




Wild DNA

River species list


Mammals

	Common name:	European otter
	Scientific name:	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
	Species facts:	The elusive otter is quite large with brown fur and whiskers. Living around freshwater, it is one of our top predators, feeding mainly on fish, water birds, amphibians and crustaceans. It is on the biodiversity action plan in the UK.
	Conservation status:	Least concern Protected species in the UK ¹
Image credit: Bernard Landgraf		
	Common name:	European water vole
	Scientific name:	<i>Arvicola amphibious</i>
	Species facts:	The water vole is a small, furry, brown rodent. It is semi-aquatic and lives along rivers, streams and lakes. Water voles eat grass and other vegetation near the water. It is on the biodiversity action plan in the UK.
	Conservation status:	Endangered Protected species in the UK ¹
Image credit: Peter Trimming		
	Common name:	Brown rat
	Scientific name:	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>
	Species facts:	The brown rat is a widespread furry, brown rodent, slightly larger than the water vole. It is nocturnal and a good swimmer, both on the surface and underwater. Brown rats can live in most habitats and as true omnivores will eat almost anything, but cereals form a large part of their diet.
	Conservation status:	Invasive, non-native species in the UK
Image credit: Zeynel Cebeci		


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	Common name:	American mink
	Scientific name:	<i>Neogale vison</i>
	Species facts:	The American mink is a ferret-like carnivore that feeds on rodents, fish, crustaceans, frogs and birds. Accidentally released from fur farms, it is classified as an invasive species and linked to the decline in water vole population.
Image credit: Chuck Homier	Conservation status:	Invasive, non-native species in the UK




Birds

	Common name:	Common kingfisher
	Scientific name:	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
	Species facts:	The kingfisher is a colourful bird that can be spotted sitting quietly on low-hanging branches over freshwater, or suddenly diving to catch small fish, invertebrates or amphibians. Kingfishers nest in burrows near lakes and other waterways.
Image credit: Andreas Trepte	Conservation status:	Vulnerable Protected species in the UK ¹

	Common name:	Grey heron
	Scientific name:	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
	Species facts:	This large bird is up to 94 cm tall and has a wingspan up to 1.8 m. Grey herons spend most of their time alone in watery habitats feeding. This predator mainly eats fish, but will also eat ducklings, voles and frogs.
Image credit: Laitche	Conservation status:	Least concern

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Birds		
 <p>Image credit: Alexis Lours</p>	Common name:	Common moorhen
	Scientific name:	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
	Species facts:	The moorhen is a very common bird with characteristic black and white feathers and red and yellow beak. It is found around ponds, lakes and rivers. Moorhens are omnivores, eating everything from snails and insects to small fish and berries.
	Conservation status:	Vulnerable Protected species in the UK ¹
 <p>Image credit: Richard Bartz</p>	Common name:	Mallard duck
	Scientific name:	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
	Species facts:	The mallard duck has a long body and a long, broad bill. The male has a dark green head, a yellow bill, purple-brown breast and grey body. The female has an orange bill with a mainly brown body. The mallard is found around ponds, lakes and rivers. It eats seeds, plants, insects and shellfish.
	Conservation status:	Least concern
 <p>Image credit: Yerpo</p>	Common name:	Mute swan
	Scientific name:	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
	Species facts:	The mute swan is a large, white, water bird with an orange bill. It eats water plants, insects and snails. In the UK, mute swans have been historically owned by the royal family through a law known as 'the Royal Prerogative'.
	Conservation status:	Least concern Protected species in the UK ²


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Amphibians

	Common name:	Common frog
	Scientific name:	<i>Rana temporaria</i>
	Species facts:	Frogs are amphibians that live close to freshwater habitats. Their appearance varies depending on their life stages. Frogspawn is produced in early spring, then tadpoles take 16 weeks to develop into tiny froglets. Froglets grow to become frogs, which feed on insects, slugs and snails.
Image credit: Richard Bartz	Conservation status:	Least concern Protected species in the UK ¹




Fish

	Common name:	European eel
	Scientific name:	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>
	Species facts:	The eel is a very long, narrow, smooth fish that can grow to over a metre in length. It can be found in rivers and ditches but leaves its freshwater home to breed in the Atlantic Ocean. European eels are mostly carnivorous, eating smaller fish and invertebrates.
Image credit: GerardM	Conservation status:	Critically endangered Protected species in the UK ³

	Common name:	Northern pike
	Scientific name:	<i>Esox lucius</i>
	Species facts:	The pike is a greenish fish with white patches, that can grow up to 1.5 m in length. This large, predatory fish is found in slow flowing rivers and canals with lots of vegetation. It uses these plants as hiding places when hunting, bursting out at high speed to catch its prey. Pike eat other fish.
Image credit: Jik jik	Conservation status:	Least concern




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Fish		
 <p>Image credit: Canal River Trust</p>	Common name:	European perch
	Scientific name:	<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>
	Species facts:	The perch is a medium-sized (up to 25 cm), greenish-coloured fish with stripes and a red tail. Found in rivers, lakes, reservoirs and canals, it feeds on invertebrates, crayfish and other fish.
	Conservation status:	Least concern
 <p>Image credit: Clément Bardot</p>	Common name:	Common minnow
	Scientific name:	<i>Phoxinus phoxinus</i>
	Species facts:	The minnow is a small fish that is found in freshwater streams and rivers. It is olive-brown above, with stripes across its back and a dark stripe down its side. Minnows feed on insects, molluscs, crustaceans, plant debris and fish eggs. Their main predators are brown trout and birds.
	Conservation status:	Least concern
 <p>Image credit: Karelj</p>	Common name:	Common roach
	Scientific name:	<i>Rutilus rutilus</i>
	Species facts:	The common roach is a silvery fish. It can be found in any freshwater ecosystem from small ponds to the largest rivers and lakes. It eats invertebrates, fish eggs and plants. It is the favourite food of the grey heron.
	Conservation status:	Least concern

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Invertebrates		
	Common name:	North American signal crayfish
	Scientific name:	<i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i>
	Species facts:	The North American signal crayfish was introduced to UK for the seafood market but escaped from fisheries. Now considered an invasive species in the UK, crayfish are omnivorous, eating fish, frogs and invertebrates. This 15 cm crustacean is larger than our native white-clawed crayfish and is causing a decline in the native crayfish population.
	Conservation status:	Invasive, non-native species in the UK
	Common name:	Water spider
	Scientific name:	<i>Argyroneta aquatica</i>
	Species facts:	This is the only known species of spider that spends almost all its life underwater. It will rest, feed and lay its eggs underwater, briefly surfacing to replenish its oxygen supply. Water spiders eat small aquatic animals like insect larvae, small fish and other invertebrates.
	Conservation status:	Least concern
	Common name:	Emperor dragonfly
	Scientific name:	<i>Anax imperator</i>
	Species facts:	This blue and green dragonfly is the largest dragonfly in the UK. It lays its eggs in the water and its larvae (or nymphs) live under water until they are ready to emerge as flying adults. The adults catch flying insects, like butterflies and smaller dragonflies, which they can eat as they fly.
	Conservation status:	Least concern

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Invertebrates

	Common name:	Common darter
	Scientific name:	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>
	Species facts:	Common darters are red dragonflies with a narrow body. They lay eggs in the water and larvae (or nymphs) live under water until they are ready to emerge as flying adults. Adults hover over areas of slow-moving water, darting forward suddenly to catch their insect prey.
Image credit: L B Tettenborn	Conservation status:	Least concern
	Common name:	Common mayfly
	Scientific name:	<i>Ephemera danica</i>
	Species facts:	Common mayfly have a yellowy-green body, with lacy wings and three long tail bristles. They are found in unpolluted freshwater rivers and lakes, where larvae (or nymphs) live underwater until ready to emerge as flying adults. Nymphs need to live in water rich in oxygen and are strong indicators for good water quality. They eat algae and plants.
Image credit: Zapyon	Conservation status:	Least concern
	Common name:	Blue tailed damselfly
	Scientific name:	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>
	Species facts:	This small, dark damselfly has blue-coloured eyes and body, with a band on its tail. The larvae (or nymphs) live under water until they are ready to emerge as flying adults and can survive in mildly polluted water. Both nymphs and adults are predators, eating a range of insects.
Image credit: Charles J Sharp	Conservation status:	Least concern

Conservation status according to Natural England Research Report 124: (<https://oifdata.defra.gov.uk/themes/wildlife/D5/>)

¹ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>)

² The Royal Prerogative. ("The Case of Swans", 1592)

³ Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009. (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/3344/contents>)