

## - Naturopathy / Nature photography/ Nature study

### Increase your knowledge

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*Wildlife & Wellbeing*

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Studies in the field of positive psychology have shown that our level of 'nature connectedness' directly relates to both our hedonic (short-term happiness and pleasure) and eudaimonic (long-lasting joy and life satisfaction) wellbeing. Eudaimonic happiness – achieved by pursuing personal development and growth – is particularly important to our overall wellbeing, as it is more fulfilling in the long term.

One of the simplest ways we can strengthen our connection to nature is the act of identifying and naming. "The need to name things stems from a deep urge in humanity to understand the world... in all its rich diversity; to recognise and respect other creatures... and by naming them to acknowledge their unique individuality," writes ornithologist and author Adam Ford in *Mindful thoughts for Birdwatchers*.

**Starting a new chapter**  
Want expert tips or a bit of escapism? Unwind with one of these books.

**Feel Better in 5 - Your Daily Plan to Feel Better For Life**  
Stress and wellbeing expert Dr Rangan Chatterjee's latest book is full of quick and easy ways to feel healthier in mind and body, with his 'micro-prescriptions' including time spent in nature, simple mindfulness practices and easy-to-do-at-home exercises.

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There are physiological health benefits to learning about nature, too. Anything that expands our knowledge also boosts our cognitive functioning, which improves our concentration, alertness and memory and helps to reduce cognitive ageing. Being able to identify and name a particular species also requires us to look closely, or listen or smell, to focus and notice the differences that distinguish one species from another. This noticing is, in itself, a form of mindfulness – a way to be present, clear our minds and let go of stress or anxiety. "Learning a name becomes a

way of noticing; it helps us to look searchingly, with all our critical questioning faculties engaged. And with close looking, comes pleasure,” says Ford.

Focussing in

Nature photography is another activity that encourages us to look closely, be curious and discover the names of species. With the advent of smartphones, photography is increasingly accessible and, paradoxically, this is one instance when our devices can be useful in building a sense of connection.

Professional photographer, author and co-founder of Close-up Photographer of the Year, Tracy Calder recommends close-up photography for connecting with nature. “When you move in close to a subject, you become aware of all the tiny details, which allows stress to fade into the background,” she says.

Tracy became interested in close-up photography about 10 years ago. “I had a fast-paced job in the magazine industry, which could be quite stressful at times, so I started photographing the wildflowers close to my home in Sussex.”

Studying the slipper-like flowers of common bird’s-foot trefoil or the flush of pink on the underside of a wood anemone proved, she says, to be “a balm for the soul”.

Visit [discoverwildlife.com/wellbeing](https://discoverwildlife.com/wellbeing) for more recommended books.

“You just sit. Before you a tree, a stretch of water, a tangled bank. And see what turns up. I’ve called it the Bottomless Sit. Look for nature. The more you sit, the less you become an observer of nature, and the more you become a participant.” Simon Barnes author of *RewildYourself: 23 spellbinding ways to make nature more visible* (Simon & Schuster, £14.99)