



NatureSpot is a Leicestershire based 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. It is entirely run by committed volunteers.

Our aims are:

1. To help the public to identify local wildlife and to learn about the natural environment
2. To 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 comprising local naturalists and conservation professionals. We are also supported by experts and professionals such as the County Recorders and officers of the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC), Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

# Ashby de la Zouch

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The ancient market town of Ashby de la Zouch is in north-west Leicestershire, near to the borders with Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

It was known as Ashby in the 1086 Domesday Book but later came into the ownership of the De Zouche family who built the castle in the 12th century.

The ruins of the castle still stand and are managed by English Heritage. Ashby stands near the centre of the National Forest so is surrounded by many new woodlands.

## Wild Places in the Ashby Parish

- Alistair's Wood, Lount
- Ashby Lower Packington Rd verge
- Ashby, Ingles Hill Wood
- Ashby, Prestop Park woodland
- Hicks Lodge, Shellbrook Wood and Newfields Wood
- John's Wood, Prestop Park

# Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project:1

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Leicestershire County Council is working with Parish Councils and local communities to improve the management of selected road verges to increase their biodiversity value. NatureSpot is helping by carrying out wildlife surveys and by promoting the verges as featured Wild Places on its website.

## **Why change?**

Britain has lost 97% of its wildflower grasslands – a major factor in the decline of many wildlife species. Road verges managed as meadows can not only help to reverse this trend but crucially provide wildlife corridors around the country.

Mown grass offers little benefit to wildlife. Most plants can't flower so there is no nectar on offer for pollinators. The baked ground is too dry and the short grass offers no cover, for most wildlife species it is like a desert and they can't live there.

# Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project:2

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## **How should a verge be managed?**

Simply by not mowing between April and mid-September, the plants can grow and flower, providing important feeding stations for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. The taller vegetation means lots of insects and other invertebrates can now find a home in the moist and protected interior – providing vital food for hedgehogs, birds, frogs, small mammals and other creatures.

Ideally, half the verge should be cut in September and the cuttings removed to prevent nutrient build-up. Half (or part) should be left uncut to provide a winter home for the wildlife. The areas cut/uncut can then be alternated each year. In a few circumstances, it may be appropriate to add wildflower seed or plug plants to increase species diversity.

## **What wildlife will benefit?**

Surveys have revealed that some verges support over 50 species of wildflowers and grasses with an average of over 20. All manner of butterflies, insects and other wildlife have been spotted using the meadow verges, but these represent only a tiny fraction of the species that will be benefitting. Part of the fun is finding out...

The verges are being added to the national **B-Lines project** – a series of wildflower-rich habitat stepping stones that create ‘insect pathways’ running through our countryside and towns.

# Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project:3

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## How you can help

If you spot any wildlife on the verge, try to take a photo and submit the record to NatureSpot. Your sighting will then feature on the verge Wild Pace page and will also be added to the county record database to help with conservation and site management.

Some verges are being managed by the community who organise the annual cut and removal of the cuttings. Ask your Parish Council if this is the case in your area.

Some people don't understand the wildlife importance of meadow grassland and think it is 'untidy'. You can help by championing the case for less mowing and by supporting your parish council to do more of this.

Why not manage your own garden for wildlife – be creative with your lawn and allow an area to remain unmown between April and August. You can even add your garden to the [B-Lines](#) map.

# Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project:4

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## Find out more

Look up the verge on NatureSpot! (use the Wild Place drop-down menu on the home page)

Contact Roseanna Burton ([roseanna.burton@leics.gov.uk](mailto:roseanna.burton@leics.gov.uk)) for more details about the project and to propose new verges to add to the network next year.

Learn to identify common Leicestershire wildlife species using our series of free ID guides – all available on [www.naturespot.org.uk/IDguides](http://www.naturespot.org.uk/IDguides)

Free wildlife ID training events are on offer – details from [roseanna.burton@leics.gov](mailto:roseanna.burton@leics.gov).

# Local Flora and Fauna

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HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OF THESE AROUND?



# Pill Wood Louse

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# Leopard Slug





# Fly Agaric (beware poisonous)

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# Common Mallow

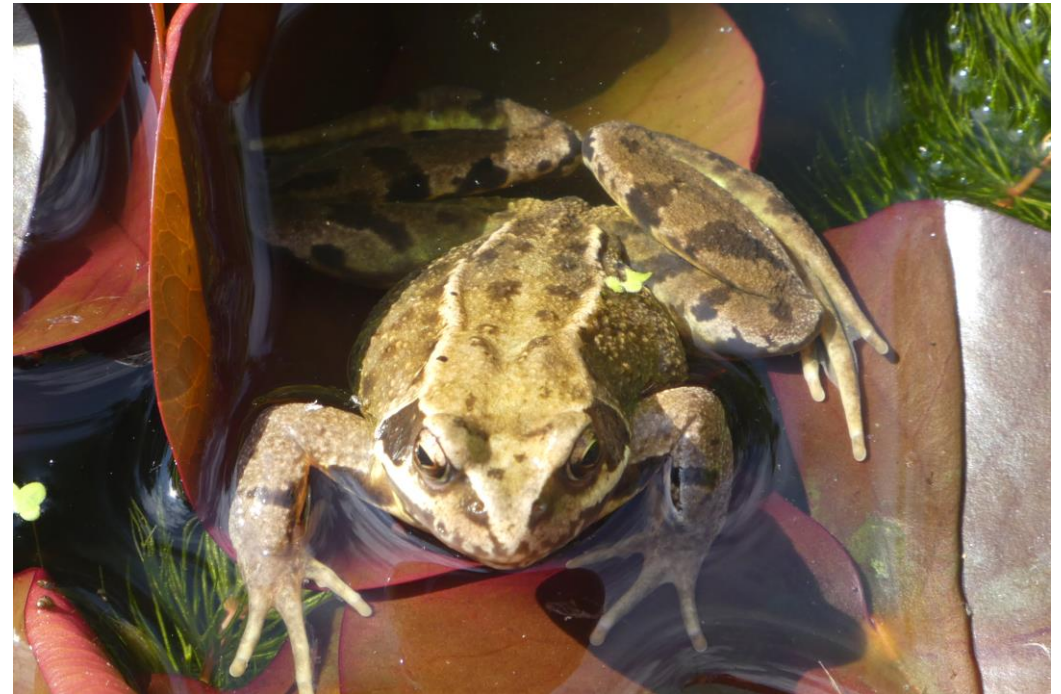


# Male Robin

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# Frog





# Southern Marsh Orchid



# Wood Sorrel



# Swollen Thighed Beetle



# Devil's Coach Horse





# Sparrow Hawk

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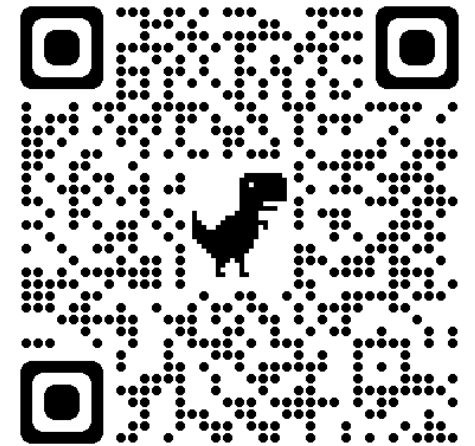
# Ravens





# <https://www.naturespot.org.uk/Ashby>

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

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