

UK Wildlife

Several surprising, rare, and unusual wild animals inhabit the UK's countryside, coasts, and towns, though many people do not realise they live there. Not all these animals are native; humans introduced some deliberately or inadvertently, while conservationists reintroduced others.

How many of these animals can you identify? Use everyday names rather than scientific ones.

			
dormouse	Hedgehog	Pine Marten	Red Squirrel
			
Brown Hare	Capercaillie (large grouse)	Ocean Sunfish	Slow Worm
			
Hummingbird Hawkmoth	Yellow-tailed Scorpion	New Forest cicada	red-necked wallaby
			
Natterjack Toad	Reeves's muntjac	Scottish wildcat	Sea Mouse
			
Bottlenose Dolphin	water vole	Sand Lizard	Roe Deer

1. Reeves's muntjac, also known as the Chinese muntjac, is a species of muntjac found widely in south-eastern China and Taiwan. It has also been introduced in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Japan.
2. The Scottish wildcat is a European wildcat population in Scotland. It was once widely distributed across Great Britain, but the population has declined drastically since the turn of the 20th century due to habitat loss and persecution. It is now limited to northern and eastern Scotland.
3. The red-necked wallaby has no natural predators in the UK, but dogs or foxes sometimes kill the young.
4. Slow Worm: A legless lizard that looks like a snake. It can drop its tail as a defence mechanism and frequently visits gardens to eat slugs.
5. Sand Lizard: One of Britain's rarest reptiles, and the only UK lizard that lays eggs instead of giving birth to live young. Males develop striking bright green flanks during the breeding season.
6. Natterjack Toad: Britain's loudest amphibian, known for a distinctive yellow stripe down its back and a loud call that carries across coastal sand dunes.
7. Sea Mouse: A marine worm found off the UK coast, covered in dense, fur-like bristles that shimmer with iridescent blue, green, and gold colours.
8. Yellow-tailed Scorpion: A surprising colony of up to 15,000 Mediterranean scorpions lives within the stone walls of the Sheerness Docks in Kent, having arrived on merchant timber ships centuries ago.
9. Ocean Sunfish: One of the heaviest bony fish in the world, the bizarre sunfish looks like it is missing the back half of its body. It is an increasingly frequent summer visitor off the south and west coasts of the UK.
10. Hummingbird Hawkmoth: A remarkable day-flying insect that migrates from Southern Europe. It hovers in front of flowers and feeds with a long proboscis, mimicking the movement of a tiny hummingbird.
11. The water vole is in danger of becoming extinct. Found along rivers and streams, this large rodent is also known as the 'water rat' or 'water dog'.
12. The New Forest cicada is a striking insect with clear wings and gold stripes. The only cicada native to the UK, famed for its extremely high-pitched song
13. The hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) has golden fur, a furry tail, and large eyes. considered one of our cutest rodents. Found in the south of the UK.
14. Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*): A large grouse around the same size as a turkey.
15. European Hedgehog: A beloved nocturnal garden visitor covered in spines, currently facing population declines.
16. Red Squirrel: The UK's native tree squirrel, now mostly restricted to Scotland and coniferous woodlands.
17. Roe Deer: A small, graceful native deer species active in woodlands and open country.
18. Pine Marten: A rare, cat-sized member of the weasel family returning to Scottish and northern forests.
19. Brown Hare: The UK's fastest land mammal, famous for springtime boxing matches in open fields.
20. Bottlenose Dolphin: A smart marine mammal frequently spotted leaping off the Welsh and Scottish coasts.