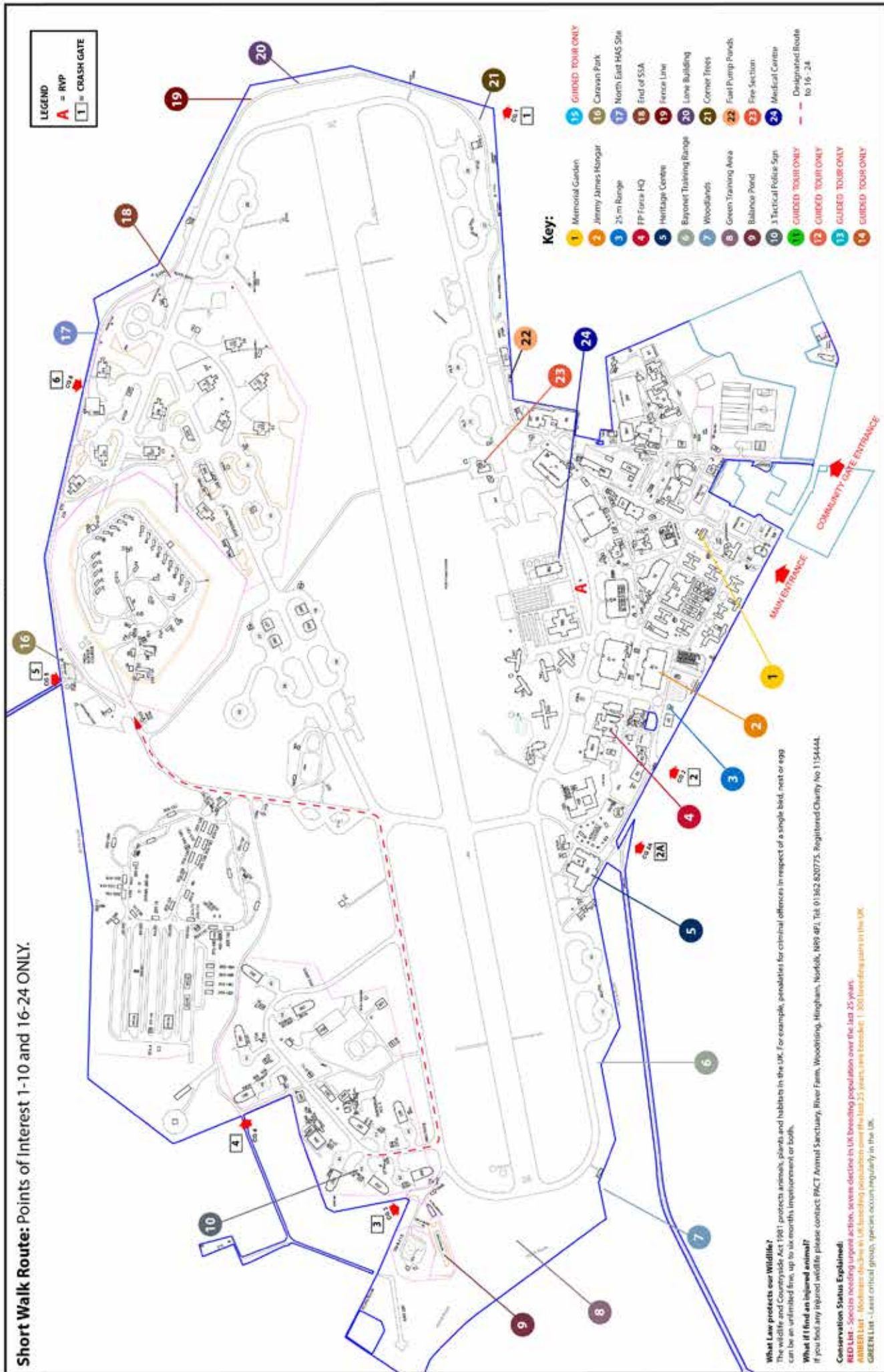






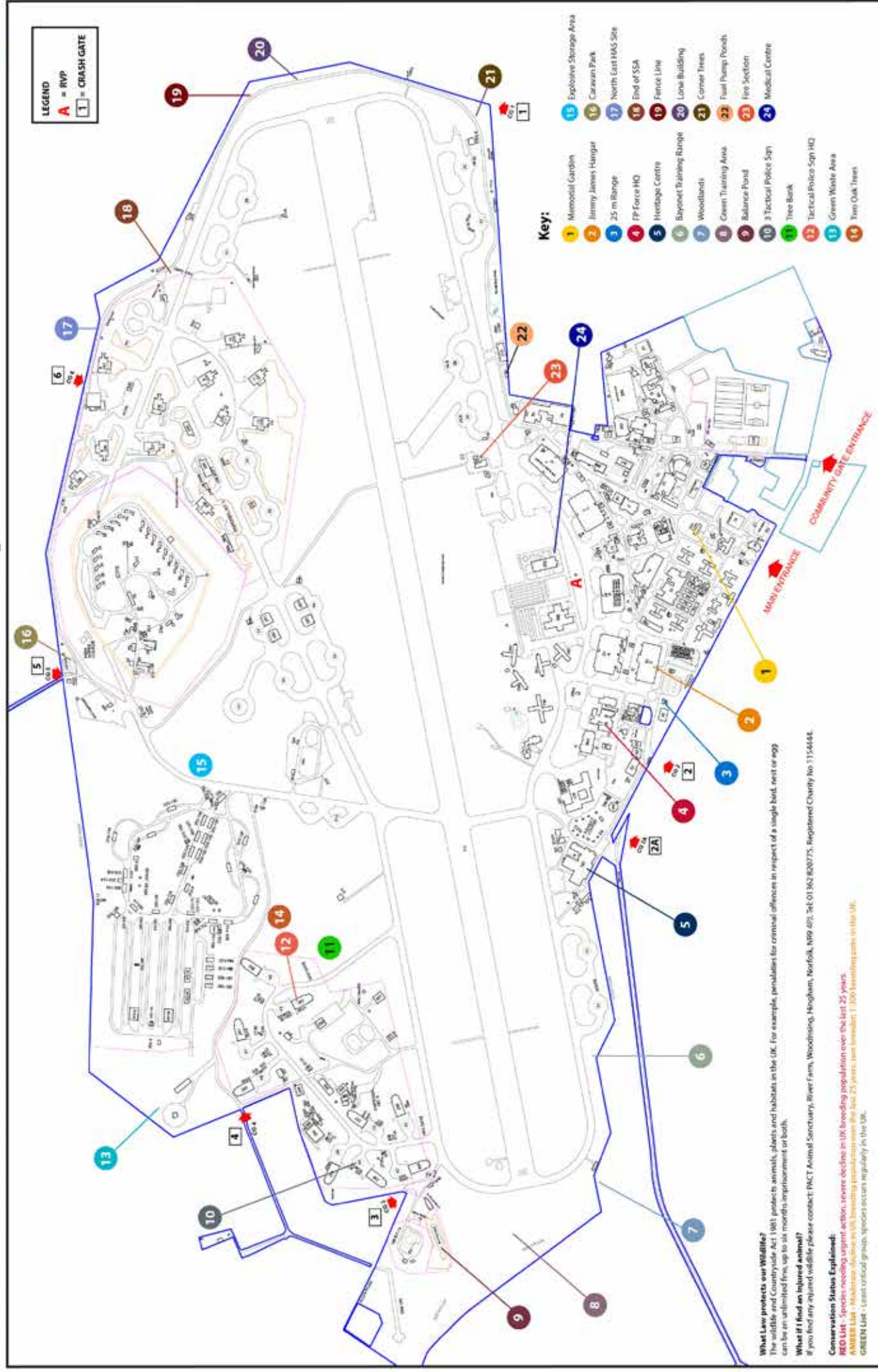
# Points of Interest: Short Walk Route Map

Short Walk Route: Points of Interest 1-10 and 16-24 ONLY.





# Points of Interest: Guided Walk Route Map



# The Nature Trail Walk Rules

For your enjoyment and safety whilst using the trail, the following rules apply. In addition, Station Standing Orders should be followed at all times.

- Do not loiter in areas which are transit only and stick to the route in the guidebook.
- **Do not** undertake the route marked as “guided walk” unless as part of a guided tour.
- Be Covid-safe. Observe 2 metres distancing, stick to current guidelines and regulations regarding social groups <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>
- Wash hands before and after using the trail. Do not share guidebooks.
- Dogs on a lead and clear up all dog mess.
- Observe only - do not touch or attempt to interfere with wildlife, birds nests etc.
- Be alert and aware of traffic and roads.
- Give way to cycles and other vehicles.
- Ensure that high-vis is worn if visibility is low and bring a torch.
- Trail takes approximately 1.5 hour at a reasonable pace, it will take longer for some people. Leave enough time for the walk and check what time sunset will be.
- Bring sunscreen and water during hot weather, or other suitable clothing for wet weather.
- All users should wear closed footwear suitable for walking, do not go “off road”.
- Be FOD aware! Take litter home with you.
- If you have mobility issues please contact the Community Development Officer for full information about access to the trail.
- **At all times station standing orders apply.** If you are escorting a guest you are responsible for ensuring they also comply with orders.
- It is your responsibility to make sure that you are aware of any airfield or other activity that may impact your ability to access the trail. Follow all signage and do not transit past any barriers. Families should contact the HIVE if unsure.
- Under 18's must be accompanied by parents or a carer aged 18+ at all times.
- Parents and carers are responsible at all times for the safety and wellbeing of under 18's using the trail.
- Parents with young children are advised to check the route beforehand. Please be aware that map locations points 7-22 have little available shelter or resting points.
- **In an emergency call 999 and inform the guard room on 01359 237979.**
- Please be aware that wildlife may not always be present or in season, the trail indicates the types of flora and fauna present in the area but that is not a guarantee that you will see it!

## What Law Protects our Wildlife?

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects animals, plants and habitats in the UK. For example, penalties for criminal offences in respect of a single bird, nest or egg can be an unlimited fine, up to six months imprisonment or both.

## What If I find an injured animal?

If you find any injured wildlife please contact PACT Animal Sanctuary, River Farm, Woodrising, Hingham, Norfolk, NR9 4PJ. Tel 01362 820775. Registered Charity No 1154444.

## Conservation Status Explained:

**RED List** - species needing urgent action, severe decline in UK breeding population over the last 25 years.

**AMBER List** - Moderate decline in UK breeding population over the last 25 years, rare breeder, 1-300 breeding pairs in the UK.

**GREEN List** - Least critical group, species occurs regularly in the UK.

# Foreword

by Station Commander  
Royal Air Force Honington  
Group Captain M M Radnall RAF



RAF Honington sits in the heart of the rural countryside, bordering Norfolk and Suffolk, and is sandwiched by the farming Estates of Euston, Troston and Elveden at nearby Thetford Forest. In such a setting, you might expect to find many varieties of wildlife beyond the Station perimeter, but you may not realise that a wealth of wildlife exists right here on our doorstep! The Station is very familiar with the usually high tempo of resident units training, exercising, marching and live firing on the airfield, with the occasional aircraft thrown in too. However, we are host to a hive of other activity; under foot, in the hedgerows and high up in the trees. The Station is an extremely biodiverse site and we are most fortunate to share it with a wide range of birds, wildlife, insects and plants, including some rare or declining species such as the Curlew, Skylark and Oystercatchers.

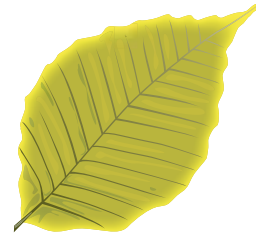
I am therefore delighted to introduce this new publication, 'The Countryman', RAF Honington's very own Nature Trail. We want this to be an exciting community asset that affords Station personnel and their families the opportunity to enjoy, learn, appreciate and help protect the wildlife that surrounds us. You will find within this booklet a Short Walk Route (3 miles) and a longer Guided Walk Route (3.5 miles) that circumnavigates the airfield and includes up to 24 sites where you might find an example of Station wildlife. We have also included an informative fact sheet that provides relevant detail and the conservation rating of fauna and flora at each location. The factsheets showcase a wonderful collection of wildlife photographs taken at RAF Honington over the years. They also include a QR code, which can be scanned to find additional information online.

I must thank the Station Community Support and Media Teams, for their effort in creating this booklet. I am also indebted to Mr Tony Roe for his willingness to share his collection of photographs and wealth of knowledge regarding the diversity of nature found on Station. I am confident that anyone undertaking the Trail will soon appreciate their passion for nature and will enjoy this unique opportunity to explore the Station, learn more of nature and promote personal wellbeing. Indeed, I hope The Countryman Trail will continue to inspire people to enjoy and help conserve our natural surroundings for generations to come.



# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Memorial Garden



1



**Conservation Status - GREEN List** - Populations are stable. Robins are vulnerable to severe winter conditions. They will feed from your garden feeder.

### Robin

**Facts** - Male Robins are brightly coloured compared to the females. You may find a Robin hopping around the Memorial Gardens or in your own garden searching for food. The Robin has long been a UK garden icon, earnestly following the gardener around waiting for them to unearth hidden insects!

**Size:** 12-14 cm **Eggs:** 3-4 eggs

**Food:** Insects, earthworms, suet, mealworms.

**Life Span:** Up to 6 years

**UK Population:** 6 million breeding pairs.



Sadly, bumblebees are in decline due to habitat loss. Two species have been driven to extinction since 1940.

### Bumblebee

**Facts** - bumblebees are large, fuzzy insects with short, stubby wings. They are larger than honeybees and do not produce as much honey. They are however, very important pollinators, foraging for pollen rather than nectar and will transfer more pollen to the pistils of the flowers with each visit. Unlike honeybees, bumblebees will not die if they use their sting.

**Size:** 1-1.4 cm in length

**Food:** nectar and pollen from flowering plants.

**Life Span:** 28 days

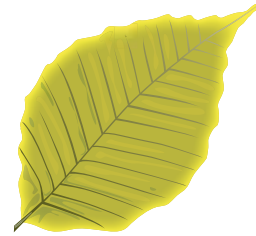
**UK Population:** 25 different species.

Scan here for  
more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Jimmy James Hangar



2



**Conservation Status: AMBER List** Population declining. Kestrel numbers fluctuate and are closely linked to vole numbers. Collisions, illegal shooting, poisoning and disease are other causes of mortality.

### Kestrel

**Facts** - The Kestrel is a member of the falcon genus, falco. Kestrels are easily distinguished by their typical hunting behaviour which is to hover at a height of 10-20m over open countryside and swoop down on prey. We are lucky to be able to view, from a distance, a resident breeding pair that have made a home in the bird box attached to the side of the Jimmy James Hangar. (The box is located on the closest upper corner of the hangar as you approach it from the Memorial Garden). They are only there for a few months of the year.

**Size:** 30-36cm **Eggs:** 3-6 eggs

**Food:** Grasshoppers, beetles, dragonflies, small rodents, bats

**Life Span:** Up to 4 years

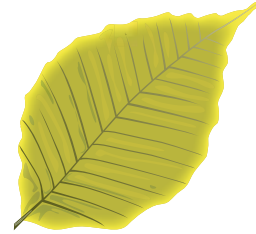
**UK Population:** Recorded as 52,000 breeding pairs in 1991 however the population has declined since then.



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more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail



3

25 Metre Range



**Conservation Status:** GREEN List. Stable population.

## Goldfinch

**Facts** - A flock of Goldfinches are called a Charm. Most UK Goldfinches will migrate approximately 1,000 miles all the way to Spain and France in order to avoid the bitter UK winter. The Goldfinches here at RAF Honington enjoy the generous bird feeders that are kindly put out next to the ranges.

**Size:** 12cm **Eggs:** 4-6 eggs

**Food:** seeds and insects. Will eat bird feeder mix from your bird table.

**Life Span:** 3-6 years

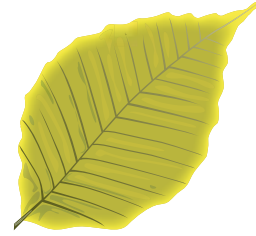
**UK Population:** 1.2 million pairs.

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more wildlife





# The Countryman Nature Trail



4

## Force Protection Force Headquarters



**Conservation Status: AMBER List** Although the population may have made a come back it is not considered stable.

### Bullfinch

**Facts** - One of Britain's most colourful birds have appeared to have made a comeback after years of decline. These extremely shy birds are a welcome, albeit rare addition to the garden. The Bullfinch is found across the UK throughout the year and is also quite partial to any handouts on the SHQ bird table.

**Size:** 14-16 cm **Eggs:** 4-5 eggs

**Food:** Seeds and insects. Attract them to your bird feeder with some lovely sunflower seeds!

**Life Span:** Up to 2 years

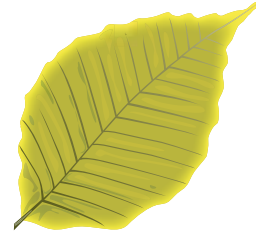
**UK Population:** 190,000 breeding pairs

Scan here for  
more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Heritage Centre



5



**Conservation Status:** **GREEN** List. Population stable. Introduced species - least concern.

### Little Owl

**Facts** - The smallest owl to be found in Britain. This bird is not native to the UK but was introduced in 1889 by two landowners. Little Owls have found their favoured nesting sites in and around RAF Honington in natural tree cavities. These owls pair for life. Although not native to the UK they have found a niche in the food chain and have fitted in without causing an issue to native species.

**Size:** 22 cm **Eggs:** 2-5 eggs

**Food:** seeds and insects.

**Life Span:** 2-3 years

**UK Population:** 1.7 million breeding pairs.



**Conservation Status:** **AMBER** List Due to their vulnerability to over fishing of their natural food supply.

### Oystercatchers

**Facts** - Britain supports an internationally important number of wintering oystercatchers with up to 45 per cent of Europe's population choosing to spend winter here. These birds come inland during the breeding season, so you are likely to spot them at RAF Honington. Beware very well camouflaged chicks 'hiding' in the middle of the road!

**Size:** 39-50 cm

**Hoglets:** 1-4 eggs

**Food:** Cockles, muscles, oysters

**Life Span:** Up to 40 years

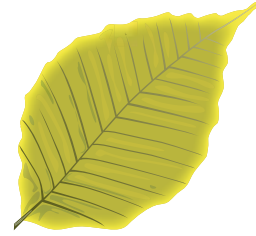
**UK Population:** 110,000 breeding pairs

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more wildlife





# The Countryman Nature Trail



6

## Bayonet Training Range



**Conservation Status: AMBER List** Intensive farming across the UK is destroying their wetland habitats.

### Common Curlew

**Facts** - The UK's breeding population of curlews is of international importance, being estimated to represent more than 30 per cent of the west European population. The overall UK population declined 42 per cent between 1995 and 2008. Here at RAF Honington we are privileged to see a curlew or two flying around and nesting in this area. They favour rough grassland and moorlands for breeding, so it is an ideal location. Please keep dogs on leads in long grass and watch where you step as there may be chicks about!

**Size:** 50-60cm **Eggs:** 3-6 eggs

**Food:** Invertebrates, earthworms, beetles, spiders, caterpillars

**Life Span:** Up to 5 years

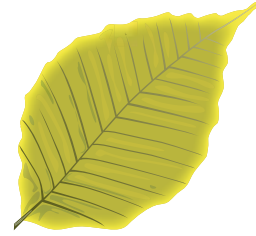
**UK Population:** 120,000 breeding pairs.

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# The Countryman Nature Trail



7

## Woodlands



**Conservation Status:** **GREEN** List not currently a species of conservation concern.

### Jackdaw

**Facts:** The western jackdaw, also known as the Eurasian jackdaw, European jackdaw, or simply jackdaw, is a passerine bird in the crow family. Found across Europe, western Asia and North Africa, it is mostly resident, although northern and eastern populations migrate south in winter.

**Size:** 45-47 cm **Eggs:** 4-5 eggs

**Food:** Their diet is largely composed of seeds, fruit and invertebrates; as Jackdaws are also carrion eaters, they will pick at road kill or even take other birds' eggs.

**Life Span:** Up to 5 years

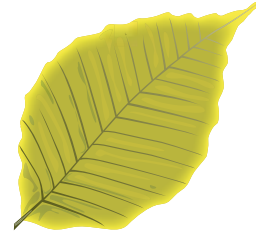
**UK Population:** 4.2 to 10 million breeding pairs.

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more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Green Training Area



8



**Conservation Status:** GREEN List Least concern.

### Six Spot Burnet Moth

**Facts** - The commonest and most widely distributed burnet moth in the UK. Flies with a usually slow buzzing flight during sunshine and is attracted to a range of flowers including thistles, knapweeds and scabious. These moths can be seen best before the long grasses are cut at the end of the runway.

**Size:** 30-38cm

**Food:** They feed on the nectar of knapweed, thistles, scabious and other grass flowers.

**Life Span:** Moths go through a life cycle of various stages that takes them from being an egg, to a caterpillar, then the pupa, and finally the adult moth. Six-Spot Burnet moths will then live for 65 to 90 days.

**UK Population:** Unknown.

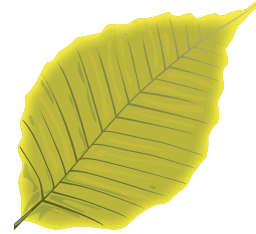
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# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Balance Pond



9



**Conservation Status: GREEN List** Population stable.

### Poppies

**Facts** - Few flowers are as widely recognised as the poppy and people with little knowledge of plants will generally be able to identify one. In part this is due to its tenacious presence both in rural lanes and fields and on wasteland and verges in towns. Mainly, though, it is the poppy's status as an emblem of remembrance that has ensured it is deeply embedded in our psyches. It is an influential flower and it has a fascinating history. Over 120 species of poppy exist in the genus *Papaver* - the genus we usually think of when we say poppy, and which includes the common red, field or corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) as well as the notorious opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*). Culinary poppy seeds are a source of minerals, calcium and iron and are derived mainly from the opium poppy *P. somniferum*.



**Conservation Status: GREEN List** Least concern. (The average worker bee lives for just 5 to 6 weeks. During this time, she'll produce around a twelfth of a teaspoon of honey)!

### Honey Bee

**Facts** - Honey bees produce the much-loved honeycomb we all recognise as a luxury cupboard addition. Honey bees, as with all bee species are highly valuable to the human population as they are perfectly adapted to pollinate, helping plants to grow! Unfortunately, many bee species are extinct or are under threat in the east of England. We can help them survive by allowing small areas of your garden to grow naturally, or to grow plants that are known to attract bees!

**Size:** 15 mm long

**Food:** Nectar and pollen found in flowers which they convert into honey.

**Threats:** Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. The heavy use of pesticides has caused widespread loss.

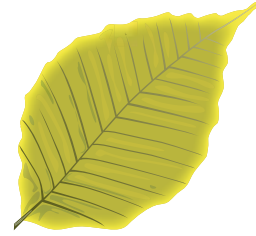
**UK Population:** Abundance has declined, population unknown.

Scan here for  
more wildlife





# The Countryman Nature Trail



10

## 3 Tactical Police Squadron



**Conservation Status:** GREEN List Population stable.

### Greylag Goose

**Facts** - Individual populations around Europe will migrate to various areas including Spain, North Africa, Turkey and Iraq to escape the cold winter. Geese travel huge distances so prefer to travel at night when the air is cooler to prevent them from overheating. The greylag geese here at RAF Honington will be feeding in the ponds and breeding in the quiet secluded areas.

**Size:** 76-89 cm **Eggs:** 5-7 eggs.

**Food:** Oats, wheat, grass, leaves, peas and root crops.

**Life Span:** Up to 8 years.

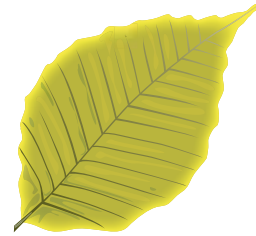
**UK Population:** Approximately 140,000.

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more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Tree Bank



11



### Ten Spot Lady Bird

**Facts** - ten spot ladybirds are more habitat specific than two spot ladybirds but still occupy a variety of habitats. Generally, ten spot ladybirds are found on deciduous trees and hedgerows. Many ten spot records are from urban areas where deciduous trees are abundant. Like two spot ladybirds, this species can be readily found on mature lime or sycamore trees, for example in parks or churchyards. A number of ten spot ladybird records are from deciduous and conifer woodlands, scrub and grasslands.

**Size:** 3.5-4.5 cm.

**Eggs:** 40 once or twice a year.

**Food:** aphids.

**Life Span:** 1 year.

**Conservation Status:** GREEN List Population stable.



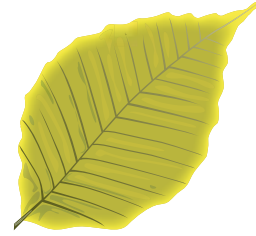
These species can also be located in the tree bank area.

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more wildlife





# The Countryman Nature Trail



12

## Tactical Police Squadron Hangar



**Conservation Status: RED** List Its recent dramatic population decline has made it a Red List species. This decrease is mainly due to the widespread switch from spring to autumn-sown cereals. Autumn sown cereals being taller and denser and unsuitable for nest building, thus they build their nests next to tractor tracks. Increased use of insecticides and weed killer has also removed much of their food source.

### Skylark

**Facts** - Known for its dramatic display flight, flying vertically up in the air. Skylarks are fantastic singers and will fill the air with bird song throughout the day. RAF Honington is a very important area for these birds as there are many wild patches around the airfield for them to breed and nest in peace.

**Size:** 18-19 cm **Eggs:** 3-5 eggs.

**Food:** Seeds, insects, earthworms, spiders and slugs.

**Life Span:** Up to 5 years.

**UK Population:** 1.5 million.

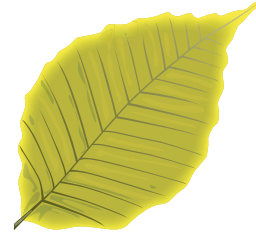
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# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Green Waste Area



13



### Labyrinth Spider

**Facts** - Labyrinth spiders are UK natives and build sheet webs that lead down to intricate, labyrinthine tunnels where they can eat their dinner in peace. Labyrinth spiders can be found on grassland and heathland and don't have a taste for human flesh, preferring to snack on grasshoppers and crickets.

**Size:** 18 mm in length.

**Food:** grasshoppers and crickets.

**Eggs:** The female usually produces 5 or 6 egg sacs with an average of 55 eggs each.

**Life Span:** 2-3 years.

**Conservation Status:** GREEN List Population stable.



### Lapwings (Green Plovers)

**Facts:** Lapwings are found on farmland throughout the UK particularly in lowland areas of northern England, the Borders and eastern Scotland. In the breeding season they prefer spring sown cereals, root crops, permanent unimproved pasture, meadows and fallow fields.

**Life Span:** 4-5 years.

**Conservation Status:** GREEN List - Stable.



### Dragonfly

**Facts:** Dragonflies hatch from eggs in freshwater and spend at least a few months (sometimes several years) as aquatic predators.

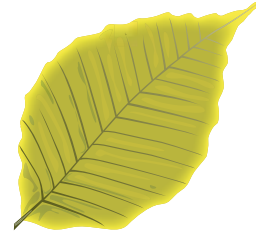
**Life Span:** 6 months.

**Conservation Status:** GREEN List - Stable.

Scan here for  
more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail



14

## Two Oak Trees



**Conservation Status:** **GREEN List** Population stable.

### Little Owl

**Facts** - The smallest owl to be found in Britain. This bird is not native to the UK but was introduced in 1889 by two landowners. Little Owls have found their favoured nesting sites in and around RAF Honington in natural tree cavities. These owls pair for life. Although not native to the UK they have found a niche in the food chain and have fitted in without causing an issue to native species.

**Size:** 22 cm **Eggs:** 2-5 eggs.

**Food:** Insects, small rodents, roosting birds, amphibians.

**Life Span:** Up to 16 years.

**UK Population:** 6,000 breeding pairs.



**Conservation Status:** **AMBER List** Declining due to the increased use of herbicides and ploughing of old grasslands.

### Cowslip

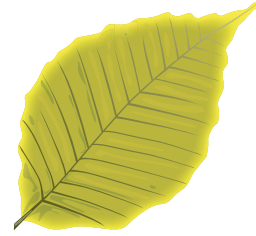
**Facts** - Simple yet lovely, cowslips are synonymous with spring and Easter. You will find them in woods and meadows during the springtime. Cowslips are very important to wildlife as their flowers are an early source of nectar for various insects including bees, beetles and butterflies. Cowslips are traditionally picked on May Day to adorn garlands. Today cowslip meadows are a great rarity, better to admire from a distance than pick and take home!

**Size:** 15-30 cm

Scan here for  
more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail



15

## Explosive Storage Area



**Conservation Status: RED List** - Endangered in the UK, population declining. Legal shooting and illegal coursing have decimated the population. Hares currently have little legal protection from year-round hunting.

### Brown Hare

**Facts** - The charismatic brown hare can be found throughout England, Wales and Scotland. The brown hare has a Species Action Plan under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, which aims to expand existing populations. Hares and rabbits keep grasses short which in turn assists with nest sites for several bird species. Hare coursing is illegal but unfortunately continues in some areas. Happily, hares at RAF Honington are safe from this practice. You may well spot one grazing whilst you wonder around the peri track!

**Size:** 50-70 cm **Leverets:** 4 in each litter (Baby hares are called leverets)

**Food:** Grasses, herbs, cereal crops.

**Life Span:** 2-4 years.

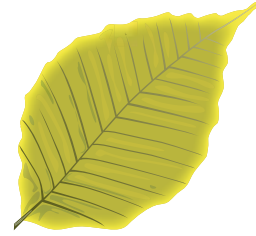
**UK Population:** Approximately 500,000.

Scan here for  
more wildlife





# The Countryman Nature Trail



16

## Caravan Park



**Conservation Status: GREEN List** - Jackdaws are thriving. This is largely as a result of improved breeding performance and the Jackdaw's diverse diet.

### Jackdaw

**Facts** - The jackdaw is a small, black crow with a distinctive silvery sheen to the back of its head. The pale eyes are also noticeable. The jackdaw call is a familiar hard 'tchack' from which it gets its name. It will commonly nest in chimneys, buildings, rock crevices and tree holes.

**Size:** 34 cm      **Eggs:** 4-6 eggs.

**Food:** Insects, young birds and eggs, fruit, seeds and scraps.

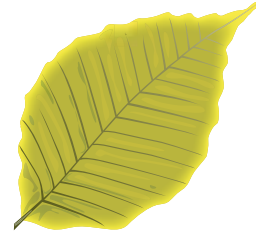
**Life Span:** 5 years.

**UK Population:** 1,400,000 breeding pairs.

Scan here for  
more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail



17

North East HAS Site



**Conservation Status:** GREEN List - Population stable.

## Common Buzzard

**Facts** - In the 1880s buzzards were a common sight in Britain, but widespread persecution resulted in heavy declines in their population. Thankfully they have made a comeback and can now be seen in every county in the UK again! This is a very adaptable species, able to survive in a wide variety of habitats including low land farms and high mountains. You may well spot one resting on the fence line.

**Size:** 40-58 cm **Eggs:** 2-4 eggs

**Food:** Small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, large insects, earthworms, birds.

**Life Span:** Up to 8 years

**UK Population:** 300,000 breeding pairs

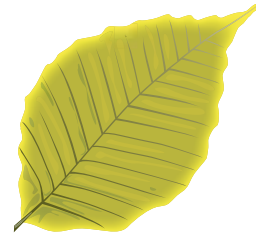
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more wildlife





# The Countryman Nature Trail

## End of SSA



18



**Conservation Status:** GREEN List Population stable.

### Swallows

**Facts** - Swallows migrate vast distances to many locations including Africa and Europe where they spend the winter. They build nests made of mud and attach them to the side of houses. Soon there will be 3 or 7 tiny and very demanding mouths agape squawking at their mother for food. If you do not wish to have bird droppings by your home, please wait for the babies to depart before you remove the nest. You may find it quite charming to watch the fledglings in the garden prior to figuring out how to take off! To view swallows away from home there are some who reside each year in the SSA area and by the 25m range.

**Size:** 15-20 cm **Eggs:** 3-7 eggs.

**Food:** Flying insects

**Life Span:** Up to 10 years.

**UK Population:** 375,000 breeding pairs.



**Conservation Status:** AMBER List Due to their vulnerability to over fishing of their natural food supply.

### Oystercatcher

**Facts** - Britain supports an internationally important number of wintering oystercatchers with up to 45 per cent of Europe's population choosing to spend winter here. These birds come inland during the breeding season, so you are likely to spot them at RAF Honington. Beware very well camouflaged chicks 'hiding' in the middle of the road!

**Size:** 39-50 cm.

**Food:** Cockles, muscles, oysters.

**Life Span:** Up to 40 years.

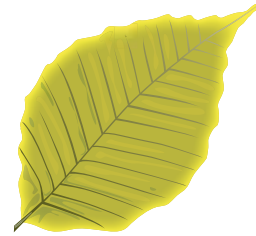
**UK Population:** 110,000 breeding pairs.

Scan here for  
more wildlife



# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Fence Line



19



**Conservation Status: GREEN List** Population stable.

### Red Legged Partridge

**Facts** - Introduced from continental Europe where they are mainly found in Spain and France. When disturbed, it prefers to run instead of fly. It breeds in open scrubland and farmland, laying its eggs on the ground. These cheeky chaps are a common and cheerful sight at RAF Honington.

**Size:** 32-34 cm **Eggs:** 13-15 eggs.

**Food:** Seeds, leaves and small invertebrates.

**Life Span:** 3-5 years.

**UK Population:** 82,000.



**Conservation Status: GREEN List** Even though numbers of pheasants decrease continuously in the wild, they are not on the list of endangered species.

### Pheasants

**Facts** - Pheasants are large, long-tailed gamebirds. The males have rich cheshnut, golden brown and black markings on their bodies and tails, with a dark green head and red face wattling. Females are mottled, with a paler brown/black colour. They were introduced to the UK long ago and more recent introductions have brought in a variety of races and breeds for sport shooting.

**Size:** 59-89 cm. **Eggs:** 2-22 eggs.

**Food:** Seeds, grain, shoots and insects.

**Life Span:** Up to 3 years in the wld.

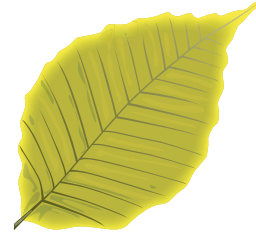
**UK Population:** 2.3 million breeding females.

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# The Countryman Nature Trail



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## Lone Building



**Conservation Status: AMBER List** - Population declining. Kestrel numbers fluctuate and are closely linked to vole numbers. Collisions, illegal shooting, poisoning and disease are other causes of mortality.

### Kestrel

**Facts** - The Kestrel is a member of the falcon genus, falco. Kestrels are easily distinguished by their typical hunting behaviour which is to hover at a height of 10-20m over open countryside and swoop down on prey. There is a nearby Kestrel nest in this location, you may spot it hunting out on the open grass on the airfield.

**Size:** 30-36 cm **Eggs:** 3-6 eggs

**Food:** Grasshoppers, beetles, dragonflies, small rodents, bats.

**Life Span:** Up to 4 years.

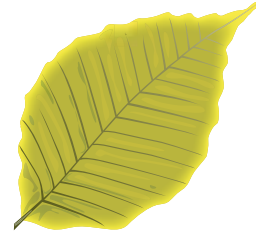
**UK Population:** Recorded as 52,000 breeding pairs in 199, however the population has declined since then.

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# The Countryman Nature Trail

## Corner Trees



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**Conservation Status:** GREEN List Population stable.

### Long-Tailed Tits

**Facts:** The Long-Tailed Tit is a small bird, however with its tail it can be up to 15cm in length, the tail can be up to 8cm, so body size is very small. In flight the Long-tailed Tit looks like a flying lollypop! It's regularly seen in gardens and will visit bird feeders and tables frequently.

**Size:** 15 cms in length.

**Eggs:** 6-8 eggs.

**Food:** mainly small insects, their larvae and small spiders, plus some seeds in the winter. In gardens where food is provided, the species readily feeds on peanuts and suet pellets in mesh feeders, suet blocks and suet balls.

**Life Span:** 2 years.

**UK Population:** 250,000 breeding pairs.



### Thistle

**Facts:** The Thistle is a national symbol of Scotland and is known for its prickly touch. The thistle flower grows those spiny leaves to protect against being eaten by wildlife. It has gained a bad reputation as a weed due to its ability to reproduce across fields.



### White Daisy

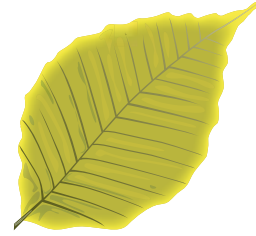
**Facts:** They may be small blooms, but they make up for their diminutive size in group volume. Daisies make up almost 10% of all flowering plants on the planet. They come in lots of other colours. Look for them in yellow, orange, red, rose, crimson and purple.

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# The Countryman Nature Trail



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## Fuel Pumps Pond



**Conservation Status:** GREEN List - Population stable.

### Mallard

**Facts** - The most familiar and widespread species of dabbling duck in Britain. Mallards are adaptable waders who live happily in tiny ponds in towns and cities as well as in marshes and wetlands in the wider countryside. Frequently spotted at RAF Honington due to the various ponds in and around the camp.

**Size:** 50-65 cm **Eggs:** 10-12 eggs.

**Food:** Aquatic vegetation, insects, earthworms, grain and corn.

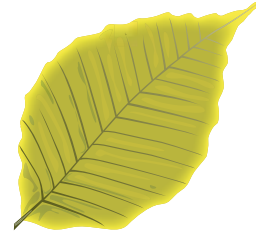
**Life Span:** 5-10 years.

**UK Population:** 61,000 - 146,000 breeding pairs.

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# The Countryman Nature Trail



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## Fire Section



**Conservation Status: AMBER List** - Population declining. Kestrel numbers fluctuate and are closely linked to vole numbers. Collisions, illegal shooting, poisoning and disease are other causes of mortality.

### Kestrel

**Facts** - The Kestrel is a member of the falcon genus, *Falco*. Kestrels are easily distinguished by their typical hunting behaviour which is to hover at a height of 10-20m over open countryside and swoop down on prey. There is a nearby Kestrel nest in this location, you may spot it hunting out on the open grass on the airfield.

**Size:** 30-36 cm **Eggs:** 3-6 eggs

**Food:** Grasshoppers, beetles, dragonflies, small rodents, bats.

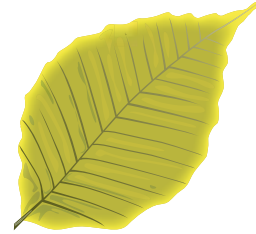
**Life Span:** Up to 4 years.

**UK Population:** Recorded as 52,000 breeding pairs in 199, however the population has declined since then.

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# The Countryman Nature Trail



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## Medical Centre



**Conservation Status: AMBER List** - Due to their vulnerability to over fishing of their natural food supply.

### Oystercatcher

**Facts** - Britain supports an internationally important number of wintering oystercatchers with up to 45 per cent of Europe's population choosing to spend winter here. These birds come inland during the breeding season, so you are likely to spot them at RAF Honington. There are oystercatchers nesting in this vicinity. Please beware there could be very well camouflaged chicks 'hiding' in the middle of the road!.

**Size:** 39-50 cm **Eggs:** 1-4 eggs.

**Food:** Worms and insects.

**Life Span:** Up to 40 years.

**UK Population:** 110,000 breeding pairs.

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# ROYAL AIR FORCE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This project is proudly supported by  
RAF Honington Community Support

**For Further Information please contact the  
Community Development Officer**

[diana.saunders110@mod.gov.uk](mailto:diana.saunders110@mod.gov.uk)

**Reprints of the guide book can be requested from**  
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