

# Wildlife Spotted

We are keen to know about the wildlife living around our rivers. As a general rule the healthier the river, the more variety and abundance of wildlife can be found. Some of these species you may only see signs of, others you might see on a regular basis. Try to get photos if you can.



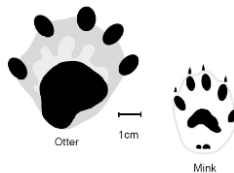
Otter

Declining water quality and habitat destruction means the otter is now a threatened species. We hope to see rising numbers as we restore our rivers.

Recognise it: Otters are shy species, so you are very unlikely to see one in the wild. You might find spraints - these are made up of fish bones, scales, fur, feathers and insect fragments. All contents are bound by a black mucus, which dries to pale grey.

Information sourced from: DBRC

The American Mink was released into the UK from fur farms. It has since become a dominant predator in our rivers.



Recognise it: Deep brown fur and a pointier nose and shorter tail than the otter. Mink are also hard to spot, but look out for tracks leading to the water, which are smaller than otter prints.

Information sourced from: GB Non Native Secretariat



Mink

Water voles are declining in numbers due to habitat loss and predation by the American Mink.

Recognise it: Similar to a brown rat, but with a rounded nose, small ears and a furry tail. Look out for signs such as burrows in the riverbank, often with a nibbled 'lawn' of grass around the entrance, piles of grass nibbled to a 45° angle, and 'latrines' of rounded, cigar-shaped droppings.

Information sourced from: The Wildlife Trusts



Water vole

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Kingfisher

Diffuse pollution has been cited as one of the major reasons for the decline of Kingfishers.

Recognise it: Kingfishers move really quickly, but keep an eye out and you might have the treat of seeing a distinctive blue flash as they dart up and down a stretch of the river. If you are quiet you may hear their distinctive 'meep' call.

Now recovering from a decline in the 70s and 80s, you can see Wagtails hunting for insects along our rivers.

Recognise it: With a long tail which 'waggles' up and down. The three species are distinctive in colouring. Yellow wagtails are ground nesting and much more likely to be spotted running along the ground chasing insects than the other two species.



Yellow wagtail



Grey wagtail



Pied wagtail



Heron

With their long necks out-stretched or tucked into their chest, Herons can be spotted on the banks or wading through the water searching for fish.

Recognise it: Herons are hard to miss with their long legs, long beak and grey plumage.

Easily spotted with their long abdomens and vibrant colours, there are about 50 species of damselfly and dragonfly in the UK.

Recognise it: In general, dragonflies rest with their wings open, whereas damselflies close their wings. For ID tips see the [British Dragonfly Society](#) website.



Dragonflies and damselflies



Fish

Fish are a fantastic sign that our rivers are doing well – particularly if found in the headwaters as this suggests there are few barriers to their upstream migration.

Recognise it: Look out for fish of all sizes camouflaging themselves within the riverbed.