

# PRESS RELEASE

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29 June 2020

## **Glow Worms spotted living on Birmingham Canal** Charity asks locals to send in sightings of “lonely hearts of the insect world”

Glow worms, once a common sight along hedgerows in England and Wales, have recently been spotted living along the Worcestershire & Birmingham Canal. Waterways and wellbeing charity, Canal & River Trust, is asking local people to send in any sightings of the magical bugs so they can be protected.

Over the years there has been a dramatic decrease of glow worms, probably due to a loss and fragmentation of habitat, the use of pesticides, and from people collecting them. The region's canals, with their warm habitats rich in snails and invertebrate life and long-connected corridors, free from pesticides, provide a good habitat for the glow worms.

Paul Wilkinson, senior ecologist at the Canal & River Trust, said: “Glow worms are one of those amazing creatures that make your heart beat a little faster, and we're really keen to find out if they are living anywhere else along the canal and how they're doing.

“The females don't have wings so colonies tend to be restricted to a local area but occasionally, where they are doing well, you may be lucky enough to see a cluster of glowing lights mysteriously shining from within the towpath edges. They are not easy to spot so there could be other colonies that we don't know about. If you do spot any please let us know, and please do not disturb them, they are rare and vulnerable, and can only survive in a few special places.

“People often think of glow worms as being a romantic sight, but they're more like the lonely hearts of the insect world - the ladies glowing away at the top of their stalks, waiting to be wooed by a male flying past. It's important we know where these wonderful insects are living so they can be protected and continue to shine a light on our wonderful wildlife and countryside.”

Spotted by one of the Canal & River Trust' eagle-eyed colleagues a female glow worm was seen in a bush alongside the canal glowing away in a bid to attract a male. The flightless females climb tall blades of grass at night and light up to attract a winged male to mate with. Despite their common name, glow worms are actually beetles and typically live for around three years in grassland habitats.

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

Once they've found a partner, the females stop glowing and return to the ground to lay their eggs. The females require undisturbed rough grass and hedges where they can feed and advertise their presence with their bright green glowing bottoms.

If anyone spots any glow worms along the canal, please get in touch and let us know. Please email [enquiries.westmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.westmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

**ENDS**

For further information contact Sarah Rudy on 07788 691 219 or email [sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)