



Wild Ways Well and Summertime

Today's Wild Ways Well task is to go for a walk in your local greenspace and look out for the signs of Summer ... Remember to follow the guidelines on Social Distancing, stay 2m apart from other people and only walk in your local area – and remember to wash your hands!

You'll **Be Active** by carefully walking outdoors (observing social distancing) keeping your mind busy and occupying your time looking for all the natural signposts that the season is changing. Take advantage of the long daylight hours to explore in the evenings or early mornings, look at the world in a new way.

We can **Connect** with the natural world by opening up our senses. There are lots of young animals making their first steps in the world, families struggling to survive. Even plants are engaged in a desperate struggle to make the most use of the plentiful resources available. Observe them, compare their struggles with yours. Nature doesn't judge anyone it just is.

We can **Keep Learning**, by observing and documenting what is going on around us. There are lots of books, tv programmes and websites about the natural world but we can also learn on our own. How do all the species live together? How does each species find its niche and avoid competing with too many others? What adaptations do different species have to help them gain advantage?

In our busy lives we rarely stop and **Take Notice** of what nature is trying to tell us while we are out and about. Spend a few moments just taking in everything that is happening, or note how quickly things change, watch the colours of the woods change from yellow to green and then to a riot of different shades as new plants come into flower in succession.

We can **Give** by giving ourselves a break from the drama of the current events and focusing on the little things around us that give us pleasure and by sharing these with others, in person or online.





Wild Ways Well



BE ACTIVE – Take part in health walks and practical outdoor activities. Explore your local paths, woods and greenspaces.

CONNECT – Meet new people. Connect with the people, the wildlife and the nature that's all around us.



GIVE – Your time to be in nature. Give something back by sharing experiences and undertaking conservation tasks.

TAKE NOTICE – Note the changing cycles of life. Use your senses. Listen to birds, smell the flowers, live in the moment.



LEARN – Identify plants and wildlife, try new crafts, learn new skills. Discover things about nature and about yourself.

Spending time outdoors, amongst nature, makes people feel better about their lives.

The Wild Ways Well project encourages people suffering from, or at risk of, poor mental health to get outside for some daily exercise and experience nature.

Remember to observe Social Distancing, stay 2m apart and only walk in your local area.

Whilst out amongst the trees, parks and reserves you have a chance to slow down, relax and take your attention away from current events.

This guide will help you to try out some environmental and conservation related activities designed to fit in with the internationally recognised Five Ways to Wellbeing mental health framework.





It's no surprise that Summer has always inspired writers, poets and artists

"In early June the world of leaf and blade and flowers explodes, and every sunset is different."

John Steinbeck

"In the summer, the days were long, stretching into each other. Out of school, everything was on pause and yet happening at the same time, this collection of weeks when anything was possible."

Sarah Dessen

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."

James Dent

"The castle grounds were gleaming in the sunlight as though freshly painted; the cloudless sky smiled at itself in the smoothly sparkling lake, the satin-green lawns rippled occasionally in a gentle breeze: June had arrived."

J.K Rowling

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time."

John Lubbock

"Sun is shining. Weather is sweet. Make you wanna move your dancing feet."

Bob Marley

How does summer make you feel? Why not write a story, a diary, a song or a poem?





Species moving North

On the next page you'll see a photograph of a bird called a Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*). These charismatic little birds with their distinctive echoing call are a beautiful sight in any woodland. They are adapted to walk across the surface of tree trunks—able to move up and down (in contrast to the Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*) which always moves upwards).

Nuthatches eat insects, nuts and seeds and are particularly partial to hazelnuts, acorns and beachmast. They are a familiar sight across England and Wales but up until very recently were rarely seen in Scotland. Over the last few years however they have become increasingly common right across Southern Scotland and up into the Central Belt. You can see Treecreepers and Nuthatches in places like Cumbernauld Glen.

Likewise the Tree Bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*) which only arrived in the South of England in 2001 from Continental Europe. Sometimes called the 'three coloured bumblebee' it has distinctive colour scheme of ginger brown thorax, black abdomen and white tail. Since its arrival in 2001 the tree bumblebee has spread steadily northwards and is now considered one of our most common bumblebees even in Scotland.

This northward progression of species is likely caused by climate change. As temperatures increase then species which were formerly barred from northern latitudes due to the cold can expand their range northwards.

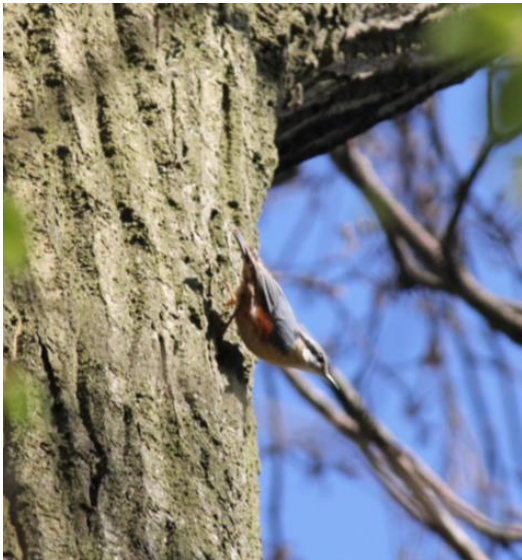
This can cause problems for species which already exist in the areas the new species are moving into. If both species share the same niche then the original one is in great danger of being outcompeted. Sometimes the original species can head northwards itself, but this has its own risks – eventually you'll reach a point in the North of Scotland, or high up in the mountains, where there is nowhere else to go.



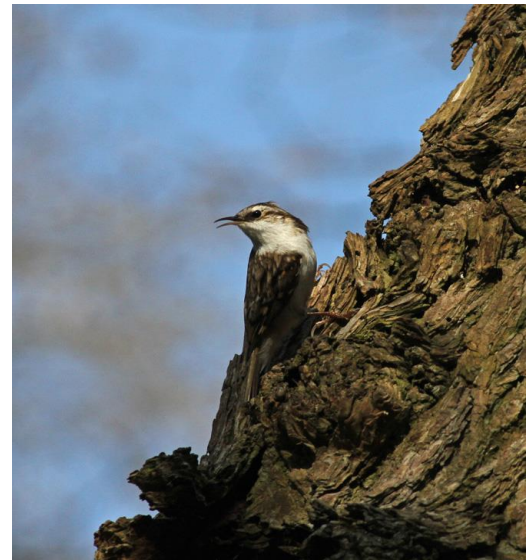


Whats that bird?

These two species, Nuthatches, and Treecreepers, have very similar life styles, they search tree trunks for insects, nuts and seeds, using their sharp claws to hand on and long beaks to probe under the bark.



Nuthatches are new arrivals to Scotland. They can run up AND down tree trunks – in fact they're the only British bird that can run downwards. They get their name from a habit of storing food like seed and nuts by hiding it crevices in tree bark.



Treecreepers are native to Scotland. You can often see them running up tree trunks, they can only ever run UP, never down. They are all around us but are so small and well camouflaged that you really have to take notice to spot them. An old name for them is "Tree Mouse" and they really do look like little mice running up trees





Midsummer festivals were common in Scottish tradition usually falling on the 23rd or 24th of June (immediately after the solstice). This dates' importance to our ancestors is revealed in the number of stone circles and monuments aligned to the sunrise on this day. Usually the festival would involve a large communal fire lit after sunset which people would walk around in a counter-clockwise (sunwise) direction. A bone representing an animal would be thrown onto the fire and then branches of birch and heather would be lit and carried round the houses, the fields and the livestock to bless and safeguard them. Afterwards the young men would leap through the flames of the bonfire—the height reached by the highest jumper was said to represent the height of that year's crops. Herbs and flowers were also collected on this day and placed under people's pillows to ensure prophetic dreams.

June was the traditional month for weddings as it represented a lull in the farming calendar, it was a good time to relax and enjoy the company of others. The first full moon in June was called the 'Honey Moon' as it was said to be the best time to take honey from beehives.

On the second Friday in August every year the tradition of the Burry man takes place in South Queensferry. Its origins are lost in the mists of time but it has been taking place for hundreds of years. A local man is dressed from head to toe in tens of thousands of 'burrs' taken from the Burdock plant and then parades around the town calling in at various households where he is given gifts of food and drink. It is very difficult to walk in the suit and by the end of the day the Burry man is exhausted. There are many theories about the origin of the custom, it may be related to the Green Man and represent rebirth, regeneration and fertility. It is also possible that he was once a ritual 'scapegoat' and may even have been a sacrificial victim.

Stories like these remind us of a time when people had a much closer relationship with nature and the land, when the turning of the seasons and the changing light provided by the Sun were vital to everyone's daily lives. We have lost that connection now but it can still be remembered, honoured and reclaimed.





Signs of Summer, Dragonfly or Damselfly?

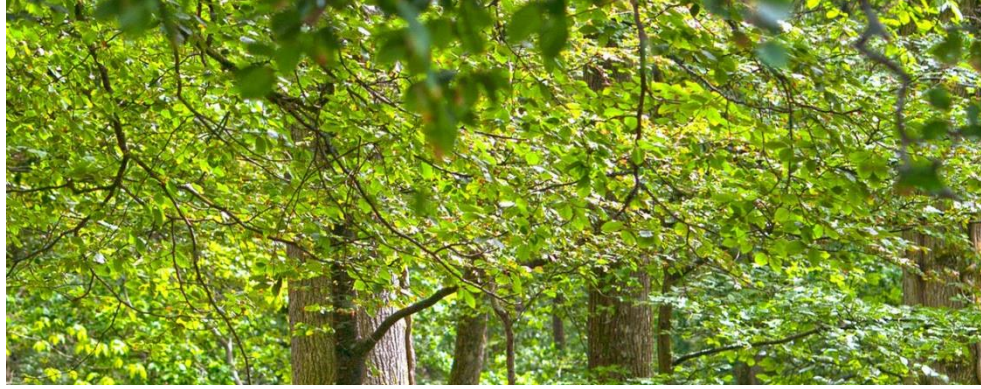
In days gone by did you think that Damselflies were just female Dragonflies? Well aren't they? They both live near ponds and marshland and eat lots of bugs, that much is true, but they are two different creatures! In the UK there are about 20 species of Dragonfly and 30 species of Damselfly, but how do we know which is which? The easiest way to tell them apart is as follows:

When the bug in question is resting are the wings spread out wide or close to its body? If the wings are wide (picture below) it's a Dragon and if they are close to its body, it's a Damsel (picture right).



We also know that Dragonflies are the deadliest animals in the whole world, they hunt successfully 95% of the time (lions only manage 19%)! Which is no surprise given the range of movement, next time you see them watch how the fly and change direction with such ease – They can even fly backwards!





How to draw a Dragonfly





Summer Activities

Find 7 different species of bumblebee

There are 7 common species of bumblebee in Scotland, it is possible to see all of them on one walk through a natural space—can you do so? Get more information at www.bumblebeeconservation.org

Press a flower

Carefully pick a wildflower—follow the flower pickers code at www.plantlife.org.uk/wildflowerhunt - and press it between the pages of a notebook.

Meet a tree

Pick one tree in your local area and get to know it thoroughly. Find out what species it is, work out its age—what events has it seen in its lifetime? Watch it closely, what other species live on it or depend on it? Get up close and touch its bark then sketch or photograph it.

Watch a cloud

Find a safe place where you can see the sky and lie on your back looking up at the clouds—can you make any patterns?

Enjoy a sunset

You have to say up late for sunset in Summer but it can be worth it to find a comfortable safe place and watch the glow of colours in the sky.

Go out in the rain and splash in a puddle











Life doesn't always have to be serious. Go out in the rain on a warm day and splash around, release your inner child!





Signs of Summer

When does Spring become Summer? Well in Scotland usually within the space of an hour!!! More traditionally there are a good few signs that give a great indication that we have arrived, see if you can hear or spot any of these!

- Dragonfly  4 Points
- Damselfly  2 Points
- Chirping Grasshopper  1 Point
- Young birds leaving the nest  2 Points
- Poppies beginning to appear  1 Point
- Flowering tree  2 Points
- Orchids beginning to pop up  3 Points
- Deer antlers are almost fully grown  4 Points
- Treecreeper  2 Points
- Nuthatch  5 Points

Total _____





Links

Go further with your Wild Ways Well activity by trying these links once you come home

Cumbernauld Living Landscape www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk

Wild Ways Well www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/project/wild-ways-well

Activities www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/get-involved/activities/

Facebook www.facebook.com/CumbernauldLivingLandscape

Twitter www.twitter.com/wildcumbernauld

The Conservation Volunteers www.tcv.org.uk/scotland

The Scottish Wildlife Trust www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

SamH www.samh.org.uk

NHS Five Ways Well www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing

MIND coronavirus and your wellbeing www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing

Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership www.elament.org.uk/media/2229/19-ways-to-stay-connected-2.pdf

Tree Bumblebee www.bumblebeeconservation.org/tree-bumblebee-bombus-hypnorum

Nuthatch www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/nuthatch

Treecreeper www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/treecreeper

British Dragonfly Society www.british-dragonflies.org.uk



cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk