



Protecting Alderney's Wildlife

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Burying Beetle spp.



Latin name: *Nicrophorus* spp.

Burying beetles are a group of large beetles that bury dead and decaying animals such as mice and small birds. Burying beetles can be found wherever there are corpses for them to feed on - their antennae are equipped with receptors that are able to detect rotting bodies from metres, even kilometres, away. Males and females pair-up at the corpse and will fight off rivals to take charge of it and bury it which they do by digging the earth away beneath it. The female lays her eggs on or beside the buried body and the resulting larvae eat the rotting corpse. Burying beetles are unusual among insects in that both males and females continue to care for the larvae after they hatch - feeding them from the corpse. There are several species found in the British Isles, and apart from the black sexton beetle, *Nicrophorus humator*, which is entirely black except for its red tipped antennae, all have distinctive red-orange markings on the wing-cases.

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