

Bringing people, wildlife and wellbeing together

Hello all, we hope you're keeping well and warm this chilly week!

Today we bring you a lovely winter craft to try whilst we've still got these freezing nights. Give it a go and send us your ice lantern photos...

To make an **ice lantern** you'll need...

- 2 plastic containers of different sizes.
- Leaves, foliage or flowers
- A tealight (LED or real flame)
- Water

To begin place your leaves at the bottom of your largest container. Then place the smaller container (open end up) inside the larger, so it holds the foliage in place.



Steph Neal



Steph Neal

You want to ensure you've chosen two containers which allow you to create a lantern that's neither too thin, as it'll just break, or too thick, as it'll take forever to freeze. A gap of 0.5 – 1cm all the way round should be fine.

Slowly, fill the space left between the two containers with water. If your containers are lightweight you may need to fill the smaller with something heavy, so it doesn't float up – a few small stones work well.

Leave to freeze outside overnight. In the morning, run some warm water over the outside of the outer container to allow a little bit of melting, so that the inner container will release from the ice.



R Charter



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R Charter



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Steph Neal

Caption This...

Yes, nature can be very beautiful, but at times, it also brings us much comedy and amusement!

In a new feature we delve into the nature bloopers from our camera roles and ask you to come up with their captions!

Send your wittiest captions and any wildlife photos that made you chuckle by email to:

rosie.charter@wkwt.org.uk



R Charter

An extract for the day...

THE WOOD:

The Life and Times of Cockshutt Wood

By John Lewis-Stempel

February 10th: For another day, the black oaks have stood in squalling rain, straight as the masts of naval ships. They did not bow, they did not yield.

February 11th: I listened to the sweet south wind this morning...

February 12th: Chaffinch singing in the cold winter sunshine, which is then dashed by sleet. He has acquired a blue cap and a rich pink waistcoat. This is the first full mating song by a Cockshutt bird.

WILD-WORDSEARCH

Migratory Birds

Arctic tern
Brent goose
Chiffchaff
Common redpoll
Fieldfare
Greenshank
Osprey
Puffin
Redstart
Sanderling
Swallow
Wheatear
Wigeon
Yellow wagtail



R Charter

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

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

"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold."

Aristotle

Name It!



J Fisk



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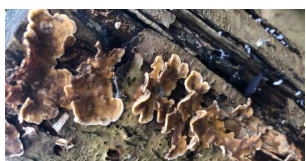
Can you identify the tracks left in the snow and the wildlife in these photos?



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Issue 31 answers... Name It!

1. oak curtain crust fungi 2. male house sparrow 3. King Alfred's cake fungi

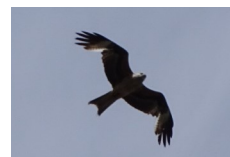


Bird Idioms

- As proud as a peacock.
As the crow flies.
The early bird catches the worm.
Eagle eye.
As happy as a lark.

How well do you know your...

Bird Idioms?



Fill in the blanks to complete these commonly known sayings.

An _____ around the neck.

As scarce as _____'s teeth.

"She took him under her _____."

_____ of a _____ flock together.

Dead as a _____.

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



The Environment and Me



theenvironmentandme



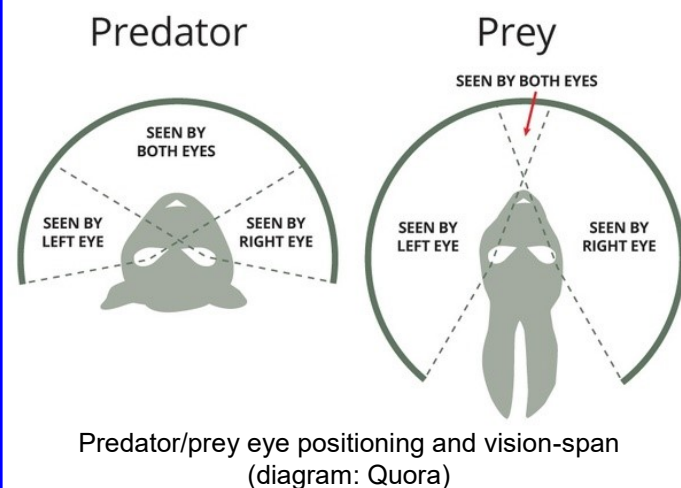
TheEnviroandMe

This week, Martin brings us a new series shining a spot light on nature's own Avengers...

ANIMAL SENSES AND SUPERPOWERS

At the end of my final article on Frost and Ice I asked if any of our readers had any suggestions for a next series of articles. I am grateful therefore for a suggestion from Stephen for a series looking at animal senses. I hope you enjoy exploring with me this fascinating subject full of strange examples of animal senses and comparing them with the extent of our own senses and how we use them to navigate our way through the world. Each issue we will look at various animal senses and include one 'super-sense'.

Our perception of the world around us comes to us via our various senses and this is no different for animals. What is different however, is how acute our various senses are and, in some cases, the presence of 'super-senses'! Most animals have at least one of the 5 senses: *sight, hearing, smell, taste and/or touch*. This week we will look at sight...



SIGHT: Sight is the primary sense of most creatures including ourselves. However, the position and capability of eyes varies across species and is reflected in the way animals live, feed and reproduce. Animals with eyes mounted on the sides of their heads are generally prey species that need to keep a careful watch for predators. Eyes positioned like this give the animal a good arc of vision to both sides of the head and when in a herd a very good overall watch for predators can be kept. In contrast, predators tend to have binocular vision with both eyes mounted to the front of the head where their working together can give a very good perception of depth. This helps predators focus on moving prey in a way that

increases their chance of successfully catching prey. Animals with side-mounted vision include rabbits, cattle and horses whilst animals with binocular vision include foxes and raptors such as eagles.

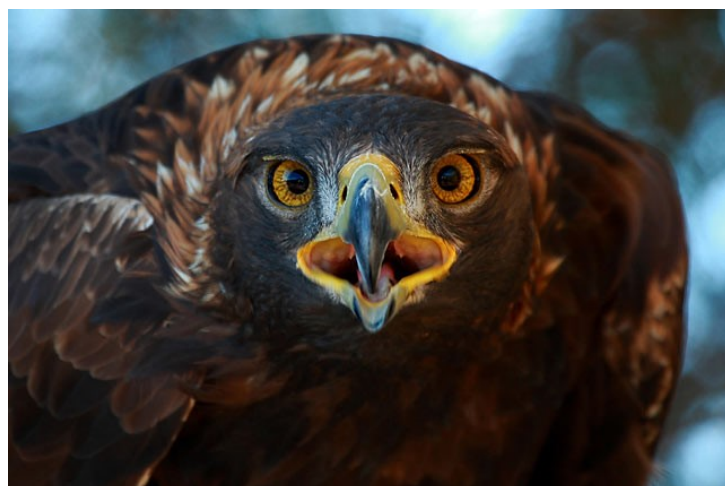
In addition to the degree of vision-span and ability to perceive depth of field, some animals have enhanced forms of eyesight. Birds of prey that hunt from height have enhanced vision that allows them to focus on prey that are far below them. The eagle for example can perceive prey at a distance up to 8-times greater than humans, have enhanced colour perception and a vision-span of 360 degrees (twice that of a human). This explains why we have coined the term 'eagle eye' vision.

Another form of enhanced sight is the ability to see better in poor light conditions. Cats are night hunters whilst deer are night-time feeders. Both animals have enhanced night vision: one to catch prey; the other to avoid predators.

Domestic cats have excellent night-vision. This is because a cat's eye contains a membrane which reflects even the smallest amounts of light, acting as a retroreflector which boosts the amount of light available to the eye's photoreceptors.



Compound eye of a Horse Fly
Image: Flickr

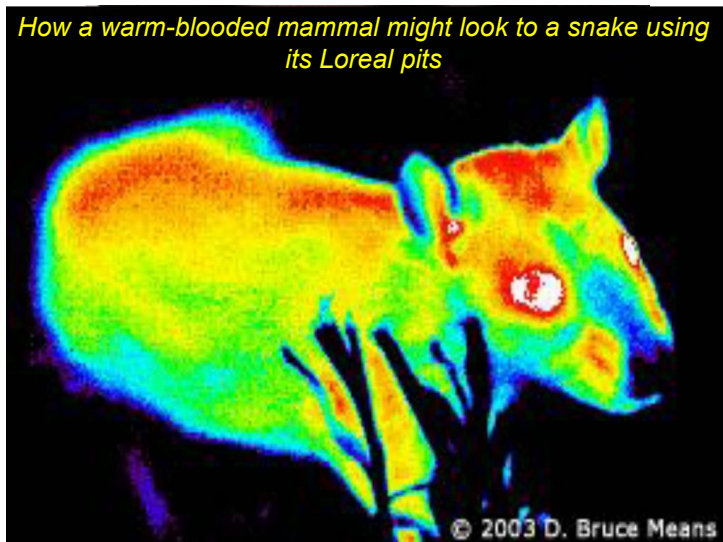
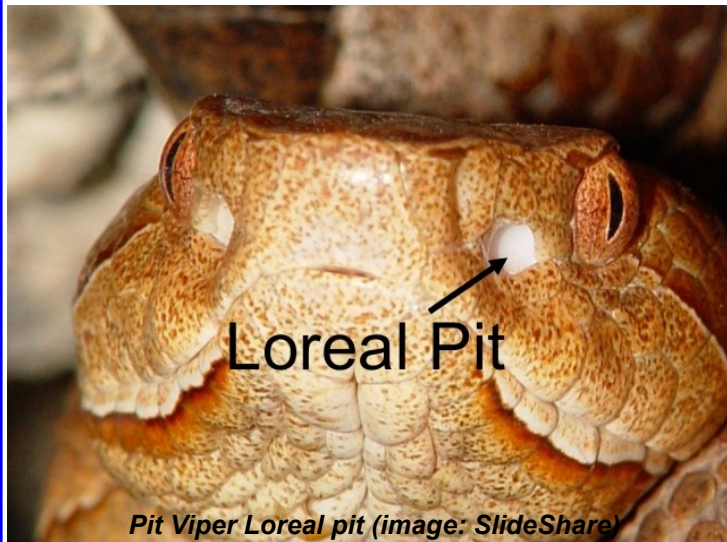


American Eagle showing forward-facing binocular eyes.
Image: Smashingphotoz.com

Deer also have enhanced night vision using much the same system. This is why the eye of both cats and deer appear as mirrors when a light is shone directly into its eyes. This characteristic has given rise to road reflectors being called 'cats eyes' and the phrase 'caught like a deer in the headlights'.

Another form of enhanced vision is the ability to sense movement. Flies are adept at this which explains why they are so hard to catch. Flies are equipped with compound eyes which means that their eyes are made up of around 3,000 lenses arranged as small panels, each capable of perceiving movement up to 200 frames per second! This makes the fly's eye sensitive to flickers received by the eye's numerous lenses and so it is able to escape predators.

This week's super-sense (the heat-seekers): Snakes that live on the ground cannot see very far as undergrowth often obscures their vision thus making good vision of little use. Instead they have developed a 'super-sense' (also known as a hyper-sense) which allows them to detect the heat given off by warm-blooded organisms. Pit vipers have such a sixth sense which, as nocturnal hunters, helps them locate their prey (e.g. small rodents). Vipers have 'heat-pits' located on their upper and lower jaws. These pits (known as Loreal pits) detect the slightest changes in ambient heat allowing the snake to develop a picture of their prey even though they may be in total darkness. We can begin to appreciate how this looks for the snake when we see an infrared image taken by a special camera (usually in a wildlife film). In previous issues we have looked at camouflage, however no matter how good your colour is at merging into the background it is almost impossible to totally hide your body's heat signature if you are a warm-blooded animal.



When you are next out and about try noticing your five senses and how they feed into your perception of the world around you. Then think about how different it might look to you if you had more acute senses.

Finally, perhaps readers might like to suggest a super-sense they would like to have, give it a name and say why they would like it?

Feature Species

Key Facts...

Length: 51-57cm

Wingspan:
113-128cm

Weight: Male 550-1,000g;
Female 700-1,300g

Max flight speed: 25mph

Food: carrion, small mammals, birds, earthworms, large insects

Habitat: woodland, farmland, heathland, grassland, uplands

UK breeding: 57,000-79,000 pairs

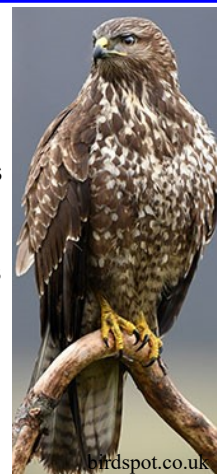
UK Conservation status:
green



Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

There's no doubt buzzards are a wonderful spectacle to gaze at as they circle and glide, riding the thermal air currents during summer months. They're the largest native resident bird of prey in England and Wales and also the UK's most common. It hasn't always been this way however!

Numbers were decimated during the '50s, largely due to the use of pesticides, which are no longer used and illegal killing; gamekeepers now recognise they pose very little threat to game. In fact, falconers, historically, have never used buzzards to hunt as they are considered lazy, favouring scavenging carrion, where they can, above hunting! They can often be seen on the ground in ploughed fields feasting on earthworms too. It's also true buzzards have relatively small territories; they are definitely home birds, pairing for life and staying close to their nest sites (of which they may have a few and swap between each year). Females are very maternal and young can stay with the parents for up to two months after fledging at around eight weeks. Have you noticed how individual they all seem to be? Buzzards have three different colour morphs: a very dark brown, a mottled intermediate and almost white. Their colour variation is inherited from their parents and research suggests it's the intermediate variety that appear to be most successful, perhaps due to their ability to blend in better with their habitat. So, are these raptors truly lazy? Or are they a beautifully individual and diverse, resilient and highly adaptable species that has life sussed? They sure knew how to make a come back!!



Next Issue...

Walking Challenge update, 'Down the Plot', Feature Species: Otters and more Animal Super-Senses!!



**Stay
safe**

