



What to look for in April

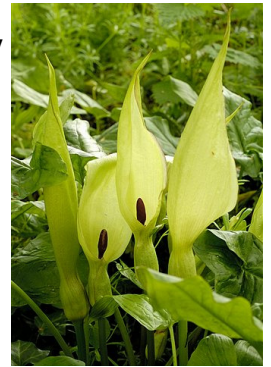
In **April**, there are plenty of signs of spring. Butterflies appear on the wing, one of the first being the **Brimstone** butterfly (*Gonepteryx rhamni*), soon followed by others such as the **Peacock** (*Inachis io*) and **Speckled Wood** (*Pararge aegeria*).



Brimstone Butterfly

Butterflies such as these emerge from their winter hibernation in April and lay their eggs on plants such as nettles or grasses. April is a busy time of year for mammals too, as they also start emerging from their winter

hibernation or raising young. **Badgers** (*Meles meles*) that were born between January and March start appearing above ground in April. **Hedgehogs** (*Erinaceus europaeus*) also start to emerge this month, appearing in hedgerows and gardens, searching for insects, slugs and snails to eat. With their shuffling and snuffling, hedgehogs are often heard rather than seen. More and more wild flowers start



Above: Cowslips

Below: Lords and Ladies



Lt: Songthrush
Rt: Bullfinch



appearing as spring develops. **Cowslips** (*Primula veris*) are one of the first flowering plants to appear on chalk grassland, and provide a valuable early-nectar source for bumblebees. **Lords and Ladies** (*Arum maculatum*), with their distinctive arrow-

shaped leaves can often be found on road verges and path edges as well as woodlands. Migrant birds heading back to the UK are arriving throughout the month, and with them

the volume and diversity of bird song increases, listen out for the **Song Thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*) and **Blackcap** (*Sylvia atricapilla*).

Breeding birds such as **Bullfinches** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) are showing their vibrant plumage, trying to attract a mate, whilst nesting **Blue Tits** (*Parus caeruleus*) may already have their first brood.