



Cornwall
Wildlife Trust

Become a more **wildlife friendly** business

A guide on how
to get started.



Creating a Cornwall
where **nature** thrives

A concerning reality

The UK stands as one of the most nature-depleted countries globally, a concerning reality echoed in Cornwall's landscape. The *State of Nature Cornwall 2020* report paints a stark picture: 12% of species of principal importance face the threat of local extinction or complete loss. Shockingly, nearly half of terrestrial mammal species and over half of butterfly species are now confined to fewer locations compared to three decades ago. Alarming, the rate of species decline shows no signs of slowing.

Inaction poses dire consequences: the potential loss of cherished species; vanishing wild places; and a weakened bond between future generations and the natural world.

However, amid this urgency, there is hope. History has shown that nature, given time, space, and support, can rejuvenate. But the imperative is clear – we must act now, and we must act together.



TOM MARSHALL

Across the UK, hedgehog numbers have halved in the last 20 years

Empowering business

Embarking on the journey to become a wildlife-friendly business may seem daunting amidst the plethora of information on sustainability, climate change, carbon offsetting, and the pursuit of net-zero emissions. Sometimes it's difficult to know where to start.

This guide aims to alleviate those fears by offering practical insights and easily actionable strategies.

Our goal is to empower businesses to embrace wildlife-friendly practices, fostering a harmonious relationship between commerce and conservation.



ADAM JONES

Willow tits are on the brink of disappearing from Cornwall

Together, let's begin our journey towards a Cornwall where nature thrives



Adapted from Leclère, D., Obersteiner, M., Barrett, M. et al. Bending the curve of terrestrial biodiversity needs an integrated strategy. *Nature* 585, 551–556 (2020)

Getting started



First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge the diversity among businesses. Each of you will possess unique resources, varying budget sizes, distinct objectives, and a different customer base. Some of you reading this may not even operate within the hospitality sector but simply seek guidance on fostering a more wildlife-friendly environment at your office. Moreover, many of you may find yourselves at various stages in your journey toward becoming more wildlife-friendly.

With these considerations in mind, please view this report as a simple guide to help you, whatever stage you are at on your journey. Recognising that it may not be feasible to implement all recommendations, we encourage you to selectively choose actions that align with your capabilities and objectives. Even small initiatives, such as providing a fresh water source for wildlife, can yield significant benefits.



Chaffinch

Even small initiatives, can yield significant benefits

Making Space for Nature

Your outdoor spaces may vary significantly in size but there is always something you can do to help your local wildlife:

- Welcome guests and staff with a reminder of the importance of wildlife, setting a nature-friendly tone for their visit, and encourage visitors to slow down and watch out for wildlife upon arrival.
- Why not provide a chalk board or something similar so that visitors, guests or staff can note what wildlife they have seen.
- Incorporate wildlife awareness into staff training, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of on-site biodiversity. You don't have to be an expert to identify wildlife these days. There are lots of free apps that can help you learn. Don't forget to share any interesting sightings on ORKS (Online Recording Kernow and Scilly) – erccis.org.uk/share-sightings
- Nature likes variety, not neat and tidy. Keep areas around paths short and neat but try to let the rest of the space grow wild.
- Avoid the use of herbicides and pesticides; they can harm wildlife and disrupt natural ecosystems.
- Choose plants that are native to your area – a walk around the local countryside will provide inspiration.
- Putting together a log pile will create a village for all things creepy and crawly. In turn, this busy community will attract birds, hedgehogs and frogs.



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Buy peat-free compost

Peat extraction releases carbon into the atmosphere, accelerating climate change.

Peat free compost is readily available in most garden centres.

Corn marigolds can be a great species that adds colour, attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies and provides seeds for birds, helping to contribute to the local ecosystem.



RICHARD BURKMAR

Outdoor spaces may vary in size but there is always something you can do

Let your hedges and borders grow wild

Habitat connectivity is super important for biodiversity. It links different habitat patches and allows species to move around, preventing isolation and decline.

- The more diverse the plants in a hedge, the better it supports various wildlife species. A rich mix of plants means a greater variety of insects, which rely on specific plants for food and shelter.
- To keep hedgerows thriving and beneficial for wildlife, it's a good idea to cut them only once every three years. By trimming a different section each year, you can ensure continuous cover and food sources for various species.

Hedgerows serve as vital corridors for wildlife movement

Let your grass grow

- Allowing grass and plants to grow without mowing promotes diverse wildflowers, attracting pollinators like bees and butterflies.
- Longer grass provides habitat and shelter for small mammals, insects and other wildlife, such as nesting sites for birds.
- Consider participating in 'No Mow May'. You'll need to cut and rake the long grass afterwards, so start with a small area first and see how it goes.
- Use signage to inform guests about the importance of natural grass areas, and inspire them to take similar actions at home.
- Diverse plant life in natural grass areas enhances soil health by improving structure, reducing erosion, and enhancing water retention.
- Long, diverse meadows suck up more carbon, helping to reduce emissions and address the climate crisis.

Promoting diverse wildflowers and vegetation attracts pollinators

Blackthorns make great hedgerows. They are native species producing lovely white flowers in the spring.

They're also an important nectar source for bees and butterflies and a valuable food source for birds. In addition, the dense, thorny branches of blackthorn create an ideal shelter for small mammals.



RICHARD BURKMAR



Red admiral butterfly

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Let your grass grow
in areas of space where
it's possible.

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The conservation group Plantlife has a number of free resources (including downloadable posters) that you can use to help inform guests of your aspirations



Provide a water source



- Provide water sources, like bird baths or water features, to attract wildlife.
- Implement water-efficient technologies and practices, such as low-flow taps and smart irrigation systems.
- Install rainwater harvesting systems for non-potable uses, reducing reliance on traditional water sources.
- Consider greywater systems to recycle water from activities like laundry for non-potable purposes.
- Choose native plants for landscaping to reduce water usage.
- Even an upturned dustbin lid can make a great source of water for wildlife!
- Explore water recycling technologies to reuse wastewater within your facility.
- Regularly inspect and maintain water infrastructure to prevent leaks and water loss.
- Use microfibre filtration systems on washing machines to reduce plastic pollution in oceans.



Blackbird



PENNY DIXIE

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Build a pond –
even the smallest
pond can bring huge
benefits to local wildlife.



ANNA WILLIAMS

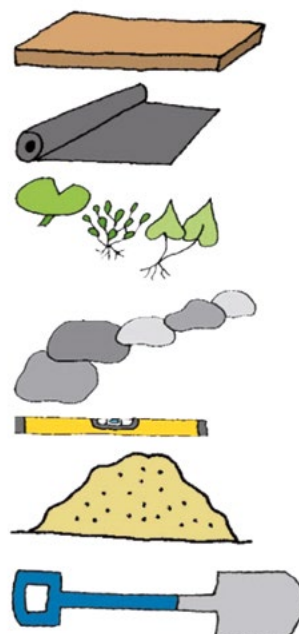
- Small ponds support diverse plant and animal species, including amphibians, insects, birds, and aquatic plants, enhancing biodiversity.
- Ponds serve as wildlife corridors, facilitating movement between habitats for species needing access to both terrestrial and aquatic environments.
- Ponds contribute to local climate regulation by moderating temperature extremes, offering cooling effects in hot weather and stabilising temperatures in surrounding areas.



EMMA ROBERTSHAW

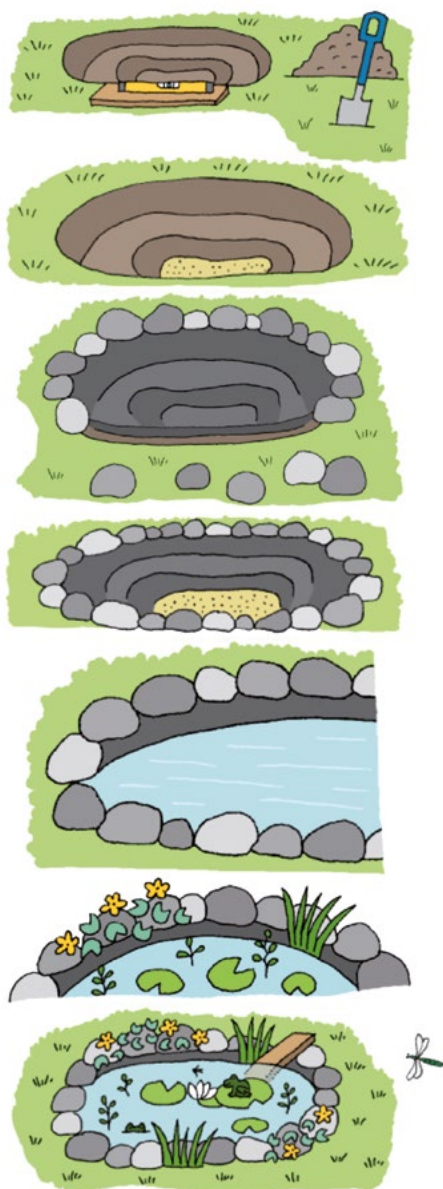
Building a pond

A wildlife pond is one of the single best features for attracting new wildlife to the garden. It is thought that some amphibians, such as frogs, are now more common in garden ponds than in the countryside. You can build a pond at any time during the year, but if you start in autumn or late winter, it will become established much quicker.



You will need

- A big patch of garden
- A plank of wood
- Pond liner – preferably made of butyl rubber, which is durable, flexible, moderately cheap and easy to work with
- A variety of pond plants
- Some large rocks
- A spirit level
- Builder's sand
- A good spade or mini-digger depending on how big your pond will be
- Water (use rainwater for best results)



Step 1

It is better for wildlife if you put the pond in a warm, sunny area – tadpoles, dragonflies and plants will thrive in these conditions. First, mark out your pond on the ground with a rope or hosepipe, and then get digging! It is essential to ensure the sides are level, which you can do by placing a plank across the pond's hole with a spirit level on top. Remember to include some shallow areas – a sloping 'beach' is ideal, to allow wildlife easy access in and out of the pond.

Step 2

Remove any sharp stones from the bottom of the hole. Put down a 5 cm-thick layer of sand to line the hole. Sand is preferable because it is sterile and will not harbour any undesirable seeds or microbes, but you can also try old carpet, newspapers or even loft insulation material. Remember to save some sand for step 4.

Step 3

Dig a trench around the edge of the pond for the overhanging pond liner to drop into. Place the liner carefully in the hole and tuck the edge into the trench; weigh it down with large rocks. Any excess liner extending beyond the ring of rocks can be snipped off with scissors.

Step 4

Fill the bottom of the pond with the remaining sand.

Step 5

Fill the pond up, this may take longer than you think. If possible, use collected rainwater to fill your pond, or fill from the tap with a hose. To stop the sand substrate dispersing, rest the nozzle of the hose on a plastic bag to absorb some of the energy. If you do fill your pond with tap water then leave it to stand for a few days in a separate container, before adding it to the pond. As the pond fills up, the liner will stretch. Back fill the trench around the edge of the pond with soil. As the pond is filling, place turf, soil or flagstones over the exposed liner at the pond edges. Butyl liner degrades in sunlight, so try not to leave areas of uncovered liner exposed for too long.

Step 6

Plants can be introduced to your pond approximately 1–2 weeks after the initial filling with water. Carefully selected native species will support your local wildlife.

Step 7

Watch and see what wildlife visits. Place stones, logs and plants around the edges to create habitats for pond-visiting creatures. Consider adding a plank of wood or a similar ramp to help any wildlife that might fall in. By including a gently sloping beach area when digging your pond, you can provide wildlife with an easy way out.

If plants are well chosen, and the pond is kept in a relatively balanced ecological state, it shouldn't need much maintenance at all. However, do keep an eye out for a build-up of dead organic matter and encroaching vegetation.

Choosing the right pond plants

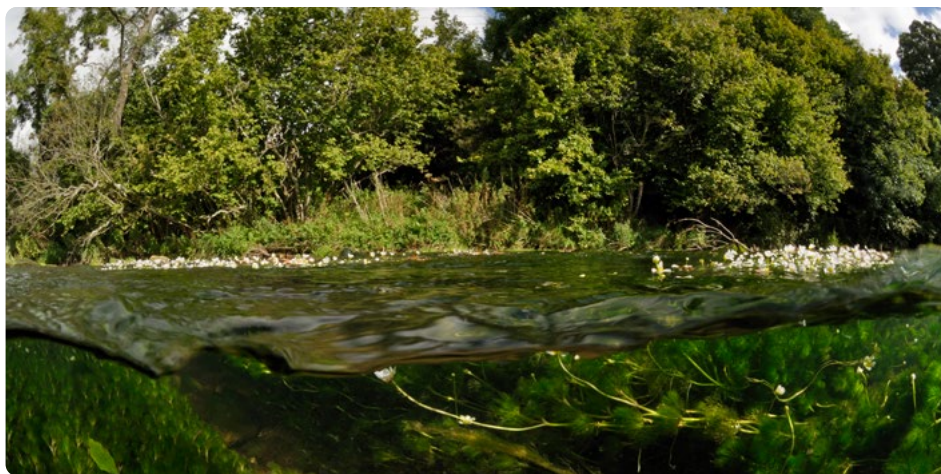
You don't have to put plants in, you can just see what turns up. But if you want to put plants in, here are some recommended pond plants:

Totally submerged (in deeper water) – oxygenating plants

- Spiked water-milfoil – *Myriophyllum spicatum*
- Hornwort – *Ceratophyllum demersum* (pollution intolerant)
- Shining pondweed – *Potamogeton lucens*
- Horned pondweed – *Zannichellia palustris*
- Fennel pondweed – *Potamogeton pectinatus* (pollution tolerant)
- Water starwort – *Callitriche stagnalis* (pollution intolerant)

Submerged but with floating leaves (also in deep water) – oxygenating plants

- Water crowfoot/buttercup – *Ranunculus aquatilis* (pollution intolerant)
- Bladderwort – *Utricularia* spp
- Frogbit – *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*
- Broad-leaved pondweed – *Potamogeton natans* (pollution tolerant)
- Curled pondweed – *Potamogeton crispus* (pollution tolerant)



LINDA PITKIN

Emergent (in shallower area)

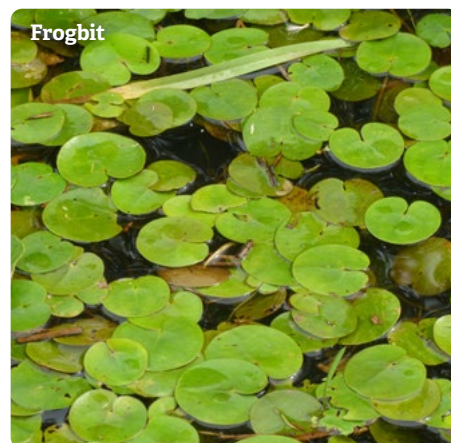
- Branched bur-reed – *Sparganium erectum* (tall, can be invasive)
- Amphibious bistort – *Persicaria amphibium*
- Arrowhead – *Sagittaria aquatilis*
- Water crowfoot – *Ranunculus aquatilis*
- Water mint – *Mentha aquatica* (can be invasive, strong scent deters some insects)
- Flowering rush – *Butomus umbellatus*
- Water plantain – *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (tall)
- Water forget-me-not – *Myosotis scorpiodes*
- Marsh cinquefoil – *Potentilla palustris*
- Greater pond-sedge – *Carex riparia* (sedges and grasses are good for pond invertebrates)



PHILIP PRECEY



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LIZZIE WILBERFORCE



KAREN LLOYD

Your retail space

Retail space and shop stock can often be overlooked when it comes to your impact on the environment. Often it's about considering where your products have come from and where they will end up. Here are some helpful guidelines:

- Source from suppliers prioritising environmental and social responsibility, with eco-friendly certifications and sustainable practices.
- Stock fresh, seasonal fruit and vegetables to reduce transport costs and pollution.
- Prioritise locally sourced and organic products to minimise environmental impact from transportation.
- Minimise packaging waste with eco-friendly materials and encourage the use of reusable bags by providing one with every purchase.
- Ditch single-use items wherever possible, such as plastic bottles and bags, to reduce plastic pollution.
- Introduce sustainable products, including reusable items and eco-friendly alternatives, and educate customers on their environmental benefits.
- Encourage waste reduction by inviting guests to bring their own containers and offering refill stations for all types of produce, with local outlets available to assist in stocking these options.
- Establish a re-use station where departing guests can leave items such as beach equipment, bodyboards, and even wetsuits for subsequent guests, promoting sustainability and cost savings for guests.

Consider where your products have come from and where they will end up



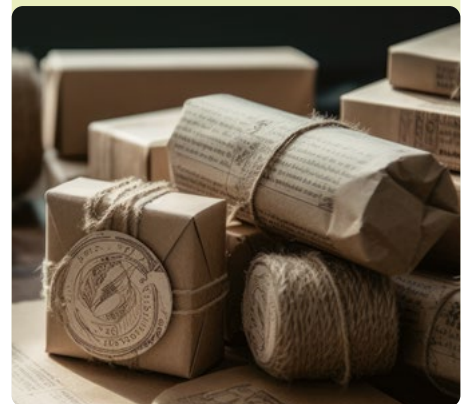
Buying from local suppliers not only reduces transport miles but also supports the local economy



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Source from suppliers prioritising environmental and social responsibility, with eco-friendly certifications and sustainable practices.

Look to stock products that have recyclable packaging or, better still, has no packaging at all.



Having a refill option in your shop can be a great way to help your guests protect the environment and help you to reduce waste.



Food and drink

If you're lucky enough to have one, or if this is your main business, your restaurants and bars are a great places to become more sustainable and help your guests or customers to make sustainable choices. Here's a few ways how...

- Support local farmers, fishermen, and producers to reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Prioritise locally sourced and organic ingredients for your menu.
- Consider seasonality when designing your menu.
- Optimise your menu to reduce food waste. Consider portion control, offer seasonal dishes, and creatively re-purpose ingredients to minimise leftovers.
- Offer more vegetarian or vegan options (with lower ingredient costs) allowing you to source smaller quantities of more sustainable meat, fish and dairy.
- Feature local and sustainably produced beverages, including craft beers, wines, and spirits. This supports local businesses and reduces the environmental impact associated with long-distance transportation.



- Sign up to the *Cornwall Good Seafood Guide* to get up-to-date listings on what seafood is currently sustainable and receive information on different catching methods.
- Train staff on sustainable practices and engage them in sustainability efforts.
- Encourage energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and responsible sourcing among staff.
- Implement incentive programs to reward eco-friendly initiatives and motivate staff participation.
- Share information with customers about product sourcing and encourage questions.
- Support environmental causes like the lobster hatchery and emphasise your commitment to sustainability to customers.



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The *Cornwall Good Seafood Guide* is a great way of making sure the fish you serve is sustainable, helping to keep our oceans healthy. This is also a good way of supporting the local fishing industry.



Empowering staff by teaching them about sustainability can have huge benefits when they interact with your guests. Shared aspirations encourage staff loyalty and help you fill job vacancies with like-minded people.



Support local farmers, fisherman, and producers to reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation and promote sustainable agriculture.

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Supporting initiatives like **'buy one set one free'** enables you and your customers to release baby lobsters into our waters to sustain fragile stocks.

You and your website

Your website will most likely be the first chance you have to create an impression and show how important wildlife is to your business, as well as being a unique opportunity for you to share information. The following are some helpful tips about how you might go about doing this.

- Introduce yourselves as a wildlife-friendly business, explaining on-site practices like longer grass and wild hedges.
- Offer access to your sustainability or environmental policy online, highlighting your journey and future plans.
- Provide information on what people can do in the local area that supports the local environment, e.g. beach cleans.
- If you operate in the hospitality sector, provide links to the Marine and Countryside Code. Many of your guests might not be familiar with what to do when faced with a wildlife encounter.

Your financial decisions could have the biggest impact of all on the environment so it's worth seeking some professional advice on how reduce your impact in this way. Here are a few things to consider:

- Switch to a green pension provider. Look for pension schemes that invest in environmentally sustainable and wildlife-friendly projects and avoid investing in industries such as fossil fuels and deforestation.
- Use an ethical bank. Find a bank with strong environmental policies that support renewable energy, conservation, and sustainability.
- Switching to a green energy provider helps reduce carbon emissions and supports the development of renewable energy sources, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

Use your website to show how important wildlife is to your business

Provide information on what people can do in the local area



NIA JONES

Mention how your guests/visitors or staff can be more wildlife friendly and avoid disturbances



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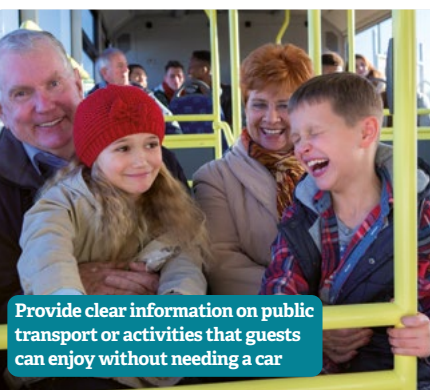
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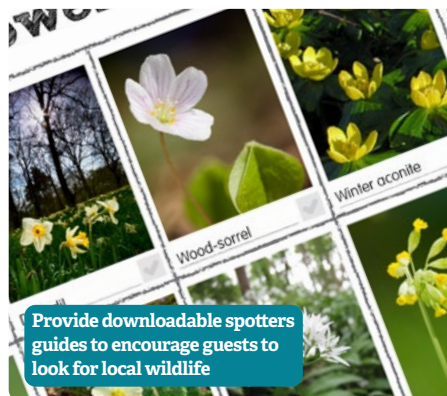
Switch to a green pension provider!

£88 billion of UK pension savers' money is invested in fossil fuels. That works out at about £3,000 per pension holder.

MakeMoneyMatter, 2024, Climate Action Report



Provide clear information on public transport or activities that guests can enjoy without needing a car



Provide downloadable spotters guides to encourage guests to look for local wildlife



Offer access to your sustainability or environmental policy online

Customer engagement



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Once your guests have arrived, hopefully they will already be aware of your motivations on becoming more wildlife friendly. It's now your opportunity to bring them on that journey too. This can be a mixture of fun activities or simple information. Here are a few ideas.

- Create a nature trail for kids combined with wildlife spotters guides (available on our website).
- Offer wildlife-friendly activities for kids, such as building a bug hotels or creating seed bombs. Instruction sheets are available on our website.
- Engage your guests in your wildlife friendly activities. If you have a bug hotel why not ask guests to add to it? If you don't, perhaps suggest making one as an activity, using our free guides for reference.
- Get guests, staff or customers to create a list of what they see whilst on site or even on their holiday. You could even ask them to take pictures and have a gallery page on your website.

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Create a swap shop or exchange for books, clothes, or reusable items, especially useful for reducing single-use plastics and disposable surfboards. This can be aimed at both customers and/or staff.

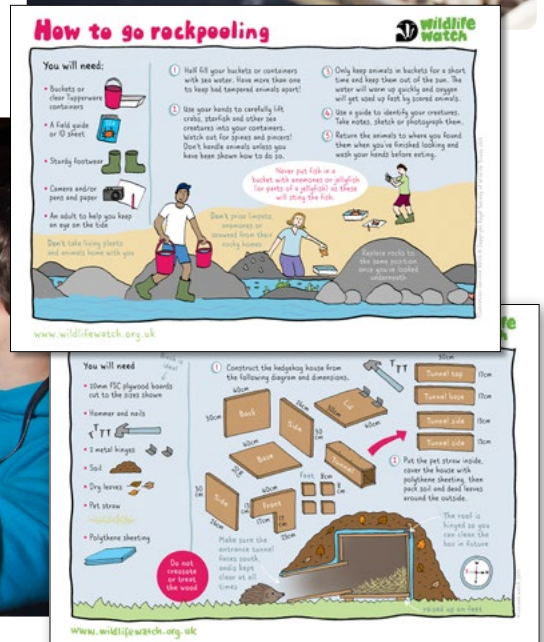
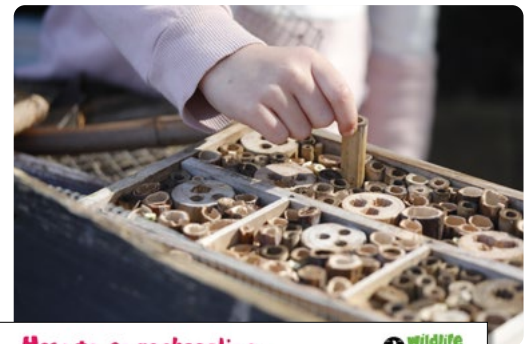


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- Install information boards around the site to educate guests about your wildlife-friendly practices, including why grass isn't cut, what's found in the bug hotel, and the importance of overgrown hedges.
- Inform guests about restaurant offerings, highlighting local and sustainable options. Reference the *Good Seafood Guide* for seafood dishes and encourage curiosity about sustainable dining.
- Provide information on local transport links to help guests lower their carbon footprint.
- Consider offering reusable BBQs for hire to limit the need for disposable ones.
- Encourage guests to make a lasting difference beyond their stay by pledging to do something differently at home that supports their local wildlife.
- Organise wildlife walks and workshops for guests to learn about local flora and fauna, and how to support biodiversity in their own backyards.
- Create a wildlife observation area with binoculars and seating where guests can quietly observe local wildlife, accompanied by informational pamphlets about the species they might see.
- Provide eco-friendly amenities such as biodegradable toiletries, reusable water bottles, and birdseed packs, encouraging guests to interact with nature in a sustainable way.

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Continue your journey

In today's world, becoming a wildlife-friendly business is not only beneficial for the environment but also an investment in your business's future. This document provides helpful tips on how to start, recognising that not all points will be achievable, relevant, or realistic for every business. However, every small action counts, which is why we included the "one small change" feature to help you begin.

Businesses vary greatly in size, purpose, and location, yet all are intrinsically linked to our environment and the wildlife we share it with. Whether you run a small local shop or a large corporation, integrating wildlife-friendly practices can enhance your sustainability efforts, improve community relations, and contribute to a healthier planet and work force.

Remember, investing in nature is investing in the future of your business.

For further information, resources, or personalised advice, please contact corporatesupport@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Together, we can make a significant impact, one small change at a time.



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**Creating a Cornwall
where nature thrives**