

A Handbook for Amy Mack's

A Bush Calendar

By Nature Study Australia



Explore Nature with Living Books

SAMPLE

A Handbook for Amy Mack's

A BUSH CALENDAR

Nature Study Australia

First Edition 2020

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www.naturestudyaustralia.com.au

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a year of walking alongside Amy Mack as she explores a small part of the Australian bush. This handguide is designed to use with the book, A Bushland Calendar by Amy Mack and it can be explored either monthly or weekly.

THE MONTHLY VERSION:

The monthly version includes reading together the whole chapter for the corresponding month. A bushland walk in a park is encouraged after the reading, but it's not necessary, as it depends on location and circumstances. Choose whether this will be an indoor or outdoor nature study.

THE WEEKLY VERSION:

The weekly version includes reading together a section in the chapter for the corresponding month. A weekly bushland walk is encouraged after each reading, but it's not necessary, as it depends on location and circumstances. Choose whether this will be an indoor or outdoor nature study.

INDOOR NATURE STUDY:

- Investigate and research a bird, insect or plant mentioned in the reading with a field guide or an internet search.
- Depending on the child/adult's level of ability or interest, either choose to include one or more subjects researched into:
 - A nature journal through drawings, written expressions or both.
 - A nature scrapbook including images of specimens if preferred in place of sketching or painting in a nature journal.
 - A Flora and Fauna Guide for the park designed and created by yourself.
 - A monthly slice on a phenology wheel.

OUTDOOR NATURE STUDY:

- Explore a bushland in your area and notice the local birds rhythms, flowering native plants, insects who live in the bush and other animals who come and go through the seasons.
- List all the birds, insects, mammals and plants noticed that week or month into a nature journal or nature scrapbook.
- Investigate, identify and research a bird, insect or plant encountered on your bushwalk.
- Depending on the child/adult's level of ability or interest, either choose to include one or more subjects researched into:
 - A nature journal through drawings, written expressions or both.
 - A nature scrapbook including photographs of specimens if preferred in place of sketching or painting in a nature journal.
 - A Flora and Fauna Guide for the park designed and created by yourself.
 - A monthly slice on a phenology wheel.

NOTE: Parents are encouraged to scribe diary entries for young children.

RESOURCE LIST

Field Guides | Australian Plants

Field guides of flora and fauna will be used as references to aid identification skills and for nature journaling indoors. If you have field guides on your shelf already, then use those instead. The field guides listed here are optional resources.

- [Field Guide to Australian Wildflowers](#) by Denise Greig
- [Cronin's Key Guide | Australian Wildflowers](#) by Leonard Cronin
- [Field Guides for Australian Wattles](#)
- [Eucalyptus: An Illustrated Guide to Identification](#) by Ian Brooker and David Kleinig
- [A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia](#) by David L. Jones
- [Australian Orchids](#) by Rosa Fiveash and Noel Lothian. (OOP)
- [The Weed Forager's Handbook](#) by Adam Grub
- [Banksias | A Field and Garden Guide](#) by Ivan Holiday.

Field Guide | Australian Birds

- [The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds](#) by Peter Slater, Pat Slater and Raoul Slater
- [The Claremont Field Guide to the Birds of Australia](#) by Simpson and Day

Field Guide | Australian Butterflies

- [The Complete Field Guide to Australian Butterflies](#) by Michael Braby

Field Guide | Australian Spiders

- [A Field Guide to Australian Spiders](#) by Robert Whyte

Field Guide | Australian Insects

- [A Field Guide to Insects of Australia](#) by Paul Zborowski and Ross Storey

Field Guide | Western Australia

- [Bush Books](#)

Field Guide | Tasmania

- [Plant Identikits](#)

Internet Resources | Australian Plants

Internet websites can be referred to in place of field guides when necessary to aid identification skills and for further research.

- [EUCLID | Wattle: Acacias of Australia](#)
- [EUCLID | Eucalyptus of Australia](#)
- [Australian Native Plant Society](#)

Internet Resources | Australian Birds

The eBird website includes pictures, bird songs and videos of bird species which are useful for identification and indoor nature journaling. Listen to a bird's song to become acquainted with it in order to identify it by ear and use the videos to observe a bird's behaviour within its habitat. The video can be paused as each new position of the bird is sketched into a nature journal. This activity enhances the skill of nature journaling while out in the field.

- [eBird](#)
- [Bushpea: Birds, Books and Other Stuff](#)

Internet Resources | Butterflies

[Butterflies of Australia](#)

[Butterfly Online Identification Tool | South Australia](#)

APPS

- [QuestaGame](#)
- [iNaturalist](#)

List of Living Book Titles for Specific Lessons

Optional living book titles have been included to engage young children in the nature study theme.

- [Wildflower Diary](#) by Winifred Waddell (OOP - A gem if you can find it).
- [Look Up: Birdwatching in Your Backyard](#) by Annette Leblanc Cate. Optional for 8+yrs old.
- [Bird Builds a Nest](#) by Martin Jenkins. Optional for 4-6yrs old.
- [An Egg is Quiet](#) by Dianna Aston. Optional for 4-8yrs old.
- [A Nest is Noisy](#) by Dianna Aston. Optional 4-8yrs old.
- [A First Book of Australian Backyard Bird Songs](#) by Fred Van Gessel. Optional for 4+yrs old.
- [Hooray for Birds](#) by Lucy Cousins. Optional for 4-6yrs old.
- [Scribbly Gum Secrets](#) by Dannika Patterson. Optional for 6+yrs old.
- [Koala Lou](#) by Mem Fox. Optional for 4-6yrs old.
- [Kookaburra, Kookaburra](#) by Bridget Farmer. Optional for 4-6yrs old.
- [Feathers Not Just for Flying](#) by Melissa Stewart. Optional for 4-8yrs old.
- [The Dandelion Seed](#) by Joseph Anthony. For children 4-10yrs old.
- [Searching for Cicadas](#) by Lesley Gibs. Optional for children 4-10yrs old.
- [A Walk in the Bush](#) by Gwyn Perkins. Optional for children 4-10yrs old.
- [Whose Chick is That?](#) By Jill B. Bruce. Optional for children 4-12yrs old.
- [Caterpillar Butterfly](#) by Vivian French. For children 4-6yrs old.
- [Butterflies Fly](#) by Yvonne Winer. For children 4-8yrs old.
- [If I Never Forever Endeavour](#) by Holly Meade. Optional for children 4+yrs.
- [Spiders Spin Webs](#) by Yvonne Winer. Optional.
- [Little Tawny](#) by Kim Dale. For Children 5+yrs.
- [Queenie Quail Can't Keep Up](#) by Jane Whittingham. Optional for Children 4-8yrs.
- [Migration: Exploring the Remarkable Journeys of Birds](#) by Melissa Mayntz. Optional.
- [Snugglepot and Cuddlepie](#) by May Gibbs. Optional read aloud. (4+yrs).
- [A Ture Story: Lyrebird](#) by Jackie Kerin. Optional for children 4-8yrs.
- [Birds Build Nests](#) by Yvonne Winer.

Optional Living Book Titles for the Entire Study

These titles may have references to evolution or Mother Nature.

- A Bushland Calendar by Amy Mack (Find it online at archives.org).
- [Australian Wildflower Fairies](#) by Nuri Mass.
- [Bushland Stories](#) by Amy Mack.

Optional Resources for Specific Lessons

Colouring books can be substituted instead of nature journaling and they're an optional resource for those who find drawing or painting a challenge.

- [Colouring Australian Flowers](#) | Vintage Collection
- [Colouring Australian Birds](#) | Vintage Collection.
- [Unique Australian Bird Songs](#) by Fred Van Gessel. Optional for all.
- [Nature Sounds](#) by David Stewart. Recordings of Bird Songs. Optional for all.

Nature Journaling Tutorials

- [How to Draw Plants](#) | John Muir Laws
- [How to Draw Birds](#) | John Muir Laws
- [How to Draw Mammals](#) | John Muir Laws
- [Nature Journaling Week Blog](#)

Nature Journaling Reference Books

- [How to Teach Nature Journaling](#) by John Muir Laws and Emily Lygren. (Free PDF Version Available). The nature journaling activities from this resource have been referred to in this handbook in order to enhance nature journaling skills in the field.
- [The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling](#) by John Muir Laws
- [Keeping a Nature Journal](#) by Clare Walker Leslie

Basic Nature Journaling Tools

- A Nature Journaling Book. An A4 or A5 Visual Art Book is sufficient.
- Watercolour Pencils or Watercolour Paints and Paint Brushes.
- Any Colouring Pencils.
- Mechanical Lead Pencils or any Lead Pencil.
- Eraser
- Optional: Fine Tipped Permanent Ink Pen for Outlining.

AUGUST

“According to the official calendar it is still winter, but out in the bush all the world knows it is spring...and the air is fragrant with early spring scents.” Amy Mack

(A Bush Calendar, pg. 1).



LESSON 1

MONTHLY BUSHLAND WALK NATURE STUDY

- Read August, in A Bush Calendar by Amy Mack.
- Choose one lesson from lessons 1-4.
- Investigate a wild place or park on a monthly basis.
- Make a journal entry into a Phenology Wheel for August.

Wattles

Checklist:

- *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, August.
- A nature journal or scrapbook journal. Alternatively, use the *Colouring Australian Flowers | Vintage Collection* colouring book.
- *Field guide for Australian Wildflowers or Wattles*.
- *Poem: Where the Wattle Blooms* by Marion Miller Knowles, pg. 14
- *Optional: Australian Wildflower Fairies* by Nuri Mass, *The Wattle Fairy*, pg. 34.
- *Optional: Internet connection to explore [Wattle Babies](#), [wattles](#) or the [Wattle App](#).*
- *Optional: A wild place to investigate on a weekly basis.*

Remember:

To get *Bushland Stories* by Amy Mack for lesson 2. (Optional).

NOTE:

There are a few editions of A Bush Calendar by Amy Mack. It is likely that our editions of the book will differ as will the page numbers. I've included excerpts from the chapters to read from each week where applicable. My edition was printed in 1986.

Read together, A Bush Calendar by Amy Mack, August, from pg. 1, to *'and the air is fragrant with early spring scents.'* Ask for an oral narration or the names of wattles mentioned in the text. Describe the weather. What did the spring air smell like?

Read together, Where the Wattle Blooms by Marion Miller Knowles.

Optional: Read together, Australian Wildflower Fairies by Nuri Mass, The Wattle Fairy, pg. 34. *Note: Contains Mother Nature remark, 'But Dear Mother Nature, who is so gentle and so wise...' Counter with Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 4:11.*

Optional: Listen together to the short story of [Wattle Babies](#) by May Gibbs.

INDOOR NATURE STUDY

Using a field guide, investigate the spring wattles listed in A Bush Calendar, pg. 7.

- Compare each wattle's flowers, leaves, seeds and shape.
- Choose one wattle species to include in a journal entry. Include notes about its features.
- Copy some verses from the poem, Where the Wattle Blooms, into the journal.
- Alternatively, choose an illustration to colour from plate numbers 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 59, 60, 61, 63 or 64 in Colouring Australian Flowers | Vintage Collection.

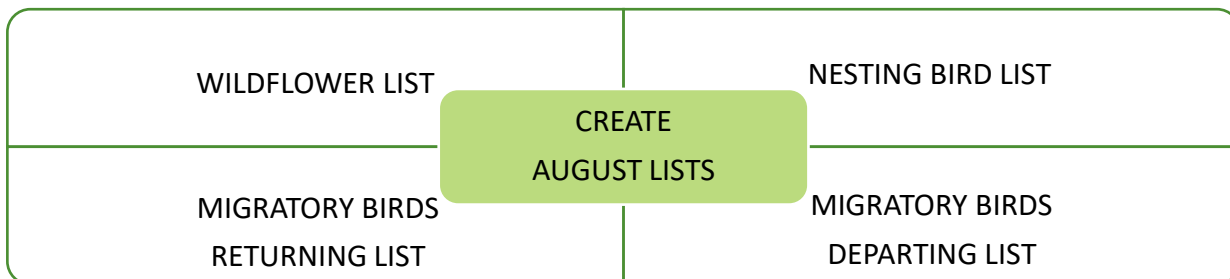
OUTDOOR NATURE STUDY

Explore a conservation park in your area for blooming wildflowers.

- Identify each species using a field guide.
- Begin an August Wildflower List at the back of your journal.
- There are many wattle species which flower through the year. Make a note of flowering wattles for each month in your area.
- Choose a wildflower or wattle shrub to sketch, paint or photograph.
- Write a diary entry describing your nature walk in the journal. What was the weather like? What did you notice, smell, hear and touch?
- Optional: Copy a few verses from the poem, Where the Wattle Blooms, into the journal.

Nature Journaling Tip:

Adults Read: [How to Teach Nature Journaling](#) by John Muir Laws – Introduction, pg. 1-29.



Where the Wattle Blooms

by Marion Miller Knowles

*Oh, to be out in the wild, fresh breezes,
Borne on the breast of the wind away,
Wandering whither my fancy pleases;
Oh, to be out on the hills today!*

*Just to gather the sweet wild flowers,
Smiling up from the dewy grass;
To bury my face in the golden showers
Of wattles whispering as I pass!*

*Just to thrill with the bliss of being,
Singing my heart out in the sun,
Glad with the simple joy of seeing,
Free as the brooks that seaward run!*

*Oh, to roam where the sun is shining,
Down where the everlastings grow,
Up where the musk-leaves' silver lining
Gleams in the light of the golden glow;*

*Up where the peaks of the purple mountains
Stand like sentinels guarding all,
And the distant splash of the flowing fountains
Stirs my blood like a bugle-call.*

*There, I know, are the glad birds singing
Rippling carols of love and mirth;
There, I know, are the blue-bells ringing
Fairy music o'er the earth.*

LESSON 2

Blue Gums and Iron Bark

Checklist:

- *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, August.
- *A Nature Journal* or scrapbook journal. Alternatively, use the *Colouring Australian Flowers | Vintage Collection* colouring book.
- *Field guide for Eucalyptus Trees*.
- *Poem: The Bush* by James Lister Cuthbertson, pg. 17
- *Optional: Bushland Stories* by Amy Mack, *The Gallant Gums*, pg.193.
- *Optional: Internet connection to explore [eucalyptus trees](#).*
- *Optional: A wild place to investigate weekly.*

Remember:

To get [Look Up: Birdwatching in Your Backyard](#) by Annette Leblanc Cate for lesson 3. (Optional 8+yrs old).

Can you remember the wildflowers encountered last week?

Read together, *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, pg. 1, from *'This afternoon there was actually a break in the grey sky...'* to *'...all three together making a dainty bunch.'* Ask for an oral narration or the names of the trees and other plants mentioned in the text.

Read together, *The Bush* by James Lister Cuthbertson.

Optional: Read together, *Bushland Stories* by Amy Mack, *The Gallant Gums*.

INDOOR NATURE STUDY

Using a field guide, investigate Blue Gums and Iron Bark Eucalypt trees.

- Compare each tree's type of bark, appearance of buds, flowers and fruit.
- Choose one tree to sketch or paint in a nature journal. Include notes about its features.
- Copy a few verses from the poem, *The Bush*, into the nature journal.
- Alternatively, choose an illustration to colour from plate numbers 44, 45, 48 or 53 in *Colouring Australian Flowers | Vintage Collection*.

OUTDOOR NATURE STUDY

Explore a park for eucalypt trees.

- Identify them using a field guide. Take photographs of the whole tree, bark, leaves, buds, flowers and gumnuts to aid identification. Practice remembering their names on each visit to the park.
- In your nature journal, begin a list of eucalypt trees for your area.
- Choose an eucalypt tree to sketch, paint or photograph. Describe the tree’s canopy, bark, leaves, flowers, gumnuts and their cluster arrangements.
- Optional: copy a few verses from the poem, The Bush, into the journal.
- Optional: Little children can do bark rubbings in their nature journals.

Nature Journaling Tip:

Adults Read: *How to Teach Nature Journaling by John Muir Laws – Getting Started, pg.31-35*

Optional Nature Journaling Activity:

I Notice, I wonder, It Reminds Me of, pg. 36-38.



NOTE:

The goal of this study is to inspire a love for the outdoors and the birds and plants that share our place in it, allowing personal connections to foster within God’s creation.

Although, bird and plant identification skills are encouraged by the use of field guides and internet research, it is not the intent of this study to memorize a list of bird or wildflower names, but to whet the appetite for the great outdoors.

THE ONLY RIGHT WAY TO BEGIN PLANT STUDY WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IS THROUGH AWAKENING THEIR INTEREST IN THE LOVE FOR FLOWERS.

Anna Botsford Comstock

The Bush

by James Lister Cuthbertson

*Give us, from dawn to dark,
Blue of Australian skies;
Let there be none to mark
Whither our pathway lies.*

*Give us, when noontide comes
Rest in the woodland free,
Fragrant breath of the gums,
Cold, sweet scent of the sea.*

*Give us the wattle's gold,
And the dew-laden air,
And the loveliness bold
Loneliest landscapes wear.*

*These are the haunts we love,
Glad with enchanted hours,
Bright as the heavens above,
Fresh as the wild bush flowers*

LESSON 3

Thornbills

Checklist:

- *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, August.
- A nature journal or scrapbook journal. Alternatively, use the *Colouring Australian Birds | Vintage Collection* colouring book.
- *Field guide for Australian Birds*.
- Optional: [Look Up: Birdwatching in Your Backyard](#) by Annette Leblanc Cate (8+yrs old)
- Poem: [The Yellow-tailed Thornbill](#) by C.J. Dennis
- Optional: Internet connection to explore [birds](#).
- Optional: A wild place to investigate weekly.

Remember:

To get [Bird Builds a Nest](#) by Martin Jenkins for lesson 4. (Optional 4-6yrs old).

Can you remember the Eucalypt trees identified last week?

Read together, *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, pg. 2, from 'Last week the bed of the creek was quite dry...' to 'catch some insects for the wee things.' Ask for an oral narration. Tomtits are Yellow-rumped Thornbills. What were the Thornbills doing?

Read together, *The Yellow-tailed Thornbill* by C.J. Dennis

Optional: Read together, [Look Up: Birdwatching in Your Backyard](#) by Annette Leblanc Cate.

Tip:

Investigate birds online:

- [Yellow-rumped Thornbill](#)

The eBird website includes pictures, bird songs and videos of bird species which is useful for identification and indoor nature journaling. Find out how to use eBird [here](#).

You may want to invest in a pair of binoculars to explore birds up close while birdwatching.

INDOOR NATURE STUDY

Using a bird field guide, find the Yellow-rumped Thornbill or Tomtit.

- Compare the male, female and juvenile Thornbills. Why do you think the juvenile wears a muted suit? What kind of nests do they build and what do their eggs look like? Listen to their bird song and watch a little video at the above link.

- Compare the Thornbill species included in the field guide. What makes them different from each other?
- Search through the Thornbill category in the field guide to find which Thornbills live in your area.
- Sketch, paint or add an image of a Thornbill to your nature journal or scrapbook. Include drawings of their nest and eggs.
- Copy some verses from the Yellow-rumped Thornbill into the journal.
- Alternatively, colour the illustration on plate 26 in *Colouring Australian Birds* | Vintage Collection.

OUTDOOR NATURE STUDY

Nesting season has begun for many birds. Investigate your park for Thornbills or other nesting birds.

- Identify the nesting birds in a bird field guide.
- Create an August Bird Breeding List at the back of a nature journal or scrapbook. Add all the breeding birds you notice in the park to the list.
 - Choose a nesting bird from the park to capture in a nature journal or scrapbook. Draw or describe its nest, nesting materials, egg size and colourations. Which tree or shrub is it nesting in? What does it eat?
 - Write a diary entry describing your walk in the park. What nesting bird did you observe and what nesting behaviours did it display? Did you notice any new wildflowers or gum trees flowering? What was the weather like?

Optional Nature Journaling Activity:

How to Teach Nature Journaling by John Muir Laws – Comparison, pg. 45-46.

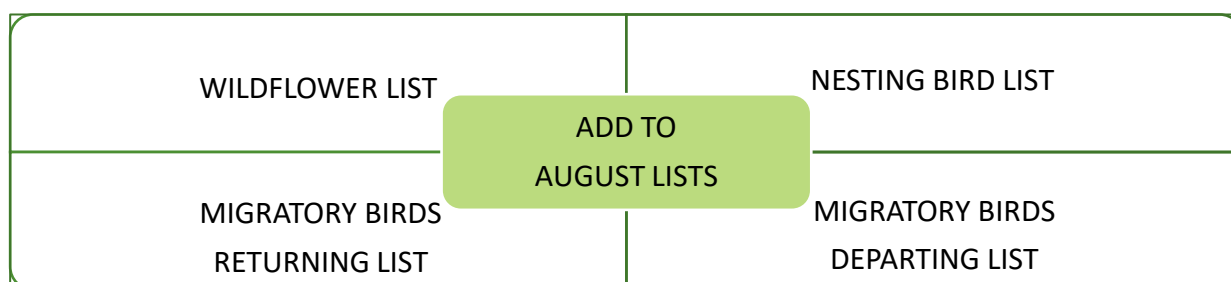
Using the above activity, compare the male, female and juvenile Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

Nature Journaling Tip:

Learn how to draw birds with [John Muir Laws](#). Download and print the *Drawing Birds PDF Worksheet*. Either paste the worksheet into the nature journal to use as a reference when sketching birds, or paste an envelope onto the inside cover of your nature journal and slide the worksheet inside to refer to later.

Nature Study Tips:

- [Learn Bird Anatomy.](#)
- [Know How to Find a Bird.](#)



LESSON 4

Honeyeaters

Checklist:

- *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, August.
- A nature journal, nature scrapbook or a Phenology Wheel. Alternatively, use the *Colouring Australian Birds | Vintage Collection* colouring book.
- *Field guide for Australian Birds*.
- Poem: *The Singing Honeyeater* by C.J. Dennis
- Optional: *Bird Builds a Nest* by Martin Jenkins. (4-6yrs old).
- Optional: Internet connection to explore [birds](#).
- Optional: A wild place to explore on a weekly basis.

Remember:

To get: *An Egg is Quiet* by Dianna Aston for lesson 5.. (Optional for 4-8yrs old).

Can you remember which nesting bird was investigated last week? What other birds did you notice in the park?

Read together, *A Bush Calendar* by Amy Mack, pg. 2, from 'but the blackcaps had been outdone by the weather...' to the end of the chapter. Ask for an oral narration. Blackcaps are White-napped Honeyeaters. What other honeyeaters were mentioned in the text?

Read together, *The Singing Honeyeater* by C.J. Dennis.

Optional: Read together, *Bird Builds a Nest* by Martin Jenkins.

Tip:

Investigate birds online:

- [White-naped Honeyeater](#)
- [New Holland Honeyeater](#)

Listen to the bird's audio and watch a video to observe the bird's behaviour in its habitat. Pause the video and practice sketching the bird in its various positions. This activity enhances the skill of nature journaling in the field.

INDOOR NATURE STUDY

Using a bird field guide, find the White-naped Honeyeater or Blackcap.

- Compare the difference between the White-naped Honeyeater and the Western Honeyeater. How is the juvenile different from the parent?
- The White-naped Honeyeater is a Small Wattled Honeyeater. Are there Small Wattled Honeyeaters in your area? What kind of nests do they build and what do their eggs look like?
- Sketch, paint or add an image of a Small Wattled Honeyeater into your nature journal or scrapbook. Include drawings of the nest and eggs.
- Copy some verses from the Singing Honeyeater poem into the journal.
- Alternatively, choose an illustration to colour on plates 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 or 49 in *Colouring Australian Birds | Vintage Collection*.

OUTDOOR NATURE STUDY

Investigate your park for Honeyeaters or other nesting birds. Depending on where you live, birds may be departing from the North and returning to the South after their Autumn migration.

- Identify new birds noticed with a bird field guide. Did you spot a Honeyeater?
- Create a Migratory Bird List for returning and departing birds in your park. Add all migratory species to the list.
- Choose a nesting or migrating bird from the park to capture in a nature journal or scrapbook. Include notes on its features and behaviour as it was observed in its habitat.
- Optional: Begin a Phenology Wheel and choose a plant, bird or insect to insert into August's 'pizza slice.'
- Amy Mack noticed the first butterfly of the season. *'And when upon my homeward way I met the first butterfly of the season, a pretty, bright, brown thing, with black-veined wings, I felt that, despite the rain, which was once beginning to creep up, spring was indeed well on her way.'* Have you seen butterflies fluttering about yet? Begin a Butterfly List at the back of your nature journal. Include the date, time and place butterflies are seen.

Optional Nature Journaling Activity:

How to Teach Nature Journaling by John Muir Laws – *Animal Encounters*, pg. 69-71.

Using the above activity, observe and study nesting birds.

