



## NatureSpot 2015 Annual Report

### Introduction

NatureSpot is a registered charity and is managed by volunteers as a community 'citizen science' initiative. It is overseen by a Board of trustees. Its 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.

2015 was a record year for NatureSpot in nearly all respects, with the growth seen in previous years continuing. In addition, two major initiatives have been developed pending their launch in 2016: a Young Recorders Scheme and a Mentoring Scheme to develop identification skills.

NatureSpot is funded through donations and grants. We are particularly grateful for the financial support offered by Leicestershire County Council and for the many hours of volunteer help provided by all involved.

### Records

24,622 records were submitted in 2015, a 65% increase on the previous year. Previous years' data do not include rejected records, but these account for a very small proportion (<1%).

Year	Number of Records
2010	4,021
2011	9,023
2012	10,037
2013	15,976
2014	14,910
2015	24,622
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>78,589</b>

Of the 24,622 records received in 2015, 46% had images submitted.

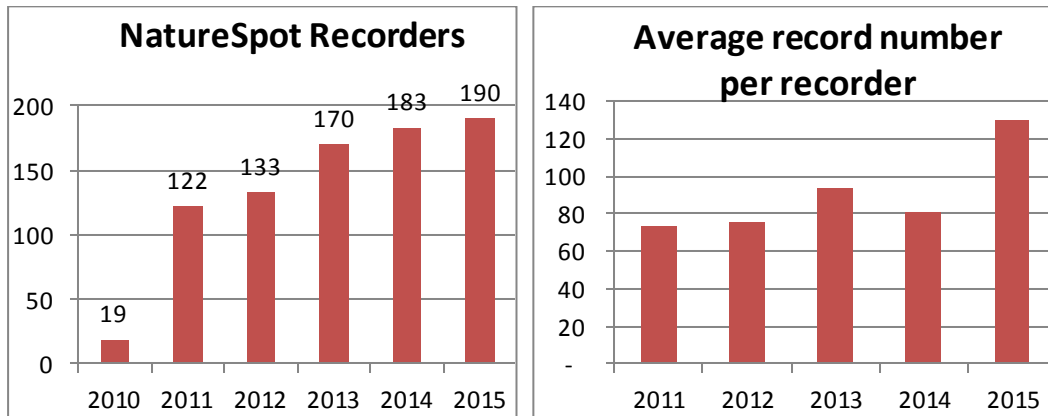
### Recorders

There has been a modest but steady growth in the number of recorders submitting wildlife records to NatureSpot every year. The total overall number of contributing recorders is 587. There has been an overall increase in the average number of records submitted by each recorder, perhaps indicating greater commitment to recording from regular members and/or an increase in the range of species they feel confident to identify.

The trend is for NatureSpot to receive regular submissions from the core recorders rather than lots of occasional submissions from the general public. This has proved mutually beneficial in that NatureSpot verifiers build up their knowledge of the recording abilities and reliability of individual

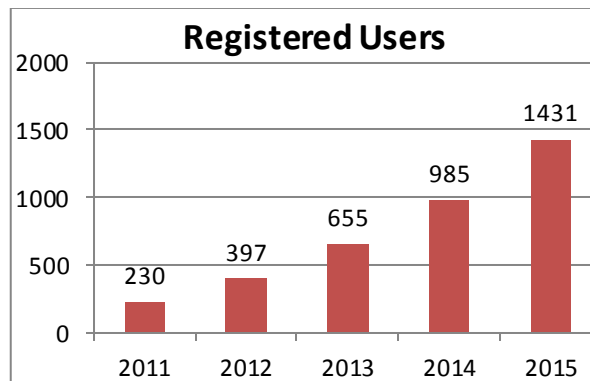


recorders, whilst the recorders develop their identification skills and interests through regular dialogue.



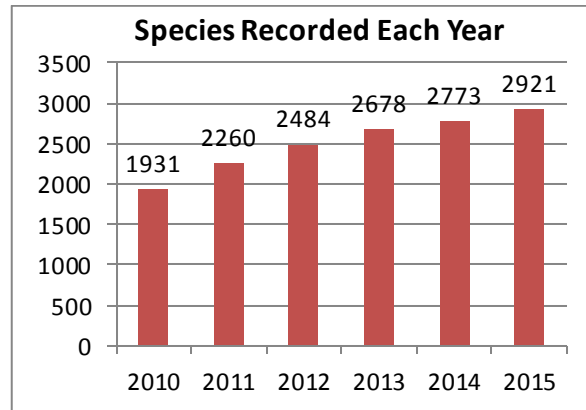
### Users

It is necessary to be registered with NatureSpot to submit records, but not all registered users actively record. We know that some users use the site as a source of information, including many that would submit records but they live outside of Leicestershire and Rutland. There was an increase of 446 new registered users in 2015 (45%) bringing the total to 1431.



### Species

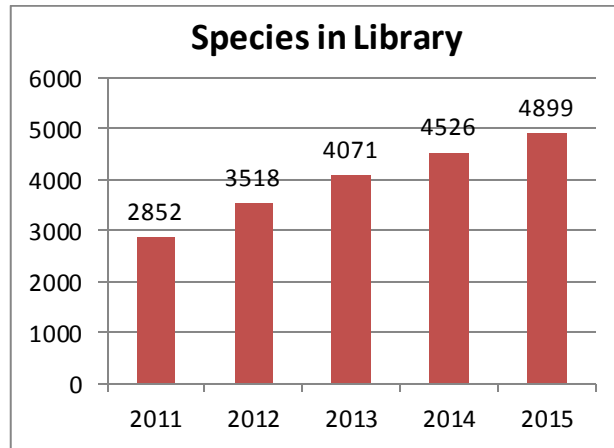
The number of different species recorded each year has grown steadily, with 2,921 recorded on NatureSpot in 2015.



When analysed by taxon, birds are the most recorded group, both in every individual year and overall. Moths and wildflowers are the next most recorded groups.

Taxon Group	2015		Grand Total	
	Number	%	Number	%
Birds	5,736	23%	19,227	24%
Moths	2,815	11%	13,734	17%
Wildflowers	4,230	17%	11,725	15%
Beetles	1,065	4%	3,902	5%
Butterflies	1,192	5%	3,212	4%
Slugs & Snails	2,079	8%	3,032	4%
Bugs	820	3%	2,616	3%
Fungi	709	3%	2,405	3%
Hoverflies	1,081	4%	2,126	3%
Trees, Shrubs & Climbers	824	3%	2,049	3%
Bees, Wasps, Ants	652	3%	1,967	3%
Dragonflies and Damselflies	413	2%	1,828	2%
Spiders, Harvestmen & Mites	450	2%	1,707	2%
Flies, Gnats and Midges	403	2%	1,569	2%
Mammals	568	2%	1,329	2%
Grasses, Rushes & Sedges	408	2%	1,168	1%
Other groups	1,177	5%	4,993	6%
	<b>24,622</b>		<b>78,589</b>	

The total number of species recorded on NatureSpot at the end of 2015 was 4,899, an increase of 373 (8%) over the year. Every species has an information page in the galleries, illustrated with images submitted by recorders (all taken in Leicestershire and Rutland).



### Verification

During 2015 a new verification system was introduced by the Biological Recording Centre (BRC) and adopted by NatureSpot as we are a partner of iRecord, the national online recording system developed by the BRC. The new verification system offers verifiers five options as shown below. In addition records may be queried, seeking more information before a decision is made, or simply not yet reviewed.

Verification option	No. of records
Accepted, confirmed as correct	6,832
Accepted, assumed correct	16,640
Plausible	663
Unable to review/identify	326
Incorrect	79
Not reviewed/queried	56
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24,596</b>

Comparable data is not available for previous years, but the 2015 data shows that 95.4% of all records were accepted and verified correct.

A further benefit of linking NatureSpot records with iRecord and the BRC is that they are made available to national experts. As a result a number of specialist species records were able to be verified by such experts. However the great majority were verified locally by NatureSpot, assisted by local experts.

Verifier	2015 Records
Calow, Graham	11,426
Nicholls, David	6,125
Gould, David	2,987
Baker, Rodney	2,938
Ruddoch, Paul	422
Watson, Ashley	208



Smith, Matt	119
Morris, Roger	83
Roberts, Stuart	78
Cossa, Nathalie	53
Bantock, Tristan	23
Partridge, Jools	17
Brown, Peter	16
O'Brien, Helen	13
admin, core	13
Daws, Jonathan	12
Palmer, Stephen	4
Hall, Geoffrey	4
Fox, Mike	2
Hubble, Dave	2
Harvey, Martin	2
Crawley, Derek	1
Cartwright, Becky	1
Crellin, Steven	1
Gurney, Mark	1
Roy, Helen	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24,596</b>

iRecord collects wildlife records from all of the UK and Ireland, and has many more specific recording schemes, such as NatureSpot, linked into it. The number of records from Leicestershire and Rutland is by far the highest of any county, comprising nearly 8% of all UK and Irish records, the majority of these are collected via the NatureSpot website.

No. of records collected to date by iRecord per county (top 50)			
Leicestershire (with Rutland)	92,654	North-east Yorkshire	16,194
Worcestershire	59,152	County Durham	14,643
Berkshire	48,284	Warwickshire	13,992
West Norfolk	41,151	Mid-west Yorkshire	13,963
East Sussex	39,761	Derbyshire	13,927
West Sussex	32,267	West Kent	13,729
South-east Yorkshire	32,148	East Cornwall	12,945
Dorset	24,590	Northamptonshire	12,829
Oxfordshire	23,703	North Somerset	12,649
West Cornwall with Scilly	23,650	Cheshire	12,492
South Devon	23,492	West Gloucestershire	11,788
Surrey	23,007	Bedfordshire	11,782
North Essex	22,417	Herefordshire	11,772
East Suffolk	21,316	Pembrokeshire	11,624



East Norfolk	21,251	Nottinghamshire	11,186
East Kent	21,198	Glamorganshire	10,086
Hertfordshire	21,056	North-west Yorkshire	9,963
Buckinghamshire	20,900	North Hampshire	9,756
South Lancashire	18,623	Cambridgeshire	9,454
South Hampshire	18,226	South Wiltshire	9,347
Antrim	17,898	Staffordshire	8,967
Shropshire	17,548	Carmarthenshire	8,865
Down	17,377	Fifeshire	8,454
South-west Yorkshire	16,948	Middlesex	8,216
Midlothian	16,778	East Gloucestershire	8,133

Total records = 1,211,421

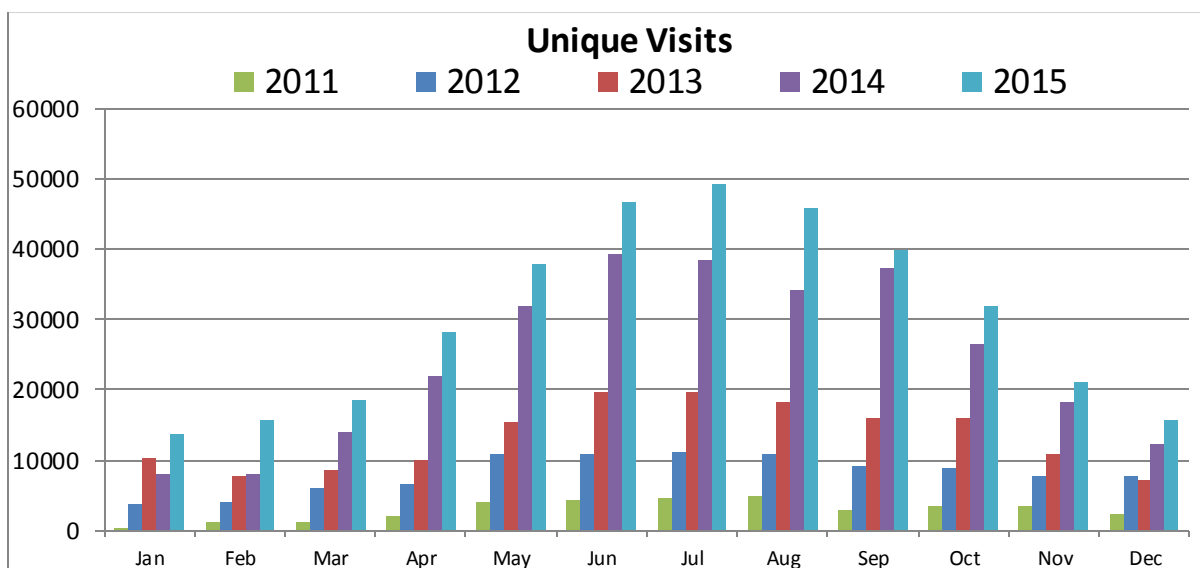
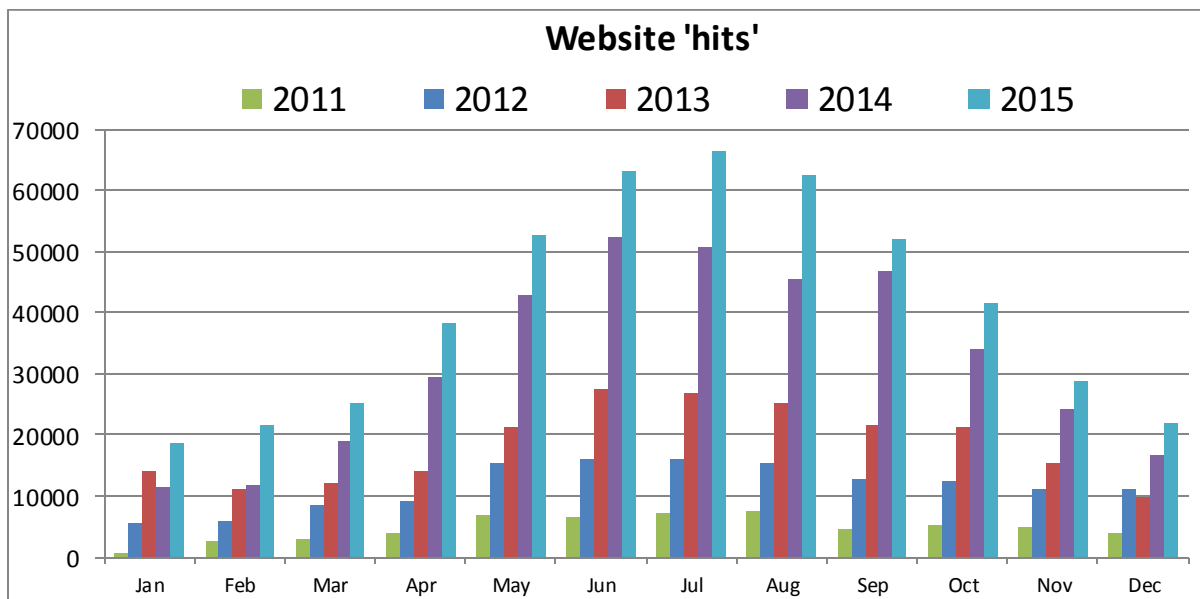
A similar pattern can be observed with the total number of species recorded in each county. Again the majority of this data is from NatureSpot records.

Vice County	Species
Leicestershire (with Rutland)	6,092
Worcestershire	4,414
Berkshire	4,322
South Devon	4,098
East Sussex	3,872
West Norfolk	3,672
East Norfolk	3,597
South-east Yorkshire	3,526
West Sussex	3,499
Oxfordshire	3,314

### Visitors

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 July. This reflected in a similar seasonal pattern of record submission due to flowers and invertebrates being more numerous and more easily seen in the warmer months.



## Feedback

The comments below are some of the feedback received by NatureSpot over the last year or so.

“I think it (NatureSpot) is an excellent resource in very many ways. I am very pleased to be of help in developing it.” **Chris du Feu – national mollusc expert**

“NatureSpot has been an invaluable tool and really useful, you and your team have been fantastic.” **Phil Crowfoot, Burbage**

“Just a note to compliment you on a great website. It almost makes me wish I lived in Rutland or Leicestershire. It really is one of the best around.” **Dave Harrison, Wirral, Merseyside**



“I think that your website is the best nature website of its type, which I have seen for any county. The information available is very impressive.” **Peter Thompson, author of Ascomycetes in Colour.**

“I have just spent a good while looking at your website and I think it is excellent!!! I will be a regular visitor and I will set up a link to it from my blog, hopefully it will direct a little more traffic your way”. **Paul Riddle - founder of 'Owls about that then!' website**

The most crucial thing is to work with BSBI and your other local naturalist societies for other wildlife - which you are doing, so that's one better than ISpot!! “I like your traffic lights system; what a good idea!” **Clare O'Reilly MSc PGCE(FE&HE) MIEEM MIFL**

..... it is a fantastic facility - and so much better than Google images. **Dr Helen O'Brien**

“I continue to be impressed by NatureSpot.” **Dr David Roy, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology**

“Today I was filmed regarding my macro photography on Autumnwatch Extra and I gave your amazing website a plug.” **Matt Doogue**

“I just wanted to say how pleased I was when I found your site. What a great resource you have. Congratulations and thank you.” **Andrew Hardacre**

“Truly excellent, well done to all involved. It's a first point of reference to many of my ID's and I don't even live in the county!” **John Bryan**

“I found nature spot by accident while searching and it is a magnificent site” **John Smith, Gloucestershire**

“I think Naturespot is excellent website/service and very user-friendly. Love the various new website features, particularly the mapping and search tools. Other friends and colleagues have commented too.” **Kate Nightingale**

“I recently met a moth trapper from the local group who uses nature spot as his primary reference source and cannot understand why every county has not got a similar site.” **Andy Mackay**

“Just to say I was speaking to a member of a Welsh local group of the wildlife trust at Conwy who, when he discovered I was from Leicestershire, extolled the virtues of nature spot and bewailed the lack of similar sites across the country - apparently it's his primary reference point.” **Amy Johnson**

“May I congratulate you on your excellent website. This seems to be the first stopping off point for UK natural history identification by amateur naturalists and I'm sure many academics.” **Kelvin Irwin**

NatureSpot is a registered charity - number 1138852

[www.naturespot.org.uk](http://www.naturespot.org.uk)





### **Further Information**

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

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