


NatureSpot

2021 Annual Report



NatureSpot


Recording the Wildlife of Leicestershire & Rutland

Home Latest images Species galleries Wild places Submit Records Explore all records NatureChat forums My dashboard

Help to record the wildlife of Leicestershire and Rutland

Submit any sighting of an animal, plant or fungus seen in Leicestershire or Rutland to put your dot on our species distribution maps. All records are passed on to local and national recording schemes and help add to our scientific knowledge which helps conservation. All wildlife records are valuable, common or rare, and whether from your garden, local park or a nature reserve. If your wildlife sighting is not in Leicestershire and Rutland, please submit the record to the national iRecord website.

You can now use the NatureSpot App to record in the field with your mobile phone.



To submit a record and experience this site in full, you must register (free and quick!).

Latest stories


Annie Smith

We have just received the sad news that Annie Smith has passed away after a long illness. [More...](#)

The view from the Chair


It's safe to say that 2021 was not the year any of us were expecting. [More...](#)

NatureSpot and Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership







NatureSpot is delighted to receive ongoing support from the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme. [More...](#)

What to record in winter?



Follow us




Laetisaria lichenicola

Latest chat

- Books & Guides - Free to Collect
- Fungi on dead stick
- Fungi on Silver Birch
- Attached photos rotated
- Spider id

[More](#)

What's around



Shaggy Parasol - Chlorophyllum rhacodes

Featured Videos

[How to submit your records](#)

Wild places

20 Acre Piece NR

Parishes

Armsby

Species pages

The galleries below lead you to information pages for every species recorded on NatureSpot.

Once a group is selected, the blue arrow will then open the family level sub-menu.

Image galleries

- Birds
- Mammals
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Fish
- Butterflies
- Moths
- Caterpillars
- Dragonflies and Damselflies
- Beetles
- Bugs
- Bees, Wasps, Ants
- Sawflies
- Hoverflies
- Craneflies, Gnats & Midges
- Flies
- Barklice & Booklice
- Grasshoppers & Crickets
- Earwigs
- Mayflies
- Caddisflies
- Lacewings & Scorpionflies


DONATE

Please support NatureSpot

Become a NatureSpot Species Champion

Search

Total count of species: 7044



Palomena prasina
CAPochin
13/01/2022
Stoneygate garden

Upcoming events

MB Nats: AGM & Talk, The Wonderful World of Spiders

Tue, 18/01/2022 - 19:30
Online via Zoom, or at St Peters C.E. Primary Academy, Station Road, Market Bosworth. CV13 ONP. To be confirmed, please contact Prue Crowley (jncrowley@btinternet.com) for further information.

LROS - Magical Merlins - Keith Offord

Fri, 21/01/2022 - 19:30
Online via Zoom

Lit&Phil Natural History Section - The

Introduction

About NatureSpot

NatureSpot is a registered charity (1138852), established in 2009 with the aim of promoting the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland and helping to increase public awareness of, and interest in, local biodiversity. Our aims are:

1. To help the public to identify local wildlife and to learn about the natural environment
2. To create an online showcase of the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland
3. To encourage and facilitate wildlife recording

NatureSpot is a company limited by guarantee and has a Board of Trustees (see appendix 1) comprising local naturalists involved in wildlife conservation, biodiversity recording and local natural heritage. We are also supported by experts and professionals such as the County Recorders, the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC), Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

We are funded by grants and donations and supported by many volunteers as a community 'citizen science' initiative. Our main activity is the NatureSpot website which profiles wildlife species found in Leicestershire and Rutland and facilitates wildlife recording by the community, and local naturalists in particular.

Report from the Chair of Trustees

It's safe to say that 2021 was not the year any of us were expecting. In spite of all the problems, the 2021 NatureSpot Annual Report in the new year shows that that we had another bumper year. We are very grateful to everyone who has helped us with financial support during the year and of course to the many recorders who contributed to this year's data.

There are exciting things to look forward to (and for you to get involved in) in 2022, notably our role in supporting a number of important projects. These include the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Saving the Saffron Brook River Restoration Scheme.

In another notable advance, NatureSpot now has records from all areas of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. At the beginning of 2021 there were just a few quadrats from where no records had ever been submitted. By the end of September there were none. Thank you again to all our recorders for your help in plugging the gaps, but we're not done yet - please keep your records coming in.

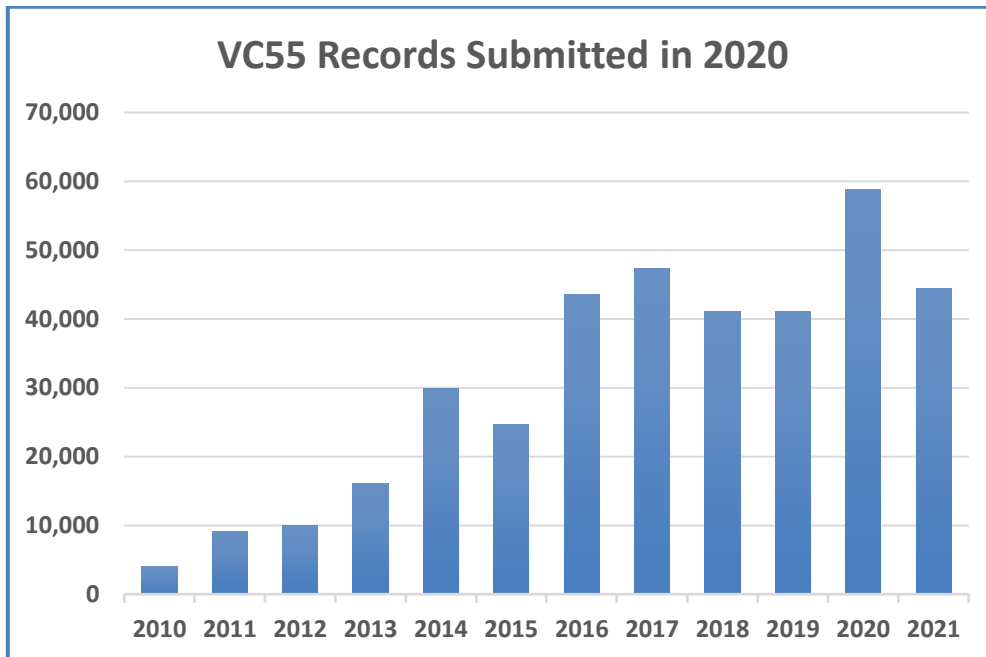
As a registered charity, NatureSpot is governed by a Board of Trustees. As I stand down following my term as Chair, I am happy to hand over this role to the competent hands of our incoming Chair, Sue Timms. The future of NatureSpot looks bright.

Alan Cann, January 2022.

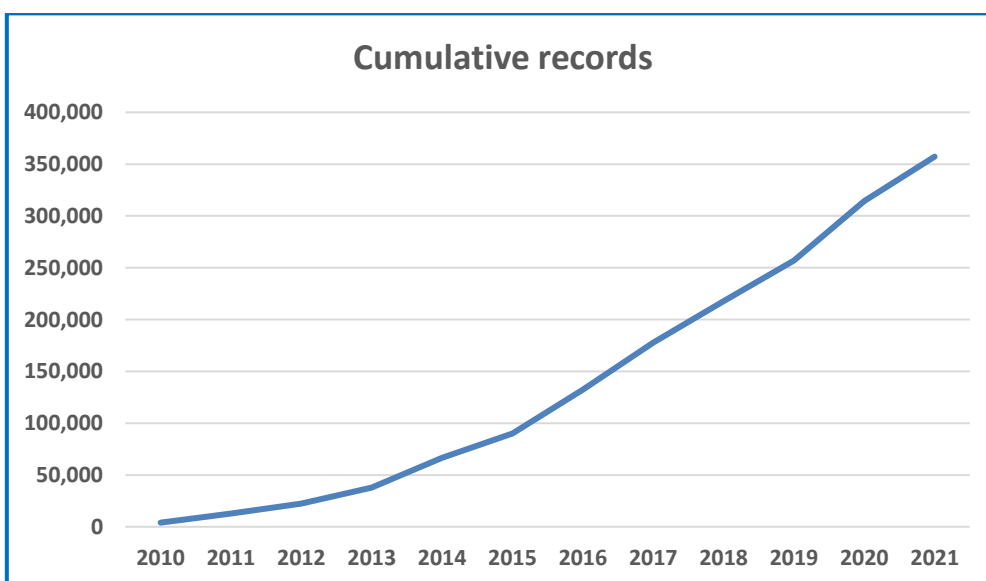
Wildlife Recording

2021 Summary

44,392 records were submitted in 2021, though fewer than the previous year when numbers were boosted by the inclusion of historic data, but still one of our highest totals. This figure only includes records for vice-county 55, the established recording boundary for Leicestershire and Rutland.

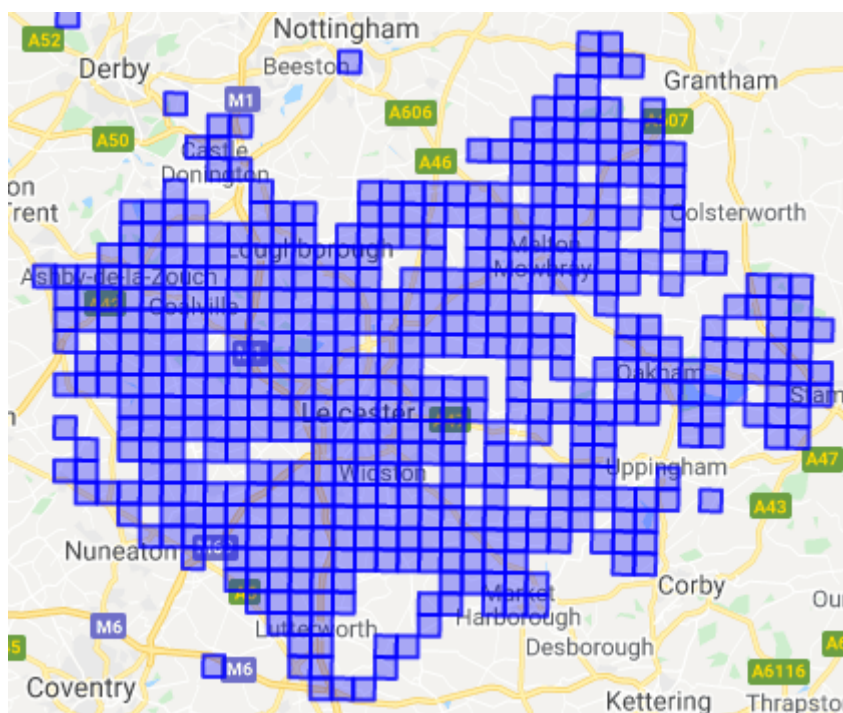


In total, 357,229 records have now been received through NatureSpot's online portal - a major contribution to the scientific knowledge of wildlife in the area.



Record distribution

As with most biological recording there is a strong recorder bias to the NatureSpot data, with a pattern that is similar to that seen for all VC55 record data, indeed the same pattern exists for nearly all taxon groups. However during 2021, there was wider coverage across the two counties, encouraged in part by appeals to visit under-recorded areas.



Distribution 'dot' map of 2021 records submitted to NatureSpot

Verification

Every record submitted to NatureSpot is individually checked by an expert and only accepted where there is satisfactory evidence to confirm the species identity. This evidence can comprise images, a description of key features or knowledge of the recorder's skills and competence. Overall, 96.7% of submitted records in 2021 were accepted and a further 1.3% considered plausible. This is a similar pattern to previous years.

NatureSpot uses the verification system used by the Biological Recording Centre (BRC) on iRecord, the national online recording system. NatureSpot is part of the iRecord family with some sharing of software. All NatureSpot records are securely held on the BRC warehouse server. This verification system offers verifiers five options: confirmed correct; assumed correct, plausible; unable to verify; incorrect. In addition, records may be queried, seeking more information before a decision is made, or forwarded to an expert for assessment.

Verification option	2021	%
Accepted / Considered correct	42,943	96.7%
Plausible	566	1.3%
Unable to review/identify	745	1.7%
Incorrect	138	0.3%
Not reviewed	0	0.0%
Grand Total	44,392	100.0%

A major effort is made each year to ensure every record is reviewed and verified by the year end. This ensures that all contributions from recorders are recognised and incorporated into the final dataset ready for distribution.

A further benefit of NatureSpot being linked with iRecord and the BRC is that the NatureSpot records are made available to national experts who help with verification. In 2021, 3,339 (8.1%) records were verified by these national experts. The remainder were verified by local experts appointed by NatureSpot, and assisted by County Recorders and other specialists.

The number of national verifiers recruited by iRecord has been growing and last year 74 (63 in 2020) of these helped with the verification of NatureSpot data, including well known experts in their fields such as Roger Morris, Gavin Broad, Barry Warrington, Helen Roy and Tristan Bantock.



Evidence

High data quality is a key objective for NatureSpot. Verifiers are asked to adopt a cautious approach and to carefully assess the evidence presented with each record submission.

Though it is not necessary to submit images with records, particularly for the more common species, it does help verifiers to confirm the identification. Records of unusual species or from an unfamiliar recorder do normally need an image to allow a correct verification decision, though confirmation from a known expert or a satisfactory description of the identification method may be sufficient. Records from known recorders may also be accepted based on their experience and track record.

The verification status can be, and is, amended should a mistake be realised or further information becomes available. Feedback from County Recorders when the records are distributed at the year end is always highly valued in this regard. NatureSpot always accepts the view of the relevant County Recorder in deciding the final verification status.

NatureSpot has developed a number of initiatives to help and guide recorders which also helps to improve data quality. The species account aims to include a detailed description of the key features needed to identify that

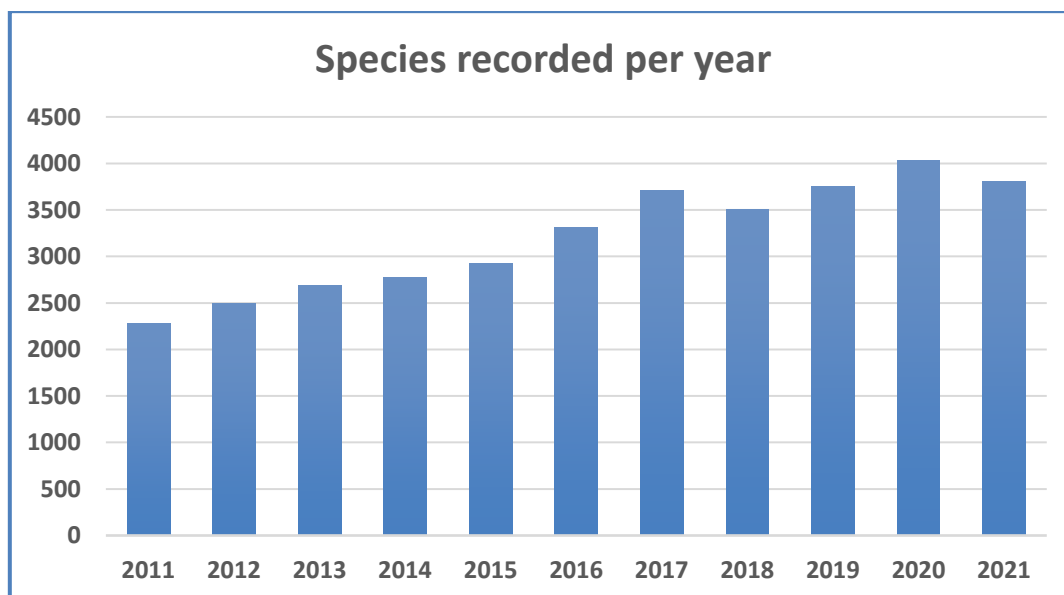
species, including reference to similar species with which it could be confused. Every species has been given a RAG (Red / Amber / Green) rating representing the identification difficulty. Recording advice also states the evidence needed with the submission for the record to be accepted. Both the RAG rating and the recording advice appear on the recording form when that species is selected as a reminder to the recorder. The updating and improvement of this information is ongoing.

Data distribution

At the year end the record data is shared with all local and some national recording schemes, as well as a number of land managers such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and the National Forest. NatureSpot data is incorporated into the ORCA database used by the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre for all VC55 data. In addition, all NatureSpot accepted records are published on the National Biodiversity Network Atlas with an update made each month as part of the iRecord service.

Species

The number of different species recorded each year had grown steadily. In 2021, records of 3,808 different species were submitted. 240 of these were species not previously recorded on NatureSpot (see New Species below).



The table below lists the taxon groups of the species records received in 2021. Moths top the list as usual, thanks to the popularity of garden moth trapping. NatureSpot has a bulk import tool that can allow large datasets or previously unshared data to be easily added. 60% of all records are from the three most recorded groups of moths, birds and wildflowers, the remainder are widely spread amongst all other groups in a similar pattern to previous years.

Taxon Group	2021	
	Record no.	%
Moths	12563	28.87%
Birds	7586	17.43%
Wildflowers	6461	14.85%
Trees, Shrubs & Climbers	1637	3.76%
Butterflies	1608	3.70%
Fungi	1580	3.63%
Bugs	1291	2.97%
Beetles	1162	2.67%
Bees, Wasps, Ants	1109	2.55%
Mammals	1023	2.35%
Flies	937	2.15%
Grasses, Rushes & Sedges	877	2.02%
Hoverflies	752	1.73%
Slugs & Snails	713	1.64%
Dragonflies and Damselflies	585	1.34%
Spiders	541	1.24%
Lichens	530	1.22%
Mosses & Liverworts	390	0.90%
Craneflies, Gnats & Midges	380	0.87%
Mites, Ticks & Pseudoscorpions	359	0.83%
Sawflies	228	0.52%
Ferns & Horsetails	216	0.50%
Woodlice, Crustaceans	112	0.26%
Amphibians	104	0.24%
Grasshoppers & Crickets	100	0.23%
harvestman (Opiliones)	96	0.22%
Springtails & Bristletails	92	0.21%
Caddisflies	61	0.14%
insect - true fly (Diptera)	61	0.14%
Centipedes & Millipedes	50	0.11%

The most recorded species in 2021 are listed below. Unlike previous years, the list is not dominated by moths and birds are heavily represented. Two mammals make the top 30 for the first time: Badger and Grey Squirrel.

2021 Top 30	Record no.	Taxon
Mute Swan	252	Birds
Mallard	230	Birds
Robin	214	Birds
Small Tortoiseshell	214	Butterflies
Blackbird	206	Birds
Gadwall	198	Birds
Tufted Duck	190	Birds
Woodpigeon	189	Birds
Blue Tit	180	Birds
Eurasian Badger	177	Mammals
Common Nettle	175	Wildflowers
Brimstone Moth	175	Moths
Buzzard	174	Birds
Light Brown Apple Moth	165	Moths
7-spot Ladybird	158	Beetles
Carrion Crow	158	Birds
Moorhen	151	Birds
Little Egret	150	Birds
Canada Goose	148	Birds
Teal	147	Birds
Dandelion	142	Wildflowers
Cleavers	142	Wildflowers
Eastern Grey Squirrel	141	Mammals
Large Yellow Underwing	140	Moths
Lapwing	138	Birds
Cormorant	136	Birds
Coot	133	Birds
Bramble	132	Trees, Shrubs & Climbers
Great Tit	131	Birds
Peacock	130	Butterflies

New species

240 'new' species were recorded during 2021 and added to the NatureSpot galleries. The selection below is a small sample of these:










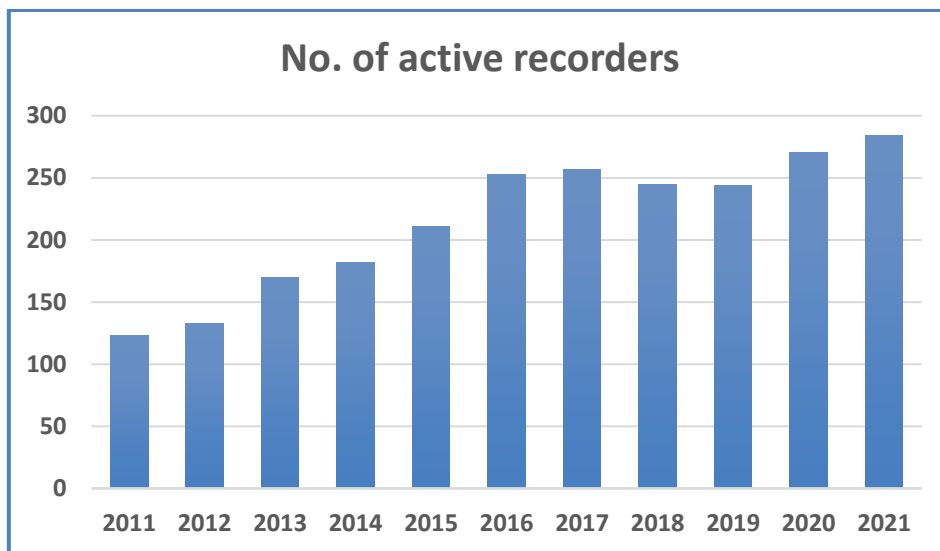
		
<i>Trifolium fragiferum</i> Strawberry Clover	<i>Scythris inspersella</i> Moth	<i>Australoplana sanguinea</i> Flatworm
		
<i>Macdunnoughia confusa</i> Dewick's Plusia	<i>Haliphus confinis</i> Beetle	<i>Mycena capillaris</i> Beechleaf Bonnet
		
<i>Cimbex luteus</i> Sawfly	<i>Mangora acalypha</i> Cricket-bat Spider	<i>Postia caesia</i> Conifer Blueing Bracket

Image credits (left to right from the top): Gareth Hirons / Keith Tailby / Christine Pochin / Adrian Russell / David Nicholls / Alan Cann / Peter Smith / Mike Higgott / Matt N.

Recorders

The number of active recorders submitting wildlife records to NatureSpot in 2021 was the highest to date (284). Of these, 108 were new recorders submitting records for the first time.



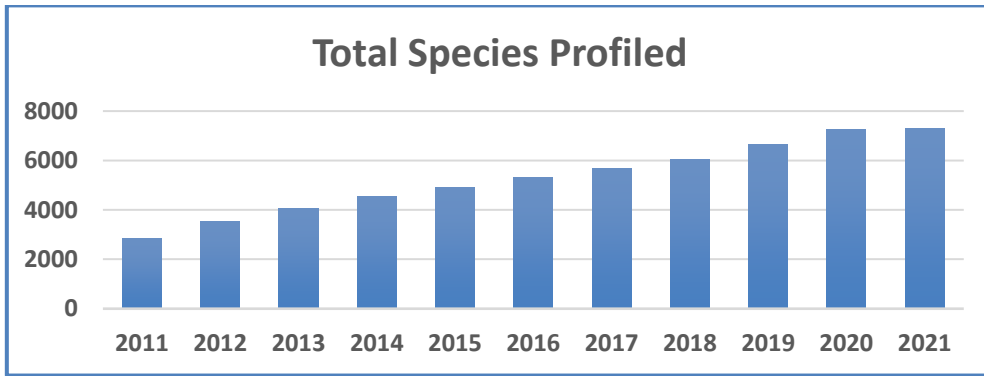
The total overall number of contributing recorders is 1405.

NatureSpot tends to receive regular submissions from core recorders rather than lots of occasional submissions from the general public. This has the benefit that NatureSpot verifiers build up their knowledge of the recording abilities and reliability of individual recorders, whilst the recorders develop their identification skills and interests through regular dialogue. This said, part of NatureSpot’s mission is to facilitate more recording so it is very pleasing to see so many new contributors.

Whilst it is necessary to be registered with NatureSpot to submit records, not all registered users actively record. We know that many users use the site as a source of information, including many that would submit records but they live outside of Leicestershire and Rutland.

Species Galleries

The total number of Leicestershire and Rutland different taxa recorded on NatureSpot at the end of 2021 was 7,298. This includes a number of aggregate species plus a few higher taxon entries, such as genus, so the number of full species featured was 7,044 at the end of 2021. New species are regularly added though fewer this year than in previous years. It is to be expected that the number of new species diminishes over time as the majority of resident species have already been included.



Every featured species has an information page in the galleries, illustrated with the best images submitted by recorders (all taken in Leicestershire and Rutland). Where possible, images are selected that show the key identification features and also represent different colour forms, sex differences and juvenile stages.

The illustration below provides an example (in this case for the Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola*).

Essex Skipper - *Thymelicus lineola*

Species

[Additional images](#)

[Click here to support NatureSpot by making a donation - small or large - your gift is very much appreciated. Thank you.](#)

Description	This species is very similar in appearance to the Small Skipper. The main distinguishing feature of the Essex Skipper is that the tips of its antennae are completely black, as if they have been dipped in ink. The male is distinguished from the female by the sex brand on its forewings, which is a short line of specialised scent scales.
Similar Species	As described above, the Essex Skipper needs to be separated from the more common Small Skipper by closely examining the tips of the antenna to check they are completely black. In the Small Skipper, the black is only on the dorsal side.
Identification difficulty	
Habitat	This species is found in rough grassland, including road verges, woodland rides, chalk grassland and embankments.
When to see it	Adults are on the wing throughout July and August.
Life History	There is a single generation each year with the larvae feeding on grasses such as Couch and Cocks-foot.
UK Status	Despite its name, the Essex Skipper is now found over much of the southern half of England and it was first recorded in Wales in 2000. It is believed that the steep and grass-covered embankments that are often found on motorways and major trunk roads assisted the increase in distribution. These have acted as corridors allowing it to reach new locations more easily.
VC55 Status	Occasional. Not as frequently recorded as Small Skipper in Leicestershire and Rutland but now established throughout most of the area.
Reference	57.005 BF1527

could you be our
Species Champion?

[Organise images](#)



David Gould
near Ratby Meadow, Enderby
26 July 2016
[edit](#)



Graham Calow
Sapcote
08 July 2009
[edit](#)



Paul Ruddoch
Melton Country Park
21 July 2015
[edit](#)



Barbara Cooper
Long Clawson
21 July 2015
[edit](#)

The species pages are constantly being revised and added to in order to provide accurate and useful information, particularly on how to reliably identify the species. Where appropriate, we are adding a new feature: Identification Aids – which is an expandable field allowing images, illustrations and text to be added to help identify the species and distinguish it from similar species it could be confused with.

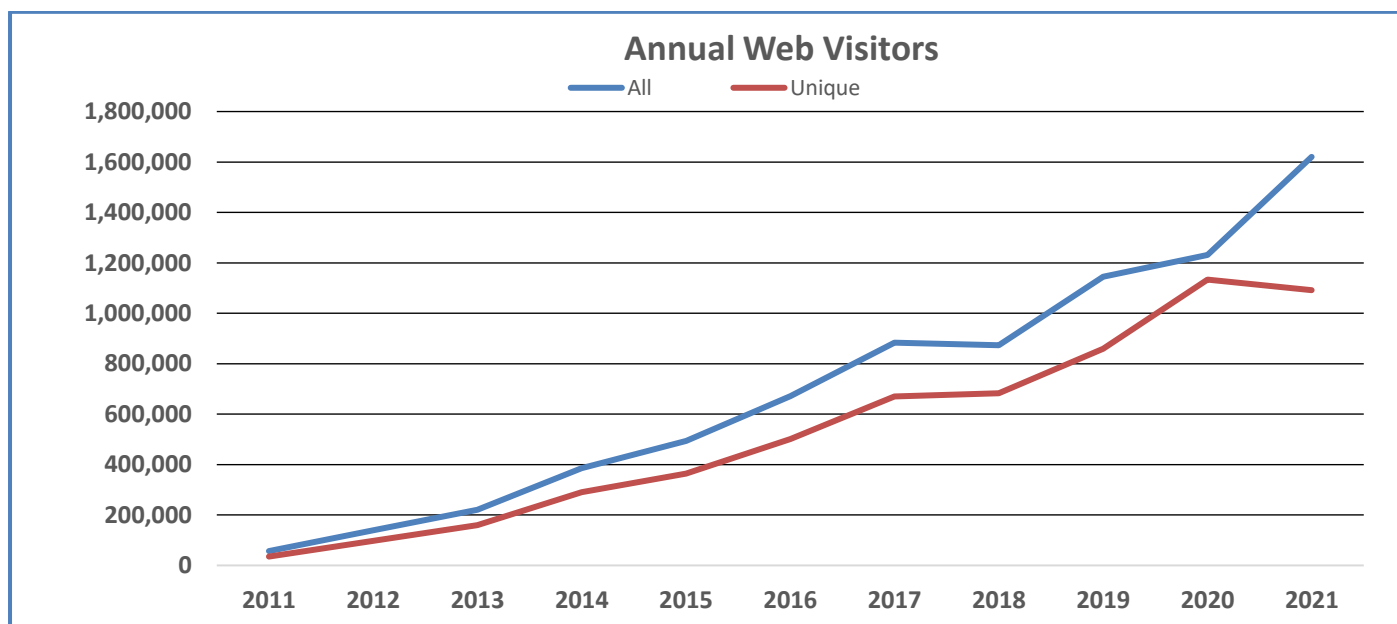
Wild Places and Parish Pages

Another key feature of the NatureSpot website is the ability to set up pages for any given site or area boundary in order to showcase the wildlife of that area. This is applied in two ways, firstly for **Parishes** (or wards in the city) and secondly for '**Wild Places**' – sites of known or potential wildlife interest with public access. Records and images for each parish/site are automatically displayed on these pages creating a dynamic and up to date account of recent wildlife sightings. Many of these site/parish pages are administered by local volunteers.

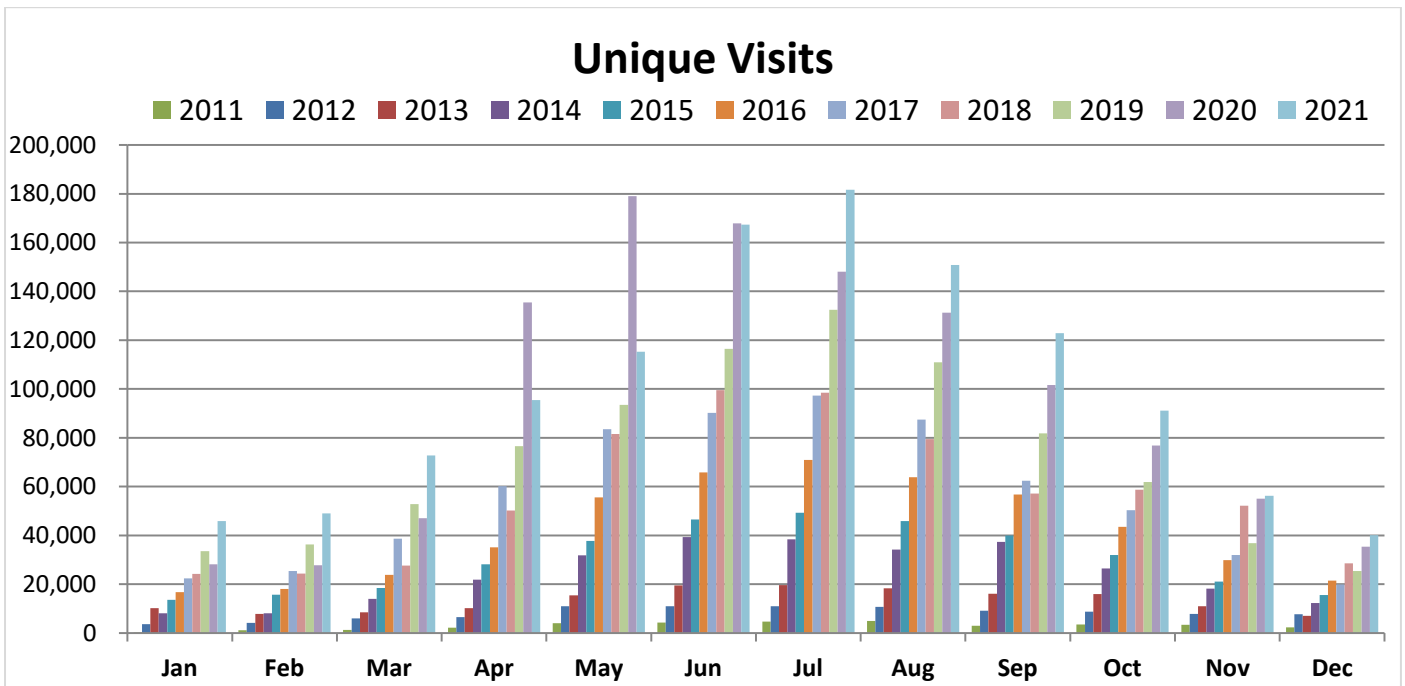
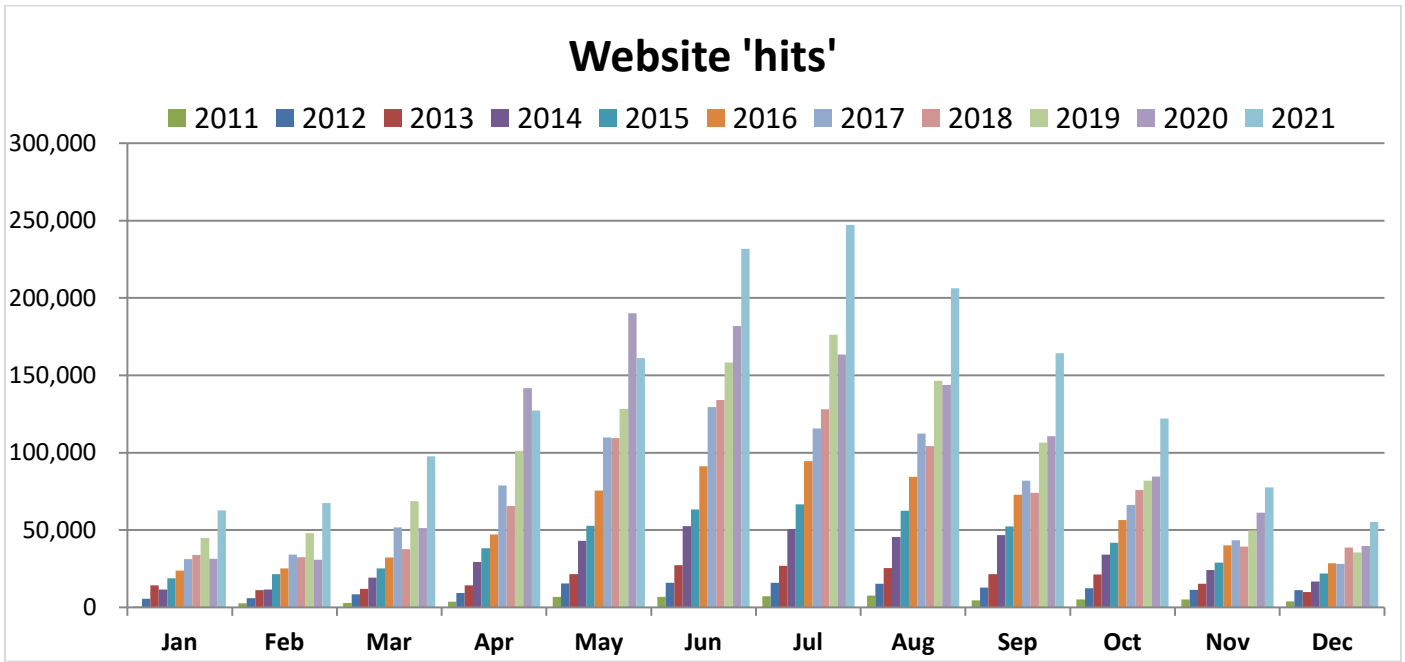
A significant number of new wild place and parish pages were also set up during the year.

Website visitors and Social Media

Visits to the NatureSpot website are monitored using Google Analytics. This records many details of each visitor, including: country of origin, their operating system, the search engine used and the term entered. It also identifies 'unique' visitors – access from computers with different IP addresses.



Visitor numbers have grown every year showing a distinct seasonal pattern, peaking in June/July. There is a similar seasonal pattern of record submissions due to flowers and invertebrates being more numerous and more easily seen in the warmer months.



In 2021 the NatureSpot website received around 3.5 million page views from 1,620,255 (1,091,158 unique) users, an increase of nearly half a million over the previous year and the highest ever annual usage. 71% of these visits came from the UK, the rest coming from a total of 216 countries or territories worldwide.

2021 Countries
1. United Kingdom (71%)
2. United States (10%)
3. Canada (2%)
4. Ireland (1%)
5. Germany (1%)

6. China (1%)
7. France (1%)
8. Netherlands (1%)
9. India (1%)
10. Australia (1%)

Users accessed the website in the following ways:

	2020	2021
Mobile Phone	51%	65%
Desktop Computer	43%	30%
Tablet	6%	5%

Twitter / Facebook

The NatureSpot Twitter account now has over 75,870 followers, a 16% increase over the year, with an annual reach of nearly a quarter of a million views. Over the year, the NatureSpot Facebook group grew from 150 to over 300 members, doubling in size.

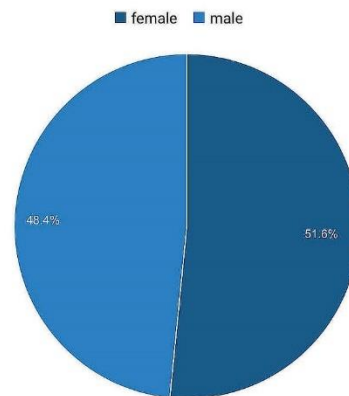
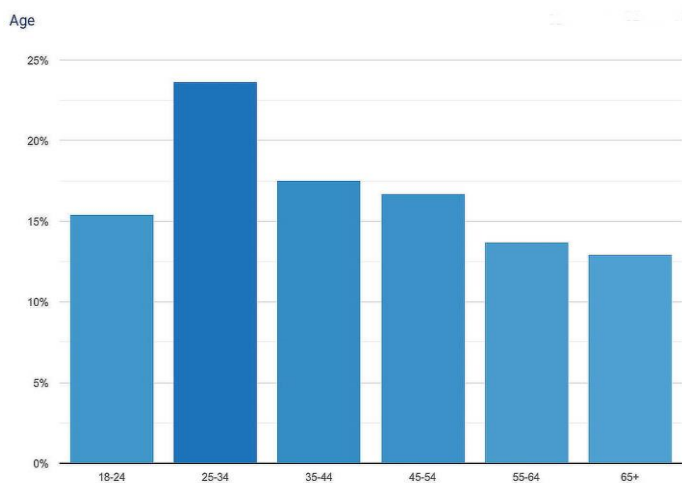
YouTube

Although we produced fewer original videos than in 2020, the content on the NatureSpot YouTube channel continues to be popular, attracting more than 15,000 views totalling over 1,700 hours.

Demographics

The demographics of NatureSpot users in 2021 (according to Google Analytics data) were:

Age range and gender:



Feedback

Comments from site users are almost all very positive, with a few examples given below.

- *Keep up the fantastic work you're doing with NatureSpot - it's becoming the envy of wildlife recorders in every other county!*
- *Your site is incredibly useful on a national level. Other local groups could try to replicate it but so far I'm not aware of any coming remotely close. I can't praise this site enough.*
- *It's a great resource. I know several people who regularly use the species galleries pages who don't live in Leicestershire or Rutland and wish their county had something similar.*
- *I absolutely adore your website. It is my first point of call when I want to find good images of certain species and a regular for me to scour to see if I can identify what I have photographed.*
- *I have been following this site for many years, and have found it an invaluable reference source for identifying species of all kinds. Excellent work. One of the very best out there! Thank you!*
- *This is such a valuable resource to help me, as a relative newcomer, to identify species. It's terrific having so many photos for each species to show the variation, angles, etc. I am really grateful for all the work that you have put into this site - thank you!*
- *An excellent resource for identifying species in neighbouring Nottinghamshire. Thank you, your hard work is appreciated. (I have made a donation!)*
- *I'm not in Leics & Rutland but this is a fantastic resource for wildlife ID anywhere in the UK (at least). Thank you!*
- *Although I live (against my will) in the London area, I go on trips to look at wildlife every chance I get. This is by far the best website for identifying UK species.*

Support for local wildlife groups and projects

We have continued to provide a web platform for a number of local wildlife groups as well as a number of projects, including those listed below, helping to promote their work and publications. We also allow these groups to publicise their events and activities directly onto the website's calendar.

- Leicestershire Entomological Society
- Leicester Amphibian and Reptile Network
- Leicestershire Moth Recorders
- Leicestershire and Rutland Mammal Group
- Market Bosworth & District Natural History Society
- Literary & Philosophical Society – Natural History Section
- Leicestershire and Rutland Badger Group
- Road verge biodiversity project

If you would like to use the NatureSpot web platform to publicise and promote your group, project or events then do get in touch.

Developments in 2021

Trustees

We are pleased to welcome a new trustee: Melinda (Min) Bell, who is a long-term contributor to NatureSpot. At the same time we were sorry to see Steve Mathers step down in order that he can commit more time to his new role of

County Recorder for Odonata in Nottinghamshire. However we are pleased to say that Steve is continuing as the NatureSpot verifier for dragonflies.

Trustees 2021
Alan Cann (Chair)
David Nicholls (Company Sec)
David Gould
Graham Calow
Sue Timms
Ben Devine
Mike Higgott
John Clarkson
Melinda Bell

Partnerships

NatureSpot has three core partners: Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, all of whom are represented on our board of trustees. In addition we work closely with a wide range of district and parish councils as well as most of the natural history societies in the two counties.

Projects

We have continued to work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council in supporting the Urban Verges Biodiversity project. This initiative is engaging parish councils in taking over the management of selected verges in their areas with the aim of improving the biodiversity value. NatureSpot's role has been to recruit and support volunteers from amongst its recording community to undertake a site survey of the existing flora and to use this data to advise parish councils on management options. This project will continue in 2022. More details are available [here](#).

We are also partners in the the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Saving the Saffron Brook River Restoration Scheme, both of which will be scale up their activities during 2022.

During 2021 we added new functionality to our recording form, enabling agreed recording activity to be 'tagged' and this data to be accessed directly by representatives from the organisations leading the activity. So far this includes: Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme, Loughborough Naturalists and the City Council's 'Where the Wild Things Are' project.

Other developments included an upgrade of the NatureSpot website software to Drupal 9, the addition of 30 new parish pages plus and many Wild Place pages, plus numerous technical fixes and improvements to improve performance and address various issues.

Further Information

If you would like further information or an explanation of anything included in this report, please contact:

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tel: 0116 2393159