



*Rewild
yourself*



NATURE GUIDE LONDON





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COMPASS BUTTON TO
EXPLORE ADVENTURE MAP



MAGNIFYING GLASS
HIGHLIGHTS INFO LINK





ReWild Yourself in London

When you think of London, what do you see? Big Ben, black cabs, red buses? Tube trains, light rain, commuter crushes? Or maybe the slow bulk of a murky river. London is all of this. But it is also gloriously green.

Over half of London is green in fact, or blue. It is a living, breathing, tangle of ecosystems, with 3,000 public parks, 3.8 million private gardens, over 500 km of rivers, canals, reservoirs and wetlands, and 150 Nature reserves. London is so green in fact, that it became the first ever National Park City in June 2019.

Yet, it is all too easy for Nature to be a stranger in the city, for us to feel disconnected, affecting our health and wellbeing. This guide is designed to help you find and access Nature in the city — then get lost in it! It's time to ReWild Yourself in London.



NATURE IN LONDON

Nature finds a home amidst the city buzz.
Take a moment to peek into the trees.

Marmalade Hoverfly 🔍

Where: Common in gardens, parks and sunny woodlands. Important pollinators.

When: All year round — high numbers in summer. Grub-like larvae feed on aphids.

ID tip: A wasp mimic: orange with black bands across its body. Look out for large, red compound eyes.



Daubenton's Bat 🔍

Where: Near water — feeding on insects. Try Wimbledon Common or Hyde Park.

When: Twilight hours, between April – October. Hibernates during winter.

ID tip: Small brown body with pinkish face. Known for its large hairy feet! Up to 25 cm wingspan.

London Plane Tree 🔍

Where: A real city slicker — the capital's most common tree, lining much of the embankment.

When: Flowers bloom in early spring, with brown fruit ripening in October.

ID tip: Camouflage-style bark, leathery, sycamore-like leaves, turn to a rich orange-yellow in autumn.



Grey Heron 🔍

Where: Throughout London's waterways. Large numbers gather at Regent's Park.

When: All year round.

ID tip: Striking, noble looking grey-backed bird, with long legs, white neck and yellow bill.

Hedgehog 🔍

Where: Large populations in Hampstead Heath and Regent's Park. Common in gardens.

When: Most active after dark, between April and October.

ID tip: Round, brown, furry-faced and famously covered in white-tipped spines.

With thanks to our friends at the **Natural History Museum, London**





Herb Robert 🔍

Where: Natural habitat is woodland and hedges, but common in urban areas along pavements and old walls.

When: Flowers between April to October (sometimes through winter).

ID tip: Grows up to 50cm. Has fern-like downy leaves and delicate pink five-petaled flowers.

Tufted Duck 🔍

Where: Nests on ponds, flooded gravel pits, lakes and reservoirs, such as Walthamstow Wetlands.

When: All year round. Can form large flocks in winter.

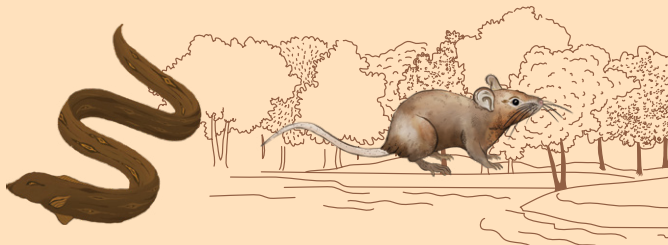
ID tip: Females are chocolate-brown. Males are black with white flanks and a long tuft on head.

House Mouse 🔍

Where: Wherever there are people and shelter. 500,000+ live in the London Underground!

When: All year round.

ID tip: Grey-brown with large ears, pointed snout, and long, scaly tail.



European Eel 🔍

Where: Once common across London waterways; now critically endangered.

When: Around May or June young eels arrive from the Sargasso Sea and 'run' into the Thames.

ID tip: Body elongated and cylindrical, with one pair of pectoral fins and small, slit-like gill openings.

Green Shield Bug 🔍

Where: Adults feed on a number of different plants in diverse habitats; often basking in the sunshine.

When: Most commonly seen between May – November. Adults overwinter in the soil.

ID tip: Broad, flattened and green, with a strongly contrasting black / brown rear end.



For more details of wildlife you can spot,
and to record your sightings, visit [iNaturalist](#)



Use our [map](#) to find the best places
to access and spot Nature



REWILD YOURSELF

4, 3, 2, 1 in Nature

A 5-minute mindfulness exercise brought to you by the
Urban Nature Project at the Natural History Museum, London.

Find a spot to sit in Nature. A local park or garden will do – anywhere there is a little green or blue and a pocket of calm. Now take a moment to be mindful of your surroundings, using the following prompts...

4

What can you see?

From where you are, scan the scene in front of you and take note of four separate urban Nature items. Take time to consider how they appear, any colours, shapes, patterns, or movements you notice.



3

What can you touch?

Then, without moving too far, find three different things in Nature to touch. Carefully notice how each feels – the texture, weight, temperature.



Visit our library for more ideas
on how to ReWild Yourself
rewildyourself.com



2

What can you hear?

Now close your eyes and open your ears.

Notice the distinct sounds you can hear. Try and pinpoint two natural sounds amongst all the machine-made ones. What is the source of the sound? What direction is it coming from?

How far away? If it's an animal, consider why it is making such a sound.



1

What can you smell?

Finally, notice all the different smells you can detect. Find or focus on a smell with a natural source. Where has it come from? How would you describe it? Is it pleasant? Is it familiar or a new smell?



The **Natural History Museum's Urban Nature Project** is improving access to Nature in towns and cities across the UK, giving people the motivation and tools to better understand, protect, and connect with Nature.



How to feel connected to Nature

Research has shown us that there are different ways people develop a relationship with the natural world. Each brings us closer to Nature and further unlocks the positive health and wellbeing benefits it brings.

Emotion

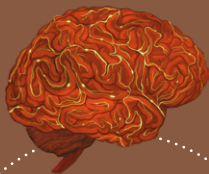
Recognise and explore your emotions and feelings in Nature. How exactly do different places make you feel?



Senses

Tune in and explore Nature using all your senses. What can you hear, smell or see? How does it feel to the touch?





Compassion

Take action for Nature.
What can you do on your
own or with others that
can make a difference for
Nature in the city?

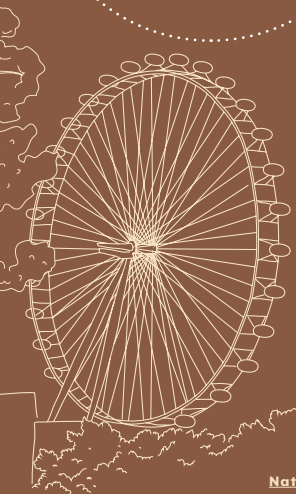
Meaning

Notice and celebrate special
moments in Nature and the
passing seasons. What do
particular plants, animals and
places in the city mean
to you personally?



Beauty

Look closely at the details
in Nature and notice their
beauty. What site in the
city do you consider the
most beautiful?



Discover more with the

Nature Connection Handbook

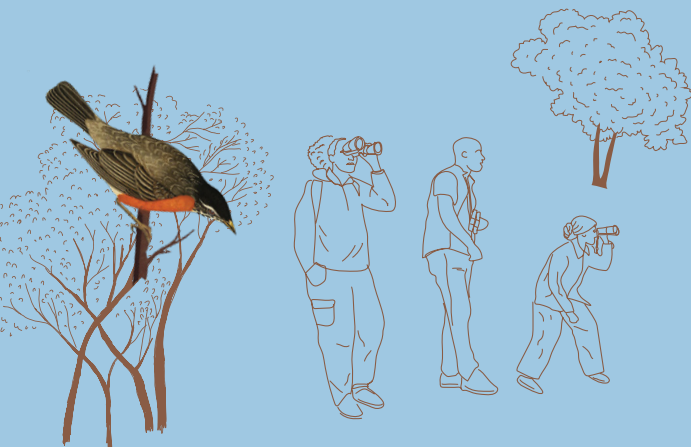
from the Nature Connectedness Research Group, University of Derby.



REWILDERS IN LONDON

Flock Together 🔍

Flock Together is a birdwatching collective for people of colour. They host monthly birdwatching walks as a forum to share experiences, find and offer support, and develop a stronger connection to the natural world.



Wild In The City 🔍

Wild In The City supports wellbeing through relationships with Nature in London and beyond. They work within Nature, offering experiences in hiking, woodland living skills, natural history and ecotherapy.



May Project 🔍

The award-winning May Project Gardens empower marginalised groups to address poverty, and increase access to Nature resources and influence. They offer practical, affordable, collective solutions to sustainable living to their community through food and creative arts; which collectively leads to social change.



London Bushcraft 🔍

London Bushcraft creates experiences to live comfortably in Nature, using natural resources in a responsible and sustainable manner. These skills were essential to our ancestors and today they can be an empowering tool to reconnect with our roots and the natural world around us.



Black Girls Hike 🔍

Black Girls Hike provides a safe space for Black women to explore the outdoors. Challenging the status quo, and encouraging Black women to reconnect with Nature, they host nationwide group hikes, outdoor activity days and training events.



Wilderness Foundation UK 🔍

The Wilderness Foundation UK harnesses the power of Nature to transform vulnerable lives. In return, they are empowered to connect with and protect the natural world. They offer Nature-based therapy camps, outreach programmes and environmental education for both adults and youth to explore wild places in the UK.



Outdoor People Family Wild Walks



Outdoor People is a non-profit organisation working to get everyone, especially children and families, to spend time outdoors every day. One of their key activities is their Family Wild Walks throughout London, for which they have created downloadable maps.



OasisPlay



OasisPlay provides an inclusive green space that welcomes all members of the community to enjoy it as if it were their very own garden. Their Nature garden contains a wildlife pond, wooded areas, fire circle, wildflower meadow, mud kitchen, tree house and vegetable patch, as well as other play structures.



Connecting with Each Other...

Sit down with someone you don't know and ask them these questions. It's a great ice breaker.

Do you have
a secret place in
Nature that you
love to go to?

Describe any
meaningful
relationship you've
had with a
non-human being

Who's your
favourite companion
for time spent in
Nature?





Is there a place
in Nature that you
dream of spending
time in?

Who or what has
taught you the most
about connecting
with Nature?

What gives you
optimism for a healthy
planetary ecosystem
in the future?






If you would like to share your insights with us
IG: [@rewildyourself](https://www.instagram.com/rewildyourself) #rewildyourself






NATURE SITES IN LONDON

Need a dose of Nature? No problem — here is our carefully selected list of wild London wonders. Each park, garden or waterway has plenty to offer, but we've picked out a Nature highlight or activity for each site, to give you more reasons to take a walk on London's wild side. Enjoy!

-  Find each site on our adventure map
-  Find each website by the title link
-  Direct link to Google map



What's
your favorite
outdoor childhood
memory?



For details of more Nature sites in the city,
visit [London Wildlife Trust](#)



Pockets of Peace And Meditation

1.

[The Inner Boardwalk at Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park](#)   

Through the wooden gatehouse building you will find the peaceful inner boardwalk of the Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park. This secluded haven, within four acres of freshwater habitat, will momentarily make you forget you are in one of the busiest cities in the world.

2.

[Healing plants at the Chelsea Physic Garden](#)   

Down by the river, hidden behind high walls, lies one of the oldest botanic gardens in Europe – a healing space since the 17th century, yet somewhere that still feels like a secret. It houses a living collection of 5,000+ species of medicinal plants, though its seductive serenity is an equal tonic.

3.

[Kyoto Garden's oasis of calm](#)   

At the heart of Holland Park is the Kyoto Gardens, one of the most idyllic outdoor areas in London. Surrounded by tranquility, take a moment to pause amongst 54-acres of stunning scenery, with flowing waterfalls, beautiful wildflowers, and a traditional Japanese carp pond.

4.

[Forest bathing in Queen's Wood](#)   

This area of ancient woodland in North London is a perfect spot to practice the ancient Japanese practice of *shinrin yoku*. Find stillness under the canopy of Hornbeams, and be mindful of the Nature around you. Our exercise on page 4 might help.

5.

[Walking Meditation in Sydenham Hill Wood](#)   

At Sydenham Hill Wood, winding trails take you well away from urbanity, immersing you in remnants of ancient woodland. Here you can focus on the sensations of walking and the Nature around you, exercising mind and body with little distraction.



The Company of Trees

6.

The lofty Charleston Plane at the Sutton Ecology Centre



Visit the tallest London Plane tree in Britain at The Sutton Ecology Centre in West London. Follow the trail to learn about the Nature, heritage and sensory aspects of the reserve, or explore hidden gems like the butterfly and forest gardens, or the marsh and pond.

7.

Kew's old champion at the Royal Botanic Gardens



This majestic Chestnut Oak has lived on the grounds of Kew Gardens for an astonishing 200 years. It is the oldest of 50,000 plants in the gardens, which also boasts Victorian glasshouses, temples, cafes, shops, galleries and water displays.

8.

The twisted Black Mulberry beauty at Lesnes Abbey Wood



Within the site of a 12th century monastery, the veteran Lesnes Abbey Mulberry is just asking to be drawn, photographed or have poetry written about it! This unique site also offers 88 hectares of ancient woodland and a park to explore.

9.

A London great – The Turkey Oak of Dulwich Park



This hybrid Oak originates from Turkey but has found a happy home in Dulwich Park, where it is now listed as one of the 'Great Trees of London'. After paying your respects, you can wander through woodland, past duck ponds and pedalos, and pop into the quaint Dulwich Village nearby.

10.

Awaken the Horse Chestnut Kraken at Clissold Park

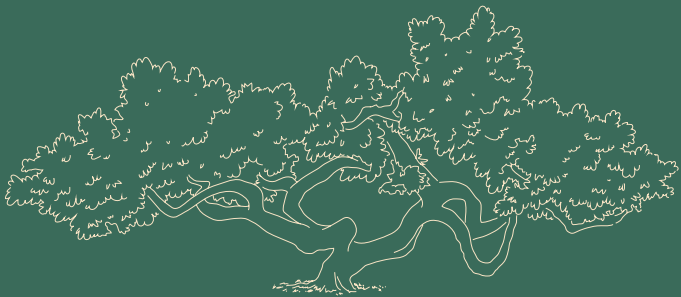


When was the last time you climbed a tree? Whatever the answer, it's been too long! At the centre of Clissold Park lies 'The Kraken', a sprawling, multi-limbed Horse Chestnut, whose low lying tentacles beckon you to hang out. Climb responsibly!





Is there a place in Nature, or a particular plant or animal that is especially meaningful to you? Why?





Where's your favorite spot in the city to connect with Nature? What memories do you have there?



Find other social farms
and community gardens in London
at farmgarden.org.uk



Get Your Hands Dirty

11.

[Volunteer at Railway Fields, Haringey](#)   

Just off the busy Green Lanes, this former railway yard is now an award winning Nature reserve and sanctuary for the local community. This is in large part because of the efforts of volunteers. If you fancy a fun, rewarding few hours, they are always looking for more helping hands!

12.

[Join the Tree Musketeers at Hackney Tree Nursery](#)   

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, luckily that's just when The Tree Musketeers started! The nursery runs events and open days and always needs volunteers to help nurture young trees, plan and plant around Hackney, then water and weed.

13.

[Get digging at Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses](#)   

In the heart of the lovely Brockwell Park in South London, you will find an orchard, walled herb garden, and two large greenhouses, all of which are maintained by the community – for the community. It is a peaceful spot to visit, and an even better place to muck-in, to “learn, play and grow together”.

14.

[Muck out the stables at Vauxhall City Farm](#)   

Within a short pony trek from the city centre lies this small slice of country life. At first glance, it seems just a quaint place to pet alpaca, but look a little closer and its real value is clear, with volunteer, educational, and therapeutic programmes running regularly.

15.

[‘Grow your own’ at Ruskin Park](#)   

Anyone and everyone is welcome to the Community Garden's Edible Gardening sessions on Saturdays at Ruskin Park, where you can learn how to grow and tend a vegetable garden, then enjoy the delicious fruits (and vegetables) of your labour!



London Tweets – Best for Birding

16. [Warbling Whitethroats at Wormwood Scrubs](#)

Most people know Wormwood Scrubs as a prison in West London. Few realise that it is also the name given to the wilderness of grassland and mixed woodland opposite. "The Scrubs" is a cracking spot for birding, attracting melodious migrating warblers, including Whitethroat.

17. [Kingfisher country at Walthamstow Wetlands](#)

There are few Nature sights as exciting as the brilliant-blue-bullet of a Kingfisher flyby! And you needn't escape the city to enjoy it. Kingfishers are year round residents at the wetlands, along with 54 other key wetland species.

18. [Tiny Firecrests at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park](#)

One of London's 'Magnificent Seven' Victorian Garden cemeteries, this charming overgrown jumble of graves, grassland and woodland is a space to get lost in, bursting with bird life. Lookout for some real jewels, such as Firecrest – tiny, high-pitched bundles of energy in the trees.

19. [Wondrous Waders at the WWT London Wetland Centre](#)

A visit to the 105 acres of lakes, pools and gardens that make up the Wetland Centre is always special, with something exciting to spot year-round. Quietly observe from the various purpose-built 'hides', or amble around the many walkways.

20. [A 'water dance' at Woodberry Wetlands](#)

If visiting in Spring, you might just catch one of Nature's most elaborate spectacles, the 'water dance' of courting Great Crested Grebes. Even when there is no 'performance' however, this 11 hectare site in urban Hackney has plenty more wildlife to offer, as well coffee and cake in the cafe!



21.

The last Lapwings at Beddington Farmlands



A suburban site with a fascinating history — part farm, part sewage works, part Nature reserve. With a long birdwatching tradition, the changing populations of species is well recorded, including the sad decline of the charismatic Lapwing. Well worth a visit, to enjoy and champion its wildlife.

Which do you think is the most inspiring season? Why? Why not turn your answer into a short poem?



Looking for Something Different

22. [Get stuck in the mud at Deptford Creek](#)

There are few things as fun as squelching up the Creek on one of the Creekside Discovery Centre's 'low tide walks'. The surprisingly diverse Creek is maintained by the Centre, who run weekly walks, talks and hands-on activities for schools and the general public.

23. [Feed the animals at Mudchute Park and Farm](#)

You needn't leave the city to enjoy the company of sheep, pigs, cows, and horses. Just south of the towering Canary Wharf lies one of the largest inner city farms in Europe. It's a pocket of pastoral peace, with plenty of hands-on activities on offer for those looking to get closer to the action.

24. [Enjoy a Bat Walk on Wimbledon Common](#)

Bats are the 'real stars of the night' according to the London-based Bat Conservation Trust. Once you witness a Daubenton's Bat zoom across the water, scooping insects off the surface with its big hairy feet, it's hard to argue. Look out for organised bat walks on the Common.

25. [Peek behind the scenes at the Natural History Museum](#)

For a truly unique Nature experience, it's hard to beat a tour of the Natural History Museum's Spirit Collection. Although mostly in jars (and very much deceased!!), you are introduced to a host of fascinating critters, brought to life with facts and stories from the expert guides.

26. [Take the plunge at Beckenham Place Park Lake](#)

While not strictly a 'wild' swimming site, the Beckenham Place Park Lake is a peaceful picturesque spot for a dip, sat within the large and lush Park grounds. Swimming is free, but you may need to book a slot.





How does time in Nature change your mood? Describe the changes and sensations.



Adventure through London's pockets of Nature

LOCATE NATURE POCKET PIN'S ON MAP OVERLEAF



● POCKETS OF PEACE
AND MEDITATION

● THE COMPANY
OF TREES

● GET YOUR
HANDS DIRTY

● LONDON TWEETS –
BEST FOR BIRDING

● LOOKING FOR
SOMETHING DIFFERENT

1 Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park
The Ecology Park Gatehouse John Harrison Way,
Olympian Way, London SE10 0QZ

2 Chelsea Physic Garden
66 Royal Hospital Rd, London SW3 4HS

3 Kyoto Garden
Holland Park, Holland Park Ave,
London W11 4UA

4 Queen's Wood
Queen's Wood Rd, London N6 6UU

5 Sydenham Hill Wood
London SE26 6LT

6 Sutton Ecology Centre Grounds
4 Tyrell Ct, North St, Carshalton SM5 2HT

7 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Kew Gardens Rd, Richmond TW9 3HG

8 Lesnes Abbey
Abbey Rd, London SE2 0AX

9 Dulwich Park
College Rd, London SE21 7EB

10 Clissold Park
Green Lanes, London N16 9HJ

11 Railway Fields
381 Green Lanes, Harringay Ladder,
London N4 1ES

12 Hackney Tree Nursery
Homerton Rd, London E9 5PF

13 Brockwell Park Community
Greenhouses
Brockwell Hall, Brockwell Park, BPCG,
London SE24 9BJ

14 Vauxhall City Farm
165 Tyers St, London SE11 5HS

15 Ruskin Park
Denmark Hill, London SE5 9AW

16 Wormwood Scrubs
London W12 0DF

17 Walthamstow Wetlands
2 Forest Rd, London N17 9NH

18 Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park
Southern Grove, London E3 4PX

19 WWT London Wetlands Centre
Queen Elizabeth Walk, London SW13 9WT

20 Woodberry Wetlands
New River Path, Woodberry Grove, Woodberry
Down, London N16 5HQ

21 Beddington Farmlands
Mile Rd, Croydon, Wallington SM6 7NN

22 Deptford Creek
Mile Rd, Croydon, Wallington SM6 7NN

23 Mudchute Park and Farm
Pier St, London E14 3HP

24 Wimbledon Common
Windmill Rd, Wimbledon Common,
London SW19 5NR

25 Natural History Museum
Cromwell Rd, South Kensington,
London SW7 5BD

26 Beckenham Place Park
Beckenham Hill Rd, London BR3 1SY



Rewild Yourself



If you would like to share your insights with us

IG: [@rewildyourself](#) #rewildyourself





Wild London

I am London, and I have always been wild
these buildings rising from sea-bed sediment
to make your homes of chalk and clay
my body never sleeps, my heart beats
to the rhythmic pulse of people making patterns
dancing to the always-something-happening of me.

I watch you, and I notice what you notice:
you see the glass and chrome high-rise cityscaped surface
but sometimes you miss what matters –
that under my skin is an ecosystem living
life breathing in between the cracks of pavement
green pushing itself into the everyday grey
the delicate pigeon-coo fuzz over traffic bassline
the tears of the Thames lapping at concrete embankments
the neon glow of foxes flashing in the Soho night
that in my parks my lungs absorb both your laughter
and the sunlight – yes, it does shine here
more often than you may imagine.





.....

Child, once you start looking, you will see that I am wild
so make space and time to breathe; to be
find yourself lost in my generous pockets of nature
wonder at the splendour of this Universe's creation
and despite everything civilisation has done to you
know that, in this urban wilderness that is London
you are welcome in your glorious natural wildness too.

.....

Poem by Dan Simpson *for ReWild Yourself*

Dan Simpson is a writer, performer, producer, and educator. He makes highly engaging and contemporary work that is entertaining, intelligent, and thought-provoking. His subjects include science and technology; history and place; art and culture; people and poetry.

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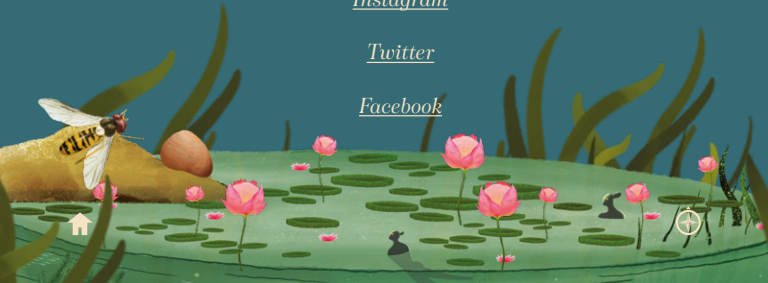


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THANK YOU!

Natural History Museum

University of Derby

Dan Simpson

Svabhu Kohli
full colour artwork



REWILD YOURSELF

VOICE FOR NATURE



Rewild Yourself





Rewild Yourself

Enjoy this opportunity to ReWild Yourself with our guide to connecting with Nature in London.

Created by Voice for Nature, our ReWild Yourself programme aims to connect people with Nature all over the world, and make access to the outdoors equal for everyone. Share your thoughts, creations and walks with us at [@rewildyourself](https://www.instagram.com/rewildyourself)



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