

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Have you ever seen a bumbarrel in a tree in your garden? Or watched a ginny spinner try and get out your bedroom window? No? Think again!

Actually, these are nicknames for two very common species – I won't reveal which straight away as you might like to try the wildlife name challenge at the end! So, where do the UK's plants and animals get their names, and nicknames, from?



Illustration by Tanya Perdikou

WHERE NAMES COME FROM

Many plants and animals have both a scientific (or Latin) name and a common name. Giving a plant or animal a scientific name is a way of making sure that people who speak different languages are using the same names for a particular species. For example, only English speaking people would say 'fox', but all languages would use the scientific name *Vulpes vulpes*.

Some animals are named after the person that discovered them. Others because of the way they look or sound. Here are some examples of common species and where they get their names.

BUTTERFLY



Brimstone butterflies are common in the UK, and one of the first species to appear in spring after hibernation. They are bright yellow in colour, and this might be where the 'butler' in 'butterfly' came from. The word caterpillar comes from the Latin 'caterpillar', which means hairy cat!

DOLPHIN



Although they live in the sea, and have fins like fish, dolphins are actually mammals. Unlike fish, mammals give birth to live young rather than laying eggs. The ancient Greeks obviously realized this - the word 'dolphin' comes from the ancient Greek 'delphis', meaning 'with a womb'.

MAGPIE



'Mag' is a word from the 1500s which meant 'chatter'. 'Pie' is a word for something which is black and white. So the word magpie basically means black and white chatter box. This seems a good way to describe them!

FUNGI



Fungi names are often linked to how the fungi looks - like jelly ear, and dead man's fingers. There's also the stinkhorn, named because of its smell, which is pongy to humans but irresistible to insects, which it needs to spread around its spores.

WILDLIFE NAME CHALLENGE

People around the UK have different nicknames for wildlife. Can you match the creatures in these pictures to the nicknames below? (Answers at the foot of the page!)



- Oven-bird
- Ginny spinner
- Hedge Betty
- Eckle
- Windhover
- Chucky pig
- Gowlack
- Bumbarrel
- Shellakabuukie
- Bishy barnabee