Along the country lane, berries are plentiful on the hawthorn bushes and there are juicy berries on the blackberry bushes. Children are hard at work picking the fruit. Birds love blackberries, too. A starling and a happy chaffinch are enjoying a great feast. The blackbird is more interested in searching the ivy flowers for insects, while the wasps feed on fallen apples. Butterflies like the large blue and the red admiral are still to be seen, bringing beauty and colour to the countryside. It is fun to cycle and it certainly causes no pollution! Use your bike as often as possible and you will be helping the environment. Always wear your helmet!
The whole countryside is rich with autumn berries, fruits and nuts. The boys collecting horse chestnuts, or conkers, have disturbed a dozy hedgehog who had just settled down for a long winter sleep. Two magpies sitting on the tree are still on the look-out for food, while a busy mother sparrow feeds a juicy worm to one of her autumn brood of chicks. The beautiful goldfinches are seen in the thistlebed and other members of the family, the bullfinches are on an elderberry bush, enjoying a feast of berries. Sitting on the telegraph wires, swallows are preparing to migrate to the African sun. Below, a family is helping the environment by saving bottles and drink cans for re-cycling. We can all play our part!
The leaves have fallen from the trees making it easier to identify them by their shapes. The alder tree makes a nice perch for three finches, the greenfinch, chaffinch, and siskin. Under the tree, a grey squirrel gathering hazelnuts to store away for the winter. A little field mouse also searching for food. On the river, a pen (a female swan) and her cygnets swim past a perky pied wagtail. A lovely kingfisher sits on a branch, watching children helping to clean up the river. They have a grown-up with them, of course. The other children are looking at a pipe spewing waste into the river, polluting the water. This should be reported. The frog will soon bury himself in the mud, to sleep until the spring. Snails too, will sleep away the winter under a tree stump.
It is the end of the year and the days are getting shorter. It is getting colder and we must look after the birds. Grandad has made a nice birdtable 1 to hold kitchen scraps, nuts, etc., and water 2 for our feathered friends. The little wren 3 and the hedge sparrow 4 are looking forward to a regular feed every day. The mistle thrush 5 likes the berries of the mistletoe 6 growing on the apple tree. A girl collects holly 7 for Christmas decoration watched by an inquisitive robin 8. Rubbish is sorted out 9 for re-cycling, something we should all do. The car has been left at home today 10, so the air will be just that little bit more pure! It’s a wonderful world – let’s keep it that way. Happy Christmas!
This month the ground can be really hard and birds often do not get enough to eat. Don’t forget to feed them. These birds, starling 1, house sparrow 2, chaffinch 3, robin 4 and the acrobatic blue tit 5 have been fortunate to find a bird table. Birds need water, too. Pretty little snowdrops 6 flower even under the snow. Tracks 7 show that a Rabbit passed this way. He was lucky that the hungry fox 8 wasn’t around at the time! A pair of magpies 9 sit on the bare branch of a hazel tree 10. No smoke is coming from these chimneys! 11 Smokeless fuel is helping to keep the air we breathe pure and healthy.
There are signs that nature is coming to life again. Catkins decorate the hazel tree and the blackbird sings his happy song. Blackthorn begins to bloom and the little wren sits among the leaves and ivy berries looking for a suitable nesting site. Lichen and moss colour the wall. Crocuses peep through to brighten the winter gloom. Black-headed gulls follow the plough, searching for tasty grubs and worms, while wood-pigeons perch on the branches of a beech tree looking for seeds. Newborn lambs romp in the field with their mother. The children know the 'country code'! They always make sure to shut the gate.
Spring is here at last and nature is celebrating. Bright yellow daffodils and delicate primroses make a lovely splash of colour and pretty pussy-willows decorate the branches. Lesser celandines brighten the pond-side where a Frog is looking for a mate. In the pond, the moorhen feels safe because the dog is on a leash. Dogs, of course, should always be kept under control. March winds make the clothes dance on the line and up above the noisy rooks are nesting. The lapwing is still looking for a nesting site in the fields. Hares go ‘mad’ about now and ‘box’ each other! It is nice to be able to gather your own shamrock.
April is the month of sunshine and showers. Bright green leaves appear on the horse chestnut tree. The tortoiseshell butterfly flutters over lovely violets and tiny forgetmenots. Even the common dandelions look pretty! In the stream, the mallard family swim past marsh-marigolds (or king-cups) and the nest of a moorhen. Further up the stream, the mute swan is watching the cleaning-up operation. Always have a grown-up with you when you are taking rubbish out of the water. The pied wagtail flies over the little vole, busily washing himself. When observing the wonders of nature, keep as quiet as possible and never disturb anything.
This is the month of flowers. The woods are carpeted with the misty colour of bluebells and hedgerows are covered with sweet smelling hawthorn. Usually, wild flowers should never be picked but daisies are an exception to the rule! A linnet perches in a gorse bush while above in the horse-chestnut tree, a cuckoo keeps repeating his strange call. The upright blossoms on the tree resemble candles. A peacock butterfly hovers over brightly coloured ladybirds sitting on nettles. Do your best to stop the dumping of the rubbish which scars our lovely countryside.
The long days of June are filled with the sounds of birds singing, grasshoppers chirping and bees buzzing as they fly from flower to flower. These busy workers gather nectar from flowers like the dog-rose and then turn it into honey. Swallows glide gracefully over the meadow covered with scarlet poppies, foxgloves, buttercups and daisies. An orange tip butterfly flies over a shy hedgehog creeping through the long grass. Two playful fox cubs peep out at the people clearing up after a picnic. Wrappers, bottles and cans are being collected and will be brought home. Plastic bags, particularly, should never be left lying around. They can harm animals!
It is holiday time! When you go to the beach this summer, always remember to use the litter bins. You could join one of the many clean-up groups and help to collect litter left by careless people. There is noise pollution, too! Keep that radio turned down! Other people may not want to listen to noisy pop music! Terns are busily nesting and turnstones are looking for food in the bladderwrack, watched by two curious rabbits in the sand dunes. At the rock pool, a shore crab crawls among the limpets, whelks and razor shells. There is colour at the seaside. Thrift is a lovely pink plant and the yellow ragwort attracts a cinnabar moth.
We are really into the summer now and a lot of us like to go picnicking. Never light a fire to boil water, especially near trees! If you must have a hot drink, bring a flask and always take your litter home. The birds also like picnics! A yellow-hammer pecks happily at fat rosehips and a thrush enjoys the berries on a rowan tree. A farmer is harvesting golden wheat and crows gobble up the ripe grains. A lovely painted lady butterfly and a hover fly like the sweet-scented honeysuckle. A stoat hunts for little fieldmice, homeless now, after the farmer’s great machine has wrecked their nests.