

New Forest Species Survival Fund - 2025 ecological survey results

Prof Russell Wynn

Wild New Forest


**SPECIES
SURVIVAL
FUND**

Funded by
UK Government

Heritage
Fund



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK



Wild New Forest



amphibian and reptile
conservation 

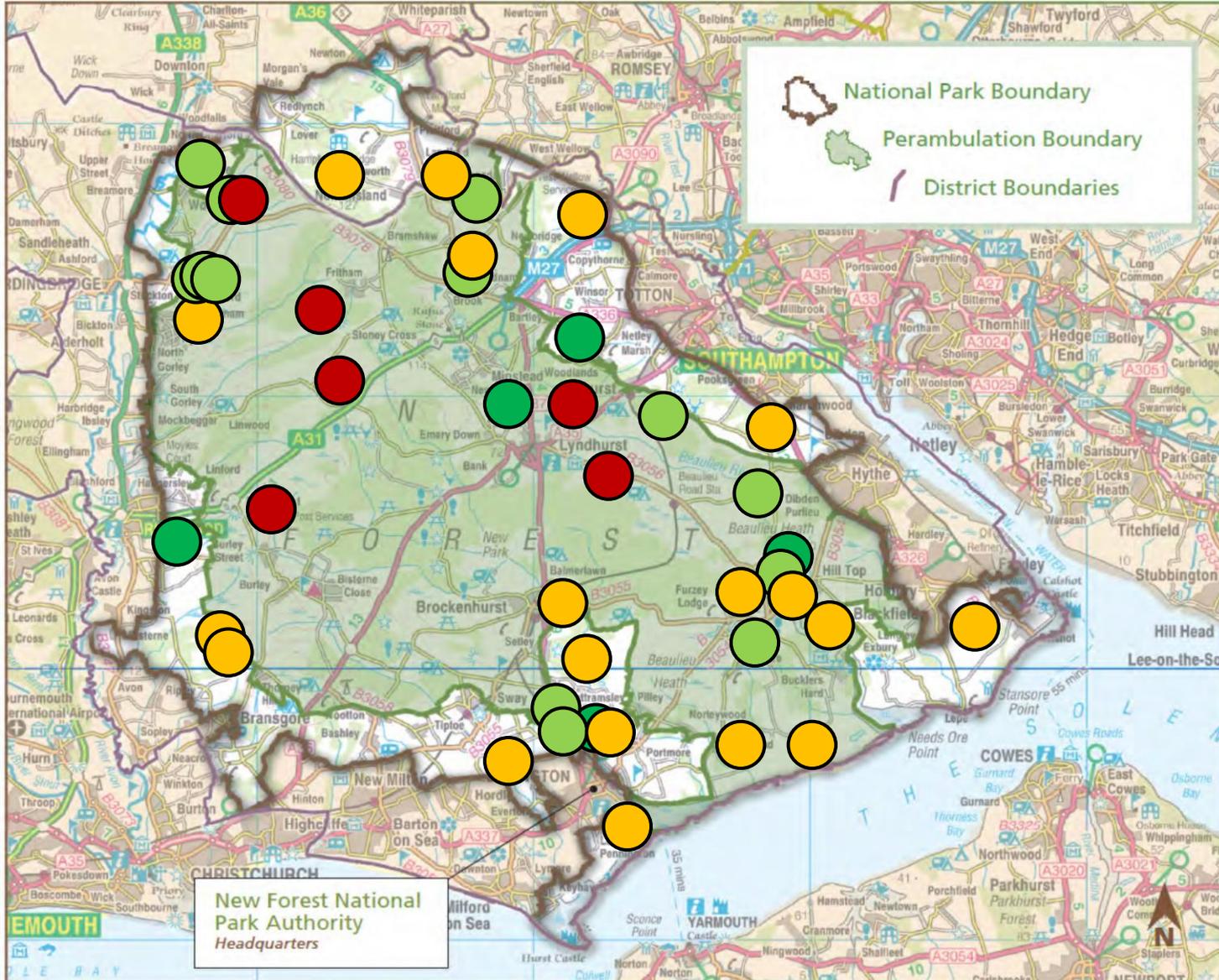


30.16 inHg -  6°C  10/01/2025 04:49AM CAMERA 1



Wild New Forest CIC - ecological survey and monitoring

www.wildnewforest.org.uk



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Private sites

● 2023 completed

● 2024 completed

● 2025 completed

Crown Lands (FE)

● 2023-25 completed



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Summary

- £1.3M project, 30 sites, >250 ha of habitat creation/restoration
- Wild New Forest delivered 80 days of SSF activity in 2024-25
- Ecological baseline surveys conducted across 15 SSF sites
- Visual walkover surveys for animals, plants, fungi
- Also, 10x trail cameras, 2x bat detectors, sweep netting, fungi DNA
- A total of 1160 species of animal, plant, and fungus recorded
- Over 200 records of 88 priority species

Wetland habitats









29.48 inHg ↓ 🌡️ 1°C ● 03/12/2025 06:38PM CAMERA 1

















Heathland habitats

















Woodland habitats





29.30 inHg ↑  7°C  10/22/2025 07:13AM CAMERA 1



30.16 inHg ↑  6°C  10/01/2025 03:39AM CAMERA 1



30.16 inHg -  6°C  10/01/2025 04:49AM CAMERA 1



30.24 inHg - 10°C 10/15/2025 04:38AM CAMERA 1





Meadow habitats

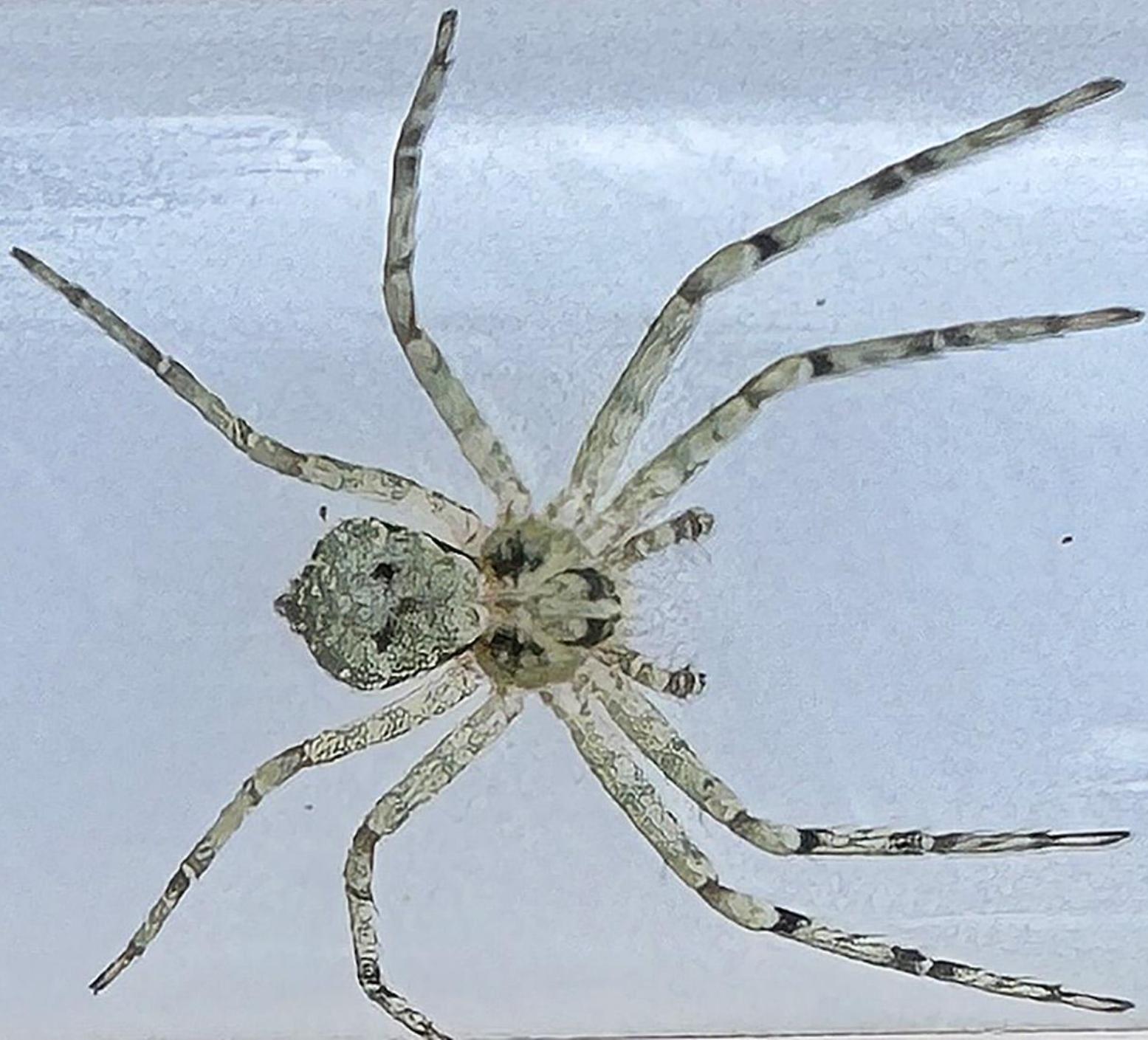












Acoustic bat data



Acoustic bat data summary

- 2x acoustic detectors deployed at 11 SSF sites for 178 deployment nights
- Over 140,000 individual bat passes recorded
- Eight bat species detected with high confidence
- Greater Horseshoe Bat at two sites in northern New Forest (Wiltshire)
- Barbastelle recorded all sites, with 418 passes at one parkland site
- Data being shared with Hampshire Bat Group and Wiltshire Bat Group

Media coverage

Scheme sheds light on Forest's bat populations

The national park is a stronghold for 14 species

BY DAN COATER

A £1.3 MILLION nature recovery project is shedding light on bat populations in the New Forest and providing information on how to improve their habitats.

Led by the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA), the scheme has seen local experts create and restore habitats at around 30 sites in a bid to increase "climate resilience" and reverse species decline.

The New Forest has been described as a "national stronghold" for bats, with 14 of the 18 species found in the UK living here.

Last year, baseline surveys were undertaken to measure bat activity before habitat improvements were carried out through the Species Survival Fund (SSF) project.

Wild New Forest – one of five partners working with the NPA on the project – placed bat detectors at 11 SSF sites for around a fortnight each to record bat echo-location calls from dusk until dawn.



A bat detector box in the New Forest and, inset, a pipistrelle bat (Photos: Russell Wynn/Wild New Forest)

The survey detected more than 140,000 individual bat passes, with a detailed analysis indicating all 14 of the Forest's bat species were potentially recorded.

A project spokesperson said common and soprano pipistrelles were the most frequently detected species,

accounting for 94% of all bat passes. The nationally scarce and red-listed barbastelle was recorded at all of the sites surveyed, with nearly 40 passes per night at one parkland location.

The locally rare greater horseshoe bat was also recorded at two sites in the north of the New Forest.

A project spokesperson said: "Bats thrive in landscapes that offer an abundance of insects and other invertebrate prey.

"The SSF project has improved and increased bat habitat by creating insect-rich wetlands and wildflower meadows, restoring native woodland, and planting new hedgerows to

strengthen connections between habitats.

"Wild New Forest will be monitoring future changes in bat activity at SSF sites where habitat improvements have recently taken place, hopefully demonstrating the long-term value of the project for bats and the wider New Forest ecosystem."

Wild New Forest director professor Russell Wynn said: "These new data have revealed existing bat hotspots and highlight the exceptional bat diversity in the New Forest. In addition to supporting the SSF project, the data is being shared with trusted colleagues in Hampshire and Wiltshire Bat Groups to inform their wider survey and research work."

The other partners involved in the SSF project are Freshwater Habitats Trust, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and New Forest Commoners Defence Association, with support from the RSPB and New Forest Biodiversity Forum.

The project is funded by the government's Species Survival Fund, developed by Defra and delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

NEWS

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Rare ladybird recorded in the UK for the first time



RUSSELL WYNN / WILD NEW FOREST

The Little Arboreal Ladybirds are normally found in France and continental Europe

Curtis Lancaster

South of England

14 September 2025

A "new" ladybird species has been recorded in the UK for the first time following the hot weather over the summer.

Prof Russell Wynn, director of Wild New Forest, said the Little Arboreal Ladybirds had been found in moth traps across the New Forest but "there were no confirmed British Records prior to this influx".

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Rare fungus spotted in New Forest for first time



RUSSELL WYNN / WILD NEW FOREST

The fungus with white branches has been found growing in at least six sites in the New Forest

1 hour ago

A fungi, which looks like a candelabra, has been found in a national park for the first time.

The New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) said the nationally rare fungus, Candelabra Coral, known for its striking crown-tipped creamy white branches, had been spotted growing in recent weeks at six sites in the forest.

Professor Russell Wynn, director of Wild New Forest, who made one of the finds said the "sudden arrival of the Candelabra Coral in the New Forest this

Acknowledgements and next steps

- Many thanks to all landowners and project partners
- New Forest Biodiversity Forum is providing match-funding
- WNF delivering three years of post-project monitoring (2026-28)