



YOUR WINTER WILDLIFE SPOTTER'S GUIDE **PART TWO**

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LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

Welcome to part two of our handy winter wildlife spotter's guide, full of hints and tips on where you are likely to encounter wild mammals or birds this season. Good luck!

Things to remember:

To increase your chances of seeing animals in their natural habitats and to prevent scaring them away, there are a few simple steps to follow:

- Do not wear any perfume, aftershave or insect repellent - you may get bitten once or twice but if you see a wild animal it may be worth it!
- Animals are very wary of human voices. Absolute silence is essential
- Try to keep yourself downwind of the animal
- Wear dark, natural or neutral coloured clothing that blend into your surrounding
- Do not wear anything that jangles or rustles
- Try not to move when in sight of an animal. If you really have to, then do it slowly and quietly.

Things to take:

It is useful to have these items with you when you're wildlife spotting:

- Maps
- Compass
- Binoculars
- Paper and pencil to make notes if needed
- Small plastic containers for collecting droppings (e.g. pill boxes or film canisters)
- Rubber or latex gloves for handling droppings.



SQUIRREL SCIURIDAE

Where to spot them?

You can see red or grey squirrels depending on where you live, or both if you're very lucky. Both species are attracted to bird feeders, so be vigilant if you have a feeder in the garden. I have seen a lot of grey squirrels on the bird feeders in my garden!

What to look out for?

Reds are smaller and more agile than greys, with tufts of fur on their ears. Greys are bigger, more gregarious and spend a lot of time on the ground. Look to the tail if you're unsure which squirrel you've spotted. Red squirrels have a uniform colouring throughout their tails whereas grey squirrels tend to have multiple shades with a white 'halo' around the edges.



FALLOW DEER

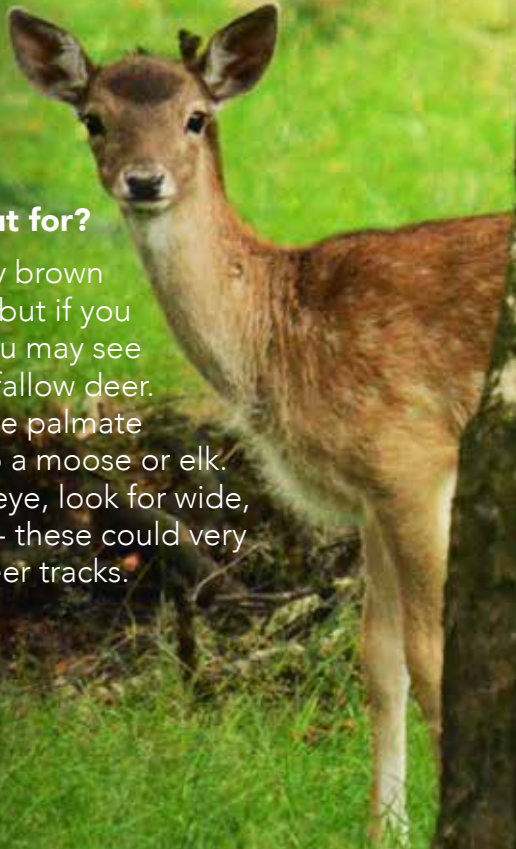
DAMA DAMA

Where to spot them?

Fallow deer can often be found in parkland, broadleaved woodland, and grassland areas - these natural spaces will often be associated with old deer parks. I recommend leaving just before dusk or dawn as fallow deer are most active during these periods.

What to look out for?

They are typically brown with white spots but if you are very lucky, you may see a black or white fallow deer. Fallow bucks have palmate antlers, similar to a moose or elk. If you've a keen eye, look for wide, long hoof prints - these could very well be fallow-deer tracks.



RABBIT

ORYCTOLAGUS CUNICULUS

Where to spot them?

Usually seen grazing around the edge of fields, rabbits will quickly disappear below ground if disturbed. Disease has devastated the rabbit population in many areas, so consider yourself lucky if you see one.

What to look out for?

These sandy coloured mammals have a petite frame but long ears and hind legs, with a distinctive fluffy white tail. Rabbits live in a network of tunnels and dens known as a warren, I often wonder how many rabbits there are living under the Baronsdown sanctuary!



REDWING & FIELDFARE

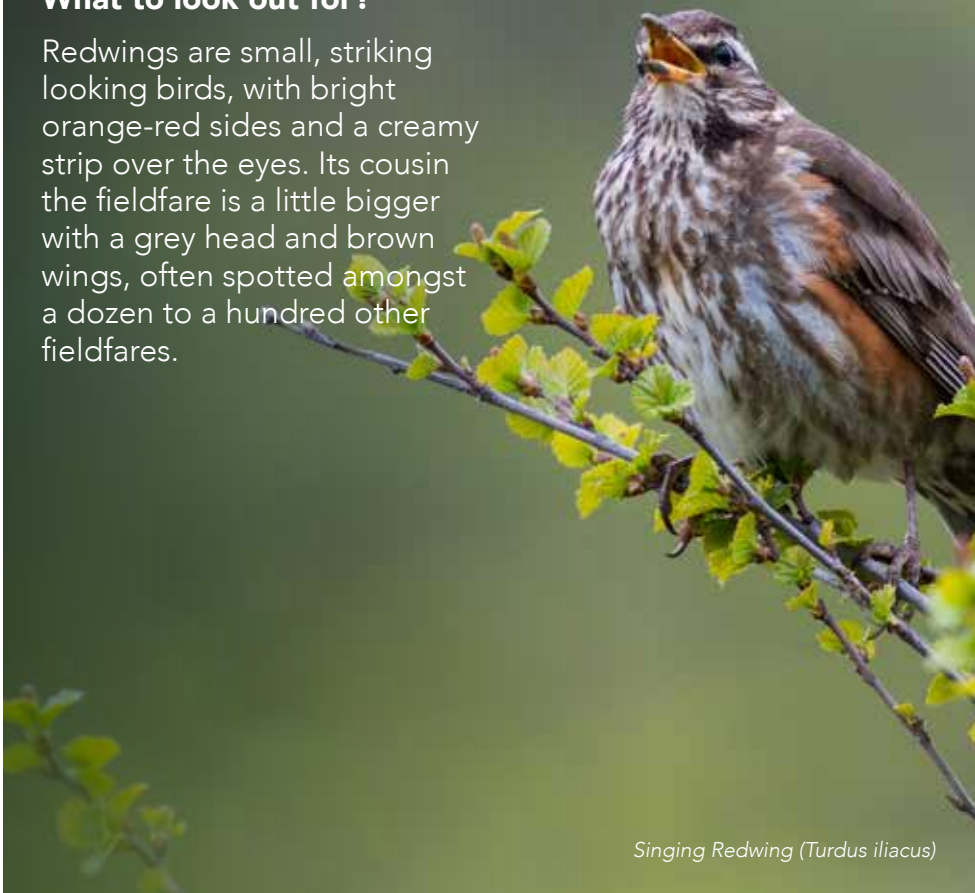
TURDUS ILIACUS & TURDUS PILARIS

Where to spot them?

These true winter thrushes can turn up anywhere, together, or separately to devour the berries from bushes. They arrive en masse from colder climates to take advantage of Britain's relatively mild winters (even if it does feel below freezing for us!).

What to look out for?

Redwings are small, striking looking birds, with bright orange-red sides and a creamy strip over the eyes. Its cousin the fieldfare is a little bigger with a grey head and brown wings, often spotted amongst a dozen to a hundred other fieldfares.



Singing Redwing (Turdus iliacus)

STARLING

STURNUS VULGARIS

Where to spot them?

If you're having trouble identifying a starling then look no further than the murmuration of starlings. This is a famous mass aerial stunt where thousands of birds take flight together, swooping and diving as one. Crowds of people turn out to see the spectacular aerial displays as starlings come to roost in the reedbeds of the Somerset Levels, conifer plantations on Bodmin Moor, and on Blackpool and Brighton piers. You're also likely to spot individual starlings in your garden as it's one of the UK's most common garden birds.

What to look out for?

At first glance the starling looks to share similar features to a blackbird, however up close it is smaller in stature and has a glossy layer of feathers that shine with waves of purple and green. The murmuration of starlings really is a spectacular sight so much so that it has been evidenced by many wildlife shows in recent years.



ROBIN

ERITHACUS RUBECULA

Where to spot them?

The ubiquitous bird of Christmas cards and decorations is actually a feisty character, capable of killing rivals that trespass on its patch. They reside across the UK and can be found in or near woodland, hedgerows, parks and gardens. They follow us around hoping that we will disturb a tasty morsel and can often be trained to perch on your hand to take food...or is it them training us?

What to look out for?

There is little distinction between male and female robins, both have a luxurious red breast. Juvenile robins have to grow into this very identifiable feature and instead hop around with a spotted golden-brown coat of feathers.





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