

NatureSpot

2016 Annual Report



NatureSpot

Recording the Wildlife of Leicestershire & Rutland

Home Latest Images Species Galleries Wild Places Submit Records My Records Explore NatureChat

Help to record the wildlife of Leicestershire and Rutland

Submit any sighting of an animal, plant or fungus – with or without a photo – to put your dot on our species distribution maps. All records are passed on to local and national recording schemes. All wildlife records are valuable, common or rare, and whether from your garden, local park or a nature reserve. [Help To Record](#)



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

DONATE

Please support NatureSpot

Total count of species: 5307

Latest Image



Learn more about
Common Wasp - *Vespa vulgaris*
Kate Nightingale
Cropston garden - 31 December 2016
Hibernating queen rescued from fire wood pile
1 of 78904

Latest News

Annual Recorder Conference

The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Recorders Conference will take place on Sunday 26th February at the Rothley Centre. This is a free event but booking is required - email [Nathalie Cossa](#) or telephone 0116 248 7362 at the Wildlife Trust to reserve your place. Click the header to see the programme.

Grantham Canal



Wild Places pages for the Grantham Canal now cover the whole Leicestershire section. The Canal is one of the less explored sites but is a rich hunting ground for wildlife recorders. It is best known for its outstanding dragonfly and damselfly populations, comprising 19 species. Located in the northeast of Leicestershire, the 11.5 miles of Canal offers easy all year access on the towpath. Find out more: [Long Clawson to Harby](#); [Harby to Redmile and Redmile to Muston](#).

Oak Marble Gall

October is a good time to spot galls, before the leaves fall. The Oak Marble Gall is a common find on Oak trees, but did you know that the wasp causing this gall, *Andricus kollari*, was introduced to the UK to help with the ink industry? Read a fascinating blog about this story [here](#).



Look out for the Ivy Bee

Many insects are disappearing as the year gets to October but by one possible late sighting is the Ivy Bee, *Colletes hederæ*. Though not yet seen in Leicestershire or Rutland it has been moving northwards so a species to look out for on late-flowering Ivy. View the info sheet.



Volunteers wanted!

Follow us



Video help

Watch our new YouTube video showing you how to submit a wildlife record.

New Species



Dog Stinkhorn
Mutinus caninus

Latest chat

Unknown insect - any ideas?

ID help needed on fungus

what is this huge fungus?

[more](#)

What's Around



Waxwing

look in trees with berries - often around car parks and supermarkets!

Species Galleries

- o Birds
- o Mammals
- o Amphibians
- o Reptiles
- o Fish
- o Butterflies
- o Moths
- o Caterpillars
- o Dragonflies and Damselflies
- o Beetles (including Ladybirds)
- o Bugs
- o Bees, Wasps, Ants
- o Sawflies
- o Hoverflies
- o Craneflies
- o Flies, Gnats and Midges
- o Barklice & Booklice
- o Grasshoppers & Crickets
- o Earwigs
- o Mayflies
- o Caddisflies
- o Lacewings & Scorpionflies
- o Stoneflies
- o Silverfish
- o Springtails & Bristletails
- o Thrips
- o Fleas
- o Spiders, Harvestmen, Mites & Ticks
- o Centipedes & Millipedes
- o Woodlice, Crustaceans
- o Slugs & Snails
- o Worms
- o Wildflowers
- o Trees, Shrubs & Climbers
- o Grasses, Rushes & Sedges
- o Ferns & Horsetails
- o Mosses & Liverworts
- o Galls
- o Fungi
- o Lichens
- o Algae, Bacteria, Virus

Parishes

Barwell

Wild Places

20 Acre Piece

Follow us on Twitter



Introduction

NatureSpot is a registered charity, supported and managed by volunteers as a community 'citizen science' initiative and overseen by a Board of trustees (see appendix 1). 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.

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.

2016 was another record year for NatureSpot, with the growth seen in previous years continuing. There were increases in the number of records submitted, the number of recorders, visitors to the website and the species profiled.

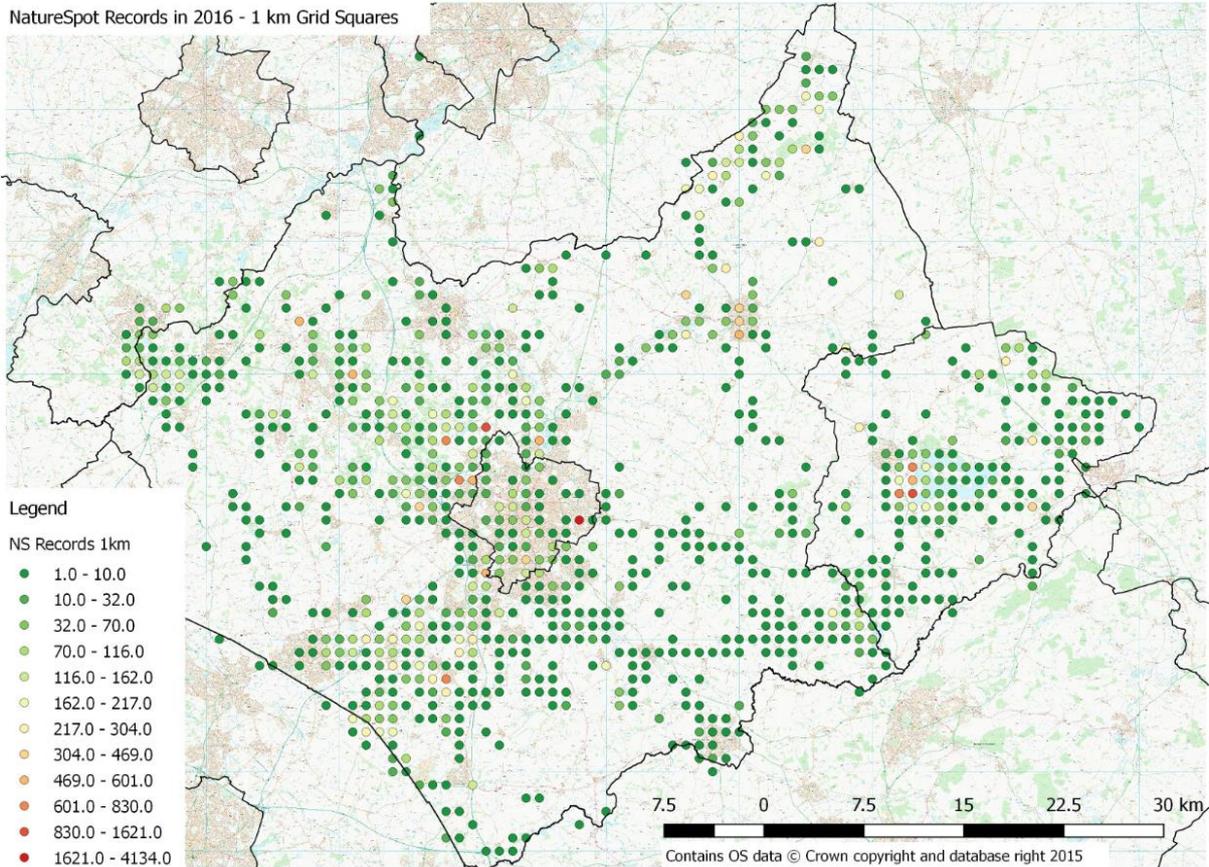
Records

43,636 records were submitted in 2016, a 78% increase on the previous year.

Year	Number of Records
2010	4,021
2011	9,023
2012	10,037
2013	15,976
2014	14,910
2015	24,622
2016	43,636
Grand Total	122,225

The heat map below shows the geographical spread of 2016 records across the two counties. This follows a typical 'recording' pattern for Leicestershire and Rutland, reflecting the more populated areas plus frequently visited sites such as nature reserves.

NatureSpot Records in 2016 - 1 km Grid Squares



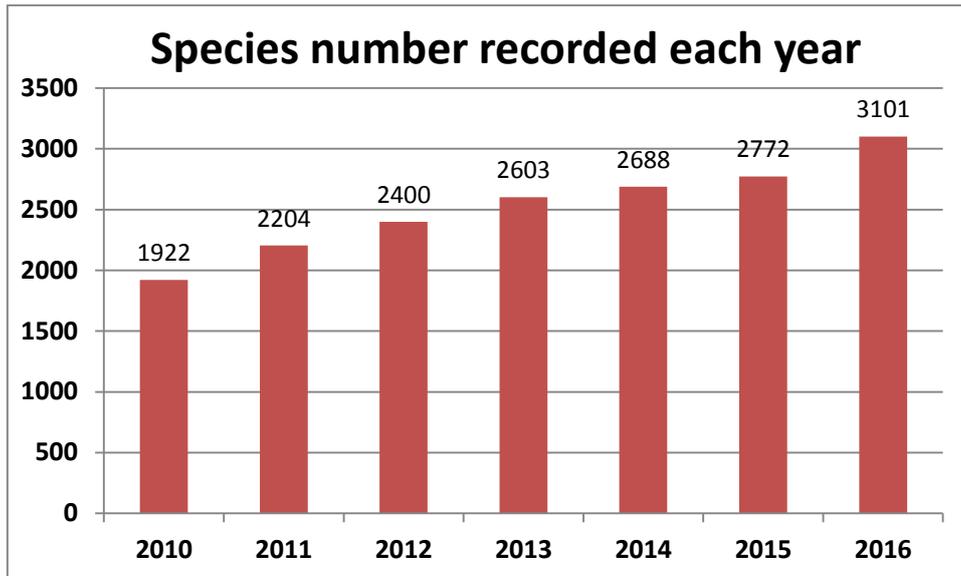
Images

It is not necessary to submit images with records, though it does help to confirm the identification. Of the 2016 records received, 30% had images submitted. 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.

The best images are selected for display on the NatureSpot species pages and on the taxon group galleries. Where possible, images are selected that show the key identification features and also represent different colour forms, sex differences and juvenile stages.

Species

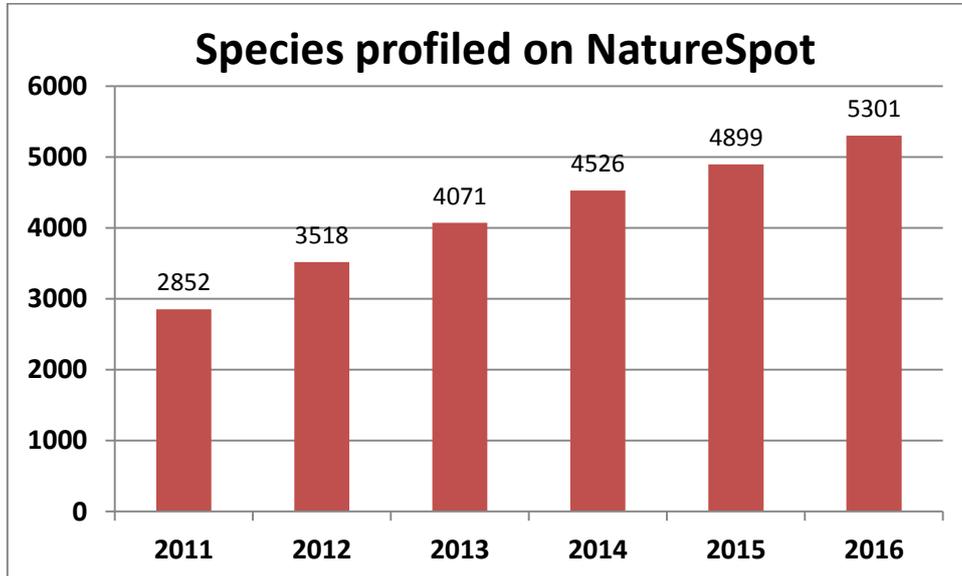
The number of different species recorded each year has grown steadily, with 3,101 recorded on NatureSpot in 2016.



Analysis by taxon group reveals that birds are the most recorded group overall but moths topped the list in 2016. Whilst around two thirds of all records are from the three most recorded groups of moths, birds and wildflowers, the remainder are widely spread amongst all other groups.

	2016	%	Total	%
Moths	12,869	29.6%	26,326	22.3%
Birds	9,851	22.6%	28,843	24.4%
Wildflowers	5,984	13.7%	17,426	14.8%
Butterflies	2,072	4.8%	5,249	4.4%
Trees, Shrubs & Climbers	1,528	3.5%	3,542	3.0%
Beetles	1,429	3.3%	5,147	4.4%
Bugs	1,144	2.6%	3,666	3.1%
Hoverflies	1,022	2.3%	3,035	2.6%
Bees, Wasps, Ants	962	2.2%	2,720	2.3%
Flies, Gnats and Midges	746	1.7%	2,176	1.8%
Grasses, Rushes & Sedges	742	1.7%	1,877	1.6%
Dragonflies and Damselflies	727	1.7%	2,526	2.1%
Mammals	593	1.4%	1,887	1.6%
Fungi	484	1.1%	2,637	2.2%
Spiders, Harvestmen & Mites	481	1.1%	3,361	2.8%
Slugs & Snails	480	1.1%	1,945	1.6%
Mosses & Liverworts	236	0.5%	732	0.6%
Ferns & Horsetails	190	0.4%	502	0.4%
Grasshoppers & Crickets	138	0.3%	456	0.4%
Sawflies	104	0.2%	490	0.4%
All records	43,534		118,051	

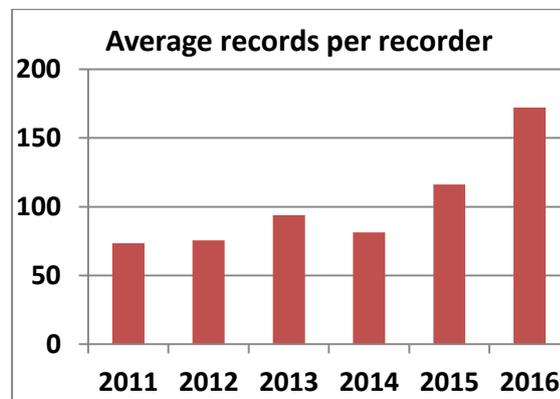
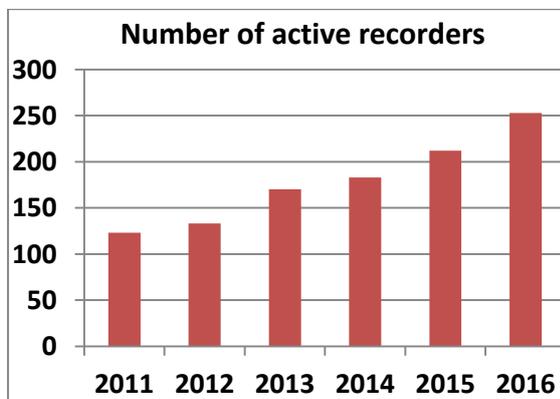
The total number of Leicestershire and Rutland species recorded on NatureSpot at the end of 2016 was 5,301, an increase of 402 over the year. Every species has an information page in the galleries, illustrated with images submitted by recorders (all taken in Leicestershire and Rutland).



Recorders

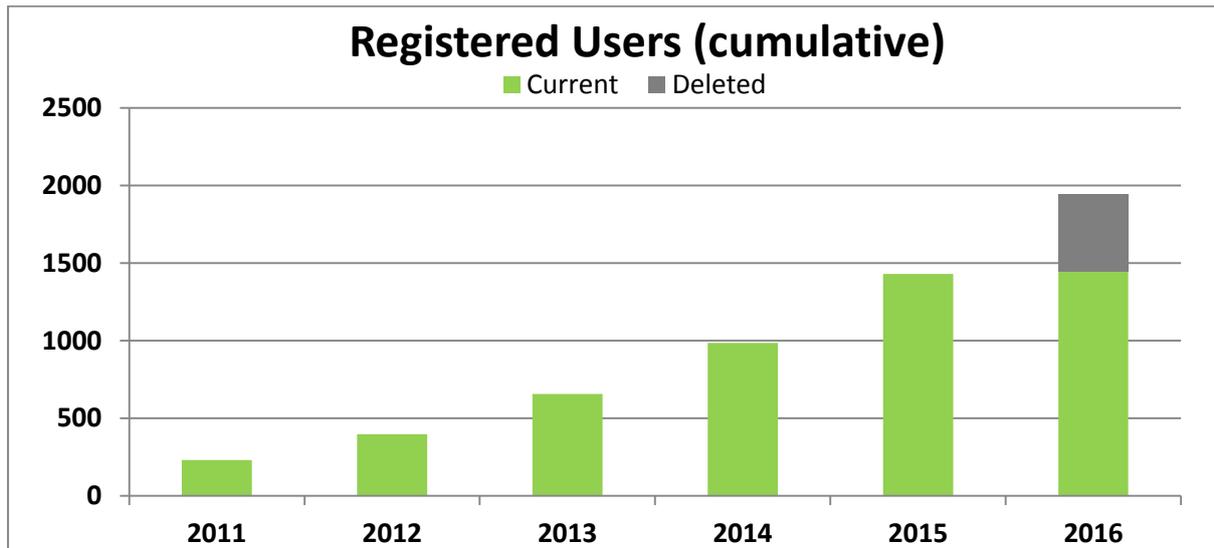
There has been a modest but steady growth in the number of active recorders submitting wildlife records to NatureSpot each year. The total overall number of contributing recorders is 742. There has also been an overall increase in the average number of records submitted by each recorder, perhaps indicating greater commitment to recording from regular members and/or an increase in the range of species they feel confident to identify.

NatureSpot tends to receive regular submissions from 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.



Registered Users

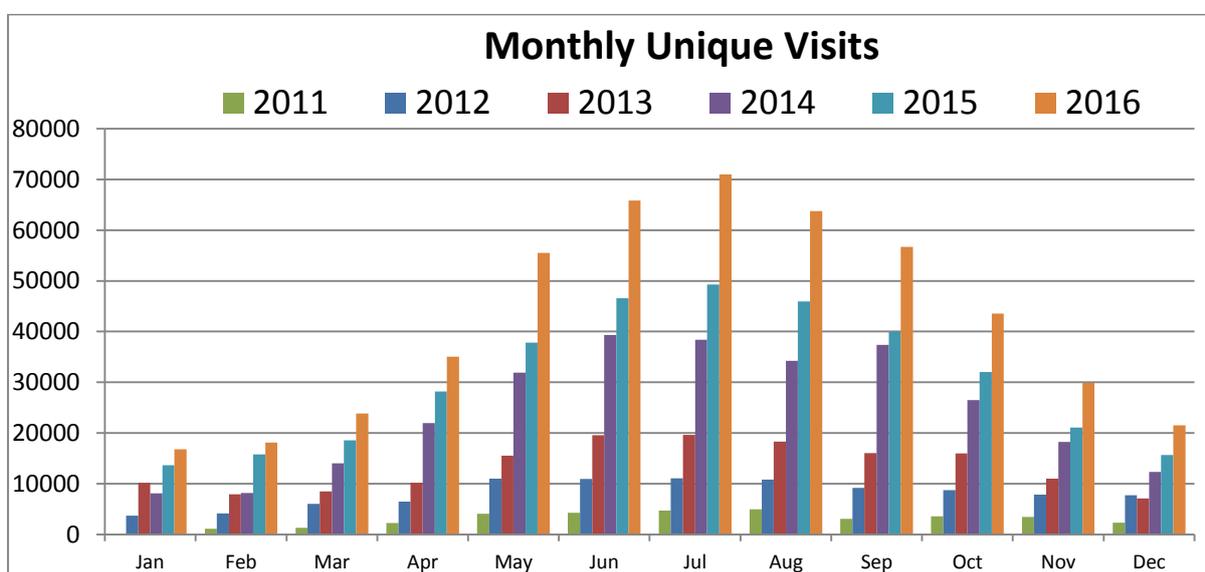
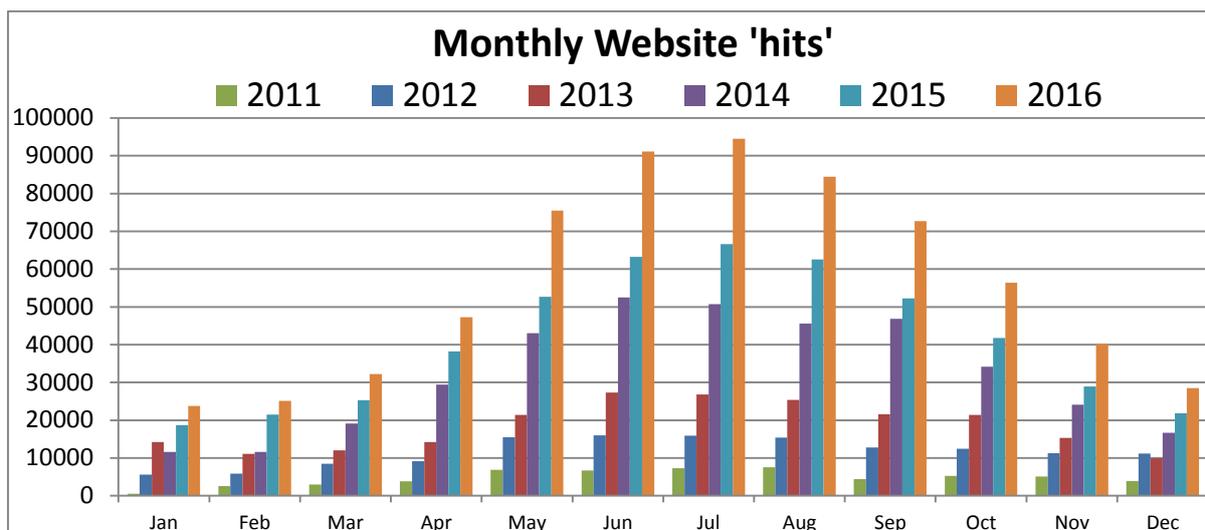
It is necessary to be registered with NatureSpot to submit records, but not all registered users actively record. We know that some users use the site as a source of information, including many that would submit records but they live outside of Leicestershire and Rutland. There was an increase of 514 new registered users in 2016, however 500 accounts that hadn't accessed the site for over two years were removed.



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. 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.



Verification

NatureSpot uses the verification system set up by the Biological Recording Centre (BRC) for use on iRecord, the national online recording system developed by the BRC. 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 as shown below. In addition records may be queried, seeking more information before a decision is made.

Verification option	2016 records	%
Accepted, confirmed as correct	12,829	29.5%
Accepted, assumed correct	29,577	67.9%
Plausible	654	1.5%
Unable to review/identify	238	0.5%
Incorrect	135	0.3%
Not reviewed/queried	101	0.2%
Grand Total	43,534	100.0%



Overall, 97.4% of the records submitted in 2016 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 records were verified by such experts, however the great majority were verified locally by NatureSpot, assisted by local experts.

Data distribution

At the year end the record data is shared with local and some national recording schemes, as well as land managers such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Specifically the records are distributed locally to each County Recorder and also to the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre. From this year, all NatureSpot records will be published on the National Biodiversity Network Gateway.

Support for local wildlife groups

We have continued to provide a web platform for a number of local wildlife groups, 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

Wild Places and Parish Pages

A 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. Records and images for each site/parish are automatically displayed on these pages creating a dynamic and up to date display of recent wildlife sightings. Many of these site/parish pages are administered by local volunteers.

Developments in 2016

In 2016 NatureSpot reached out to users on social media platforms: **Twitter, Facebook and Flickr**. In December we reached 6,400 people via Twitter and 3,400 via Facebook posts. Keen photographers have contributed 850 pictures of wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland to the Flickr group. These numbers are expected to grow over the next year.

NatureSpot is a partner with the **Black to Green project** – an initiative led by the National Forest Company and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. A key objective is to encourage wildlife recording in the Heart of the National Forest area as part of an overall community engagement strategy, linking residents to their local environment.



A number of **training and educational activities** were carried out during the year, working with schools as well as adults to raise awareness of local wildlife and foster interest in recording.

Plans have been drawn up for a **major upgrade** of the NatureSpot website early in 2017. In particular this will upgrade the content management system and enable the website to be better viewed on tablets and mobile devices.

Further Information

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

David Nicholls

dnicholls@naturespot.org.uk

tel: 0116 2393159



Appendix 1 NatureSpot Who's Who

Board of Trustees

Graham Calow (Chair)
David Gould
Simon Bennett
Ron Stevens

Manager

David Nicholls (Company Secretary)

Verifyers

David Nicholls (All)
Graham Calow (All)
David Gould (All)
Paul Ruddoch (All)
Mike Higgott (All)
Steve Mathers (All)
Rod Baker (Birds)
Jon Daws (Arachnids)
Lorraine Ellison (Dragonflies & Damselflies)
Helen O'Brien, Nathalie Cossa, Barry Ingram, Jools Partridge (Mammals)

Website administrators

David Nicholls
Simon Bennett
David Gould
Graham Calow
John van Breda

Site Editors

Alan Cann (Social Media)
Ben Devine
Paul Ruddoch
Rod Baker
Richard Iliffe

Parish Editors

Ron Stevens (Broughton Astley)
Phil Crowfoot (Burbage)
Lorraine Ellison
Simon Bennett (Knighton Ward)

Image Editors

Kate Nightingale
Steve Mathers
Mike Higgott
Richard Pegler

Events Editors

Russell Parry (Lit and Phil)
Louise Marsh (BSBI)
Andrew Heaton (Leics Amphibs & Reptiles)
Janet Sykes (Market Bosworth Nat. Hist.)



Appendix 2 Feedback

The comments below are some of the feedback received by NatureSpot.

“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 NatureSpot 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**

"Thanks for demonstrating how much more there is to nature than just birds, butterflies and flowers. It makes the world more interesting every time I step outdoors!" **Peter Smith**

"A most trusted site for identifying British wildlife. Thank you to all involved in creating and maintaining this valuable resource." **Nick Norfolk**

"I've found your website an incredibly useful resource. It really is excellent. Thank you and keep up the good work! " **Catherine Beazley**

"Been a great help with ID where the books failed. Many thanks." **Abbie P.**

"Nature Spot is an invaluable resource for the garden naturalist - thanks for all the good work." **Gary Lowe**