

iRecord Winter 2025/26

The arrival of the colder weather in late November sees a fairly steep decline in wildlife recording. Shorter days and colder temperatures see many creatures retreating into hibernation or seeking shelter. And as the wildlife becomes less conspicuous it is a good excuse for us to do the same.

While most stay inside dreaming of summer, several hardy observers continued to contribute records, helping us understand how wildlife adapts to the winter months.

As you will see on the following page, the wildlife we recorded fell into a few notable categories, reflecting the weather and what we were able to find while poking about in the woods.

In this edition of our summary for the Rea Valley, we will take a closer look at marvellous Mosses and Liverworts - the theme for our first event of the year which took place in early February - you can find the full report on our website. We will also find out about the weird world of Lichens, and peek into the macroscopic realm of the Springtails.

Keep submitting those records and enjoy the apricity of spring.

Our activity in December, January and February..

163
records

111
species

13
people

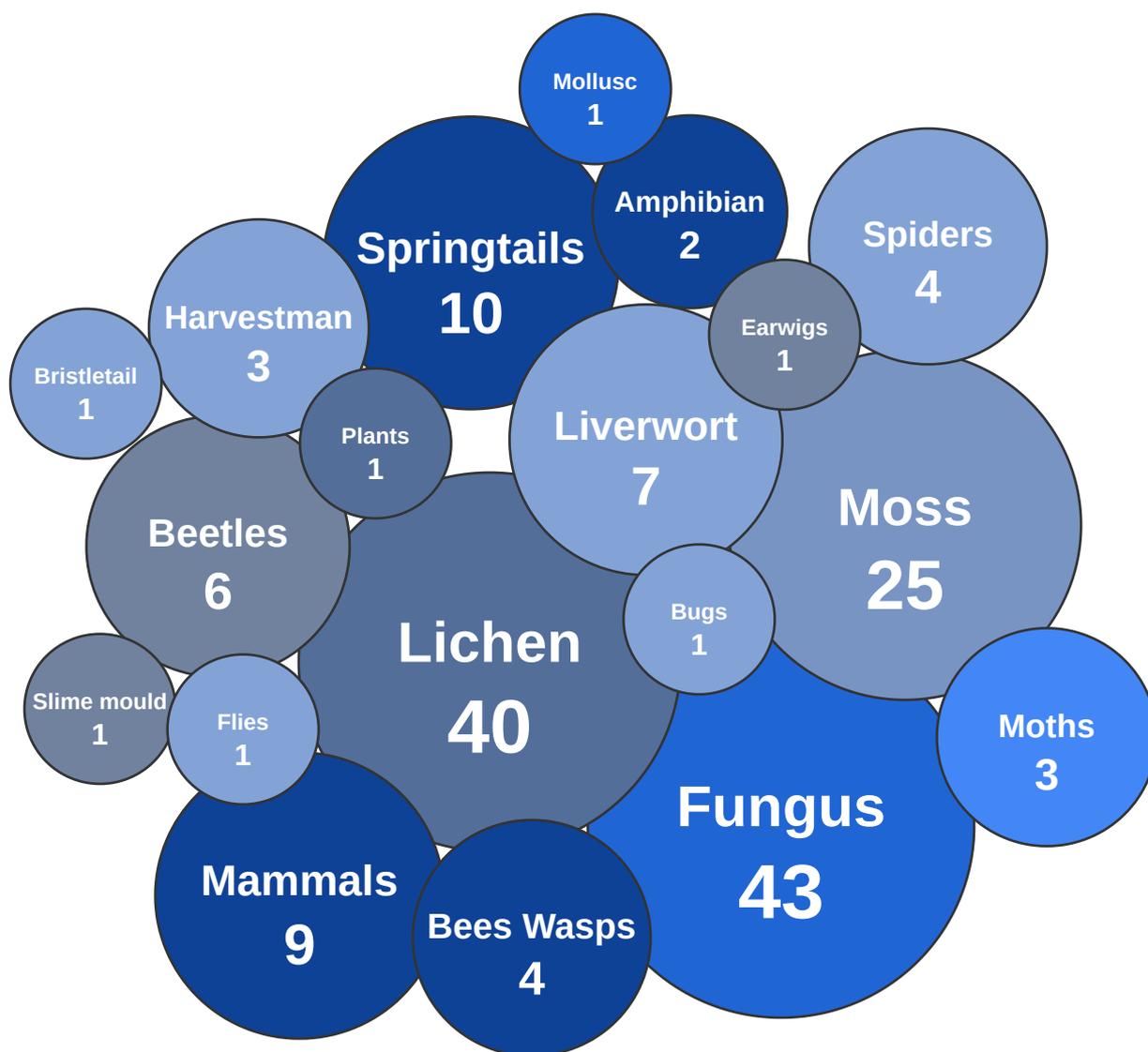
27
days

21
km²

Wildlife Groups

Here are the wildlife taxon groups we recorded most frequently this winter.

The mild, rainy weather brought us a wonderful array of fungi, bryophytes (mosses and liverworts), and lichens. We also got inspired by a Springtail sighting shared in our WhatsApp group. Notably lacking were the amphibians. A single newt and one frog or toad were recorded. Given the mild winter, we anticipated seeing more.



In the upcoming pages, we will look at the different species within each of these groups, where in the Rea Valley we found them, and whether any of them are uncommon.

A few highlights

A few of our favourite finds this winter. You can view everything we recorded on our iRecord activity page.



Palmate Newt
Lissotriton helveticus
© Janet Walker



Blueish Veilwort
Metzgeria violacea
© Dan Wrench



Great Diving Beetle
Dytiscus marginalis
© Laura Edwards-White



Amber Jelly
Exidia recisa
© Laura Edwards-White



Yellow-necked Mouse
Apodemus flavicollis
CCO iRecord



Springtail
Collembola
© Michael Howard

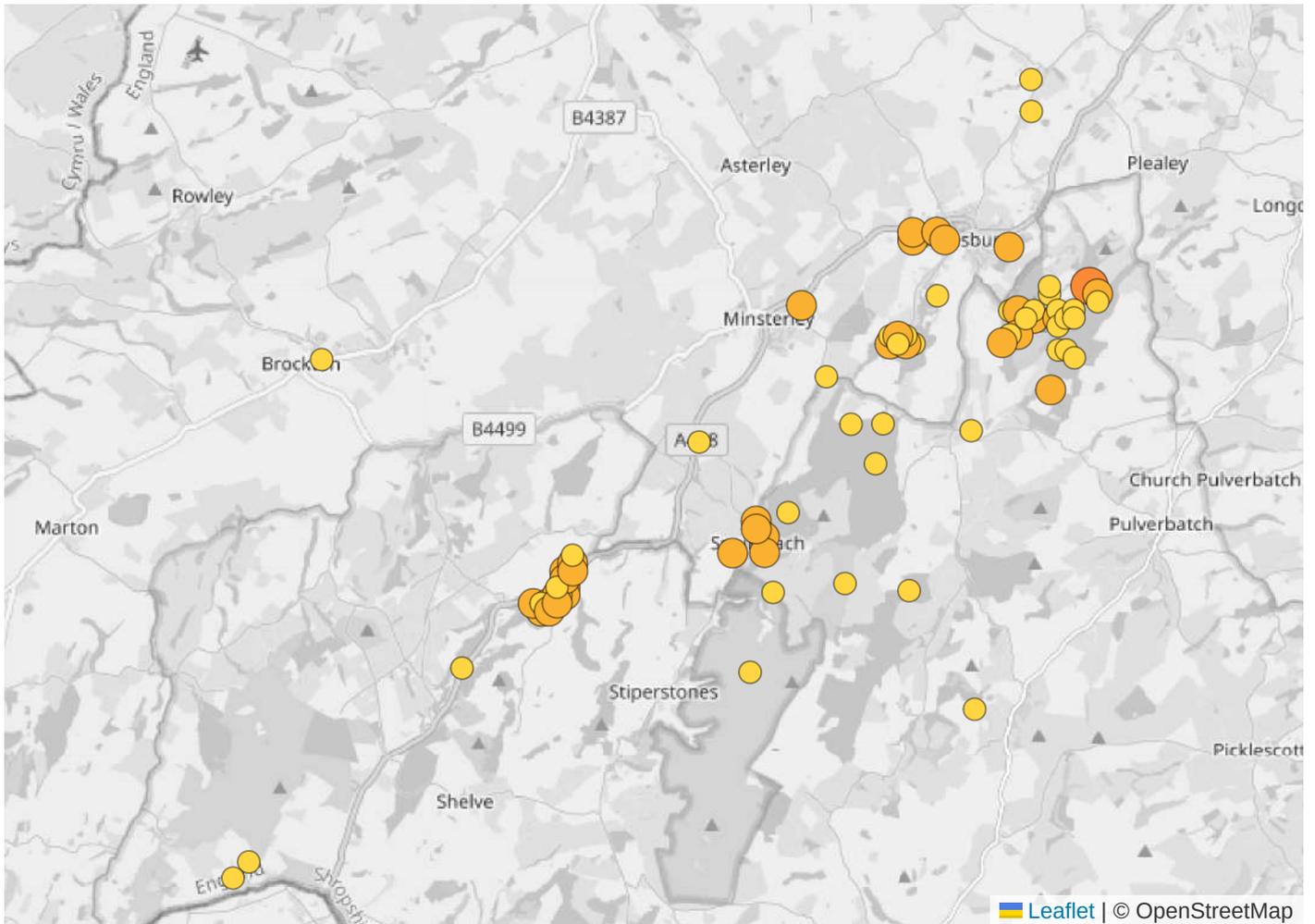


Purplepore Bracket
Trichaptum abietinum
© Julian Livsey

Our Activity Mapped

The map below shows where people ventured to collect our wildlife records this winter.

Hot spots include Pontesford and Earl's Hill, Snailbeach, and Hope Valley. But we also saw data from less frequently visited locations like near Paulith Bank, atop the Stiperstones, and below Corndon Hill.



If you would like to help record a few of our less well trodden squares, get in touch on the WhatsApp group or send us an email. While many community wildlife groups tend to focus on recording a single patch of woodland, we cover a much larger area with a diverse range of habitats and species. We are always eager to welcome more wildlife enthusiasts to help us monitor our local area.

Winter Springtails

Springtails are tiny creatures (not actually insects) that live in the leaf litter, soil, and decaying plant matter.

Despite being very small, often just a few millimetres, they are fantastic decomposers, helping to break down organic material and recycle nutrients back into the soil.

Their name comes from having a spring-loaded tail that allows them to jump impressive distances for their size. Often a pale grey or brown colour, they sometimes have quite distinctive markings and one of our members recently found the shocking pink example opposite.

The earliest known Springtails date to around 400 million years ago and they are still here in ridiculously impressive numbers today - wikipedia suggests a single square meter of soil can hold a staggering 100,000 individuals!

Finding springtails is easy. Locate some damp leaf litter, in your garden or local woodland. Which shouldn't be difficult given the weather we have had recently! Pop it into a tupperware container and give it a gentle shake. After removing most of the leaves you should see some Springtails wandering around on the bottom, occasionally boinging out of sight. A magnifying glass will help.

They thrive in damp environments, so places to look include under rotting leaves, in moss, or even compost heaps, especially during damp, mild weather. There are many many different species so identification can be challenging.



Collembola
© Michael Howard



Pogonognathellus longicornis
© Julian Livsey



Tomocerus
© Michael Howard

Lichens

The weird world of composite organisms



Cladonia fimbriata
© Julian Livsey



Dog Lichen
Peltigera
© Julian Livsey



Physcia adscendens
© Julian Livsey

At a brief glance, you would assume a lichen is a type of plant or moss. It is actually a fungus - a fungus that has opted out of a typical fungus lifestyle and opted instead to join forces with another species.

Lichens are fascinating symbiotic organisms made up of a fungus and a photosynthetic partner, in the form of algae or cyanobacteria. The pair work together to thrive in environments that neither could live on their own. You will find lichens on coastal rocks, dry stone walls, footpaths, trees and soil.

The fungus (mycobiont) provides structure and protection while the algae (photobiont) provides food. This takes place in a complex micro nutrient trading system, like a mini stock exchange! There is debate as to whether the fungi enslaves the algae, but both seem to do well out of the relationship.

There are no roots sucking up water, lichens get everything they need from rain and the air. They can survive in extreme conditions of light and shade, flood and drought and are often good indicators of air quality and environmental health - though some do well in polluted environments.

In the UK, there are more than 1,500 recorded species. Some are widespread but others very niche to a particular environment, places like the Atlantic rainforests of Western coasts.

You can find them in lots of places in the Rea Valley. Take a look at the pavements near your house. Those white or pale green splotches are crustose lichen. In the woods, pick up sticks or fallen branches, there you will find the other two main types, foliose and fruticose. Finding a woodland stick *without* lichen can be a challenge.

Mosses and Bryophytes

These plants love water

Mosses and liverworts belong to a group known as bryophytes. Unlike true plants, they do not have the ability to transport water and nutrients, relying instead on diffusion to move these substances through their bodies. Mosses are usually soft, green and leafy to look at, and they spread themselves quite low to the ground, forming mats. Liverworts are similar, but tend to be flattened with lobes or ribbon structures.

Bryophytes do not have leaves, roots or stems in the same way as vascular plants, and they reproduce via spores rather than seeds. They thrive in moist, shaded environments because they need water to absorb nutrients and to reproduce.

There are plenty of good locations to see mosses in our area. Pontesford Hill, Nills Quarry, and Hope Valley all boast a good selection, but you will find them everywhere with a bit of shade. Get yourself a small hand lens of 10x or 20x magnification and the marvellous mosses will reveal themselves to your eyes.

Mosses and liverworts are actually some of the oldest land plants, dating back over 450 million years. Environmentally they help retain soil moisture, prevent erosion, and provide habitat for tiny invertebrates like our Springtails. And as with our Lichens, mosses are good indicators of air quality because they are sensitive to pollution.



Rose-moss
Rhodobryum roseum
© Dan Wrench



Heath Star Moss
Campylopus introflexus
© Katherine Edwards-White



Even Scalewort
Radula complanata
© Dan Wrench

Rediscovered Species



We also found species that *have* been recorded before in our area, but not recently.

To find a previous record of the species below in the national database, we have to go back 20 years or more. (Note, some may have been recorded more recently than this in schemes not shared with the national database)

lichen



66 Years

Botryolepraria lesdainii
© Julian Livsey

lichen



66 Years

Diploicia canescens
© Julian Livsey

lichen



66 Years

Punctelia subrudecta s.
lat.
© Julian Livsey

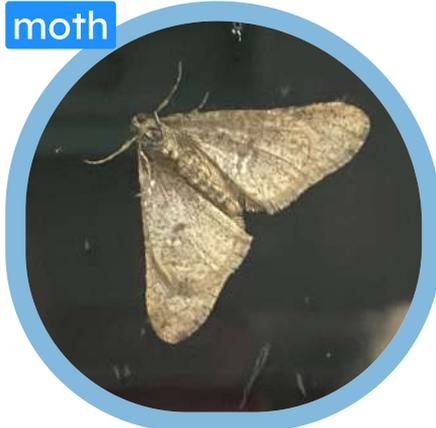
mollusc



61 Years

Draparnaud's Glass Snail
Oxychilus (Oxychilus)
draparnaudi
© Julian Livsey

moth



51 Years

Spring Usher
Agriopsis leucophaearia
© Julian Livsey

moss



48 Years

Swamp Silk-moss
Plagiothecium
denticulatum var.
denticulatum
CC0 iRecord

fungus



32 Years

Hairy Oysterling

Resupinatus trichotis

© Julian Livsey

fungus



20 Years

Variable Oysterling

Crepidotus variabilis

© Julian Livsey

Possible New Species!



After so much recording it still amazes me how much is still out there to be found.

The National Biodiversity database currently holds about 5,500 species records for our area. Our latest finds below (verified and unverified, correctly or incorrectly identified) are not to be found on this database. There may be records yet to be published, but until we hear otherwise, we may consider the following species possible new finds

Oak Pin

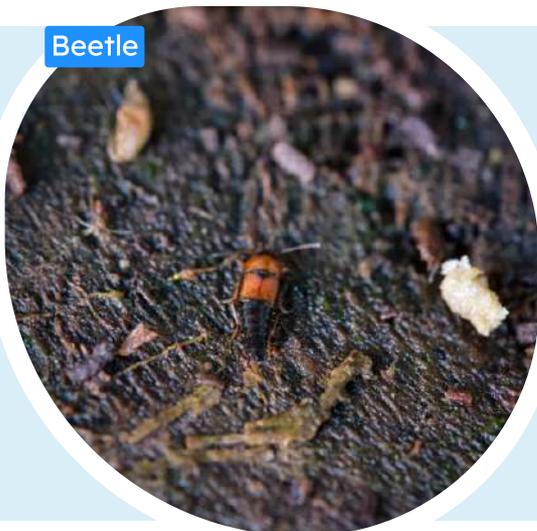
Cudoniella acicularis

A tiny mushroom found on a tree stump at Poles Coppice. This little fungus tends to appear in damp, shady places, often on fallen branches or rotting leaves. Its fragile, almost hair-like structure gives it a very delicate appearance.

image © Julian Livsey



Beetle



Tachyporus chrysomelinus/dispar agg.

A tiny beetle that is usually less than a few millimeters long. It has a shiny, smooth body that can be reddish-brown or golden in colour. This little insect tends to live in places like leaf litter, under the bark of trees, or in decaying plant material. It is a great scavenger, often feeding on dead insects and decaying organic matter.

image © Howard, Michael

Cryptococcus macerans

On our marvellous mosses walk there were quite a few mushrooms about. This sap yeast was found on a felled tree, where it lives on the bark in the form of orange slime. It feasts on sugars from tree sap and is actually a parasite of other fungi.

image © Julian Livsey



Fungus

Springtail (Collembola)



Tomocerus vulgaris

This tiny, silver coloured creature is a species of springtail that was found in leaf litter. Take a look at the article in this newsletter to find out more about springtails.

image © Julian Livsey

Physcia caesia

Physcia caesia is a type of lichen. It looks like a delicate, leafy patch that often grows on the bark of trees or on rocks. This lichen prefers shady, moist places and can be found in wooded areas. It can survive in quite harsh environments.

image © Julian Livsey



Lichen

Fungus



Erythricium aurantiacum

I thought this was a lichen but it is actually a fungus that specialises in parasitising *Physcia* lichens! Forms a distinctive orange hue that spreads across the lichen.

image © Julian Livsey

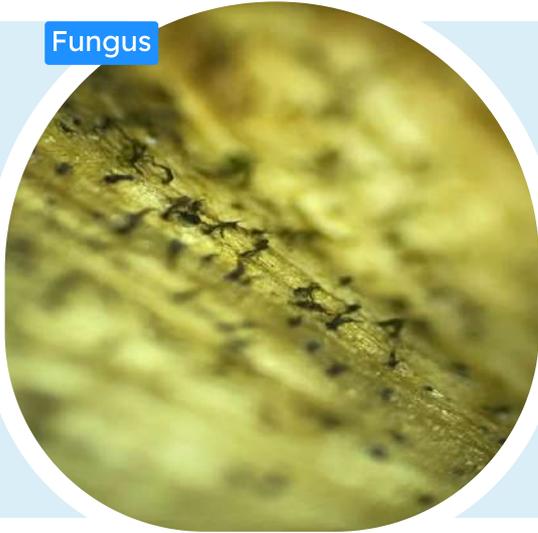
Pertusaria leioplaca

Another lichen not recorded in the Rea Valley according to the British Lichen Society's database. This one was found in the Hope Valley. They prefer smooth barked trees and tend to grow on the north side.

image © Julian Livsey



Fungus



Neosetophoma samarorum

Needed a microscope to see this one! It is a type of very small fungus that lives on Ash keys. I'd love to know how they get there. Probably quite common, but very easily overlooked.

image © Julian Livsey

Visit Inspiration

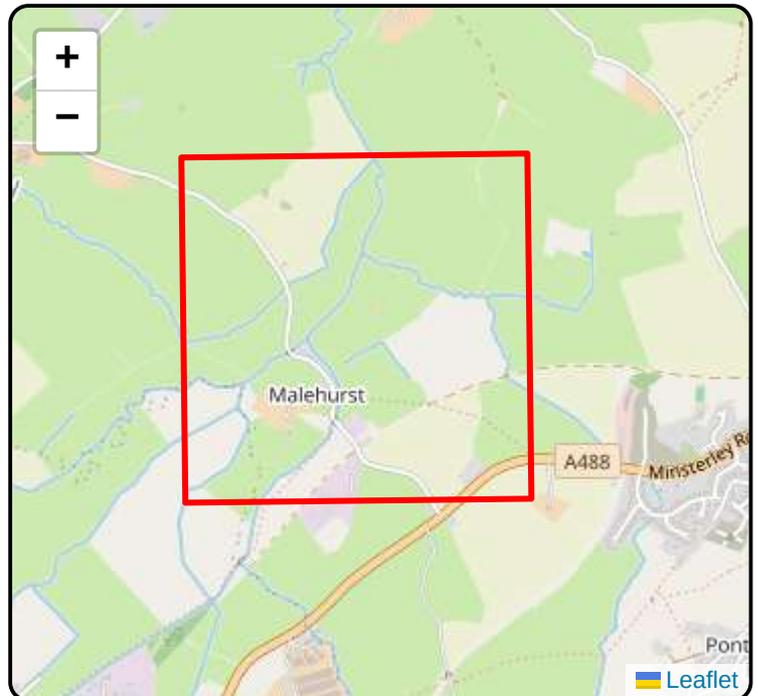
Survey square SJ3806 includes Malehurst, a short walk from Pontesbury and Minsterley.

The Minsterley Book and the Asterley Brook both join the Rea Brook in this square. There are public footpaths criss-crossing the area and a narrow road that sees minimal traffic. Much of this square is farmland. A mix of woodland and old hedgerows give this area plenty of rich sites for wildlife.

So far this year we have not recorded in this square.

We made 6 records for this square during 2025: *Calopteryx virgo* **Beautiful Demoiselle**, *Palomena prasina* **Green Shieldbug**, *Colletes hederæ* **Ivy Bee**, and *Nephrotoma appendiculata* and *Vulpes vulpes* **Red Fox**.

Over the years, 799 wildlife records have made their way to the NBN database for this square, relating to 316 different species. Plants found here include *Rubus fruticosus* agg. **Bramble**, *Impatiens glandulifera* **Himalayan Balsam**, *Epilobium ciliatum* **American Willowherb**, and *Taraxacum officinale* agg. **Dandelion**. The most common species recorded in this square are *Potamopyrgus antipodarum* **Jenkins' Spire Snail**, *Ephemera danica* **Green Drake**, and *Piscicola geometra* **fish leech**.



What did we find

Below you will find a full list of all 111 species that we recorded in the Rea Valley during December 2025, January and February 2026. The table includes the taxon group and the number of records for each species.

Amphibian

frogs and toads <i>Anura</i>	1	Palmate Newt <i>Lissotriton helveticus</i>	1
		Shropshire priority list	

Flowering plant

Shepherd's Cress <i>Teesdalia nudicaulis</i>	1		
		Shropshire priority list	

Fungus

Witches' Butter <i>Exidia glandulosa</i>	4	Amber Jelly <i>Exidia recisa</i>	2
Common Rustgill <i>Gymnopilus penetrans</i>	2	Coral Spot <i>Nectria cinnabarina</i>	2
Crystal Brain <i>Exidia nucleata</i>	2	Jelly Ear <i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>	2
King Alfred's Cakes <i>Daldinia concentrica</i>	2	Oak Pin <i>Cudoniella acicularis</i>	2
<i>Cryptococcus macerans</i>	1	<i>Diaporthe samaricola</i>	1
<i>Erythricium aurantiacum</i>	1	<i>Galerina</i>	1
<i>Neosetophoma samarorum</i>	1	<i>Sarcoscypha</i>	1
<i>Sarcoscypha austriaca</i>	1	Black Bulgar <i>Bulgaria inquinans</i>	1
Bleeding Broadleaf Crust <i>Stereum rugosum</i>	1	Candlesnuff Fungus <i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	1
Conifer Blueing Bracket <i>Postia caesia</i>	1	Elder Whitewash <i>Xylodon sambuci</i>	1
Glue Crust <i>Hydnoporia corrugata</i>	1	Hairy Curtain Crust <i>Stereum hirsutum</i>	1
Hairy Oysterling <i>Resupinatus trichotis</i>	1	Hazel Woodwart <i>Hypoxylon fuscum</i>	1
Honey Fungus <i>Armillaria mellea</i>	1	Oak Blackhead <i>Diatrypella quercina</i>	1
Purplepore Bracket <i>Trichaptum abietinum</i>	1	Small Stagshorn <i>Calocera cornea</i>	1
Split Porecrust <i>Schizopora paradoxa</i>	1	Turkeytail <i>Trametes versicolor</i>	1
Variable Oysterling <i>Crepidotus variabilis</i>	1	Yellow Brain <i>Tremella mesenterica</i>	1
Yellow Stagshorn <i>Calocera viscosa</i>	1		

Harvestman (Opiliones)

<i>Paroligolophus agrestis</i>	2	<i>Rilaena triangularis</i>	1
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Insect - beetle (Coleoptera)

7-spot Ladybird <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	2	<i>Bembidion quadrimaculatum</i>	1
<i>Tachyporus chrysomelinus/dispar</i> agg.	1	<i>Tachyporus hypnorum</i>	1
Great Diving Beetle <i>Dytiscus marginalis</i>	1		

Insect - earwig (Dermaptera)

Common Earwig *Forficula auricularia*

1

Insect - hymenopteran

Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*

3 Cherry Gall *Cynips quercusfolii*

1

Insect - moth

Black Arches *Lymantria monacha*

1 Common Plume *Emmelina monodactyla*

1

Spring Usher *Agriopis leucophaearia*

1

Insect - true bug (Hemiptera)

Empoasca

1

Insect - true fly (Diptera)

Trichocera annulata

1

Lichen

Lecidella elaeochroma

3 *Physcia aipolia*

3

Common Orange Lichen *Xanthoria parietina*

3 *Melanohalea elegantula*

2

Porpidia

2 *Ramalina farinacea*

2

Oak Moss *Evernia prunastri*

2 *Alyxoria*

1

Botryolepraria lesdainii

1 *Candelaria concolor*

1

Chaenotheca ferruginea

1 *Cladonia fimbriata*

1

Diploicia canescens

1 *Lecanactis abietina*

1

Lecanora chlorotera s. lat.

1 *Lepraria*

1

Parmotrema perlatum

1 *Pertusaria leioplaca*

1

Phlyctis argena

1 *Physcia adscendens*

1

Physcia caesia

1 *Porpidia tuberculosa*

1

Punctelia subrudecta s. lat.

1 *Ramalina*

1

Usnea subfloridana

1 Cup Lichen *Cladonia*

1

Dark Crottle *Hypogymnia physodes*

1 Dog Lichen *Peltigera*

1

Netted Shield Lichen *Parmelia sulcata*

1 Old Man's Beard *Usnea*

1

Liverwort

Dilated Scalewort *Frullania dilatata*

3 Bifid Crestwort *Lophocolea bidentata*

2

Blueish Veilwort *Metzgeria violacea*

1 Forked Veilwort *Metzgeria furcata*

1

Mollusc

Draparnaud's Glass Snail *Oxychilus (Oxychilus) draparnaudi*

1

Moss

Lesser Yoke-moss *Zygodon conoideus*

2 Neat Feather-moss *Pseudoscleropodium purum*

2

Ulota

1 Aloe Haircap *Pogonatum aloides*

1

Bank Haircap *Polytrichum formosum*

1 Broom Fork-moss *Dicranum scoparium*

1

Cape Thread-moss *Orthodontium lineare*

1 Capillary Thread-moss *Bryum capillare*

1

Common Feather-moss *Kindbergia praelonga*

1 Common Pocket-moss *Fissidens taxifolius*

1

Common Smoothcap <i>Atrichum undulatum s.str.</i>	1	Common Striated Feather-moss <i>Eurhynchium striatum</i>	1
Common Tamarisk-moss <i>Thuidium tamariscinum</i>	1	Cypress-leaved Plait-moss <i>Hypnum cupressiforme s.str.</i>	1
Hart's-tongue Thyme-moss <i>Plagiomnium undulatum</i>	1	Heath Star Moss <i>Campylopus introflexus</i>	1
Rough-stalked Feather-moss <i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>	1	Rusty Swan-neck Moss <i>Campylopus flexuosus</i>	1
Slender Mouse-tail Moss <i>Isoetecium myosuroides s.l.</i>	1	Springy Turf-moss <i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	1
Straw Bristle-moss <i>Orthotrichum stramineum</i>	1	Swamp Silk-moss <i>Plagiothecium denticulatum var. denticulatum</i>	1

Wood Bristle-moss *Lewinskya affinis*

1

Slime mould

Myxomycete *Myxogastrea*

1

Spider (Araneae)

Amaurobius

1 *Anyphaena*

1

Harpactea hombergi

1 *Labulla thoracica*

1

Springtail (Collembola)

Dicyrtomina ornata

1 *Dicyrtomina saundersi*

1

Entomobrya

1 *Orchesella cincta*

1

Orchesella villosa

1 *Pogonognathellus longicornis*

1

Tomoceridae

1 *Tomocerus*

1

Tomocerus vulgaris

1 Springtails *Collembola*

1

Terrestrial mammal

Yellow-necked Mouse *Apodemus flavicollis*

3 Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*
Red list

2

Eastern Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

1 European Mole *Talpa europaea*

1

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

1 Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*

1

Two-tailed bristletail (Diplura)

Campodea

1



Who contributed

The more people who take part the more interesting our records become, so a big thank you to.. Julian Livsey, Katherine Edwards-White, Howard Michael, Laura Edwards-White, Ric Morris, Dan Wrench, Anne-Mari Gordon, Janet Walker, Stuart Edmunds, Maddox Paul, for submitting their records during chilly December, wet January and very wet February.

Data Citations

The full list of reporting schemes and data sources used to compile this report can be found here : <https://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/NBN-Citation-for-Data.pdf>

Why and How to take part

There is a huge range of flora and fauna out there just waiting to be discovered and recorded! From the first tentative shoots of spring flowers to the hardy critters that tough it out year-round, every record helps us paint a vibrant picture of the incredible biodiversity all around us. So keep those eyes peeled and iRecord at the ready - who knows what natural wonders we will spot next. Your observations are a valuable piece of the puzzle as we work to understand and protect this bit of Shropshire that we are lucky enough to call home.

All records are valuable, from the common frog to a nationally scarce beetle - pop them on iRecord and you will be helping us map and protect the wildlife in our little corner of the world.

To get involved in our 2026 iRecord Activity, visit:
irecord.org.uk

 facebook  WhatsApp
reavalleycwg@gmail.com

shropscwgs.org.uk/rea-valley-wildlife-group

