



Young Nature Writer 2022 Winning and runner up entries

Overall winner

Title: My Garden

Author: Sophie Wood

Age: 8

Our garden may not be a nature reserve or the beautiful Manx coastline. It isn't even very big, but it certainly has plenty of wildlife (and I don't just mean our collection of guinea pigs)!

Tucked away at the edge of my garden, between the hawthorn bushes is a little bird box. We keep a secret from the birds, there is a camera hidden from view so we can watch everything they do. Last year this was very un-exciting as nothing would come in. However, in spring 2022 we had some visitors, a pair of blue tits started to make a nest. Soon after she laid 6 eggs and spent a lot of days looking very uncomfortable. Finally late at night they began to hatch. Then the handwork really started. The two birds were seen day and night, flying in and out of their nest with worms in their beaks. Until one day the birds left the nest and after six weeks of constantly watching the birds we felt bit disappointed it was all over, but happy for the birds.

Next on my list are the beautiful buzzing bees. We like bees because they help pollinate the lovely flowers in our garden. This is especially important to us as the flowers on our little raspberry bush and plum tree need an insect to pollinate them and allow the seeds to grow. Without bees we wouldn't be able to enjoy the delicious fruit from all our tree and bushes. The most popular residents of our garden are Woodlice. We have sooooo many it's like our garden is a hotel for woodlice (which you don't need to pay for and they never have to leave).

One of the most interesting facts about wood lice is that they drink from their bottoms! Another interesting fact is that wood lice eat all the dead things in the garden and then refresh the soil which helps the plants grow.

Our garden isn't just a great place for birds and bugs, we also have some lovely plants. One in particular is the fuchsia, the fuchsia grows so well in the Isle of Man that it is our national flower. I like the flowers as they look like ballerinas and I love ballet. To make a really good ballerina you need to take out all the stamen except for two (which are relatively the same size) to be the legs. Also take out the style (the long one!) and keep it to make the arms. Use your finger nail to make a little

hole and poke the arms through! No garden would be complete without my Daddy's least favourite creature, the spider. However, I love spiders (especially if they are in my favourite Harry Potter books) and they are good for our garden. If woodlice are our recyclers of the garden, then spiders would be pest control. They eat up flies and flies are a nuisance.

I hope you have enjoyed exploring my garden with me and it has inspired you to research all the wonderful nature in your own garden.

Best bird entry winner

Title: The Peregrine Falcon

Author: Timmy Clarke

Age: 10

One sunny day, I was strolling through Glen Dhoo when I heard a kack-kack-kack-kack and I immediately knew what was hiding behind me...The fastest bird on the planet with a speed of 320kmph while diving. I was amazed!

I spun around and gazed at the sight in front of me, but then my excitement turned to fear as it locked its beady eyes on me. I did what my instincts told me to do. I ducked...The amazing falcon swooped down and grabbed a hare running behind me with its killing claws and then it was gone.

I sighed with relief but I was sad as well because I wondered if I'd ever see it again...I did, on Thursday 12th May when I was bouncing all over my trampoline when I heard a CRASH! A bush on my left somehow shifted with movement and outburst the 'duck hawk' swooping around like a shooting star, in front of me for a few seconds, then gone the next.

Hope you enjoyed my experience with the peregrine falcon and see you next time.

Runners up

Title: Save The Pond

Author: Sophia Manley

Age: 7

Ponds are amazing things. They are a home for animals like frogs and fish.

I wanted to talk about this because I went to my Uncle Josh and Auntie Liddy's house and they were getting rid of their pond. We discovered that there were lots of animals like frogs and fish in it. I also found a hedgehog sunbathing at the side of the pond which was very cute.

This is when I said 'save the pond' because I knew I could save the pond and the animals in it.

A few weeks later I came back to my Uncle and Aunt's house and I was relieved that my Uncle and Aunt were not getting rid of the pond.

I think EVERYONE should have a habitat in their garden because they create magical homes for animals (and fairies).

Title: Breeze

Author: Iva Petrova

Age: 15

The icy tendrils of winter encase the dewy hilltops in a veil of soft snow, such a rare, precious jewel on the sloping sides of Mann. Intricately detailed snowflakes tickle the mountains, coating the surroundings in delicious patterns of icing, making the cotton-candy clouds appear brighter, glowing, reflecting off the ice from piercing icicles, frost from the enticing shimmer of a frozen pond. From the tip of Snaefell, the land poses for photographs, the island an endless expanse, miniature rooftops with chimneys billowing warmth look perfectly cosy caked in cream frosting, tracing footsteps and tiny animal pawprints leading from doorways to fields, to smiling snowmen with glistening pebbles for eyes, huffing out icy breath.

~Breathe~

Flowers sway with delicate charm, meadow upon meadow of multi-coloured dancers, painting a picture with their stems, their syrupy, pollinated petals breath an aroma of pure bliss, the scent of caramelised candies in a sweetshop. Beautiful butterflies with their ladybird companions decorate a frame, whilst busy bees buzz around the pot of golden honey at the rainbows end, and dew drops drip from tenderly woven spider's webs. Daydream fields with pinkie-purplish blossoms arching over a petal-strewn aisle, where daisies wait to be plucked into daisy chains, picked in a child's little fist, a bouquet for a gift, where dandelion seeds get carried on the air with a babies' gurgling laugh.

~Breeze~

Point of Ayre, sea air, the sweet, salty smell of azure waves lapping onto stony, sandy beaches, where small trenches are dug, smooth, painted stones are piled decorating grandiose sand forts, dotted with sandcastle villages, with garlands of slippery seaweed trailing from the shore. Ravenous seagulls bob up and down with the waves, cawing their tune of hunger to fishing boats pulling out nets of silvery mackerels, as dazzling white yachts from mystical countries flutter their masts, sailing across the deep waters, to distant wind turbines rotating on land just peeking through in the horizon. Granules of crystallised sand reflect the vibrant hues emitting from the radiant shimmering orb, our Sun, drifting into its saccharine sunset bed.

~Breathe~

Leaves of ambers, golds, maroons, and garnets twirl onto forest grounds, rich with mushrooms of every assortment, shooting sprouts from shrubs, squelching muddy mayhem. A snap of twigs under a mammal's paw sends fleets of birds soaring from their nests, leaving tiny little chirpers clacking their mini beaks, pillowed in clambering trees spiralling upwards, creating a quietly shadowed atmosphere, where only the sun's rays can penetrate the intense undergrowth. The mildewed tree bark wears a glossy coat of emerald moss, where inquisitive brownish polecats climb up to the branches to view the glory of the plantations from high above the plain of velvety treetops.

~Breeze~

A gentle gust slips in through the windowpane, causing a melodic harmony of wind-chimes to resonate within the confined room. Moonlit valleys with plethora's of stars holding so many secrets and wishes in their hearts.

I hold on to memories of nature. They are what will get me through.

~Breathe~

Title: None

Author: Jasmine Quayle

Age: 11

My favourite birds are Robins. You can see them in fields, gardens, parks, scrubs and woodland. They love farmers because when me and my grandad plough the first fields I can see some of them feeding on worms. They also love gardeners because when they dig up the ground and when they replace the plants they can Pinch some.

I love robins because of how brave they are to come and see you, you can feed them sunflower seeds, mealworms, fruit, crushed peanuts, raisins and bits of bread. They also sing beautiful songs sometimes in the mornings. Robins brighten the world in the winter with their orange breast and their face lined with grey and brown. I also love to see them in my garden.

Title: Octopus's Journey

Author: Emmy Rogerson

Age: 7

A journey to find a friend.

Once upon a time a beautiful orange octopus lived in a deep cave. His name is George he is a lonely boy. His cave is wonderful with a bed made of soft, green seaweed, but George was desperate for a friend.

Not long after George began a journey to find a friend. He swam a very long way past shells, rocks and seaweed. He finally saw a shadow of a wrasse hidden behind short seaweed. The wrasse is very frustrated because the seaweed is too short. George tried to help the wrasse but there was no way to help it, George swam away for a long time. Further in the distance a starfish lay on a small rock. George swam closer to the rock and asked the starfish "can you be my friend?" the starfish said "yes of course I would love that," so they set off together.

They swam past a broken down shipwreck but it was too small for creatures to live in. After swimming they saw a lobster hidden in some crevices. They said to the lobster "can you be my friend?" but they didn't see that the lobster was asleep and it didn't reply. George and the starfish swam off to sit on a rock for a rest.

After a minute they began to swim again but they didn't see three eel conger eels chasing them. They swam as fast as they could and hid behind a big, white shell. George saw a glass bottle with a note in it. He read the note and it said "go north

and you will find a sunken ship from pirates." The starfish shouted "a sunken ship!" and they swam off together north.

They swam slowly and carefully then ended up in a massive net. They got pulled up into a boat. The man screamed because it was his first time seeing an octopus so he opened the net and pushed it back in the sea. All the creatures swam to freedom, George and the starfish and the other creatures all got out the net. The man pulled the net up and he was disappointed because he lost his catch and all the fish swam away so the man went somewhere else to fish. Under the water George asked the starfish "what's your name" he replied "I don't have a name" so George named him Stary.

Soon Stary and George found the ship from the note it was full of life so they went closer. They went inside and found a chest they opened the chest it was empty and they shut it. Suddenly the chest opened but George and Stary went touch-ing it, a big, brown tentacle reached out the chest. They were scared at first and then Stary realised it was another octopus. George said "what's your name" she replied "I'm Evey what's your name" George replied "I'm George and this is Stary, can you be are friend?" she said "yes".

And they were friends forever, THE END.

Title: Atlas

Author: Marija Vasic

Age: 17

Unfortunately, I don't share the privilege of jellyfish and seaweed. What is unfortunate is not the fact that I lack the ability to make someone's swimming in the sea distressing, but that I don't have the honour of calling the Isle of Man my home.

My home country is small, hometown smaller even than the Island, however, they both remind me of each other in many different ways- I am certainly not the only thing they have in common.

What I do have the privilege of is studying on the island. Since I first arrived, it has been an unforgettable journey that I am fortunate enough to continue for one more year.

I had an opportunity to experience a bit of every season and the way those (minimal) temperature changes affect the nature on the island. One particularly windy day, I remember being fascinated by the way the crows outside my window maneuverer their wings and managed to keep flying. The extreme weather was used to their advantage as they glided and danced with leaves and dust. Watching them, I was reminded of an old friend whose name was still fresh in my mind.

A few years ago, when I was younger but admittedly more naive, I was hit with the cruelty of the fate of the animals whose lives depend on our selfish choices. With a friend, I was strolling through my neighbourhood. We were giddy with excitement- a shopping mall was opening soon, in our town! As we jumped and leaped, a black ball of fluff caught my attention. When we neared, we realized it was a baby bird, later finding out from my veterinarian uncle that it was a small crow. The vet tried to help

the little guy, as one of his wings was fractured, and my friend and I visited it every day for a week. We were never told if it was a girl or a boy, most likely so we wouldn't get too attached, but we decided that he was a he, naming him Atlas.

Coming to the clinic one day and seeing his impromptu bed empty, excitement rushed through me, believing that he finally recovered. Images of his mum welcoming him back filled my mind, and I was so proud of the tiny creature. My uncle never told me what happened, my young mind couldn't even fathom Atlas experiencing a tragic end. Looking back, I still tend to disregard the obvious.

Whenever I hear the crows from my window, I choose to be naïve and wonder- did the brave Atlas ever find his way home? I wonder, was his mother waiting for him, their nest warm and carefully prepared for him? Or is it too late to feign naivety- was she chased away, to the skies above our own? Has she been reunited with her son, after failing to survive in a new environment, all for the sake of the new shopping mall that was 'necessary' for our small, quiet, town?