

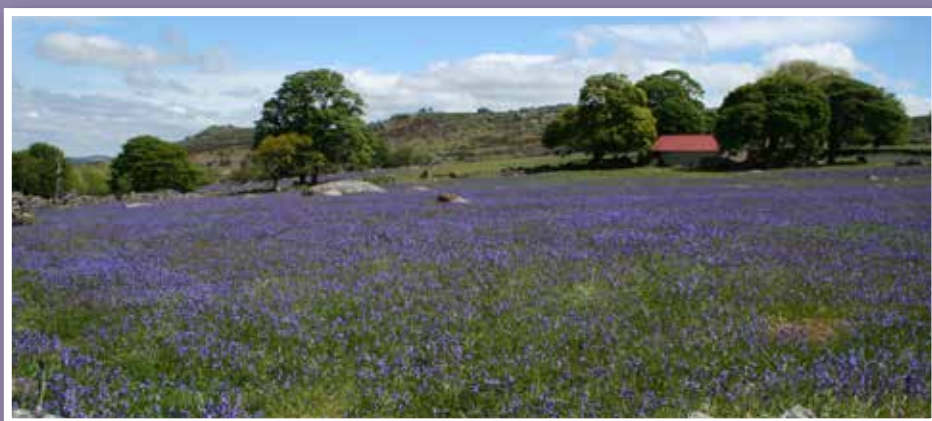
SPRING 2020



NEWSLETTER 78



RANGER RALPH'S CLUB



Hello,

Oh, what a wet winter we have had but the signs of spring are on show in the woodlands and on the moor. It's time to start snowdrop spotting and making the most of these slightly longer days as they arrive.

I always think that Dartmoor comes to life again in spring, when wildflowers start spreading colour in the fields, hedge banks and woods. We see new lambs bounding around in the fields and, of course a lot more people come out to enjoy the warmer weather.

Birds are also preparing their nests at this time of year and we are very lucky on Dartmoor to have lots of different birds to enjoy. Some are nesting in woodland and hedgerows, others make their nests on the ground on open moorland.

Inside this newsletter is some information about how to protect the birds on Dartmoor, especially in the spring and early summer. There is a quiz for you to try, a bird maze and some Bluebell colouring.

We were hoping to celebrate Ranger Ralph's birthday in May with some of our favourite activities from the last 20 years but we will now have to postpone this to another time in the future. When we have a firm date we will let you all know: you will all be very welcome!

Sadly, Ranger Ralph's birthday was going to coincide with the launch of World Otter Day which will also be delayed, but there will be other opportunities to see our roving otter on our outreach van over the coming year.

Take care everyone and whilst we can't all enjoy visiting our wonderful moors right now, Dartmoor will be waiting for us just as soon as it is safe to do so.

Enjoy spring and remember to follow the Ranger code,

Ralph



RANGER RALPH SAYS:

"Please do not pick the wild flowers, they don't tend to last long outside of their natural habitats and leaving them to grow naturally means more people get the chance to see and enjoy them."

www.dartmoor.gov.uk

Ranger Ralph's Family Fun - 2020

* **Wednesday 26 April, 10.00 – 12.00 (2hrs)**

JOIN RALPH AS WE GO BACK TO THE BRONZE AGE

We will spend the morning exploring the moor to explore what life might have been like over 4,000 years ago.

Believer Forest. Actual location confirmed on booking. Bookings taken now.

* **Wednesday 27 May, 10.00 - 14.00 (4hrs)**

RANGER RALPH'S 20TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Come and join in with Ranger Ralph's special 20th birthday celebration. We can experience a taster of some of the things we do.

Meet at Haytor (near the Haytor car park, SX 765 771) fees apply.

Bookings taken now but you are also welcome to book later.

* **Monday 1 June, 14.00 - 16.00 (2hrs)**

MEET THE MINI BEASTS - NEXT WEEK

Come and meet the mini beasts that live beneath the trees. Who might live in a Mini Beast? Who might live in a Grapefruit dome? Meet them and take home.

Meet at Meldon Woods car park (929) NOT Meldon reservoir. Bookings taken from now.

Bookings taken now but you are also welcome to book later.

VISIT...

WWW.DARTMOOR.GOV.UK/ENJOY-DARTMOOR/FUNZONE

Bookings taken from three weeks before each event. If, for any reason, you find you cannot make the event, please call and cancel. This will give other people the opportunity to book. Sorry, but we do not allow dogs on our events.

HOW CAN WE PROTECT THE BIRDS THAT LIVE ON DARTMOOR?



Dartmoor is the largest upland area in southern England, offering many different habitats to a wide variety of breeding birds. Dartmoor's moorland and woodlands are internationally important, and these wonderful habitats support their own unique bird community.

Our moorland areas are home to a fascinating range of birds, and Dartmoor is a stronghold for species that have declined elsewhere in the UK, such as skylark and snipe. Some birds have now become so rare nationally that visitors come to Dartmoor to see them, such as the ring ouzel and the cuckoo. Familiar Dartmoor birds, such as meadow pipit and stonechat, are present here in internationally important numbers.

If we are to continue to enjoy seeing these birds on Dartmoor we must ensure that the young chicks are safe and successfully fly the nest. They nest on the ground between 1 March and 15 July and so we all need to take care not to disturb them at this time. If the mother is frightened and flies from the nest, the eggs or young chicks may cool down and die or be taken by predators.

ALL USERS OF THE MOOR CAN HELP IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Stay on paths or tracks because birds tend to nest where there is vegetation cover and not close to routes which are regularly used.
- Keep dogs on a lead so that they don't run into the areas where birds might nest.
- Move away quickly if you see a bird fly from the nest or in a distressed state so that it can return and look after its young.
- If you come across a young bird on its own, please move away quickly, and do not touch it or pick it up – its parents may be waiting anxiously nearby to look after it when you have gone.

Buzzard



Curlew



Lapwing



Stone Chat



Skylark



THANK YOU FOR HELPING US TO LOVE MOOR LIFE

If you are particularly interested in birds, the RSPB have a Wildlife Explorers Club. For further information you can contact the RSPB South West Regional Office on (01392) 432691 or check out their website

www.rspb.org.uk/join-and-donate/youth-membership/

RANGER RALPH'S BIRD QUIZ



If you are lucky, all these birds can be seen on Dartmoor. They are all birds which use the moorland for breeding, so it is especially important for us all to make sure that we do not disturb nesting birds at this time of year. If they can successfully raise their young, we may be more likely to see them in the future.

In my quiz, there are four clues for each bird. If you know what the bird is from the first clue, you get 4 points, if you need two clues, you will get 3 points, and so on. When you think you know the answer, write it on the dotted line, then move to the next section. At the end, check that you have the right answers (on the back page) then fill in your score for each one. Add them up to get your total score.

A. WHAT BIRD AM I?

- I am a large bird of prey **4**
- I love soaring on warm currents **3**
- I eat mainly small mammals, but also insects, worms, and small birds. **2**
- I am generally brown in colour, with 'fingers' of feathers on my wing tips. **1**

I am a?.....

B. WHAT BIRD AM I?

- I am a small bird, with a small crest on my head **4**
- I eat seeds and insects **3**
- I fly almost vertically high into the air **2**
- I have a beautiful, loud song **1**

I am a?.....

C. WHAT BIRD AM I?

- I am a robin-sized bird, but have a black head, with white round my neck, an orange-red breast, and a mottled brown back. **4**
- You will often see me on low gorse bushes, where I flick my wings **3**
- I eat insects, seeds and fruit **2**
- My song sounds like the noise made by stones hitting each other. **1**

I am a?.....

D. WHAT BIRD AM I?

- I am a large, brown wading bird, but you can find me on the moor when I breed. **4**
- In winter I live around the coast, where I love to be on the mudflats. **3**
- I eat shellfish, worms, and shrimps **2**
- I have a very long beak, which curves downwards **1**

I am a?.....

E. WHAT BIRD AM I?

- I appear to be a black and white bird, though the black is actually dark green **4**
- I have a large crest on top of my head **3**
- I eat insects and worms **2**
- My song sounds as if I am singing 'pee-wit', which is another name for me **1**

I am a?.....

ADD UP YOUR SCORE HERE

A	B	C	D	E	Total
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NEXT TIME YOU ARE OUT ON DARTMOOR KEEP A CAREFUL LOOK OUT FOR SOME OF THESE BIRDS, AND SEE HOW MANY YOU CAN SPOT.

JOIN RANGER RALPH'S CLUB

Ranger Ralph's Club is open to all children between the ages of 5-12. When you become a member you will receive a membership starter pack, containing a membership card (which will give you access to FREE Ranger Ralph guided activities), a ruler, a Ranger Ralph badge, a pencil, stickers, and a folder to keep it all in. You will then receive a quarterly newsletter full of seasonal news, competitions, things to make and do and of course the dates of our events. Your membership will last a year - that's 4 newsletters.

Membership is just £10 per child per year.

"It's a club where you go to Dartmoor and explore."

"Great fun, we didn't want it to end!"

APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Date of birth:

Adult's signature:

New member: ☐

Renewal: ☐

Membership no:

Where did you hear about us:

Please send enclosing a cheque made payable to 'Dartmoor National Park Authority' to: Ranger Ralph, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 9JQ.

**JOIN NOW
RANGER
RALPH CLUB**
membership is just
£10 per child
per year!

(Please allow a minimum of two weeks to receive your first mailing.)

Data protection

I consent to Dartmoor National Park Authority keeping the above details securely. Dartmoor National Park will not pass them on to any other organisation. They will only use this information for Ranger Ralph Club activities, contact, newsletters and promotions. ☐

Due to data protection law memberships cannot be processed without this consent.

We may contact you from time to time with details of additional activities, offers and events on Dartmoor that we think you might be interested in. Please tick the box to show that you are willing to receive this additional information. ☐

BIRD MAZE

Can you help this Lapwing find a way back to its nest?

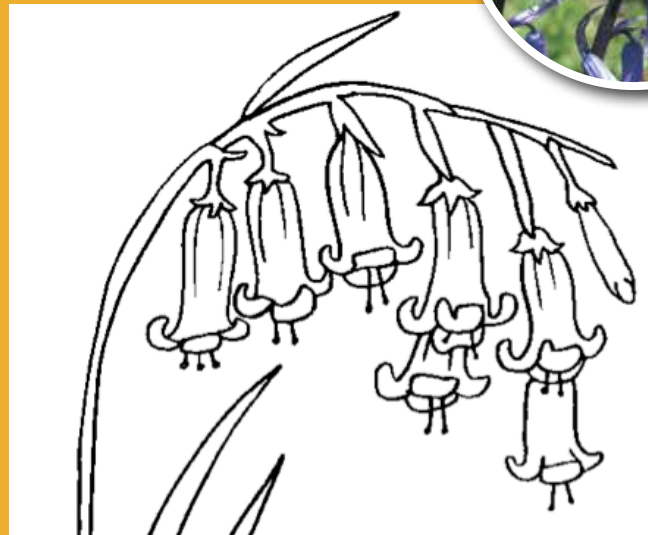


DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE NATION'S FAVOURITE WILDFLOWER IS?

In a recent vote, the British public placed the Bluebell as their favourite wildflower followed closely by the Primrose.

Bluebells have distinctive bell-shaped flowers and long narrow leaves. They often grow so closely together that they appear like a violet-blue carpet across the spring woodland floor, with their stunning and unique display of brilliant flowers. We really do have the finest bluebell carpets right here on Dartmoor and can be seen anytime between mid-March and May. What's more is that bees are attracted to their distinct scent.

Did you know that: The Bluebells root sap was used to glue feathers onto arrows in the middle Ages?



Answers to the Bird Quiz:
A. Buzzard B. Skylark C. Stonechat D. Curlew E. Lapwing