



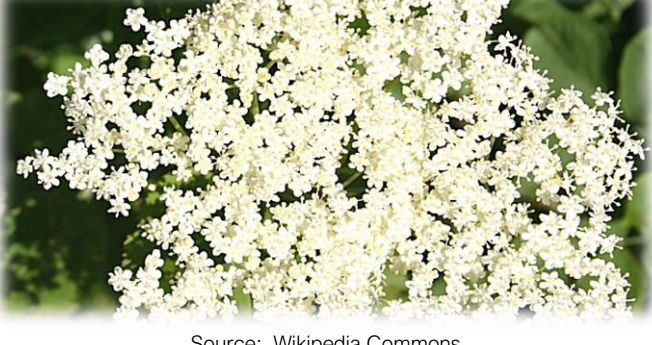







## HUGS 3 VILLAGE WILD WALK - Winter Top 10 Wildlife Spotting List

Here are 10 different birds, insects and plants to look out for in winter on the walk. If you spot one, tick the left-hand column. If you spot 5 or more you're doing well!

1	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Wild Cherry Blossom.</b></p> <p>The Wild Cherry tree (<i>Prunus avium</i>) produces white flowers in April which are loved by bees. The bark of the tree is deep reddish-brown with cream-coloured horizontal lines banded across the trunk. When pollinated, the flowers develop into cherries which will be eaten by birds. The leaves are a food source for many different moth species.</p>
2	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Cow Parsley.</b></p> <p>Cow parsley, also known as Queen Anne's Lace, flowers from April onwards and is loved by hoverflies as well as bees. It's common on roadside verges giving a soft, frothy look. Its white flowers come out in umbels from the centre. It's also a food source for the Orange Tip Butterfly.</p>
3	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Swift.</b></p> <p>We may first see swifts in our skies from April onwards, although we also see them as a summer visitor. They migrate to us from Africa. They are incredible flyers, eating and sleeping whilst in the air. They can fly up to 800km and they will fly to avoid bad weather, so you're likely to be seeing them on dry, calm days. They are brown, with a short, forked tail and scythe-like wings.</p>
4	 <p>Source: Pixabay</p>	<p><b>Swallow.</b></p> <p>Swallows too arrive in April and May and can be seen sitting on telegraph wires and feeding up above the Sustrans route. They like open pasture, a supply of water and quiet farm buildings. They have a much longer tail than the swift, plus dark blue back, red throat and pale underparts.</p>
5	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Elderflower.</b></p> <p>These flat white heads of flowers look similar to Cow Parsley and open in mid to late May. The Elder tree or bush itself is relatively short and the leaves are similar to Walnut leaves. These bushes are often found near rabbit warrens and badger setts as the animals have spread the seeds with their droppings. The flowers are loved by many pollinators and the berries are eaten by many birds and mammals, all parts are poisonous to humans until cooked.</p>

6	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Orange Tip Butterfly.</b></p> <p>This easily spotted butterfly can be found along the hedgerows near the Sustrans Route, such as along Moor Lane in spring and summer. The male has this distinctive orange tipped wings, while the female is white with black wing tips. They like meadow and hedgerow habitats and feed on Garlic Mustard and other native plants which they then lay their eggs on. The caterpillars then feed on these plants. The caterpillars pupate in July and they remain in the chrysalis until emerging as butterflies in spring.</p>
7	 <p>Source: Malcolm Brownsword</p>	<p><b>Bumblebee.</b></p> <p>There are 24 species of Bumblebee in the UK, most live in social groups, making nests together and collecting pollen. They are large and fluffy, making a low buzzing noise as they fly. Queen bees emerge early in the year and look for a site to nest. Under hedgerows may be an option for them. When they forage for food, they often stick to one species of flower at a time which means they can lose energy fast if the plants are sparse. Because bumblebees require large amounts of energy in flight, they are only 40 minutes away from starvation at any given time.</p>
8	 <p>Source: Pixabay</p>	<p><b>Standing dead trees.</b></p> <p>Trees that have died but remain upright are fantastic habitat for wildlife. They can easily be burrowed into as they decay and so make home for many different invertebrates as well as other creatures. Providing home to beetles means food for beetle eaters, such as voles and feeding voles means food for owls. There are a few great examples of standing dead wood on our walk route. See if you can spot them!</p>
9	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Nesting birds.</b></p> <p>Birds flying with sticks and grass in their beaks are a fantastic spring sight. Some species start to pair up in later winter / early spring and then much of the first wave of nest building starts in earnest in March. Have a look for birds with twigs / other materials in their beaks and see if you can see where they fly to in a tree or into a nice, dense hedge. Many birds will have two clutches of eggs in a season. Look out in March, April and May for nesting as well as fledglings noisily cheeping at parents and flapping their wings for food!</p>
10	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons</p>	<p><b>Fledgelings.</b></p> <p>Baby birds are noisily asking their parents for food in spring at the same time as flapping their wings. This is a baby wren, one of the first clutch born in April. The father of this baby will have made several nests for his partner to choose from. The mother will have laid between 5 and 8 speckled eggs in the nest she chose. The babies hatch within two weeks and fledge within a month. Wrens are one of our smallest birds but have a mightily loud and beautiful song. Their diet is spiders and small insects.</p>