



# BOUGHTON AND DUNKIRK SCHOOL NATURE LINKS

If you love nature, enjoy walks in the countryside together, or simply want to encourage your child to collect more slugs and snails !... then these pages might be for you . Some links and tips for holidays and weekends splashing around in rock-pools , watching woodlice in jam jars, digging in the garden for worms or searching for fossil sharks teeth on Beltinge beach.



## WHERE TO WATCH NATURE

**Kent Wildlife Trust** - . [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/) is the leading conservation charity in Kent and Medway, established in 1958. They have over 61 nature reserves .**Access to all reserves is free. Good local visitors centres at Tyland Barn Maidstone and at Reculver .**

The trust organises many events, study days and walks . Membership is probably the best way to learn about Kent Wildlife. There are many events for children and an education programme for schools. <http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-watch-membership> will take you to a 'Wildlife Watch' page for children. Four 'local reserves' at **Oare, Reculver ,Blean Woods**, and a little further away **Pegwell Bay**. At Oare and Pegwell Bay if you can time your visit for a rising or high tide as the incoming tide pushes the birds closer to the shore .Seals are often spotted at Oare. [http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/sandwich-and-pegwell-bay.](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/sandwich-and-pegwell-bay)



## BIRDS

RSPB Guides to all the RSPB RESERVES including **Blean Woods**. <http://www.rspb.org.uk> A large and useful site which lists organised 'events' and walks and gives lots of information about their reserves. <http://www.rspb.org.uk/youth/makeanddo/do/actionawards/takepart.aspx> Here are the RSPB childrens awards. Undertake wildlife projects to gain awards.

RSPB Kids page. Activities and things to make is at .... <http://www.rspb.org.uk/youth/>

RSPB Bird identifier. For specific information, pictures and to hear the bird call <http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdidentifier/>

Children can find binoculars difficult to handle. One answer might be some lighter smaller family binoculars. There are some excellent dual purpose 'close-focus' binoculars that can are light and can be used for birding. They will also focus down to half a metre and so are great for watching butterflies, dragonflies in close-up or even looking at the detail of flowers. The Pentax Papilio range might be one answer . You can find one review at <http://wildlifeneeds.co.uk/2011/review-pentax-papilio-binoculars/>



## SEA / BEACHES / MARINE

Our local North Kent beaches are varied and exciting places to explore. Find a list of Kent Coastal Parks at-

[http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/countryside\\_and\\_coast/parks\\_and\\_open\\_spaces/park\\_locations/kents\\_coastal\\_parks.aspx?theme=mobile](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/countryside_and_coast/parks_and_open_spaces/park_locations/kents_coastal_parks.aspx?theme=mobile) Go rock-pooling at Reculver or St. Margarets Bay . Find tide timetables at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast\\_and\\_sea/tide\\_tables/9](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/tide_tables/9)

Kent Wildlife Trust Centre at Reculver is usually open at weekends . The centre organises family rock-pooling and beach walks. Many school groups visit throughout the year. The centre has good displays and there are toilets available. <http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/reculver-visitor-centre-and-country-park>

Thanet Coast Project. Sometimes manages organised beach walks and rock-pooling <http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk/> Includes Samphire Hoe Wildlife Park where the Channel Tunnel spoil was dumped. At low tide rock pooling walks are sometimes organised. A 'Green Gang' is organised by <http://www.whitecliffscountryside.org.uk/> activities for children in the holidays.

Sea Safaris from Ramsgate .wildlife and seals. <http://www.horizonseasafaris.co.uk/>

Sandwich Bay Observatory. Field centre. Walks and other activities organised for members and non members. <http://www.sbbot.co.uk/>

Sandwich River Bus. Trips out to see the seals and other wildlife around the Pegwell Bay and down the River Stour. <http://sandwichriverbus.blogspot.co.uk/>



## ROCKS AND FOSSILS

Lots of fossils are washed out of the London Clay from Seasalter and around to Herne Bay, likewise at Warden Bay on Sheppey . Shark teeth are an easy find for children and if you search in the brown piles of pyritised pebbles you will find fossil wood, shells large palm seeds and the occasional small vertebrae .

At Folkestone you can find fossils in the gault clay. On flint pebble beaches you might find fossil sponges or fossils sea urchins. A club for young geologists exists at <http://www.rockwatch.org.uk/>

If you go fossil hunting on the Isle of Sheppey get Rockwatch Guide No.1 by Alan Rundle. ISBN 9780900717659 and look at the Sheppey fossil web site <http://www.sheppeyfossils.com/> to see what you might find !

Discovering Fossils is a useful site that covers the whole of the UK and organises fossil hunting trips. [http://www.discoveringfossils.co.uk/isle\\_of\\_sheppey\\_fossils.htm](http://www.discoveringfossils.co.uk/isle_of_sheppey_fossils.htm) UK Fossil Network is another good site <http://www.sheppey.ukfossils.co.uk/Sheppey-Fossils-Geology/where-to-look.htm>

There is also a shop in Rochester dedicated to fossils. <http://www.idigidinos.com/>

UKGE geological supplies at <http://www.ukge.co.uk/UK/cardboard-trays.asp> supply some very useful flat-pack fold up cardboard trays for children to display their find in plus a lot of other equipment to do with rocks and fossils.

Maidstone Museum – has a good collection of ‘Kent fossils’ and some dinosaurs as well !

This link lists Kent beaches and the fossils you might find there  
<http://www.ukfossils.co.uk/kent.htm>

The Natural History Museum web site is excellent . This NHM link takes you to the fossils  
<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/kids-only/earth-space/fantastic-fossils/>



## MINIBEASTS

The 'Bug Club' organised by the Amateur Entomologists Society <http://www.amentsoc.org/bug-club/>

A good school website about minibeasts  
[www.parkfieldict.co.uk/infant/minibeasts/contents.html](http://www.parkfieldict.co.uk/infant/minibeasts/contents.html)

Also BBC Learning zone <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/minibeasts/12647.html>

CBeebies story for the very young. Mr Tumble shrinks and meets the minibeasts  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/something-special/stories/something-special-mrtumbleandtheminibeasts/>

You can design you own super bug with an interactive game provided for KS2 children by York Museum at <http://www.mylearning.org/intermediate-interactive.asp?journeyid=77&resourceid=311>

Find some worms , make a wormery and watch the worms mix up the soil  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/gardening\\_with\\_children/homegrownprojects\\_watchworms.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/gardening_with_children/homegrownprojects_watchworms.shtml)

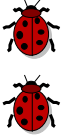
A very useful family book to identify mini-beasts and lots more is 'Guide to Garden Wildlife' by Richard Lewington ISBN 978-0-9531399-7-2

One good source of mini-beast cages are the plastic see through aquarium-like boxes that house washing machine capsules ! Alternatively the large plastic sweet jars might be begged from local newsagents or sweet shops !



## Woodland

With Blean Woods all around us. The 'Woodland Trust ' hosts a good interactive site for children called 'Nature Detectives ' <http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/>



## Reptiles and amphibians



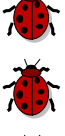
There is a Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group (KRAG) at <http://www.kentarg.org/> The site has just started a 'kids' page. If you want to know more about frogs, toads, newts, lizards and snakes visit this one.



## Pond dipping



Even a tiny garden pond will provide an amazing variety of life. All that is needed is a pond dipping net and a white plastic tray to tip the weed and wildlife into. Once in the tray wriggly things can best be lifted out into other containers with a small white plastic spoon. Nets ,white trays and lots of other equipment can be found at Watkins and Doncaster <http://www.watdon.co.uk/the-naturalists/> They will also supply lenses and viewers . If you are after a microscope of any sort try <http://www.brunelmicroscopes.co.uk/> a phone call will usually result in some very good advice before you spend any money ! Low powered binocular microscopes or a simple digital microscope that can be attached to your computer might be an answer. If you are seriously interested the micro-world then <http://www.microscopy-uk.org.uk/index2.html> is a web site for all .



The Field Studies Council at <http://www.field-studies-council.org/publications/fold-out-charts.aspx> produce a fold out leaflet on how to look after tadpoles . **All** of their fold out leaflets are excellent. They are light and designed to fit into a rucksack and accompany you on your walk.



Encouraging your young scientists to look at the world around them might be helped by the new ' **I-Spy** ' books ' published by 'Michelin' .You score points by 'spotting' things and collect a badge and a certificate when you have enough points. Good for long car journeys as well! Find them at <http://www.ispymichelin.com/>

Lastly a **really good book**, if you can get hold of, for keen Mums and Dads or older children..

'The Complete Amateur Naturalist' by Michael Chinery ISBN 1-85471-032-X . Probably out of print, Amazon had some SH copies. A young naturalists 'bible' From how to feed an injured bird to making 'beetle traps' from leaf prints to making a wormery !



