











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

Here are 10 different birds, animals, 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: David Rickeard</p>	<p>Old Man's Beard.</p> <p>To give this plant its proper name – it's <i>Clematis vitalba</i>. It covers banks and hedges and at this time of year is covered in feathery seed heads which are loved by goldfinches as well as other birds. Its flowers are enjoyed by pollinators including moths. And traditionally it was used as a herbal remedy for problems such as inflammation.</p>
2	 <p>Source: Wikipedia Commons License</p>	<p>Bird's nest</p> <p>Large nests high up in trees become much more visible as the leaves have fallen in winter time. Open, slightly messy looking nests high up in trees are likely to belong to the crow family of birds. Birds will use the nests in the spring and summer for breeding and may return to roost in them in the colder months. Nests in groups may belong to rooks.</p>
3	 <p>Source: Simon Stevenson</p>	<p>Rose Hips.</p> <p>The Dog Rose has pretty open single flowers in summer which are perfect for many pollinators. Then in autumn and winter these lovely ruby red hips. They are favoured by many birds especially when softened by frost. We foraged and consumed them in their millions during the Second World War when the Ministry of Food recommended rose hip syrup every day for children for its high vitamin C content.</p>
4	 <p>Source: Steve Gozdz, Goring Wildlife Walks</p>	<p>Rabbit.</p> <p>These mammals are 'crepuscular' meaning they're most active at dusk and dawn. You can find them in the mornings and late afternoons and evenings in winter. They have warrens at the base of the railway embankment and forage for food in the fields next to their warrens. They have to look at constantly for buzzards and other predators who might eat them.</p>
5	 <p>Source: David Rickeard</p>	<p>Fallen tree.</p> <p>This one is along Shovel Spring and is fantastic both as a sculpture and as a home to wildlife. As wood dies back it creates more opportunities for wildlife habitat – here for overwintering wildlife. If the wood falls in to or over the water too, it creates shelter and habitat for fish and other aquatic life.</p>

6	 <p data-bbox="368 432 614 454">Source: Kieron Humphrey</p>	<p data-bbox="1066 159 1206 181">Apple trees.</p> <p data-bbox="823 192 1453 376">Rumour has it the apple trees along the old railway line are here because apple cores were thrown from the train windows before the line was closed in the 1960s. However it was that they arrived, the fruit is very welcome to birds in the autumn and winter as they fall from the trees.</p>
7	 <p data-bbox="368 813 614 835">Source: Kieron Humphrey</p>	<p data-bbox="1031 506 1241 528">Ridge and Furrow.</p> <p data-bbox="823 539 1453 790">Find the bench along the old railway line that echoes the shape of the land beyond it. The shape of the ground show a very old system of ploughing was used here. Probably in medieval times, the soil here was cultivated by a traditional plough, creating this distinctive pattern. And the land must have been left to grazing ever since so we can see this history of the field in its wavy contours.</p>
8	 <p data-bbox="320 1189 667 1211">Source: Wikipedia Commons License</p>	<p data-bbox="1070 913 1201 936">Blackbirds.</p> <p data-bbox="823 947 1453 1131">These birds are easy to spot in the winter as the males will be out defending their territory. They will also be very busy eating the berries and hips that are still available through the season. They also eat worms and insects and live for around 3 to 4 years. This is a male blackbird, females have brown plumage.</p>
9	 <p data-bbox="368 1615 614 1637">Source: Simon Stevenson</p>	<p data-bbox="1098 1238 1174 1261">Sloes.</p> <p data-bbox="823 1272 1453 1615">The blackthorn plant has amazing white blossom early in the spring then gives us these purple berries in the autumn and winter. As well as making very good sloe gin for us, they are favoured by birds! Birds also choose to nest in blackthorn, protected by the prickly branches. The leaves are food for both moth and butterfly caterpillars. The wood is strong and has traditionally been used for tool and walking sticks amongst other things. The bark, flowers and sloes have also been used for herbal remedies for digestive problems.</p>
10	 <p data-bbox="320 2045 667 2067">Source: Wikipedia Commons License</p>	<p data-bbox="983 1697 1289 1720">Yellow Brimstone Butterfly.</p> <p data-bbox="823 1731 1453 2011">The old railway line is a great habitat for butterflies. One of the butterflies you might spot in winter is the Brimstone. Depending on the weather it may be surviving from a late brood in the autumn or it may be an early harbinger of spring, appearing towards the end of February. The male has a stronger yellow colour than the female. Their wings are shaped like leaves. And you might spot one in dry weather flying over verges or hedges.</p>