



YOUR WINTER WILDLIFE SPOTTER'S GUIDE **PART ONE**

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LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

Winter wildlife spotting, what better reason to brave the cold? Welcome to part one of our handy spotter's guide, full of hints and tips on where you are likely to encounter wild mammals or birds this season. Good luck!

Things to remember:

To increase your chances of seeing animals in their natural habitats and to prevent scaring them away, there are a few simple steps to follow:

- Do not wear any perfume, aftershave or insect repellent - you may get bitten once or twice but if you see a wild animal it may be worth it!
- Animals are very wary of human voices. Absolute silence is essential
- Try to keep yourself downwind of the animal
- Wear dark, natural or neutral coloured clothing that blend into your surrounding
- Do not wear anything that jangles or rustles
- Try not to move when in sight of an animal. If you really have to, then do it slowly and quietly.

Things to take:

It is useful to have these items with you when you're wildlife spotting:

- Maps
- Compass
- Binoculars
- Paper and pencil to make notes if needed
- Small plastic containers for collecting droppings (e.g. pill boxes or film canisters)
- Rubber or latex gloves for handling droppings.



RED FOX VULPES VULPES

Where to spot them?

If you live in a town or a city, you are probably more likely to see a fox than if you live in the countryside. They are crepuscular, meaning they are most active around dawn and dusk, but it is not unusual to see them during the day, especially in cities and towns.

What to look out for?

The fur of the fox is at its russet best in winter and male foxes are on the prowl looking for mates.



ROE DEER CAPREOLUS CAPREOLUS

Where to spot them?

These pretty little deer have increased in number and have spread into towns and cities, where they are found in parks and cemeteries, and even in the garden (where they make themselves unpopular by eating roses!).

What to look out for?

Roe deer coat changes depending on the season. They showcase a vibrant red-brown coat in the summer and a faded, dull brown in the winter. Roe bucks have small, spiky antlers whereas their female counterparts don't.



TAWNY OWL STRIX ALUCO

Where to spot them?

You may not see them, but there is a good chance you will hear the familiar "t'wit, t'woo" sound on a still winter night, as males and females call to each other. You sometimes see tawny owls being mobbed by small birds, as the owls try to sleep out the daylight hours in a suitable tree.

What to look out for?

A distinctive ring of feathers surrounds the tawny owl's rounded face, with eyes as dark as the night sky. Their feathers are usually a hue of reddish-brown tones with a paler colouring on the breast.



WOODCOCK

SCOLOPAX RUSTICOLA

Where to spot them?

Woodcock are secretive birds of the woodland, which crouch down low, perfectly camouflaged on the ground and burst out at the last second as they zig-zag away to safety. They are crepuscular birds, so seeing one during the day is a very fortunate event – if you do manage to see a woodcock or you have seen one already I would love to hear about it!

What to look out for?

A large and bulky bird with a hue of black and brown wing feathers. The woodcock can be identified by its thin tapered beak and short legs.



BROWN HARE

LEPUS EUROPAEUS

Where to spot them?

A common mammal in the agricultural lands of the east of England, brown hares are scarce in the west of England. They don't use burrows but live above ground in 'forms' which are shallow depressions on the ground. In winter they may move to woodland for cover from the cold.

What to look out for?

They have a much bigger stature than rabbits and characteristic black tips on the end of their ears. Brown hares rely on their acute senses and lightning fast running speeds of up to 45mph to evade predators. If you hear the beat of running paws on soft ground, you may have been in the presence of a brown hare.



BRAMBLING

FRINGILLA MONTIFRINGILLA

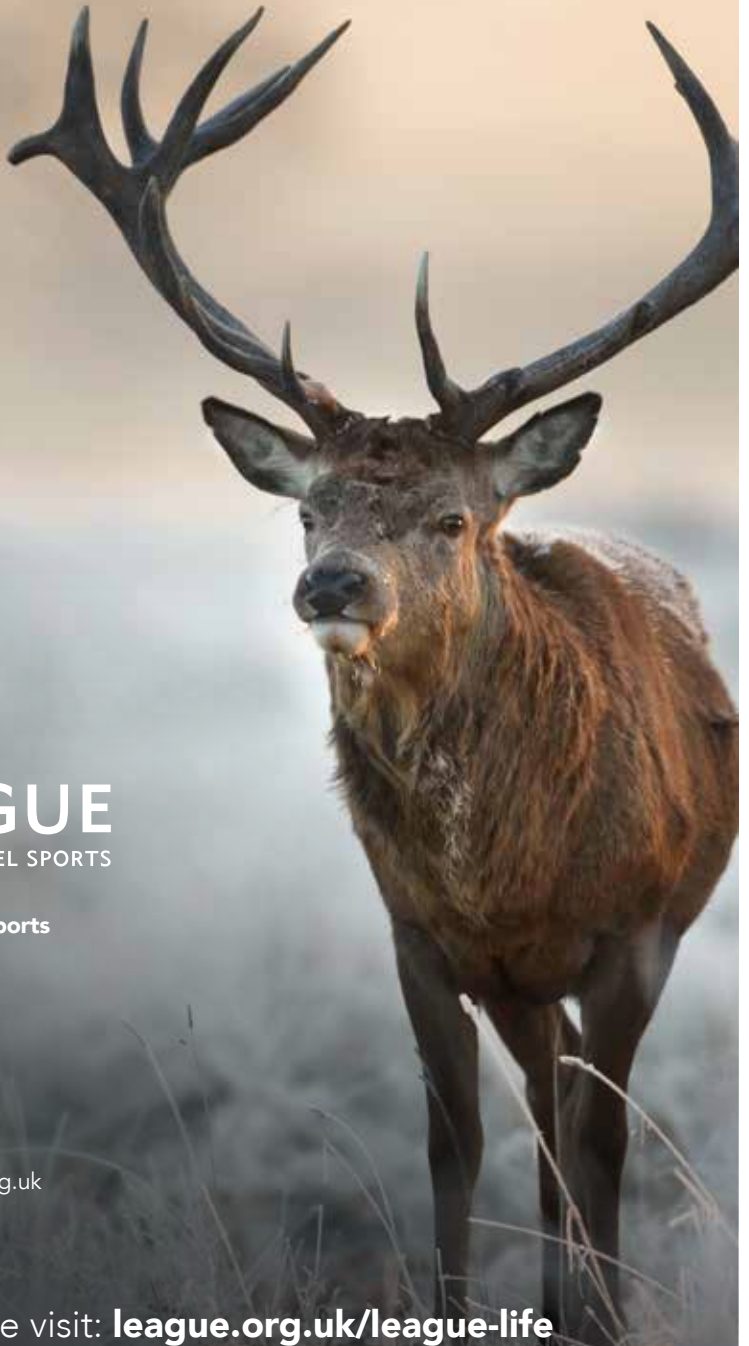
Where to spot them?

If you see a flock of chaffinches in the winter, in your garden, in a park, or on open fields, there is a good chance there will be a brambling or two amongst them. They fly in from the north nestled amongst the chaffinches.

What to look out for?

They're easily distinguished by the splashes of orange on their chest and wings, and long white rump whilst in flight. The brambling is more distinguished and has a prettier appearance than its chaffinch counterpart.





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