

Winnall Moors



Hampshire & Isle of Wight

Reedbeds and former water meadows along the River Itchen.



Habitat Type	<i>Wet meadows, reedbeds</i>
Size of Reserve	<i>42 hectares / 104 acres</i>
Special Features	SSSI    
OS Map Number	<i>185</i>
Grid Reference	<i>SU 490 306</i>
Nearest Town	<i>On the edge of Winchester</i>
Nearest Rail Station	<i>Winchester - 0.5 mile</i>
Tourist Information	<i>Winchester 01962 840500</i>
Best Time to Visit	<i>Winter - wildfowl Spring / summer - butterflies, breeding birds</i>

HOW TO GET THERE

Winnall Moors nature reserve is situated within half a mile of Winchester City centre. From North Walls Road (one way) take the first left into Hyde Abbey Road and follow round to the right into Gordon Road. A leisure centre is on the right where car parking is available.

The other entrance can be reached on foot via Durngate Place, which is at the end of North Walls Road near the police station. There is a separate walkway over the bridge from which the reserve can be reached.

Winchester has a train station and bus station from which the reserve is within easy walking distance.

ACCESS

The southern part of Winnall Moors is open access all year round; the north of the reserve requires a permit for access, or attend one of the guided walks (for details contact the Reserves Officer on 07831 692963). No dogs are allowed on the reserve.

SITE DESCRIPTION

It is easy to forget in this tranquil spot that the bustling city centre is a short walk away. Winnall Moors has the renowned and beautiful River Itchen flowing throughout its length, providing much needed water for the wet grasslands, reedbeds and ponds. In the southern end of the reserve the circular walk leads you along the riverbank and other waterways, with great views of the bird and plant life that abounds here. A closer look at waterlife can be had from the pond platform. The wet grasslands in the north of the reserve are important for their wetland plants and breeding bird interest. Two fields are cut for hay and the rest are grazed.

WILDLIFE

- In the northern part of the reserve plants such as Southern Marsh orchid, Marsh Valerian, Bogbean, Ragged-Robin and Marsh-marigold can be found.
- The rare Green-flowered Helleborine is found under Willow trees in the southern part of the site.
- The River Itchen has distinctive plant life such as Water Crowfoot and Lesser Water-parsnip. On its banks Purple Loosestrife, Orange Balsam, Gypsywort and various sedges provide cover which is used in spring by nesting birds such as Tufted Duck and Mallard and in winter by Gadwall and Wigeon.
- Reedbeds and open mixed fen in the southern end of the reserve are dominated by tall grasses interspersed with Fleabane, Meadowsweet, Fen Bedstraw and Skullcap. Here, amongst the reeds in spring, Reed and Sedge Warblers breed in large numbers.
- Unusually for a chalk stream the Itchen has many different species of breeding dragonfly including the Broad-bodied Chaser and Common Darter.
- The meadows are important breeding and feeding grounds for Redshank, Lapwing and Snipe particularly during spring and early summer.

OTHER

- In the southern part of the reserve there is a trial reed cutting plot to investigate the affects of this management on the number of species found there.
- The Wildlife Trust is monitoring the northern part of the site and the access and management carried out here is under review to determine what is best for the sensitive wildlife.

- The location of the old water meadows (formed in 1670) and their water channels can still be seen in the northern part of the reserve. The monks of Hyde Abbey are thought to be the first to farm the land, but this labour intensive practice was stopped in the 1930s.

NEARBY SITES OF INTEREST

St Catherine's Hill Wildlife Reserve

- see page 108

Flower-rich chalk grassland of great conservation and archaeological importance.

Winchester Water Meadows

Beautiful water meadows lying alongside the River Itchen.

Winchester City Mill

The National Trust's working mill in the heart of Winchester is working in partnership with the Wildlife Trust to interpret the River Itchen and its wildlife.

Water Vole
Photo by Richard Bowsher

