

Nextdoor Nature Pioneers Programme



Nextdoor Nature book list

These are some of our favourite nature books. We asked our colleagues across the Scottish Wildlife Trust for their recommendations and favourite nature books.

If you've got a favourite nature book that you'd like to share, please get in touch as we'd love to keep this list growing!

Please try and support local book shops where possible!

Book: A Sting in the Tail

Author: Dave Goulson

Age range: Adult

Read it for: Pollinator expert, Dave Goulson, explores history's relationship with the humble bumblebee and the enormous impacts of intensive farming. He also looks at the efforts to reintroduce the short-haired bumblebee which was declared extinct in the UK in 2000.

Book: Antlers of Water

Author: Edited by Kathleen Jamie

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A collection of writing on Scottish landscape and nature. This book features prose, poetry and photography. Walking, wild swimming, red deer, pigeons and wasps all feature as this book takes you from back gardens to remote islands.

Book: Back to Nature

Author: Chris Packham

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A heartfelt collection of natural tales from the latest conservation breakthroughs and scientific discoveries. Chris Packham and his stepdaughter, Megan McCubbin use hard evidence from solid research mixed with emotionally fuelled stories of their own encounters to make the case for both rewilding and reconnecting with nature.

Book: Buzz: The Nature and Necessity of Bees

Author: Thor Hanson

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The charming tale of the humble bee. From the evolution of the bee to the current challenges bees face today. A reminder that bees are an essential part of our existence.



Book: Bringing Back the Beaver: The Story of One Man's Quest to Rewild Britain's Waterways

Author: Derek Gow

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The story of reintroducing beavers in Britain from farmer-turned-ecologist Derek Gow. A frank and honest look at the world of beaver reintroductions. Derek Gow is a leading conservationist working to reintroduce various native species in Britain.

Book: Diary of a Young Naturalist

Author: Dara McAnulty

Age range: Young adult/Adult

Read it for: A glimpse into one 15-year-old's connection to the natural world. Young author, Dara McAnulty, shares some of his diary entries about the way he sees the natural world around us. An emotionally stunning read for anyone who appreciates nature.

Book: Entangled Life

Author: Merlin Sheldrake

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A dive into the mysterious world of fungus! This book will change the way you look at fungi! The more we learn about fungi, the less makes sense without them.

Book: Feral

Author: George Monbiot

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A hard hitting account of how restoring and rewilding damaged ecosystems can bring wonder back into our lives. This book is draws on scientific discoveries to transform our understanding of natural systems. Highly praised as a "manifesto for the future of the planet".



Book: H is for Hawk

Author: Helen Macdonald

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A year in the life of Helen Macdonald as she deals with grief and loss while rearing a young goshawk. Honest and raw, this book tells the tale of taming and un-taming.

Book: Islands of Abandonment: Life in the Post-Human Landscape

Author: Cal Flyn

Age range: Adult

Read it for: An insight into what happens when humans move out and nature is left to reclaim. This book looks at places across the world that have been abandoned by humans but embraced by nature.

Book: Once Upon a Raven's Nest

Author: Catrina Davies

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The portrait of Thomas Hedley, a working-class man who grew up deeply connected to nature in Exmoor and ended his days in the Welsh mountains. He spent his life in between, as out-of-doors as possible. His desire for adventure led him from shenanigans in the forests, to loveably roguish relationships with the people around him, and to him becoming paralysed in an accident in the later years of his life. Tommy's raw voice shines through, the voice of a man who knew and loved the world around him, and who saw it disappearing. Davies became friends with Hedley in the later years of his life, and together they created this portrait of his life, the life of a consummate risk taker, lover, and outdoors philosopher. Tommy's story is one that nature writing has been missing.

Book: Raptor

Author: James Macdonald Lochart

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A beautiful walk through the UK looking at some of our most unique birds. Macdonald Lochart documents his wonderful journey in search of our 15 native raptor species. From hen harriers on Orkney to buzzards in Devon.



Book: Rebirding: Restoring Britain's Wildlife

Author: Benedict Macdonald

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A manifesto for restoring Britain's wildlife. This book debunks many of the myths around rewilding and land availability.

Book: Regeneration: The Rescue of a Wild Land

Author: Andrew Painting

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The story of the successful regeneration of Mar Lodge Estate in the Cairngorms. This book tells the tale of 25 years of hard work, undoing centuries of neglect at a landscape scale. A beautiful look at the restoration of a dying Caledonian pinewood. There is also a look at some more current conservation issues including deer management and raptor persecution.

Book: Rewild Yourself

Author: Simon Barnes

Age range: Adult

Read it for: We're not just losing the wild world. We're forgetting it. We're no longer noticing it. We've lost the habit of looking and seeing and listening and hearing. This book shares 23 wonderful ways of reconnecting with the world around us.

Book: Scurry of Squirrels

Author: Polly Pullar

Age range: Adult

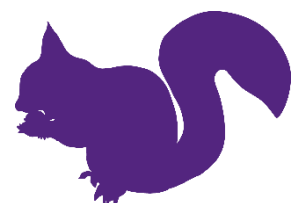
Read it for: The story of one woman's passion for the red squirrel. Polly Pullar has worked hard to make her Perthshire farm as wildlife friendly as possible. This includes hand-rearing multiple litters of red squirrel kits. A heartwarming tale about the success of Pullar's efforts to support the characterful red squirrel.

Book: Silent Spring

Author: Rachel Carson

Age range: Adult

Read it for: One of the earliest books exposing the enormous damage being done by pesticides. This book survived attempts to ban it from the chemical industry and led to the banning of harmful pesticides in several countries.



Book: The Book of Wilding: A practical guide to rewilding, big and small

Author: Isabelle Tree and Charlie Burrell

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A handbook on how to restore nature in spaces of all shapes and sizes. The authors led a very successful rewilding project in Sussex and this book is a brilliant way to tap into their learning. Perfect for rewilding anywhere from window boxes to churchyards and everywhere in between.

Book: The Gospel of the Eels

Author: Patrick Svensson

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A look at some of our most elusive fish tied with a mirror of the human condition and a father-son relationship.

Book: The Hidden Life of Trees

Author: Peter Wohlleben

Age range: Adult

Read it for: This book is a fascinating look at trees as social beings. Using a combination of cutting-edge scientific studies and his own experiences, Peter Wohlleben leads us on an incredible tour of woodlands like we've never seen them before.

Book: The Living Mountain

Author: Nan Shepherd

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The tale of a journey into the mountains of the Cairngorms in search of "essential nature". Originally written during the Second World War, this book was published some 30 years later. It explores the beauty and harshness of the Cairngorms, finding strength and comfort in the wilderness. Regarded as a masterpiece of nature writing.

Book: The Missing Lynx: The Past and Future of Britain's Lost Mammals

Author: Ross Barnett

Age range: Adult

Read it for: An ode to the lost mammals of Britain. Case studies, fossil discoveries and biomolecular evidence all make up part of this book as it dives into the past of Britain's lost mammals. Lynx, bears, wolves and bison all feature as Barnett looks at the past and future, including the potential for reintroductions.



Book: The Most Perfect Thing: Inside (and Outside) a Bird's Egg

Author: Tim Birkhead

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A look into bird reproduction with a fascinating focus on eggs. Current scientific understanding meets historical context of birds eggs. How are eggs of different shapes made, and why are they the shape they are? Why do some eggs contain two yolks? And which end of an egg is laid first - the blunt end or the pointy end? Find out in this book.

Book: The Outrun

Author: Amy Liptrot

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The beautiful story of a recovering alcoholic finding solace and hope in the wild of her family farm on Orkney.

Book: The Peregrine

Author: J.A. Baker

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The experiences of Baker's observations of peregrine falcons in Essex marshes. First published in 1967, this book has received several awards. Passionate and fierce, Baker paints a fascinating picture of this iconic species.

Book: The Seabirds Cry: The Lives and Loves of Puffins, Gannets and other Ocean Voyagers

Author: Adam Nicolson

Age range: Adult

Read it for: Ten chapters, each dedicated to a different sea bird species. This book delves into the journeys of seabirds, the way their bodies work and how they survive. Ranging from the Hebrides to Ireland, north to Iceland and Norway and across to Canada, this book is a journey in itself. Includes beautiful illustrations from Kate Boxer.



Book: The Wild Remedy: How Nature Mends Us – A Diary

Author: Emma Mitchell

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A beautiful hand-illustrated diary account of how reconnecting with nature might offer a solution to the mental health epidemic. This book tells the story of Emma Mitchell’s twenty-five-year struggle with depression (that she calls “the grey slug”) and how her natural encounters impacted her mood. A wonderous account of nature’s influence over us.

Book: What Has Nature Ever Done for Us?: How Money Really Does Grow on Trees

Author: Tony Juniper

Age range: Adult

Read it for: A scientific look at just how much nature has benefited humankind. Full of stories about the positive impact of nature and warnings of what could happen if it continues to disappear. Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, provides a chunky look at the benefits of nature: from soil to predators and recycling to national economics.

Book: Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm

Author: Isabelle Tree

Age range: Adult

Read it for: The story of one of the most successful rewilding projects in the UK. Author, Isabella Tree, tells the tale of moving away from economically unsustainable intensive farming and letting nature take hold. The Knepp Estate is now regarded as one of the best examples of rewilding in the UK.



For some natural magic

Book: The Lost Words

Author: Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris

Age range: All ages

Read it for: A response to the removal of hosts of natural words being removed from the Oxford Children's Dictionary. A truly magical book, packed with acrostic poems that reflect the wonder of each species. Formatted as an A4 hardback, this is a spell-book for any nature-lover's shelf.

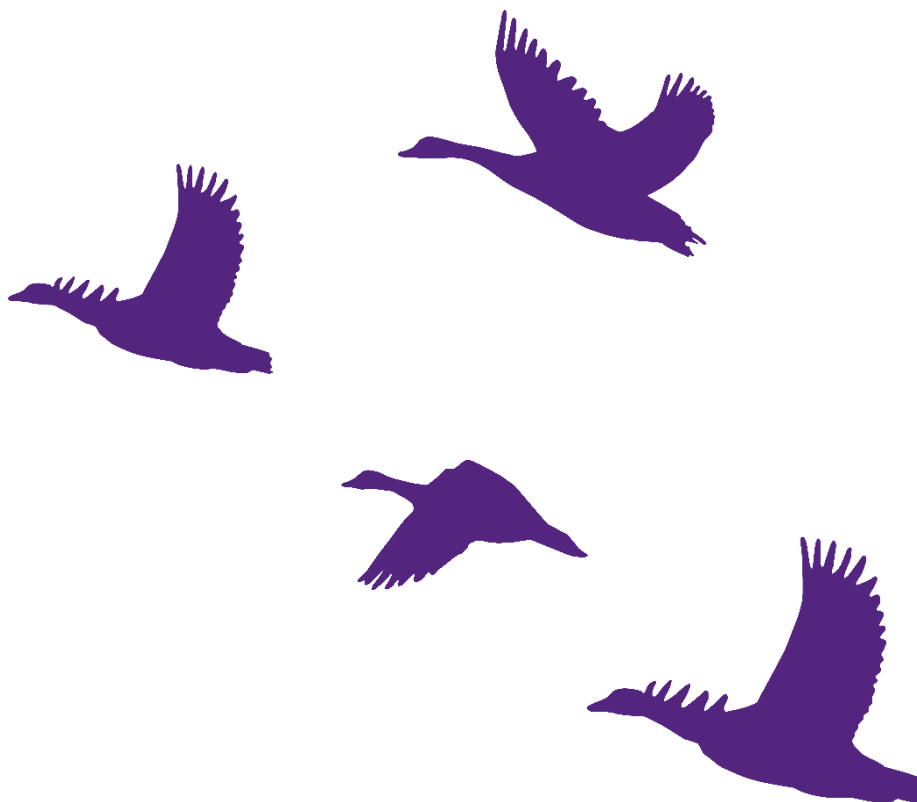
Book: The Lost Spells

Author: Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris

Age range: All ages

Read it for: A kindred spirit to The Lost Words (see above). The Lost Spells is a pocket-sized companion featuring a new host of species each with their own acrostic spell. Another mysterious and deeply magical book.

There are lots of fantastic resources on [The Lost Words website](#). This includes information about *Spell Songs* and *Spell Songs II: Let the Light in*, the musical evolutions of both *The Lost Words* and *The Lost Spells*. The albums are both available to buy on CD and vinyl or you can listen for free on most streaming services (Spotify, Apple Music etc.) The website is well worth a look.



For young naturalists

Book: 5-minute Nature Stories: True Tales from the Woodland

Author: Gabby Dawnay, Mona K

Age range: Children

Read it for: A collection of beautiful stories about the natural world. The author, Gabby Dawnay, is a poet and science writer. A fantastic way to introduce children to nature and inspire the next generation of nature lovers.

Book: Leila and the Blue Fox

Author: Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Age range: 9 years and up

Read it for: The tale of a fox's adventure under the endless daylight of the Arctic summer!

Book: October, October

Author: Katya Balen

Age range: Children

Read it for: A fictional story about October, a young girl who lives in the woods with her dad. The story follows October as she rescues a baby owl, meets her mother for the first time and finds the space to be wild. A wonderful book for all ages.

Book: The Tales of Harry Also

Author: Celie Norman Smith

Age range: 10 years and up

Read it for: A Scottish tale about a scarecrow who lives in an organic vegetable garden! This book explores inner strength and friendship through some emotional stories.