

## Take action and get involved!

### Land management

Do you own or manage any land in a Shrill Carder Bee area? The project can offer a free, no obligation visit to provide bespoke advice on enhancing your land and providing for Shrill Carder Bees and other pollinators. From gardens and small acreages to farms and estates, the project can provide assistance.

### Volunteering

Simple actions to do at home, such as bee-friendly planting or starting a BeeWalk to helping at events and taking part in our surveying. There are many ways to get involved with the project. If you are interested in learning more about the Shrill Carder Bee, or would like to become a volunteer please contact your local project officer (see below for details).

**To find out more, arrange a visit or get advice, please contact our project officers:**

**Daisy Headley** (Somerset & Wiltshire) at [daisy.headley@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:daisy.headley@bumblebeeconservation.org)

**Rosie Earwaker** (Thames Gateway) at [rosie.earwaker@buglife.org.uk](mailto:rosie.earwaker@buglife.org.uk)



## The Bumblebee Conservation Trust

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust was established in 2006 and is a science led organisation with projects across the UK. The Trust aims to inspire people to help provide the habitat these charismatic insects require across communities and the countryside to ensure that populations have a long term future in the UK.

### Buglife

Buglife is the only organisation in Europe devoted to the conservation of all invertebrates. The organisation is actively working to save Britain's rarest little animals – everything from bees to beetles, worms to woodlice and jumping spiders to jellyfish. There are more than 40,000 invertebrate species in the UK, and many of these are under threat as never before. Buglife intends to inspire people across the country to discover and care for the small things that run the planet.



Keep up to date and join the conversation by following us on Twitter and Facebook at [@naturebftb](https://twitter.com/naturebftb)

Find out more about Back from the Brink and our other projects at [naturebftb.co.uk](http://naturebftb.co.uk)

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The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a registered charity (England & Wales 1115634 / Scotland SC042830). Company registration number 05618710 (England & Wales)

**Registered Office:** Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Lakeside Centre, Lakeside Country Park, Wide Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 5PE.

# BACK FROM THE BRINK

## Bringing the Shrill Carder Bee back from the brink



[naturebftb.co.uk](http://naturebftb.co.uk)

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Buglife are part of one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken, working collaboratively on the **Back from the Brink** partnership. The collaboration has brought together the expertise from across the conservation sector with the aim of saving 20 species in England from the brink of extinction and benefiting over 200 more through projects including the Shrilla Carder Bee Recovery Project. The project is made possible thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the players of the National Lottery, and the project has been described as “a game changer for wildlife”, Tom Tew, HLF Trustee.

### Why the ‘Shrilla Carder Bee Project’?

The Shrilla Carder Bee Project is an exciting partnership being led by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Buglife to secure the future of one of the UK’s rarest bumblebees, the Shrilla Carder Bee (*Bombus sylvarum*). As part of the wider Back from the Brink project, our aim is to gain a better understanding of both the distribution and abundance of this bumblebee, to protect those sites where populations still exist. We will provide advice to inform targeted land management activities that will strengthen and increase population numbers. This will increase the area of suitable habitat for Shrilla Carder Bees and improve the connectivity of populations.

### Species in decline

Formerly a widespread species, the Shrilla Carder Bee has suffered serious declines and is now limited to only a handful of areas in southern England and Wales. The main cause is the loss of flower-rich areas through the intensification of agriculture and increasing urbanisation. This has resulted in smaller and more fragmented populations, which are increasingly vulnerable to further declines as well as local and national extinctions.

### Where are we doing?

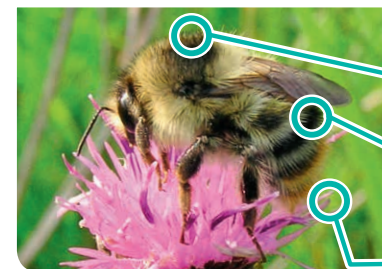
Our work is focusing on two areas in England where populations of the Shrilla Carder Bee are still known today: Somerset & Wiltshire and the Thames Gateway (North Kent and South Essex). We will:

- Work with local landowners providing advice on how to improve and create areas of favourable Shrilla Carder Bee habitat
- Provide identification training for volunteer surveyors to help monitor populations of the Shrilla Carder Bee and other bumblebees
- Produce a species recovery plan to inform future conservation activities.

The Shrilla Carder Bee is a late flying species, with queens typically emerging in May. After overwintering, queens will begin the search for a new nest site which is usually built on or just below the surface in rough, tussocky grassland. The Shrilla Carder Bee is one of Britain’s smallest species of bumblebee and produces one of the smallest colonies with around 50–70 workers.



### Have you seen this bumblebee?



**Black band** between wings.

**Black stripes** on abdomen.

A mainly straw-coloured bee, with dull **reddish-orange** tail.

### Providing habitat for the Shrilla Carder Bee

The Shrilla Carder Bee occupies a variety of habitats from brownfield sites in the Thames Gateway to the wet grazing marshes of the Somerset and Gwent levels. Despite this, they have three main requirements for survival:

- Suitable nest site
- A continuous supply of flowers from April to early October, especially later in the season for new queens
- Flowers that are close to nest sites due to short foraging distance.

Favourite forage plants include Comfrey, Red bartsia, Black horehound, White-dead nettle, Knapweed and Thistles. Legumes are also particularly important for many of our rare long-tongued bumblebee species including the Shrilla Carder Bee. These include plants such as Red clover, Birds-foot trefoils and vetches.



Photo-credit: Nick Withers