

## Bringing people, wildlife and wellbeing together

### Nature Thoughts...

This week, I found I was struggling a little to see the bigger picture, as we all do from time to time. So, on the advice of a wise friend, I decided to switch off the technology and go and immerse myself in nature for a while.

Although I've done plenty of walking and spent a lot of time outdoors recently, it's a while since I practised any mindfulness. So, rather than striding through my usual woodland loop, I slowed down and wandered until I found the spot that made me feel I wanted to sit a while. In that spot, I found the view that drew me in most and sat.



I found myself half way up a shady path on the side of a steep slope beneath an oak tree. My view looked back down the slope: I was eye level with the woodland canopy that had its roots at the bottom of the hill. I spent time looking at the shapes of the branches and the way the light fell through the leaves and wondered what it was about that view that had drawn me in. There is a belief in nature-based mindfulness that each of the cardinal directions carries its own energy. I was looking south. South speaks to the emotional being in us and to our sense of belonging, the part of us that welcomes our feelings and embraces our capacity to feel a huge range of emotions. To me, it's the direction that says 'you're allowed to be here and how you feel is ok.' The idea that cardinal directions have their own energy is an abstract thought and not for everyone. I'm undecided. I do believe however, that spending time in nature helps me to process my thoughts and I'm drawn to aspects of nature that mirror my feelings in that moment. Perhaps I see the things in nature I want to see, or maybe I see the things that I need to see? Make time for yourself in nature this week,

Rosie

### What's in a name?!

*In this new feature, we explore the origins of some British wildlife names! Send us any colloquial names for creatures and critters you may have heard around the UK, or maybe common general names that have their roots in history like cuckoo spit...*

#### Cuckoo Spit

Seen in parks and gardens the country over yet its name is a mystery to many!



"The name originates from the coinciding dates of the appearance of the foamy substance on plants and the arrival of the cuckoo. The cuckoo itself does not actually spit.

The arrival of the first cuckoo has long been an important event, as the arrival of the cuckoo is linked closely with the arrival of spring. The majority of cuckoos arrive in the UK during April, having overwintered in tropical Africa."

Ian Hayward, Wildlife Advisor, RSPB

Check out 'Your Nature Spots' on page 4 to find out more about the cuckoo spit maker...!

### Read of the Week!

***The following extract comes from:  
The Wisdom of Trees By Max Adams***

"Woods that once graced the land, but which are now long gone, can often be identified by a place name. There are plenty of tree names preserved in villages, fields and rivers... Some of the best evidence comes not from the names of trees, but from the words that record their removal.: the Old English *leah*, as in Oakley, would preserve the memory of a clearing in an oak wood. *Hirst* and *Frith* names similarly record the former presence of woodland, and since such names were formed in the Anglo-Saxon period, we can be reasonably sure that those woods were in existence before the Norman Conquest... In Britain you can take an Ordnance Survey map and, using these names, imagine the distribution and pattern of woods that are no longer there."

# WILD-WORDSEARCH!

## Amphibians

- Fire Bellied Toad
- Tomato Frog
- Alpine Newt
- Mudpuppy
- Cane Toad
- Bullfrog
- Olm
- Axolotyl
- Caecilian
- Golden Toad
- Darwin's Frog
- Smooth Newt
- Red Salamander
- Poison Dart Frog

Image: M.Felstead

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

Extra challenge... Find the two other hidden words that hint at next week's puzzle theme!

"However long the night, the dawn will break"

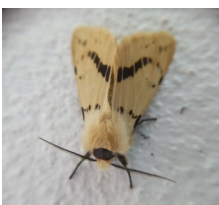
African Proverb

## Name it!

Can you identify the wildlife in these photos?



Issue 12 answers...



1.buff ermine moth, 2.robin, 3.scarlet pimpernel

## Wildlife word of the week...

**Torpor:** This is a short term drop in body temperature and period of inactivity, usually in the day time, to preserve energy, a bit like a mini-hibernation.



You can also follow TEaM on social media for a Daily Dose of Nature...



The Environment and Me



theenvironmentandme



TheEnviroandMe

# NATNAV

## 'MEET THE STARS'

If we wish to find our way at night we start with finding North and from this the other points of the compass. The best way to do this is by using the stars (providing cloud cover allows to us view them and there is not too much light pollution from streetlights). This may seem a bit daunting at first so I will keep this very simple.

In the northern hemisphere '*Polaris*' or '*North Star*' can give us a constant northern direction. Start by finding the constellation 'the Plough' (also known as the '*Big Dipper*' or '*saucepan*').

This constellation is made of 7 bright stars that form its distinctive 'plough-shape' (see picture).

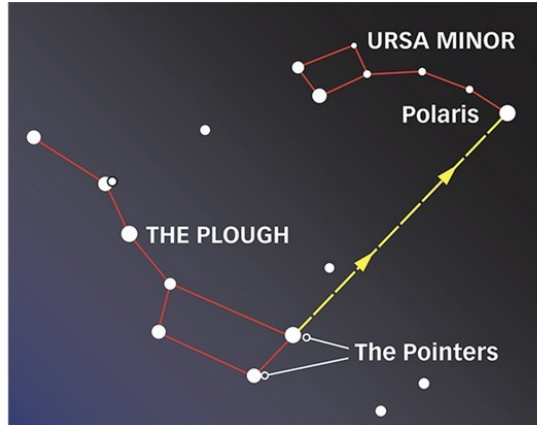


Image 'The Sky at Night' Magazine

Once we have located The Plough we need to find the 2 '*pointer-stars*'. If we imagine the constellation as a saucepan with a handle and we tipped the saucepan up then the 2 pointer-stars are at the end where the liquid in the saucepan would run out. If we then draw an imaginary line up into the night sky five-times the distance between the 2 pointer stars we will arrive at a point where the northern star can be seen. As the Plough constellation rotates around the northern celestial pole this works throughout the night and year.

Once we have found the north star all we need to do is turn to face it and drop an imaginary line straight down to earth. This will give a north direction with south behind us and east and west aligned with our right and left shoulders respectively.

You can also see from the diagram that the end of the handle of the saucepan formed by the 'Little Plough' also indicates the position of Polaris or North Star. We can use this to check our observation.

Remember, you can always use a simple compass or 'compass app' on your phone to check your findings.

## THE COLLECTIVE QUIZ!

Fill in the missing spaces to discover the wildlife collective noun phrases...

It's all a bit fishy this week!

Sand eels are a tasty dinner for the coastal puffins; inland, cormorants and herons are often seen hunting for brown trout.



Jack Perks, TWT

- A \_ \_ oa \_ of fish
- A b \_ tt \_ \_ y of barracudas
- A \_ e \_ of eels
- An \_ r \_ y of herring
- A sh \_ \_ \_ r of sharks
- A h \_ v \_ r of trout
- A f \_ v \_ \_ of stingrays

Issue 12 answers...

- A quiver of cobras
- A bask of crocodiles
- A bale of turtles
- A rhumba of rattlesnakes
- A generation of vipers
- A lounge of lizards
- A congregation of alligators

How many did you get?

## Your nature spots...

Logan spotted this native seven-spot ladybird larvae this week and took a pic with his macro lens! Almost alien like in appearance, the larvae is as ferocious a predator as the adult ladybird eating up to 100 aphids a day. They're definitely one of nature's best garden pest controllers!



TEaM member Becky sent us this picture of 'cuckoo spit' that she found on a walk which raised the question addressed on page 1: 'Do cuckoos spit?' The foam is, in fact, created by an insect called a froghopper. The froghopper nymph produces a secretion which it pushes air through to create the foam, a bit like a toddler blowing bubbles! The foam protects the young from predators. Once an adult, the froghopper no longer produces foam, it leaps instead! Although the froghopper is a sap sucker, they cause no harm to the plant.

Bushcrafters Alan and Sue spotted 'this cheeky little robin sat on (their) shed door handle. They have a nest in the ivy just outside the shed.' It looks a lot like this little robin is doing some home renovations with a beak full of nesting material. A second brood perhaps?



Rosalind has also been in touch this week with a lovely list of native wildflower spots including: red campion, herb robert, dead nettle, speedwell, cow parsley, clover, daisy, scarlet pimpernel, buttercup, dandelion and lily-of-the-valley. Lily-of-the-valley is an indicator species of ancient woodland so if you spot it, it could be sign that you're walking in a really special place!

## Feature Species!!

### Dunnock or Sparrow?

It's a double this week. We are often asked 'what's the difference between a dunnock and a sparrow?' so this week, we take a look at two of our favourite garden birds.

#### **Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

Often seen alone, hopping on the ground near shrubs, borders and hedges. Females often mate with more than one male so neither knows who the father is and both will supply her chicks with food. Not a sparrow at all, but often referred to as a hedge-sparrow.



UK Status	<b>Amber</b>
Bird Family	Accentors
Length	14cm
Wingspan	19—21cm
Weight	19—24g
Ave Life span	2 years
Eggs	Up to 5
Food	Insects, worms, spiders, seeds

#### **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Noisy, outgoing and sociable birds. Usually found where there are people, its common to find sparrows hopping around outdoor seating of cafes and gardens. They nest in loose colonies and sometimes their nests are only 20—30cm apart.



UK Status	<b>Red</b>
Bird Family	Old World Sparrows
Length	14—15cm
Wingspan	21—25cm
Weight	24—38g
Ave Life Span	3 years
Eggs	2—5
Food	Seeds, invertebrates, scraps



**Stay  
safe**

