Table of Contents

Welcome 2

Introduction to MammalWeb 2

The National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme 3

How to classify images on MammalWeb 4

- Difficult IDs 4
- Species panel 5
- Inverting colours 8

This content is accurate in June 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact Dalma Zsalakó by emailing sustainability@warwick.ac.uk.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

MammalWeb guide for spotters – FAO staff and students of the University of Warwick

Welcome

In 2025, the University of Warwick participated in the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme (NHMP). This important nationwide pilot project explores the feasibility of providing accurate population estimates for this elusive endangered species using wildlife trail cameras.

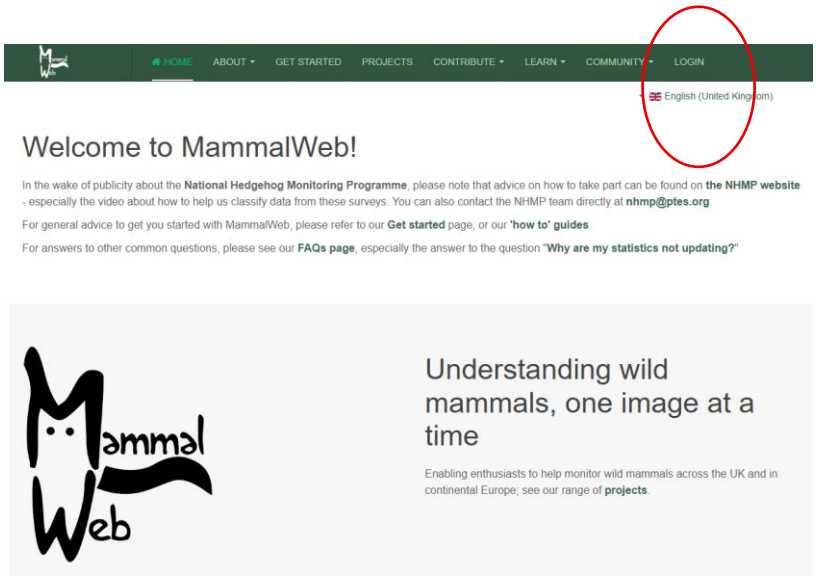
The images captured on the wildlife trail cameras are uploaded onto MammalWeb, where volunteer "spotters" can help ID the images, hereby contributing to the study.

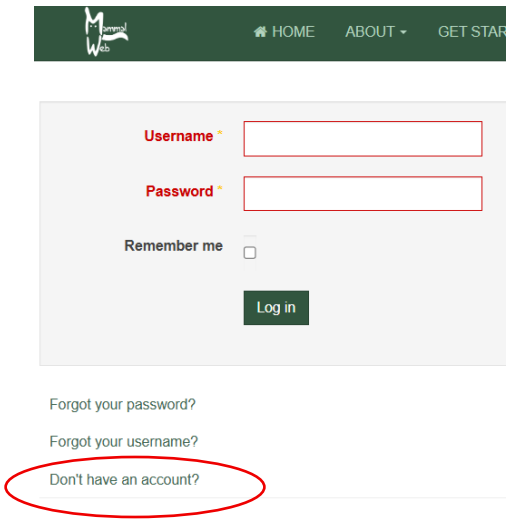
This illustrated guide provides a step-by-step breakdown on how to use the platform, and includes useful practical advice to enable everyone to make the most valuable contribution to NHMP and other projects on the platform.

Introduction to MammalWeb

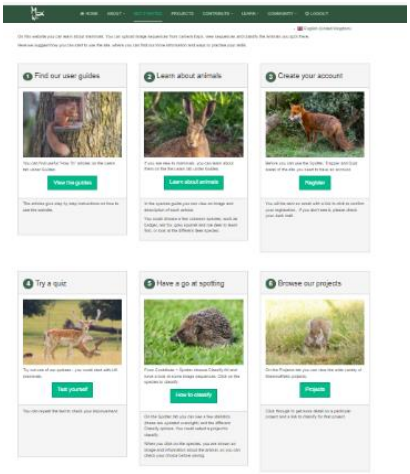
Website: https://www.mammalweb.org/en/

You can sign up by clicking on "Login" and then registering by selecting "Don't have an account?". (Their newsletter can be quite interesting so do sign up for it here if it's of interest.)





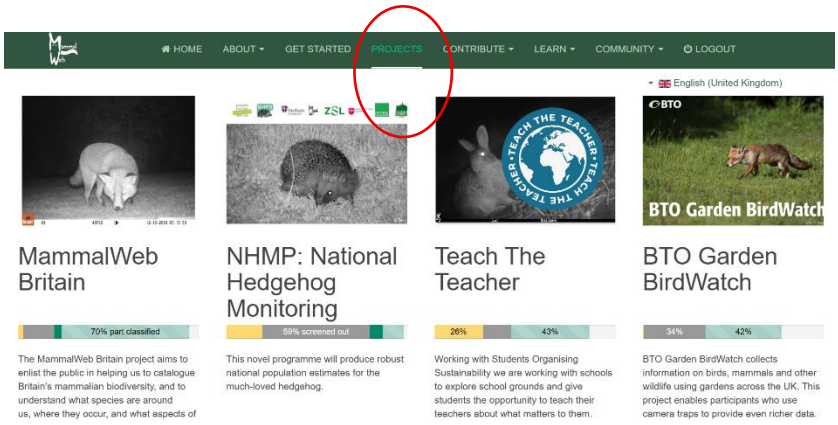
The platform has a lot of good resources so do explore all the dropdowns.
"My dashboard" (in "Contribute") has some interesting statistics, whilst the "Get started" and "Learn" tabs have a lot of useful resources, including helpful guides to help you improve your ID skills as a spotter.

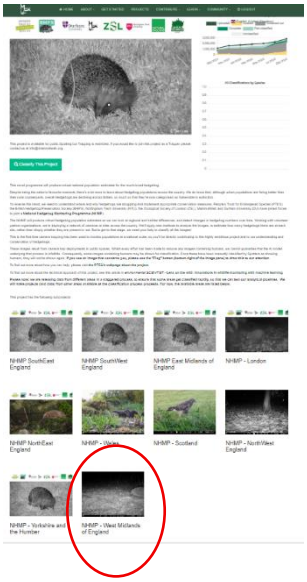


Tip: Additional useful resources:
How to Identify Different Types of Pigeons and Doves
Corvids: how to identify the crow family
MustelidLeaflet.pdf
Deer Species - The British Deer Society and Deer ID Guide

The National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme

There are quite a few projects on MammalWeb from all over the UK. To contribute to the NHMP, simply click on that project, then scroll down to "NHMP - West Midlands of England".



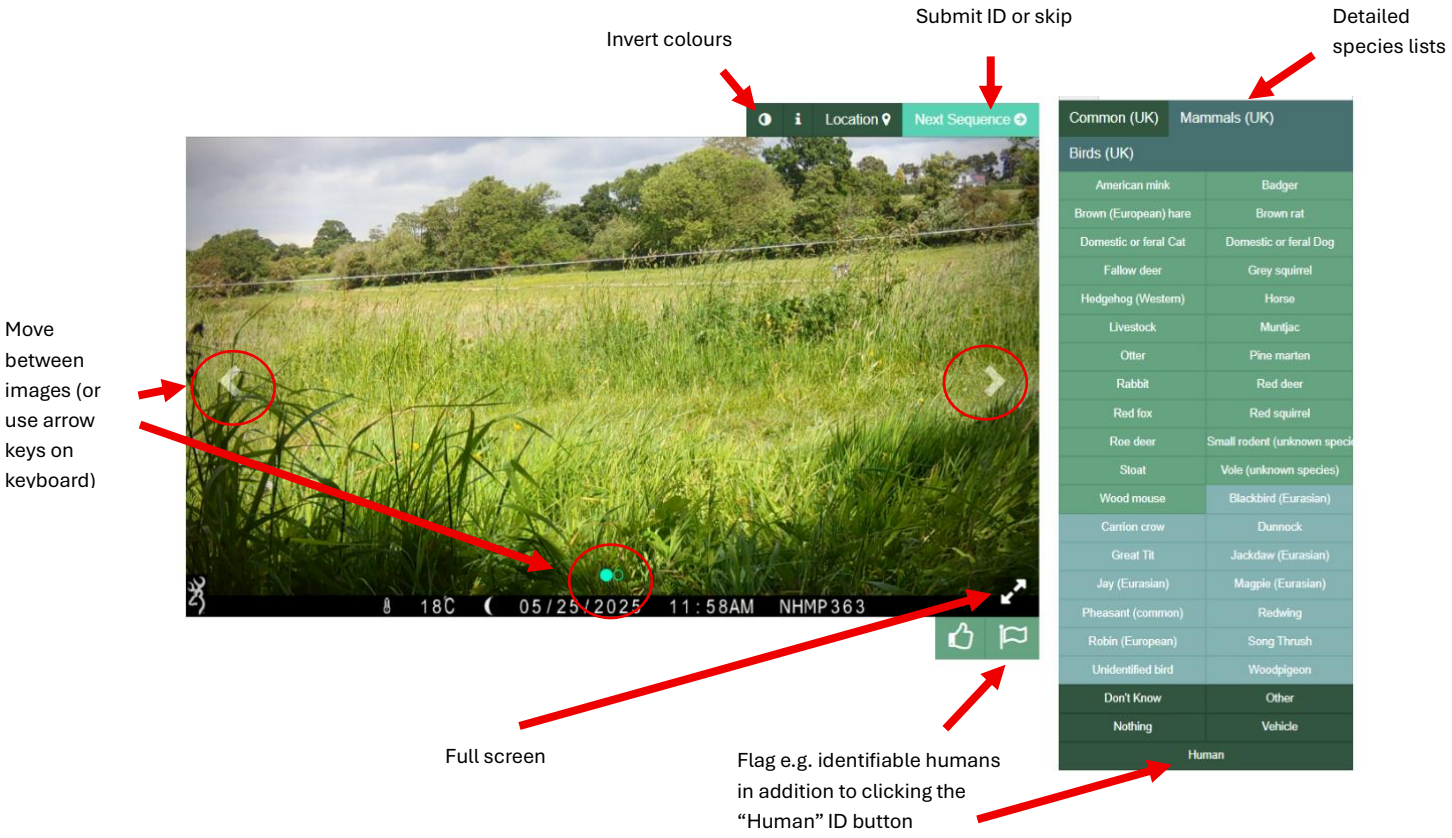


Photos from the Wellesbourne campus are under "**NHMP - Warwickshire 4**".

You may have seen on your Dashboard the mind-blowing number of images MammalWeb deals with. Images are uploaded to the different projects in a staggered fashion.

Warwickshire volunteers are quite good at classifying images so there may be times when you click on a project and you see the message "No photos are available on this project for you to classify". In this case, do go ahead and help out some other NHMP Warwickshire sites or even other NHMP projects, as that could help release further Wellesbourne site images.

How to classify images on MammalWeb

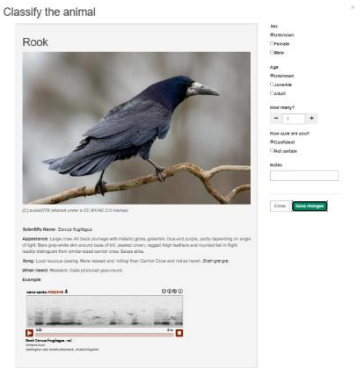


Difficult IDs

Often the animals are photographed from a less than perfect angle so it might be difficult to decide e.g. if it's a hare or a rabbit or which deer, corvid or pigeon species.

💡 **Tip**: Each image is presented to multiple spotters on MammalWeb. If you can't tell what it is, it's often best to skip the image (instead of saying "Don't know"), as there's a good chance someone else can ID the species with confidence (even if e.g. it's just a silhouette – many species can still be identified by someone who has more experience with the taxon). If you are not sure what to do, ask yourself "*is there a chance someone else would know what it is?*".

Remember, babies/juveniles may look nothing like the adults and, unfortunately, a number of **non-native species** are also now roaming the British countryside – so don't discount the unexpected!



💡 **Tip**: In other cases, e.g. if you can't tell if it's a song thrush or a mistle thrush, just log your best bet and select "Not certain" on the species ID profile. Most popup species profiles also contain a photo and a description that could help with the confirmation of your ID.

💡 **Tip**: Whenever unsure, it's always a good idea to research species on the internet (incl. finding sites with **reliable** pictures), and you can also try to take a picture of the screen and see if iNaturalist can ID the species for you. This will also enable you to increase your knowledge of species ID and you will reap the benefits of this additional research in the long run. 😊

💡 **Tip**: Scale on an image can be deceiving, so you cannot always rely solely on the perceived size of an animal when IDing a photo (e.g. adult or not, even species ID!). It's perfectly acceptable to not specify whether the animal is an adult or juvenile, just leave it as "Unknown" in the species ID popup.

💡 **Tip**: Although usually the images of a sequence are in the correct order, occasionally they aren't, so we shouldn't assume that it's 2 animals just because one appears to have moved off the screen when "another" appears. Unless you are certain it's not the same individual in front of the camera twice, only record the maximum number of animals you see together. Sometimes it is possible to differentiate between the individuals even if only 1 is visible on the image at a time, e.g. male vs. female, or due to a distinctive pattern, shape of antlers or a scar.

Species panel

The default is the most commonly found UK species list, but you can find more species of mammals and birds in alphabetical order by clicking on the relevant tabs.

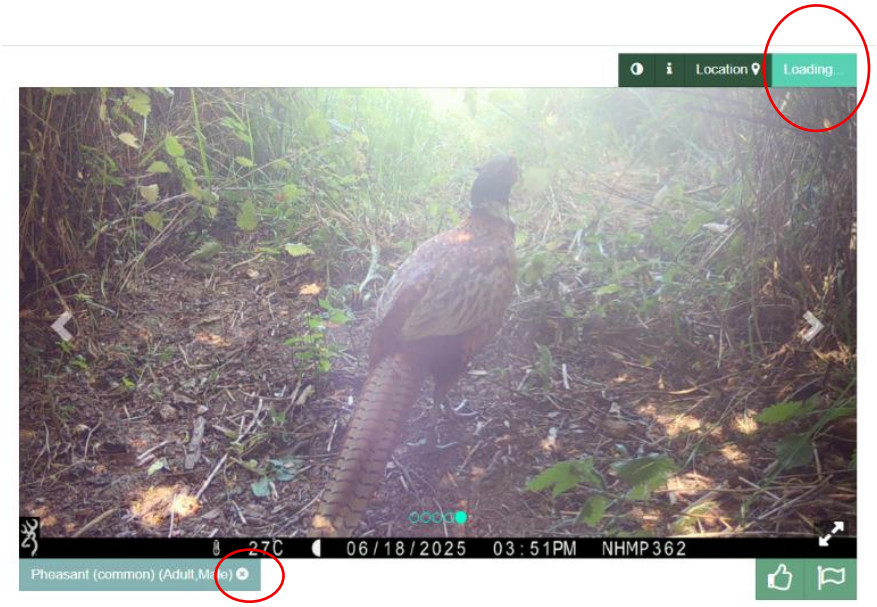
Some species are grouped (e.g. livestock, small rodent [unknown species], domestic fowl, rock dove/feral pigeon, polecat or ferret, stoat or weasel).

Even though all images are screened by AI before they are uploaded onto MammalWeb, occasionally photos containing **humans** do get through. Please label this sequence using the "Human" ID button and you can also flag them to make sure these images will not be shown again.

💡 **Tip**: Always look through **all** the images in a sequence before adding an ID because existing IDs cannot be modified, i.e. if you spot a 2nd and 3rd hedgehog on the last picture but you already entered the ID as 1 hedgehog, you'd have to delete that ID and start again.

Unfortunately, you cannot go back and edit your ID once you submitted it.

💡 **Tip**: If you realise you made an ID mistake while the system is still loading the next sequence, you can delete your ID by simply clicking on the "x" – but you need to be quick!



Sometimes there's nothing on the image because, e.g.

- the animal was so quick that by the time the photo was taken, it was gone;
- the animal is slightly behind the camera (still triggered the motion sensor but wasn't captured on the image);
- it was rain, a falling leaf or the movement of vegetation that triggered the camera.

When "Nothing" is your ID, just choose one of the following options in the popup window (Wellesbourne campus images will most likely have a lot of photos of waving vegetation!):

However, don't rush to click on the "Nothing" button. Some surroundings are very complex (e.g. woodlands with a variety of trees and bushes casting shadows, and with colourful leaf litter on the ground) and many species are very well camouflaged in their environment (e.g. birds, small rodents). Sometimes something as big as a deer can be difficult to spot!

💡 **Tip**: use full screen mode and take your time. You can also use the left and right arrows to move between the images, as your eyes might pick up a subtle movement/difference by creating rudimentary “moving pictures”.

MammalWeb is a platform of “list everything you see”, not “list the first thing you see”. 😊 It is very easy to be distracted by and focus on the animal moving around in the centre of the images but there could be something else in the corner, high up in the tree or hiding behind some grass.

💡 **Tip**: Scan the image in a systematic way, e.g. starting in one corner and working your way across it in a grid pattern.
Never assume anything – just because there's a top predator on the image it doesn't mean that there isn't another species there as well – e.g. cats and hedgehogs (even squirrels) are often on the same image. Behaviour of a predator can also be an indication that there's something else on the image to see, e.g. when you see a cat staring at or stalking something, look for what they were looking at.
A flock of birds can also contain multiple species.

Inverting colours

This feature is available in both the small and full screen versions. It can be very useful, as demonstrated in this example:

Thank you for your help and…

Have fun!!