

Here is your **nature prescription**



SCOTLAND



RSPB Scotland Loch of Kinnordy nature reserve

What is a nature prescription?

Nature is really important for our wellbeing and connecting to nature has been shown to improve mood, reduce feelings of stress, help people to feel more relaxed, improve physical health, improve sleep quality, reduce loneliness and improve confidence and self-esteem.

An RSPB nature prescription is a free, non-medical approach to wellbeing, based on spending time in nature either on your own or with others. The suggestions will help you to improve your wellbeing by engaging with nature in a personal and meaningful way.

This booklet contains a calendar of seasonal ideas with ten suggestions for each month which have been designed knowing that what you do and notice in nature is far more important than how long or where you spend time in nature. Many of these can be done from your home with one suggestion each month for going further afield.

This is not a challenge but an invitation to connect to nature. You are encouraged to try as many of these as you can, as often as you can. You don't need to do them in the order or even the same month as suggested, and they can be repeated as many times as you like.

You can choose what you do and when you want to do it. Even doing just a small number will start to benefit your wellbeing.

As with any trip outdoors, please dress for the weather and work to your ability. Remember to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code which is available at [outdooraccess-scotland.scot](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot)

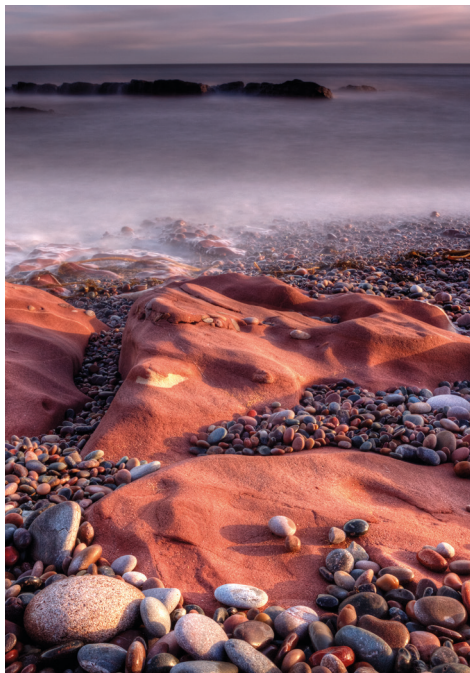
Find out more about nature prescriptions at
rspb.org.uk/natureprescriptions



Monikie, Angus



Lunan Bay and Red Castle, near Arbroath



Auchmithie beach



Forfar Loch

January



Photo by John Bridges rspb-images.com

- ❑ Get out, whatever the weather. Feel the wind and rain on your face or the crunch of frost underfoot. Breathe in the fresh frosty air.
- ❑ Take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch at rspb.org.uk/birdwatch. You don't need to have a garden – pick your favourite spot outside to watch from there.
- ❑ Clouds are often described as wispy (cirrus), heaped (cumulus) and layered (stratus). What clouds do you notice today? Watch them move across the sky.
- ❑ Put up a nestbox to provide a home for garden birds. You could even try making one. Visit rspb.org.uk/nestboxes for some ideas.
- ❑ Get out into the snow and look for animal tracks – Roe Deer, Foxes, Rabbits, Badgers and Pine Martens are local residents.
- ❑ Open your window or step outside and be still for three minutes. Listen out for the sounds of nature like Song Thrushes starting to sing.
- ❑ Look for unusual moss or lichen on buildings, walls and trees. How many colours, textures and shapes can you see?
- ❑ Take a trip to the coast where you will see lots of wildlife. Look for wildfowl and waders in the estuary at Montrose Basin such as Shelducks and Oystercatchers.
- ❑ Watch the sunset until the light disappears – do you notice the light lasting longer as you go through the month?
- ❑ Spend half an hour on a cold sunny day in the bird hides at Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve Balgavies Loch near Forfar and watch the Blue Tits and Goldfinches feed. Go for a walk round the loch to see the Cormorants and Swans and stop by the shore – feel the peace surround you.



Montrose Basin



Photo by Michael Harvey [rspb-images.com](https://www.rspb-images.com)

February

- Find your 'sit spot' – a favourite place in nature to rest and just be. Visit it often and tune into the world around you. Get to know the local wildlife, plants and trees. Notice how it feels to connect with nature in your special place. Keep it close to home so you always have time to go.
- Take a walk and look out for bare trees (trees that have lost their leaves) and feel their bark – can you do a bark rubbing to create some art?
- Seek out an early spring flower like a Snowdrop. Can you draw, paint or photograph it?
- Walk through trees or a woodland near you and listen for woodpeckers drumming to attract a mate – if you can, visit RSPB Scotland Loch of Kinnordy nature reserve near Kirriemuir and sit quietly in the hides and watch the ducks and waders throughout the winter.
- Find someone to chat to about nature. Tell them about your favourite plant, bird or insect. Ask them what theirs is. Talk about why they are your favourites.
- Start a nature journal and write down one thing each day that you notice in the places close to home.
- Walk round your nearest town or village and see how much nature you can spot even in winter. Notice what is growing amongst the buildings or by the side of the road. Flowering plants may also have a scent – you might find some Winter Honeysuckle.
- Look out for Oystercatchers returning inland from their wintering grounds on the coast where they'll fight very noisily over the best breeding sites in fields and even on roundabouts. Easily recognisable, they are large, black and white wading birds with long orange beaks, red eyes and pink legs.
- Feed the birds in your garden or visit your local greenspace and watch the winter thrushes hunt for food amongst the leaf litter. Remember if you are feeding the birds to keep your feeders clean and put out fresh water for drinking and bathing when it is frosty.
- If you are able to go further afield, visit Glen Doll in the Cairngorms National Park, rich in wildlife with Red Deer, Otters, Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons.

March



Photo by Ben Andrew rspb-images.com

- ❑ Spot the first signs of spring like the first Primroses, Wood Anemones and Lesser Celandine whose flowers open in sun and close in shade. Take time out to think about what spring means to you.
- ❑ Look for frogspawn in local ponds – what other pond life can you see?
- ❑ Look out for Adders basking in the sun on south facing slopes in the Angus Glens as they emerge from hibernation.
- ❑ Amongst the first of the spring migrants, the Sand Martin, can be found from late March around lochs and rivers where they nest colonially in holes dug into steep banks.
- ❑ You could combine noticing nature with your regular exercise. Take more time to notice nature on your usual walk. If you run, walk back the same way more slowly, using all your senses to notice all the things you missed when you ran fast.
- ❑ Look out for queen bees emerging from hibernation. Listen for the buzzing and follow one as it moves between the flowers.
- ❑ Listen for birds such as Blackbirds or House Sparrows nesting in hedges and watch them carrying materials to build their nests. If you have a garden think about hanging bundles of wool and straw to help with the nesting.
- ❑ If you can't venture far, go into your garden or the nearest greenspace and take a photograph. If you do this regularly you will have a record showing how much your environment has changed seasonally.
- ❑ Visit the Lurgies on the edge of Montrose, where the River South Esk meets the estuary; Look for waders – and maybe even a Kingfisher; and you might see Harbour Seals close up as they follow the fish along the course of the river.
- ❑ Take a trip to Backmuir Woodland at Muirhead – you might see Red Squirrels, deer, Jay and woodpeckers. Stop and listen and watch the tree canopy to see what is there.

A photograph of two Great-crested Grebes swimming on a body of water during sunset. The birds have dark plumage with a distinctive reddish-brown patch on their heads and a crest of feathers. Their reflections are visible in the calm water. The background is a warm, orange-hued sky.

April

Photo by Ben Andrew rspb-images.com

- ❑ Turn over some soil and plant wildflowers for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies. rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators
- ❑ Get out into April showers, feel the rain on your face and watch for rainbows.
- ❑ Take a stroll around your own village/town/local area and note what you see, hear and smell – take a note and make return visits throughout the year to see what changes with the seasons.
- ❑ Listen for a Cuckoo calling or for Curlew casting their eerie call across the misty valleys.
- ❑ Visit one of Angus' Country Parks – Crombie, Monikie and Forfar Loch have woodland and water where you will be able to immerse yourself in nature and look for wildlife like Great-crested Grebes or Red Squirrels or just sit and listen to the sounds of nature around you.
- ❑ Take a walk through Kirrie Den – look for the flash of white of Dippers skimming up the stream. Make sure you stop for a few minutes every now and then to take in the sounds of the woodland around you.
- ❑ Go on a micro safari – choose one small space in nature close to your home and study it up close. Perhaps explore a patch of grass, the trunk of a tree, or the petal of a flower. What colours do you see? Are there any minibeasts around?
- ❑ Look for House Martins returning after spending the winter in Africa: rspb.org.uk/swiftswallowmartin
- ❑ Find a bud on a tree and feel the texture – can you identify the tree? For help go to woodlandtrust.org.uk
- ❑ Find out about your local path network and go exploring (angus.gov.uk). Look out for plants, insects, birds and animals as you walk and see your local area with a fresh perspective. Appreciate how much nature is on your door step. If you want to walk with others, find a local health walk by visiting pathsforall.org.uk



Photo by Ben Andrew rspb-images.com

May

- ❑ Listen to the dawn chorus. You don't need to go far – just open your bedroom window and listen. Dawn is one hour before sunrise and you can check your local weather forecast to find out when that is throughout the month. How does your body respond as you listen?
- ❑ Along the coast, listen out for Corn Buntings trilling from telephone lines around cereal crop fields or look for Common Terns returning from Africa and darting into the sea to catch fish.
- ❑ Watch for Swallows arriving in Scotland for the summer – so distinctive with their forked tails and the way they swoop low over our gardens.
- ❑ Visit a beach and take in the sounds and smells of the sea. Breathe deeply and watch the ocean waves and feel the different textures of the shells and sea weed you find. Look for rock pools and do some pond dipping to see what is living in the water.
- ❑ Add a different purpose to your walk – take a camera or a sketch book and pencil and record what you see along the way. Inspire others by sharing your photos or sketches with friends and family.
- ❑ Plant herbs in a pot beside your front or back door or on your windowsill. Mint, marjoram and oregano are easy to grow, have a lovely aroma, they're great to cook with and bees love them too!
- ❑ Head to your favourite place to watch the sunset – what sounds do you hear at twilight?
- ❑ If you live near mature pinewoods or heather moorland, listen or look for Black Grouse bubbling during lekking – when the males compete to attract a mate in a lek – or group of grouse.
- ❑ Take part in No Mow May – the campaign to restore wildlife by not mowing your lawn for a whole month. Watch wildlife move in and see how many wildflowers find a home in your garden. plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay
- ❑ In spring and summer, if you can, visit RSPB Scotland Loch of Kinnordy, Scottish Wild Life Trust Loch of Lintrathen and Scottish Wildlife Trust Balgavies Loch to see if you spot Ospreys fishing – what other wildlife do you see?

June



Photo by Ben Andrew rspb-images.com

- ❑ Did you know that Angus is home to the rare Small Blue Butterfly? It relies on Kidney Vetch plants to complete its life cycle. Found near the coast you will have to look closely as it is the smallest butterfly in the UK. What other butterflies can you see near your home? Visit butterfly-conservation.com
- ❑ Lie in the grass and watch the clouds come and go and enjoy feeling peaceful and quiet.
- ❑ Celebrate midsummer (June 21)! You could welcome the sunrise, have a picnic, make a herb garland, play, or just sit in the open air and enjoy the long, light evenings. Watch the new chicks being fed by their parents.
- ❑ Watch the Swifts and look for their high nesting sites in surrounding buildings. They nest up high because Swifts never land – they eat and sleep on the wing! Open your window or sit outside for half an hour and listen to them screaming as they skim in large numbers over our rooftops.
- ❑ Visit somewhere you know well but look around as if you were looking for the first time. What flowers and plants do you see that you haven't noticed before? What is the smallest thing you notice and what is the largest?
- ❑ Rewild one of your senses – smell everything in nature growing around your home.
- ❑ Look for different types of grass and notice how different they look and feel.
- ❑ The Angus coast is home to a wide range of birds including Puffins, Razorbills and Guillemots! If you can make your way to Auchmithie you can look for them – and you can take time to relax watching the sea and breathing to the rhythm of the waves.
- ❑ See what insects you can find by turning over and moving leaves and stones – but remember to put them back again.
- ❑ Take a bus trip to somewhere you have never been and write some notes about the nature you find there.

July

Photo by Chris Comersall rspb-images.com

- ❑ Find a patch of wildflowers and take in all the colours and scents.
- ❑ Sit by a flowering shrub and see who comes to visit. Record any butterflies at the bigbutterflycount.org
- ❑ Go for a picnic in a place you've never been before – what is growing around you? What birdsong can you hear?
- ❑ Watch out for froglets (baby frogs) as they disperse from the ponds – don't touch the frogs as you can damage their skin.
- ❑ Can you find any dandelion clocks (thistledown) dancing in the wind. Are the fluffy white seed heads blowing around? Give them a blow and imagine them carrying away your worries. Feel how soft the seed heads are.
- ❑ Explore all the amazing things you can do for wildlife where you live by going to rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep
- ❑ Take a walk along the Arbroath promenade on a windy day when you can smell the sea. Treat yourself to some fish and chips or ice cream as you watch the birds swooping and gliding in the wind.
- ❑ Look out for moths on your windows at night attracted by the lights. Have a go at making a simple moth trap. Search wildlifewatch.org.uk for ideas.
- ❑ This is the best time of the year to see Pipistrelle Bats at dusk as small insects are plentiful.
- ❑ Take a walk from Reid Park in Forfar up to the Balmashanner Monument. Sit quietly and enjoy the views across to the mountains and think about the scale of the natural world – from the smallest insect to the highest mountain. Reflect on what nature means to you.



Signal Tower Museum – Arbroath promenade



August

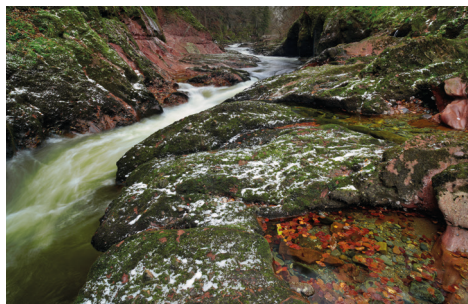
Photo by Ben Andrew rsfb-images.com

- ❑ Look for raspberries and taste them straight from the bush.
- ❑ Go for a nature scent walk around where you live. What do you smell in the air – look for hints of honeysuckle, earthy moss, urban Foxes and freshly cut grass.
- ❑ Feed the hungry Hedgehogs in your garden to help them build energy for raising hoglets, and fat reserves for their long winter hibernation (from October). Visit scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/helping-wildlife-at-home/hedgehogs for advice on how to help protect hedgehogs.
- ❑ Find some binoculars and just explore what you can see from your garden or from a green space near your home. Focus on a particular plant or shrub and notice the contours and colours that you would never see with your naked eye.
- ❑ Pick a cloudless day and just sit on the grass and take in how blue the sky is and spot the birds soaring high above the ground – does this give you a sense of peace?
- ❑ Look for the Swallows sitting on telegraph wires at the end of summer.
- ❑ If you can travel to Montrose, see if you catch sight of Bottlenose Dolphins near Scurdie Ness Lighthouse or at Montrose Beach.
- ❑ Bumblebees are busy buzzing around this month so spend time looking and listening for them. You can contribute to important local survey work by helping to record what you see. Visit taysidebiodiversity.co.uk for more information.
- ❑ If you can travel visit the Reekie Linn waterfall at Glen Isla which is one of the most spectacular in Scotland. Take the short woodland walk just to sit and listen to the power of the water cascading down the glen. What do you think about as you listen? Can you hear anything else?
- ❑ Go for a walk and listen for the chirping of grasshoppers and crickets along the path.

September

Photo by Andy Hay rspb-images.com

- ❑ If you can travel, visit the Rocks of Solitude located at the River North Esk, north of Edzell. See if you can spot salmon jumping upstream, enjoy the paths and look for wildlife and listen to the birdsong all around you.
- ❑ Find somewhere green to linger at lunchtime – sit against a tree, close your eyes and take a break in nature.
- ❑ Go for a walk and look out for different fungi in the woods and elsewhere – but remember that some fungi are poisonous and so don't eat them but look for more information about the different species and where they grow.
- ❑ Notice how many types of wildflowers are still in bloom and record what you see at bsbi.org/wildflower-hour
- ❑ Go for a sound safari and listen out for the curious sounds of nature.
- ❑ Build a bug hotel: rspb.org.uk/bughotel
- ❑ Sit outside in the dark and take deep breaths – what you can you smell?
- ❑ Take a walk through some trees and see if you can identify what kinds of trees they are by using the Woodland Trust app. Download at woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/tree-id-app
- ❑ If you are able go further afield, walk through the hills and see, feel and smell the heather. Take a deep breath and think about bees using the pollen to make local honey.
- ❑ This is a good month for hearing stags roaring as they assert their dominance to secure breeding rights for the season.



Rocks of Solitude

October

Photo by Michael Harvey rspb-images.com

- ❑ Take a weekly walk and notice the changing colours, light and scents of autumn. Take a walk along Newtyle Railway line to see a stunning display of autumn colours. Do you spot any Red Squirrels rummaging through the leaves?
- ❑ Listen to chattering Starlings gathering on rooftops. Did you know that Starlings are excellent mimics, often copying other bird calls, humans and sometimes even car alarms!
- ❑ Prepare homes for winter wildlife – tend to plants, clean bird baths, fill feeders and let piles of leaves grow. Visit rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/year-round-gardening/October for advice.
- ❑ Look for the fine wispy threads (gossamer) of money spiders' webs in the heather – or in any tall plants or shrubs near your home.
- ❑ Collect some natural materials for your windowsill. Look out for acorns, conkers and hazelnuts. Find a conker and rub it until it is shiny and feels warm in your hand. Keep it in your pocket. Do you find it comforting?
- ❑ Listen for the 'honking' and 'inking' of the skeins of geese flying south for the winter.
- ❑ Wrap up warm and find a spot to sit on a cold day. Take a deep breath – what does autumn smell like?
- ❑ This month thousands of Pink-footed Geese arrive from their Arctic breeding grounds to winter at Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Dawn and dusk are the best times to see them. How many can you count?
- ❑ Otters and Beavers might be spotted in rivers or ponds as sunset approaches and Forfar Loch Country Park is one really accessible place where you might see them.



Forfar Loch



Photo by Ben Andrew rsfb-images.com

November

- ❑ Note three good things in nature every day for five days. How does your body feel as you notice them?
- ❑ Feed the birds in your garden or the local park – halve an apple and put it on the grass to see if you can attract a Blackbird.
- ❑ Look for migrating birds feeding on the berries of Rowan trees. Can you spot a Fieldfare or Redwing? Look for their red “armpits”!
- ❑ Sit under a tree and be showered by falling leaves. Look for Sycamore seeds twirling down from the sky.
- ❑ Sit inside or outside with a hot drink and watch the light fade at the end of the day. How long does it take for the sun to go down?
- ❑ Look for examples of how strong and resilient nature is – trees bending and swaying in high winds or plants still flowering through the frost and snow.
- ❑ Learn something new about nature and go exploring. Your local charity shop may have books on nature and warm clothes for outdoor walks. Visit angus.gov.uk/directories/document_category/path_networks
- ❑ This is a good month to see Wigeon at Montrose Basin as they prefer open spaces and stretches of water for bathing and safety.
- ❑ If you are able to travel, visit Barry Mill near Carnoustie – a working water-powered corn mill. Go walking along the burn and listen to the water where you might spot Grey Herons or Dippers who are resident with us all year.
- ❑ Look for signs and symbols of nature in everyday things around your home and local town. Think about how much we depend on nature – and how much we impact on nature every day.



Barry Mill near Carnoustie



Photo by John Bridges rspb-images.com

December

- ❑ Look at the silhouettes of the trees against the winter night sky and spot the first star appearing. What does looking at the stars make you think about?
- ❑ Go for a walk and see where you can still find colour and look for things that grow even in the cold and frost.
- ❑ Find fallen branches, ivy or berries and make a festive wreath.
- ❑ If there has been a frost, look for patterns in the ice on leaves, in puddles, or on car windscreens.
- ❑ Make it your mission to put out fresh water for birds every day and watch them come for a drink. Try making feeders from fir cones, lard and bird seeds. rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning-for-kids/games-and-activities/activities/produce-a-pine-cone-feeder/
- ❑ If it snows, stand outside whilst the snow is falling and catch snowflakes – listen to the silence of the snow.
- ❑ Estuaries like Montrose Basin are good places to see a range of birds as short days mean they have to feed in large numbers. Look out for Knot and Redshank. Have a last visit of the year to RSPB Scotland Loch of Kinnordy and spend time in the hides watching the ducks and just listening to nature.
- ❑ Barn Owls are resident all year. They need extra food in the winter to cope with the colder weather. They can be seen at dawn or dusk perched on fence posts around their favourite hunting grounds.
- ❑ Reflect back on your year. What was your favourite moment in nature? How does it feel now as you bring it to mind? What are you looking forward to noticing in nature next year?
- ❑ Walk round your neighbourhood or town and look for the trees that have lost their leaves (deciduous) and those that are still green (coniferous or evergreen). Think about how amazing the variety and diversity in nature is.



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December

Finding out more

- ❑ Discover more fun activities that you can do close to home: rspb.org.uk/natureonyourdoorstep
- ❑ ANGUSalive offers residents and visitors to Angus a wealth of services which inspire healthy, active and creative lifestyle choices. Visit angusalive.scot to find out more.

We would love to hear your feedback and experiences of using the calendar.

Please email: TAY.angushscp@nhs.scot

This calendar of ideas is part of RSPB's Nature Prescriptions, developed in partnership with the NHS and health partners across the UK. As with any trip outdoors, please dress for the weather and be aware of your own safety. Take your healthcare worker's advice and work to your ability. Remember to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code which is available at outdooraccess-cotland.scot



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