



Avon

Our top 20 reserves

Explore the Trust's top 20 nature reserves, from woodlands and meadows, to an ancient hill fort and restored wetlands. Discover where best to spot early purple orchids, hairy dragonflies, skylarks or even water voles. See the map on the back page or go to avonwildlifetrust.org.uk for more details and walks.



Barbara Evripidou

Brandon Hill

Grid ref: ST 577 728. Nearest postcode: BS8 1DR

Discover an area devoted to wildlife in the heart of Bristol, where the wildflower meadow is at its best in midsummer, when ox-eye daisies, yellow rattle and black knapweed add a fine splash of colour. A pond provides a breeding site for frogs, toads and smooth newts. Look out for birds such as jay, bullfinch and blackcap.

Directions: The nearest parking is West End Car Park or metered spaces on Great George Street, Berkeley Square or Jacobs Wells Road.

Access: Access for wheelchairs from Great George Street and Berkeley Square only.



Brown's Folly

Grid ref: ST 798 663. Nearest postcode: BA15 2QP

Standing high above the river Avon, with commanding views towards Bath, Brown's Folly boasts rich grasslands, woodlands and scrub, carpeting the remains of the old Bath stone quarries. Harebells, orchids and wild thyme add to the reserve's beauty. Pockets of ancient woodland on the lower slopes are home to woodpeckers, and rare plants such as Bath asparagus.

Directions: Take the A363 from Bathford to Kingsdown, taking a steep right-hand turn to Monkton Farleigh. Car park is near the brow of the hill on Prospect Place.

Access: Some paths are muddy in winter. Please take extreme caution when approaching rock faces, and do not enter the mines.



Burledge Hill

Grid ref: ST 589 591. Nearest postcode: BS39 5UN

Burledge Hill forms part of a limestone plateau on the north-eastern fringes of the Mendip Hills with stunning views of Chew Valley Lake. Plants include lady's mantle, saw-wort and devil's bit scabious. Birds such as willow warbler, garden warbler and whitethroat can be heard singing from the scrub areas.

Directions: Burledge Hill is on the southern edge of the village of Bishop Sutton, off Sutton Hill Road. There is no car parking at the reserve.

Access: There is a steep public footpath which crosses the reserve.



Weston Big Wood

Grid ref: ST 452 750. Nearest postcode: BS20 8JY

Weston Big Wood is one of Avon's largest ancient woodlands. In springtime, the ground is covered with wood anemones, violets and masses of bluebells. Plants such as herb paris and yellow archangel together with the rare purple gromwell, show that this is an ancient woodland. The wood is very good for birds, including woodpecker, nuthatch, and tawny owl. Bats also roost in the trees and there are badger setts.

Directions: From B3124 Clevedon to Portishead road, turn into Valley Road. Park in the lay-by approx 250 metres on right, and walk up the hill. Steps lead into the wood from the road.

Access: Paths can be muddy, slippery and steep-sided. Please keep away from the quarry sides.

Weston Moor

Grid ref: ST 441 741. Nearest postcode: BS20 8PZ

This Gordano Valley reserve has open moorland, species-rich rhynes, wet pasture and hay meadows. It is full of many rare plants such as cotton grass, marsh pennywort and lesser butterfly orchid, along with nationally scarce invertebrates such as the hairy dragonfly and ruddy darter. During the spring and summer the fields attract lapwing, redshank and snipe. Other birds such as little owl, linnet, reed bunting and skylark also breed in the area. Sparrowhawk, buzzard and green woodpecker are regularly recorded over the reserve.

Directions: Parking is restricted and the approach to the reserve is hampered by traffic on the B3124 being particularly fast-moving. When parking please do not block entrances to farms, fields or homes.

Access: The birds are easily disturbed and the rhynes and wet grassland areas potentially treacherous. A limited number of annual permits for the moorland area are available for members. Open access is restricted to the fields north of Walton Brook, which give excellent views over the moor.

Willsbridge Valley

Grid ref: ST 663 706. Nearest postcode: BS30 6EX

Willsbridge Valley is a peaceful wooded valley on the edge of Bristol which survives amongst modern housing estates, with an old corn mill and ponds at its heart. The woodlands are at their best in spring, full of bluebells, campions and the sound of birdsong. The ponds are home to frogs, toads and dragonflies, and dippers and kingfishers can be spotted on the stream.

Directions: Take the A431 Bristol to Bath road, turning into Long Beach Road. Car park on left.

Access: Wheelchair access via Willsbridge Hill to most of the valley.

Further information

Dogs are welcome on all our reserves, except Folly Farm. They must be kept on leads.

Please see traveline.org.uk and sustrans.org.uk for information on public transport and the National Cycle Network. If travelling by car, please do not block entrances to any farms, fields or homes. Please note that the postcodes given are for addresses nearest to reserves.

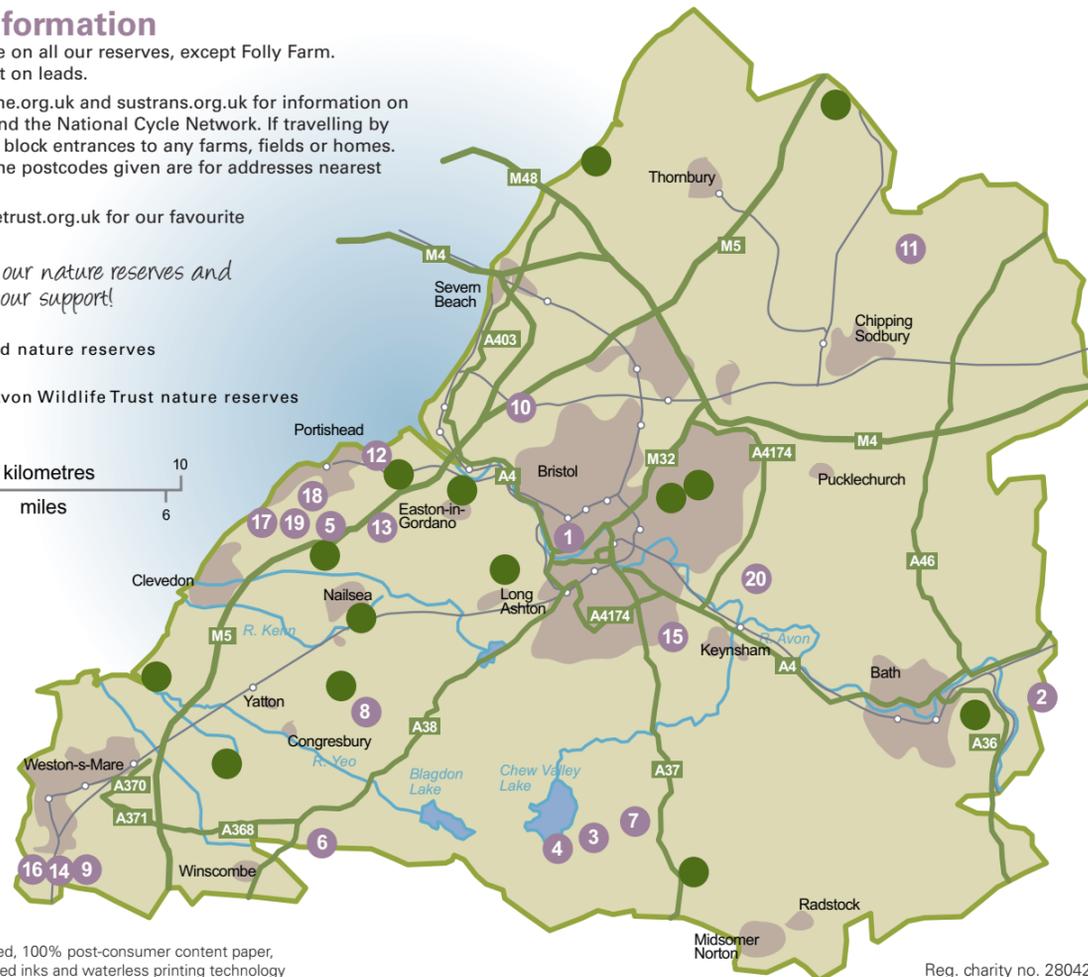
Go to avonwildlifetrust.org.uk for our favourite reserve walks.

Enjoy exploring our nature reserves and thank you for your support!

1 Featured nature reserves

Other Avon Wildlife Trust nature reserves

0 10 kilometres
0 6 miles



Printed on FSC certified, 100% post-consumer content paper, with vegetable oil-based inks and waterless printing technology

Reg. charity no. 280422



4

Chew Valley Lake

Grid ref: ST 570 582. Nearest postcode: BS40 6HN

Chew Valley Lake is the largest artificial lake in the south west. It is extremely important for migrating and wintering wildfowl, warblers and swallows. Large numbers of reed warblers breed in the reedbeds. The lake can attract osprey and grebes. Summer sees large populations of dragonflies hunting over the water, including ruddy darters and migrant hawks.

Directions: Take the B3114 south from Chew Stoke, bear left for West Harptree and head north-east on the A368. Good views across the reserve from causeway at Herriott's Bridge where there is car parking.

Access: Hides with permit only, obtainable from Bristol Water at Woodford Lodge.



5

Clapton Moor

Grid ref: ST 461 733. Nearest postcode: BS20 7RJ

Set within the Gordano Valley, Clapton Moor is an integral part of the levels and moors landscape and is important for breeding waders and wintering wildfowl. The network of rhynes are full of many rare plants such as frogbit, greater spearwort and fen pondweed along with nationally scarce invertebrates such as hairy dragonfly and ruddy darter.

Directions: At Clapton-in-Gordano take Clapton Lane towards Clevedon. After two miles the entrance to the reserve is on the right-hand side opposite the entrance to New Farm. Clapton Lane has narrow bends and caution is advised. Parking is restricted. Please do not block any farm or field entrances.

Access: Restricted to the path that leads to the hide, or along the Clapton Circuit.



6

Dolebury Warren

Grid ref: ST 446 588. Nearest postcode: BS25 1QL

The spectacular views across North Somerset and the Mendips made Dolebury Warren the natural choice for an imposing Iron Age hill fort. Today wildflowers, including small scabious, early purple orchid and eyebright, carpet the grassy ramparts and hill slopes, attracting rare butterflies.

Directions: Take the A38 southwards from Churchill village and take first left turn after traffic lights into Dolebury Bottom. Please drive slowly along lane and park in small car park. Follow footpaths to summit.

Access: Please keep dogs on leads as cattle and sheep graze here. Some gravel paths and steps, but strenuous in places.



7

Folly Farm

Grid ref: ST 600 604. Nearest postcode: BS39 4DW

This is an increasingly rare example of unspoilt countryside. The meadows brim with wildflowers such as betony and heath spotted orchid and butterflies are abundant. Dowlings Wood is an old hazel coppice and amongst the many birds that can be seen are buzzard and great spotted woodpecker. The Trust's Folly Farm education and conference centre, and wedding venue, is at the heart of the reserve.

Directions: From the A37 turn right at the Chelwood roundabout onto the A368 towards Bishop Sutton. After about 2 miles go past the turning to Chew Magna and take the next small turning on your left before reaching Stowey. Follow signs for the car park.

Access: No dogs allowed. Parking also for disabled visitors. Access for All trail is suitable for wheelchair users and pushchairs. Open access to all parts of the farm, but please remember to close gates.



8

Goblin Combe

Grid ref: ST 471 652. Nearest postcode: BS40 5PR

In this peaceful reserve, the airy grassland above contrasts strongly with the shady combe below. The grassland is best seen in late summer, when it is dotted with flowers such as autumn gentian, autumn lady's tresses and yellow-wort. The site is home to more than 30 butterfly species. The combe itself is wooded and damp, and the home of the rare and unusual moonwort fern.

Directions: At Cleeve on the A370 Bristol to Weston road, turn into Cleeve Hill Road. Park in the quarry on left side near the Goblin Combe Environment Centre. Follow the footpath through the combe to reserve.

Access: Footpaths can be very muddy and slippery. Take care and avoid cliffs and scree slopes.



9

Hellenge Hill

Grid ref: ST 344 576. Nearest postcode: BS24 0AD

The site commands extensive views across the Somerset Levels and the Bristol Channel and includes very rare areas of grassland found only on the southern scarp of the Mendips. Extensive gorse and hawthorn scrub provide good habitat for birds, invertebrates and adders (wear sturdy boots).

Directions: Take the A370 south from Weston-super-Mare and after just over a mile, take the minor road on the left signposted to Bleadon. Park in the village and walk along the minor road towards Loxton. Turn left up the track which is part of the Mendip Way.

Access: Sheep and cattle graze the site, so dogs must be kept on leads.



10

Lawrence Weston Moor

Grid ref: ST 545 790. Nearest postcode: BS11 0ST

This urban oasis is sandwiched between the M5 motorway and housing estates of Lawrence Weston. An extensive network of wet meadows and reedbeds, it is extremely rich in wildlife. The drier fields are hay meadows where plants such as meadowsweet and pepper saxifrage are common. The wetter meadows are important for birds such as reed bunting and snipe.

Directions: From Long Cross in Lawrence Weston, turn into Lawrence Weston Road next to St Bede's School. Park just before the motorway bridge and take the track alongside the allotments.

Access: Fields are often very wet and there are no formal paths.

Lower Woods

Grid ref: ST 743 876. Nearest postcode: GL9 1BY

Lower Woods are the most extensive semi-natural woodland in the Avon area, with boundaries that have remained unchanged for several centuries. It has many woodland plants and excellent invertebrate, bird and mammal populations. Between the end of April to mid May listen out for nightingales. The site is managed with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

Directions: Lower Woods are about a mile east of Wickwar. Main access to parking at Lower Woods Lodge, via a track off the Wickwar to Hawkesbury road.

Access: Public footpaths and bridleways cross the reserve.



11

Portbury Wharf

Grid ref: ST 482 761. Nearest postcode: BS20 7TD

Portbury Wharf lies on the land between Portishead and Royal Portbury Dock, next to the Severn Estuary. Areas of open water in the reserve provide an invaluable wetland habitat for rare species such as water vole and otter. The grazing marsh areas are important for birds such as snipe and lapwing, and the hay meadows and hedgerows are rich in insect life, providing food and shelter for many small mammals, which in turn provide a meal for birds of prey including buzzards and owls.

Directions: The path and cycle way around the development link to the segregated bridleway at Sheepway which provides access to Wharf Lane. There is limited parking. First Bus 358 stops at Sheepway.

Access: There are paths suitable for bikes and walkers. Dogs must be kept on leads and must not be taken into the hides.



12

Prior's Wood

Grid ref: ST 494 749. Nearest postcode: BS20 7UF

Once part of the Tynesfield Estate, Prior's Wood has ancient woodland, streams and plantations. It is probably the best bluebell wood in the area, but a visit at any time of year is rewarding. This wildlife-rich wood is very good for birds including buzzard, garden warbler and chiffchaff. During the autumn look out for fungi.

Directions: From Portbury take the Clapton-in-Gordano road, parking on the lay-by on the right just after leaving Portbury Village. Please park with consideration to residents.

Access: There are public and permissible paths throughout. Paths are often muddy.



13

Purn Hill

Grid ref: ST 332 573. Nearest postcode: BS24 0AL

Part of the western Mendips, it has panoramic views to Brean Down, across the Somerset Levels to the Blackdowns and Quantocks. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and home to three nationally rare or threatened plants – honewort, Somerset hairgrass and white rock rose (only found on two sites in the UK).

Directions: Take the A370 and travel south from Weston-super-Mare. Turn left on to Bleadon Hill and right onto Purn Lane. Park at the sign for Southridge Heights. Walk down the lane and access the reserve through a kissing gate.

Access: Some steep sections. Part of the West Mendip Way. A circular walk links Purn Hill with Walbourough.



14

Stockwood Open Space

Grid ref: ST 624 687. Nearest postcode: BS14 8JN

This expanse of historic farmland on the edge of Bristol has old meadows, thick hedges and woodlands and offers a panoramic view of south Bristol. Cowslip, dyer's greenweed and bird's-foot trefoil provide splashes of colour here in summer, with numerous butterflies including meadow brown, marbled white and large skipper.

Directions: Between Stockwood and Brislington on the south-east fringe of Bristol. Parking at end of Stockwood Road before turning into the Coots.

Access: Tarmac paths provide access for wheelchairs. A cycle path crosses the reserve.



15

Walborough

Grid ref: ST 314 582. Nearest postcode: BS23 4XR

This reserve has salt marsh and limestone grassland with rare plants which include Somerset hairgrass, green winged and early purple orchid and autumn lady's tresses. Patches of sea lavender add a splash of colour in late summer. The River Axe shelters wildfowl and waders during autumn and winter.

Directions: Follow signs to Uphill village from the southern end of Weston-super-Mare. Uphill leads towards the south end of Weston beach. Head towards the beach but park near the large sluice gates on the left by Uphill Local Nature Reserve and boatyard.

Access: A surfaced path allows access to parts of the site for those who are less mobile. There is open access to the grassland areas and sea wall, but please keep off the salt marsh to avoid disturbing the birds.



16

Walton Common

Grid ref: ST 424 734. Nearest postcode: BS21 7AP

There are excellent views of the Gordano Valley and the Severn Estuary from above the quarry. Butterflies include grizzled skipper, green and purple hairstreak, and dark green fritillary. Other insects such as grasshoppers and moths are abundant. The scrub and woodland edge provide food and nest sites for blackcap and whitethroat. Buzzard, kestrel and sparrowhawk hunt across the common.

Directions: Take the B3124 between Clevedon and Portishead. In the village of Walton-in-Gordano, turn up the Portishead coast road. Park on roadside verge beside Clevedon golf course. Walk towards the village and up the sign-posted public footpath.

Access: Permissive paths, including some steep ones, cross the reserve.



17