

BATH CITY FARM

September Nature Trail

Wildlife observations & text by Mike Williams

Follow the nature trail from by the pig pens and into the wood to discover what minibeasts are living on the Farm in September. We've put out four signs for you to find – one by the pigs, two in the field beyond the pigs and one in the woods beyond that. See how many you can find, and learn more about them.

LOCATION 4 : WOODLAND



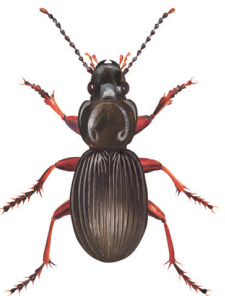
Abax parallelepipedus – This large shiny black ground beetle lives under stones, logs and in leaf litter where it enjoys hunting for slugs. This beetle can be identified by two characteristic ridges on its abdomen and wrinkles above its eyes. It also has an unusual box like shape.



Notiophilus biguttatus – This striking ground beetle has a golden back which shines like a mirror and unusually large eyes. It hunts during the daytime for springtails, mites and aphids amongst leaf litter. It can be spotted basking on sunny paths or scurrying across the woodland floor.



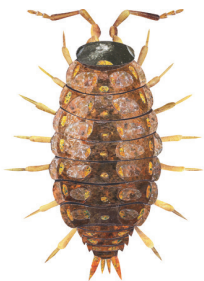
Common Earwig (Forficula auricularia) – If you look closely down in the grass you might find these harmless insects. They eat a variety of plants and smaller insects, and one of their favourite foods is white clover, which is common in the meadow. The mother earwigs are famously very protective of their young, which she raises underground. Their name is thought to come from the resemblance of their wings to ears – they are very rarely found in human ears (as in popular folklore) although there have been several cases throughout history when they have! They like dark crevices hence why they might have occasionally curled up in an ear.



Black Clock Beetle (Pterostichus madidus) – This ground beetle is most helpful to gardeners, as it loves eating garden pests like slugs and caterpillars. It hunts at night and spends the daytime hiding under logs and stones.



Harvestman (Nemastoma bimaculata) – Harvestmen are close relatives of spiders, but they have no venom and do not make webs. Instead they are hunters and are often seen crawling over vegetation in search of prey. Several species are often found around dead wood and leaf litter on woodland floors. *Nemastoma bimaculata* is easily recognised by its small size and being black with two white spots.



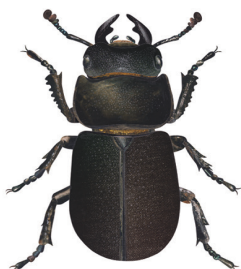
Common Striped Woodlouse (*Philoscia muscorum*) – This species has an obvious dark stripe on its back. Instead of rolling into a ball, it tends to run very fast when in danger. It is often found in the grass and also in the wood.



Pill Woodlouse (*Armadillidium vulgare*) – This species rolls into a ball when threatened. There are several other species that do this in Bath, but this is the most common. It can be found by looking carefully through the grass.



Rough Woodlouse (*Porcellio scaber*) – This woodlouse is an expert at composting and recycling, eating its way through all kinds of dead wood, decaying animals and fruit, fungi and leaf litter. The female carries her eggs on her underside until they hatch and then stays with her babies until they mature. It can easily be separated from other woodlice by numerous tiny bumps on its surface. The similar shiny woodlouse (*Oniscus asellus*) often lives with it but has a smooth shiny surface.



Lesser Stag Beetle (*Dorcus parallelipipedus*) – This beetle looks similar to the female stag beetle but is smaller and uniformly black. In the daytime it can be found sheltering amongst rotting wood or leaf litter in woodlands, parks and gardens. The adults beetles can live for over a year, feeding on tree sap, whilst the larvae feast on rotting wood.



Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) – This butterfly is frequently seen throughout the year around the woodlands and scrub on the farm. The caterpillar feeds on various grasses. It mostly feeds on aphid honeydew, but may occasionally visit flowers and fruits such as blackberries for food. Sometimes you might see two butterflies circling quickly around each other – the males are very territorial and often fight other males that come near.



Devil's Coach Horse (*Ocypus olens*) – This rove beetle is a fierce night time hunter, catching small insects, larvae, spiders and slugs. It lives in decaying matter, leaf litter or under logs and stones. If frightened or upset, a Devil's Coach Horse will twist its rear end upwards so it looks like an angry scorpion. It can squirt a nasty smelling liquid from its bottom and sometimes gives a painful nip.