



#TeamWilder Toolkit: Helping our Hero Species.

Nature's nine in need:

Our #TeamWilder logo contains our six hero species, plus three extra special species – those that are in greatest need of our help and those that represent and support the diversity of Yorkshire's wildlife.

This guide contains all you need to know about how you can make a real and lasting difference to their recovery.

1. Bumble bee

Why is it important to look after them?

Bumble bees are incredible pollinators, without them we wouldn't have much of our food.

They also play a crucial role in pollinating wildflowers, shrubs, and trees, enabling them to provide vital seeds, nuts, and berries for other wildlife to survive.

Sadly, eight species of bumble bee are currently at risk of extinction.



How can you help?

Grow a good mix of pollinator-friendly, nectar rich and pollen rich plants to attract and sustain bees, and make sure the range covers from late winter to the end of autumn to provide the most food possible.

In case we have a mild winter both winter honeysuckle and clematis mean you can have all year-round food.

Make sure your flowers are 'bee-friendly' some flowers look nice but do not provide any nectar or pollen for wildlife. Grow single headed varieties rather than double headed and make sure you have a range of flower shapes for a wide range of bees.

Purple flowers are great for attracting bees as this is the colour that they can find the best.

You can also build a bee hotel for solitary bees and other insects – they're good fun to make and can look quite impressive! Information on how to create one can be found in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit Wildlife Actions – Shelter.**

Put out a shallow bowl of water in hot weather and fill it with pebbles or marbles, this helps bees to drink without drowning.



2. Common frog

Why is it important to look after them?

Childhood memories are filled with gelatinous frogspawn that magically transforms into wriggling black dots and then, too soon, becomes shiny green frogs hopping away into secret, damp hideaways.

Common frogs are in decline, most likely because there are fewer ponds and pools for them to breed in than there once were.



How can you help?

Creating a pond, container pond or other ground level water feature is by far the best way to help frogs.

It is important to make sure your pond has exit routes for the tiny emerging froglets as they will want to come out of the pond to fatten up on slugs and snails. If your pond had steep sides then place rocks, in a couple of areas, to make sloped sections or steppingstones.

If you've got small children, you might want to consider a bog garden instead.

More information on how to create a pond or introduce water to your garden can be found in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Water.**

You can also create a hibernaculum for them to overwinter in. Details on how to build one of these can be found in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Shelter.**

3. Dandelion

Why is it important to look after them?

Dandelions provide a vital source of early pollen for bees and other insects.

Flowering for a very long season, dandelions supply nectar to many pollinators: bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies, solitary bees, hoverflies, and day flying moths.

97% of UK wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930's, removing huge swathes of vital pollinator-friendly plants.



How can you help?

Quite simply – let your dandelions grow!

Leave a section of your lawn to grow longer and watch the amount of activity on your dandelions.

Get together with others and campaign to your local council to leave sections of unused grass in parks unmown for longer.

Participate in No Mow May! You can mow a single path through the grass or park the lawnmower entirely and you'll be amazed at the difference it makes for insects and wildflowers. People have even reported wild orchids appearing for the first time on a lawn left to grow.



4. Dolphin

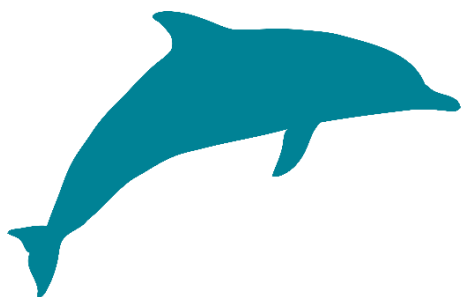
Why is it important to look after them?

With regular sightings in Scarborough, Yorkshire's most common dolphin species is the charismatic and highly sociable bottlenose dolphin. Often seen in groups (or pods) of up to 15 animals, these acrobatic marine mammals are regularly spotted somersaulting through the waves close to Yorkshire's shores. Weighing in at an average of 500kg, the UK's bottlenose dolphins are the largest in the world.

These graceful marine giants are struggling. Human activity, pollution and lack of protection has scarred and weakened Yorkshire's seas, leaving them damaged and depleted.

On a daily basis, micro-plastics and tangles of deadly rubbish are polluting our beaches and choking our wildlife. Marine mammals, already under threat nationally, face the alarming reality of stomachs filled with plastic and chemical-filled waters.

Feeding on fish, they often work as a team to hunt and **overfishing is also having a negative impact on dolphin populations worldwide.**



How can you help?

The best thing you can do to help Yorkshire's dolphins is to carefully consider what you put down your drains and take steps to reduce the amount of chemicals and microplastics that you allow to enter the water system.

Every time we do the laundry, thousands of tiny fibres (known as microfibrils) are washed off our clothes, down the drain and into the environment. These can be eaten by a variety of animals and enter the marine food chain. Using a microfibre catcher in your washing machine can help to catch all those pesky microfibrils before they head out to sea.

Favour natural fabrics such as **Cotton, Flax, Hemp, Jute and Linen** that don't release microfibrils rather than man-made fabrics like Polyester, Nylon, Acrylic, Fleece, and Microfleece.

Reducing your use of single use plastics is vital to help save our seas, and of course recycle as much as possible.

Carry out a litter pick when you go to the beach or your local green space, particularly around rivers. but as much of the pollution in the sea comes from land any litter picking will greatly help.

If you spot a cetacean at sea then you can contribute to our understanding of these animals by reporting the sighting here: [Sea Watch Foundation » Submit a sighting online](#)

If you spot a stranded dolphin (dead or alive) or other marine mammal, do not touch it, and report it to British Divers Marine Life Rescue here: [British Divers Marine Life Rescue \(bdmlr.org.uk\)](#)

Making sustainable food choices around fish and seafood will also give our Dolphins the best chance to thrive.

Support campaigns to increase marine protection and reduce pollution of rivers and seas.



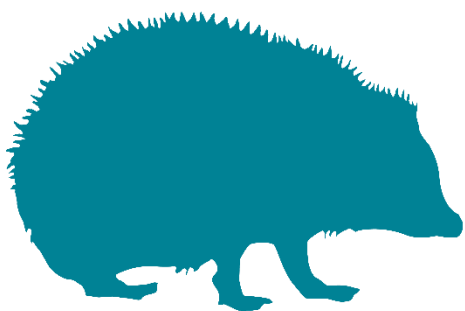
5. Hedgehog

Why is it important to look after them?

Voted Britain's most loved mammal, the hedgehog is a night-time visitor that gardeners adore! This little carnivorous creature uses smell and sound to hunt down its prey of worms, beetles, slugs, and snails as it meanders through our neighbourhoods under the cover of darkness.

Hedgehogs are the UK's only spiny mammal and play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems by controlling the populations of slugs, snails, earthworms, millipedes, ground beetles, earwigs, and other insects.

That's what makes them such good friends to gardeners, yet we've lost a third of urban hedgehogs and half of rural hedgehogs since 2000.



How can you help?

Hedgehogs rely on corridors of hedgerows, joined-up gardens, or woodlands to roam and feed. They have poor eyesight so rely on landmarks such as hedgerows and garden edges to find their way.

Hedgehog Highways are becoming an increasingly vital way of keeping our hedgehogs safe and off the roads. **Create a small gap in your fence to allow hedgehogs to roam freely between gardens – this should be 13cm x 13cm.**

Leave a corner of your garden stacked with leaves and logs for a good hibernation spot or install a hedgehog home to give them a place to hibernate in winter and to shelter during the day. Ideally this should have a tunnel to get into it to keep out predators and be situated in a shady, quiet spot. Information about how to build one is included in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Shelter.**

Hedgehogs love to eat creepy crawlies. In fact, nearly 100% of their natural diet is made up of beetles, earthworms, and caterpillars.

If you're looking to attract hedgehogs to your outside space, you should start by providing mini habitats for insects. Information about how to do this is in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Food.**

If you've got hedgehogs in your garden, provide a shallow bowl of clean water and supplementary food if you wish. Meat-based cat biscuits are best. You can buy specially made hedgehog food, but cat biscuits are just as good.

Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant so please do not give them milk. Bread is low in energy so also should be avoided.

For more information: www.hedgehogstreet.org.uk



6. Nettle

Why is it important to look after them?

Many of our garden butterflies rely on nettles, including red admiral, small tortoiseshell, peacock, painted lady, and comma butterflies.

Nettles are also a feast for Mother of Pearl, Burnished Brass, Jersey Tiger, Golden Y and Snout Moth caterpillars.

Nettles support over 40 different types of insects.

The seeds of nettles are a great food source for small seed eating birds like chaffinches, bullfinches, and house sparrows.

How can you help?

A wild patch of nettles can make a huge difference to your garden biodiversity, even if it's just squirreled away in a corner or constrained to a pot.

Nettles are not fussy about where they grow so tuck some away behind a shed or at the bottom of a garden.

They will thrive where the soil is rich in nitrogen so keep them away from your compost area or it will quickly become taken over!

A small patch can make a big difference, so, find the perfect place and keep an eye on them for little butterfly eggs and then hundreds of greedy caterpillars!



7. Pipistrelle bat

Why is it important to look after them?

Pipistrelle bats are extremely fast fliers with incredible aerial agility, they swoop and dive to catch up to 3,000 insects each night.

Weighing as little as a 20p piece, they are our smallest bat, can often be seen flying around buildings and woodland in the early evening.

How can you help?

Install a bat box on a wall or in a tree. You can buy one or build one yourself if you are feeling crafty. Instructions for how to build a bat box can be found in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Shelter.**

Bats will also benefit from a wider range of plants, native hedges and mature trees which bring with them more insects for them to feed on.

Plant flowers that release their scent in the evening to attract moths for bats to feed on.

Night-time nectar providers include common jasmine, honeysuckle, tobacco plant, evening primrose, and hebe.



Although widely distributed throughout Yorkshire, Pipistrelle bats have declined dramatically in the last few decades. Their reliance on buildings for roosting makes them vulnerable to building renovations.

Remember to grow a diverse range of plants, shrubs, and grasses to provide foodplants for the moth caterpillars too. Some good plants for caterpillars include hawthorn, currants, ivy, nettle, and hop.

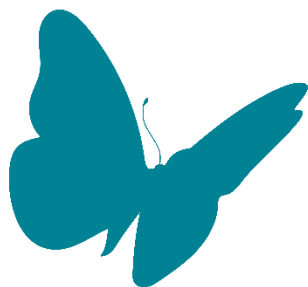
8. Small tortoiseshell butterfly

Why is it important to look after them?

A real nomad, able to live anywhere from mountain top to valley bottom, the small tortoiseshell butterfly can be found almost everywhere in Britain.

Striking orange and black wings adorned with crystal blue gems make the small tortoiseshell butterfly easily recognisable.

Sadly, our population of this beautiful butterfly has collapsed by 75% since the 1970's.



How can you help?

A good mix of pollinator-friendly and nectar rich plants to attract butterflies, and make sure the range covers from spring to autumn to provide the most food possible. Early nectar is essential for butterflies coming out of hibernation and autumn nectar helps butterflies have enough fuel for overwintering or long migrations.

Planting nectar rich climbers provides plentiful food for butterflies, and some also double as food for caterpillars; roses, native honeysuckle, clematis, hop and ivy.

For the height of summer the following plants are the most useful for butterflies in your garden:

- **Buddleia (The butterfly bush).**
- **Purpletop vervain (*Verbena bonariensis*)**
- **Lavender.**
- **Perennial Wallflower**
- **Marjoram (Oregano)**

Nettles are the only food source for small tortoiseshell caterpillars. You can try to grow a small nettle (*Urtica Urens*) if you are lacking the room for some common nettles.

Caterpillars need native wild plants so add foxgloves and primroses in flower borders, create a native hedgerow with hawthorn, beech, hazel, and blackthorn and leave a patch of weeds in your garden corner (dock, plantain, thistles, nettles and grasses)



9. Swift

Why is it important to look after them?

Summertime was once heralded by the screech of swifts wheeling overhead, performing their daring acrobatics. Silhouetted high in the sky, swifts are easy to recognise from their iconic arched wing shape and short forked tail. Each spring they travel from south of the Sahara, surveying much of Europe along the way.

Swifts spend just 3 months of the year in Britain, arriving in early May. They nest in high, deep crevices of buildings, but because we've lost many old buildings and roof spaces have been mended, they have limited nesting opportunities, so their numbers have declined dramatically.

Since 1995 the British swift population has dropped by a shocking 53%.

How can you help?

Install a swift box on the side of your house. You can make one if you're feeling particularly crafty, find out how in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Shelter.**

Swift boxes need to be installed high on the side of a building under the eaves 5metres (15 feet) above the ground, with an unobstructed flight path.

Swifts will also benefit from a wider range of plants, which bring with them more insects for snacks.



This toolkit has been created with credit to The Wildlife Trusts.

