

British Woodland Animals

Many plants and animals make their home in woodlands. In the British Isles, it is the habitat with the greatest number of different species. Let's have a look at just a few of the many animals that live there.

Insect - Comma Butterfly (Scientific Name: *Polygonia c-album*)

Comma butterflies are widespread across the British Isles, from the south of England to Scotland. Unusually, they can wake up on warm winter's days, and so it is possible to see them throughout the year. They are often found warming their wings as they bask in the sun. You can spot a comma butterfly by the white comma-shaped markings on their underwings.



Spider - Spotted wolf spider (Scientific Name: *Pardosa amentata*)

Spotted wolf spiders are mostly nocturnal creatures that live under the leaves on the woodland floor. They are unusual among spiders as they do not spin a web to catch their prey. Instead, they hunt it down. They are very agile and can move very quickly. They also have excellent eyesight.



Amphibian - Common frog (Scientific Name: *Rana temporaria*)

Common frogs have smooth skin which can be either green or brown in colour. When it is time to breed, they lay their eggs (spawn) in shallow water. There are up to 2,000 eggs in their spawn! Tadpoles eat algae but become carnivorous once they are adults, eating slugs and worms as well as insects, which they catch on their sticky tongues. The adults are mostly nocturnal and hibernate in winter.



Reptile - Slow worm (Scientific Name: *Anguis fragilis*)

Slow worms may look like snakes, but they are actually limbless lizards. One of the differences is that they have eyelids, whereas snakes do not. Slow worms are carnivorous, and their diet includes slugs, earthworms, insects and spiders. They hide in damp places. When it begins to get dark, or after rain, they will emerge to hunt.



Bird - Goshawk (Scientific Name: *Accipiter gentilis*)

The goshawk is a bird of prey that once vanished from the UK. Scientists have worked hard to reintroduce them to the British Isles, and there are now believed to be around 400 breeding pairs in the wild. The goshawk can fly quickly above and through the trees of woodlands, diving down on its prey. Goshawks feed upon other woodland birds and mammals such as rabbits and squirrels.



Mammal - Wood mouse (Scientific Name: *Apodemus sylvaticus*)

The wood mouse is the most common wild rodent in the British Isles. This small mammal lives in complex underground burrows. They are nocturnal and omnivorous, eating both plants and animals. Wood mice are an important source of food for larger woodland animals, and so their life span is rarely longer than a year.

