

The Yorkshire Dales Nature through the Year

Autumn

Red squirrel © Whitfield Benson YDNPA



We may be sad to see the summer's warmth go but there is plenty to celebrate about the autumn with its bright crops of berries and russet coloured bracken on the hills. Even a wet and windy day can be enjoyed if you are dressed for the weather, especially if there's the promise of a wood fire and a pint of local beer at the end of it.

Look out for hawthorn berries (haws), rosehips, sloes (on blackthorn), blackberries and crab apples. Gathering a handful of spicy blackberries is one of autumn's treats, while the bright red hips and haws are a bounty for the birds feeding up for the winter. A bottle-full of sloes mixed with gin and sugar will be a [ruby-red Christmas pleasure](#).

It goes without saying that kicking up leaves in an autumn wood is fun for everyone whatever their age. Collect a few conkers and have a battle with a friend. Visit Grass Wood or Freeholders' Wood.

Autumn is a good time of year to try red squirrel spotting. They are busy gathering supplies for the winter and are easily spotted dashing about among the trees. One of the best places to see them is along the [red squirrel trail](#) at Snaizeholme in Wensleydale.

Ingleborough © Steve Hastie YDNPA



Why not climb a hill and admire the views? On a crisp clear autumn day you will get stunning views from one of our Three Peaks. Become a [Friend of the Three Peaks](#) and help us look after this wonderful place. You don't have to climb mountains — even a smaller hill will reward you with that perfect photo opportunity.



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Our [heather moorlands](#) are important habitats for grouse and other ground-nesting birds. In early autumn the heather and ling come into flower and the moors are clothed in purple, a sight not to be missed.

[Bracken](#) is disliked by land managers because it swamps heather and other moorland plants but when it turns russet brown on the hills in the autumn it's a wonderful sight. Even better if there's a good sunset, when it will light up like it's on fire. [The Bolton Abbey Estate](#) has some beautiful bracken-clothed hillsides above the River Wharfe.



[Leaping salmon](#) are one of the wonders of nature not to be missed, as adult salmon are seen returning to the same streams they were spawned in years before. At this time of year people gather at waterfalls and weirs to watch the thrilling sight of these powerful and determined fish leaping up through the rushing water. The River Ribble is a good salmon river, watch them at Stainforth Foss or other weirs around Settle where there are public footpaths.

