

BLUEBELL WOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

THE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Bluebell Wood is a special place. It has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve in recognition of the value of the wood both for wildlife and people. It is managed by Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service, who have a balancing act to look after the wood and at the same time make sure everyone can share it.

One of the unusual features of Bluebell Wood is the variety of habitats in such a compact site. The eastern section is semi-natural ancient woodland, and the western section is self-set woodland on a former industrial site. In between is an extremely important area of wet woodland.



Bluebells

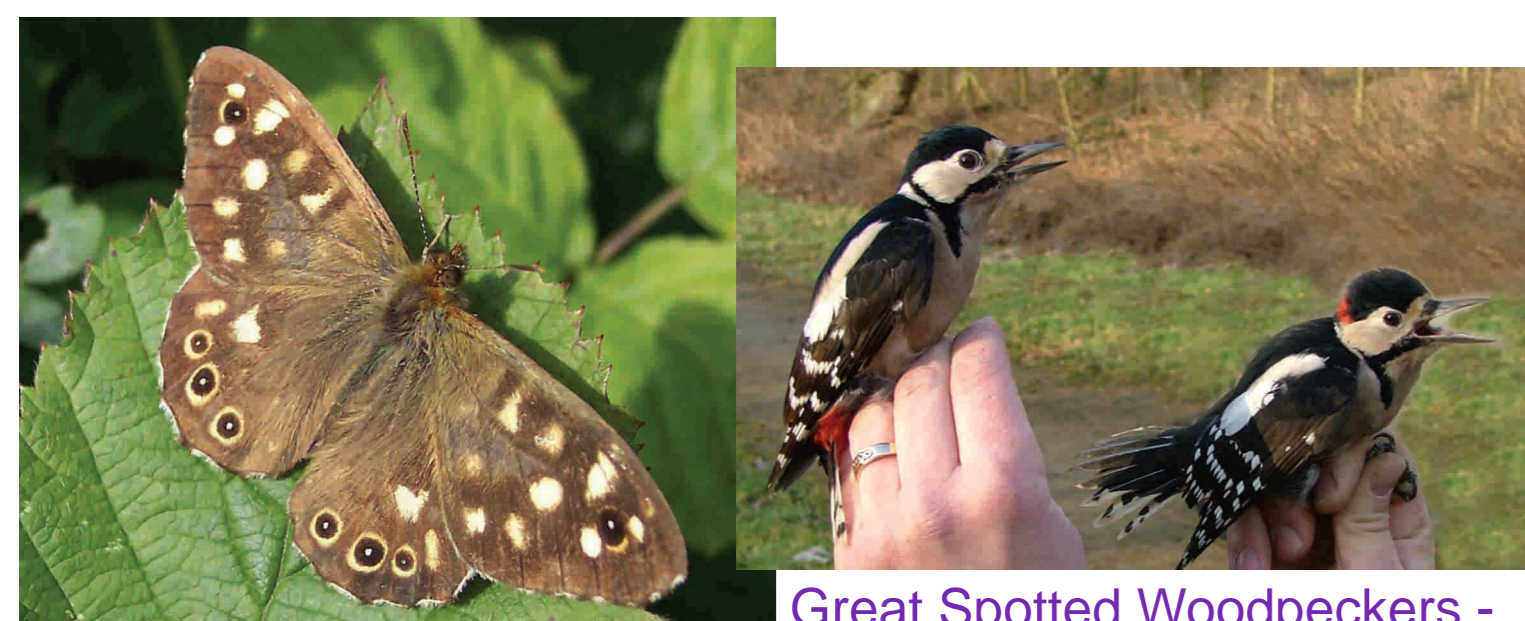
THE WILDLIFE

The wood has a fantastic array of wildlife, some easy to spot, others not so easy. Many of them are associated with ancient woodland. The most obvious are the trees, which include oak, silver birch, hornbeam, field maple and various willows. Smaller "understorey" trees include hazel, holly and hawthorn.

Wildflowers include wood anemone, marsh marigold, yellow archangel, and, of course, bluebells - visit in spring and you will see thousands of them.

Mammals living in the wood include stoats, weasels, woodmice, voles, with badgers and the occasional deer passing through. At dusk bats (noctules, daubentons and the tiny pipistrelles) can be seen in the tree canopy.

There are also large numbers of species of invertebrates, fungi and amphibians.



Speckled Wood on bramble

Great Spotted Woodpeckers - male and female

THE BLUEBELL WOOD ACCESS FOR ALL PROJECT

Bluebell Wood is now accessible by wheelchair and pushchair, but this was not always so. Looking at it now it is difficult to imagine just how difficult it was to get around the wood previously. In 2003/4 we began a project driven by the conviction that everyone, whatever their level of ability, should be able to share this beautiful place. The challenge was to achieve this without damaging the woodland and its wildlife. Stiles were replaced by special gates, gradients reduced, and paths rebuilt using local stone. Two narrow timber bridges crossing the stream were replaced by boardwalks.

You can take a wheelchair or pushchair along the whole 1100m loop from the Visitor Centre and back again. The first path into the wood, marked ☆ on the map, slopes down a little steeper than ideal, but it is manageable. You can take either direction around the wood, or you can double back and avoid the steeper section. The choice is yours.



Picnic area



Marsh Marigold - found in the wet areas March - August

THE BOARDWALKS

Designed and built by the Countryside Service using recycled plastic, which would otherwise have lain in a landfill for thousands of years. It will last much longer than treated timber since it will not rot. Also, unlike treated timber, it will not allow harmful chemicals to leach out and damage the surrounding highly sensitive wet woodland habitat. Great care was taken to make sure the structures blend into the landscape rather than being imposed on it.

Bluebell Wood is a special place - please help us keep it that way.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

The range of wildlife species in the wood is increasing as a result of our woodland management work. We work with nature rather than trying to force it to do something it doesn't want to do. Much of the work is to allow a proper woodland to form, from fungi and invertebrates, through wild flowers, shrubs and small trees to large canopy trees.

Deadwood is a vital component of a woodland ecosystem. It is here that much of the life of a woodland begins. In fact, in a completely natural woodland up to 60% of the wood would be dead, and so we try to ensure there is a lot of dead wood around. Hence the dead standing trees, log piles and brush piles you will notice.



Scarlet Elf Cup growing on dead wood

Remember to keep the country code
In particular:
Please keep your dogs under control.
Take all your litter home.

KEY

- Information and shop
- Refreshments
- Toilets

Total walk length is 1100 metres