



Yorkshire
Wildlife Trust



Knitting
Pattern
by Sara
Booth-Card



Knit a bittern

Knittern pattern

#WilderWetlands

ywt.org.uk



**Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is the only charity
entirely dedicated to conserving, protecting and
enhancing Yorkshire's wildlife and wild places**

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is registered in England no. 409650 and is a registered charity no. 210807. Registered Office: 1 St George's Place, York, YO24 1GN



Bittern

Scientific name: Botaurus stellaris

The shy and retiring bittern is a master of blending in and can be very difficult to spot in its reedbed home. It does sound like a booming foghorn, however, when it calls so can often be heard if it cannot be seen.



About

A rare and shy heron, the bittern spends almost all its time hidden away in large reedbeds, where it feeds on eels and other fish. It has wonderfully camouflaged plumage, helping it to blend into the reeds. It can also stand motionless for long periods to avoid detection.



When to see

January to December



Distribution

A shy, rare bird found in large reedbeds, especially in East Anglia, Kent, south Wales, northwest England and Yorkshire!



Did you know?

During the breeding season, the male bittern 'booms', making a deep, foghorn-like sound which can be heard up to two miles away, mostly at night. Males will mate with up to five females each season, who will each produce four or five eggs in March or April.



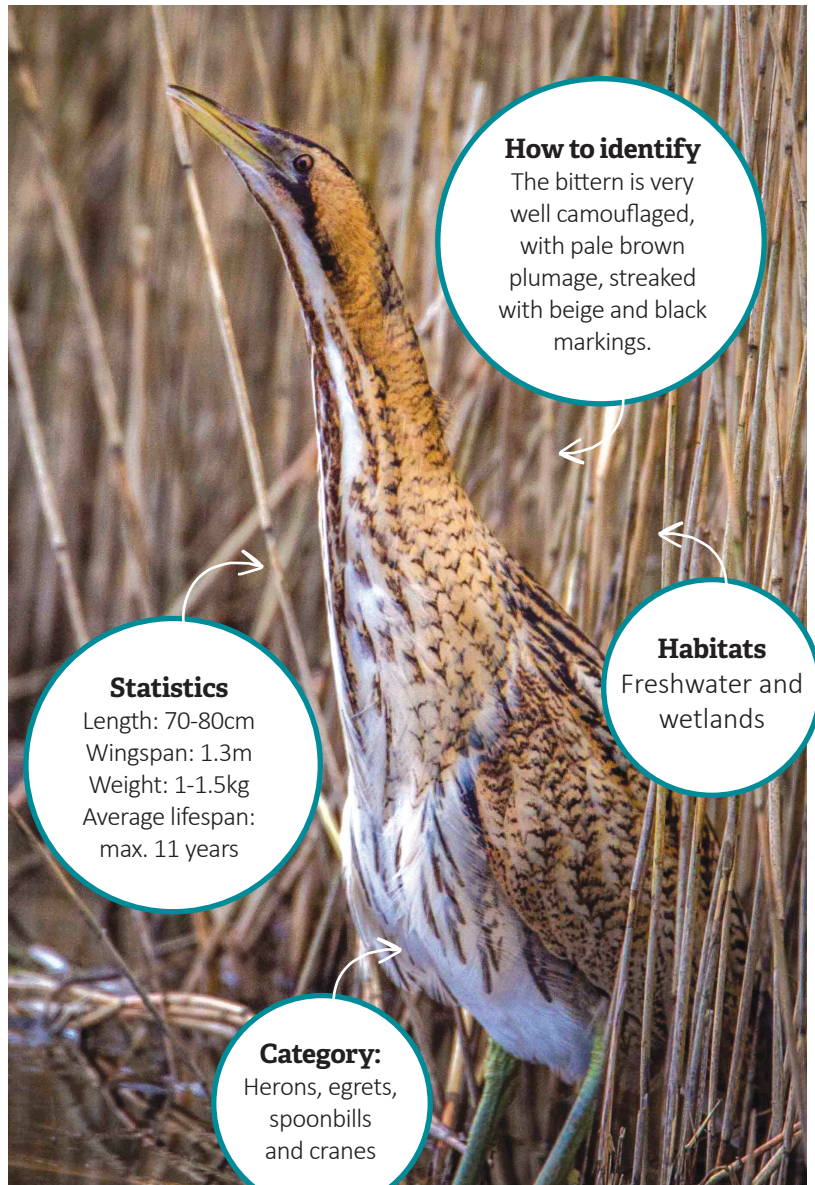
Conservation status

Classified in the UK as Amber under the Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds (2021). Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.



How people can help

The Wildlife Trusts are working closely with planners, developers and farmers to ensure our reedbeds are protected. Additionally, careful habitat management carried out by The Wildlife Trusts on local nature reserves where bitterns live helps them to survive. By volunteering for your local Trust you can help too, and you'll make new friends and learn new skills along the way.





Materials

250m/275yds 4 ply speckled brown yarn
125m/137yds 4 ply pale yellow yarn
8m/9yds 4 ply black yarn
3mm/ 3.25mm straight knitting needles
Toy stuffing
A large needle for stitching the **#knittern** together
Black buttons (for eyes, if you wish)

Tension

Around 24 stitches and 32 rows to measure 10x10cm (4x4in) over unstuffed stocking stitch.

Abbreviations

K – knit
P – purl
St st- stocking stitch
KFB- increase by knitting into the front and back of the next stitch
K2tog – decrease by knitting the next two stitches together
RS – right side
WS – wrong side



Thank you so much!

This pattern is intended to be used by the person buying it, so feel free to print it out, but please don't sell it, share it on the internet or make multiple copies. **Please remember to credit Yorkshire Wildlife Trust!** Together we can inspire more people to take action for the wildlife you love.

Sharing is caring!

We would love to see your finished **#knittern**, please share them on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels. Please submit a photo for our gallery at Potteric Carr for a free entry ticket and chance to win a prize - details below!

Start knitting!

1. Make one body! Use speckled brown yarn

Cast on	12 stitches (neck end of the body)
Row 1 (WS):	P to end
Row 2 (RS):	KFB into every stitch (24 stitches)
Row 3:	P to end
Row 4:	(K1, KFB) to end (36 stitches)
Row 5:	P to end
Row 6:	(K1, KFB, K1) to end (48 stitches)
Row 7:	P to end
Row 8:	(K1, KFB, K2) to end (60 stitches)
Rows 9-37:	Continue in St St for 29 rows
Row 38:	K2tog, K to last two stitches, K2tog (58 stitches)
Row 39:	P to end
Rows 40-83:	Repeat the last two rows until 14 stitches remain, ending with a P row
Row 84:	K2tog seven times (7 stitches)
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off (this is the tail end)

Top tip!

Use sustainable cotton yarn to make my **#knittern** as environmentally friendly as possible and the insides of old cushions for the stuffing!



2. Make two wings! Use speckled brown yarn

Cast on	12 stitches
Row 1 (WS):	P to end
Row 2 (RS):	KFB into every stitch (24 stitches)
Row 3:	P to end
Row 4:	(K1, KFB) to end (36 stitches)
Row 5:	P to end
Row 6:	(K1, KFB, K1) to end (48 stitches)
Rows 7-15:	Continue in St St for 9 rows
Row 16:	K2tog, K to last two stitches, K2tog (46 stitches)
Row 17:	P to end
Rows 18-59:	Repeat the last two rows until 4 stitches remain, ending with a P row
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.

3. Make two thighs! Use speckled brown yarn

Cast on	16 stitches (top of the thigh)
Row 1 (RS):	K to end
Row 2 (WS):	P to end
Rows 3-12:	Continue in St St for 10 rows
Row 13:	K2tog eight times (8 stitches)
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.

4. Make one head! Use speckled brown yarn

Cast on	6 stitches
Row 1 (WS):	P to end
Row 2 (RS):	KFB into every stitch (12 stitches)
Row 3:	P to end
Row 4:	(K1, KFB) to end (18 stitches)
Row 5:	P to end
Row 6:	(K1, KFB, K1) to end (24 stitches)
Rows 7-19:	Continue in St St for 13 rows
Row 20:	(K1, K2tog, K1) to end (18 stitches)
Row 21:	P to end
Row 22:	(K1, K2tog) to end (12 stitches)
Row 23:	P to end
Row 24:	K2tog six times (6 stitches)
End	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.



5. Make one neck! Use speckled brown yarn

Cast on	16 stitches (body end of neck)
Row 1 (RS):	K to end
Row 2 (WS):	P to end
Row 3:	KFB, K to the last stitch, KFB (18 stitches)
Rows 4-11:	Repeat the last two rows until there are 26 stitches
Row 12:	P to end
Rows 13-20:	Continue in St St for 8 rows
Row 21:	K2 tog, K to the last two stitches K2 tog (24 stitches)
Row 22:	P to end
Row 23-27:	Repeat the last two rows until there are 18 stitches
Row 28:	P to end
Row 29-37:	Continue in St St until row 37
Row 38:	Cast off

6. Make one beak! Use yellowish- green yarn

Cast on	10 stitches
Row 1 (WS):	P to end
Row 2 (RS):	K to end
Row 3:	P to end
Row 4:	K2tog, K to last two stitches, K2tog (8 stitches)
Rows 5-7:	Continue in St St for 3 rows
Row 8:	K2tog, K to last two stitches, K2tog (6 stitches)
Rows 9-11:	Continue in St St for 3 rows
Row 12:	K2tog, K to last two stitches, K2tog (4 stitches)
Row 16:	P to end
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.

7. Make two legs! Use yellowish- green yarn

Cast on	8 stitches
Row 1 (RS):	K to end
Row 2 (WS):	P to end
Rows 3-65:	Continue in St St for 63 rows (or until work measures 24cm/9½in)
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.



8. Make two side toes! Use yellowish- green yarn

Cast on	8 stitches
Row 1 (RS):	K to end
Row 2 (WS):	P to end
Rows 3-30:	Continue in St St for 28 rows
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.

9. Make two middle toes! Use yellowish- green yarn

Cast on	8 stitches
Row 1 (RS):	K to end
Row 2 (WS):	P to end
Rows 3-15:	Continue in St St for 13 rows
End:	Cut the yarn, leaving a long end. Thread the yarn through the stitches on the needle, draw up tightly and fasten off.

Putting your #knittern together!

1. Use mattress stitch to seam and join the pieces (there is a one stitch seam allowance)
2. Do not turn parts inside out to stitch them

Body

Work a gathering thread through the cast on stitches of the body, pull up tightly and fasten off. Join the seam, adding stuffing as you go.

Legs

Take one leg, work a gathering thread through the cast on stitches, pull up tightly and then join the seam- no stuffing is required. Repeat this process with the second leg, the side toes and the middle toes. You should now have six tubular sections in three different lengths. To make each foot, take the side toe (the medium-sized tube), pinch it into a v-shape and join the middle toe (the smallest tube) in the centre of the v-shape, as shown in the photos. Next, take a leg and join one end to the top

of the foot so that the two pieces meet at a right-angle. Repeat the process for the second leg. Join the seam on the thighs and add a little stuffing. Attach each leg to the gathered end of the thigh and then join the cast on edge of the thighs to the underside of the body so that they sit either side of the seam, where the decreasing on the body begins. To make the knees, tie a single knot in the centre of each leg.

Wings

For each wing, work a gathering thread through the cast on stitches, pull up tightly and fasten off. Fold the wing in half lengthways and join the seam, adding small amounts of stuffing as you go so that the finished wing is only lightly padded. Pin the wings to the body so that the seams are facing downwards. Attach the wings to the body all along the rounded edge and vertically between the wing and the body so that the bottom portion of the wing is completely unattached.



Neck

Join the neck seam to the cast-off edge. Stuff the neck firmly and pin the shaped end to the body, adding extra stuffing if necessary. Attach the neck so that it stands vertically from the body and remove the pins. The curve in the neck is created by massaging the stuffed neck into the desired shape.

Head

Take the head and work a gathering thread through the cast on stitches. Pull up tightly and fasten off. Join the seam, adding stuffing as you go. Join the seam on the beak and stuff. Attach the beak to the head so that it covers the cast on stitches and the seam on each piece is on the underside.

Eyes

Use the two small black buttons or a French knot! The eyes are created by making a large knot in the

centre of a 50cm/20in length of yarn. To do this, twist the yarn as you would to make a single knot but, before you pull it tight, wrap the yarn around five more times. Pull the ends gently to create an oval knot. Thread one end of the yarn on to the needle and take it from the eye position to the underside of the head, where it will eventually be hidden by the neck. Then do the same with the other end of the yarn. Repeat for the second eye. Secure the yarn ends so that the eyes are snug against the head.

Finally, attach the head to the neck and say hello to your completed **#knittern!**

Camouflage

If you feel like your bittern needs better camouflage, then use a Swiss darning stitch to add more of a pattern!

We hope you like your new woolly friend – there are only around 20 breeding pairs of bitterns in Yorkshire, so treasure yours!

Submit a high-res (at least 1MB) colour picture of your Knittern to **info@ywt.org.uk** by **Monday 9th January 2023** for two free entry tickets to Potteric Carr, the opportunity to see your bittern as part of a knittern gallery and the chance to win a prize for best knittern- worth nearly £300! (Make sure to vote when you visit!)

We would also be very grateful if you could share the poster below with local knitting groups or community groups – the more the merrier!



Knit a Bittern

#WilderWetlands



In the last 100 years, 90% of UK wetlands have been lost, putting wildlife at risk. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's campaign this year focuses on helping our wilder wetlands – and you can get a fluffy new friend out of it!



Why not knit a bittern or two over the Christmas period (or gift one to a friend or family member)?

Do consider donating to our wilder wetlands campaign too, so that we can continue to conserve bitterns and other endangered wildlife for years to come!

You can download the pattern here:
ywt.org.uk/wilder-wetlands#knittern
or scan the
QR code here:



What's more, we'll be launching a knitted bittern exhibition trail on the **2nd February 2023** at **Potteric Carr nature reserve in Doncaster** to coincide with World Wetlands Day.

Bittern-knitters who enter will get two free entry tickets to enter the reserve and see the exhibition, and we will be asking all visitors to vote for their favourite – with the winner receiving a prize worth nearly £300!

Want to get involved?

Once you've knitted your bittern, make sure to submit a high-res (at least 1MB) colour picture of it to supporter.services@ywt.org.uk by **Monday 9th January 2023**. Most smartphone photos will be fine!

Ts and Cs Voting will be done via a webpage link or by talking to Potteric Carr centre staff. Winners will be chosen by visitors and contacted on 31st March 2023. Free admission voucher admits two adults to Potteric Carr only. Voucher expires on 28th February 2023..

ywt.org.uk

