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WOODLAND
TRUST

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Pretty Corner Explorer



WOODLAND
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Welcome intrepid explorers

A secret world lives in Pretty Corner Woods! Use this book and your detective skills to discover just some of the wildlife hiding among the trees.

There are 30 things to spot, from mighty oaks to the smallest kingfishers. Some will be very easy to find; some you can only see at certain times of year. Others only come out at night!

How many can you discover today? Explore the wood and tick off each find on your journey.



If you enjoy the activities within this book why not have an adventure every single week with our kids' club.

With all this and more you can get close to nature every single week:

Weekly challenges sent to you
Giant poster
Year of stickers
Packs in the post

Get stuck in at
www.naturedetectives.org.uk/club

350+
things to do!



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Easy to see

English oak

Is that an acorn at your feet? Then look up and you'll see the English oak. Acorns are the fruit of this ginormous tree that can grow 35 metres high and live for 1000 years. That's older than your grandad! The wood from an oak tree is so strong it was used to build houses and ships.

Date _____ ☐



Ling heather

If you were a moth caterpillar you'd be licking your lips if you saw this plant. It's their favourite food. It's bushy, about knee high and grows in groups covered in small purple flowers in summer. See if you can find one with white flowers. They're supposed to be lucky.

Date _____ ☐



Grand fir

The grand fir looks a bit like a Christmas tree. You'd need a big house to put it in though - it can grow up to 60 metres high. It's one of the tallest types of tree in Britain. Instead of leaves it has spikey needles, which are shiny, dark green above and pale white underneath.

Date _____ ☐



Scots pine

With a trunk that's often bent over, the Scots pine looks rather squashed. It's a big tree with flat looking branches and is home to many insects. They creep into the cracks in its bark to hide from birds that want them for their tea. Buzzards like to sit in its branches looking for mice with their beady eyes.

Date _____ ☐



Speckled wood butterfly

See those brown butterflies dancing in shafts of sunlight? They're male speckled wood butterflies and they're not dancing they're fighting over territory. When they're feeling peckish they snack on honeydew made by aphids. Look out for their green caterpillars munching on grass below.

Date _____ ☐



Wren

Listen! Can you hear a big, trilling song? It's the tiny wren. Look carefully to see this compact, brown bird with a stumpy tail. It zips through the undergrowth looking for crunchy insects and spiders. At night wrens sometimes sleep together. 60 were once found in one nest box. Cosy.

Date _____ ☐



Foxglove

This tall plant with big green leaves has cylindrical flowers. They are poisonous and you can often find bees in them so don't touch. How did it get its name? Some say fairies give the flowers to foxes to wear as gloves when they steal the farmer's chickens. What do you think?

Date _____ ☐



Rowan

Look out for a small tree with sharp leaves and brilliant red berries in June, which birds like to eat. Some Rowans grow under other trees where the birds have had a poo. Nice. It's also thought to be a magical tree, perfect for wizard's wands. *Expelliarmus*.

Date _____ ☐



Easy to see

Red admiral

You won't have to look hard for the red admiral. These nosy butterflies will come and find you. When flying they're easy to spot. But once they land and fold their wings together, like magic, they become invisible. Their caterpillars camp out in tents made from folded-together stinging nettle leaves.

Date _____ ☐



Red campion

Have a look along the edge of the woods and in hedgerows. Can you spot some cheerful pink flowers? They probably belong to the red campion. They shut tight at night as if going to sleep. The seeds have been used to treat snake bites. Hopefully you won't need them.

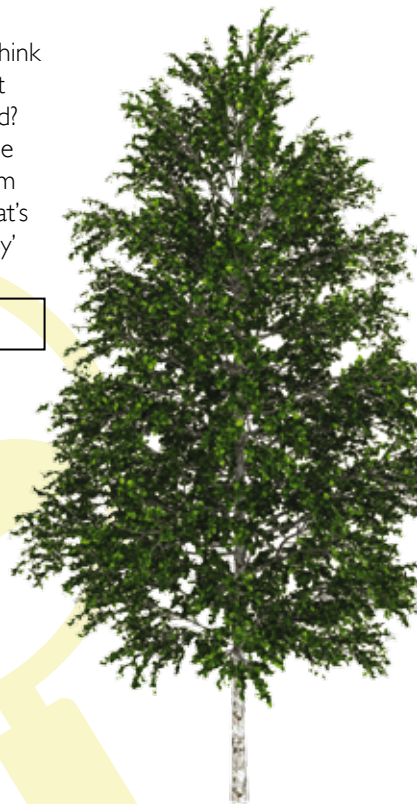
Date _____ ☐



Downy birch

People used to think this wood drove out evil spirits – do you think Harry Potter's broomstick might have been made from this wood? In April and May look out for the 'catkins'. These flowers hang from the tree like little lambs' tails. That's why the tree is called the 'downy' birch.

Date _____ ☐



More difficult to see

Tawny owl

Listen carefully. Can you hear a 'twit twoo'? The 'twit' bit is the female owl and the 'twoo' is the male answering. They sleep during the day, but look for pellets on the ground. These are the bones and skin of small animals that the owl spits out. Yuck! The owl may be in the tree above.

Date _____ ☐



Common buzzard

Buzzards are the most common bird of prey around. Listen out for a mewing sound like a cat. Then look up. See that little dot circling high in the sky? That's the buzzard. They use their incredible eyesight to spot small animals to eat.

Date _____ ☐



Nuthatch

These lovely birds should be in the circus – they are amazingly agile. Watch how they run up and down trees hunting for insects. You might also see them hammering nuts into the bark so they can open them with their strong bill. They nest in tree-holes, which they plaster with mud.

Date _____ ☐



Muntjac deer

That barking in the woods may not be a dog, but a muntjac. Their dog-like calls can go on and on. They were brought from China to live in UK parks, but some escaped into the wild. The males have sharp tusk-like teeth and look a bit fierce. Don't worry, they'll be more scared of you.

Date _____ ☐



More difficult to see

Woodcock

How would you like eyes on the top of your head? This bulky wading bird uses them to watch for danger as it digs for worms. You'll be lucky to see one as it like to hide in patches of bramble. When in danger, the females can fly off with their chicks riding on their back.



Date _____ ☐

Bluebell

It is said that fairies will put you under a spell if you wander into a bluebell ring. Who knows? What's for certain is that there is something magical about their bright blue flowers and gentle scent. Bluebells make a colourful carpet in the woods during late spring - a sure sign that summer is on the way.



Date _____ ☐

Wood sorrel

On a sunny spring day these pretty white flowers wink at you from the woodland floor. But if the weather's dull, the flowers shut tight. Is that why they are sometimes called sleeping beauty? The leaves have a sharp taste and used to be put in food instead of lemon.



Date _____ ☐

Common frog

Shush! Be quite and look carefully when you get near a pond. Can you see a little pair of eyes and nostrils peeking out above the water? That'll be the common frog watching you. You might even catch them flicking out a long sticky tongue to catch insects, slugs and snails.



Date _____ ☐

More difficult to see

Wych elm

Rub your fingers over a wych elm leaf and it will feel like fine sandpaper. These graceful trees can grow up to 30 metres. But be careful when standing underneath looking up. They have a habit of dropping branches without warning. Maybe that's why they are associated with death.

Date _____



Male fern

Would you like to be invisible? The seeds (or 'spores') of the male fern were thought to do the trick. Even Shakespeare thought so. These impressive plants love to grow in woods and shady places. They look like big green shuttlecocks and can grow up to a metre high.

Date _____



Comma butterfly

Fluttering around with its wings open this is a beautiful orange and brown butterfly. With its wings closed, it's drab and tatty. But this is very handy as it looks like an old leaf and won't get eaten. The caterpillars have an even better disguise – they look like bird droppings.

Date _____



Hard to see

White admiral butterfly

In some countries this spectacular butterfly is called a 'glider'. Can you guess why? You'll see it beat its wings then glide along effortlessly along as if on a string. Find a patch of bramble in the sunshine and you'll probably see these butterflies. They love guzzling the nectar.



Date _____ ☐

Twayblade

There's a clue in the name. Look out for two rounded leaves at ground level - tway blades – and a tall spike. It's the UK's most common orchid, but you can easily walk right past. The tiny green flowers are like little people. It uses these to attract insects and then glues pollen on their heads.



Date _____ ☐

Slow worms

They're not worms, and they're definitely not slow. Believe it or not these are lizards - without legs. On a warm day, you might be lucky to see one dozing in a patch of sun. They spend most of their time under logs and rocks, coming out in the evening to feast on slugs and snails.



Date _____ ☐

Kingfisher

Wow! Did you see that flash of bright blue out of the corner of your eye? That was a kingfisher. It's off to a favourite perch on a branch over the stream. Here it'll watch out below, then splash in to catch a little fish. Look along the muddy bank and you might see the burrow where it lives.



Date _____ ☐

Hard to see

Goldcrest

A tiny bird that weighs less than the 10p piece in your pocket. It's easy to recognise by the flash of gold on its head. They're real fidgets. Watch them as they dash about, whirring and hovering, around pine trees. They only stop to pick tasty insects out of fir cones.

Date _____ ☐



Moschatel

These tiny green plants are also called 'town hall clock'. You can't tell the time by them. And they don't go tick tock. They get their name from their flowerheads - four faces point out and one looks up. Search for them in damp places, but be careful not to tread on one!

Date _____ ☐



Pipistrelle bats

If you're out around sunset, look up and see if you can spot this tiny bat performing acro-bat-ics. They're out greedily hunting moths and gnats – eating up to 3,000 in a night. You won't see them in the winter. They hide away to sleep from mid-November to April.

Date _____ ☐



Glow worm

Ask your parents if you can stay out late to see these extraordinary creatures. On a dark June night, look out for tiny ghostly lights in the grass. That's the female glow worm turning on a lamp in her bottom to attract a male. These little beetles only live a few weeks as an adult.

Date _____ ☐



