



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust



my wild winter

— A WINTER WILDLIFE AND ACTIVITY GUIDE —



#WILDWINTERDAYS

Wildlife to look out for in winter

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For whenever you are stuck indoors.

- Ducks, geese and swans all visit the UK in winter. Look out for large flocks or migratory geese.
- Winter is the best time to spot footprints in mud and snow. Great for practising your wildlife tracking skills.
- Listen for woodpeckers drumming on trees.
- Tawny owls call more in winter than at other times of year. Listen for their familiar twit-twoo.
- Look out for starling 'murmurations' where hundreds of birds swoop through the sky together before settling down to roost for the night.
- Snowdrops flower in the later winter – one of the first signs that spring is on its way.
- Red wings and fieldfares look a bit like thrushes and they visit the UK in winter. They love eating juicy red berries on rowan and hawthorn trees.

Brrrr! The coldest and darkest months of the year are here, and it might be tempting to curl up indoors to wait for spring to arrive but DONT! There are loads of things to do outdoors, and lots of wildlife to spot at this time of year.

This booklet is packed full with ideas from The Wildlife Trusts to help you explore nature and wild places, either at home or on days out. We're on a mission to help keep families wild and connected with nature, whatever the weather. So grab your gloves and pull on your wellies, it's time to begin your wild winter.



Starling murmuration



Red deer

my playground

— ACTIVITIES —



Make your own binoculars



You will need

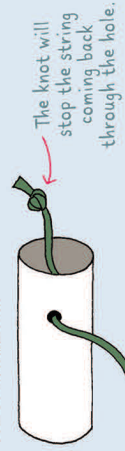
- Two cardboard tubes (you can use toilet roll tubes)
 - String
 - Paper
 - Scissors
 - Glue
 - Rubber band
 - Hole puncher or pen
 - Felt tip pens (optional)
-

- 1** Cut your paper to size, then cover your tubes with glue and wrap the paper around them.
-

- 2** Using a pen or hole puncher, insert a hole at the side of each tube, about a third of the way down.
-

- 3** Glue the two tubes together so that the holes are facing the outside.
-

- 4** Insert string into one of the holes from the outside of the tube. Bring it through the tube and tie a chunky knot. Gently pull the string back from the outside. Repeat on the other side.
-



The knot will stop the string coming back through the hole.

- 5** Place a rubber band around the tubes to help the glue set. Leave to dry over night.
-

- 6** Remove the elastic band and then decorate them with pens!
-

- 7** Go wildlife detecting!

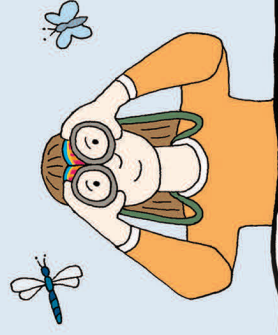


Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Truists 2016



How to make your own bird feeder

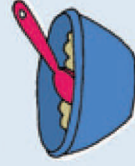
wildlife
watch



What you need:

- dry ingredients
 - bird seed
 - cooked rice
 - grated cheese
- dried fruit
- breadcrumbs
- chopped nuts
- lard or dripping)
- a fir cone, coconut shell or yoghurt pot
- string

1 Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl



2 Add the fat and give it a good mix around.

If you need to melt the fat, ask an adult to help

3 Choose your feeder

plaster all over a fir cone



put it round the inside of a coconut shell

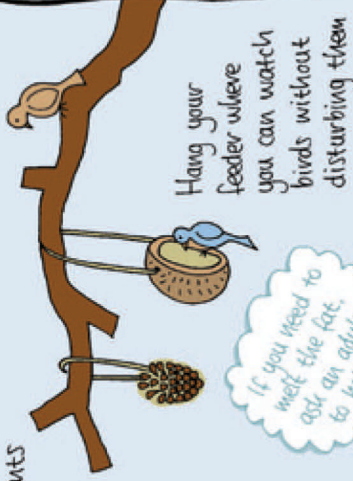


press into a yoghurt pot

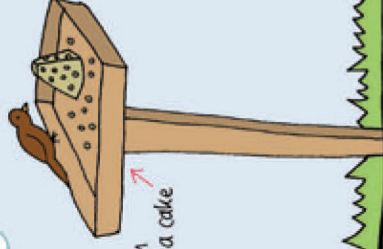


you can hang this upside down like a bell or turn it out like a cake

4 Hang your feeders with string (you may need to make holes and tie the string in before adding the mix)



Hang your feeder where you can watch birds without disturbing them



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How to make a nest box

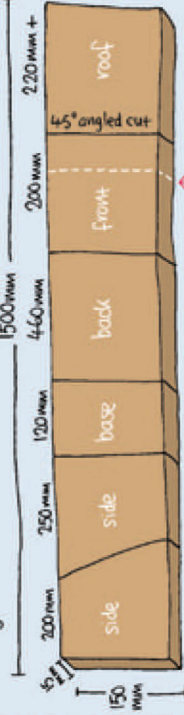
wildlife
watch



What you need:

- rough cut timber
- some old rubber or a hinge
- 20mm nails

• tools:

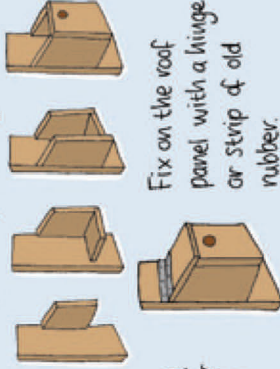


1 Mark out and saw panels

Use diagrams above, and write the name of each panel onto the marked out wood.

3 Assemble the box

Nail the panels together:



2 Choose your box type

- hole-fronted box: blue tits (25mm) great tits (28mm) sparrows (38mm) starlings (45mm)
- open-fronted box for robins

Fix on the roof panel with a hinge or strip of old rubber.

Where to put it:

2-5 metres above the ground, somewhere sheltered.

2-5m above ground



• 150mm x 200mm x 220mm

• hand brace or drill

• pencil, ruler and

• scissors

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Discover animal tracks and signs

wildlife
watch



Look for animal footprints in mud, sand or snow.

Look under hedges and in banks for rabbit holes.

Animal fur can get caught on barbed wire and fences.

Owls spit out bits (pellets) of their prey they can't digest.

Birds shed their feathers when they are damaged.

Look for hedgehog poo with bits of beetles in it.

Look for pine cones that have been stripped by hungry Squirrels.

If the trail is continuous, it's a slug. If broken, it's a snail.

Nests are a surefire sign that birds are breeding. Hooray!

Molehills are signs that moles are nearby

Mammals can leave flattened grass in their tracks.

Song thrushes leave behind broken snail shells after meals.

© Cornvine watch 04

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How to go plaster casting

wildlife
watch



What you need:

- plaster of paris (from a pharmacy)
- an old 500g margarine tub for mixing it in
- a stick or spoon for stirring
- water
- Strips of card, 10cm wide and long enough to fit around the footprint
- paperclips

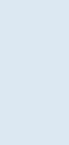


1 Find a footprint and clear away any twigs and leaves from the area around it



2 Make a circle with the strip of card, join the ends with the paperclip, and push it into the ground around the footprint

3 Mix 5 tablespoons of dry plaster with water until it is like smooth cream



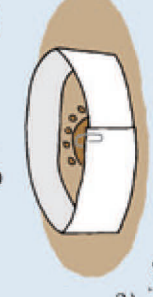
4 Pour the plaster into the card collar. Wait 5-10 mins for it to set then dig it out



5 Take home, wash, identify and label



plaster should be at least 3cm deep



© Cornvine watch 04

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How to make ice decorations



You will need:

- Saucers
- Kettle
- Boiled water that has been allowed to cool
- Natural items like leaves, feathers, berries and grass
- String or wool
- A freezer (if the weather isn't cold enough!)

1 Place your saucers on a flat surface and put the end of your string into the saucer, making sure a long piece is left dangling over the edge.



2 Lay natural items in the saucer over the string.



3 Gently pour in cooled water (boiling it first helps to remove any bubbles).



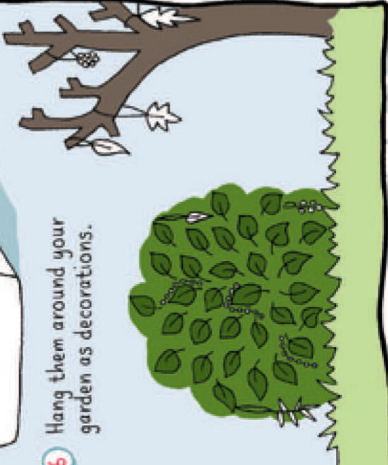
4 Put the saucers outside on a frosty night (or in the freezer).



5 In the morning put the saucers in a tub of cold water to separate the ice.



6 Hang them around your garden as decorations.



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Snow, ice and the dark

SNOW ANIMALS

Have you ever built a snowman? Well this year we're challenging you to try something different! Why not see if you can build a wild animal from snow instead. You could have a go at building any sort of creature but if you're stuck for ideas, we've come up with a few suggestions of animals to try:

Difficulty rating

Easy: Hedgehog (use sticks for the spines), caterpillar, snail

Medium: Owl, rabbit (if the ears are bit tricky, use sticks instead of snow for these), dolphin

Tricky: Squirrel, octopus, swan



NIGHT WALK

During the winter the nights are long and dark but that doesn't mean you have to stay indoors. It can be exciting to explore outside at night time.

Things to do:

- Try switching off your torch to see how dark it is: what is the darkest place you can find?
- Take binoculars and look in detail at the craters on the moon, or learn to identify some star constellations – Orion's Belt and The Plough are both good ones to start with. It is believed that some birds use the stars to help them navigate during migration. Do you think you could use the stars to find your way around?
- Listen out for nocturnal wildlife like owls and foxes.
- Play 'sardines'. One person goes outside and hides somewhere in the garden (they can take a torch to help find their hiding place, but then they will need to switch it off once they are hidden). Everyone else must count to 20 before going outside to try to find them (no torches!). You must sneak round quietly on your own, and if you find the hidden person you hide with them. Eventually everyone will be squeezed into one hiding place.

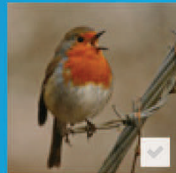
TOP TIPS FOR NIGHT TIME ADVENTURES:

- Wrap up warm
- Take a torch
- Wear bright, light clothing near roads so that cars can see you.

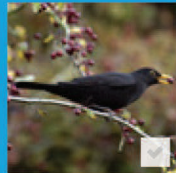


Spotting winter wildlife

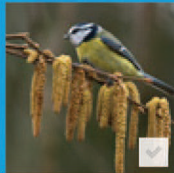
Tick off the wildlife you see this winter



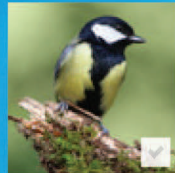
Robin



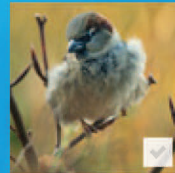
Blackbird



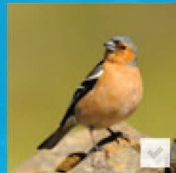
Blue tit



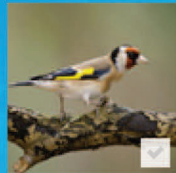
Great tit



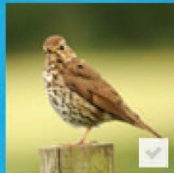
House sparrow



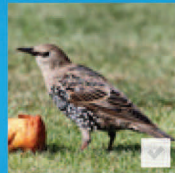
Chaffinch



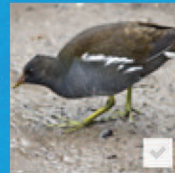
Goldfinch



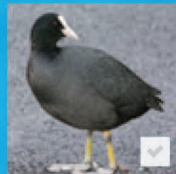
Song thrush



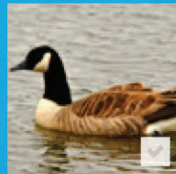
Starling



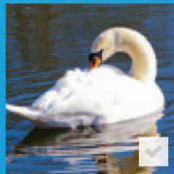
Moorhen



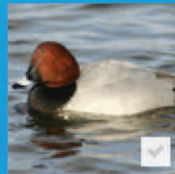
Coot



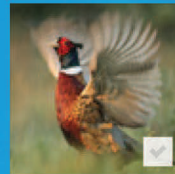
Canada goose



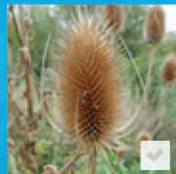
Mute swan



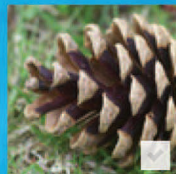
Pochard



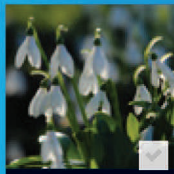
Pheasant



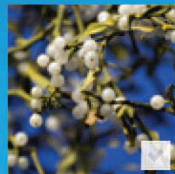
Teasel



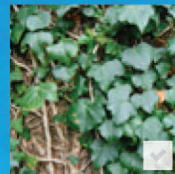
Pine cone



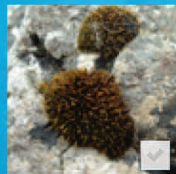
Snowdrop



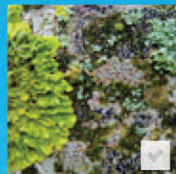
Mistletoe



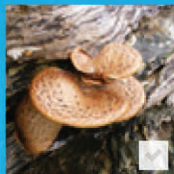
Ivy



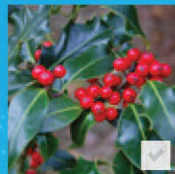
Moss



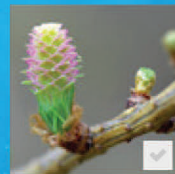
Lichen



Bracket fungi

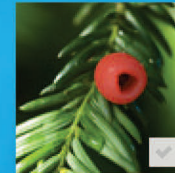


Holly

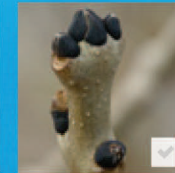


Larch

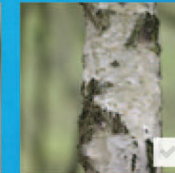
Download a poster of this page at wildlifetrusts.org/winterspotting



Yew



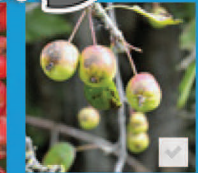
Ash tree



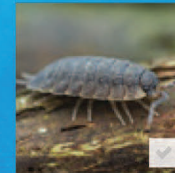
Silver birch



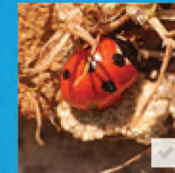
Rowan tree



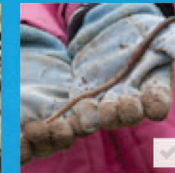
Crab apple



Woodlouse



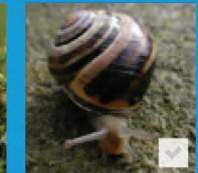
Hibernating ladybirds



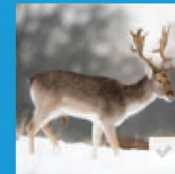
Earthworm



Millipede



Snail



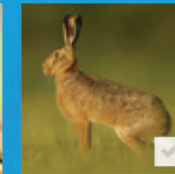
Fallow deer



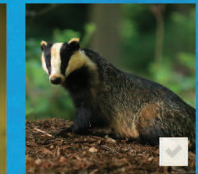
Fox



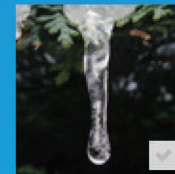
Grey squirrel



Brown hare



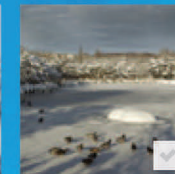
Badger



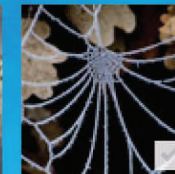
Icicle



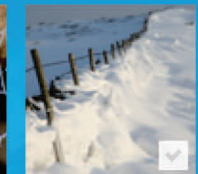
Tree covered in frost



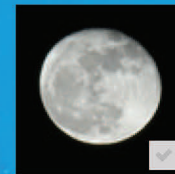
Frozen pond



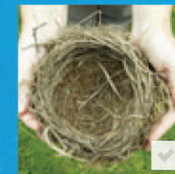
Cobweb



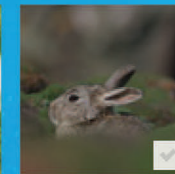
Snow



Moon



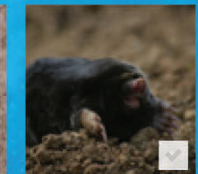
Empty bird's nest



Rabbit hole



Animal tracks



Mole hill

Jokes

WHAT DO YOU CALL A DEER WEARING EAR MUFFS?

Anything you like - he can't hear you

IN WINTER, WHAT FALLS BUT DOESN'T HIT THE GROUND?

The temperature

WHAT FISH ONLY SWIMS AT NIGHT?

A starfish

HOW DO YOU CATCH A SQUIRREL?

Climb up a tree and act like a nut!

WHY DO BIRDS FLY SOUTH IN THE WINTER?

Because it's too far to walk

WHERE DO FROGS LEAVE THEIR HATS AND COATS?

In the croakroom

WHAT DOES AN OCTOPUS WEAR WHEN IT GETS COLD?

A coat of arms

WHERE DOES IVY GO TO BECOME FAMOUS?

Holly-wood

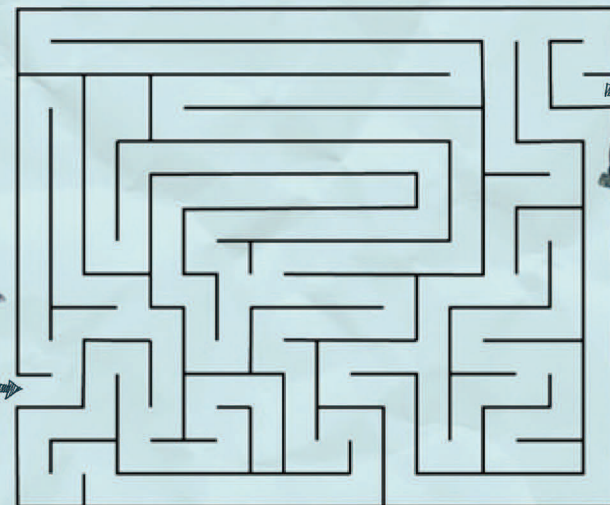
WHY DOES SANTA HAVE A GARDEN?

So he can hoe hoe hoe



PUZZLE

Can you help the jay find the way to the hidden acorns?



COLOURING IN

Get creative and colour in some winter wildlife. Can you unscramble their names too?



GHOST HURNS



ODOURSM E

ROMTHERAW



CREATE A LONG-EARED OWL MASK



Use paints, pencils or even natural materials to create your own owl mask.

Once you have decorated your mask, carefully cut along the thick black line, make holes on the 2 black dots on each side of the mask*, then thread and attach string.

*This task will require adult supervision

WILD WINTER CROSSWORD



M U S N O W B A L L B H J H U W F H
 U K N R O M Z L A P T S N W F U R O
 R S O H O X I I V Y I O N S G I O L
 M V W Q I B A S K E F N B O P Y Z L
 U F D B J B I Z T W K F E A W M E Y
 R D R T L M E N B L U Y G C D M N S
 A N O Y F U T R U C E G S O O G A K
 T H P T E O E R N X N T Y L F N E N
 I D A R K O X T P A K R O D R X E R
 O N I C I C L E I L T U G E Q G N N
 N L Y D E E R I V T Y E T A P E N H
 R Z Z F R O S T F N E S N O W K W H



Badger
 Bluetit
 Cold
 Dark
 Deer
 Fox
 Frost

Frozen
 Hibernate
 Holly
 Icicle
 Ivy
 Mistletoe
 Murmuration

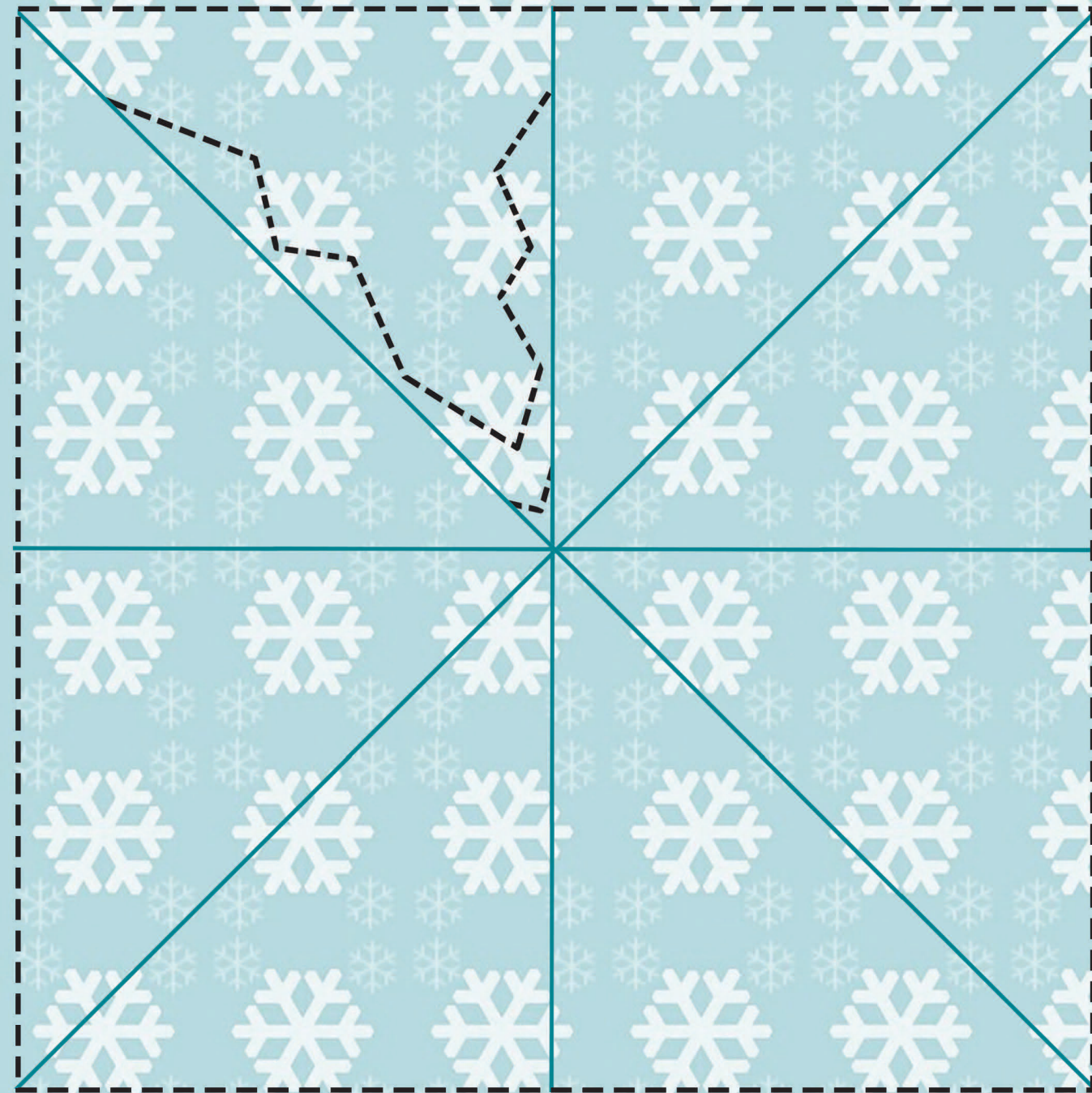
Pinecone
 Robin
 Snow
 Snowball
 Snowdrop
 Snowman





COLOUR IN THIS WILD WINTER SCENE. Add extra animals and winter plants to make it even wilder!

CREATE AN ICICLE DECORATION



1. Cut the square out along the dotted lines.



2. Fold the paper in half, along the guidelines, with the snowflake pattern and guides facing out.



3. Fold the paper into quarters, along the guidelines.



4. Fold the paper across the diagonal line.

5. Now your paper is all folded, cut along the dotted lines.



6. Open up your cut paper to reveal a wintry snowflake.

You can create lots of different snowflake decorations using a range of papers including old newspaper.

*This activity will require adult supervision

CREATE YOUR WILD WINTER PACK MEDAL



Now you have completed your Wild Winter Pack, decorate this medal, cut it out along the dotted line, and show it off!



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust

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