

Nature Activities—September (and beyond)

Find out about the wildlife living near you:

- get outside!
- talk about safety and good practice around nature — ‘don’t pick, don’t lick!’, wash your hands etc
- go for a walk and record what you see (write, draw, audio record, photograph....). Pick things up along the way that you can talk about back in class. You could become some of Dippy’s Natureonauts: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/natureonauts.html>
- if you don’t recognise things that you see, take a photograph, draw a picture or write a description and look it up—or try some spotter apps.
- start a nature table. You’ll need to have some rules about it (nothing alive, only things you have picked up not pulled off a plant etc). Here’s one at the Hauxley Nature Reserve →
- find ways to attract wildlife into your school grounds—have a bird feeder, make an bug hotel, start a compost heap, have a wild area—you can find lots of ideas on-line, but there’s a great start from the Royal Horticultural Society at <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/resources/info-sheet/encouraging-wildlife-in-your-school-garden>



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Record change through the year

September is a good time to start some projects to track seasonal change through the school year. Phenology (the study of seasonal and cyclical events in nature such as the first cuckoo of spring or the date of flowering of a particular plant) is an increasingly important way in which we can not only track the seasons but understand the impacts of climate change. You can download a calendar of events to look out for and record at <https://naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1817/10103-natures-calendar-date-range-poster.pdf>

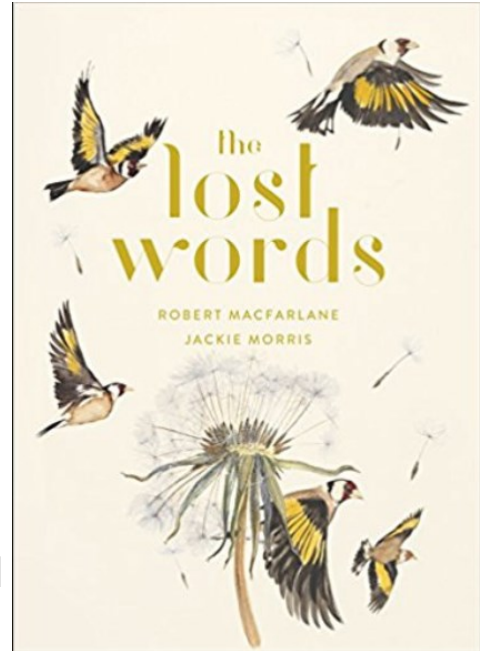
- start taking photographs of the same view (eg out of your classroom window), from the same spot each week so that you can watch how it changes with the seasons
- start a weather record. This can be as simple as a different coloured line on a long strip through the year according to the weather that day, but there are loads of ideas from the Royal Geographical Society at: <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/weather-experiments/> and the Meteorological Office at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/weather-for-kids/wow>
- record seasonal events such as autumn leaves changing colour, the first frost or the first blossom in spring. You can make this into ‘real’ scientific research as part of the Woodland Trust’s citizen science project ‘Nature’s Calendar’: <https://naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>



Literacy Activities—September (and beyond)

Nature words

- try to learn a new nature word each week—make it something you have found, or something appropriate to the season
- **Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris’s book ‘The Lost Words’** is a set of beautifully illustrated acrostic ‘spells’ that conjure up natural words which are falling out of use.
 - you can find resources to support using it from the John Muir Trust at <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/initiatives/the-lost-words>, including an explorers guide aimed at teachers and free posters to download.
 - there is a moderated on-line board where you can share your work and discover what other schools have done: <https://padlet.com/LostWordsforSchools/lwfs>
 - there’s an interview with Robert Macfarlane about the book on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9WrlGZirPs>
 - both Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris are very active on Twitter and respond well to schools telling them about work they have done around using the book



Maths Activities—September (and beyond)

Recording nature

- going on your nature walk, use tallies to keep track of how many examples of something you have seen.
- start a spotter chart, using photographs or pictures of different animals/birds/plants to make pictograms to record wildlife you have seen
- recording weather data or species data over an extended period will provide you with a real data set that you can use for all kinds of maths, including measurement; numbers; place value; addition and subtraction; statistics such as mean, median and mode; fractions and ratios.



Art, Artsmark, Arts Award —September (and beyond)

The Dippy Schools programme follows the Arts Council Quality Principles:

- * Striving for excellence and innovation
- * Being authentic
- * Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
- * Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
- * Actively involving children and young people
- * Enabling personal progression
- * Developing belonging and ownership

Which means that many of the activities can be used to support your Artsmark application

Nature Art

There is a long tradition of observational drawing, sketching and keeping of field notebooks when studying nature

- keep a wildlife notebook through the year (we will be talking about this at the Dippy Conference). This can also be a sketchbook for KS2 or KS3 art.
- research Jackie Morris, illustrator of *The Lost Words*, for the ‘find out’ section of your Arts Award journey. She has an excellent blog which will help you as well as articles and author biographies online



Crest Awards —September (and beyond)

Crest Awards (<https://www.crestawards.org/>) are run by the British Science Association and support science work and working scientifically. Star level is aimed at KS1; Superstar at KS2 and Discovery at KS3 and all have pre-made downloadable challenges which you can put together to achieve the awards. Beyond that, Bronze, Silver and Gold levels give more scope for individual projects. We are working to produce a Crest accredited challenge for when you visit Dippy at the Great North Museum: Hancock to make up one of these activities on your journey. The awards are cheap to do (£1 per child for Star and Superstar and £3 each for Discovery) and you can record the activities online to get the children's certificates and badges.

Investigating Nature Challenges

Star (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-star>)

- Animal Adventure

Superstar (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-superstar>)

- Tree Trouble
- Under Your Feet



Things to look out for in September

- berries and nuts on the trees



- leaves starting to change colour

- conkers!



- mushrooms in the grass

- swallows and house martins on the wires

- murmurations of starlings around sunset



- heavy dew

- can you smell the Autumn arriving?



Spotter Guides, Apps etc

You don't need to be able to identify every species of animal or plant all by yourself!

The **Natural History Museum** have a set of identification guides and if you can't work out what you have from those, you can e-mail them a photograph: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/identify-nature.html>

You can download excellent identification guides for lots of types of British wildlife from **OPAL** at <https://www.opalexplorenature.org/identification>.

Plants

- **Forestry Commission – Forest XPlorer**

<https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8EJFYR>

Identify trees at Forestry Commission sites

- **Natural History Museum – Leafsnap App**

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/identify-nature/leafsnap-uk-app.html>

Identify 156 UK tree species from their leaves, flowers, fruit and other features. If you don't want to go electronic, you can download a tree identification guide from <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/content/dam/nhmwww/take-part/identify-nature/tree-identification-key.pdf>



- **Woodland Trust – Tree id**

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/identify-trees-with-our-tree-id-app/>

Identify trees by their bark, twigs, buds, leaves, flowers or fruit

- **Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland - Find Wild Flowers**

<http://www.botanicalkeys.co.uk/flora/>

A website with a key for identifying and recording wild flowers

Animals

- **The Mammal Society – Mammal Tracker**

http://www.brc.ac.uk/mammal_tracker/

Identify and record British mammals

- **OPAL Bugs Count**

<https://www.opalexplorenature.org/bugs-app>

Identify and record bugs; join in Species Quest: <https://www.opalexplorenature.org/SpeciesQuestBugs>

- **RSPB – Identify a Bird**

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/identify-a-bird/>

An on-line resource to work out what bird you've just seen



- **British Trust for Ornithology – Bird Track**

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/taking-part/birdtrack-apps>

Log bird sightings around the world.

- **Classify It!**

<http://sciencenetlinks.com/tools/classify-it/>

Test your knowledge of how species are linked.

Rocks and Fossils

- **British Geological Survey – iGeology**

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/igeology/>

Find out what's under your feet or look at the geology anywhere in Britain

- **Natural History Museum – Fossil Explorer**

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/identify-nature/fossil-explorer-app.html>

Identify the most common fossils from a location and find out a bit more about them

