



Staffordshire  
Wildlife Trust



# my wild winter

— A WINTER WILDLIFE AND ACTIVITY GUIDE —



#WILDWINTERDAYS

# Wildlife to look out for in winter

## WHAT'S INSIDE

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50 things to spot this winter.

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For whenever you are stuck indoors.

- Ducks, geese and swans all visit the UK in winter. Look out for large flocks of migratory geese.
- Winter is the best time to spot footprints in mud and snow, great for practising your wildlife tracking skills.
- Listen for woodpeckers drumming on trees in January and February.
- Tawny owls call more in winter than at other times of year. Listen for the familiar twit-twoo.
- Look out for starling 'murmurations' where hundreds of birds swoop through the sky together before settling down to roost for the night.
- Snowdrops flower in late winter – one of the first signs that spring is on its way.
- Redwings and fieldfares look a bit like thrushes and they visit the UK in winter. They love eating juicy red berries on rowan and hawthorn trees.



**Brrrr!** The coldest and darkest months of the year are here, and it might be tempting to curl up indoors to wait for spring to arrive but DON'T! There are loads of things to do outdoors, and lots of wildlife to spot at this time of year.

This booklet is packed full with ideas from The Wildlife Trusts to help you explore nature and wild places, either at home or on days out. We're on a mission to help keep families wild and connected with nature, whatever the weather. So grab your gloves and pull on your wellies, it's time to begin your wild winter.



Starling murmuration



Red deer

# my playground

— ACTIVITIES —



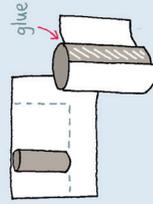
## Make your own binoculars



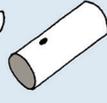
### You will need

- Two cardboard tubes (you can use toilet roll tubes)
- String
- Paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Rubber band
- Hole puncher or pen
- Felt tip pens (optional)

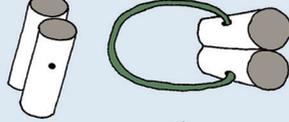
- 1** Cut your paper to size, then cover your tubes with glue and wrap the paper around them.



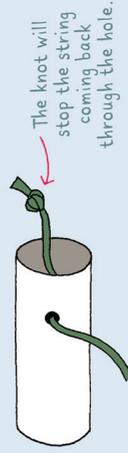
- 2** Using a pen or hole puncher, insert a hole at the side of each tube, about a third of the way down.



- 3** Glue the two tubes together so that the holes are facing the outside.

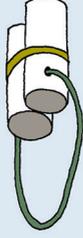


- 4** Insert string into one of the holes from the outside of the tube. Bring it through the tube and tie a chunky knot. Gently pull the string back from the outside. Repeat on the other side.

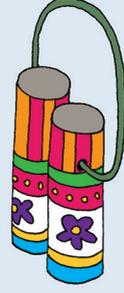


The knot will stop the string coming back through the hole.

- 5** Place a rubber band around the tubes to help the glue set. Leave to dry over night.



- 6** Remove the elastic band and then decorate them with pens!



- 7** Go wildlife detecting!

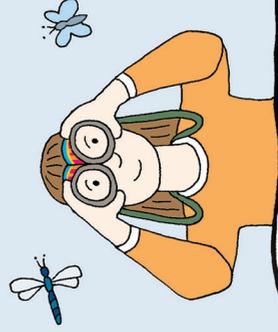


Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2016



# How to make your own bird feeder

wildlife  
watch



## What you need:

- dry ingredients
  - bird seed
  - cooked rice
  - grated cheese
- dried fruit
- breadcrumbs
- chopped nuts

- lard or dripping fat (lard or dripping)

- a fir cone, coconut shell or yoghurt pot



- string

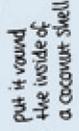
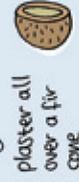


- 1 Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl

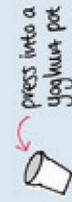


- 2 Add the fat and give it a good mix around.

- 3 Choose your feeder



If you need to melt the fat, ask an adult to help



press into a yoghurt pot

- 4 Hang your feeders with string (you may need to make holes and tie the string in before adding the mix)



Hang your feeder where you can watch birds without disturbing them

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# How to make a nest box

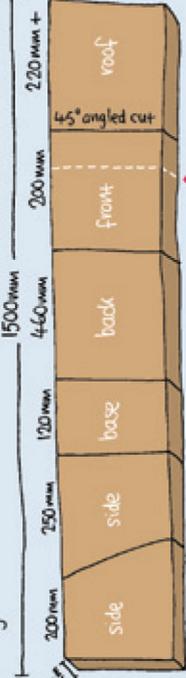
wildlife  
watch



## What you need:

- rough cut timber
- some old rubber or a hinge
- 20mm nails

- tools:



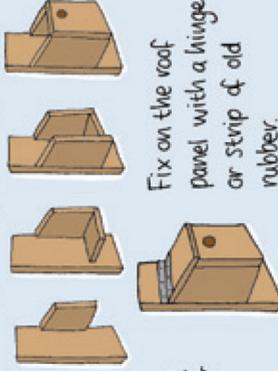
cut along dotted line for open-fronted robin box

- 1 Mark out and saw panels

Use diagrams above, and write the name of each panel onto the marked out wood.

- 3 Assemble the box

Nail the panels together:

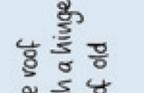


- 2 Choose your box type

hole-fronted box:  
blue tits (25mm)  
great tits (28mm)  
sparrows (38mm)  
starlings (45mm)



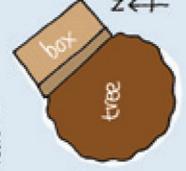
Fix on the roof panel with a hinge or strip of old rubber.



- Where to put it:

2-5 metres above the ground, somewhere sheltered.

2-5m above ground



Don't place on a tree stump



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# Discover animal tracks and signs

wildlife  
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Look for animal footprints in mud, sand or snow.



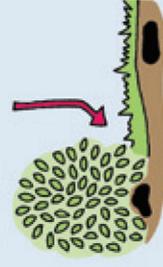
Owls spit out bits (pellets) of their prey they can't digest.



Look for pine cones that have been stripped by hungry Squirrels.



Molehills are signs that moles are nearby



Look under hedges and in banks for rabbit holes.



Birds shed their feathers when they are damaged.



If the trail is continuous, it's a slug. If broken, it's a snail.



Animal fur can get caught on barbed wire and fences.



Look for hedgehog poo with bits of beetles in it.



Nests are a surefire sign that birds are breeding. Hooray!



Mammals can leave flattened grass in their tracks.



Song thrushes leave behind broken snail shells after meals.

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# How to go plaster casting

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What you need:

- plaster of paris (from a pharmacy)
- an old 500g margarine tub for mixing it in
- a stick or spoon for stirring
- water
- Strips of card, 10cm wide and long enough to fit around the footprint
- paperclips



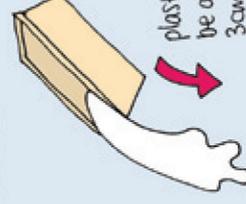
1 Find a footprint and clear away any twigs and leaves from the area around it

2 Make a circle with the strip of card, join the ends with the paperclip, and push it into the ground around the footprint

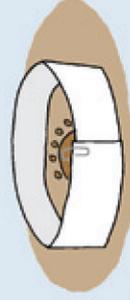
3 Mix 5 tablespoons of dry plaster with water until it is like smooth cream

4 Pour the plaster into the card collar. Wait 5-10 mins for it to set then dig it out

5 Take home, wash, identify and label



plaster should be at least 3cm deep



© Cornvine watch 09

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# How to make ice decorations

wildlife  
watch



## You will need:

- Saucers
- Kettle
- Boiled water that has been allowed to cool
- Natural items like leaves, feathers, berries and grass
- String or wool
- A freezer (if the weather isn't cold enough!)

1 Place your saucers on a flat surface and put the end of your string into the saucer, making sure a long piece is left dangling over the edge.



2 Lay natural items in the saucer over the string.



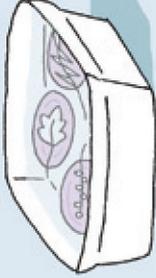
3 Gently pour in cooled water (boiling it first helps to remove any bubbles).



4 Put the saucers outside on a frosty night (or in the freezer).



5 In the morning put the saucers in a tub of cold water to separate the ice.



6 Hang them around your garden as decorations.



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# Snow, ice and the dark

## SNOW ANIMALS

Have you ever built a snowman? Well this year we're challenging you to try something different! Why not see if you can build a wild animal from snow instead. You could have a go at building any sort of creature but if you're stuck for ideas, we've come up with a few suggestions of animals to try:

### Difficulty rating

- Easy:** Hedgehog (use sticks for the spines), caterpillar, snail
- Medium:** Owl, rabbit (if the ears are bit tricky, use sticks instead of snow for these), dolphin
- Tricky:** Squirrel, octopus, swan



## NIGHT WALK

During the winter the nights are long and dark but that doesn't mean you have to stay indoors. It can be exciting to explore outside at night time.

### Things to do:

- Try switching off your torch to see how dark it is: what is the darkest place you can find?
- Take binoculars and look in detail at the craters on the moon, or learn to identify some star constellations – Orion's Belt and The Plough are both good ones to start with. It is believed that some birds use the stars to help them navigate during migration. Do you think you could use the stars to find your way around?
- Listen out for nocturnal wildlife like owls and foxes.
- Play 'sardines'. One person goes outside and hides somewhere in the garden (they can take a torch to help find their hiding place, but then they will need to switch it off once they are hidden). Everyone else must count to 20 before going outside to try to find them (no torches!). You must sneak round quietly on your own, and if you find the hidden person you hide with them. Eventually everyone will be squeezed into one hiding place.

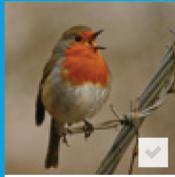
### TOP TIPS FOR NIGHT TIME ADVENTURES:

- Wrap up warm
- Take a torch
- Wear bright, light clothing near roads so that cars can see you.



# Spotting winter wildlife

Tick off the wildlife you see this winter



Robin



Blackbird



Blue tit



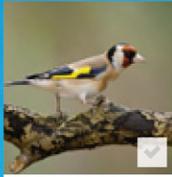
Great tit



House sparrow



Chaffinch



Goldfinch



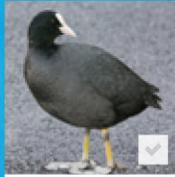
Song thrush



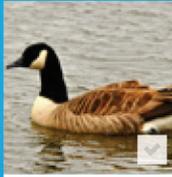
Starling



Moorhen



Coot



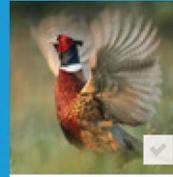
Canada goose



Mute swan



Pochard



Pheasant



Teasel



Pine cone



Snowdrop



Mistletoe



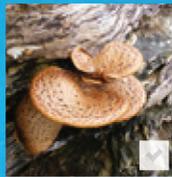
Ivy



Moss



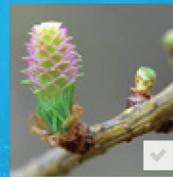
Lichen



Bracket fungi

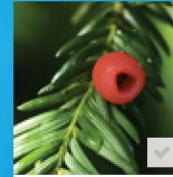


Holly



Larch

Download a poster of this page at [wildlifetrusts.org/winterspotting](http://wildlifetrusts.org/winterspotting)



Yew



Ash tree



Silver birch



Rowan tree



Crab apple



Woodlouse



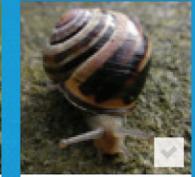
Hibernating ladybirds



Earthworm



Millipede



Snail



Fallow deer



Fox



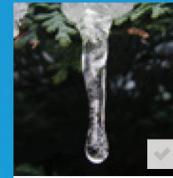
Grey squirrel



Brown hare



Badger



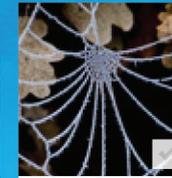
Icicle



Tree covered in frost



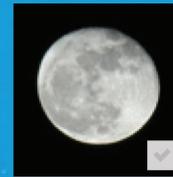
Frozen pond



Cobweb



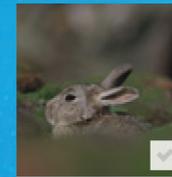
Snow



Moon



Empty bird's nest



Rabbit hole



Animal tracks



Mole hill

# Jokes

**WHAT DO YOU CALL A DEER WEARING EAR MUFFS?**

Anything you like - he can't hear you

**IN WINTER, WHAT FALLS BUT DOESN'T HIT THE GROUND?**

The temperature

**WHAT FISH ONLY SWIMS AT NIGHT?**

A starfish

**HOW DO YOU CATCH A SQUIRREL?**

Climb up a tree and act like a nut!

**WHY DO BIRDS FLY SOUTH IN THE WINTER?**

Because it's too far to walk

**WHERE DO FROGS LEAVE THEIR HATS AND COATS?**

In the croakroom

**WHAT DOES AN OCTOPUS WEAR WHEN IT GETS COLD?**

A coat of arms

**WHERE DOES IVY GO TO BECOME FAMOUS?**

Holly-wood

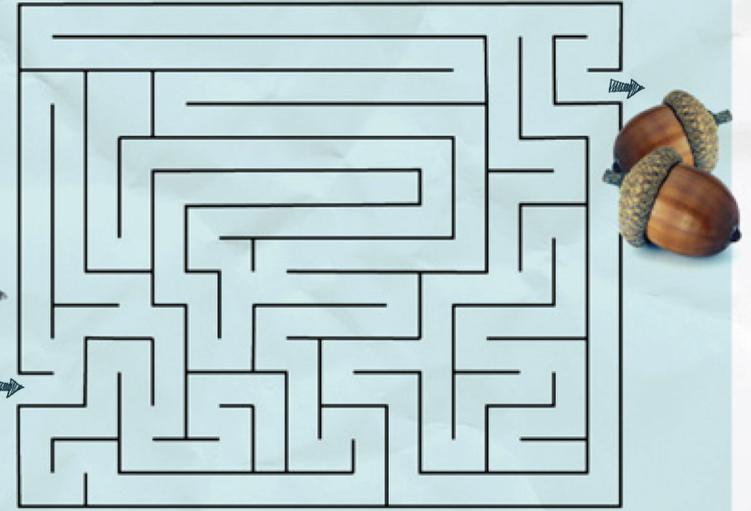
**WHY DOES SANTA HAVE A GARDEN?**

So he can hoe hoe hoe



# PUZZLE

Can you help the jay find the way to the hidden acorns?



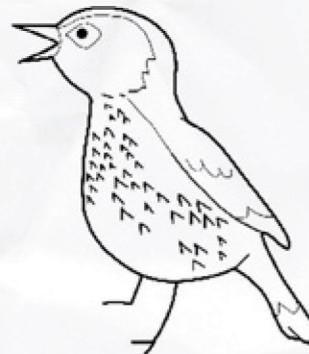
# COLOURING IN

Get creative and colour in some winter wildlife. Can you unscramble their names too?



GHSTHURNS

ODOURSME



ROMTHERAW



# CREATE A LONG-EARED OWL MASK



Use paints, pencils or even natural materials to create your own owl mask.

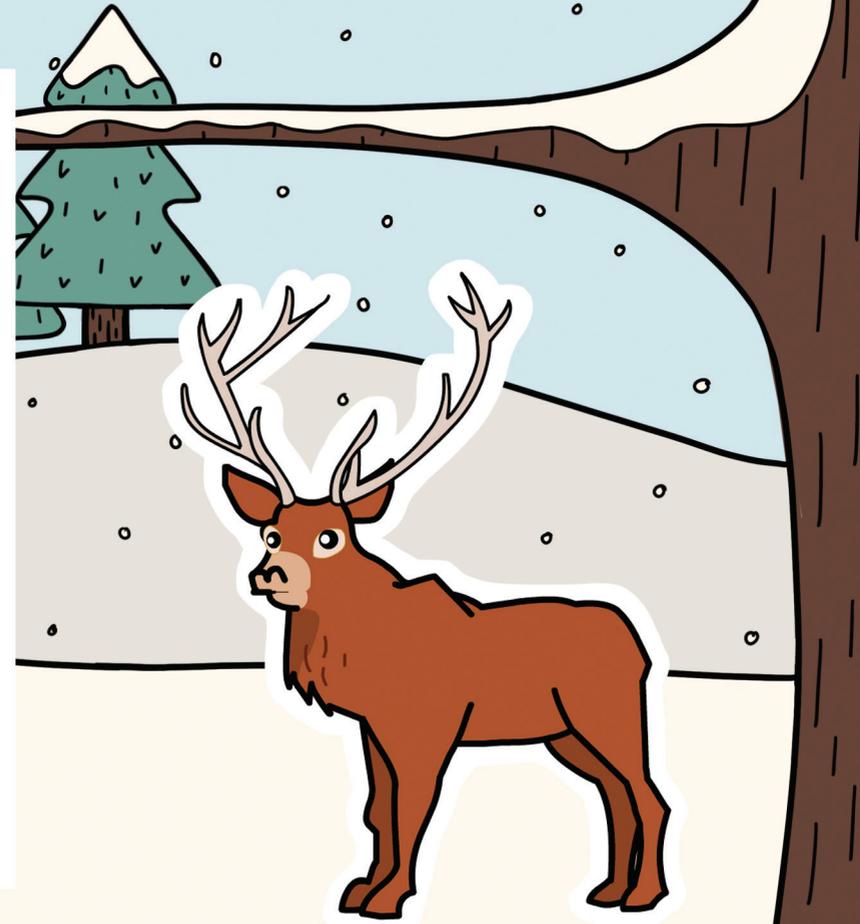
Once you have decorated your mask, carefully cut along the thick black line, make holes on the 2 black dots on each side of the mask\*, then thread and attach string.

\*This task will require adult supervision

# WILD WINTER CROSSWORD



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



Badger  
 Bluetit  
 Cold  
 Dark  
 Deer  
 Fox  
 Frost

Frozen  
 Hibernate  
 Holly  
 Icicle  
 Ivy  
 Mistletoe  
 Murmuration

Pinecone  
 Robin  
 Snow  
 Snowball  
 Snowdrop  
 Snowman





COLOUR IN THIS WILD WINTER SCENE. Add extra animals and winter plants to make it even wilder!



# CREATE YOUR WILD WINTER PACK MEDAL



Now you have completed your Wild Winter Pack, decorate this medal, cut it out along the dotted line, and show it off!



GOT WILD WITH  
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259558  
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Hawkins, David Tipping  
Owl Mask© Corinne Welsh 2011