

Helping Wildlife at Home

Kent has lots of wildlife, with over 20,000 species recorded and 3,400 rare or threatened species. But wildlife is currently under threat, with more and more species disappearing. The good news is there are lots of things we can do at home to help protect wildlife and keep it safe.

What can you do at home?

There are lots of fun projects you can do to encourage biodiversity in your garden by making space for wildlife, and even doing just one of these can really help! For example:

- Build a log shelter for insects by leaving a pile of old logs, twigs and stones in the corner of the garden. This has the bonus of attracting hedgehogs and amphibians!
- Make a bee hotel by drilling small holes into a block of wood, or plant wildflowers to encourage pollinators, butterflies and moths.
- Reduce pesticide usage where possible and avoid using slug pellets or bait which could poison other animals.
- Put out water for wildlife, whether a specific bird bath or just a bowl on the floor, you will attract all sorts of animals! Just make sure there is a ramp for them to get in and out safely.
- Create a hedgehog hole in your fence (13cm x 13cm) to allow them to move between gardens.
- Use peat free compost for gardening to help save our peatlands, which are normally havens for wildlife.
- Leave a patch of your lawn or garden wild to encourage insects and animals. For example, leaving a corner of your lawn unmown.
- Put up bird or bat boxes, or alternatively ensure there are bushes, shrubs or climbing plants for nesting songbirds.
- As well as looking beautiful, building a pond (if you have space!) can provide a home for amphibians and other wildlife.
- Add bird feeders, either to your garden or to your window, to provide food for native birds.
- Put in a window box planter and grow wildflowers or other flowers good for pollinators and moths
- For other great ideas and projects, visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions



Adonis Blue butterfly, credit: Jim Asher Butterfly Conservation



A pyramidal orchid at Tyland Barn



Stag beetles are one of many surveys you can take part in, credit William Moreno

Volunteering

If you want to go one step further, you may consider volunteering. Volunteering days are great ways to get involved, learn new skills and get outside, all while helping the environment. Volunteering doesn't always have to be away from home, and could be:

- **Surveying wildlife** in your garden or outside, there are lots of national programs surveying birds, butterflies or any other animal or plant you may be interested in. You can find out more on surveying on the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre website.
- **Workdays:** these are normally run by local reserves and conservation areas and allow you to help preserve these areas by assisting with maintenance or setting up new projects.
- **Litter picking:** this can be part of an organised day or organising your own. This could be a beach or river clean or going through your local woods. You may also be able to get litter picking resources to help, for more information see keepbritaintidy.org or look on your district council website.
- Alternatively, for existing litter pick events and other volunteering activities visit explorekent.org

Most importantly, go and enjoy wildlife!

Being outdoors and enjoying nature and wildlife is proven to be good for our mental and physical health, and it doesn't cost a penny! Whether it's visiting a country park, nature reserve or local park, walking along our well signed public rights of way, or spending the day at the coast, there are plenty of ways to enjoy Kent's rich and wonderful wildlife and countryside.

For more information

For more information on where you can enjoy nature visit explorekent.org. They also have an excellent directory of activities, volunteering and cycling and walking routes.

You can also visit VisitKent.co.uk, RSPB.org.uk, or KentWildlifeTrust.org.uk

