### What can you spot in autumn?

| **Red deer** | Autumn is the time of the annual red deer rut. Listen for roaring stags and clashing antlers. |
| **Leaf skeleton** | Fallen leaves rot away, leaving a beautiful ‘skeleton’. Take one home for a craft project! |
| **Rowan Berries** | Ripe red rowan berries provide food for hungry birds. Look out for blackbirds eating the berries. |
| **Pine marten** | Pine martens often poo on rocks or forest paths. Can you tell what they’ve been eating? |
| **Fly agaric** | Fly agaric fungi usually grow with birch and pine trees. What trees are growing near them? |
| **Winged seeds** | Sycamore and ash seeds fly a bit like a helicopter. Throw one and see how far it flies. |
| **Pine marten** | Pine martens often poo on rocks or forest paths. Can you tell what they’ve been eating? |
| **Douglas fir** | Most conifers keep their leaves all year round. Crush and smell some of their leaves. |
| **Chanterelle** | Some wild mushrooms are really tasty. Never eat fungi unless you know what they are! |
| **Blaeberry** | Blaeberry grow on low bushes in the old pine woods. Pine martens eat so many their poo turns blue! |
| **Redwing** | Redwings arrive in autumn and spend the winter here. Listen for their ‘zztseep’ calls on clear nights. |
| **Salmon** | Salmon return to the place of their birth to spawn. Cheer them on at weirs and waterfalls. |

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Children must be supervised by a responsible adult. Activities are at your own risk.

**See how many you can spot when out on your walk!**

[www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)
Get into the woods and look for nuts, cones and seeds...

1. Collect and bury three nuts like a squirrel, then go off for a walk. Can you find them again when you get back?

2. Look for a rainbow of seed colours as you walk:

3. Find a nibbled cone and discover what has eaten it:
   - **Squirrel**: scales are gnawed off, eaten cone looks untidy and are found in open spaces
   - **Mouse**: scales are neatly gnawed off, not found in the open but at hidden feeding sites
   - **Woodpecker**: scales broken and ruffled

4. Look for and touch:
   - Smooth acorns
   - Rough fir cones
   - Spikey conker cases

5. Find an open cone, and see if you can shake out any tiny winged seeds.

6. Leave a trail of seeds for a vole to follow. Where will you lead them? To a waiting store of nuts, to a new burrow, or somewhere else?

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Looking for leaves

Leaves come in all sorts of colours, shapes, and sizes. Some have hidden scents, some make wonderful sounds and there are many different textures to explore.

Why not try...

- Looking for these leaf shapes.
- Finding leaves that feel tickly or prickly, waxy or hairy, rough or smooth.
- Making a leaf pile, put your feet into it and rustle or stomp to create leaf music.
- Laying some leaves in a line on the floor to create a leaf-snake winding through the trees.
- Watching the leaves dance as they fall to the floor.
- Stopping still and listen to the wind in the tree tops.
- Finding a Douglas fir, rub the leaves and smell the hidden citrus scent.
- Matching as many of these autumn leaf colours as you can:

www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland
Cone bird feeders

Help the birds in your garden through winter by making your own bird feeder.

You will need:
- Selection of cones
- Thread
- Peanut butter or raisins, (or lard with stale breadcrumbs, chopped apple or nuts and birdseed)
- Newspaper

what to do...

1. Cover the work area with a few sheets of newspaper. This can get a little messy!
2. If your cone has not yet opened up, place it in a warm place and leave for a few days to dry out and open up.
3. Tie the thread onto your cone before you start to fill it with food!
4. Squash the raisins or peanut butter into the gaps between the cone scales.
5. If using lard, ask an adult to gently heat the lard, adding the breadcrumbs, chopped apple, chopped nuts and birdseed. Leave to cool.
6. When the mixture has begun to thicken but is still runny, dribble it in between the cones scales. Leave upright to set.
7. Find a good safe place outside to hang your feeders. Have fun bird spotting.

www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland
Twilight adventures in the forest

Have you ever been to the woods at dusk?

Take a visit just before dark to see many animals at their most active. Use this sheet when you go on your twilight adventure and see what you can spot!

Looking

Many nocturnal animals have excellent eyesight and can see their prey in the dark. Our eyes are nowhere near as efficient, so before it gets too dark, look for...

- **Rabbits**
  Although rabbits can be seen in the daytime, they are much more active at dusk and can be spotted on open grassy areas at the edge of the forest.

- **Tawny owls**
  Spring evenings are the best time to spot tawny owls, before the leaves are on the trees.

- **Bats**
  Although bats hibernate, you might be lucky enough to see one on a warm spring evening.

Minibeasts

Minibeasts, or to give them their proper name, invertebrates, can be found during the day, but are more active after sunset, when the air and soil cools. Lift rocks and logs to find them, or look underneath the leaves of the trees or plants at the side of the track.

Can you find:

- **Ground beetle?**
  Tick here

- **Slugs**
  Tick here

- **Woodlouse?**
  Tick here

- **Centipede?**
  Tick here

Reflective eyes

When you are walking through the forest, shine a torch into the trees and look for the reflection of eyes looking back at you – they might belong to deer or foxes.

Have you decided what you are going to do during your twilight adventure? Here are some suggestions...

Turn over for more activities
Listening

Some nocturnal animals rely on their excellent hearing to be able to survive in the forest at night – foxes can supposedly hear a mouse squeak from 30 metres away!

What night time noises can you hear in the forest?

- **Woodpigeons** roost in trees and take off with a loud flapping when you disturb them by walking past.
- **Blackbirds** sing loudly every evening just before nightfall.
- **Humans** make a lot of noise, which travels at night – you might hear distant machines, cars, voices, music, aeroplanes…
- **Frogs** make a deep croaking sound from forest ponds in spring when they are attracting a mate.
- **Hedgehogs** come out of hibernation in spring, and may be heard rustling through the undergrowth looking for caterpillars and beetles to eat.

Twilight activities in the forest continued

Tracking

Wildlife watchers look for clues that animals have left behind in order to find the animals that they are interested in.

Look for footprints, areas of flattened grass where animals might have laid down during the day, or fur on a fence.

Try leaving a trail for mum or dad to follow – what could you use to mark the route you have taken?

Hiding

Small nocturnal prey animals such as mice and shrews need to be able to hide from their predators in order to survive.

Before it gets too dark, try speedy hide and seek. Get mum or dad to count to five while you hide yourself. It doesn’t give you long, so you’ll have to become really good at looking for hiding places.

The forest after hours

The forest after hours

Next time…

1. Find a badger sett and watch it at dusk to see if any badgers come out – be prepared to sit and wait very quietly!
2. Borrow a bat detector and listen for bats.
3. Visit the forest at night in the snow or under a full moon – you might be able to see much more.

www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland
How many of these fun things can you do while visiting the forest today?

1. Find yellow, red & brown leaves
2. Build a twig & leaf hotel for bugs
3. Make a picture from fallen leaves
4. Find a leaf skeleton
5. Feel something prickly
6. Find 5 different tree buds
7. Draw in the frost
8. Touch a tree with smooth bark
9. Spot a squirrel’s drey
10. Listen to a robin singing
11. Listen to the wind in the trees
12. Look through a piece of ice
13. Spot a colourful mushroom
14. Make a magic wand
15. Stand still in the dark
16. Look for animal tracks
17. Sniff Douglas fir needles
18. Crunch some autumn leaves
19. Make a face in the mud
20. Listen out for owls

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For more exciting days out: www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland