

Spotter's Guide - Spring

Spotting signs of spring

This is when nature gets going again after the winter. Birds are nesting, butterflies are on the wing as the weather warms up and flowers start appearing. What signs of spring can you see at Dalzell and Baron's Haugh?

Lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*)

The flowers of the lesser celandine open when the sun comes out and close when it goes down. Looking like miniature suns themselves, they are one of the very first flowers you'll see in early spring.



Points for spotting lesser celandine flowers: 2

I've seen lesser celandine flowers

(add nature spring watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Orange tip butterfly (*Anthocharis cardamines*)

This is one of the first butterflies to appear in the spring. Only the male butterfly has orange tips on its wings, but the undersides of the wings are partly mottled green on both males and females, so that it can hide from hungry birds (and you).



Points for spotting an orange tip butterfly: 4

I've seen an orange tip butterfly

(add nature spring watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

You'll probably hear this small olive-brown bird before you see it – you can't mistake the repeated "chiffchaff" call. It spends the winter in warmer countries before flying back here in the spring to nest (though sometimes it stays through the winter in southern Britain).



Points for hearing/seeing a chiffchaff: 4

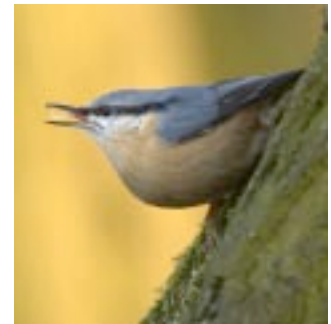
I've heard/seen a chiffchaff

(add nature spring watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Try and spot this woodland bird walking up or down tree trunks looking for insects to eat – it's the only British bird that can climb down head first! Listen out for the sound of the nuthatch hammering nuts and seeds into cracks so it can split them open with its sharp beak.



Points for seeing a nuthatch: 6

I've seen a nuthatch

(add nature spring watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Common frog (*Rana temporaria*)

Look out for frogs and frogspawn in ponds, ditches and even puddles during the spring. The mass of jelly-like spawn is made up of thousands of individual eggs and the tiny black specks inside will hatch into tadpoles before changing into froglets.



Points for spotting a frog/frogspawn: 5

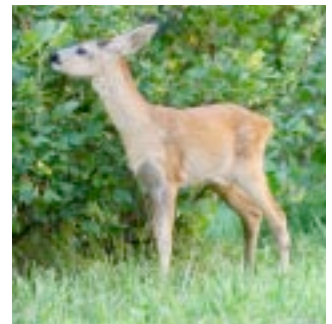
I've seen a frog/frogspawn

(add nature spring watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)

The shy roe deer can sometimes be seen grazing among the high reeds and grasses around the haugh, as well as in the woodland. But their hearing and sense of smell is excellent and they're good at spotting moving objects, so if they see you first, they'll be off!



Points for seeing a roe deer: 8

I've seen a roe deer

(add nature spring watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Your total number of nature spring watch points

Spotter's Guide - Summer

Summer's here!

Now things are hotting up. The birds are busy finding food to feed their young, insects are buzzing about and the trees are in full leaf. There's a lot to see at Dalzell and Baron's Haugh.

Oak (*Quercus robur*)

Oak trees are full of life! From their roots to their leaves, oaks provide shelter and food for more living things, especially insects, than any other tree. What can you find on the oak trees growing at Dalzell?



Points for seeing an oak tree: 1

I've seen an oak tree

(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Peacock butterfly (*Inachis io*)

The large eye spots on the wings of these butterflies are there to warn off hungry birds. They give the butterfly its name too as they look like the markings on a peacock's tail.



Points for seeing a peacock butterfly: 5

I've seen a peacock butterfly

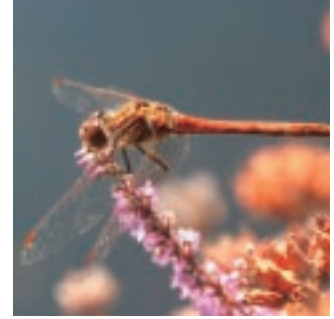
(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Dragonfly (*Sympetrum striolatum*)

It's hard to believe, but the dragonflies whizzing about at Dalzell and Baron's Haugh started life in water. The eggs are laid in ponds and hatch into larva, which live underwater for several years before climbing out. Then the skin splits and the winged adult is born.



Points for seeing a dragonfly: 8

I've seen a dragonfly

(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Sand martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Look out for the nest tunnels of sand martins in the banks of the River Clyde. You'll see the adult birds darting after flying insects and, in the late summer, gathering together ready to fly to Africa for the winter.



Points for seeing sand martins: 4

I've seen sand martins

(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)

Look but don't touch this woodland plant. Every bit of it is poisonous – one of its other names is dead man's bells.



Points for seeing foxgloves: 2

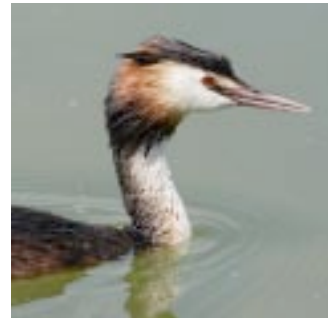
I've seen foxgloves

(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

The haugh is the place to see this large water bird. It's easy to recognise – the grey crest looks like a pair of ears and it has a black frill at the base of its head (this disappears in the autumn).



Points for seeing a great crested grebe: 6

I've seen a great crested grebe

(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Otter

This is one of the most playful animals, sliding down mud banks just for fun. It has webbed toes and a powerful tail to help it swim under water as it hunts for fish. The otter is rare but can sometimes be seen by the river – top marks if you spot one.



Points for seeing an otter: 10

I've seen an otter

(add nature summer watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Your total number of nature summer watch points

Spotter's Guide - Autumn

Autumn arrives

As the weather cools down, the leaves start changing colour and wildlife stocks up on insects, ripe berries and nuts. Some birds fly off to warmer countries, but others arrive to spend the winter with us. What will you spot?

Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

During a sunny autumn, look out for the brilliant combination of yellow-orange leaves and clusters of red berries on this small tree. It may be full of birds too as thrushes love the berries.



Points for seeing a rowan: 3

I've seen a rowan

(add nature autumn watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Small tortoiseshell butterfly (*Aglais urticae*)

On warm, sunny days you may see this butterfly flitting around looking for flowers that are rich in nectar. It has to feed up ready for the winter when it hibernates hidden away in buildings.



Points for seeing a small tortoiseshell butterfly: 4

I've seen a small tortoiseshell butterfly

(add nature autumn watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

These birds fly in from Scandinavia in large flocks to spend the autumn and winter with us. Look out for their grey heads and rumps and listen for the noisy chattering calls.



Points for seeing a fieldfare: 5

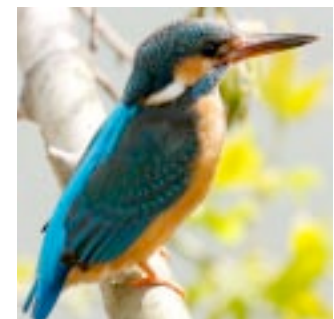
I've seen a fieldfare

(add nature autumn watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

If you see a flash of blue flying low over the river, you've spotted a kingfisher, one of our most colourful birds. Watch carefully and you may see it diving into the water from an overhanging branch, coming back up with a fish, which it swallows whole, head first.



Points for seeing a kingfisher: 9

I've seen a kingfisher

(add nature autumn watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Listen for a “pee-wit!” cry and look out for the lapwing. It’s black and white with a subtle iridescent green on the wings. It also has a crazy tuft on its head. You’ll often find them in a big gang!



Points for seeing a lapwing: 6

I’ve seen a lapwing

(add nature autumn watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Ear fungus (*Auricularia auricula-judae*)

Look for this in damp, low-down places, like fallen logs or old elder bushes. It looks like an ear, except dark red. Remember never to touch fungi as some can make you very ill!



Points for seeing ear fungus: 6

I’ve seen ear fungus

(add nature autumn watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Your total number of nature autumn watch points

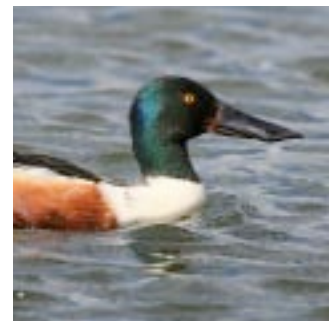
Spotter's Guide - Winter

Wrap up for winter

It may be cold and wet outside but there's still plenty to see at Dalzell and Baron's Haugh, especially on the haugh where the resident wildfowl are joined by ducks and swans coming here for the winter.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

You can guess how this duck got its name! The wide bill is used to sift small insects and plant matter from water sucked in by the duck. See if you can spot the shoveler in action.



Points for seeing a shoveler: 4

I've seen a shoveler

(add nature winter watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*)

Get up close to the snowdrop and you might just be able to detect a very faint scent. The smell attracts any insects flying early in the year, when this little plant is one of very few flowering in the woods.



Points for seeing a snowdrop: 1

I've seen a snowdrop

(add nature winter watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

A flock of these large, white swans arrives from Iceland to spend the winter in this part of the Clyde Valley. They have distinctive yellow patterns on their bills, compared to the orange of mute swans, which live here all year round.



Points for seeing a whooper swan: 9

I've seen a whooper swan

(add nature winter watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

The prickly leaves of this small evergreen tree or bush shine out among the bare branches in the woods.

The red berries only appear on some plants and won't be there for long – flocks of blackbirds, fieldfares and other thrushes feast on them as the weather gets cold.



Points for seeing holly: 1

I've seen a holly tree

(add nature winter watch points to the box)

At
(where and what time you saw it)

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Now that many trees are bare of leaves, look for the sparrowhawk flying at high speed among the branches. This bird of prey is searching for small birds, which it takes to a tree stump or post to pluck off the feathers and feet before eating.



Points for seeing a sparrowhawk: 8

I've seen a sparrowhawk

(add nature winter watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

One of the reasons why the fox is such a great survivor is because it isn't fussy about what it eats. It will feed on insects, earthworms, berries, birds, small animals and any bits of food left about by us humans, even searching through bin bags for something tasty.



Points for seeing a fox: 9

I've seen a fox

(add nature winter watch points to the box)

At

(where and what time you saw it)

Your total number of nature winter watch points