

Cuckoo



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Scientific name: *Cuculus canorus*

How to identify: With their sleek body, long tail and pointed wings, cuckoos are sometimes mistaken for sparrowhawks when flying. However, if seen well, a cuckoo is unmistakable, with blue grey upper parts, head and chest with dark barred white under parts.

Where: A summer visitor to Exmoor; found particularly on Croydon Hill, Hopcott and Alcombe Common, Ley Hill, Webber's Post, Haddon Hill.

Best time to see: Adults arrive in late March or April and depart in July or August, with young birds leaving a month or so later.

Did you know? Adult cuckoos feed almost entirely on big hairy caterpillars.

Oil beetle - black and violet



Main photo: Black oil beetle - Ben Lee
Inset photo: Violet oil beetle - John Wallers

Scientific name: *Meloe proscarabaeus* & *Meloe violaceus*

How to identify: All oil beetles have overlapping wing-cases which are usually shorter than their abdomens. Both are black with violet-blue reflection or all black in colour. The violet oil beetle has an indented lower edge of the thorax and a distinct sharp tooth at the base whereas the black oil beetle has an almost straight base to the thorax with a very small rounded tooth at the base.

Where: Violet oil beetles are found in meadows and woodlands whereas black oil beetles are found in meadows and coastal grassland. Their habit of seeking out bare ground in which to dig nest burrows means they are frequently seen on footpaths.

Best time to see: March to July.

Did you know? Oil beetles have one of the most extraordinary life cycles of any British insect being nest parasites of solitary mining bees.

Tree bumblebee



Scientific name: *Bombus hypnorum*

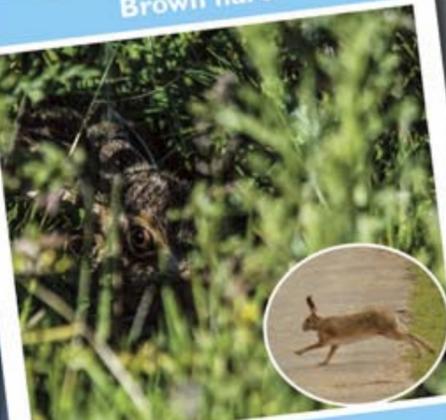
How to identify: This distinctive bee has a ginger back and a white tail, and is the only bumblebee species to have this colour pattern.

Where: Found in a variety of habitats such as woodland, grassland and gardens. It is especially fond of fruiting plants such as bramble.

Best time to see: The tree bumblebee usually emerges from hibernation in March and is active through to September.

Did you know? The tree bumblebee first arrived into the UK from mainland Europe in 2001 and has been spreading ever since. It doesn't pose a threat to UK species.

Brown hare



Scientific name: *Lepus europaeus*

How to identify: The brown hare is larger than the rabbit, with longer legs and longer ears with black tips.

Where: Widespread but not common, found particularly on North Hill, Croydon Hill, Molland Common, Barle Valley and Withypool Common.

Best time to see: Most visible in early spring, but present all year round.

Did you know? A baby hare is called a leveret.

Harbour porpoise



Scientific name: *Phocoena phocoena*

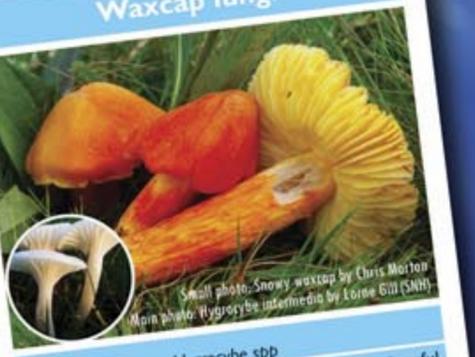
How to identify: The harbour porpoise is rotund in shape, with a small triangular dorsal fin which shows briefly above the surface - usually little of the animal is seen, as it rarely leaves the water entirely. It is often confused with dolphins, particularly the bottlenose dolphin but it has a small rounded head with no distinct beak.

Where: look out for them off headlands along the Exmoor coast.

Best time to see: All year round.

Did you know? The harbour porpoise is the smallest species of cetacean found in European waters.

Waxcap fungi



Small photo: Snowy waxcap by Chris Morton
Main photo: Hygrocybe intermedia by Loree Gill (SNH)

Scientific name: *Hygrocybe* spp

How to identify: Many waxcaps are highly colourful and their fruit bodies, especially the relatively thick gills under the cap, often have a waxy texture, hence their common name.

Where: Rough grassland often adjoining moorland areas such as near Pinkery Pond, tightly cropped lawns including parklands such as Dunster Deerpark and Nettlecombe, churchyards and lawns.

Best time to see: September to December.

Did you know? There are over 25 species of waxcap known to occur on Exmoor, including the snowy, ballerina, parrot and scarlet waxcap.

Exmoor is home to a fantastic array of wildlife that has evolved over millennia as part of a rich ecosystem. But today they are under increasing threat from non-native invasive species, which upset this delicate balance and threaten our native plants and animals. We welcome records for any species you see on Exmoor but are particularly keen to know about any sightings of the six species above. Many are native to the National Park and learning more about their distribution will help better target our conservation work.

As part of the Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project we also urgently need your help to find out more about where the six species below are distributed across the National Park. We have been working for over 15 years to control knotweed so hopefully you shouldn't spot too much. Next in our sights we have skunk cabbage and Himalayan balsam.

Reporting sightings will help us build up a picture of where the problem areas are we need to focus on. **So please let us know about any sightings!**

EXMOOR Wild Watch 2020

Submitting a record is easy, simply visit
www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/wild-watch

If you have a passion for Exmoor's wildlife you may want to join us at one of the many family friendly wildlife events shown overleaf.

Or why not take your wildlife knowledge to the next level and get involved in an Exmoor Wild Watch training event? These range from one-off Discover sessions to more long-term surveys; just visit: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/get-involved/events-and-training or pick up our WildWatch Training Programme 2020 leaflet. Good luck with your spotting! When looking out for wildlife please ensure you follow the Countryside Code at all times.



To find out how you can get more involved with the ENNIS Project please search online for 'Exmoor ENNIS Project'.



Japanese and Himalayan knotweed



Main photo: Japanese knotweed
Inset photo: Himalayan knotweed

Scientific names: *Fallopia japonica* and *Persicaria wallichii*

How to identify: Japanese knotweed has stems with a bamboo-like appearance and if broken, are hollow inside. Stems that are green have red specks and the plants have distinctive spade shaped leaves with a pointed tip and a straightened edge which grow in a zig-zag along the stems. They have tiny white flowers between August and October. Himalayan knotweed is similar to Japanese knotweed, but has leaves that are very narrow, often half as wide as they are long. Flowers on Himalayan knotweed have a pink hue to their colour, which distinguishes them from the pure white of Japanese knotweed flowers. In winter look out for clumps of dead canes.

Where: Stream banks, hedgebanks, woodland edges, roadsides, railway banks and waste ground.

Best time to see: Both grow up to 2-3m tall and form dense stands in the summer, making identification very easy. In late summer, both plants will be in flower.

Did you know? Japanese knotweed is an aggressive weed that can grow up to 10cm a day. The rhizome (or root) system can extend up to 3m in depth and 7m in all directions. These rhizomes can squeeze through the smallest cracks in masonry and concrete which means they pose a serious threat to buildings.

Montbretia



Scientific name: *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora*

How to identify: It forms clumps, similar in appearance to those of the yellow iris, but with distinctive bright orange flowers. The leaves are lime green, sword-shaped and the brightly coloured flowers are funnel-shaped on arching stems.

Where: Mostly seen on hedgebanks and river banks on Exmoor. You can also look out for it at the edge of woodland as it can only tolerate partial shade.

Best time to see: When in flower between July and September.

Did you know? Reproduction by seed is unusual, more commonly montbretia reproduces by producing rhizomes that give rise to new corms a short distance from the parent plant. Once established, clumps grow vegetatively, often forming large clumps.

American signal crayfish



Scientific name: *Pacifastacus leniusculus*

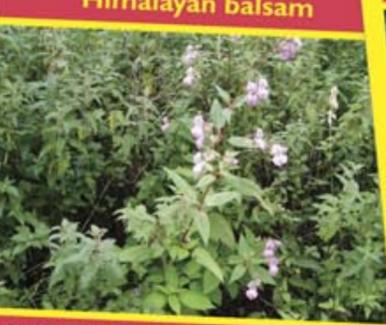
How to identify: Small lobster like appearance makes them easy to recognise. The claws are red underneath with a small turquoise/white blotch on the hinge on top. Much larger than the native white-clawed species which is believed to be no longer present on Exmoor.

Where: In the River Barle and River Exe but may also be in other watercourses, ponds and lakes.

Best time to see: During the summer.

Did you know? Negative impacts include the almost complete loss of native crayfish in the UK through the spread of disease and direct competition. They also predate on native fish eggs and aquatic invertebrates. Burrowing by crayfish can cause erosion of riverbanks and destroy valuable wildlife habitat.

Himalayan balsam



Scientific name: *Impatiens glandulifera*

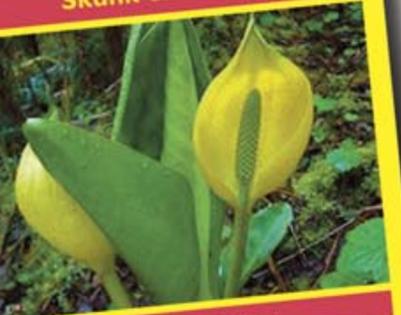
How to identify: A tall, annual herb with a fleshy stem and large 'policeman's helmet' pink-purple flowers which have a strong sickly smell. The leaves grow opposite to each other or in whorls of 3-5 which grow from stem joints. Plants grow up to 2m tall.

Where: Found on riverbanks, hedgerows and woodland all over Exmoor.

Best time to see: Easiest to spot when in flower from June to September.

Did you know? The seed capsule hangs on red stalks and explodes on touch when ripe and can spread seed up to 6m away.

Skunk cabbage



Scientific name: *Lysichiton americanus*

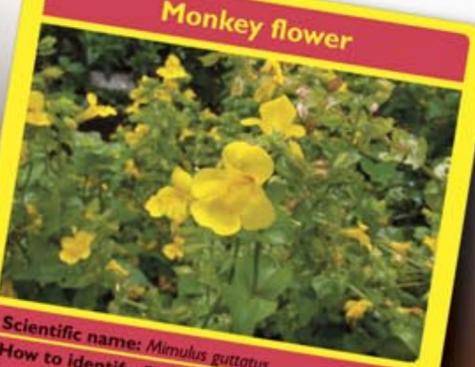
How to identify: It is a tall plant with a pungent smell that can grow up to 1.5m in height with bright green leathery leaves and yellow flowers that resemble those of wild arum (lords and ladies).

Where: It needs a wet site and is usually found in wet woodland, edge of ponds and on riverbanks.

Best time to see: The distinctive yellow flowers are produced in spring between March and May.

Did you know? In America it is considered as medicinal. However, it contains calcium oxalate - a poisonous substance that can produce sores and numbing and could even be fatal if consumed in large quantities!

Monkey flower



Scientific name: *Mimulus guttatus*

How to identify: Flower with yellow and red-spotted 'monkey faces'. Short to medium almost hairless plant. Stem hollow, ascending to erect. Oval and irregularly toothed leaves grow opposite to each other with only the lower stalked.

Where: Most frequent along streambanks and river shingle, ditches and rivers. It will also occur around lakes, in springs and occasionally on damp disturbed ground away from wetlands.

Best time to see: When it flowers from June-September and by stolons; it may also be able to grow from detached pieces of the lower stem or rhizomes (roots).