

## Conservation Communities - Wildlife Spotters Challenge

### July, August and September

We'd love to hear from you if you've seen any of these 8 species.

Help us to build up a picture of Devon's wildlife by telling

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre what you've seen and where:

[Wildlife sightings – DBRC](#)



**Devon**  
Wildlife Trust

#### Wildflowers

**Black knapweed** is great for insects and, along with some other key plant species can be an indicator of good habitat quality in meadows. Knapweed flowers have a thistle-like appearance. They are pink/purple and have a round bract underneath. Black knapweed has simple leaves and the flowers are 15-20mm across.



#### Birds

##### Swallows, Swifts and House Martins

All these species are summer visitors to the UK, spending the winters in Africa. They are all dynamic and agile fliers, with sharp wings and forked tails.

Here's how to tell them apart:

Photo: Chris Gomersall



**Swallows** have dark, glossy backs, pale underparts with a red chin. They have long, fine tail feathers. Swallows build cup-shaped nests in barns. They will often perch on phone wires.



Photo: Stefan Johansson

**Swifts** are large, with a wingspan up to 48cm. They are dark brown, apart from a white patch on their throat. The tail isn't as forked as a swallow's. You can hear their screaming calls in the mornings and evenings as they catch prey high in the sky. They don't build exposed nests and don't perch – they have tiny legs and feet!

Photo: Margaret Holland



**House martins** are the smallest of these three species, measuring up to a 29cm wingspan. They have glossy blue-black backs and white underparts, including their throats. They also have a white patch at the base of the tail. Their tails are the least forked. House martins build mud-cup nests on the outside of buildings, often in groups.



## Reptiles

We'd like to hear about any reptiles you see.

**Slow worms** are lizards who have lost their legs through evolution. They are our most common reptile and frequent garden or allotment inhabitants. Slow worms give birth to live young, which are a golden colour. Females have dark flanks and mature males can be silver with blue tummies! They are fantastic guests to gardens as they will eat pests.



## Mammals

Here are a couple of mammal species that are often seen, but not so often recorded. To find out more about these species watch our talks: [Hedgehogs](#) and [Bats](#).



**Bats** have their babies in June and July. For a few weeks, mother bats carry their young when they leave the roost at night. In August, when the young get too big to carry, adult bats come and go

from a roost as they keep check on their pups. We have 16 bat species in Devon. Bats appear just after sunset, hunting for insects. A pipistrelle bat (one of our smallest species) can eat thousands of midges in a night! If you see a bat, but don't know the species, you can still record it as "bat" with DBRC.

The photo shows a brown long-eared bat.



**Hedgehogs** are out and about at this time of year. You might hear their load snuffling in the evenings. Or find their droppings in the garden. Hedgehog droppings are usually very dark brown to black with evidence of partially-digested insect remains. They are sausage-shaped and can vary in length from 1.5 cm to 5cm.



## Amphibians

We'd like to hear about any amphibians you see. To learn more about amphibians and how to identify them watch our [Amphibians Talk](#).

**Common frogs** are often seen in spring, but are harder to spot in summer. Look in garden ponds and along water ways. Their colour is variable, but there is a dark patch just behind the eye and stripey legs.