

Why conserve bumblebees?

There are more than 20 species of bumblebee in the UK and almost all are thought to have declined. Two species are in danger of national extinction and a further ten species give serious cause for concern.

Managing habitats for bumblebees has many benefits:

- Provides important pollinators for crops, some of which are entirely dependent on bumblebees
- Supports the many wild plants which depend on them
- Helps to maintain the diversity of our countryside
- Boosts populations of other UKBAP priority species

The shrill carder bee - what to watch out for:

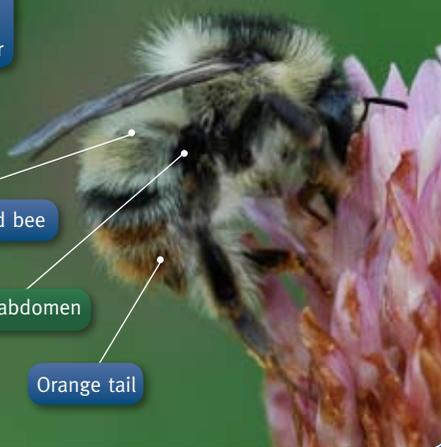
Relatively small:
queen length 17 mm,
workers much smaller

A noticeably
high-pitched buzz!

Mainly straw-coloured bee

Black stripe(s) on abdomen

Orange tail



Why have bumblebees declined?

Bumblebees need large areas with flower-rich habitat in order to forage and areas of long grass or hedgerows in which to nest.

The shift towards intensive agriculture, together with developmental pressures, has led to the loss of over 97% of the UK's flower-rich grasslands. These are the primary habitats for bumblebees.

The shrill carder bee – a bumble on the brink!

The shrill carder bee has been hit hard by loss of habitat and has now declined to just a few isolated populations where large areas of suitable habitat remain.

Contact us

If you have land that you would like to manage for bumblebees, have spotted a shrill carder bee or would like more information then we would love to hear from you:

To contact your local Bumblebee Conservation Officer please...

Write:

Bumblebee Conservation Trust,
University of Stirling,
Stirling, FK9 4LA

Phone: 01786 467818

Email: enquiries@bumblebeeconservation.org

Or visit: www.bumblebeeconservation.org

for more information on land management for bumblebees

Join us

If you would like to learn more about the fascinating lives of bumblebees and support out work then why not become a member of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust today! For more information about the fascinating lives of bumblebees or how you can join please visit www.bumblebeeconservation.org

How to manage your land to help save the shrill carder bee from national extinction!



The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a registered charity (no. 1115634). We are grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their support. Thanks to CCW and the committee and members of BWARS for access to their data holdings.

Bumblebees need pollen and nectar rich flowers to feed from throughout the summer (April to September) to complete their lifecycle. Providing even small patches around your land will make a real difference.

Key to Symbols:

- £ funding available
- 🐝 provides habitat for other wildlife
- 🌸 provides foraging habitat
- 🐝 best for bumblebees
- 🏠 provides nesting habitat

The shrill carder bee needs your help!

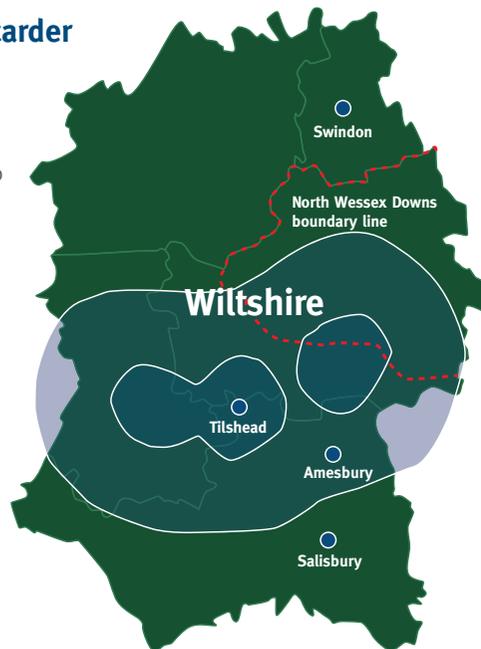
The project aims to provide advice and support to farmers and land managers who are interested in managing their land to help the shrill carder bee.

Unfortunately the shrill carder bee is now restricted to just six populations in England and Wales. It is vital to retain and expand habitat in these areas to prevent the national extinction of this native bumblebee.

Bumblebees are fantastic pollinators of crops and wildflowers. They are hard working and because many species have long-tongues, they can pollinate plants that other insects can't. Helping bumblebees on your land will help to support agriculture and a wealth of wildlife in our countryside.

Map of shrill carder distribution in Wiltshire

Habitat provision in the inner zones is top priority to safeguard existing populations. The outer zones show where we need to prioritise habitat restoration to expand and support the existing populations.



Grassland options

Flower-rich grasslands are the most important habitat for the shrill carder bee and other rare bumblebees

- 1) Manage grasslands sensitively** £ 🌸 🏠 🐝
Manage land with low inputs and allow plants to flower to increase the forage value for bumblebees.
- 2) Maintain species-rich, semi-natural grassland** £ 🌸 🐝 🐝 🐝
Maintain existing species-rich meadows and pastures through sensitive management to safeguard remaining populations of rare and common bumblebees.
- 3) Restore species-rich, semi-natural grassland** £ 🌸 🐝 🐝 🐝
Increase the diversity of wildflowers and grasses in existing grassland, where soil conditions are suitable, through management and/or seed addition.
- 4) Create species-rich, semi-natural grassland** £ 🌸 🐝 🐝 🐝
Create valuable habitat on former ley grassland sites through seed addition where conditions are suitable.



Arable options

There are many things that you can do to provide habitat for the shrill carder bee and other bumblebees on your land. Their main need is for flowers to feed on, but nesting habitats are also important.

- 1) Sow a pollen and nectar mix** £ 🌸 🌸 🐝 🐝
Sow blocks or strips at the edge of fields of at least four pollen and nectar rich plants to provide good forage for bumblebees. We can advise on seed mixes.
- 2) Create field margins and grassy field corners** £ 🏠 🐝
Establish grassy areas in field margins.
- 3) Undersow spring cereals or sow clover leys** £ 🌸
Add a legume mix as an understorey or sow a clover ley and allow to flower, to help bumblebees and reduce the need to use fertiliser.
- 4) Fallows and natural regeneration** £ 🌸 🐝 🐝
When used as part of a rotation, these utilise and enhance the existing seed bank of wildflowers and can lead to establishment of valuable flowers for bumblebees.
- 5) Create or maintain flower-rich grass margins** £ 🌸 🏠 🐝 🐝
Maintain existing flower-rich margins or add wildflower seed to create margins that contain pollen-rich wildflowers to benefit bumblebees. Cut and remove growth in late summer to encourage a diversity of flowers.
- 6) Create species-rich, semi-natural grassland** £ 🌸 🏠 🐝 🐝
Create valuable bumblebee habitat on former arable sites.

Boundary options

Manage hedgerows for bumblebees £ 🌸 🏠 🐝
Manage hedgerows to provide important nesting and foraging habitat for bumblebees throughout the spring and summer. These should not be cut before September.

Manage ditches and banks for bumblebees £ 🌸 🏠 🐝
Cut ditches and banks in sections on rotation in late summer to provide uncut flowery areas throughout the summer.



Clive Hill (photographer)

Fruit farming options

Orchard management for bumblebees £ 🌸 🐝 🐝
Bumblebees and other wild bees are very important pollinators in orchards. Manage the sward underneath by hay cutting or grazing with no fertiliser to provide additional flowers through the summer. Consider adding clover-rich wildflower seed to provide forage for bumblebees. Boundaries and hedges can also be managed to encourage bees and other beneficial insects.

Soft fruit management for bumblebees

Most soft fruits such as raspberries, strawberries and currants are pollinated by wild bumblebees. They can significantly increase yields, even in polytunnels and glasshouses. You can boost their numbers by sowing clover-rich flower strips nearby, or by choosing from the options above.



Any questions?

Please see overleaf to contact your local Bumblebee Conservation Officer who can provide advice on the best options for bumblebees on your land and details of what is involved. We may even be able to provide free bumblebee-friendly flower seed!

✓ Funding available!

Funding is available to support many of these bumblebee-friendly management options, often through agri-environment schemes. Please get in touch if you would like more information and we will be happy to help.