

Making your records count

Many people take an interest in the wildlife they see around them, but did you know that making a quick note of what you see can make a useful contribution to our understanding of the distribution of the wildlife of Nottinghamshire? You might think this is well understood, however such recording is heavily dependent on local enthusiasts sending in records on all sorts of critters from all points of the compass, so there are always gaps in coverage, so it is unwise to assume someone else must have reported seeing such and such in your area. Whilst some groups like birds are reasonably well covered, for most other types the coverage is likely to be quite variable and some groups, such as mammals for example, are surprisingly poorly recorded.

So records from your local patch are of value and not just to identify the unusual, but to confirm that the usual suspects are still present. If you visit a particular location – green lane, park or reserve – why not record what you see. Of particular importance are any records of creatures like grass snakes, hedgehogs (or indeed any wild mammals), frogs and newts etc. Whilst it might be easier to specialise a bit especially when it comes to sending the records in and you may also get more pleasure from getting to know the more difficult, less often seen or rarer species but that is not important. The golden rule is: don't assume that it's unimportant.

Amateur naturalists are the backbone of conservation in Nottinghamshire. If we don't know what's there then conservation efforts are less effective. Not enough people send in records of wildlife and the wildlife needs you! You don't need to be an expert to identify a hedgehog or a grass snake, but for every one seen, only a fraction are reported and form the historical record of our fauna (or flora).

Nottinghamshire has a network of County Recorders that acts as the central repository for particular groups i.e. amphibians, moths, plants etc. For that they will need to know the specific species, number if possible, date seen and location (ideally both name and four figure map reference). These can be accumulated over a number of months and sent in en bloc. To obtain a list of recorders go to www.southnottswildlife.org.uk.