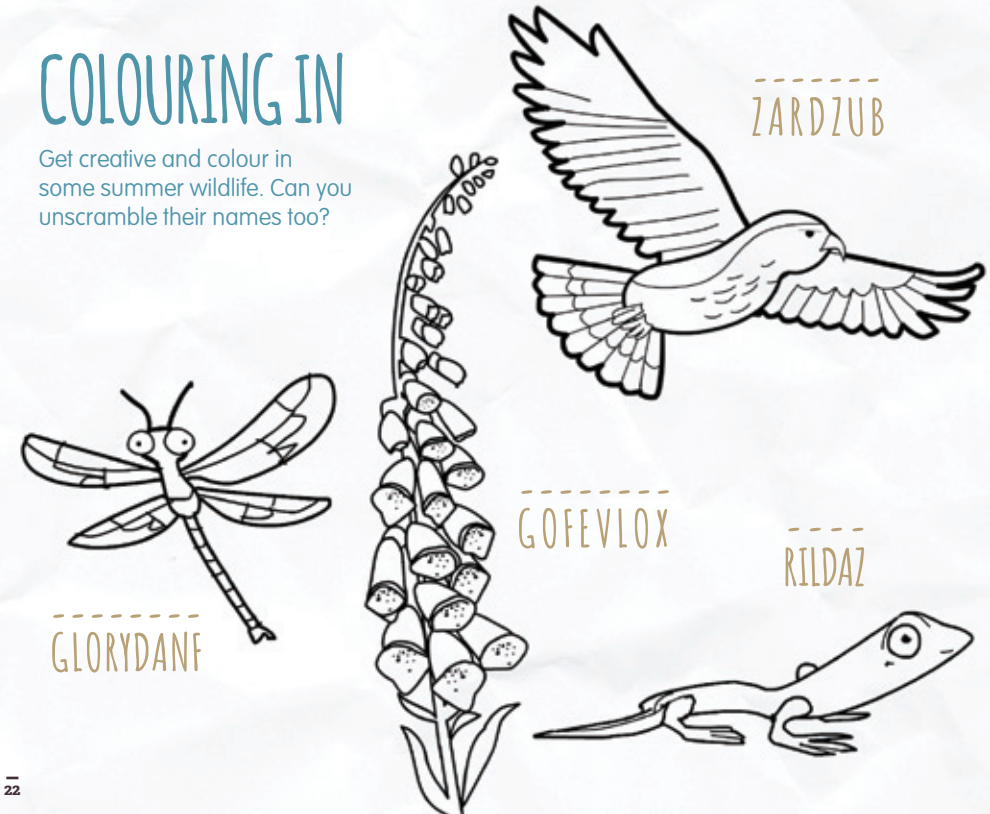
CATERPILLAR
After hatching the caterpillar eats and grows

CHRYSALIS
When fully grown the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis

BUTTERFLY
The butterfly emerges, dries its wings and flies in search of a mate

COLOURING IN

Get creative and colour in some summer wildlife. Can you unscramble their names too?



ZARDZUB

GOFEVLOX

RILDAZ

GLORYDANF

Wild summer reading

NATURE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN FEATURING UK WILDLIFE

We asked children of all ages to name the best nature fiction they had read between the ages of 4 and 12. Here we've picked just 10 from the many they came up with!

For an even longer list of favourites including great non-fiction nature books for children, visit **wildlifetrusts.org/summerbooks**



The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle



A caterpillar's culinary journey from egg to butterfly. A classic children's book.

Brambly Hedge book series by Jill Barklem



A series of stories following the lives of a community of mice hidden in the hedgerows of the English countryside.

Shadows in the Sky by Pete Cross



Cornish choughs return to their home after two hundred years of exile, as told through a young boy's eyes.

The Animals of Farthing Wood by Colin Dann



A community of woodland animals travel in search of a new home after their wood is destroyed by housing developers.

The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson (illustrated by Axel Scheffler)



A mouse takes a walk in the woods and tells some tall tales to keep out of trouble.

Great Northern by Arthur Ransome



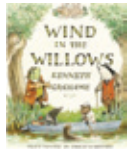
Set on Orkney this is a tale of children protecting the eggs of great northern divers from thieves.

The Brer Rabbit Book and other stories by Enid Blyton



This loveable trickster finds ingeneous ways to avoid trouble and outwit his enemies!

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame



Tales from the riverbank and its animal inhabitants. Meet Toad, Badger, Mole and Ratty (the water vole).

Fantastic Mr Fox by Roald Dahl



A clever fox finds food for his family by outwitting his farmer neighbours.

Watership Down by Richard Adams



Their warren destroyed, a group of rabbits must journey in search of a new home, facing peril on the way.

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 Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK with a shared mission to restore nature everywhere we can and to inspire people to value and take action for nature.

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 Summer 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) 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



Love wildlife, wild places and making new friends? Then Wildlife Watch is the club for you!

wildlife watch

With thanks for the generous support of our photographers:
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Say hello:
01636 677711
The Wildlife Trusts
The Kiln
Mather Road
Newark NG24 1WT
info@wildlifetrusts.org

Registered Charity
Number 207238
Join us: wildlifetrusts.org/join

Summer wildlife colouring in (p22) answers: Stoat, Foxglove, Buzzard, Newt



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