

**Bringing people, wildlife and wellbeing together**

## Nature Thoughts...

This week, I caught up with TEaM member John Hawker. With his permission, I share his story.

Those of you that know John, will know that he has had a really tough time recently and is not as mobile as he once was! Only a few months ago, John was living in a flat with stairs to negotiate and without his own garden and often felt "in a dark place". After a stay in hospital, John moved into his 'new place' at a care home. Full of praise and thanks for the encouraging staff at the home and his Mum, Dad and Sister who shop for him and socially distance visit: "they're brilliant, they are." He's in no doubt the special people around him have played a huge part in helping to boost his mental health. Them and the garden...

There is plenty of garden space, lawns and beds and John loves a good garden potter. Now, when he gets up in the morning and he feels 'shaky' and in that dark place, he can go straight out into the garden and adjust the sweet peas or fill the bird feeders; he's got something to 'take care of', to focus on. When he's out there, he feels like he's in his 'own world, his little bubble.' He does the weeding, digs the soil and has even got his own pair of gloves! John said he uses everything he learnt from his time at the allotment, all the tips he's remembered and how to care for the plants. He is also bringing nature into the grounds and has introduced bird boxes, a bug hotel and a hedgehog house (a work in progress as it's currently inhabited by magpies but John is hopeful as hedgehogs have been spotted in the gardens!) He loves watching the birds visiting the feeders and has spotted: finches, including a bull finch (how fabulous), an 'army of sparrows', tits, blackbirds, a robin and the resident pigeon: Mr Wonky Tail (there's a sad story involving a disgruntled magpie). With the help of his book, he's now able to spot the difference between species. John often takes his binoculars into the garden with him and recounted a funny story: He was looking up one day and saw a huge bird - he thought it must be some kind of eagle, maybe a stray sea eagle!! He grabbed his bins, focused in and quickly realised it was a gull! That made me feel better about all the times I've mistaken a pigeon for a sparrow hawk!



John loves that other people at the care home enjoy the garden too. They ask questions and contribute, but it also triggers happy memories for them too. They often tell him stories of how certain flowers remind them of happy times and this encourages him to do more. But what does it mean for John personally? "Without the garden I wouldn't have coped, I wouldn't have been able to get out... The garden gives me total freedom, fresh hope and fresh air." Gardening is "calming and relaxing for people with poor mental health. It changes people." John, thank you so much for sharing this with us. Your words can only inspire people to go out and begin to explore the nature around them and I'm certain many readers will be reading with a deeply understanding smile.

### Read of the Week...

### The Living Mountain by Nan Shepherd

*Composed during WWII, Nan's description of the Cairngorms and her relationship with the wild environment is really beautiful and poetic. It reminds us it's not about the end goal of the walk or reaching a summit in record time - it's about noticing the world around us as we go and feeling a part of it. Rosie*

"Walking in the dark, oddly enough, can reveal new knowledge about a familiar place. In a moonless week, with overcast skies and wartime blackout, I walked night after night over the moory path... to hear the news broadcast. I carried a torch but used it only once... Two trees that stood out against the sky were my signposts, and no matter how dark the night sky was always appreciably lighter than the trees... it amazed to find how unfamiliar I was with that path. I had followed it times without number, yet now, when my eyes were in my feet, I did not know it's bumps and holes, nor where the trickles of water crossed it, nor where it rose and fell. It astonished me that my memory was so much in the eye and so little in the feet, for I am not awkward in the dark and walk easily and happily in it. Yet here I am stumbling because the rock has made a hump in the ground. To be a blind man, I see, needs application."

# WILD-WORDSEARCH!

## Weather

- Blizzard
- Breeze
- Drought
- Frost
- Heatwave
- Hurricane
- Lightning
- Mist
- Monsoon
- Rain shower
- Squall
- Sunshine
- Thunder
- Tornado

SAMUEL D. BARRICKLOW / GETTY

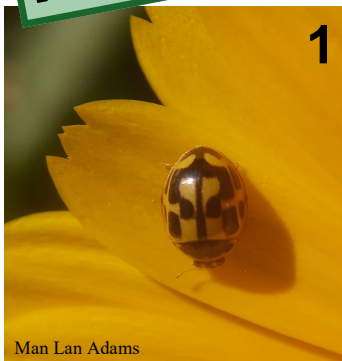
E	N	A	C	I	R	R	U	H	H	J	P	K	R	L
T	Z	I	K	H	A	A	F	T	Z	T	Q	N	W	U
H	I	G	Y	O	I	F	G	W	O	Z	S	O	S	A
U	W	K	M	N	N	B	O	P	E	K	I	O	E	U
N	Z	P	A	R	S	N	I	P	R	U	D	S	R	L
D	R	O	U	G	H	T	I	D	Q	E	R	N	F	F
E	D	I	E	N	O	H	I	Z	Z	A	A	O	M	G
R	H	E	A	T	W	A	V	E	E	N	Z	M	T	N
L	N	L	C	G	E	C	E	U	N	L	Z	V	E	I
R	K	M	N	U	R	R	H	Q	I	O	I	S	U	N
E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

**Challenge... Find the two hidden words that hint at next week's theme!**

"In a world of constant change and streaming technology,  
I find solace in the forest where a tree remains a tree."  
Angle Welland-Crosby

## Name It!

Can you identify the wildlife in the photos...



Issue 15 answers...

### Name It!

1. Goldeneye
2. Cream spot tiger moth
3. Bracket fungi



### Missing Links...

- Cow-Shod (slip)
- Fly-Time (past)
- Ant-Side (hill)
- Flower-Pack (power)
- Stem-Snap (ginger)
- Red-Mark (kite)

### Missing Links...

Your task is to find the missing word that follows the first clue and precedes the second. For example, the answer to Rain-String could be 'Bow' giving Rainbow and Bowstring.

Horse-Ground

Wood-Mark

Sea-Show

Cloud-Pin

Dragon-past

Sea-Man

Answers next week!

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



The Environment and Me



theenvironmentandme



TheEnviroandMe

# NATNAV

## THE MOON IS A MIRROR

As our closest natural satellite, visible to the naked eye, the moon is an ever-present feature of both the daytime and night skies. It influences our tides, determines whether the night is light or dark and even said to effect mood. It's movements in relation to a position on earth is complex but there are some simple things we can observe and learn that are useful as natural-navigation tools. The 'Golden Rule' to remember is that the moon reflects the sun's light towards us and therefore it acts as a mirror.

*This is a waxing crescent moon. A waxing moon rises above the horizon before dusk. As the moon's risen before the sun sets, the evenings are lighter during this phase... great for evening walks. The darkness comes but in the early hours before dawn. A waning moon, however, usually rises long after sunset meaning there's an evening period of complete natural darkness. This phase, suits a dawn walker!*



If we look at the moon and imagine whether it is most like the letter 'D' or 'C' in appearance we can predict whether the part of the moon lit up by the sun is increasing or decreasing in size (waxing or waning). If the curve of the moon is to the right then it appears most-like a 'D' which we can interpret as 'Declining'. However, we must remember that the moon is a mirror and so it is the opposite, i.e. Climbing or increasing. If the curve of the moon is to the left then it is most-like a 'C' which we can interpret as 'Climbing', but once again remember the moon is a mirror so it is the opposite and therefore 'Declining'. A Climbing moon is said to be waxing and this means it's illuminated size will increase night on night until the full-moon is reached. After this point it will decrease or wane until we reach the night of no moon where no portion is illuminated. After this point the process begins once more. As it takes approximately one month to complete a full cycle (no moon to no moon or full moon to full moon) it can be used as a lunar calendar by which we can measure days, weeks and months.

When travelling at night it can be useful to predict whether the moon is waxing or waning as this will influence the amount of light available to us at night. On a clear cloudless, night a full moon can provide enough light to travel safely and can even reflect enough of the sun's rays to power a solar panel!

Next week: How the moon influences our tides.

## THE COLLECTIVE QUIZ!

### Week 14 answers

A flutter of butterflies

An army of ants

A swarm of bees

A glimmer of glow-worms

A nibbling of gnats

A bite of midges

A cluster of spiders

**New feature next week!**

## A Mindful Moment...

This week, we challenge you to take a mindfulness walk.

Perhaps on the grass barefoot. Close your eyes for a moment, how does the grass feel beneath your feet?



Pick a familiar path, maybe through the woods or a park. Notice your body as you move, the pressure on your feet, how your feet feel as you roll across your soles from heel to toes. Is the ground uneven or flat? Notice any bumps and ridges.

Perhaps you could follow in Nan Shepherd's footsteps and take a walk while it's dark if you struggle to sleep. Familiar places become new worlds in twilight or moonlight (be safe, there's nothing wrong with a night time wander around your own garden. If going further, make sure someone knows where you are).

## Your nature...



Tracy Villiers has been using her macro lens to explore nature and sent us these lovely pictures. We love the vivid colour of the flowers. What aquatic mammal did Tracy notice the slug was doing a good impression of?!



A hedgehog update from bushcrafter Sam:

"We seem to be having a hedgehog visitor every night, as the food plate is nearly always empty in the morning. A few nights ago I went down just after dusk to see if everything was set up ok, and there was Mr. Hedgehog eating the biscuits I'd put out for our cat, Louis (he gets so annoyed when he sees me giving away his biscuits so I put a few out for him too!). When Mr. Hedgehog was in the feeding station eating the properly designated biscuits, Sophie heard a rustling in a nearby bush, and there was a second hedgehog (pictured below!). We couldn't quite believe it. So we're now primed for, fingers crossed, more hedgehog sightings. I've bought myself a new torch, solely for that purpose."

This is wonderful to hear Sam, thank you!

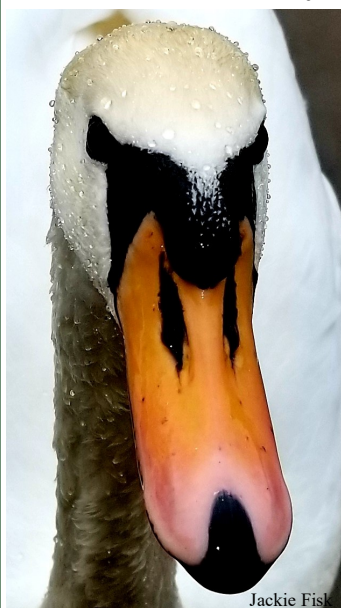
## Feature Species!!

### Who owns the swans?

The Queen! Yes Her Majesty owns all unmarked mute swans. A surprising thing left over from the middle ages. In those days owners of swans had to mark their swans by nicks on the beaks. Any that are unmarked belongs to the Queen. There is an official role of a Swan Keeper and once a year there is ceremony on the Monday of the third week in July on the Thames.

There are three types of swan in the UK. The mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) is the largest and the adult is all white and has an orange beak with a black tip. It is resident and breeds here; it can be found all over UK. It is called mute swan because it is slightly quieter compared to the other types of swan! They can live for a long time and tend to keep the same mate.

The other two are whooper (*Cygnus cygnus*) and Bewick's (*Cygnus columbianus*) swans which travel thousands of miles to the UK every autumn. The Whooper flies in from Iceland and the Bewick's from Arctic Russia.



Jackie Fish

The whooper is large like the mute swan but with yellow, instead of orange, markings on its black beak. The Bewick's swan is smaller and compact with a much shorter neck. The yellow patch on its black beak is also confined to the base of the bill. The Bewick's swan got its name from Thomas Bewick, an 18<sup>th</sup> century English natural-history writer.



Man Lan Adams

Mute swan



Man Lan Adams

Whooper swans



Man Lan Adams

Bewick's swans

More details on swans can be found at [www.RSPB.org.uk](http://www.RSPB.org.uk) and [www.Countryfile.com](http://www.Countryfile.com)



Stay  
safe

