

Welcome to Warndon Woodlands Local Nature Reserve

Warndon and Tolladine Woods are ancient semi-natural woodlands which may once have been part of Feckenham Forest. Along with New Plantation and Hillwood Meadow, these woodlands and meadows are now managed by Worcester City Council. Traditional techniques such as coppicing, hedgelaying, thinning and mowing benefit wildlife and visitors to the Reserve.

Coppicing

Coppicing is the practice of cutting trees such as hazel back to the ground on a regular basis eg every 7 to 10 years. The coppice stool (or stump) responds to this by sending out many more shoots, which can be coppiced in turn. Today the coppiced hazel is mostly used to make hedging stakes and for firewood, but in the past it was used for building, charcoal and hurdle making as well as fuel for heating and cooking. The council coppice the ancient woods because it lets the light reach the woodland floor, encouraging plants such as wood anemone and bluebells to grow.



Coppiced glade

Grassland

The rough grassland at Hillwood Meadow is important for invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles such as slow worms. Look out for bird's foot trefoil, tufted vetch, clover and black knapweed during the spring and summer months.



Slow Worm

Butterflies



Speckled Wood

The woodland glades encourage butterflies such as meadow brown and speckled wood, and in the open grassland at Hillwood Meadow you may also see marbled white and common blue. The larvae feed on the

scrub, grasses and nettles found on the wood edges, while the adults may visit flowers and fallen fruit and can be seen sunning themselves on brambles and leaves if you approach quietly.

Hedgerows, ditches and banks

The boundaries of Warndon and Tolladine Woods are marked by hedgerows, ditches and banks. These hedgerows have been dated as between 600 and 780 years old. They contain species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and spindle.

Dead Wood and Stag Beetles

It's not just the living trees that are important. The smells in the wood are dominated by the smell of rotting and decaying wood and plant matter. Piles of wood and fallen timber are left to rot and provide a habitat for insects and small mammals.



Stag Beetle

Spectacular fungi will grow on this timber as it rots down. Where it is safe to do so, trees are left standing as the holes and crevices in them provide nests and roosts for bats and birds such as the tree creeper and greater spotted woodpecker.

Dotted throughout the Reserve you may notice strange structures of half buried logs. These logs are buried around 60cm into the ground and provide the habitat of rotting wood needed by the larvae of the stag beetle. The stag beetle is the largest land living beetle in Britain, and it is becoming increasingly rare. Although it looks fierce it is actually harmless. The adults lay their eggs underground in rotting wood. The larvae lives on the rotting wood and can take up to 7 years to emerge as an adult.

Bluebells

In spring the ancient woods are a lush carpet of bluebells and wood anemone. Bluebells take advantage of the dappled spring light when the trees above have few leaves.



Bluebell

Bluebells are easily damaged, so please try to stick to existing marked paths through the woods.

The Ponds

Approach the ponds quietly and you may see and hear many different things. Dragonflies such as the southern hawkler buzz inquisitively around, smooth newts occasionally come up to the surface for air and frogs splash around in the spring. The vegetation at the edge of the ponds provides refuge and food for insects and their larvae. Bats feed on the insects above the water, swooping low at dusk.



Frog

Felling and Thinning

The woods once provided timber, particularly oak, for a range of uses. Imagine the wood being sawn and shaped into boats or to make frames for buildings such as nearby St Nicholas' Church. Today, some trees are felled, sawn and then crafted into benches, way-markers and display boards that can be found around Worcester.



Anemone

Felling selected trees for timber increases the amount of light reaching the woodland floor, allowing ground plants to flourish and tree seedlings to germinate. The oaks in Warndon Wood are all of a similar age, due to the need for timber during the first World War. We thin the oaks to improve the age structure of the wood, but we have chosen some trees to become veterans. Very old trees support a huge variety of wildlife.

The young woodland at New Plantation acts as a corridor linking the two ancient woodlands, allowing animals and plants to spread between them. We are beginning to thin out some trees, allowing others to grow on to maturity. This lets in more light in to encourage flowers such as bluebells, celandine and cowslips.

Between Tolladine and Warndon Woods, we have way-marked three colour-coded circular trails which are shown on the map on the right.

Key

- Ancient Woodland
- Young Woodland
- Pond
- Dog Bin
- Grassland
- Road
- Circular walk around wood
- Path or cycleway
- Butterfly Trail
- Badger Trail
- Buzzard Trail



Common Blue Butterfly

Parts of the path may be slippery, uneven and muddy. The purple Buzzard Trail includes stiles, steps and crosses a busy road. Cows and sheep graze in the fields surrounding the Warndon Wood. Please follow the Countryside Code. Leave gates as you find them and keep dogs under control.



The three way-marked routes are colour coded:-



The **red Butterfly Trail** (about 1.15km) is a short stroll around Tolladine Wood and surrounds. Watch out for woodpeckers, jays and song birds as well as many butterflies on a warm summery day.



Jay



Badger

The **green Badger Trail** (about 2.5km) circles New Plantation and Tolladine Wood. Look out for the original hedgerow features that remain on the paths through the housing. They act as wildlife corridors, joining the gardens and green areas together.

The **purple Buzzard Trail** (about 2 km) takes in Warndon Wood and the beautiful wild flower meadows to the north, returning through New Plantation. Buzzards are regularly seen above the woods - listen for their cat-like mewing.



Buzzard



Warndon Woodlands Nature Trails

For further information please contact the Customer Service Centre on 01905 722233 or visit www.worcester.gov.uk/parks

