




THE *scout* ASSOCIATION
OF MALTA



BirdLife
MALTA

BirdLife Malta Nature Programme

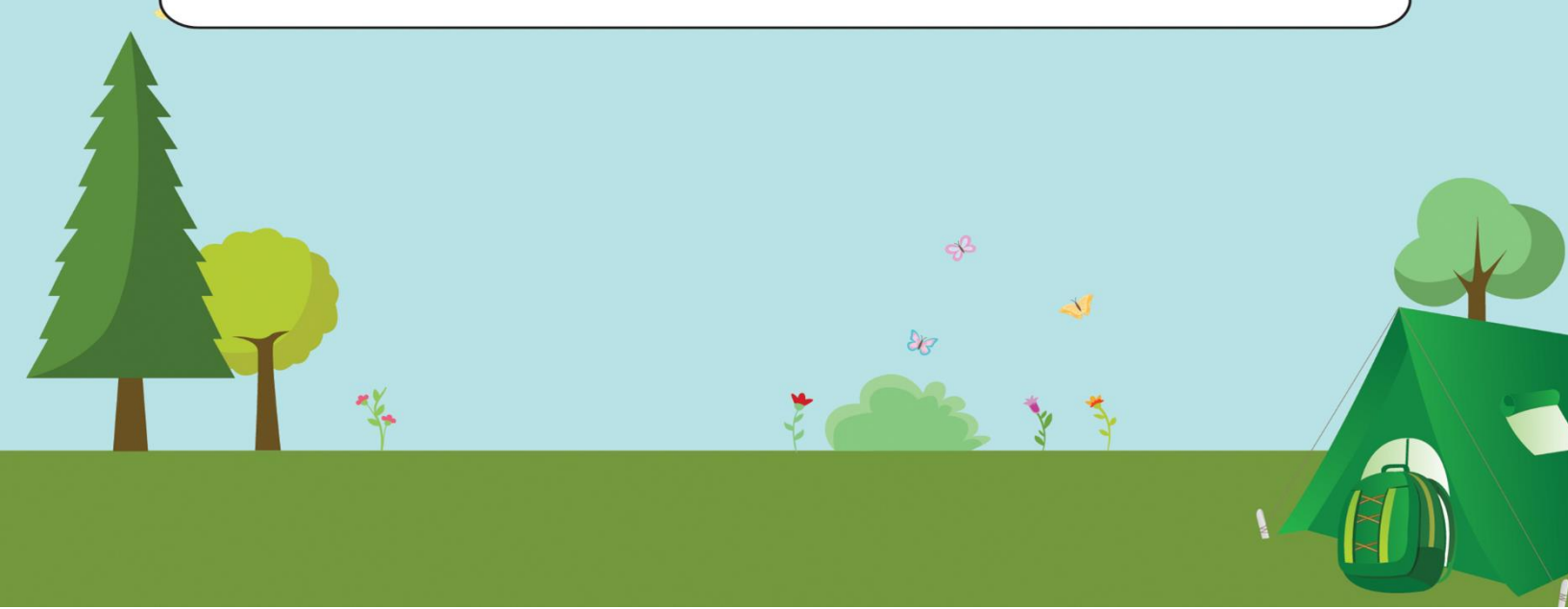




We believe that inspiring young people to spend time outdoors and appreciate nature is an essential component in our scouting programmes.

Therefore, the Scout Association Malta are collaborating with BirdLife Malta to deliver engaging environmental education sessions for our members.

We now offer nature sessions, specifically tailored for each section to cover aspects of nature badges at BirdLife Malta nature reserves. This is an opportunity for your section to experience the outdoors in a new way through environmental games, crafts and activities focused on learning about Maltese wildlife and environment.



Beaver Scouts

Explore and Connect to Nature

Badge requirements covered:

- Outdoor Challenge Badge
 - A day in the countryside
- Discovery Challenge
 - Creativity
 - Learn about animals

Objective:

- Explore nature through visiting a BirdLife Malta nature reserve
- Feel confident in being in the outdoors
- Connect to nature by realising what a special and exciting place it can be

Activities

- Participate in a nature art activity such as:
 - Bark rubbings
 - Creating a picture from natural materials on the ground
 - Use natural dyes such as beetroot or charcoal to create a painting
 - Use natural materials such as pinecones to create a hanging mobile
 - Create a natural wind chime using sticks and leaves
- Learn how to use binoculars and spend some time birdwatching at a nature reserve. With the help of an adult, use a simple key to identify what birds you find. Look to see how the key features (beak, eyes, feet, claws and feathers) change in different species.
- Take photos of your visit to a Nature Reserve and create a collage of the photos together
- Participate in a treasure hunt in a forest
- Take part in a mini-beast hunt using magnifying lenses. Identify the insects you find and learn interesting facts about them
- Make something to help animals in the wild, such as a nest box or bug hotel
- Take part in some activities that allows you to explore the world using each of your 5 senses.
 - Such as: Using a magnifying lens, listening to your surroundings, sampling smells from the area and determining what they are from, following a blind trail, tasting new food.

Cub Scouts

Observing and Learning

Badge requirements covered:

- Bird Lover Badge
 - Describe the physical characteristics of Birds. This should include information about feathers and their function, the beak, eyes, feet and claws. Understand why these are different according to the species and its needs.
 - Know the names of some local birds which are protected by law in the Maltese Islands
- Naturalist Badge
 - Take part in one expedition or outing involving nature study and keep a log of it. Drawings and/or photos should be included
 - Present some information including diagrams, pictures or photographs about 2 local plants and 2 local insects
- Local Flora and Fauna
 - Living things under stones - Here the Cubs learn about the small creatures that exist in Malta and how these can be classified.
 - Small Plants and Flowers

Objective:

- Engage with nature by learning about the Nature Reserves and the species which are found there during a visit to a BirdLife Malta reserve
- To learn more about Maltese nature and become familiar with common birds that are found in Malta
- To learn about animal interactions
- To appreciate wildlife in a natural setting

Activities

- Observe birds in their natural habitat. Use binoculars and field guides or identification keys to identify some of the birds that you see
- Learn about birds adaptations and explain why these changes have occurred.
- Learn about how predators and prey interact through a series of games
 - Camouflage game

- Animal tracks and signs
- Stealth game
- Bat and moth
- Take part in a nature observation for 10 minutes. During this time, find a quiet place to sit alone and use your senses to engage with your surroundings. Look for any signs of wildlife around you. Note down any interesting things that you see, hear or smell, and remember to look out for small insects as well. When you are finished your observation discuss what you saw, heard, smelled and felt with the rest of your pack.
- Take part in a mini-beast hunt using magnifying lenses. Identify the insects you find and learn interesting facts
- Use a key or guide to identify at least 2 plants found at a reserve and learn some interesting facts about them, and how the local wildlife use them
- Discover the different textures of trees by taking rubbings of the bark and leaves
- Create a scrap book of your visit by writing any interesting information, draw insects, birds, and plants and add any photos you have taken

Troop Scouts

Benefits and Threats



Nature badge requirements covered:

- Explain the meaning of animal, invertebrate, vertebrate and mammal
- Explain photosynthesis and why this process is important
- Conservation
- Plant Identification



Objective:

- To understand why Maltese nature is important and why we should protect it
- To learn about threats to Maltese nature and conservation measures taken
- To identify habitats and common flora



Activities

- Learn about conservation: What it is, why it is carried out and how you can help.
- Research species of your choice and find out about characteristics, life cycle, diet, ICUN listings, possible threats to the species and how scientists are attempting to conserve them and tell others about them.
- Learn about a bird species that are protected or under threat in Malta and how local organizations are attempting to conserve the species.

CHOOSE EITHER

- Sea birds** (With specific interest in Yelkouan Shearwater, Scopoli's Shearwater, Mediterranean Storm Petrel)
- Follow the progress of the Shearwater by plotting coordinates from GPS Satellite tracking on a map. Learn about the processes that cause the shearwater to undertake such an arduous journey.
- Go on a night hike on the cliff with a Seabird expert with a chance to hear nocturnal seabirds calling and find out how technology such as thermal imaging cameras and drones are used in conservation work.*

OR

- Migratory birds** (Such as Little Ringed Plover, Black-winged Stilts, Coots, Water Rails, Herons, Egrets, Marsh Harriers, Honey Buzzards, European Bee-eaters, Black Caps, Robins.)
- Learn about migration and how Malta plays a role in the worldwide migration routes.

- Ringing Demonstrations at reserves
- Birdwatching at reserves with field teacher

- Litter is a threat to all wildlife, including marine life. Participate in interactive games to learn more about why it is a problem and how you can help
 - Unnatural objects scavenger hunt,
 - Timeline of litter degrading
 - Quiz

- Take part in a debate to protect an area of the sea for wildlife. In teams or individuals you will all act as different organisations in the decision with different viewpoints such as, the government, fishermen or conservationists.

* Only available during January, February, March and April as this is when the birds are on the cliffs. Subject to weather conditions and lunar cycles (Bright full moon will prevent the birds from calling because they are more vulnerable to predators).

Flora

- Build a tree using people as the different parts and learn about the different biological processes.
- Learn how to identify common tree species through interactive activities
 - Match the leaves to the tree
 - Use an identification key to work out the species of the tree
 - Use a word pneumonic to help you remember the names of the trees
- Learn some interesting facts about some of the trees found at a reserve. Looking specifically at their ethnobotanical uses (how they are used in our daily lives) and how these useful adaptations arose.
- Take part in a nature observation for 10 minutes. During this time, find a quiet place to sit alone and use your senses to engage with your surroundings. Look for any signs of life around you. Note down or draw any interesting things that you see, hear or smell, look specifically at how plants and animals interact with one another. When you are finished your observation discuss what you saw, heard, smelt and felt with the rest of the group.

Booking Information

To book a session at one of our nature reserves please email education@birdlifemalta.org or phone during office hours **+356 2134 7645 (Ext 503)**.

Please take into account the following information when booking:

- Not all the activities for the sections will be able to be covered therefore if you would particularly like your group to do one of the activities please let us know.
- The maximum number of participants is 25. You must book more than one session at the nature reserve if you have over 25 participants.
- BirdLife Malta education team will lead the session, however the group leaders are responsible for ensuring appropriate behavior of participants.
- Please let us know if your group has any special requirements so we can ensure the visit is a positive experience for everyone.
- Visits usually between 2-3 hours however can be flexible.
- A 1-2 hour pre-visit to your meeting place can be arranged where some background information can be given or some of the activities can take place.
- We have 4 nature reserves available for bookings:
 - Is-Simar Nature Reserve: Xemxija: Available on Saturdays and weekdays
 - Għadira Nature Reserve: Mellieha: Available weekdays
 - Foresta 2000 Nature Reserve: Mellieha: Available any day during the winter (October-May)
 - Salina Nature Reserve: Salina salt pans: Available any day during the winter (October-May)

The following details will be needed upon booking;

- Name of group:
- Site requested:
- Preferred date:
- Age group:
- Number of participants:
- Contact name:
- Contact number:
- Contact email: