

 95
years



Let nature inspire



Saving **Norfolk's Wildlife** for the Future

Over the last year many of us have taken comfort and inspiration from nature.

The internet has lit up with creative responses to the natural world – photographs, drawings, poetry and podcasts – and our slowed-down, locally-limited lives have led to countless numbers of us noticing nature's species and cycles more keenly than ever before.

This new booklet captures some of these personal and creative responses to the natural world, along with ideas for how nature can inspire us to learn more, explore more and get creative!



Your one-stop shop

We have made a brand new webpage to bring together activities, further information, links to resources from our partners and other conservation organisations. From here, you can also explore our Frequently Asked Questions, book on to Cley Calling Presents events, add pictures to our wildlife gallery and more.

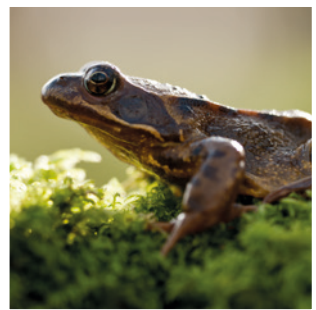
Join in online on your favourite social media with **#natureinspires** sharing your pictures, activities, wildlife spots – whatever you want to share with us! We can't wait to see it.

www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/natureinspires

Ask for help

The team running the Wildlife Information Service love talking about wildlife! If you can't find an answer to your question in our FAQs online, or if you spot an animal or plant and you don't know what it is, take a photograph of it and get in touch:

wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk



Take action for our garden wildlife

Gardens are increasingly important for a whole range of threatened wildlife, from declining hedgehogs and house sparrows to frogs and toads.

A small patch of lawn, patio or even a balcony can provide a home to wildlife. Here are some ideas to inspire you to take on your own mini re-wilding project.

Make homes for wildlife

A great way to help wildlife in your garden is to put up nest-boxes. Most birds that use boxes like clear access to the entry hole, and it is best if it is placed about 7 to 10 feet off the ground and if possible facing in a north-east direction. Robins and wrens will use 'open-fronted' boxes, usually tucked away in a quiet spot deep in a bush or shrub. You may have blackbird, song thrush or dunnock attempting to



- nest in your hedges, so ensure
- they are trimmed before early
- March to avoid any disturbance.

Let the grass grow

Be brave and dare to leave the lawnmower in the shed, or at least leave a small patch long.

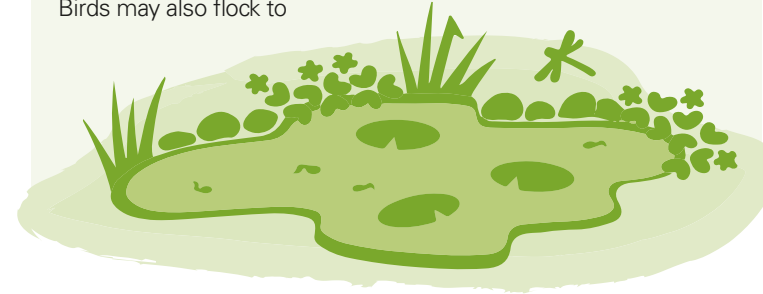
It will cost you nothing, just let the grass grow and see what comes up. You can go a step further, choose a sunny spot and strip back some of the turf, dig it over a little and sprinkle some wildflower seeds.

Most garden centres sell a variety of seed mixes and you can find one that suits your garden. They will attract a good variety of insects too.

Dig a pond

A pond is a great way to encourage wildlife in your garden. During the pond's first spring look out for frogs and newts settling in. Emperor dragonflies will investigate any new bodies of water, and as most water-bugs and beetles fly, it is surprising what will suddenly turn up. Birds may also flock to

- your pond, particularly in
- summer when drinking water
- for garden birds is scarce.
- Wildlife ponds do better without
- fish and it is important to
- properly source plants through
- reputable suppliers: there are
- several non-native invasive
- aquatic plants in the county that
- are proving difficult to control.



What nature means to me...



"My garden has become my own miniature

nature reserve, the seasons appear more vivid and I notice even the smallest details. I have started making lists of the birds, dragonflies and wildflowers and many other creatures that appear in my garden and I rejoice with each new addition. I can't overstate the joy of sitting by a pond in summer, the crackle of dragonfly wings, the skipping butterflies among the flowers you planted, it's a pure delight."

Robert Morgan, NWT Nature Reserves Officer

Through the seasons

Spring

Look for the first butterflies to emerge from hibernation: peacock, tortoiseshell and brimstone are frequent garden visitors in spring. Watch for garden birds carrying nesting materials or food, but don't be tempted to search the bushes for nests. Frogspawn may appear in the shallow end of your pond.



Summer

Delight in your wildflower lawn, look for beetles and hoverflies gathering nectar on the flowers and listen for crickets. At night try searching for moths.

Autumn

Look for interesting fungi in your garden, you may see a 'fairy-ring' in the lawn. Let your meadow 'go to seed' and mow it without a lawnmower box on to allow the spread of seed, and then rake up any of the remaining litter.

Winter

Try a variety of bird food and see what visits your garden. Clear the pond of any excessive weed; it is best to 'wash-it out' in a tub, so as to try and catch any of the invertebrates. They can then be safely returned to the pond.



If everybody does something small, you end up with big action.
Monty Don



Nature inspires me to...

Learn about the natural world



Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.
Albert Einstein

What nature means to me...



"During lockdown, nature has been a big part of my learning. In Geography we are currently learning about erosion and weathering so for our homework we were asked to go on a walk and find examples of these.



We went on a walk to Thorpe Marshes to find erosion on the banks. I saw a few places along the river where the bank had worn away. After that we enjoyed the walk home and spotted two little

- birds in a tree that
- we later identified as
- warblers. I have enjoyed
- all the walks that we have
- taken this lockdown."
-
- Maya Riches,
- wildlife enthusiast

Nature is addictive, the more you learn about it, the more questions you have, the more you want to know! And there is no end to learning about Norfolk's wildlife: there is always a new species to discover, a habitat to explore or a question to be asked.

Carry out your own wildlife survey

How well do you know the wildlife that lives in your local area? Maybe set yourself the challenge to find one new species in your local area each day. Just imagine, by the end of the year you would have discovered 365 different animals and plants. You could even take it one step further and create a nature log, taking each species and researching some interesting facts.

Get to know your midnight garden

Why not discover the wildlife that visits your garden after sunset? One way to do this is to create a simple moth trap by shining a lamp onto a white sheet, or for those moths with a sweet tooth, try soaking strips of an old cloth in a mixture of cheap red wine and sugar, hang the strips over your washing line and check them for visitors after a couple of hours.



Tune in to wildlife

Learning birdsong is a great way to identify what birds are found in your local area, as often you can hear them but not see them. Learning birdsong may seem daunting, but there are some great resources online to help you. The key is to take one species at a time and maybe start with birds you see every day such as wrens, robins and blackbirds.



Learn with Norfolk Wildlife Trust



Have a read of our monthly blog, with articles from our wardens, conservationists, and guest contributors.

Explore our Frequently Asked Questions on the NWT website, or watch our Minute Wildlife series of intro films!

Join our Engagement Officer, Isabelle Mudge, on one of our virtual Wildlife Watch sessions, where children can learn about tracks and trails of garden birds.

Watch one of our Cley Calling digital events.



Nature inspires me to...

Explore my local patch



...there are always new things to find out if you go looking for them.
David Attenborough

There is something to be said for getting to know a local patch; a particular area you walk regularly.

The more you get to know a local area, the more of its secrets it will share with you. It will let you know where the great spotted woodpeckers nest, or the favourite play spot of the local weasel family; it will reveal where the comma butterflies like to feed or the grass snakes like to bask in the sun. Whether you live in village, town or city your local patch is waiting to be explored.



Create your own nature's calendar

Norfolk is the birthplace of phenology, which is the study of the timing of natural seasonal events. Robert Marsham (1708–1797) was a Norfolk man who recorded the dates of certain wildlife events (continued by his family after his death) giving us approximately 200 years of valuable information about British wildlife. Phenology was once seen as a relatively unimportant pastime of amateur naturalists, but as a result of climate change it is now seen as an exceptionally important way of considering how our seasons are changing.

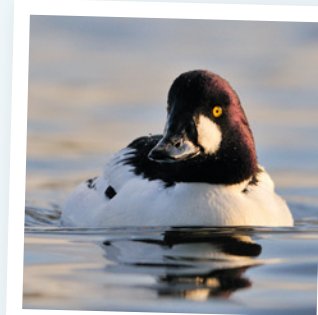
Why not keep your own nature's calendar for your local patch? Keep a log of the first time you see a species, or see a natural event such as the unfurling of a hawthorn leaf. Keeping such a list is a great way to remind yourself when to listen out for the cuckoo in your local area, or the first returning swallows and swifts.

What nature means to me...



"I'm lucky enough to live within easy walking distance of

NWT's Thorpe Marshes on the eastern edge of Norwich. Not every nature reserve is good year-round, but at Thorpe there's no quiet spell in mid-winter as the former gravel pit, St Andrews Broad, attracts ducks, including regular goldeneyes and, recently, a great white egret. In spring, the marshes and scrub are alive with warblers and last year we had a lockdown celebrity: a calling corncrake. Summer brings colourful marsh flowers and dragonflies and damselflies. Norfolk hawkers in June and my



- personal favourite, willow
- emerald damselflies, in early
- autumn are among the
- 21 species recorded here.
- I enjoy sharing my local
- patch as the NWT guide on
- monthly walks. This adds
- to the pleasure of exploring
- a familiar local patch:
- seeing the area through
- others' eyes and a variety
- of interests and expertise."
- Chris Durdin, NWT Volunteer
- and naturalist

Exercise my love for nature

This past year many of us have felt the benefits of being out in nature. Whether it is a walk or a bike ride, a boat trip on the broads or looking for shells on the beach, it is no secret that surrounding yourself in nature is good for your general

- wellbeing. So this year make
- your goal to spend as much
- time as possible out, whether
- you potter in your garden,
- explore Norfolk's network of
- footpaths or discover one of
- the many nature reserves
- the county has to offer.

- When enjoying the
- countryside please
- remember to practice
- the Countryside Code:
- Respect, Protect, Enjoy.



Try forest bathing



Join a practical conservation group



Enjoy a walk and a picnic

Nature inspires me to...

Get creative



What is art, monsieur, but nature concentrated?
Honore de Balzac

Nature has been the inspiration to many an artist, composer and writer.

We can all think of a time when we have been inspired (even if it did not come to anything) to put pen to paper, paintbrush to pallet or crochet hook to wool after seeing or experiencing something whilst surrounded by nature. A stunning sunset, watching a murmuration of starlings or listening to a nightingale sing, why even a blade of

- grass blowing in the wind, or
- a spider making a web can act as inspiration to be creative.
- There are so many different ways to be creative that it can sometimes be daunting to know where or how to start.
- At Cley and Salthouse Marshes, we play host to many creative workshops, performances and exhibitions to both inspire and nurture creativity.



Capture wildlife through the written word



"When I am stuck with a piece of writing, I walk the

commons and lanes near my home until the tangle of words falls into place in my head. Walking and chance encounters with wildlife are as much a part of my process of creating as they are a source of inspiration.

As an ecologist, I am always aware of the stories of the land. A gorse bush reveals sandy soils, perhaps a glacial deposit; coppiced hazel tells a tale of long ago woodland management. As a writer, these stories fascinate me – every place has stories waiting to be told."

Helen Baczkowska, author and NWT Conservation Officer

The key thing to being creative is to have a go, and don't worry if it does not quite go to plan!

Create your own piece of artwork that can also be used by wildlife

For inspiration, visit our 'nature inspires' page to look at solitary bee homes. There are thousands of ways to make a solitary bee home that can also act as a piece of artwork in your garden!



Become naturally crafty

Next time you go for a walk or you are in your garden get creative using natural material you find lying around. Twigs, stones, moss and leaves can become your crafting material. Take inspiration from artists such as Andy Goldsworthy to see what can be achieved with a little help from nature.

Have a go at botanical drawing

- All you need is a pad of paper, a pencil, sharpener and rubber, and if you are feeling really creative some colouring pencils.
- Taking the time to observe something can really open your eyes to its uniqueness and help you get to grips with the things that you need to look at in order to identify it.

What nature means to me...

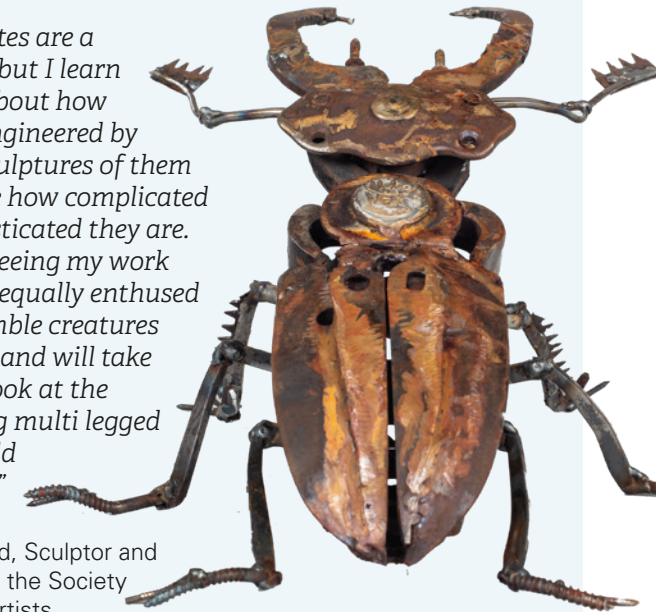


"My life revolves around wildlife and the natural world. I am lucky to live in

rural Norfolk so I have plenty of inspiration, but there is a whole world of easily accessible wildlife which you can find wherever you live if you think small! Spend time up close with an earwig or a woodlouse and you see the wonder in them. Whether a hare or a beetle, I want to capture the essence of the creature and give new life to the old tools and scrap items within them.

- Invertebrates are a challenge, but I learn so much about how they are engineered by making sculptures of them and realise how complicated and sophisticated they are.
- I hope by seeing my work others are equally enthused by the humble creatures around us and will take a second look at the fascinating multi legged micro world around us."

Harriet Mead, Sculptor and President of the Society of Wildlife Artists



Nature inspires me to...



Pick up a camera

Add to my reading list



"I read about nature for three reasons, I suppose. The first — which has stayed with me since childhood — is to learn to identify new things. A naturalist's life is one of fascination and, in large part, this means putting names to the things we see around us. Happily, an astonishing range of field guides is at our disposal, some photographic, others gloriously illustrated by the likes of Richard Lewington and Killian Mullarney. My second reason to read is to understand natural processes, and sometimes to challenge my views. Countless authors, among them Erica McAlister, Ian Newton and Merlin Sheldrake, help make science accessible to a popular audience. My third motivation is simply to marvel. In the past couple of years, the soaring prose of Tim Dee, Melissa Harrison, Matt Gaw, Simon Barnes and Brigit Strawbridge Howard has connected me still more deeply to the wild places and wild creatures which are the guiding thread of my life."

Nick Acheson,
NWT Wildlife Ambassador



Josh Jaggard is a wildlife photographer and film-maker whose work has appeared on Springwatch, wildlife documentaries and many NWT publications! Here he shares his top tips for getting that perfect shot.

Nature has always inspired me to pick up my camera and document the wildlife around Norfolk. So why not get out today and give it a go. Here are a few tips to help:

Visit the same locations regularly to start understanding behaviours and routines. Start a field notebook.

For more impact shots, try and get eye level with your subject matter. This will create a better connection and angle for the photo.

Research your subject to help predict activity and behaviours.



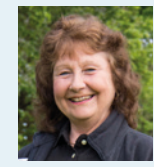
- Ideally a long lens prevents disturbance and gets you up close to the wildlife, although any camera – even your phone – can take great wildlife pictures, so use what you have.
- With most wildlife, patience is vital. Grab your camera, sit in a woodland, park, garden or by the river for an hour and you will be surprised how much wildlife pops up.

Two hours before/after sunrise and sunset are the best times to head out to photograph wildlife. It's a lot quieter time of day for human activity and the wildlife is more active, with species coming out for breakfast and dinner.

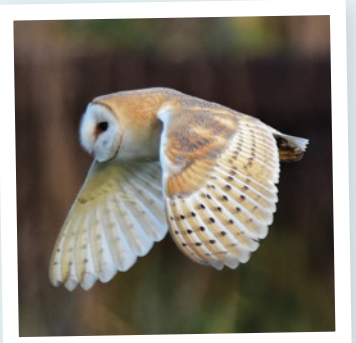
But most importantly, just enjoy being outside and around wildlife. Take some time to watch and appreciate it all.



What nature means to me...



"There's something inspirational about being with wildlife. I love exploring and capturing it on my camera: from sunrise sky colours to barn owls hovering for prey. It's so peaceful and magical. My passion is to capture wildlife in their natural environment, seeing where they live, their food source and behaviour. I especially love getting birds in flight and showing all the colours of their feathers and wing



- movement, which can help identify them from a distance. I am happy taking photos of everyday wildlife – I nearly always have my camera with me – and if something rare turns up where I am, it's a bonus!"
- Elizabeth Dack,
NWT Volunteer

Nature inspires me to...



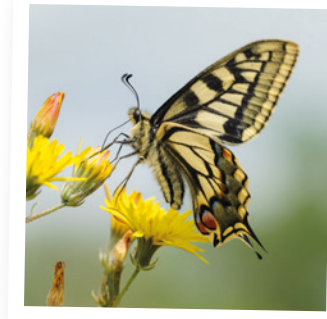
Share my wildlife experiences

If you can't excite people about wildlife, how can you convince them to love, cherish, and protect our wildlife?
Steve Irwin

It has never been easier to share your wildlife experiences: the digital world now puts us in touch with millions of people.

Put it on the map

Whether you see a blackbird or a bittern, a tortoiseshell or a swallowtail, take a moment to officially log your wildlife sighting. Sharing your wildlife sightings can help us understand where species can be found and how they are faring. There are organised citizen science surveys to join in with as well, such as our seasonal spotter surveys; RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch;



and the Big Butterfly Count with Butterfly Conservation.

Create a network through your neighbourhood

A natter over the fence with your neighbour could really help a beloved native species. If you have hedgehogs in your garden talk to your neighbours and see if you can encourage them to help you create a highway for hedgehogs. All it might take is a CD-sized hole in a fence to allow the hedgehog to move freely in search of food and somewhere to nest.



It's not just what you have seen, but also what is missing...



Maybe you have noticed house sparrows in your village have decreased, or there aren't as

many swifts anymore. Take the first step and bring people together who care about local wildlife and start your own wildlife project in your village, town or in the city. Start a conversation via local online groups or the parish magazine and see if you can encourage people to do something for wildlife. Perhaps you could start a bird box project where you live or raise awareness of what can be done in gardens to help wildlife?

What nature means to me...



"I like sharing my passion for nature so I can

inspire others to have the passion I do. I want everyone to have a favourite tree and have the relaxation of listening to rain tumbling down into a pond. Wildlife also benefits when more people care, they think before they kill an innocent spider, wasp or fly.

I have lots of fun Tweeting and sharing Instagram posts where I've met lots of lovely other enthusiastic nature nerds, I talk about wildlife with my friends and I get to share Cley's amazing wildlife when I volunteer there. For beginners, 30 Days Wild is a great way to get started, it's how I started to properly love and share my adventures with nature the way I do now."

Amelia Bradbury,
NWT Volunteer





Spread the wildlife bug

The more people who are passionate about wildlife the better for the whole world, for if you love wildlife you are more likely to step up and do your bit to protect it. Sharing images of wildlife you have seen on your local patch via your local online page, or letting people know what wildlife you have seen in your garden, can inspire others to then take notice and take action.

Keep in touch with Norfolk Wildlife Trust:

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Registered charity number 208734

Images: Adrian Clarke, Amy Lewis,
Ben Hall/2020VISION, David Ferre, David Rounce,
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