FREE!
MAN O' WAR POSTER

SPOOKY OR SPECIAL?
Misunderstood wildlife

OH DEER!
The six species of deer in the UK

Issue 111 Autumn 2024

wildlife watch

MAGAZINE

MISSING MAMMALS

Discover some of the UK's lost wildlife

The Wildlife Trusts

Editor's corner

TOM HIBBERT
Editor, Wildlife Watch

When I think of autumn, I think of birds making long migrations. But did you know insects can migrate as well? Check out the science section on page four for some incredible news about insect migration.

Whilst some insects are leaving for the winter, others are getting ready to shut down and hide away until spring. This includes lots of different shieldbugs – you can learn all about their life cycle on page eight.

Autumn can also be a bit of a spooky season, thanks to Halloween. Over the years, some animals, like bats and toads, have been linked to Halloween, witches and other ghostly goings-on. But do they really deserve their rotten reputation? Find out on page 18!

I hope you enjoy the magazine and have an awesome autumn!

Tom

GET IN TOUCH

Email us at:
watch@wildlifetrusts.org

Ring us on:
01636 677711

Write to us at:
Wildlife Watch
The Kiln, Mather Road
Newark, Notts, NG24 1WT

wildlifetrusts
@wildlifetrusts
@wildlifetrusts
thewildlifetrusts
WildlifeWatchUK

WILD THINGS

News from our Wildlife Watchers

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Thomas (aged 5) from Devon has been searching for creatures as he works towards his Hedgehog Award. He had a wonderful encounter with a newt whilst pond dipping.

GARDEN SPA

Five-year-old Ira from London was delighted to spot this young fox bathing in a wheelbarrow! It was just a metre away from where Ira was having breakfast.

HAVING A HOOT!

Ten-year-old Robyn from Devon decided to dissect an owl pellet. Look at all the amazing bones they found!

STAR BAKERS

In Sheffield, Martha, Jacob, Brook, Ray and their friends baked cakes to raise money for The Wildlife Trusts (above photo). In London, Sylvie, Nell, Jasmine and Olive also raised funds by selling cakes, handmade scrunchies, painted plant pots and other items (right photo). Thanks for all your hard work!

Lynx © Bernd Fischer

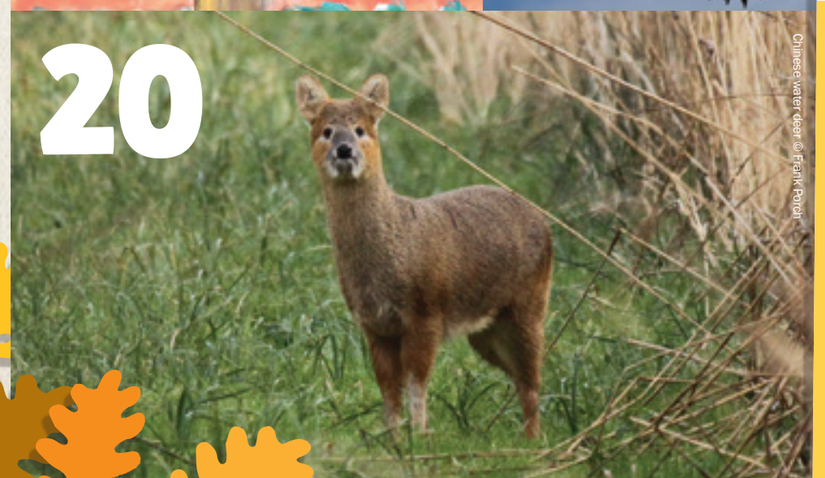
12

Gull by Watch reader, Vinny

14

White-tailed eagle © Neil Aldridge

22



Chinese water deer © Frank Pooh

20

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover pic of lynx © Edwin Giesbers / naturepl.com

Regulars

Features

WILDLIFE WATCH 111

Editor: **Tom Hibbert**

Editorial Team: **Ashleigh Carter, Gina Gavigan, Joanna Richards, Leanne Smart, Louise Francis, Mike Watson**

Design: **Sean Coleman**

What's Wildlife Watch?

Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts. Join Wildlife Watch and start your nature adventure. Prices range from £10-£24 per year for child-only membership and £30-£60 for family membership.

You'll receive a starter pack and four issues of Wildlife Watch magazine a year. This is packed full of amazing pictures, posters and competitions. We also have a really wild website and e-newsletter full of wild ideas and nature-spotting tips. Plus you get access to local events and groups. Go to **wildlifewatch.org.uk** to find out more.

KEEP WATCHING!

The Science Section

Always wondered what that weird-sounding word meant or desperate to know what the latest wonderful wildlife discovery is? Well, here we bring you a fact-packed science section so you can impress your friends with your knowledge!

WILD WORDS

Wow your friends with new words from the world of wildlife science!

PRECIPITATION
(pri-sip-i-tay-shun)
The term for any type of water that is falling from the sky. It includes rain, hail, sleet, snow and more.

PETRICHOR
(peh-tree-kor)
The earthy smell you get when rain falls on dry soil. Lots of people enjoy it!

DELIQUESCE
(delih-kwes)
This means 'turn into a liquid'. Some mushrooms deliquesce into inky goop as they get older.

RECENT DISCOVERIES

Syrphus ribesi © Ross Hoddinott / 2020VISION

INSECT EXIT

Birds are famous for flying south in the winter, but lots of insects leave the UK in autumn, too. They head for southern Europe and even Africa, where it's warmer. Scientists studied the insects travelling south through one gap in the Pyrenees mountains, on the border of France and Spain. The gap is just 30 metres wide – a tiny bit longer than two buses parked end to end. The scientists discovered that each autumn, around 17 million insects migrate through this small gap in the mountains! Most of the insects were flies (almost 90%), but there were also butterflies, dragonflies and many other species.

ANT AID

Scientists already knew that some ants give each other first aid when they're injured. These ants can tell when a wound is infected. They produce a chemical that they put on the wound, which helps fight the infection so the injured ant can recover. Now scientists have discovered that some ants will even perform surgery on other ants! When an ant had a badly infected leg, the other ants gathered around and cut the leg off. Amazingly, this gave the injured ant a better chance of surviving.

Wood ants © Ross Hoddinott / 2020VISION

YOUR PHOTOS

Keep sharing your amazing photos with us, we love to see them all!

MOLLIE (aged 9) has done a great job photographing this gorgeous gannet. The bird is very nicely positioned slightly to one side, with the cliff edge leading your eye towards the bird.

TILLY (aged 12) snapped this fabulous photo of a bumblebee collecting pollen. It's a wonderfully framed photo, showing the bee in its habitat.

ELSPETH (aged 9) has given us a glimpse into the life of this frog, relaxing on a log. It feels like we're peeking through the grass at it!

JASPER (aged 9) shared this lovely large red damselfly. We love the way the grass sweeps towards the insect, helping to make it the centre of your attention.

Send your stories, ideas and photos to **watch@wildlifetrusts.org!**

The UK's new coins pay tribute to some special species

ON THE MON£Y!

To mark His Majesty King Charles III becoming king, the UK got a new set of coins. They all have the King's face on one side, but the other side features some fabulous UK wildlife. It'll take a while before you start seeing them in real life, but let's meet the amazing animals and plants on each coin!

1p HAZEL DORMOUSE

It might be the least valuable coin, but in our opinion it has one of the most adorable animals! Hazel dormice live in woodlands and overgrown hedgerows. In autumn they'll be fattening up, ready to hibernate through the winter. They curl up in their nest, wrapped in their own furry tail, and don't come out until spring.

2p RED SQUIRREL

The red squirrel is a woodland icon. It has a rich, red coat with a white belly and long, hairy tufts on its ears. Red squirrels used to be found all across the UK, but in most places they've now been replaced by grey squirrels. Autumn is a great time to see them as they gather food to store for winter.

5p OAK

The smallest coin celebrates one of the UK's widest trees! Oak trees can have incredibly fat trunks and sprawling branches. They're also really important for wildlife. Around 2,300 different species are thought to make use of oaks in the UK. There are beetles that live inside the wood, bats that roost in holes and fungi that grow on fallen branches.

10p CAPERCAILLIE

Soon you might spot an unusual bird on your 10p coins. The capercaillie is the largest member of the grouse family. They can grow to almost a metre long! They can only be found in the Highlands of Scotland, but they're so rare that people should only look for them outside of the breeding season, to make sure they aren't disturbed at that important time of the year for their survival.

20p PUFFIN

One of the UK's most popular seabirds, puffins nest on cliffs and small islands around our coasts. They feed on sandeels, little fish that swim around in huge shoals. At the end of summer, they head out to sea and spend the winter bobbing about on the water. They won't come back to land until spring.

50p ATLANTIC SALMON

Salmon are famous for leaping over obstacles as they migrate up rivers in the autumn. Sadly, a leaping salmon is now a much rarer sight than it used to be in the UK. The population here is considered endangered, which means we risk losing them completely. We need to help them by making our rivers wilder and wigglier, with clean water and trees to provide shade.

£1 BEES

This coin is celebrating the UK's bees. There are more than 250 species of bee in the UK. Most of them are solitary bees, which don't nest in hives like bumblebees or honeybees. Solitary bees can nest in the ground, in holes in plants or sometimes even in snail shells! If you've got a bee hotel, it may have young solitary bees spending autumn and winter inside of it.

£2 SPECIAL PLANTS

The new £2 coin features four plants to represent the four nations that make up the UK. There's a rose for England, a thistle for Scotland, a daffodil for Wales and shamrock for Northern Ireland. A shamrock is a type of clover. All of these plants are visited by insects, which feed on their nectar, pollen or leaves.

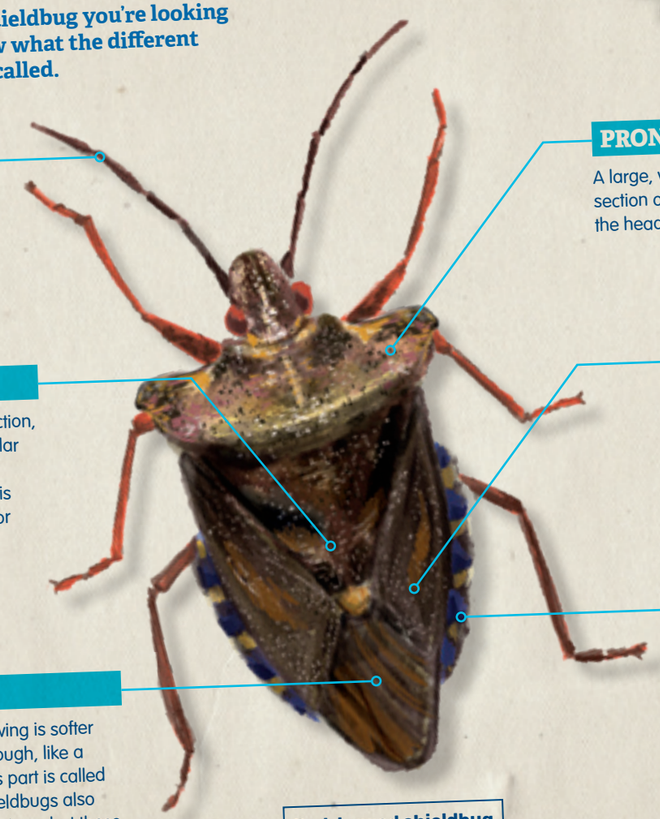
Discover some BRILLIANT bugs!

SUPERB SHIELDBUGS

Shieldbugs are a group of true bugs. They look a bit like beetles, but instead of biting mandibles they have a stiff, straw-like mouthpart called a rostrum. They stick this into plants (or sometimes creatures!) to suck up food. There are around **44 SPECIES** of shieldbug in the UK, though some of them are extremely rare. Luckily, other shieldbugs are common and can even be found in gardens.

THE SHAPE OF A SHIELDBUG

To work out which shieldbug you're looking at, it can help to know what the different parts of its body are called.



ANTENNA

Antennae are sense organs that help insects understand the world around them by detecting things like smells and vibrations.

SCUTELLUM

Another armour-like section, which is often a triangular shape. The shape and colour of the scutellum is often a useful feature for identifying shieldbugs.

MEMBRANE

The end of the forewing is softer and almost see-through, like a dragonfly wing. This part is called the membrane. Shieldbugs also have a pair of hindwings, but these are tucked out of sight until they fly.

PRONOTUM

A large, wide, armour-like section of the body behind the head.

CORIUM

The forewings of a shieldbug are mostly hard and leathery. This leathery part is called the corium.

CONNEXIVUM

The edge of a shieldbug's body sometimes sticks out beyond the wings in a flat border. This part is called the connexivum. It often has patterns that help with identification.

Red-legged shieldbug

FROM EGG TO ADULT

The shieldbug lifecycle has THREE main stages: egg, nymph, adult. Here's the lifecycle of a green shieldbug to show the different stages.

EGGS

Shieldbugs lay clusters of eggs, which are often barrel-shaped. As the young shieldbugs develop inside, it can look like the egg has a smiley face!

NYMPHS

Young shieldbugs are known as nymphs. They grow in stages, called instars. The first instar will shed its skin to become the second instar and so on. Each instar is bigger than the one before and looks a bit more like an adult. Here you can see the five instars of a green shieldbug.

ADULTS

Eventually, the final instar sheds its skin to become an adult. Most shieldbugs spend the winter as an adult, tucked away somewhere sheltered. They become active again in spring to pair up and lay eggs and start the cycle over again.

Illustrations by Katy Frost

Shieldbugs to spot

GREEN SHIELDBUG

One of our most common shieldbugs. For most of the year, they're almost entirely green, with a dark membrane – like the one in the lifecycle diagram above. But as they get ready for winter, they turn brown to help them camouflage like this one illustrated here.

HAWTHORN SHIELDBUG

This shieldbug is green and covered in black dots, with a broad red border around the scutellum. The membrane is also a reddish colour. They like to hang around hawthorn trees and nearby plants.

HAIRY SHIELDBUG

This shieldbug is covered in tiny hairs! It's mostly purple-brown with a greenish scutellum. The antennae and connexivum have black and white bands. They can be found on low-growing plants in lots of different places, including parks and gardens.

INCREDIBLE INTERACTIONS

Nature is a great big, complicated web of life! Everything is connected. All living things play a role in keeping wild places healthy and balanced. Each issue, we'll take a look at how different plants or animals affect the wild world around them.

FUNGI

Fly agaric © Jon Hawkins – Surrey Hills Photography

Waxcap © Vaughn Matthews

Common stinkhorn © Chris Lawrence

FUNGI FORAGERS

Fungi are important for what they eat, but also for what eats them! There are lots of animals that love to make a meal out of a mushroom, including people. Though many wild mushrooms are poisonous to humans, so you shouldn't pick anything unless you're an expert. Amazingly, some wildlife can feed on fungi that would make us ill, like the fly agaric in the photo above.

MUSHROOM MAGIC

Fungi aren't just a food source for humans, they've given us lots of other uses too. They've been used to make medicine, like antibiotics. They can be used as natural dyes to add colour to fabrics. They can also be used as a material for making clothes, packaging and even bricks for building things. Fungi have even more uses than this, from making beer to breaking down plastic.

Autumn lady's tresses orchid © Will Atkins

ROT STARS

Fungi are recycling champions. Many fungi feed on dead material from plants and animals. By feeding on them, they break them down and release nutrients that can go back into the soil to help plants grow. They also clean up the countryside by getting rid of the dead things! Fungi will be helping to break down the leaves that fall this autumn.

Minotaur beetle on devil's fingers © Will Atkins

Oyster mushroom © Malcolm Storey

PLANT PALS

Fungi often have an important relationship with plants. In fact, many plants couldn't survive without them! Fungi that live in networks in the soil connect to plant roots and share food with them. The fungi give minerals to the plant, and the plant gives the fungi sugars. Orchid seeds can't even grow without the help of fungi.

LITTLE OWL BIG ATTITUDE

They might be our smallest owl, but little owls have a fierce stare! They like to perch on posts before pouncing on their prey. Sometimes they run across the ground, chasing beetles.

© Luke Massey / 2020VISION

Meet some of the species that are **MISSING** from the UK

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

by Anna Williams

ANNA works on The Missing Lynx Project, talking to people about lynx and investigating whether we may be able to have them back in the UK one day. She loves being surrounded by nature and protecting our wild places.

The UK has some wonderful wildlife, but there are some animals that used to live here that are now missing. Many were lost because of hunting by humans, or because humans changed their habitat. In the future, some of these animals might be able to return. But others are lost from the earth forever. Here are EIGHT of the UK's missing species!

© Paul Hobson / naturepl

BROWN BEAR

Thousands of years ago, brown bears were found all over the UK. However, due to people hunting them and cutting down woodlands, the brown bear became extinct in the UK about 1,000 years ago. Today, brown bears live in the forests and mountains of North America, continental Europe and Asia.

© Damian Waters / Drummages.co.uk

WOLF

The wolf is the ancestor of our pet dogs. Wolves live in groups called packs and like to roam over large areas of woodland and grassland. They used to live all over the UK. However, because of humans cutting down forests and trapping and hunting wolves, they became extinct here. The last British wolf was killed around the year 1760. Today wolves live in Canada and North America, and across many countries in Europe and Asia.

© Berndt Fischer

LYNX

The lynx is a medium-sized cat with golden fur and black spots. They have a short tail and tufts of hair on the tops of their ears. Lynx live in areas with lots of trees. They were lost from the UK about 1,500 years ago, because of hunting and humans cutting down their forest home. Lynx can be found in quite a few European countries, such as Germany, Poland and Italy.

© Erlend Haarberg, naturepl

ELK

The European elk is a large deer that was once common in Britain. To live happily, they need large spaces of forest and wetland. Elk became extinct in Britain about 3,000 years ago due to hunting for their meat and skins, and changes to their habitat. Today, elk are found across North America (where they are called moose), Northern Europe and Asia.

GREAT AUK

The great auk was a large seabird. It was similar to a puffin, but four times taller and it could not fly. It lived along rocky coasts in North America and across the Atlantic to Scandinavia and the UK. Because it couldn't fly, it was easily hunted by people for its meat and feathers. By about 1850, the great auk was completely extinct. There were none left anywhere in the world.

© Pete Richman

WRYNECK

The wryneck is a small woodpecker. It was once common across England and Wales, nesting in orchards and parks. Sadly, it no longer nests here regularly. Habitat loss and the use of pesticides may be to blame. Wrynecks still nest across much of Europe and through Asia to Japan, with most moving south for the winter. In spring and autumn, they sometimes pass through the UK on their migration.

Wrynecks can twist their head around and hiss like a snake!

© Nicola Rahme

BLUE STAG BEETLE

The blue stag beetle grows to over one centimetre long and is black with a metallic blue or green shine. It is a common insect in woodland areas in Europe and used to be found in Britain. However, it has not been seen here since the 1800s. Scientists aren't sure why it was lost. It may always have been rare. Its larger cousin, the stag beetle, can still be found in southern England.

© Peter Eeles

LARGE COPPER

The large copper is an orange butterfly with black on the edges of its wings. It lived in the east of England, preferring wet areas of land. It became extinct around 1850, because the land where it lived was drained so crops could be planted. It can now be found in central Europe and Asia.

GALLERY

Send in your photos, poems, artwork and letters for your chance to feature in the gallery. If your artwork is picked as the star entry you'll win your very own drawing kit!
The perfect starter set for any budding wildlife artist.

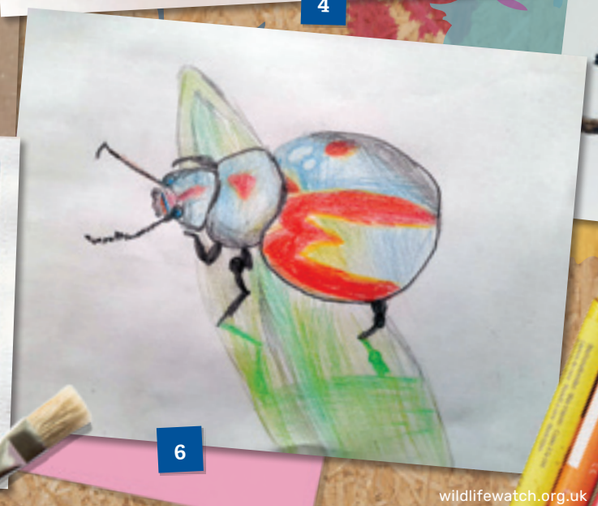
1

2

3

4

5



6

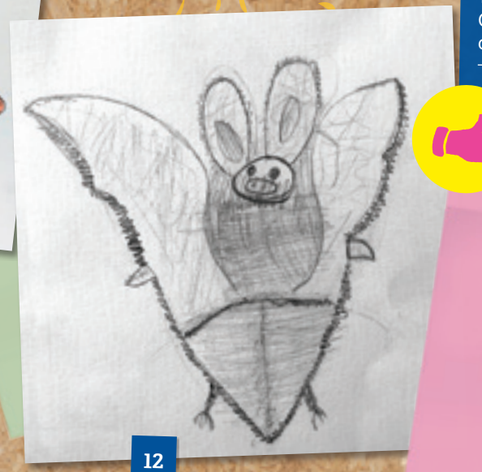
7

8

9

10

11



12

1) Brown hare by Nancy, aged 11
This hare is spellbinding! The detail on the fur, the shading, the light on the eyes. Perfect.

2) Fly agaric by Sam, aged 11
An awesome autumnal scene. The shape on the stem shows Sam has really studied the subject.

3) Whale by Isa, aged 13
The shape of this whale gives a wonderful sense of motion. There's also some excellent texture work.

4) Damselfly by Otto, aged 6
We really appreciate how much time and effort Otto has put into making the pattern on this damselfly's wings.

5) Lily pads by Matilda, aged 10
Matilda created this wonderful pond scene. We love how dramatic the water looks.

6) Rosemary beetle by Reed, aged 11
Reed has done a great job of capturing the way light makes these colourful beetles shine.

7) Garden snail by Mya, aged 9
We think snails are superb, so we really enjoyed this gorgeous garden snail.

8) Gull by Vinny, aged 5
Vinny has managed to make a gull with a lot of character! It looks great against the colourful background.

9) Duckling by Isla Jean, aged 10
The duckling is gorgeous and we love all the details in the painting, from the falling leaf to the fish.

10) Great crested newt by Emilia, aged 9
Emilia has used colour really well to bring this newt to life. The belly pattern is fantastic!

11) Redwing by Tilly, aged 11
Tilly has obviously spent a lot of time getting the posture right on this beautiful redwing and has done a perfect job!

12) Long-eared bat by George, aged 7
This bat is really charming and we love that George chose a subject we don't see many drawings of.

If we feature your artwork we will need your first name and your age, so don't forget to include them. We might also share it on our website and social media.

HOW TO ENTER

Email **watch@wildlifetrusts.org** with the subject line 'Gallery entry' or write to us at:
Wildlife Watch Gallery
The Wildlife Trusts
The Kiln, Mather Road
Newark
Notts NG24 1WT

WEIRD NATURE

THIS ISSUE: WEIRD EARS

LONG-EARED OWL

© Jon Hawkins – Surrey Hills Photography

The 'ears' on this owl's head are just feather tufts. Owl ears are actually massive holes, hidden by feathers. One ear is lower than the other, helping them judge where a sound is coming from. Stiff feathers also channel sound into the ear.

MACKEREL

© Alexander Mustard / 2020VISION

Fish ears are also hidden. They contain hard plates called otoliths. They use these to detect sound vibrations in the water. Otoliths grow in circles, like the rings of a tree. You can tell how old a fish is by counting the circles.

BROWN HARE

© Andrew Parkinson / 2020VISION

Brown hares have extra long ears, with black fur at the tip. They give hares an excellent sense of hearing, which helps them detect nearby predators. If they sense danger, they can crouch down low and flatten their ears against their back to hide.

SPIDERS

© Jon Hawkins – Surrey Hills Photography

Spiders don't have ears like we do, but they can still detect sound. Sound travels in waves. These waves cause special hairs on a spider's legs to vibrate, letting it 'hear' the sound. Scientists discovered that a jumping spider could hear clapping from more than five metres away.

GRASSHOPPERS

Field grasshopper © Vaughn Matthews

Grasshoppers don't have ears as we think of them either, but they sense sound through something called tympanic organs. They work like eardrums and are found on the sides of their body! They can also hear by detecting vibrations through hairs on their body.

MOTHS

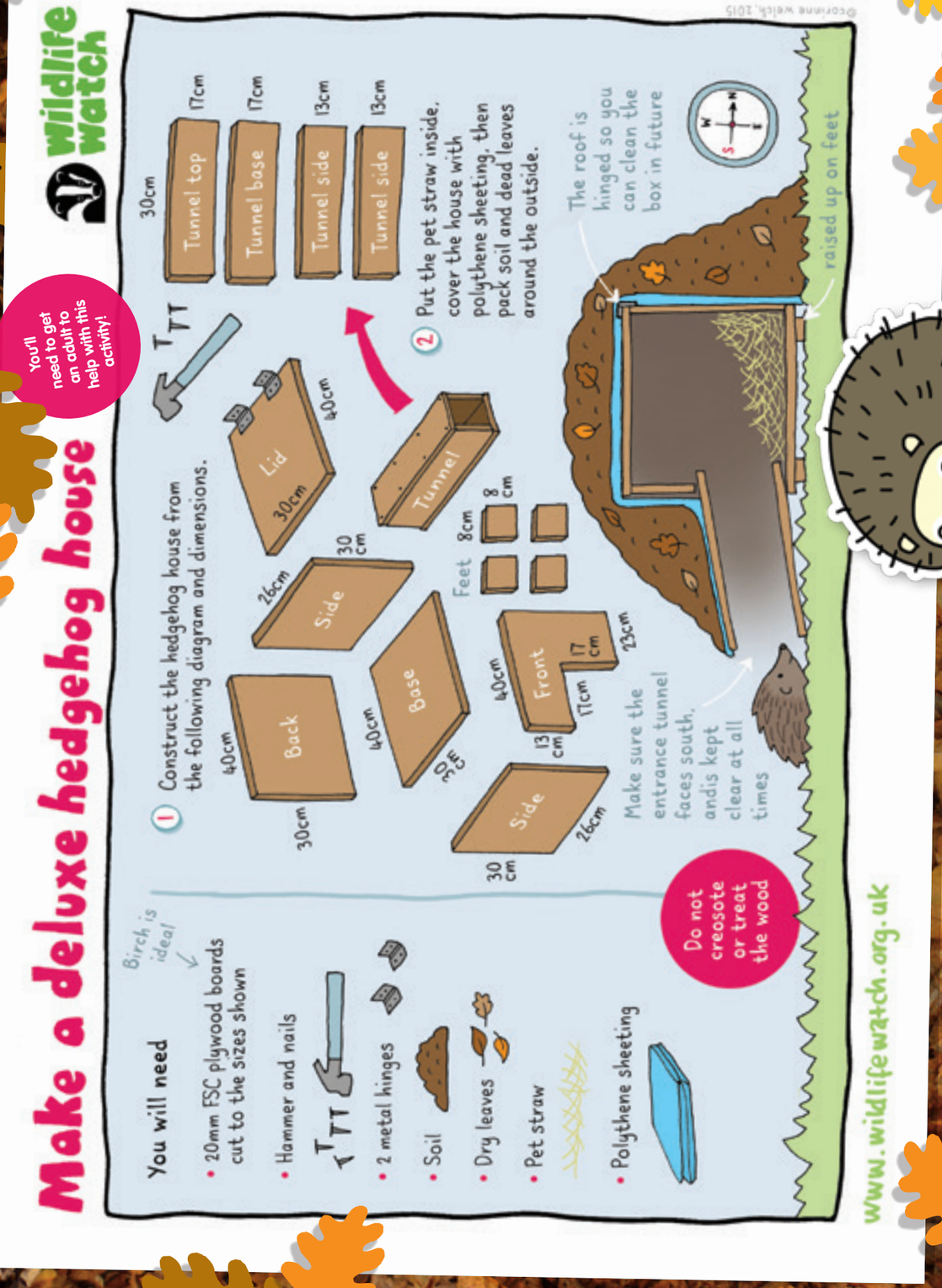
Elephant hawk-moth © Tom Hibbert

Many moths have extra sensitive hearing. This lets them detect the ultrasonic calls that bats use for echolocation. The moths can tell when bats are hunting them and can try to dodge. Some moths have hearing organs on their sides like a grasshopper, but some hawk-moths hear using their mouthparts!

wildlife watch

You'll need to get an adult to help with this activity!

Make a deluxe hedgehog house



SPOOKY OR SPECIAL?

These unlucky animals have long been linked to all kinds of doom and gloom, death and disaster! But do they really deserve their rotten reputation?

by Pete Dommett

PETE is a wildlife writer. He enjoys finding out new facts about nature.

DEATHWATCH BEETLE

What's that knocking noise? Hearing this insect tapping in the middle of the night was once considered a signal that someone was about to die! But this strange sound is really a beetle love song – adults attract each other by banging their heads against hard wood. The only scary thing about these insects is the damage they can do to wooden buildings, floors and furniture.

BARN OWL

Seeing or hearing an owl used to be a sure sign that something bad was about to happen – from a terrible thunderstorm to a fateful shipwreck! With its ghostly white wings and haunting screech, the barn owl was probably the most feared owl of all. Nowadays, this special species is much loved – in fact, it was voted the UK's second favourite bird!

DEATH'S-HEAD HAWK-MOTH

This huge hawk-moth has appeared in many horror films – check out the spooky, skull-shaped marking on its body! Seeing this insect was once believed to bring bad luck, but you'd actually be unbelievably lucky to spot one as only a handful of these hawk-moths migrate from southern Europe to the UK each autumn. Keep an eye out for them!

The death's-head hawk-moth can make a squeaking sound by squeezing air out of its tongue!

COMMON PIPISTRELLE

Terrifying tales about bats and vampires have been told for centuries. Blood-sucking bats do exist, but they only live in Central and South America. All 18 species of these fabulous flying mammals found in the UK eat insects. In fact, a common pipistrelle can gobble up 3,000 moths and midges in just one evening!

DEVIL'S COACH HORSE

In medieval times, people believed this black beetle could perform black magic! When it curled up its tail, it was thought to be casting out curses – but this behaviour actually means that the insect itself feels frightened. The only things that should be afraid of this pint-sized predator are the invertebrates (such as slugs, spiders, worms and woodlice) it preys on!

As a predator, the devil's coach horse plays an important part in an ecosystem.

COMMON TOAD

Toads have always had a bad press! People used to think they were witches' pets or the devil in disguise and that touching one would give you warts (it won't!). But these helpful amphibians actually perform an important 'ecosystem service' by controlling the number of slugs, snails, beetles and flies in an area... by eating them!

DEAD MAN'S FINGERS

Despite its ghoulish appearance and gruesome name, this woodland fungus is totally harmless. It grows on old tree stumps and buried branches, breaking down the dead wood to leave lots of lovely, nutrient-rich soil for invertebrates to feed on.

There is also a type of soft coral called dead man's fingers. It grows all around the UK's coasts.

CARRION CROW

All-black birds with an even darker reputation, crows have always been connected to all things evil. This is partly because they feed on dead animals (or 'carrion'), which is where their name comes from. But we need such scavengers – they keep habitats clean, recycle nutrients back into the ecosystem and stop diseases from spreading. Crows aren't cruel... they're crucial!

A group of crows is called 'a murder'!

Do you know your stags from your bucks?

DEER TO BE DIFFERENT!

by Stuart Edmunds

Red deer © Danny Green / 2020VISION

You may have "herd" of red and roe deer, but did you know that we have another four deer species in the UK? Red and roe deer are the only ones naturally found here. The others were all brought to the UK by people.

Deer help keep woodland plants from growing too big by eating them. But when there are too many deer, plants struggle to grow at all. This is becoming a problem as there are no native predators to keep deer numbers down.

Stuart is Chairman of Shropshire Mammal Group and has been involved with mammal monitoring and recording for 20 years.

Young deer only poop when their mum tells them to! This is because the smell could attract predators.

FALLOW DEER

© Dawn Monrose

Adult weight
Up to 93 kg

Male name
Buck

Female name
Doe

Fallow deer are slightly smaller than red deer and have white spots. The bucks' antlers are large, but often appear flattened compared to reds. Both sexes also have a black, upside-down horseshoe shaped marking on their bum.

Fallow deer are native to mainland Europe and were brought over to England by hunters around 1,000 years ago. They are now common across the UK. For the best chance of spotting them, visit a deer park, particularly in early autumn when they begin their rut.

SIKA DEER

© Ross Hoddinott / 2020VISION

Adult weight
Up to 70 kg

Male name
Stag

Female name
Hind

Sika deer are sometimes mistaken for fallow deer. But unlike fallows, sika prefer pine woodland. They can be a problem for people growing pine trees to sell for timber, as they eat the small tree shoots. They also graze on heather in upland areas, which can be bad for wildlife that depends on heather, like red grouse. Sika were first brought to the UK from Asia in the 1800s and released into deer parks for people to hunt.

You can often tell the sex of a deer by looking at their droppings! Males usually leave much bigger piles of pellets than females.

RED DEER

© Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography

Adult weight
Can be 300 kg

Male name
Stag or hart

Female name
Hind or doe

The red deer is our biggest land mammal! They live in herds, sometimes numbering 12 females (hinds). In the autumn rut, a male (stag) tries to attract the attention of groups of hinds. If he succeeds, he has to defend his group from other stags. They use their huge antlers as weapons to battle males attempting to take over their herd.

Red deer are common in Scotland and can also be spotted in other parts of the UK including Exmoor, the Lake District and Thetford Forest. It is the only deer naturally found in Northern Ireland.

ROE DEER

© Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography

Adult weight
Up to 25 kg

Male name
Buck

Female name
Doe

Like the larger red deer, female roes often move around woodlands and feed in small herds, but become more solitary when they have young (kids) to look after. They can be found in almost any woodlands in Britain.

The roe deer breeding season takes place in summer. Males (bucks) often decorate their small, three-pointed antlers by draping mosses and ferns over them in order to make themselves look more attractive!

Deer footprints in mud are called slots. They look like sheep prints, but with more pointed tips.

REEVES' MUNTJAC DEER

© John Bridges

Adult weight
Up to 18 kg

Male name
Buck

Female name
Doe

These tiny deer are often called "barking deer" as the call of the male sounds like an Alsatian dog barking. Muntjac have spread quickly across Britain after escaping from deer parks and can be found in woodlands, hedgerows, parks and even gardens. Unlike our other deer, muntjac can breed throughout the year and often have young every 7-10 months!

Males have two small, horn-like antlers and both sexes have two thick black stripes between their eyes. When threatened, muntjac raise their white tail as a warning sign, before dashing away to hide.

CHINESE WATER DEER

© Frank Porch

Adult weight
11 kg - 18 kg

Male name
Buck

Female name
Doe

The teddy bear of deer due to their fluffy appearance and rounded ears. Rather than antlers, these deer have fang-like tusks, which make them slightly less cuddly! Males have more prominent fangs and use them to fight off other bucks. They are mainly solitary, but males and females form a bond and stay together throughout the winter.

As the name suggests, Chinese water deer are naturally found in Asia and prefer to live in marshes and fens. This makes the low-lying fens of East Anglia the best place to spot them.

FEATURE CREATURE

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE

White-tailed eagle © Amy Lewis

BARN DOOR BIRDS

The white-tailed eagle is the UK's largest bird of prey. They have a whopping wingspan of up to 2.4 metres. That's much taller than the average man! Thanks to their spectacular size, white-tailed eagles have been given the nickname of 'flying barn doors'. It sounds silly until you see one for yourself, then you realise just how big they actually are!

ESSENTIAL FACTS

Scientific name

Haliaeetus albicilla

Size

Up to 94 cm long

Wingspan

Up to 2.4 metres

Amazing fact

White-tailed eagles are closely related to the American bald eagle.

White-tailed eagle with chick © Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION

EAGLE AID

White-tailed eagles used to live in all countries of the UK. Sadly, they were hunted by people and were lost from these islands completely. Luckily, they survived in other parts of Europe and a project was launched to bring them back. Eagles were transported from Norway to the west coast of Scotland, where they successfully nested. They have since started to spread, but are still mostly seen in western Scotland. However, more recently some eagles have also been released on the Isle of Wight, in southern England.

White-tailed eagle © Neil Aldridge

FISHING ON THE FLY

White-tailed eagles aren't picky eaters. They'll take what they can get. They'll feed on dead things that they find, but will also hunt for their own food. A recent study found that during the nesting season they mainly hunt seabirds and fish. They fly low over the water, using their huge talons to snatch fish from the surface.

ARE NEW SPECIES STILL BEING DISCOVERED?

© Sebastian Kennerknecht / Minden / naturepl.com

A scientist sets a camera trap to record wildlife.

Humans have been exploring the world for thousands of years, but are there still wild wonders left to find?

The short answer is YES!

New species are being discovered all the time. Every year, scientists describe thousands of species that haven't been written about before. Just last year, scientists from the Natural History Museum recorded 619 new wasps!

A WORLD FULL OF WILDLIFE

Scientists have given a name to more than 1.2 million species around the world. That's pretty impressive! But they think there are many millions more waiting to be discovered. In fact, scientists suspect we have only found around 20% of all Earth's species.

Sometimes finding new species involves expeditions to parts of the world that haven't really been explored by our scientific community. On trips like this, scientists might find lots of species that have never been written about – though local people might have known about them already.

SPLITTING SPECIES

Finding a new species isn't always as exciting as spotting an animal that hasn't been seen before. Sometimes scientists realise that what they thought was one species is actually two or more very similar species. They often discover this by studying the DNA of the species.

For example, scientists thought the red grouse we get in the UK was the same species as the willow grouse, found in other parts of the world. They've now decided it's actually a different species, so the red grouse becomes a new species of bird!

This can also work the other way. Scientists might decide that what we thought were two different species are actually just the same species, so they get lumped together as one and we lose a species.

© Luke Stoppard

The Tremough jumper is a new spider that was first discovered in Cornwall!

Red grouse and willow grouse were thought to be the same species until recently.

Red grouse © Ben Hall / 2020VISION

ARE ANY OF THEM IN THE UK?

Amazingly, new species are still being discovered in the UK! In the last few years, a new species of sea slug was found in the seas off southwest England. It was named *Pleurobranchaea britannica*, celebrating the fact it was found in Britain. Other recent discoveries include a new fungus found only in rainforests in Scotland and Wales, and a new jumping spider spotted at a university in Cornwall.

COMPETITIONS

WIN REWILD THE WORLD AT BEDTIME

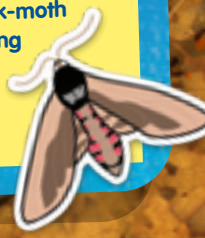
Discover 20 soothing stories about rewilding projects across the globe! Rewilding means bringing wildlife back to the places it once thrived. These inspiring stories offer a dose of hope that we can help nature make a comeback, from beavers in Devon to tigers in Nepal.

We've got FIVE copies to give away!

RRP: £14.99

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

Tell us which spooky hawk-moth has a skull-shaped marking on its back!
CLUE: The answer is in the magazine



WIN WILDSMITH SERIES

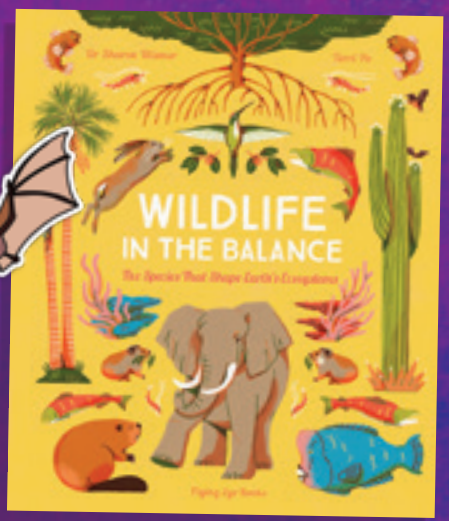
Meet Rowan, a young girl who has the ability to speak to and heal animals, both ordinary and magical. Each book in this sparkling fantasy series sees Rowan on a new quest, combining magical creatures with themes of wildlife conservation. We're giving away a bundle of all four books in the series, including the latest adventure – *Wildsmith: Magical Mountain Rescue*.

We've got THREE bundles to give away!

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

Tell us which animal you would most like to talk to and why you'd like to talk to it!

WIN WILDLIFE IN THE BALANCE



Wildlife in the Balance: The Species that Shape Earth's Ecosystems introduces 12 keystone species from around the world. These are species that play a crucial role in their habitat and have a huge effect on the other wildlife around them. Discover what makes a keystone species so special and how we can help them, from beavers to elephants!

We've got FIVE copies to give away!

RRP: £14.99

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

Answer this question:
Which of these butterflies used to live in England?
a) Large copper
b) Monarch
c) Blue morpho

If you're sending multiple entries, please try to put them in one email to save energy!

COMPETITION RULES

Send your competition entries to us: **By email** watchcomps@wildlifetrusts.org **By post** Wildlife Watch, The Kiln, Mather Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1WT
Don't forget to include your name, age and a way of contacting you about your entry! **DEADLINE: 30 November 2024**
Competition entries may be used on our website and social media channels.