

ANIMAL NEWS

STAG beetle season is here and experts need your help to monitor this rare and magnificent insect.

Stag beetles are the UK's largest beetle. They used to be common in the south of England, but are sadly now quite rare. For years they live underground as larvae (see below). But in May and June, the adult beetles emerge in order to find a mate.

The PTES (People's Trust for Endangered Species) is asking for our help to spot stag beetles. It wants to map where the beetles are found and track their numbers.

The best time to spot stag beetles is on a warm, summer's evening, when the insects like to fly around. They are easily recognised by their large 'antlers', which are only found on the males. And don't worry, the antlers are used to battle other males and impress the females – they don't bite!

If you are lucky enough to spot one, record your sighting at www.ptes.org/stagbeetles. The website also has lots of useful information on how you can help this iconic insect.



Stag beetle larvae

The curious life of a stag beetle:

- Stag beetles spend up to seven years underground as a larvae.
- They feed on rotting wood.
- Once fully grown, the larvae build a cocoon in the soil and change into beetles.
- In the summer, the adults dig their way out of the soil.
- They fly around to find a mate and lay eggs.
- The beetles only live for a few weeks. By the end of August, most of them will have died.

BEETLE WATCH



Male and female stag beetles

LO: I can find facts

Listen to me reading the text again. Then, have a go at reading it by yourself.

Task 1

Write down **eight facts** that you have learnt about stag beetles by reading the text.

Task 2

Decide if the statements in the box are true or false.

| statement | True or false? |
|---|----------------|
| Stag beetles are the UK's smallest beetle. | |
| They have become quite rare in England. | |
| The PTES wants us to help them spot stag beetles. | |
| Stag beetles spend May and June underground as larvae. | |
| They eat rotting wood. | |
| In the summertime, adult stag beetles emerge from the soil. | |
| Female stag beetles have large antlers on their heads. | |