# Kangaroo spotted hopping along A4130 near Henley sparks debate over exotic wildlife in Oxfordshire



In an extraordinary encounter earlier this week, a young man travelling along the A4130 near Henley-on-Thames reported spotting what appeared to be a kangaroo hopping freely along the road. Roman Gerashchenko, accompanied by a friend around 3am on Thursday, May 22, captured the moment on video, which has since raised eyebrows and questions about wildlife in the area. The comical yet bewildering situation took place as they were en route to the airport, with Gerashchenko’s friend reportedly in a state of shock upon first noticing the creature.

Initial impressions suggest that what they observed could have been a kangaroo, which led to a light-hearted concern from the friend about potential crocodiles lurking in the Thames. Despite the playful tone, the sighting appears to fit into a curious trend of wildlife encroachment in Oxfordshire, where unusual animals have been appearing with increasing regularity. The video captured by Gerashchenko brings to light not just an unusual occurrence but also the broader narrative of exotic wildlife sightings in the region.

The area surrounding Henley has seen its fair share of wallaby sightings over the decades. Reports dating back to the 1970s indicate a small population exists, likely stemming from escapes or releases from private collections and wildlife parks. The Fawley Hill estate, known for its diverse fauna, has previously housed wallabies, suggesting that these marsupials have made a semi-permanent, if sporadic, home in the countryside. Such wildlife sightings often generate curiosity and debate among local residents, especially when they occur in urban settings.

Just a few weeks earlier, Oxfordshire faced a separate but equally puzzling incident involving a large python spotted at Port Meadow. The snake sighting was alarming enough for local authorities to issue a warning to the public, urging them to remain vigilant and report further sightings to the police. This increasing frequency of exotic animal encounters in urban locales raises questions about how and why such creatures end up in built-up areas.

Local wildlife experts and the RSPCA have been monitoring these sightings and investigating potential origins. Instances of wallabies in South-East England have previously been linked to abandoned pets or escapes from exotic animal collections, leading to discussions around wildlife management and safety.

As the fascination surrounding these occurrences continues, residents and visitors are encouraged to observe local wildlife responsibly while also recognising that the boundaries between rural and urban environments are becoming increasingly blurred. Each sighting adds an intriguing chapter to the unfolding story of Oxfordshire’s wildlife, reminding us that nature can often surprise us, even in the most unexpected places.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25183501.kangaroo-spotted-hopping-major-oxfordshire-road/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-41087209> - This BBC News article discusses the presence of wallabies in Oxfordshire, particularly around Henley-on-Thames. It highlights sightings of these marsupials in areas like Nettlebed and Shepherd's Green, noting that such occurrences have been reported since the 1970s. The article explores potential origins, including escapes from private collections and wildlife parks, and mentions that the Fawley Hill estate has previously housed wallabies. The piece also touches upon the mystery of how these animals arrived in the area and their current population status.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-41041727> - This BBC News report covers a sighting of a wallaby in Shepherd's Green village near Henley-on-Thames. A waste collection crew member captured a photo of the animal before it fled into nearby bushes. The RSPCA is investigating the incident to determine if there have been other similar sightings in the region. The article provides background information on wallabies, including their native habitats and instances of them being found in the UK, such as in Ashdown Forest and the Peak District.
4. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/14684682.streuth-wallaby-makes-oxfordshire-new-home/> - This Oxford Mail article reports on sightings of wallabies in Oxfordshire, with residents sharing their experiences of encountering these animals in the countryside. The piece mentions a dead wallaby found outside Redbridge Hollow in Oxford and includes eyewitness accounts from individuals who have spotted wallabies near Benson and Tetsworth. The article also references a farmer who briefly cared for wallabies at his menagerie and discusses the potential origins of these animals in the area.
5. <https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/berkshire-history/berkshire-gardens-thames-valley-streets-23694938> - This Berkshire Live article delves into historical accounts of wallabies in the Thames Valley area. It recounts an incident where wallabies escaped from the Fawley estate of Bill McAlpine and were spotted in Henley. The piece provides context on the origins of these wallabies, noting that they were obtained from Whipsnade Zoo and were considered harmless pets. The article also includes comments from a police spokesman about the initial skepticism regarding the sightings and the eventual confirmation of the animals' presence.
6. <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/PortMeadow> - This official page from Oxford City Council provides detailed information about Port Meadow, a large open space in the north of Oxford. The page covers the meadow's history, including its use as grazing land since the 10th century, and its significance as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It also offers practical information for visitors, such as access points, facilities, and activities like walking, picnicking, and wild swimming.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-44343012> - This BBC News article reports on the sighting of an albino wallaby on a country lane in Wiltshire. The piece provides background information on wallabies in the UK, noting that they are native to Australia and Papua New Guinea but have been found in colonies on the Isle of Man and Loch Lomond. It also mentions previous instances of escaped wallabies in the UK, such as one caught in a Marlborough garden in 2014. The article includes comments from Wiltshire Police regarding the sighting and the absence of related incidents.