



Common pipistrelle

Pipistrellus pipistrellus

In the magical warm fragrance of summer twilight, if you spy a small bat rapidly flickering, twisting and diving, along a treeline with a rapid and fluid dexterity it is more than likely that this is a common pipistrelle on the hunt for moths, midges and flies. Weighing up to 8g, lighter than a £1 coin, and having a wingspan of 19 – 23cm this is the smallest bat in the UK. However it more than makes up for this slightness of form with an epic appetite and is able to consume up to 3,000 midges in one night.

all zones

The sight of a badger snuffling and rooting through autumn leaf litter for fallen chestnuts is a powerful and mesmerising experience, the first overwhelming impression is how big it is, at this time of year males can reach a whopping 16.5kg, feeding not only on the fruit and nuts from trees and bushes, but also on birds, beetles, roots, hedgehogs and earthworms, several hundred of the latter can be consumed in just one night. Wielding a powerful pair of front claws, used for digging and tearing into old logs in search of large insects and beetle larvae, the badger has a bulky silver-grey coated body with a relatively small head, which is white with iconic black stripes that stretch from the nose, up through the eyes and finish at the tufty white tipped ears.



all zones

Badger

Meles meles

find me

When dusk is falling snuffling around the edges of woodland or in clearings. If a sett is found, which comprises of a number of large wide holes in the ground, then half an hour before night falls, get settled at least 20m away down wind, with your back against a tree to disguise your shape, be still, quiet and above all be patient, it will be worth the wait.

mammals

easy to find

Skylarks Nature Reserve

all zones



Red Fox

Vulpes vulpes

©John Hawkins

The chilling earthy scream from the female, or the rasping breathy bark from a male, resonating with a hollow woody echo from within the icy darkness of a winter copse, is a quintessential sound of the British countryside. Now a familiar sound of our urban streets and alleyways, where ready meals are served from bins and perfect shelter is found beneath the garden shed, which doubles as a perfect crèche for the cubs. Nothing compares to the sight of our only wild member of the dog family in a natural setting, its ember red coat burning a trail across a meadow or woodland ride, sniffing out anything from rabbits, rats and voles to berries and even worms. Being an adaptable opportunist, and not being a fussy eater is the secret to their success.

find me

All year round. In June the female will leave the cubs in a safe area, whilst she goes off to hunt for a meal to feed them, sniffing around places of previous success such as rabbit warrens or the edges of waterbodies for ducks and geese.

Nottinghamshire

Wildlife Trust





all zones

Bloodthirsty would be an accurate term to describe the weasel, having a fast metabolism it must eat at least half its body weight every day, relentlessly hunting both day and night for mice, voles, rabbits, birds and eggs. Even in plentiful times of food, a weasel will keep on killing then cache the carcasses close to its den in preparation for harder times. Often confused with a stoat, the weasel is half the size, a rufous brown with a white chin and belly and lacks the stoats distinctive black tip to the tail.

Weasle

Mustela nivalis



zone 4,5,6,7

Roe deer

Capreolus capreolus

A vision of grace and sprightly vigilance, often seen sauntering into a woody clearing, pausing as still as a stone, long neck erect, large ears pricked, a sooty grey face with dark, yet bright eyes wide and alert. The male sports antlers which are short and curvaceous with 2 – 3 points and have a rough knobby texture to their surface, but the real show stopping feature is the coat which is of a bright burnished bronze hue. Towards the winter months becomes increasingly dull and in some cases almost black. A native to Britain, having been hunted almost to extinction by the 1700's this tough little deer with its dignified and athletic poise has made a remarkable return, with populations now widespread.

find me
At dusk and dawn browsing grasses, brambles and tree shoots, favouring the fresh lush grasses of woodland rides and clearings.

mammals

hard to find

Skylarks Nature Reserve



zone 1, 2, 3

A slender elongated body up to 40cm long, with a slick hazel brown coat and a neat cream bib that runs from chin to tail, which is tipped in powder black. A ferocious and tenacious predator that will take prey far larger than itself, such as rabbits, but rats, voles and reptiles are also all fair game and quickly dispatched with a sharp bite just below the base of the skull. If the element of surprise has been lost, a stoat will employ its famed hypnotic dance moves, wriggling, leaping, twisting, rolling, flipping, often landing clumsily on its back, all the time edging nearer to the captivated rabbit, when at the least expected moment, it will strike.

Stoat

Mustela erminea

find me
All year, darting around hedgerows, ditches, woodpiles and rabbit warrens, moving with an arched bounding motion at lightning speed between places that offer cover, pausing only to pop up to periscope a route to the next hiding place, and edge nearer to the prey.

©Darin Smith

©Margaret Holland

mammals

a **real** find

Skylarks Nature Reserve



zone
2, 6

©Sean Gallagher

Harvest mouse

Micromys minutus

A field of barley tinted by the warm amber glow of a setting summer sun would not only be a great place to find a harvest mouse, but also a good way to describe the colour of its fur. With a white underside and a more blunt nose than other mice, this is the smallest rodent in Europe, its head and body length of up to 8cm matching the length of the tail which is free of fur and prehensile, meaning it can grab and wrap around grass stems and shoots to aid movement through vegetation. Suspended above the ground and attached to the stems

find me

In summer feeding on berries, seeds and insects in tall grassy areas at woodland edges, hedgerows and brambles, or look for a neatly woven ball shaped nest attached to stems between 30cm and 1m off the ground.

and stalks of grasses, reeds and brambles, the harvest mouse nest is an engineering wonder, a perfectly formed ball of woven grass that can be built to the size of a grapefruit when the time comes to raise a new family.

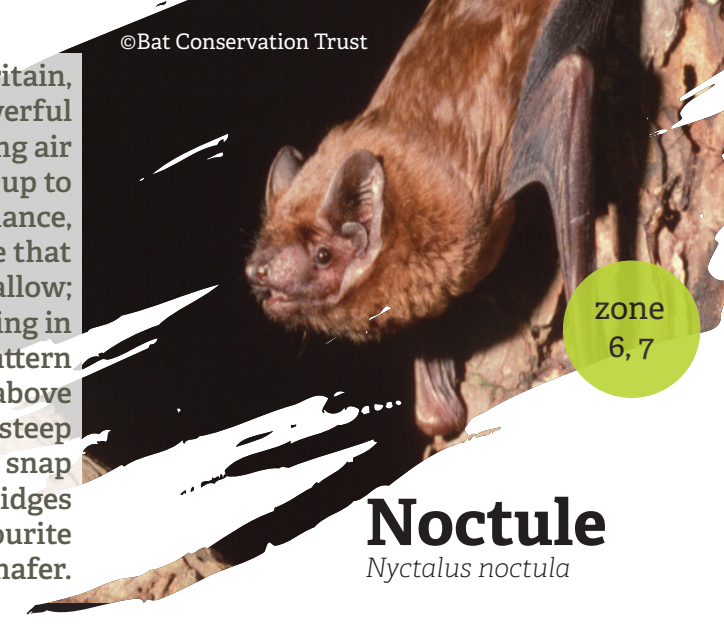
The largest and highest flying bat in Britain, the noctule is often seen flying in a powerful and direct manner, taking to the evening air before sunset. With a wing span of up to

find me

Roosting and hibernating mainly in old holes in trees, vacated woodpecker nest holes and cracks and crevices in rocks. Or before the sun has set, hunting above trees in a powerful and direct flight, plummeting down to catch moths and large beetles.

40cm it can, at a glance, lead you to believe that you have seen a swallow; the difference being in the hunting flight pattern often executed high above trees and falling into steep repeated plunges to snap up moths, mayflies, midges and beetles; a favourite being the cockchafer.

©Bat Conservation Trust



zone
6, 7

Noctule

Nyctalus noctula

Although signs of a mole's presence can be an almost everyday occurrence, we very rarely get the chance to see one. Spending nearly their whole life underground tirelessly excavating a network of tunnels, and capable of digging up to 20m a day; the excess soil is pushed above ground forming the familiar hills. The deeper tunnels are warm in winter where the earth stays moist, a perfect environment for earthworms, a mole's favourite food. An 80g mole must eat at least 50g of worms and insects a day, so it never stops hunting, and then create special larders where worms can be stored for leaner times.

Mole

Talpa europaea



©Alex Davies

zone
1, 3

find me

Creating hills by emptying tunnels of soil all year round in any environment rich in earth worms with soil deep enough to allow tunnelling, yet avoiding water logged areas due to the danger of flooding.

Nottinghamshire

Wildlife Trust

