

## Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust Wildlife Books for 2021: Rutland Readers choices

*Here is the 2021 list for our volunteer wildlife book club. There's some really great reads install for the coming year from amazing authors about different species and areas of conservation.*

*Though our book club isn't taking on new members at the moment we thought you all might like to take a look and have a read for yourself.*

*So now all that's left is to pour yourself a nice cup of tea, find a comfy spot and get reading! Enjoy!*



### ONE TO LOOK FOR:

#### **The Stubborn Light of Things**

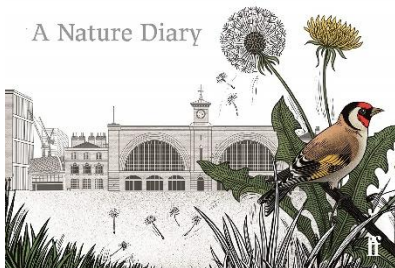
**Published 5 Nov 2020 - paperback due April 22 2021**

MELISSA HARRISON

Melissa Harrison

### **The Stubborn Light of Things**

A Nature Diary



Her monthly nature columns in The Times over past 5 years. In this beautiful meditation on reconnecting with the natural world, novelist, *Times* columnist and former Londoner Melissa Harrison charts her journey from city-dweller to star-gazing resident of rural Suffolk.

A Londoner for over twenty years, moving from flat to Tube to air-conditioned office, Melissa Harrison knew what it was to be insulated from the seasons. Adopting a dog and going on daily walks helped reconnect her with the cycle of the year and the quiet richness of nature all around her: swifts nesting in a nearby church; ivy-leaved toadflax growing out of brick walls; the first blackbird's song; an

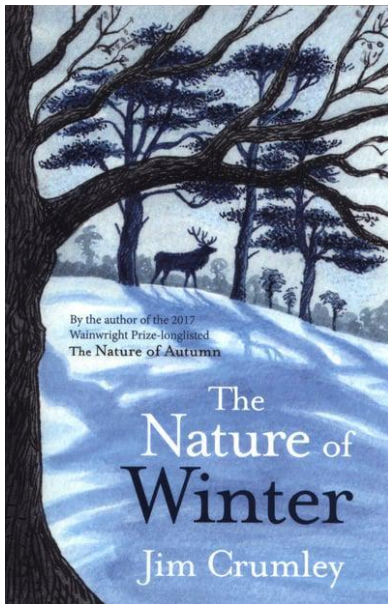
exhilarating glimpse of a hobby over Tooting Common.

Moving from scrappy city verges to ancient, rural Suffolk, where Harrison eventually relocates, this diary - compiled from her beloved Nature Notebook column in The Times - maps her joyful engagement with the natural world and demonstrates how we must first learn to see, and then act to preserve, the beauty we have on our doorsteps - no matter where we live.

A perceptive and powerful call-to-arms written in mesmerising prose, *The Stubborn Light of Things* confirms Harrison as a central voice in British nature writing.

## To dip into each month:

### January



#### **The Nature of Winter - Paperback**

Jim Crumley

Accounts of his encounters with wildlife in the Perthshire region. Another lyrical seasonal evocation from the pen of Jim Crumley, *The Nature of Winter* resounds with a chill serenity. Golden eagles and red deer populated its atmospheric pages as the author reflects not just on the power of nature but his own life and circumstances in rapturous prose.

During winter, dark days of wild storms can give way to the perfect, glistening stillness of frost-encrusted winter landscapes - it is the stuff of wonder and beauty, of nature at its utmost. In *The Nature of Winter*, Jim Crumley ventures into our countryside to experience firsthand the chaos and the quiet solitude of nature's rest period. He bears witness to the lives of remarkable animals such as golden eagles, red deer and even whales as they battle intemperate weather and the turbulence of climate change. In the snow Jim

discovers ancient footsteps that lead him to reflect on the journey of his personal nature-writing life - a journey that takes in mountain legends, dear departed friends and an enduring fascination and deep love for nature. Simply, he evokes winter in all its drama, in all its pathos, in all its glory.

"Warmly entertaining...  
An endearing account of the search for rare bees"



#### *Bee Quest*



Dave Goulson

EDMUND SPENCER

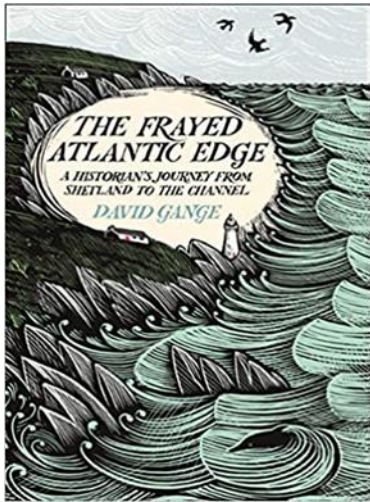
#### **Bee Quest: In search of rare bees, in Britain and around the world - paperback**

Dave Goulson

Dave travels many miles and has disappointments as well as moments of joy. Mark Cocker, in the *Mail on Sunday*, says: 'Wonderfully entertaining ... Engages the reader as much with the eloquence of its argument as with the charm of its humour'. Mary Beard described it as a worthy book of the year (2017) in the *Observer*.

A hunt for the world's most elusive bees leads Dave Goulson from Salisbury plain to Sussex hedgerows, from Poland to Patagonia, as well as closer to home, amongst the secret places hidden right under our noses: the abandoned industrial estates where great crested newts roam; or the rewilded estate at Knepp Castle, where, with the aid of some hairy, bluebell-eating Tamworth pigs, nightingale song has been heard for the first time in generations.

## February



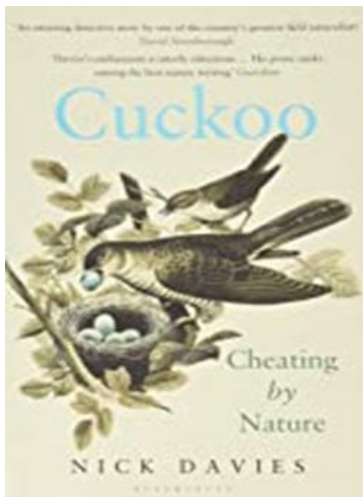
### **The Frayed Atlantic Edge 2019 - paperback**

David Gange

Journey by kayak down the West Atlantic coast of Britain via Ireland to Cornwall and encounters with nature.

Over the course of a year, leading historian and nature writer David Gange kayaked the weather-ravaged coasts of Atlantic Britain and Ireland from north to south: every cove, sound, inlet, island.

The idea was to travel slowly and close to the water: in touch with both the natural world and the histories of communities on Atlantic coastlines. The story of his journey is one of staggering adventure, range and beauty. For too long, Gange argues, the significance of coasts has been underestimated, and the potential of small boats as tools to make sense of these histories rarely explored. This book seeks to put that imbalance right.



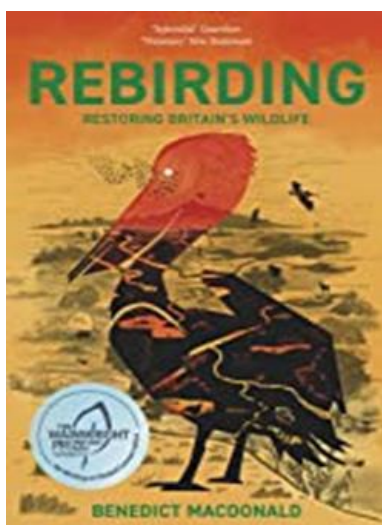
### **Cuckoo: Cheating by Nature - paperback**

Nick Davies

Description of the ways in which cuckoos deceive other species in an evolutionary race between them and their hosts.

Beloved as a herald of spring, cuckoos have held a place in our hearts for centuries. But for many other birds the cuckoo is a signal of doom, for it is nature's most notorious cheat. In this enormously engaging book, naturalist and scientist Nick Davies reveals how cuckoos deceive other species, uncovering an evolutionary race between cuckoos and the hosts. *Cuckoo* offers a new insight not only into the secret lives of these extraordinary birds, but also how cheating evolves and thrives in the natural world.

## March



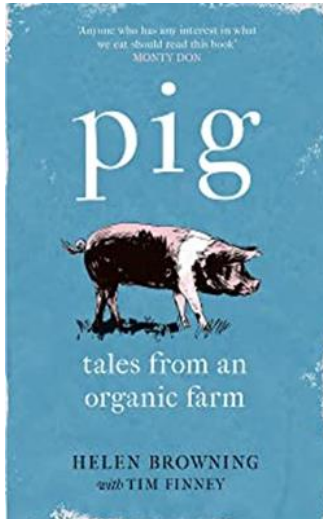
### **ReBirding - Paperback**

Benedict Macdonald

Wainwright winner: investigation of the concept and practice of rewilding in ways which would benefit birds.

Britain has all the space it needs for an epic return of its wildlife.

Only six percent of our country is built upon. Contrary to popular myth, large areas of our countryside are not productively farmed but remain deserts of opportunity for both wildlife and jobs. It is time to turn things around. Praised as 'visionary' by conservationists and landowners alike, *Rebirding* sets out a compelling manifesto for restoring Britain's wildlife, rewilding its species and restoring rural jobs to the benefit of all

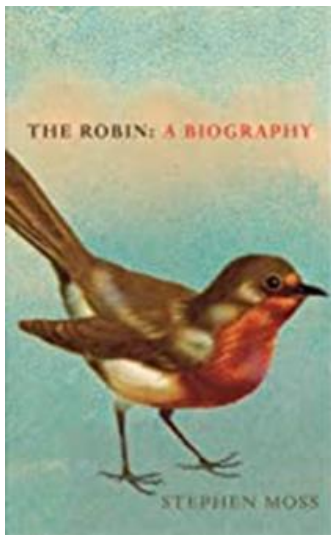


### **Pig: tales from an organic farm - paperback**

Helen Browning

In a frosty field on the longest night of the year, eight little piglets snuffle their first breaths and jostle close to their mother to feed. Over the following six months, Helen Browning records their adventures to show how pigs become the mischievous, competitive, intelligent and inventive animals that we know them to be. In doing so, they demonstrate why it is so crucial that the welfare of our farm animals – and equally, the way we manage our countryside – takes centre stage in the contemporary discussions around food, climate change and the loss of wildlife. This is a timely and entrancing exploration of our relationship with farm animals, nature and life itself.

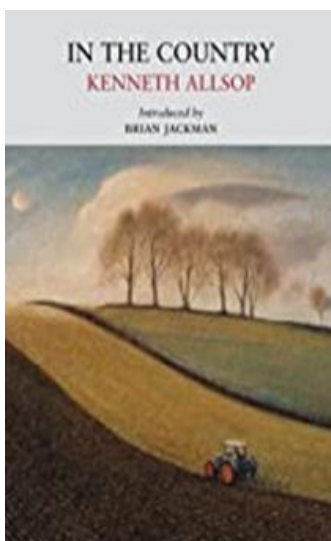
## April



### **The Robin A Biography - cheap hardback**

Stephen Moss

In *The Robin* Stephen Moss records a year of observing the robin both close to home and in the field to shed light on the hidden life of this apparently familiar bird. **We follow its lifecycle** from the time it enters the world as an egg, through its time as a nestling and juvenile, to the adult bird; via courtship, song, breeding, feeding, migration – and ultimately, death. At the same time we trace the robin's relationship with us: **how did this particular bird – one of more than 300 species in its huge and diverse family – find its way so deeply and permanently into our nation's heart and its social and cultural history?** It's a story that tells us as much about ourselves as it does about the robin itself.

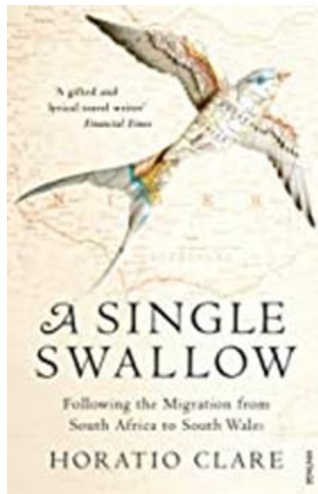


### **Into The Country - 1972 paperback**

Kenneth Allsop

A nature classic by BBC journalist, writer and birdwatcher about his life with local wildlife around his water mill home in Dorset. At the end of the 1960s, Kenneth Allsop, a famous television presenter and literary man-about-town, left London and settled amid the sunken lanes, ancient forests and chalk streams of west Dorset. He was at his very happiest here. He thought it the loveliest place on earth, and for three years he devoted a weekly newspaper column to his day-to-day life at the mill, brimming with humour and delight for the wildlife which shared his home. *In the Country* is not rustic or romantic. It is never unrealistic about agricultural modernisation and social change in the countryside. Yet, steeped with a deep sense of the past, Kenneth Allsop's writing speaks in defence of the natural world and stands firmly against the unchecked exploitation of the land

## May



### **A Single Swallow: An epic journey from South Africa to South Wales - 2010 paperback**

Horatio Clare

Does what it says in the title – follows migrating swallows from Capetown to south Wales. From the slums of Cape Town to the palaces of Algiers, through Pygmy villages where pineapples grow wild, to the Gulf of Guinea where the sea blazes with oil flares, across two continents and fourteen countries - this epic journey is nothing to swallows, they do it twice a year. But for Horatio Clare, writer and birdwatcher, it is the expedition of a lifetime. Along the way, he discovers old empires and modern tribes, a witch doctor's recipe for stewed swallow, explains how to travel without money or a passport, and describes a terrifying incident involving three Spanish soldiers and a tiny orange dog. By trains, motorbikes, canoes,

one camel and three ships, Clare follows the swallows from reed beds in South Africa, where millions roost in February, to a barn in Wales, where a pair nest in May.



### **Nature's Architect: Beavers Return to Our Wild Landscape - paperback**

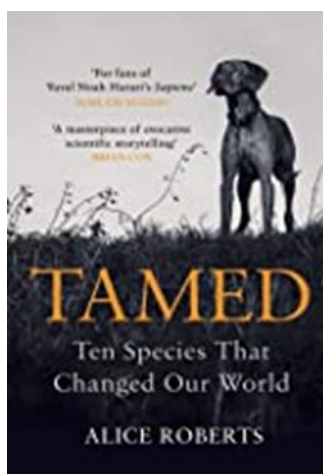
Jim Crumley

Jim describes encounters with beavers around the country, particularly unofficial Perthshire ones

Hundreds of years after their extinction in these isles, beavers are back in Britain. These highly skilled engineers of the natural world have been reintroduced at several sites across the UK and, even as they become established, are already having a dramatic effect on our wild landscapes. Here, leading nature writer Jim Crumley reveals the pioneering lifestyle of these intriguing and secretive creatures and considers the ecological and economic impact of the beaver reintroductions. Employing his trademark beautiful prose and empathy for life in the wild, Crumley considers the

future for Britain's beavers and makes the case for giving them their freedom.

## June

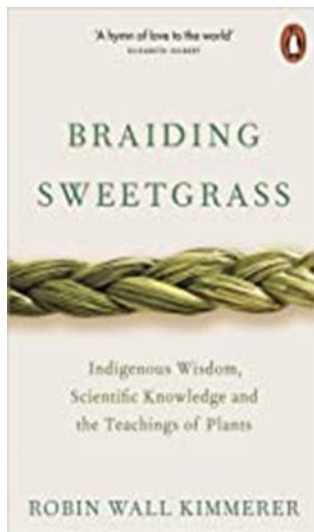


### **Tamed: Ten species that changed our world - paperback** Prof. Alice Roberts

The academic and broadcaster who has made evolution, archaeology and human history so accessible on TV. Prof Roberts charts the history of the way humans have domesticated wildlife (animals, plants) for our own comfort, consumption and companionship.

For hundreds of thousands of years, our ancestors depended on wild plants and animals to stay alive – until they began to tame them. Combining archaeology and cutting-edge genetics, *Tamed* tells the story of the greatest revolution in human history and reveals the fascinating origins of ten crucial domesticated species; and how they, in turn,

transformed us. In a world creaking under the strain of human activity, Alice Roberts urges us to look again at our relationship with the natural world – and our huge influence upon it.



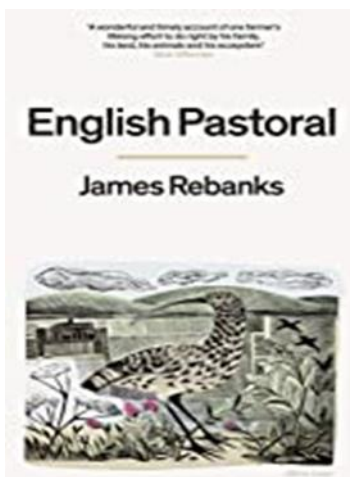
### **Braiding Sweet Grass Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and teaching of plants - 2020 paperback**

Robin Wall Kimmerer

A celebration of North American flora by an American botanist. Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, a mother, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the

generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.

## July



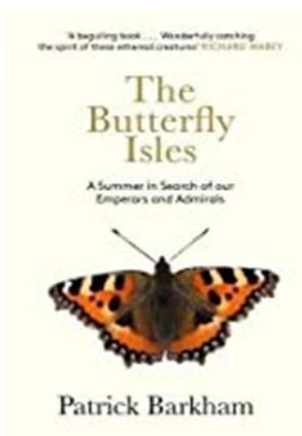
### **English Pastoral An inheritance - paperback due 29 April 2021**

James Rebanks

The Lakeland shepherd describes his family's farming inheritance and the influences that have changed it and his plans to revive it.

*English Pastoral* is the story of an inheritance: one that affects us all. It tells of how rural landscapes around the world were brought close to collapse, and the age-old rhythms of work, weather, community and wild things were lost. And yet this elegy from the northern fells is also a song of hope: of how, guided by the past, one farmer began to salvage a tiny corner of England that was now his, doing his best to restore the life that had vanished and to leave a legacy for the future.

This is a book about what it means to have love and pride in a place, and how, against all the odds, it may still be possible to build a new pastoral: not a utopia, but somewhere decent for us all.



### **The Butterfly Isles A summer in search of Emperors and Admirals - 2018 2 choices paperback**

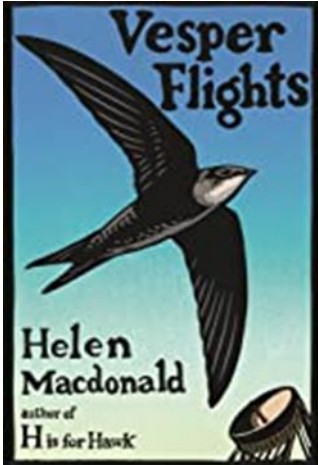
Patrick Barkham

This is the story of Barkham's project in 2009 to see all the butterflies on the British list in the course of a single summer. He was lucky to have chosen a year when there was a massive irruption of Painted Lady butterflies into Britain that even made the front page of some newspapers. He weaves together descriptions of his journeys to seek the species as they emerge, the people who helped him find them and delightful reminiscences of childhood journeys to see butterflies with his father, John.

Butterflies animate our summers but the fifty-nine species found in the British Isles can be surprisingly elusive. Some bask unseen at the top of

trees in London parks; others lurk at the bottom of damp bogs in Scotland. A few survive for months, while other ephemeral creatures only fly for three days. Several are virtually extinct. This bewitching book charts Patrick Barkham's quest to find each of them - from the Adonis Blue to the Dingy Skipper - in one unforgettable summer. Wry, attentive, full of infectious delight and curiosity, written with a beautifully light touch, *The Butterfly Isles* is a classic of British nature writing.

## August



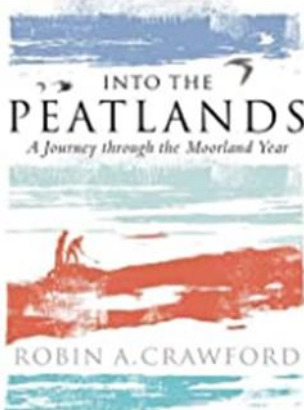
### **Vesper Flights** - paperback due 3 June 2021

Helen McDonald

Set of essays about her encounters with various aspects of the natural world and naturalists.

Helen Macdonald brings together a collection of her best-loved writing along with new pieces covering a thrilling range of subjects. There are essays here on headaches, on catching swans, on hunting mushrooms, on twentieth-century spies, on numinous experiences and high-rise buildings; on nests and wild pigs and the tribulations of farming ostriches.

*Vesper Flights* is a book about observation, fascination, time, memory, love and loss and how we make the world around us. Moving and frank, personal and political, it confirms Helen Macdonald as one of this century's greatest nature writers.



### **Peatlands** - paperback

Robin A Crawford

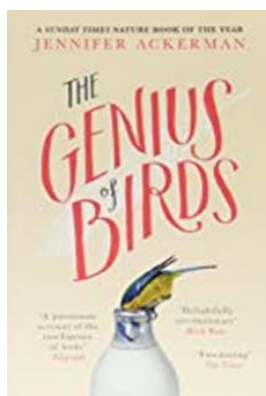
Description of this particular habitat through the seasons drawing on examples from the Hebrides and other areas.

In this book Robin A. Crawford explores the peatlands of Lewis. He explains how they have come to be and also considers how peat has been used for millennia, principally as a fuel but also, amongst other things, as a key element in the whisky-making process.

In describing the seasonal processes of cutting, drying, stacking, storing and burning, he reveals one of the key rhythms of island life, but his study goes well beyond this to include many other aspects, including the wildlife and

folklore associated with these lonely, watery places. Widening his gaze to other peatlands in the country, he also reflects on the historical and cultural importance that peat has played, and continues to play, in the story of Scotland.

## September



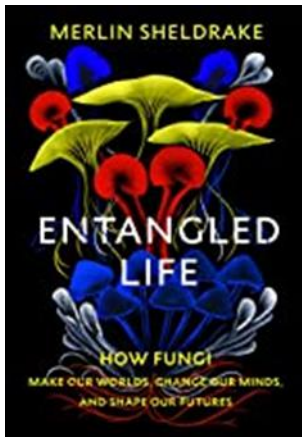
### **The Genius of Birds** - paperback

Jennifer Ackerman

Brings together the latest research about the intelligence of birds drawing on examples from around the world – scientific investigation and travelogue.

In *The Genius of Birds*, acclaimed author Jennifer Ackerman explores the newly discovered brilliance of birds and how it came about. As she travels around the world to the most cutting-edge frontiers of research - the distant laboratories of Barbados and New Caledonia, the great tit communities of the United Kingdom and the bowerbird habitats of Australia, the ravaged mid-Atlantic coast after Hurricane Sandy and the warming mountains of central Virginia and the western states - Ackerman not only tells the story of the

recently uncovered genius of birds but also delves deeply into the latest findings about the bird brain itself that are revolutionizing our view of what it means to be intelligent.



**Entangled Life: newly published - paperback due 6 May 2021**  
Martin Sheldrake

Only popular book about fungi exploring their profound influence in nature as neither a plant or an animal.

Neither plant nor animal, they are found throughout the earth, the air and our bodies. They can be microscopic, yet also account for the largest organisms ever recorded. They enabled the first life on land, can survive unprotected in space and thrive amidst nuclear radiation. In fact, nearly all life relies in some way on fungi.

These endlessly surprising organisms have no brain but can solve problems and manipulate animal behaviour with devastating precision. In giving us bread, alcohol and life-saving medicines, fungi have shaped human history, and their psychedelic properties have recently been shown to alleviate a number of mental illnesses. Their ability to digest plastic, explosives, pesticides and crude oil is being harnessed in break-through technologies, and the discovery that they connect plants in underground networks, the 'Wood Wide Web', is transforming the way we understand ecosystems. Yet over ninety percent of their species remain undocumented.

*Entangled Life* is a mind-altering journey into a spectacular and neglected world, and shows that fungi provide a key to understanding both the planet on which we live, and life itself

## October



**The Accidental Countryside - paperback due March 4 2021**  
Stephen Moss

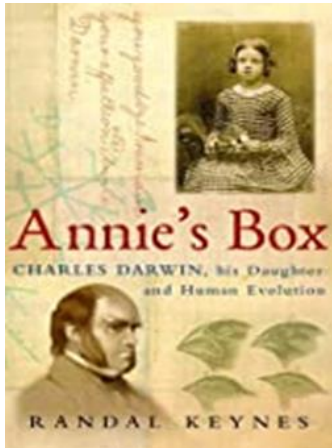
Journey through Britain exploring the way in which wildlife exploits unexpected corners of the countryside.

In *The Accidental Countryside*, author and naturalist Stephen Moss makes a journey of discovery through Britain, in search of the hidden corners where wildlife survives against the odds.

From Shetland's Iron Age stone structures to London's most modern skyscrapers, and from lowly railway cuttings to ornate stately gardens, Moss reveals the unlikely oases where wildlife thrives in areas originally created for human purposes.

The result is a surprising and uplifting story of how we have influenced the landscape and wildlife of these crowded islands; and how wildlife has taken advantage of us – even when we least expected it.





### **Annie's Box - Paperback**

Randal Keynes

This is a partial biography of Charles Darwin by his great-great grandson, and reveals how he developed some of his ideas. Annie was his daughter.

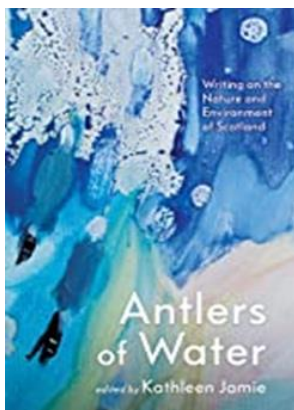
The story of the personal tragedy that lay behind Darwin's revolutionary understanding of man's place in nature.

Darwin's eldest daughter Annie died when she was only ten years old. In the writing case are keepsakes of her life that cast precious light on Darwin's work and on his love for his wife and children. Taking Annie's story as his starting point Randal Keynes brings together science and humanity in a ground-breaking book that makes a major contribution to

our understanding of Charles Darwin.

Randal Keynes, Darwin's great-great-grandson and the current guardian of Annie's box, conjures up a world in which great thinkers – including Carlyle, Babbage and George Eliot – were struggling with ideas that were to shake mankind to its core. At the forefront was Darwin himself, whose thinking about evolution and human nature was profoundly influenced by his life with his family, vividly picture in this intimate portrait of the man and his private world.

## **November**



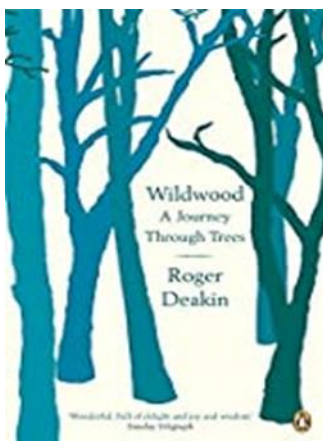
### **Antlers of Water: Writing on nature and the environment of Scotland - 2020 hardback**

Kathleen Jamie et al. Anthology of newly commissioned nature writing by Scottish writers.

The first ever collection of contemporary Scottish writing on nature and landscape, *Antlers of Water* showcases the diversity and radicalism of new Scottish nature writing today.

Edited, curated and introduced by the award-winning Kathleen Jamie, and featuring prose, poetry and photography, this inspiring collection takes us from walking to wild swimming, from red deer to pigeons and wasps, from remote islands to back gardens.

With contributions from Amy Liptrot, Malachy Tallack, Chitra Ramaswamy, Jim Crumley, Amanda Thomson, Karine Polwart and many more, *Antlers of Water* urges us to renegotiate our relationship with the more-than-human world, in writing which is by turns celebratory, radical and political



### **Wildwood: A Journey through Trees - paperback**

Roger Deakin

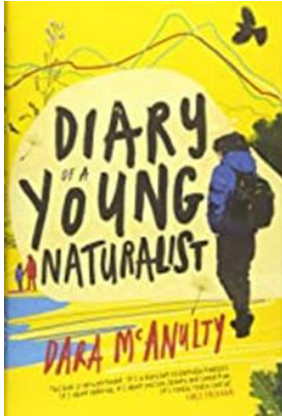
Exploration of human connections with woods and trees through travels in Europe and Australia.

From the walnut tree at his Suffolk home, he embarks upon a quest that takes him through Britain, across Europe, to Central Asia and Australia, in search of what lies behind man's profound and enduring connection with wood and trees.

Meeting woodlanders of all kinds, he lives in shacks and cabins, travels in search of the wild apple groves of Kazakhstan, goes coppicing in Suffolk, swims beneath the walnut trees of the Haut-Languedoc, and hunts bush plums with Aboriginal women in the outback.

Perfect for fans of Robert Macfarlane and Colin Tudge, Roger Deakin's unmatched exploration of our relationship with trees is autobiography, history, traveller's tale and incisive work in natural history. It will take you into the heart of the woods, where we go 'to grow, learn and change.

## December



### **Diary of a Young Naturalist 2020 - Hardback**

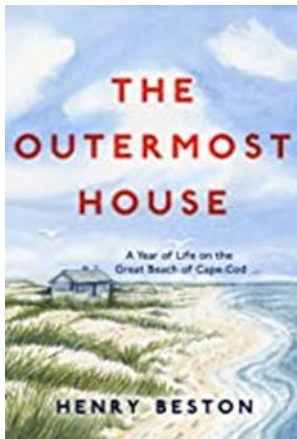
Dara McAnulty

Accounts of his encounters with nature in Northern Ireland by the new teenage Irish naturalist.

Wainwright winner.

Winner of the 2020 Wainwright Prize, *Diary of a Young Naturalist* chronicles the turning of Dara McAnulty's world, from spring to summer, autumn to winter, on his home patch, at school, in the wild and in his head. Evocative, raw and beautifully written, this very special book vividly explores the natural world from the perspective of an autistic teenager juggling homework, exams and friendships alongside his life as a conservationist and environmental activist. With a sense of awe and wonder, Dara describes in meticulous detail

encounters in his garden and the wild, with blackbirds, whooper swans, red kites, hen harriers, frogs, dandelions, skylarks, bats, cuckoo flowers, Irish hares and many more species. The power and warmth of his words also draw an affectionate and moving portrait of a close-knit family making their way in the world



### **The Outermost House - paperback**

Henry Beston

A year of life on the great beach of Cape Cod 1928 American nature writing classic about a season living on Cape Cod in New England.

A fragment of land in open ocean, the outermost beach of Cape Cod lies battered by winds and waves. It was here that the writer-naturalist Henry Beston spent a year in a tiny, two-roomed wooden house built on a solitary dune, writing his rapturous account of the changing seasons amid a vast, bright world of sea, sand and sky.

Transforming the natural world into something mysterious, elemental and transcendent, Beston describes soaring clouds of migrating birds and butterflies; the primal sounds of the booming sea; luminous plankton

washed ashore like stardust; the long-buried, blackened skeleton of an ancient shipwreck rising from the dunes during a winter storm; a single eagle in the endless blue.

With its rhythmic, incantatory language and its heightened sensory power, *The Outermost House* is an American classic that changed writing about the wild: a hymn to ancient, eternal patterns of life and creation.