

How To: Watch Wildlife



Watching wildlife is a peaceful and rewarding experience that can be done in any outdoor space. There are lots of reasons you might want to watch (or “observe”) wildlife, including general interest or as part of a wildlife monitoring task such as a “BioBlitz”. There are some important things to remember when you do this:

The Golden Rule: Be Respectful

It is always important to remember that we are visitors in the home of nature. When watching and recording wildlife, it is essential to have as little impact on the animals, plants and habitats as possible. Key things you can do include:

- Be quiet when watching animals such as birds and mammals.
- Do not touch animals or pick/trample plants.
- Always put shelters back where you found them (i.e. logs/rocks).
- Be careful where you step.
- Keep your distance where possible! Animals such as birds or mammals can be watched from afar with binoculars, and will often move away if you get too close. Minibeasts are best watched closer up, but you still don’t need to pick them up.

Look EVERYWHERE!

Wildlife can find its way into the smallest, most discrete places to stay safe. Turn over any smaller logs and rocks that you can safely lift, and place them back gently when you’re done. Check on the underside of leaves, around windows, under plant pots, or even just sit and watch the sky for a few minutes!

Keep Track

Record your findings on paper or in a note on a mobile device. You can take identification guides out with you, or use apps that can help you work out what you’re looking at. Some good examples are iNaturalist and Google Lens. You can also take photos of your findings and identify them later in the classroom - this will mean you have more time to find species, than taking time figuring out the species. Once you’ve collected your data, find an interesting way to present this (i.e. graphs and tables). You can also submit some of your more exciting finds to iRecord which adds them to the national species database.

Share

Why not share your findings far and wide? Celebrate our amazing native wildlife, and encourage people to learn more about the species we share our country with by posting on social media, delivering assemblies or creating school displays/newsletter content. Don’t forget, you can also tag The Parks Trust in your social posts as we love to see what you get up to in nature!