

Step back in time

Winnall Moors is steeped in history dating from medieval times when it belonged to Hyde Abbey and a small chapel known as St Gertrude's Chapel was present on the meadows.

The nature reserve you are visiting today was shaped during the 17th and 18th centuries when it was used as floated water meadows. A network of ditches and streams were excavated to flood the meadows and enable sheep to graze on the lush, early grass growth. Several brickwork structures still exist to mark the primary carrier ditches. This practice would have once been seen across most of the Itchen Valley.

Because the meadows at Winnall Moors never came under the plough or were not 'improved' by artificial fertilizer they have had the chance to develop into flower-rich grasslands supporting an abundance of wildlife.



Caring for this precious wildlife haven is only possible through the ongoing support of our members and volunteers.

If you enjoyed your visit to Winnall Moors you may like to...

- **Volunteer** - help look after the reserve through wardening, habitat management, wildlife surveys or events.
- **Become a Trust member** - your membership will help us to secure a better future for wildlife in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight.

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is the leading nature conservation charity in the two counties.

For more than 50 years, we have protected local wildlife and inspired people to love nature.

Find out more

Visit us at www.hiwwt.org.uk
Or call **01489 774400**

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Registered Charity No. 201081



Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Winnall Moors Nature Reserve

An historic landscape with warblers, water voles, otters and dragonflies.



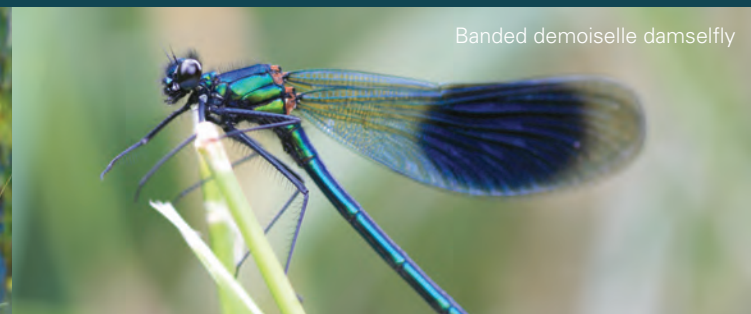
Protecting **wildlife**, inspiring **people**



Sedge warbler



Otter



Banded demoiselle damselfly

Welcome to Winnall Moors Nature Reserve

This leaflet is designed to help you to discover this hidden wildlife oasis just ten minutes walk from Winchester city centre. Here you can see a rare mix of habitats including chalk stream and wetland, fen meadows and reedbed. Although close to a large city this nature reserve, carefully managed by your local Wildlife Trust, is rich in wildlife and offers an almost unique glimpse at the full array of habitats that would have traditionally lined the river valley.

Walks

Open year round, there is a 1-mile surfaced circular path and boardwalk in the south of the reserve, suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Access to the north of the reserve is restricted to organised visits or activities.

Due to the sensitivity of the site dog walking is not permitted.

The River Itchen

The River Itchen and a network of smaller streams pass through the nature reserve all shaped by the reserve's past use as traditional water meadows. The river is internationally important for its chalk stream habitats and protected under European law.

A home to otters

Winnall Moors is especially important for the charismatic otter, which finds refuge and food among the many habitats, lying up under tree roots, old ditches and scrub, and feeding upon an abundance of fish.

In the flowing waters of the Itchen Atlantic salmon, bullhead, brook lamprey, pike and eel can be found.

Kingfishers and warblers

With such a wealth of fish you could glimpse the electric blue of a kingfisher as it whips along the streams. In the summer, amongst the reedbeds listen to the songs of reed bunting, sedge, reed and Cetti's warblers.

Emperors and damsels

The river bed and margins provide homes for many insects, some of which start off their lives in the river then emerge through the plant life to become adults, such as the mayfly, which, in turn, is an important food source for brown trout.

In the summer months look out for the striking banded demoiselle and the impressive emperor dragonfly courting across the reedbed hunting for prey.

Photos: (Cover) Elliott Neep, (This Page) Amy Lewis, Elliott Neep, Vicky Nall (Map Page) Harry Hogg, Jamie Hall, Lee Schofield, Hilary Mould-Ryan, Richard Burkmar, Jon Hawkins, Malcolm Storey.

Designed by Rachel Hudson/www.butterflytrack.co.uk





Coot with chick



Siskin

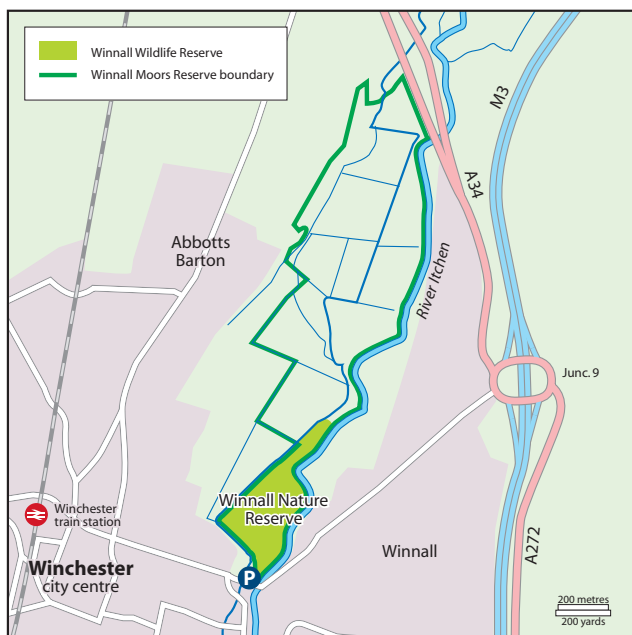


Water vole

Winnall Moors: an historic wetland haven with chalk stream, reedbeds and grassland holding a wealth of wildlife, just a stone's throw from Winchester city.

How to get there

Entrance via Durngate (OS grid reference SU 486 297) is a 10-minute walk from Winchester city centre and 3/4 mile from Winchester train station. The nearest car parks are Durngate, 50m from the southern entrance and River Park Leisure Centre, 300m from the North Walls recreation ground entrance.



Fen Meadows

At the top of the circular path you can look across the stream to grazed fen meadow. In the spring and summer you can see wetland wildflowers such as ragged robin (pictured above), marsh valerian and comfrey. Sedges, rushes and yellow flag iris mark the former water meadow ditches.

Water Vole Trail

This trail offers you a chance of watching water voles in the slow-moving streams. Look for them along the bank margins busily feeding or gathering plant material for their burrows. Listen for the tell-tale 'plop' as they slip into the water to escape predators. In winter, hear flocks of bright yellow siskins in the trees, feeding on alder cones.

Follow the water vole trail by looking out for the footprints which will lead you from Abbey Gardens to Winnall Moors.



Reedbed walk

Follow the boardwalk that winds through the reedbed and in summer listen to the sound of singing sedge warblers, reed warblers and even the explosive calls of the Cetti's warbler. In winter look for roe deer slipping quietly past.



Marsh marigold



Kingfisher



Scarlet tiger moth