



Come and play!

Wild Play



Days are getting shorter and temperatures dropping, but don't let that stop you from getting outside!

SCROLL DOWN FOR THINGS TO DO

Where to go?

Winter is a great time to be out in nature, when even familiar places can take on a new, magical feeling. Winter wild play can be a little more challenging, so here are some ideas for you and your family to try.

Put on your layers, fill your flask with hot chocolate and head out for some winter fun!

- Winter weather can often cause squidgy and muddy ground. These great locations have solid pathways, making them easier to explore; particularly for people with mobility restrictions, pushchairs or wheelchairs.

Bolderwood (Grid ref: SU 243 086)

- A perfect spot to find out about the fallow deer who make their home in the Forest, with a choice of walking trails. There is also a picnic and BBQ area, making this is a great spot for some family fun.

- There are also toilet facilities.

Blackwater Arboretum (Grid ref: SU 268 047)

- A lovely spot with a choice of trails depending on how adventurous you are feeling, with its own sensory sculpture trail to explore.



Things to do during winter

Stick, stick, sticky stick...

Sticks are an amazingly versatile tool for wild play, with seemingly endless possibilities. Here are just a few activities using sticks to get you started:

- **Lay a trail** - use sticks to make arrows and other symbols to create a trail for your friends to follow.
- **Pooh sticks** - just like Winnie the Pooh! Find a bridge over a stream and work out which direction the water is flowing in. You want to start on the side the water is flowing from. Drop your sticks down into the water and watch them float under the bridge. Whose stick will win the race? Remember to take extra care when playing around water.
- **Music maestro please** - there are lots of opportunities to make music in nature and sticks can make a great instrument. Use them as drum sticks on a log or make a xylophone out of a tree's bark. What other instruments can you make?
- **Giant nests** - winter is a great time to be able to spot birds nests up in the tree tops. You can use lots of sticks to create a giant nest on the ground big enough for a person to sit in! How could you make your nest nice and cosy?
- **Stick people** - find a Y-shaped stick for the body and legs, using a piece of string, tie another stick across the body for the arms. What else could you add to your stick person? Could you add some hair or clothes? Let your imagination roll...
- **Noughts and crosses** - use four long sticks to create a grid on the ground. Use more sticks to create crosses and pine cones or leaves for the noughts.

...And if we are lucky enough to have some snow!

Very quickly snowmen can be seen popping up everywhere. But why stick to snowmen? Let your imagination go and see what you come up with... What about a 'snow Forest pony'?

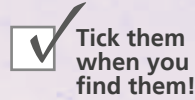
- Try making a snowman BUT while you are doing so make a maze! Remember to walk behind the snowball so you won't leave any prints.
- Have you tried making an igloo before by packing snow into plastic storage boxes? - You could even make little ones for the wildlife who visit your garden.



I Spy Winter...

Winter **18/19**

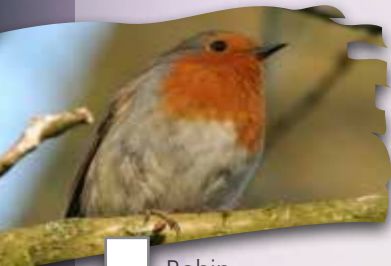
It's easy to mistake winter as a time when there isn't much to see and nature has gone to sleep. But if you get outside and start looking you will be amazed at what you can find. How many of the things below can you spot?



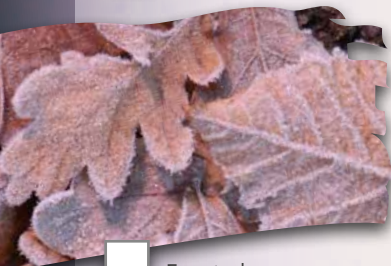
A few more wintery wild play ideas



Holly with berries



Robin



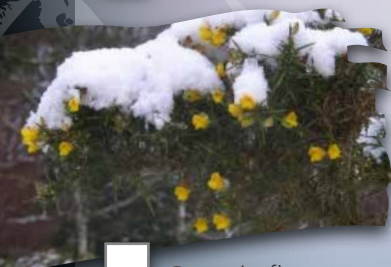
Frosty leaves



A sunset



Deer footprints



Gorse in flower

- **Puddle jumping** - one of the best things about wet, winter weather are the puddles that are left behind, making winter the perfect time of year for some good old puddle jumping! If we get some particularly cold weather, you may even have to break some ice!
- **Pine cone decorations** - pine cones are fantastic and this provides two activities in one! First you get to go out on a nature walk and collect lots of pine cones and then you get to decorate them back in the warm. There are lots of ways to make pine cones into decorations; add a bit of paint and glitter, or why not make some pine cone animals? Hedgehogs, owls and reindeer all work well. What animals can you make?
- **Winter picnics** - why keep picnics just for summer? With a little extra planning a winter picnic can be a great option. Keep things simple as cold hands don't tend to like fiddly items. Think warm soup, hot dogs or even jacket potatoes. There is nothing quite like a nice cup of hot chocolate to warm up chilly fingers.
- **Make the most of the dark days** - short days can often lead to more time inside, but darkness can provide some amazing, alternative play opportunities. Go for a full moon walk and you will be surprised at just how much you can see! With darkness setting in earlier in the evenings, it's a great chance to stargaze. Wrap up warm and see what you can spot, why not make up some of your own constellations and tell their stories?

Whose poo?

Another way to track the wildlife in the Forest is to identify the animal's poo!

Can you work out who might leave these?
(draw a line - example below)



Red deer

Fallow deer

Fox

Badger

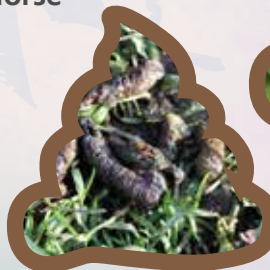
Owl (pellet, not poo!)

Harvest mouse

Hedgehog

Rabbit

Horse



Many thanks to the New Forest Wildlife Park rangers for the poo pics!

New Forest wildlife park

A trip to the coast?

Why not wrap up warm and visit the coast. There is some great exploring to do down at Lepe Country Park.

You could also go and visit the marshes at Keyhaven or Lymington. There are lots of birds who visit that area.

If you're feeling really adventurous why not walk to Hurst Castle? It's a bit hard for the little ones but worth pushing the older ones! Just remember to take a hot flask and some goodies to keep the energy levels up!



Hurst Castle