

The World About us



The World about us

When Mankind first evolved as hunter-gatherers they relied entirely on nature and the world around them for survival and therefore had total respect for it. Pagan worship of the Sun and of Mother Earth were understandable when all life on the planet seemed to be connected to the light of the Sun, and the seasons, and fertility of the Earth.

Man has a special part to play in the circle of life, however his superior intelligence within the animal kingdom has enabled him to exploit nature for his own ends. At first animals provided food and skins for clothing, the earth provided water, timber, clay and flint for tools. Working in harmony with their surroundings each survived. As time went by Mankind has shifted from a position of harmony to a place where he now exploits the wealth of nature for his own ends.

The hunter-gather tribes living deep in the jungles of Borneo to the native American Indians understood the harmony that needed to exist between man and nature. These peoples took from the land what was needed to survive. No animal was hunted to excess, the native American Indians hunted only the weak buffalo, imitating the hunting skills of the animals they had observed. Tigers and lions, for example, hunt only the weakest members of a herd and as a result normally the fittest animals survive,



and so the circle of life continues, each animal and plant playing a unique part in the cycle.

The diversity of plant and animal life on this planet have evolved to suit every condition encountered on Earth from the Polar bear to camel. In earlier times man learnt what plants were good to eat and what plants had healing qualities. Cabbage, carrots, and potatoes were once wild plants. Man discovered that they provided good food sources and soon learned to cultivate them. Similarly, the healing power of plants and herbs enabled them to heal wounds and stay healthy and much of this ancient knowledge has been incorporated into many of today's medicines.



Mankind in the civilised world has, over time, lost this deep understanding of nature, often seeing the natural world as a place to exploit for his own ends. Increased industrialisation, hunting animals to extinction, and lack of care for our environment are all symptoms of the greed that exists within our modern society. Even the passive activity of farming can put our rivers in danger due to

over fertilisation of the ground. Each part of the circle of life must be maintained; if one part of the chain is broken, other parts of the circle will fill its place often at the expense of extinction of one or more species. Each action will have a counter reaction.

As Scouts, venturing as we do into wild countryside, we get a unique opportunity to discover and observe nature at first hand. On hikes and camps we are in fact imitating our forefathers as they went out across the countryside in search of food and shelter. Today we carry modern hoop tents, but in the past, nomadic tribes around the world carried their tents with them in search of new food sources, particularly, if they lived in a hostile area such as the desert. Modern hoop tents, for example, are imitations of the traditional yurts used by the nomadic people of Mongolia. We have a compass to find direction but in the past our forefathers used the stars and nature's natural compasses to show direction. They carried with them honey and high energy food such as nuts and fruits. Today we carry snack bars, bars of fruit and nut chocolate. Have things really changed? Today we call it adventure. In the past this was life.

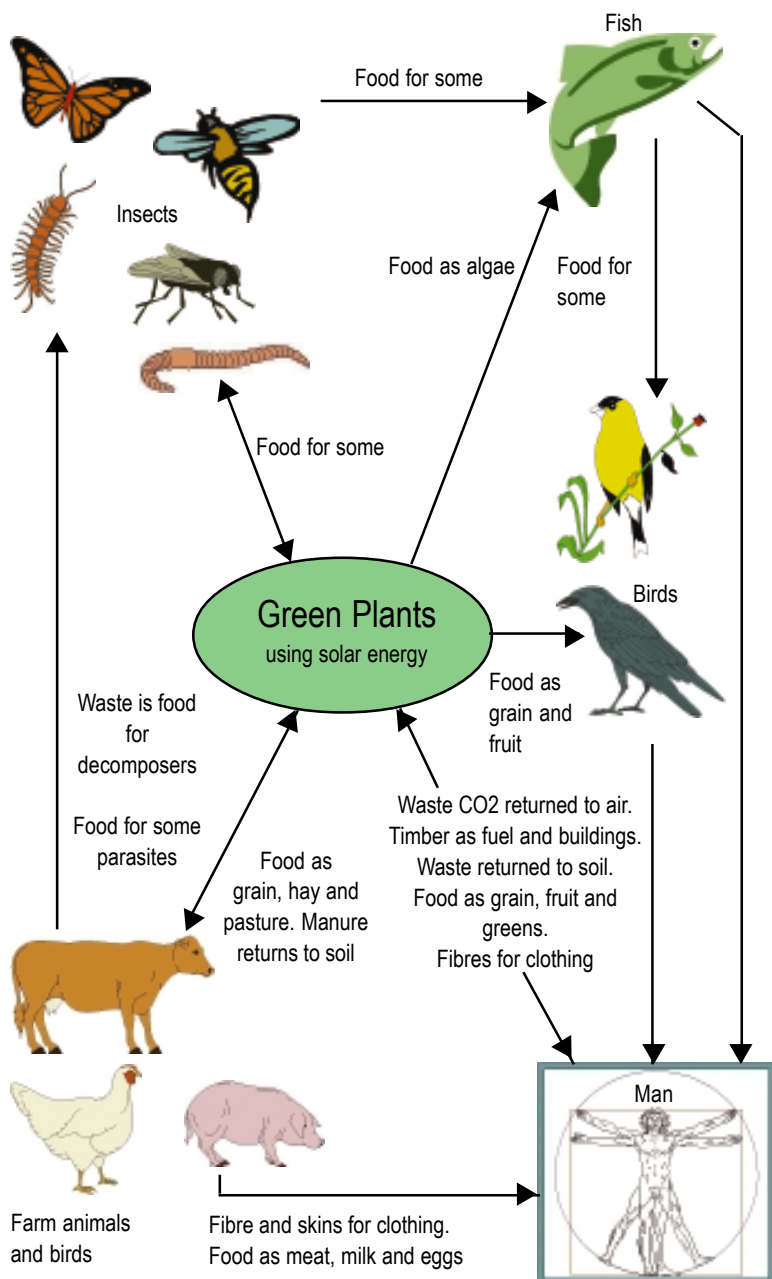
Adventures can take place in any natural setting. All modern adventure pursuits, whether on water, land, or in the air are experienced by placing yourself in 'competition' with nature. Today, modern advances in equipment design, limit, to a certain extent, some of the risks involved. However, wild places should always be respected. Nature has a nasty habit of turning on you when you least expect it! Notice how quickly a sunny day can turn into a thunder storm, sometimes without much warning. This is the challenge of

venturing forth into wild places and it awakens in us a deep instinct to discover and explore.

In order to fully understand and experience the world that exists about us, in particular in wild places, some knowledge of the diversity of wildlife that can be found can be useful. Observation and discovery can lead us to experience the wonders of our planet. Wild animals, edible plants and foods exist at our feet or are lurking around the next tree trunk. Real battles and massive killings are taking place all around us, as are unbelievable incidents of survival as the circle of life continues.

It is important to state that in Scouting we are not overly concerned with the learning of the names of plants and animals; this knowledge will come in time. We want you at this stage to explore and discover and open yourself to experience the world around you. Use all of your senses in this discovery, listen to the hum of the bees and the different songs of the birds. Taste the fruits and nuts of the forest from the sweet to the sour. Feel the wind and rain in your face and the mud at the bottom of the stream you are crossing, ooze between your toes, or the smoothness and grittiness of different rocks. See the wonder of the landscape and the hand of God in its creation and smell the freshness of the air and the fragrance of the heather and wild flowers. Once you understand the beauty of our planet and the interaction of each of its elements, it will be easier for you to conclude why we must conserve, why we must protect, and, most importantly of all, why we must live in harmony and not exploit the world around us.

Circle of life



The Big Chief sends word....

The Red Indians of North America have captured the imagination of the young - and not so young - for generations. Their bravery in war, and their savagery too, has formed the plot for many thrilling stories. The names of the Cherokee, Iroquois, Sioux and

many other tribes are well known.

However the author of the address printed here was the chief of a less well known tribe, the Suquamish, from the north west United States: and he is remembered not for his bravery as a warrior, but for his attempts, which were largely successful, to live peacefully alongside the 'Bostons' - the white settlers from the eastern United States. As a small boy Chief Seathl had seen Captain Vancouver sail up Puget Sound. His imagination was captured by this white man whose orders were promptly obeyed by his men, and the ambition to live in peaceful harmony with the white man was born. It was strengthened by the ta - man - a - wis (or vision), that he had as a young man, in the form of a white seagull. The gull was a symbol of peace to the Suquamish, as it was white and it indicated that his mission was to seek peace with the white man.

At the age of twenty - two (1808) Seathl became the Chief of the Suquamish and its allied tribes. He must have been a successful chief, for 43 years later, when the first permanent settlement was made on the eastern shores of Puget Sound, he was still chief. Soon after the settlement was made he persuaded Dr. David S.



Maynard to move his trading post there, from the southern end of the sound.

Maynard soon became the first Justice of the Peace of Duwamps, Thurston County, Oregon Territory. He didn't like the name 'Duwamps' and it was suggested by Arthur Denny, one of the Commissioners, that the settlement be named after Seathl, the man who was chiefly responsible for it. Seathl was at first horrified by the idea, but Maynard persuaded him to accept it. As the Indian 'Seathl' was hard to pronounce, it was changed to Seattle, which today is the largest city of the North West. USA. The Chief's 'Testament' was an address given to the tribal confederation, probably at the time when the first Governor of the new Washington Territory, Major Isaac Stevens, was annexing Indian lands - mainly by exterminating the American Indians. The great chief in Washington D.C. was President Franklin Pierce (1853 - 57), part of whose Home Policy was to open up the North West of America. There is wisdom in Chief Seathl words, which is timeless. Many of the things he feared would come about, are with us today, and his words have a great relevance to our modern situation.

Today a statue of Chief Seathl stands at the junction of Fifth and Denny Streets in Seattle, Washington, and the name of his tribe is revered in the Skokomish Indian Reservation

The words of Chief Seathl

"The Great Chief (President Franklin Pierce) sends word that he wishes to buy our land. The Great Chief also sends words of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him since we know he has little need of our friendship in return, but we will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, the white man may come with guns and take our land. How can you buy or sell the sky, and the warmth of the land?

The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat



of the pony and man - all belong to the same family.

So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children. So we will consider your offer to buy our land, but it will not be easy for this land is sacred to us. This shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.



The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

The red man has always retreated before the advancing white man, as the mist of the mountain runs before the morning sun. But the ashes of our fathers are sacred.

Their graves are holy ground, and so these hills, these trees, this portion of the earth is consecrated to us. We know the white man does not understand our ways.

One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs.

The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father's graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children. He does not care. His father's graves and his children's birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert. I do not know.



Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eye of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand. There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or hear the rustle of insect wings. The chatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around the pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed with the midday air, or scented with the pinon pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man lying for many days, he is numb to the touch. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our



grandfather his first breath also received his last sigh. And the wind must also give our children the spirit of life. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land.

If we decide to accept, I will make one condition; the white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. I am a savage and do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that

the land is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family, all things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself.

But we will consider your offer to go to the reservation you have for my people. We will live apart, and in peace. It matters little where we spend the rest of our days. Our children have seen their fathers humbled in defeat. Our warriors have felt shame, and after defeat they turn their days to idleness and contaminate their bodies with sweet foods and strong drink. It matters little where we spend the rest of our days. They are not many. A few more hours, a few more winters, and none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth or that roam now in small bands in the woods will be left to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful and hopeful as yours. But why should I mourn the graves of my people?



*Tribes are made of men, nothing more.
Men come and go, like the waves of the
sea. Even the white man, whose God
walks and talks with him as friend to friend,
cannot be exempt from common destiny.
We may be brothers after all; we shall see.*

*One thing we know, which the white man
may one day discover - our God is the
same God. You may think now that you
own Him as you wish to own our land; but
you cannot. He is the God of man, and His
compassion is equal for the red man and
the white. The earth is precious to Him,
and to harm the earth is to heap contempt
on its Creator.*

*goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt?
The end of living and the beginning of
survival. with all your heart, preserve it for
your children, and love it ...as God loves
us.*

*So we will consider your offer to buy our
land. If we agree it will be to secure the
reservation you have promised. There,
perhaps, we may live out our brief days as
we wish. When the last red man has
vanished from this earth, and his memory
is only the shadow of a cloud moving
across the prairie, these shores and
forests will still hold the spirit of my people.
For they love this earth as a newborn*



*The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner
than any other tribes. Continue to
contaminate your bed, and you will one
night suffocate in your own waste. But in
your perishing you will shine brightly, fired
by the strength of the God who brought
you to this land and for some special
purpose gave you dominion over this land
and over the red man. That destiny is a
mystery to us, for we do not understand
when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the
wild horses are tamed,
the secret corners of the forests are heavy
with the scent of many men, and the view
of the hills blotted out by talking wires.
Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the
eagle? Gone. And what is it to say*

*loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell
our land, love it as we have loved it. Care
for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your
mind the memory of the land as it is when
you take it. And with all your strength, with
all your mind, Creator.*

*One thing we know. Our God is the same
God. The earth is precious to Him. Even
the white cannot be exempt from the
common destiny. We may be brother after
all. We shall see".*

Experiencing Nature

Woodcraft is not only a knowledge of the names of plants and animals, but a deeper and more meaningful relationship with our surroundings. It is the experience of nature through all the senses that provides the mind with a more intensified picture of the interrelationship between all things on the planet and enable us to harmonise with them.

Have you ever been in a natural situation when you have experienced something wonderful? It could be a simple thing - like sitting on the top of a mountain or perhaps sitting out a storm in your tent. Often these experiences will present to you a realisation of the world around you, the presence of God and the wonderment of God's creation. Such experiences may only happen to you once in a lifetime while others may experience such a thrill every day.

Through the use of all of our senses we become aware, and begin the learning process. Seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting; each sense provides unique information to the brain. The combination of sensory information greatly increases the experience.

Using all the senses allows a fuller picture to be developed in the mind. A tree, for example, can be seen and recognised. The leaves have their own shape. Are they shiny or furry as you feel them? Do they have a smell and a taste? The bark can be smooth or rough. Could you identify it blindfolded



by touch alone? By using as many of the senses as possible more information is channelled into our memories.

To experience nature you have to get out and explore it fully. Here are some simple exercises that will help you explore and improve your sensory skills.

Hand-Oak

Sit under an Oak tree and compare the lines on your hand with the branch structure and roots of the tree. Before long you will find comparisons between the lines on your hand and your chosen tree - a personal connection.

Mirror walk

Walk along a forest track holding a mirror at your waist, facing up. You will notice many things - tree patterns, birds, stars, cloud formations.

Colour Palette

Collect small specks of colour in the area of your exploration. The specks of colour can be placed on the back of a sticky label. You will notice that many different colours are present and that there really are 40 shades of green!

Time alone

Stand silently and alone for 10 minutes in a forest and listen. How many sounds can you hear. Try and become aware of the noise you make as you travel through the forest, if you can hear the noise so can every animal.

Smell

Smell the air around you and smell every plant you can find.

Lie in the high grass

Lie on your back in long grass and look to the sky. Feel the wind around you and see the waves of wind drifting over the grass.

Nailing jelly

Some things just have to be experienced. How do you describe the smell of an orange, the wildness of the winter sea or the closeness of the stars in the wilderness at night? Why, its easier to nail jelly to the ceiling!

Fuelled

Fuelled by a million man-made wings
of fire the rocket tore a tunnel
through the sky
and everyone cheered

Fuelled only by the thought of God
the seedling urged its way through
the thickness of black
and as it pierced the heavy ceiling of
soil and launched itself up
into outer space
no one even clapped

Marcie Hans

Man's impact on nature

More than 3 people are born every second.

Humans have grown to be the dominant species, forcing nature into retreat everywhere.

The world population increases by over 300,000 people per day.

Deforestation - Deserts spread at 16,000 hectares a day.

5 litres of safe clean water is required per person per day.

Forests are disappearing at a rate of 30,000 hectares per day.

500,000 plastic items are dumped into the sea every day.



It takes about 450,000 litres of water to make a car, 160,000 litres to make four tyres, 1000 litres to make a litre of petrol, 700 litres to make a single newspaper, and 300 litres to make a single canned drink.

Every form of life is unique, warranting respect regardless of its present worth to man.

United Nations: World Charter for Nature

Common Birds

In your garden



Robin



Great tit
(chick)



Chaffinch



Greenfinch



Raven

Wagtail



Thrush

Blackbird



Wren



Goldfinch



Sparrow



Magpie



Starling



Bluetit



Jackdaw



Common Birds

on the water or seashore





If the earth were only a metre in diameter, floating a few metres above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to see it. People would walk around it, marvelling at its big pools, the bumps on it, and the holes in it. They would also be amazed at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball, and the creatures in the water.

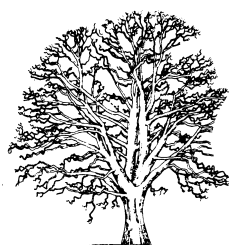
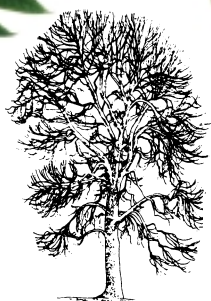
The people would declare it sacred because it was the only one, and they would protect it, so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and the people would come and pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know the beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it.

If the Earth were only a metre in diameter.

Common Trees



Ash



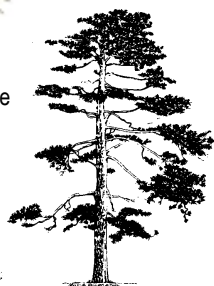
Oak



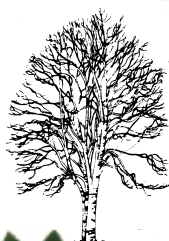
Hawthorn



Scots pine

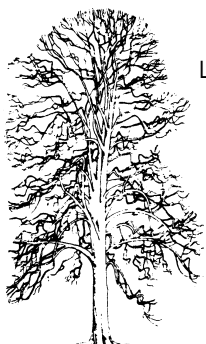


Rowan or Mountain ash

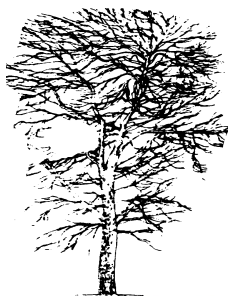


Sycamore





Lime



Hornbeam



Yew



Spruce



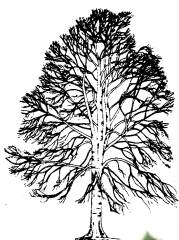
Silver birch



Horse Chestnut

Larch

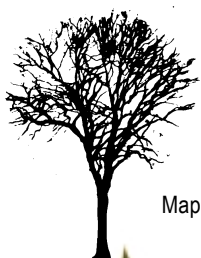




Beech



Holly



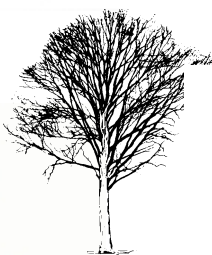
Maple



Willow



Sessile Oak



Hazel



The Oak

Trees and woodlands are a vast living habitat for all kinds of insect and animal life and act as a refuge in open areas for small animals.

Hedgerows, for example, are great storehouses of wildlife activity from insects to wild flowers.

The Oak tree can grow up to 45 metres high, 15 metres in girth, sink its roots up to 4 metres into the ground and weigh 100 tons.

It drinks 400 litres of water a day, has 200,000 leaves and grows 10,000 acorns a year.

The oak is home for 500 species of insects and provides nests for 20 species of birds.

Caterpillars swing on threads, devastate leaves and grow into Oak leaf roller moths

Squirrels rear their young in branches and bury acorns for winter.

Wood mice live in root tunnels.



Earthworms enrich soil by digesting fallen leaves.

Blue tits nest in holes in the trunk and branches whereas wrens build several domed nests in the branches.

The Oak supports 22 different weevils some of which bore into the acorns.

Gall wasp eggs are hatched in knob like apples on twigs and roots.

Bettles and woodlice live in decayed wood and fallen leaves.



Wild Flowers



Daisy



Dandelion



Foxglove



Hogweed



Buttercup



Poppy



Wild Garlic



Wood sorrel



Bindweed



Speedwell



Plantain



Thistle



Yellow Iris



Chickweed



Bird's foot trefoil



Clover



Wild Rose



Tormentil



Bluebell



Primrose

Wild Animals

Deer



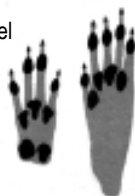
Fox



Hare & rabbit



Squirrel





Hedgehog



Bat

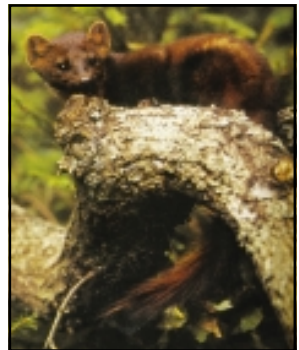


Badger



Otter

(Hard to observe)



Pine Martin



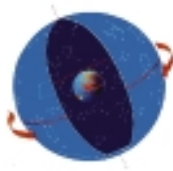
Frog



Rat



Star Charts

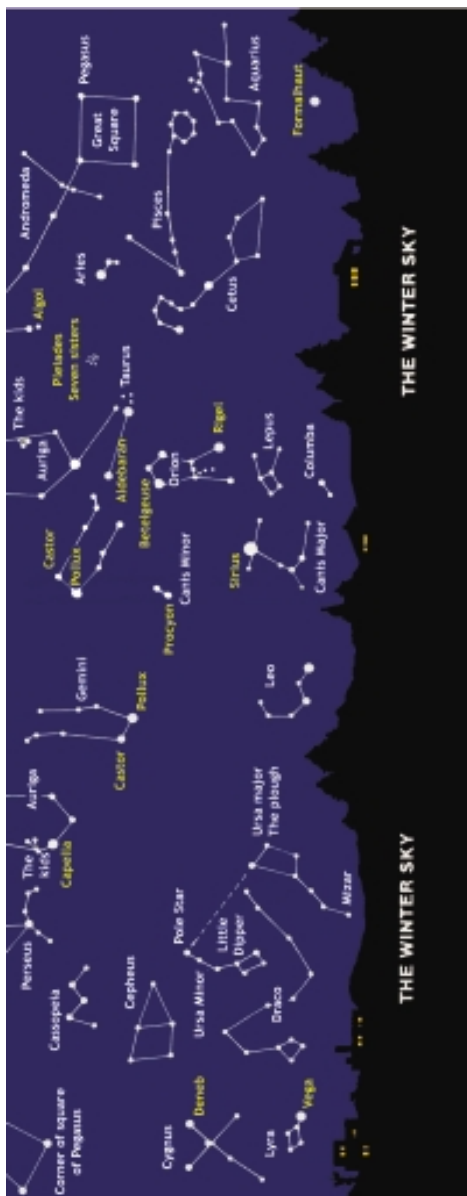


For thousands of years mankind has been amazed and fascinated by the night sky. Some cultures base their whole existence on the movement of the night sky. When you are out camping or bivouacking it is an ideal opportunity to spread out your groundsheet or bedroll under the skies, and lie back and observe the heavens above.

The earth is constantly moving so the stars visible in the sky are determined by the position of the earth in relation to the heavens. Some star constellations are only visible at certain times of the year. The planets are also visible and tend to appear lower on the skyline and be brighter.

Look out also for shooting stars. Also spot satellites as they move around the earth. Discover our own galaxy, the Milky Way.

The charts illustrate the many constellations visible in summer around July and in winter around December. Use them as a general reference. For a more precise map of the night sky, you will need a rotating star map.

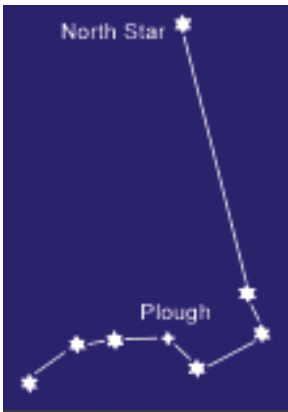


To get a clearer view of star constellations you can use a telescope or a pair of binoculars. Binoculars are a good choice if you are a casual watcher as they allow a wide field of view. They are particularly good for looking at the moon. The power of binoculars is not important, the standard 7 or 10 power will do the job. You will probably need a tripod or a cushion placed on a fence or wall to steady your binoculars.



The Moon

The Moon is the biggest object in the night sky and on a frosty night it can be seen at its best. Each of the areas of the moon has been mapped and you will find it easy to identify each area with the aid of a telescope or binoculars.

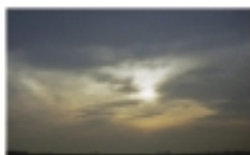
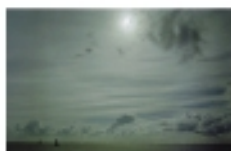


Use the stars to find direction.

Clouds



High level - Cirrocumulus and Cirrostratus clouds (5,000 metres)



Medium level - Altocumulus and Altostratus clouds (3,500 metres)



Low level - Strato-Cumulus Clouds (500 metres)

Clouds form in a number of ways depending on wind conditions at different heights, and the weather system following behind. Clouds can be either fluffy, fibrous or flat in shape. Their names are in Latin and they indicate the type of cloud; Cumulus - Heap, Stratus - Layer, Cirrus - Tuft of hair, Alto - Higher, Nimbus - Rain.

High level clouds usually indicate good weather and calm conditions.

Middle range clouds usually indicate changeable conditions with darker type clouds in this range indicating rainy conditions.

Low level clouds usually indicate drizzle, fog and low wind conditions.

Weatherlore

Weather lore is almost as old as the human race. However its scientific use is doubtful. Some of the old sayings can be useful indicators, but always rely on the scientific method, the weather forecast.

Rain before seven, fine before eleven

Four hours of continuous rain occur occasionally when a weather front becomes slow moving, but periods of rain are usually shorter.

Long foretold, long last; short notice, soon past

This is true insofar as the slow advance of a depression with falling pressure and thickening cloud brings bad weather often lasting a day or more, whereas rapid clouding over is more likely to be the precursor of a single shower or a smaller fast-moving depression.

Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning; red sky at night, shepherd's delight

Mackerel sky and mares'tails, make tall ships carry small sails

High level clouds often form well ahead of depressions and their associated fronts. Mackerel skies and mares'tails describe forms of cirrocumulus and twisted sheaves of cirrus respectively, implying strong high-level winds. In the days of sailing ships they may have been rightly viewed as likely forerunners of stormy weather.

If clouds be bright, it will clear tonight. If clouds be dark, it will rain by dark

Bright clouds suggest sun shining through gaps between and on to cumulus clouds. These clouds often dissolve towards sunset to give a clear, cold night. Dark clouds are usually deep and more extensive.

A bright circle round the sun denotes a storm and colder weather

Thin high level cloud often produces both solar and lunar halos. It precedes depressions which bring rain and strong winds, and eventually colder weather to the rear.

Always a calm before a storm - This is frequently true but not always.

The sudden storm lasts not three hours. The sharper the blast, the sooner it will past

These both truly reflect the difference between the sudden heavy deluge and squally winds with a heavy shower or thunderstorm, and the generally steadier and often prolonged frontal rain associated with depressions.

Countryside Code

Respect the people who live and work in the countryside.

Respect private property, farmland and all rural environments.

Do not interfere with livestock, machinery and crops.

Respect, and, where possible, protect all wildlife, plants and trees.

When walking, use the approved routes and keep as closely as possible to them.

Take special care when walking on country roads.

Leave all gates as you find them and do not cause damage to property.

Do not enter farmland if you have dogs with you, even on a leash, unless with the permission of the landowner.

Guard against all risks of fire, especially near forests.

When travelling in large groups try to maintain a low profile.

Take all your litter home, leaving only footprints behind.

Keep the number of cars used to a minimum, park safely and do not restrict access.

Minimise impact on fragile vegetation and soft ground.

Take heed of warning signs - they are there for your protection.

Take care not to pollute water sources.

(Based on the Farmland Code of the Irish Farmers Association.)

