

# Chevin Forest Park Wildlife Spotters Guide



## Mammals and Reptiles



Roe Deer  
(*Capreolus capreolus*)



Fox  
(*Vulpes vulpes*)



Grey Squirrel  
(*Sciurus carolinensis*)



Brown Long-Eared Bat  
(*Plecotus auritus*)  
April - October



Wood Mouse  
(*Apodemus sylvaticus*)



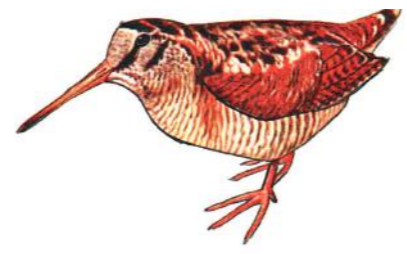
Weasel  
(*Mustela nivalis*)



Common Shrew  
(*Sorex araneus*)



Common Lizard  
(*Lacerta vivipara*)  
April - October



Woodcock  
(*Scolopax rusticola*)



Kestrel  
(*Falco tinnunculus*)



Nuthatch  
(*Sitta europaea*)



Sparrowhawk  
(*Accipiter nisus*)

## Birds



Great Spotted Woodpecker  
(*Dendrocopos major*)



Meadow Pipit  
(*Anthus pratensis*)



Long-Tailed Tit  
(*Aegithalos caudatus*)



Tawny Owl  
(*Strix aluco*)



Jay  
(*Garrulus glandarius*)

## Plants



Common Knapweed  
(*Centaurea nigra*)  
June - September



Bilberry  
(*Vaccinium myrtillus*)  
April - November



Common Cottongrass  
(*Eriophorum angustifolium*)  
May - July



English Bluebell  
(*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)  
April - May



Heather  
(*Calluna vulgaris*)  
July - November



Hart's Tongue Fern  
(*Phyllitis scolopendrum*)



Gorse  
(*Ulex europaeus*)



Yellow Flag Iris  
(*Iris pseudacorus*)  
June - August



Bog Asphodel  
(*Narthecium ossifragum*)  
July - November

## Insects



Speckled Wood Butterfly  
(*Pararge aegeria*)  
March - October



Green Hairstreak Butterfly  
(*Callophrys rubi*)  
April - June



Common Blue Damselfly  
(*Enallagma cyathigerum*)  
May - September



Violet Ground Beetle  
(*Carabus violaceus*)



Orange Tip Butterfly  
(*Anthocharis cardamines*)  
April - June



Small Heath Butterfly  
(*Coenonympha pamphilus*)  
June - August



Tawny Mining Bee  
(*Andrena fulva*)  
March - May



Four-Spotted Chaser  
(*Libellula quadrimaculata*)  
May - August

The wildlife is coded according to how easy or difficult they are to spot:

- Fairly common across The Chevin
- Widespread but you'll need to pay attention
- Not so widespread – see Map and Spotters Tips on other side
- You'll need to visit special places to see these – see the Map on other side.

Where months are shown these indicate best times to find them. No months means they can be seen anytime of year.

## Welcome to the Wildlife Spotters Guide to The Chevin

There are many different habitats on The Chevin, which support many different types of animals and plants. Far too many to show you on this Wildlife Spotters Guide. Instead, this guide aims to give you an introduction to these different habitats, where to find them and what wildlife you might find in them.

If you want to learn more about the wildlife around you on The Chevin you may find it useful to buy wildlife identification books, such as those produced by Collins. Alternatively, you could join the Leeds City Council's Parks and Countryside Rangers for wildlife spotting events on The Chevin. Visit [www.chevinforest.co.uk](http://www.chevinforest.co.uk) for details of upcoming events.

### A brief introduction to the habitats found on The Chevin

Chevin Forest Park was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1989 in recognition of its importance for wildlife. There are many different habitats on The Chevin, including woodland, heathland, scrub, grassland, streams, ponds and rocky crags. These have been largely influenced by the underlying geology. The soils tend to be fairly thin in many places and acidic due to the presence of millstone grit rocks. Together with the steeply sloping land, these conditions are not good for agriculture and historically the land has been left uncultivated allowing wildlife to flourish.

**Mixed woodland and plantation blocks** are widespread on The Chevin, resulting from plantings in the late 18th and early 19th century and after World War II. The woodland is a mixture of broadleaf trees, such as Beech and Oak; conifers, such as Scots Pine and European Larch; and shrubs including Holly and Hawthorn. There are over 100 species of tree on The Chevin – see the Tree Spotters Guide to The Chevin. Woodland provides food and shelter for a wealth of wildlife including mammals, such as Roe Deer and Grey Squirrels; birds, such as Jays and Woodcocks; and wildflowers including Bluebell and Wood Sorrel.

**Heathland and mires** are another dominant habitat on The Chevin. Heathlands are the result of many years of human intervention, in which tree growth was prevented through extensive grazing. On heathlands the slow decomposition of vegetation in waterlogged conditions produced the peaty soils on which Heather and Bilberry thrive. The permanently waterlogged mires support a variety of specially adapted vegetation, such as Bog Asphodel, Crowberry and Cotton Grass.

**Grasslands** are also the result of many years of human intervention, again through grazing. Most of the grassland across The Chevin is acidic grassland and grows on thin, nutrient-poor soils. They include many different species of grasses, sedges, rushes and flowering plants, including 3 species of orchid. The species found depend on whether the ground is wet or dry, and shady or exposed. Many insects and other invertebrates feed and shelter in the grass, providing food for larger creatures such as shrews.

**Gorse scrub**, which is found scattered across the grasslands, provides food for the caterpillars of the Green Hairstreak Butterfly and nest sites for many small birds.

**Wet areas** on The Chevin include ponds, streams and wet flushes (areas constantly supplied with water from springs). Different species prefer the fast moving, oxygen-rich stream conditions to those of the still pond waters. Wildlife you might spot in ponds includes amphibians, such as Frogs and Palmate Newts; insects including the Common Blue Damselfly; and plants such as Yellow Flag Iris and Sphagnum Mosses next to ponds.

**Rocky crags** are another prominent feature on The Chevin. These are the result of past quarrying and include Caley Crag and Pelcross Quarry. Animals may be seen perching or basking on the rocks, such as Tawny Owls, which have been spotted nesting at Pelcross Quarry. The crevasses between the crags also provide microclimates for plants such as Killarney Fern.

## Where to spot wildlife on The Chevin

- 1 Meadows are great for Common Bird's Foot Trefoil, Yellow Rattle, Common Knapweed and vetches, which in turn are great for the nationally rare Bilberry Bumblebee.
- 2 The bird feeding area in front of the White House is a good place to see small mammals, such as Bank Voles feeding on fallen seeds. Sparrowhawks are also a common sight here, as they nest in the pine trees above the White House.
- 3 Beautiful carpets of English Bluebell, together with Wood Sorrel and Greater Woodrush, can be seen in Danefield Wood in spring. The native bluebell is one of the favourite food plants of the Orange Tip Butterfly.
- 4 The arched bridge over Holbeck is a good place to spot plants such as Hart's Tongue Fern.
- 5 The ponds here and at Yorkgate Quarry are a great place to spot Dragonflies, Damselflies, Frogs, Newts, Yellow Flag Iris, Starwort and Sphagnum Moss.



- 7 The small wet area here is the only place in Leeds where Cottongrass is found.
- 8 Eroded footpaths here are a good place to spot Tawny Mining Bees in spring.
- 9 Acidic grassland with Heath Rush, Green-Ribbed Sedge and Heather.
- 10 Wide rides, such as Chippendale Ride, provide a good woodland edge habitat for many species of insects, birds and mammals, such as bats. The Speckled Wood Butterfly is often seen in these shaded areas.
- 11 The mire here is one of only two places in Leeds where you can find Bog Asphodel. There are also lots of Alder trees.

### Friends of Chevin Forest

The Friends of Chevin Forest carry out a practical task once per month to help keep The Chevin a wonderful place for people and wildlife. New faces are always very welcome and much needed. If you can spare a few hours per month and fancy some gentle exercise in the great outdoors contact us on 0113 237 5268. Visit [www.chevinforest.co.uk](http://www.chevinforest.co.uk) for more information.

To download a copy of The Chevin Forest Park management plan, orienteering maps and find out about any upcoming events visit [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk) and type in "Chevin" into the search facility and follow the link or visit the White House Café.

## Wildlife Spotters Top Tips

A lot of wildlife can be seen throughout the year, but some plants and animals are only in flower or active at certain times of year or even at certain times of day (or night!). Here are a few tips to help.

### Mammals and reptiles:

- **Lizards** have excellent hearing, so if you want to see them walk very carefully and quietly in open heathland. Dry, sunny days in spring/summer are best, as are early mornings before they have fully warmed up and become fast-moving.
- **Foxes** are at home in most habitats. Although they are usually only active in the evening or at night you may spot them during the day in some of the quieter spots on The Chevin, such as Sinclair's Field.
- The White House and surrounding buildings are used as roosts for **Pipistrelle** and **Brown Long-Eared Bats**. You may spot these flying in the area in the evening.
- **Shrews** are often found hunting for insects in grasslands, such as Springfield Meadow. They are more often heard rather than seen. An angry squeaking in the undergrowth may indicate a territorial dispute.

### Birds:

- **Woodcock** are ground-nesting birds with excellent camouflage to blend into dead leaves and bracken. Dusk and dawn in the summer are the best times to look for this medium-sized bird, as the male patrols his territory (called "roding") while croaking 3 times like a frog. Dusk and dawn in the summer are also the best times to watch **bats** flying around edges of woodland chasing insects, such as moths and flies.
- **Tawny owls** are hard to spot, but in winter evenings and mornings are vocal as they defend their regular territory.
- Over the summer you may see the **Meadow Pipit** over the heathlands across The Chevin. Often only seen as they fly away from cover, the best clue to their identity is the thin, squeaky call, repeated persistently. They prefer upland heathlands, but migrate south to lowland areas in the winter.
- **Nuthatches** are a striking and very perky little bird, which may be spotted climbing up and down tree trunks and branches in search of insects hidden on the bark. In autumn they collect beech mast, acorns and hazel nuts from the woodland floor. A good clue to their presence are nestholes in trees that have been plastered with a hard rim of mud, in order to exclude predators.

### Insects:

- **Butterflies** will be more likely to fly if the temperature is above 16°C with little wind and the sun shining.
- In spring and early summer the only breeding population of **Green Hairstreak Butterfly** in Leeds can be found amongst the Heather and Bilberry of Manby Field. It's larvae feed on Gorse and Bilberry.
- **Tawny Mining Bees** may be spotted flying back and forth from their burrows collecting nectar in spring. Eroded and compacted, bare earth footpaths, like those found by Surprise View, provide an ideal habitat.
- The **Common Blue Damselfly** can be spotted around ponds from early summer. The female has metallic green wings.

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