

CANOPY
& STARS

A GUIDE TO

Nature Spotting

for kids

Keeping an
eye on the
WILD THINGS

A WORD FROM

MEGAN McCUBBIN

Have you ever wanted to be a detective, piecing together clues and solving mysteries? Well, grab your boots and step outside because there's a world waiting to be discovered. And it's a lot closer than you think...

This guide gives you all the best tricks and tips as you head out on your very own mini-safari into the wilderness of your garden, local park or on your favourite walks. Look to the ground and find footprints, feathers and holes that can tell you a story of who may be living nearby. You never know if you'll catch a glimpse of a fox's bushy tail or hear the squawk of a buzzard flying overhead.

Discovery is part of the fun. Bring along this guide to help you learn and identify all the treasures you come across. No two adventures are the same, and you'll be surprised at what you may find! There is wilderness everywhere, even in the hearts of our cities, if we just take the time to look, listen and notice.

So what are you waiting for...

Channel your inner **'WILD'** and go exploring!

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SNAP HAPPY

Why not tag us on **Instagram** whilst you're out exploring? Find us **@canopyandstars** and don't forget to tag **#alifemorewild**

...or **email** your photos (all the best explorers have a photo diary!) to us at **info@canopyandstars.co.uk**

CLICK CLICK

The background of the entire page is a light, pale blue. Scattered across this background are approximately 15 individual bird feathers of various shapes, sizes, and colors. Some are dark brown or black, while others are lighter, showing patterns of brown, white, and grey. The feathers are oriented in different directions, some pointing towards the top, some towards the bottom, and some horizontally. They vary in texture, with some appearing smooth and others more downy or frayed at the base.

Feathered friends

MISSION

If you want to get close to a bird to identify it, you must approach with stealth – slowly and quietly, whilst walking in a zig-zag line! Or dig out your binoculars. . .



FEATHERED FRIENDS

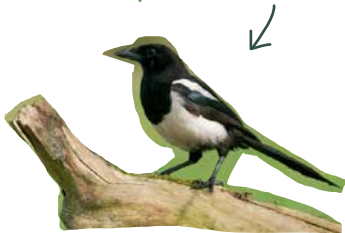


Yellowhammer

A yellowhammer is banana and caramel in colour and its high-pitched song sounds like the bird is saying 'Little bit of bread and no cheeeeeese!'

↖
TRY IT

Baby magpies have much shorter tails – can you spot one?



Magpie

A magpie looks like a black and white crow. Its tail accounts for more than half of its length and is a beautiful blue, green and purple colour.



Robin

Despite what we all think, robins can be spotted all year round, not just at Christmas. They are easily identifiable by their plump orange-red chests.



Great Tit

Can you tell a male and a female great tit apart? Look for the width of the stripe down its chest – the male's stripe is much fatter.

↖
The great tit has a very distinct call which sounds like the whistle of a bicycle pump



Pheasants are protected by the 'Game Acts'

Pheasant

Pheasants have a bright copper-coloured plumage, green ear tufts and green neck. Their throat and cheeks are bright purple.

↖
A pheasant's call sounds a lot like the call of a turkey

GOBBLE GOBBLE



Jay

One of our most colourful birds, the jay lives in woodland, parks and gardens and is an accidental gardener! He buries acorns in the ground for food for winter and if he forgets to collect them, a new oak tree will grow!



Kestrel

Found all over the UK, the kestrel is a bird of prey you'll find hovering over grassland looking for its next meal. It's small, chestnut brown in colour, with a hooked blue beak with a yellow tip.

↖ **Kestrels can see ultraviolet light which allows them to seek out voles whose urine glows in that kind of light!**

QUACKERS



Mallard

You might also know these little guys as ducks. Males have a long grey body, green head and yellow beak whilst females are mainly brown with an orange beak.



Swift

A swift looks like a boomerang in the sky and you'll find them flying low and fast around buildings. They have a piercing call and spend the first three years of their lives flying – how tiring!

Starling

That mass flock of birds flying quickly together is a flock of starlings. They have small heads, triangle-shaped wings and walk quickly on the ground!



TWIT TWHO



Tawny Owl

The most common type of owl, they make the well known 'twit-twoo' sound which is actually two owls talking to each other! The female says 'twit' and the male replies 'twoo'!

Green Woodpecker

With its short tail and long beak, the green woodpecker has a green upper body, bright yellow chest and a red head – totally tropical!

↗ **Keep your eyes peeled in your garden as they spend lots of time searching for ants in the ground**





Do you say this rhyme whenever you spot a magpie or two?

“One for sorrow, two for joy,
Three for a girl, four for a boy,
Five for silver, six for gold,
Seven for a secret, never to be told,
Eight for a wish, nine for a kiss,
Ten for a bird that’s best to miss”

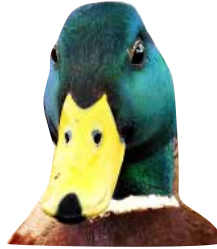


What do you call a funny chicken?
A comedi-hen

What kind of math do Snowy Owls like?
Owlgebra

Why do birds fly south?
Because it's too far to walk!

Haha!



WOOF!

Look at a duck's beak more closely – can you see a dog's long face?

CHIRPY FACTS



Blackbirds

Only male blackbirds are actually black. Female birds have a dark brown plumage with a spotted breast!

Family Feeding

Baby sparrowhawks are fed by both the mum and the dad bird.



MEET THE Crow family

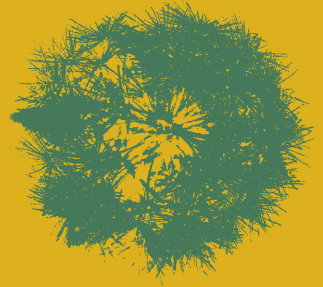
A jackdaw is a small version of a rook which is a small version of a raven! All are from the crow family.



Can you spot five differences in the photographs?



Answers: Missing branch in snow, missing bird foot, change of head colour, white patch missing from head, shorter tail

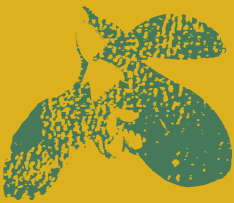


Brilliant blooms



MISSION

They smell yummy, the bees love them and they really brighten up the local park. Don't pick them though, as many species of flower are protected!





You'll see them in clusters and they have five petals



Wild Strawberry

Found in woodland, banks and other grassy spaces from April to July

Everyone knows what a strawberry is but did you know the wild strawberry plant also produces pretty white flowers with a touch of pink?



Bluebell

Found in woodland areas from April to May

Bluebell flowers grow and droop down from the top of the stem in a lovely deep violet blue. Look out for where the tips of the petals roll back like they are trying to touch the tube of the flower!



Elderflower

Found in wooded meadows from June to July

To tell the difference between elderflower and cowbane (which is poisonous so watch out!), look at the colour of the flowers and their spread. Elderflowers are cream and smell lovely whilst cowbane flowers are white and contain no pollen.



Cowslip

Found in grassland and meadows from April to May

The tube-like petals of these egg-yolk yellow flowers can be found clustered together on upright stalks. The leaves are crinkled and sit low down to the ground.

Foxglove

Found in woodland, moorland and sea cliffs from June to September

These poisonous tube-shaped pink flowers grow around the tall stem and open in order from bottom to top. The large leaves lie at the base of the plant.



Can you find a foxglove taller than you are?



Ox-eye Daisy

Found on roadside verges and hay meadows from July to September

Made up of large, round, white and gold flower heads held up by a single stem.

↖ **This flower is actually made up of lots of tiny flowers which make up the yellow middle!**



Poppy

Found on wasteland and disturbed ground from June to August

This one has the large scarlet petals and black seeds that you might have seen in many a painting!



Dog Rose

Found in hedgerows, woodland edges and sand dunes from June to July

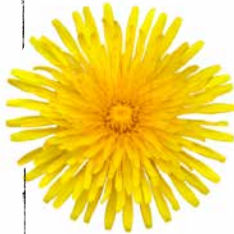
Often growing in clusters of two or three, these pink or white flowers are sweetly scented and have arching stems with curved thorns.



Snowdrop

Found in rich, moist soils from January to April

Snowdrops have greyish blue-green leaves narrower than your little finger nail! One of the petals will have a single green mark which could just be a 'u' or 'v' shape but can look like anything from a sad face to a pair of scissors.



Dandelion

Found on roadsides, garden lawns and meadows all year round

An easy one to get you going! These yellow flowers are on a single stem that leaks a milky sap if broken.

Chamomile

Found in grassland and marine environments from May to October

Similar in appearance to a daisy, these flowers have a delicious apple scent! Leaves are small, fern-like and feathery.



YUM EAT ME!



Flower power

Did you know that some flowers are edible? Brighten up a summer salad even more by adding a nasturtium or two.



Elderflower cordial

Pick 20 heads and follow [this recipe](#) to make a yummy picnic-worthy drink!

Can you find these flowers?

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Dog Rose | <input type="radio"/> | Bluebell | <input type="radio"/> | Cowslip | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foxglove | <input type="radio"/> | Chamomile | <input type="radio"/> | Dandelion | <input type="radio"/> |
| Elderflower | <input type="radio"/> | Poppy | <input type="radio"/> | Snowdrop | <input type="radio"/> |

Z	O	E	F	C	H	A	M	O	M	I	L	E	Y
S	B	T	N	O	I	L	E	D	N	A	D	G	N
I	L	I	F	H	H	B	V	G	F	L	M	N	Z
A	U	C	K	Q	U	H	C	O	W	S	L	I	P
X	E	C	B	W	Q	J	X	N	J	N	P	I	A
S	B	S	D	C	X	G	E	N	P	O	P	P	Y
D	E	F	A	E	L	S	V	M	K	W	G	K	L
A	L	T	R	O	O	M	Y	E	K	D	N	A	W
M	L	G	V	R	I	J	V	U	R	R	F	B	B
Q	S	E	G	H	T	D	D	F	Y	O	V	I	C
O	Z	O	A	S	H	P	E	E	T	P	B	F	G
L	D	P	S	G	H	Z	M	A	Q	G	H	H	D
V	U	E	L	D	E	R	F	L	O	W	E	R	A

FLORAL FACTS

The colour yellow is vital for bees to pollinate flowers. Bees can't see red, black warns of predators, but blue and yellow (which look the same) mean pollen!

BZZZ



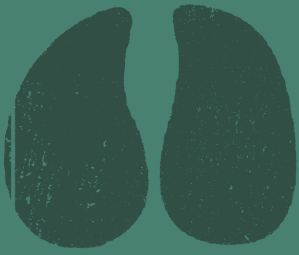
Butter up

Hold a buttercup under your chin and if your chin glows yellow, this is said to be a sure-fire way to tell if you like butter or not!



Flower or vegetable?

Broccoli is both a flower and a vegetable. The 'flower' is the largest part of the plant, which is also the part that is typically eaten.



Tracks & trails



MISSION

Some wild animals are too stealthy for us to spot their tracks, but spotting traces of them having been close is sometimes slightly easier...





CHICKEN

HERON



Heron

A heron's print is like a chicken's – three claws and no webbing, but is notably larger.

Rabbit



These fluffy footprints will be found in sets of four with two prints at the front in the middle and two longer prints behind.



Deer

Narrow cleft footprints are those of a fallow deer. They look similar to a sheep's print only narrower.



Fox

Tell the difference between a fox and a dog print by putting a blade of grass diagonally across the outer toe pads – the large pad will not be touched if from a fox but the grass will overlap the bottom pad if from a dog.



These are easy to identify thanks to the chevron-shaped pad on the heel that no other canine has.

NUTS!



Squirrel

With front feet slightly smaller than the hind feet, squirrel prints are really interesting! With all five toes visible as well as the claws and several pads, tracks on mud or snow will look like tiny handprints. On a firm surface, they'll appear as lots of little blobs.

Mouse or Bat

You can't often see the tracks of these little guys but if the adults in your house are wondering who's been creeping around the attic, the way to tell the difference is their poo! Bat poo crumbles into dust but mouse poo stays firm.



OR





Badger

Look out for a pawprint with a wide, kidney-shaped pad and long claws. To spot a badger, lie quietly about 30 metres from the sett just before sunset or sunrise and you'll see them enter or exit their home!



Look out for prints near hedgerows or woodland!

Mole

You'll struggle to spot his prints, but spotted a pile of earth? This is a molehill, and is likely to be near to a mole's burrow and a sign of him repairing or digging himself a new home.

A mole digs up to 20 metres of tunnel every day!

Hello



Cow

A cow's tracks are similar to a deer's (both are hooved animals) with a simple two-hoof print.



Pheasant

A pheasant has three toes, the middle one longer than the others. They also have a back toe which may appear faintly in the tracks after a gap at the back of the foot.



Otter



The large rounded pads make for a clear, easy to spot print. Five toes bend around the front of the pad.

Webs between the toes may even show up in soft ground!



Duck

One of the easiest to spot, look out for three toes with webbing in between!





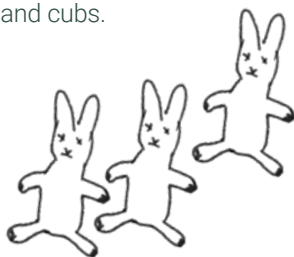
Who lives there?



Although you ↙
may think it
belongs to a bird,
a spherical nest is
a squirrel's nest.

YUCK!

Three or four dead rabbits in a field is the sign of a killing by a dad fox where he has laid out the prey for his wife and cubs.



When you see boxing hares, it is actually a female hare fighting off unwanted attentions from the male!

TAKE THAT OOF!



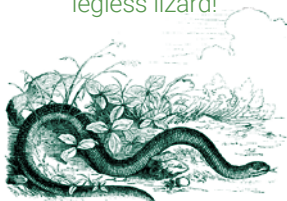
Match the animal to their print!



ANIMAL FACTS

A slow worm

is not a snake or a worm but in fact a legless lizard!



Hairy tail!

Black and white hairs caught on the bottom of a barbed wire fence is the sign of a badger run.

Ever found a faun lying in the grass whilst out walking?

Young fauns have no scent until their strength builds, so they automatically know to curl up and lie still whilst their mum is off grazing so that they can't be found by predators!





Treetop treasures

MISSION

We love trees here at Canopy & Stars, especially when they have houses in them. Which tree do you think is the best tree to build a treehouse in?



Oak

Growing up to a huge 20m in height, the oak tree's leaves are around 10cm long. The leaves have a very short stem and grow in bunches.



An oak tree's fruit is the acorn but these aren't produced until the tree is at least 40 years old!



Grey Willow

You'll see grey brown bark on this tree and its leaves are twice as long as they are wide with a silver felt underneath. The grey willow also develops diamond-shaped cracks in the bark as it ages.

Look in woodlands, hedgerows & damp places by canals and rivers



Ash

The sets of leaves are formed by 6-12 pairs of tiny green leaves with jagged edges known as leaflets which can be up to 40cm long!



They have buds that look like little black berries!



Hawthorn

This tree's flowers smell lovely (though some think they smell rotten!) and are coloured white or pink with five flat-topped petals.

Common Beech

A beech tree's leaf buds are reddish brown and torpedo-shaped and grow in short stalks. The leaves themselves are lime green when young and become darker with age.

The trunk has smooth grey bark with lots of wrinkles, just like elephants' knees!



Hazel

Winter can be a sad time for tree ID. Some have very distinctive buds though and the yellow catkins on a male hazel tree can appear as early as January!

**Can you spot one?
Here's a clue: they
grow in scrub and
hedgerows**

Alder

Leaves are round and toothed with tapered stalks and they are shaped like a pear! The bark goes grey and cracked with age.



Yew

Often spotted in churchyards in southern England, the yew has reddish brown peeling bark and dark green straight, pointy needles for leaves.



**Look out for
leaves in two
rows like a
Christmas tree**



Elm

Elm flowers appear in February and March, are dark pink to red and hang in tassels. The bottoms of their leaves look wonky and one side hangs lower than the other.



OUCH!



Holly

Be careful with these as their dark green glossy leaves are very prickly! You'll find them in woodlands. Look out for their bright red berries.



MEET A TREE

A GAME FOR TWO PLAYERS

Blindfold player one. Player two leads them to a tree (leading them away from any stinging nettles!).

Player one hugs the tree and takes in the smell, texture and shape.

Player two leads player one back to the starting point. Player one removes the blindfold and then tries to find the tree!



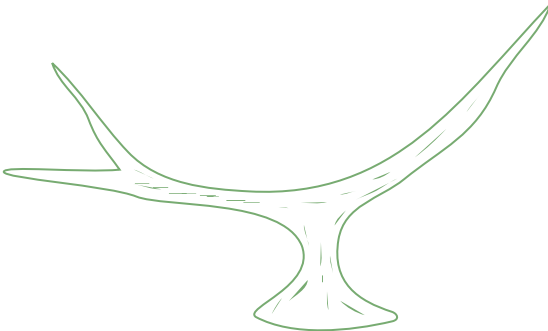
What did the tree do when the bank closed?
It started a new branch!

How can you tell a tree is a dogwood tree?
By its bark!

What is a tree's least favourite month?
Sep-timber!

Haha!

Design your ideal treehouse!



TWIGGY TIDBITS

Old as ice

Oak, yew, goat willow and ash trees are all native to Britain and have existed for thousands of years since the last Ice Age!



WOW!

FEELING 'Horse'



Conkers from horse chestnut trees used to be ground up and fed to horses to cure coughs!



Hard as nails

A yew's wood is so strong that Vikings used it as the nails for their longboats!

Thanks for joining in and becoming a Nature Investigator!

You can print out this sheet to keep a record of your observations – let us know anything interesting you find via Instagram @canopyandstars or email us info@canopyandstars.co.uk

FEATHERED FRIENDS

- Yellowhammer
- Magpie
- Robin
- Pheasant
- Great Tit
- Jay
- Kestrel
- Mallard
- Starling
- Green Woodpecker
- Swift
- Tawny Owl

BRILLIANT BLOOMS

- Elderflower
- Cowslip
- Foxglove
- Wild Strawberry
- Bluebell
- Ox-eye Daisy
- Poppy
- Dog Rose
- Snowdrop
- Dandelion
- Camomile

TRACKS & TRAILS

- Heron
- Rabbit
- Deer
- Fox
- Mouse
- Bat
- Squirrel
- Badger
- Cow
- Pheasant
- Mole
- Duck



TREETOP TREASURES

- Oak
- Grey Willow
- Ash
- Hawthorn
- Common Beech
- Hazel
- Alder
- Yew
- Elm
- Holly

WELL
DONE!

CANOPY & STARS

Canopy & Stars is a collection
of inspected and selected
unusual places to stay across
the UK and Europe.

You can find anything from
a stunning treehouse or a
sumptuous yurt, to a fun,
family safari tent, or even a
floating log cabin.



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