

BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS

Heritage & Nature Reserve.

OTHER WILDLIFE

2025 Update

The outstanding event in 2025 was the first record of Rouselle's Bush Cricket, found and photographed by an environmental contractor (Jonathan Rhodes) on the site. This impressive insect was formerly confined to southern England, but is spreading north due to climate change.

MAMMALS

MOLE *Talpa europaea*

One was found freshly dead on the path adjacent to Brinsley Brook pond on 01/01/2012. Judging by the number of molehills found, this species is present in good numbers.

RABBIT *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

This species is a scarce visitor to the site, with previous records of a single on 18/05/2008 and 23/07/2008. However, there was an increase in records during 2019, with two seen on the edge of Saints Coppice on 23/04/2019.

BROWN HARE *Lepus europaeus*

This species was normally seen regularly in the fields adjacent to the site, with a maximum of 5 on 14/06/2013. However, this species has drastically declined in numbers on the site and, sadly, there were no sightings in 2025. Since the pasture adjacent to the Headstocks nature reserve has been fenced off to protect the tree saplings, it is unlikely that this species will occur in any numbers for a few years.

GREY SQUIRREL *Sciurus carolinensis*

Recorded frequently throughout the site. Largely ignored by the recorders, but a maximum of eight on were recorded in 2025.

BROWN RAT *Rattus norvegicus*

The first site record was of one in the Dell on 22/03/15, hoovering up the contents of a bird feeding-station !.

DEER species

There are regular sightings of deer on the site in the early mornings or late evenings, but have never been identified as a particular species (probably fallow deer).

WATER VOLE *Arvicola amphibious*

A resident reported a water vole on the brook in March 2002 and again in February 2009 (actual dates not known).

SHORT-TAILED FIELD VOLE *Microtus agrestis*

Judging by the regular presence of hunting kestrels, this species is a common resident on the site. A juvenile was found freshly dead on the path close to Brinsley brook pond on 22/07/2014, following torrential rain overnight. One was caught by a FoBH's members dog in the Long Meadow in March 2015, during a working party. The vole was rescued and released.

BANK VOLE *Myodes glareolus*

The first site record occurred on November 5th 2019, when one was closely observed in the ditch by the old railway line, feeding in a discarded pumpkin !

RED FOX *Vulpes vulpes*

The first sighting of this species by the recorders was of a fine dog fox in the pasture adjacent to the railway line on March 16th 2016. On 17th December 2019, one was seen strolling nonchalantly through a field of sheep adjacent to the old railway line, affording relatively close views.

BADGER *Meles meles*

One found freshly dead at the roadside on 09/04/2013. Although off site, it was only 100 metres from the car park. It was found very close to the spot where a juvenile was also found dead in 2008. There is evidence of badger activity on the site, but no specific sightings yet.

STOAT *Mustela ermine*

The first site record of this species was on 06/12/2014, when one was seen in the dyke by the railway line.

PIPISTRELLE BAT *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

On the nocturnal night held on site on 10/07/15, a walk was organised, during which bat detectors were employed. A minimum of 6 Pipistrelles were heard and seen.

BROWN LONG-EARED BAT *Plecotus auritus*

The bat detectors used on the nocturnal night were not set-up to locate the frequency used by this species, but two large bats seen well just before dusk were considered by the experts present to be of this species.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

GRASS SNAKE *Natrix natrix*

A pencil-thick juvenile was seen in the Dew pond in 2012. However, on 27/08/2013, a full adult measuring approx.. a metre was by the path adjacent to Brinsley Brook pond. A most impressive sight !. On 31/08/2014, a visitor to the site photographed a snake which was initially considered to be an adder. The evidence was sent to Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, who pointed out that the photo showed the underside of a grass snake, a view not often seen. This species has a trick of "playing dead" if disturbed, which could explain this event.

COMMON FROG *Rana temporaria*

There have only been two records for the site prior to 2013. The first sighting in 2019 was of a single in the Willow Holt ponds on March 5th. On March 20th, there were 13 males in this same location, with lots of spawn evident. There was also plentiful amounts of spawn in the Dipping pond. In 2025, there were 12+ males in the pond in Willow Holt. There was also a single male beside a mass of frog spawn, waiting hopefully for a late female ! (see photo).

COMMON TOAD *Bufo bufo*

Another species which is probably under-recorded and which was not seen in 2025. The only definite record is of a male which spent the daylight hours hiding under a piece of wood adjacent to the brook on 12/05/2010.

INSECTS

The expertise of the recorders is a little thin, considering the vast number of species within this genus. One unmistakeable species however is :-

EUROPEAN HORNET *Vespa crabro*

Four Queens of this species were observed feeding on flowering ivy close to the Headstocks on 14/10/2009, dwarfing the Queen wasps which were also present. There was a nest in the ash tree in the Long Meadow in 2024, but no nests were located in 2025.

TREE BUMBLEBEE *Bombus hypnorum*

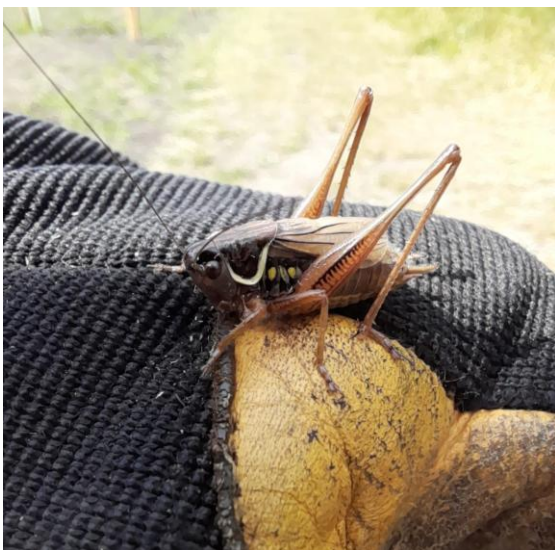
The first site record for this relatively new colonist was of a single in the Dell on September 4th 2016. A colony was located close to the Headstocks structure in 2022, in a nest box intended for blue tits.

LILY BEETLE *Lilioceris lili*

Several adults of this species, in their bright scarlet garb, were seen in the only patch of lilies on site (Pyrenean lily) in 2025.

AQUATIC SPECIES

Almost immediately following the creation of the ponds on site, they were colonised by **pond skaters**. These early colonists were soon followed by small numbers of **water boatmen** and a few months later by the enormously entertaining **whirlygig beetles**. **Minnows and sticklebacks** have been seen in the brook, and have now colonised the Dipping Pond in good numbers.



Rouselle's Bush Cricket. Photograph by Jonathan Rhodes



Soldier Beetle on umbellifer. Photograph by John Eyre



Hopeful male frog, who may have missed the boat.

Photograph by John Eyre