

THE SPRING SPOTTING CHALLENGE!

Don't miss a thing this Spring, with our spotting ticklist compiled by the experts at the Wildlife Trusts. How many points can your rack up on your walks this month?

SPOTTING POINTS EXPLAINED:

Q = Fairly easy spot QQQQQ = Very lucky find!

▶ Cut out or download from livefortheoutdoors.com/springticklist

(Drumming)

Great Spotted Woodpecker □

Where to spot it: Listen out for them in broad-leaf woodlands, gardens and parks
I never knew that: Woodpeckers have even drummed on lampposts, to amplify their sound Q



(Boxing) Brown Hare □

Where to spot it: Spot them on rolling farmland, arable fields and open grassland
I never knew that: As the breeding season approaches, the females box away the amorous males QQ

(Pungent) Wild Garlic □

Where to spot it: Search it out in woodlands
I never knew that: Wild Garlic, also known as Bear's Garlic, is a forager's dream; the white flowers and broad leaves are edible and give off a pungent aroma QQQ



(Booming) Bittern □

Where to spot it: Listen for the boom of the Bittern echoing across reedbeds
I never knew that: You'll be lucky to see one, but this loud, trumpeting 'boom' will announce them QQQQ

(Patches of) Wild Daffodils □

Where to spot it: They're no longer common, but can be found in some woodland nature reserves
I never knew that: They're also known as the Lent lily, since they bloom during the Lent period QQQQ



(Skimming) Sand Martin □

Where to spot it: Watch as they arrive back in flocks to wetlands, reservoirs and rivers
I never knew that: Sand Martin are one of our first breeding 'hirundines' to return to the UK QQ



(A carpet of) Bluebells □

Where to spot it: At the end of March, look out in a woodland near you (the older the better)
I never knew that: The UK is home to more than half the world's population of common bluebells Q



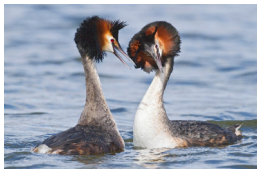
(Nesting) Long-tailed Tit ■

Where to spot it: On nature reserves, brownfield sites, woodlands, towns, parks and gardens
I never knew that: Long-tailed Tits are known as bumarrels due to their tear-drop shaped nests QQ



(Splashing) Water Voles □

Where to spot it: Look out on the short grass, mud or logs down river banks and canals
I never knew that: Once highly endangered, Water Voles are recovering in some areas now due to great conservation work QQQQ



(Swaying) Great-crested Grebes □

Where to spot it: Look out in the early mornings on lakes, reservoirs and wetlands
I never knew that: Their springtime ritual sees them pair up in an elegant dance, head plumes spread wide QQ



(Basking) Grass Snakes □

Where to spot it: Watch out on sunny, south-facing patches of heathland, wetland and grassland
I never knew that: Grass Snakes will usually hibernate until April, but warm sunshine might wake them up early QQQQ

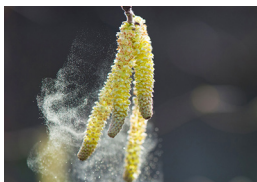


(Dancing) Smooth Newts □

Where to spot it: Search by moonlight or torchlight in ponds
I never knew that: In spring, the male assumes a breeding costume and performs a ritual dance display to attract a mate QQQ

(Colonies of) Herons ■

Where to spot it: Herons are easily disturbed, so a nature reserve is the best way to view them nesting.
I never knew that: When not courting, they are fighting with the neighbours, stealing twigs from each other's nests or even setting their sights on their neighbour's partner QQ



(Hanging) Hazel Catkins □

Where to spot it: Hazel is widespread, so look for it in woodland, parks, hedgerows and gardens
I never knew that: Hazels are associated with magic! The catkins are the male part of the tree, whilst the flowers are female Q



(The Rush of) Migration ■

Where to spot it: Anywhere you like, but for the best spectacles go to headlands and the coast
I never knew that: Watch the countryside fill up with warblers, wheatears, swallows, martins, redstarts, flycatchers, cuckoos, yellow wagtails and turtle doves QQ

(Parachuting) Skylarks □

Where to spot it: On crisp sunny days, listen out for Skylarks singing above farmland and meadows
I never knew that: They float up high, call out their tuneful melody and parachute down to the fields below QQ



(Buzzing) Queen Bees □

Where to spot it: On a warm sunny day scan flowerbeds and hedgerows
I never knew that: Queen Bees wake up early and will be searching for sweet spring nectar QQ



(Tuneful) Chiffchaffs □

Where to spot it: This unobtrusive warbler might be spotted in the tops of bushes and trees
I never knew that: Chiffchaffs are named for their delicate and simple yet nostalgic song QQ



(Fluttering) Brimstones □

Where to spot it: Spot this distinctive butterfly in grasslands, hedgerows, gardens and meadows browsing for a nest site.
I never knew that: You'll need a warm day to spot a butterfly, but Brimstone do grace our countryside early QQ

(Rays of) Celandine □

Where to spot it: Lesser Celandine will flower in woodlands, hedgerows and possibly gardens
I never knew that: Celandine is a wildflower much like a buttercup; they are a reminder that the warmth of spring and summer is on the way QQQ



More nature facts, wild havens, activities and top wildlife experiences at www.wildlifetrusts.org
HOW DID YOU DO? We'd love to hear from you (see all contact points on page 69)