

NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

Come and play!

WildPlay

Spring is here!

Our Forest is filled with shades of green and bluebell carpets.

If you want to spend more time outdoors this spring, we have some great ideas to keep your little ones entertained.

Spring is a wonderful time in the Forest, with signs of new life appearing everywhere. From reptiles and bats emerging from hibernation, to the calls of resident birds such as the blackbird, robin and great tit.

Why not see what wildlife you can spot when you're out and about exploring this spring?

You can find out more about the Forest's wildlife at:
www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/discover/wildlife

Wild events in the New Forest:

Wild Wednesday (The Reptile Centre, A35 near Lyndhurst)

30 May 2018 - Turn up anytime between 10.30am and 4pm

Enjoy a date with nature at the Reptile Centre, with fun activities for the whole family, including a quiz trail and craft activities for children. Come and see the 'live' video of birds on their nests as well as the reptiles and amphibians.

www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/things-to-do/spotting-wildlife/date-with-nature

Family Discovery Days (New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst Car Park)

May 29 and 31 - drop in from 10am until 3pm

Learn about the New Forest and have fun as you take part in family-friendly activities. No need to book and there are different activities each day.

www.newforestcentre.org.uk

SCROLL DOWN
FOR THINGS
TO DO

Things to do in spring

Exploring from high to low

Cause an ant disturbance

As ants find food they leave an invisible chemical trail from the nest to the food. This trail is soon full of worker ants travelling to and fro strengthening the trail the more it is used. To cause ant confusion try this little trick!

- Find an ant trail, wet your finger and rub out the invisible trail between a gap in the ants. The next ant will then stop where you have rubbed out the trail. Before long there will be a swarm of ants all searching for the trail (where you have rubbed it out) until they find it. The line of ants will then start all over again.

Feel your spring senses

All animals use their senses, but can you use yours better? Get outside and go for a walk or play in your back garden.

- Smells – what can you smell lying on the ground? Soil, freshly cut grass? What about crouching and standing? Do the shrubs and flowers smell? Is there a smell in the breeze?
- Sounds – with your ears to the floor can you hear any footsteps, rustling from the bushes, bees buzzing? Can you hear any other animals sounds? Are the birds singing? How many different bird songs can you hear? Are there any birds talking back to each other?
- Sights – how many different types of animal can you see? Who are flying, hopping, walking, crawling and squirming? How many different types of spiders or birds can you find? Maybe take a bird watching book with you and identify some of them.

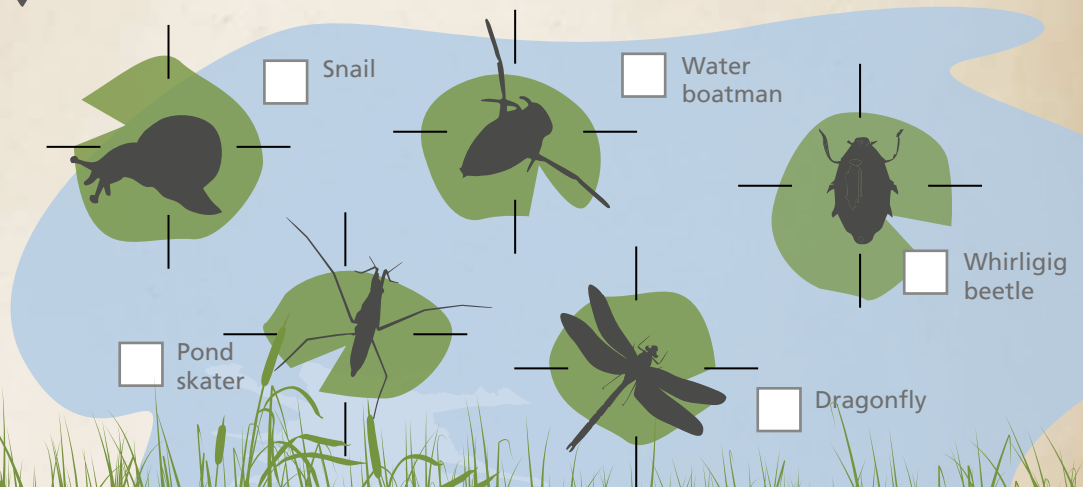


What else can you do?..

Fancy a dip?

You can pop down to the local pond or stream and see what you can find. Take a jam jar (put a piece of white paper on the ground underneath as it will show the contents better) or an old white ice cream container with you and scoop up some water to see what's alive. Look around, what else can you see?

✓ See if you can find some of these on your travels:



Please note: Always return live creatures to the pond safely. It is very important to wash pond nets and trays before going to any other pond or stream to prevent plants and diseases being spread, and never move frogspawn to another pond. Keep an eye on children whilst near water.

Spring is the perfect time to plant seeds ...

Growing plants from seeds is a great way for children to connect to nature and there are so many options of what to grow!

Sunflowers – why not have a family competition to see who can grow the tallest sunflower? You could even have a prize for the winner.

Something to eat – growing something to eat can provide the ultimate reward. It is best to start with something simple such as sugar snap peas, beans or courgettes. You could also have a go at planting some strawberry plants; the berries will probably be eaten before they make it indoors!

Wild flowers – if you have an unloved corner of your garden scatter a wild flower mix and watch it transform into a wonderful rainbow of nature as the seasons progress.

Spring walks

Spring is an amazing and vibrant time of year.

While you're walking see how many different colours you can see. Take a paint chart with you and tick off what you find.

See if you can spot the following flowers:



Wild cherry

Wood anemone

Lesser celandine or 'spring messenger'

Wild strawberry



Teach your youngster to be a New Forest Ranger and spread the word

What can you do to be Forest friendly?

Keep to the tracks – To help the rare birds that nest on the ground rear their young safely, keep yourself, dogs and horses on the tracks from the beginning of March to the end of July.

Litter – Why not take some gloves and fill up a bag on your walk? The litter and food which is left could harm the Forest animals. Please take the litter home if the bins are full.

Don't touch the animals – For their safety and your own please don't feed or stroke them; there is plenty of natural food for them even though you might not think so! It is best that they do not rely on people's attention, they may look friendly but they can bite and kick, especially ponies with foals.

Dogs – If you are out walking with your dog have a fun time but try not to cause trouble to wildlife, animals and other people. Make sure you can see your dog and that it is close to you at all times. Please pick up after your dog, especially on paths and near car parks.

Best New Forest bluebells?

- Broomy Inclosure, north of Linwood
- Pondhead Inclosure, near Lyndhurst - a well-fenced area which is protected from roaming stock and wild deer
www.pondheadconservation.org.uk
- Roydon Woods near Brockenhurst - owned by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust with a network of paths open to the public
www.hiwwt.org.uk/reserves/roydon-woods
- Sandleheath, near Fordingbridge – primroses and bluebells line the public footpaths and bridleways
- Exbury Gardens and Summer Lane (the two mile approach to the Gardens entrance from Hill Top).

There is also the Discovery Trail at Bolderwood: a self-guided trail which takes you through the woods and has activities and challenges for all the family, open now until the Autumn.