

SPRING

Explorer's Trail



Welcome to Watchtree Nature Reserve's nature trails. On the Explorer's Trail, you'll discover Watchtree's wide range of habitats and have the chance to see for yourself the birds, plants, mammals and insects that live here.

the PLAQUES

Have fun taking rubbings from the decorative plaques located on 9 of the waymarkers. Paper and crayons are available from the Visitor Centre. When you've identified each motif, put its initial letter in the grid on your paper, then unscramble all 9 letters to find the hidden word.

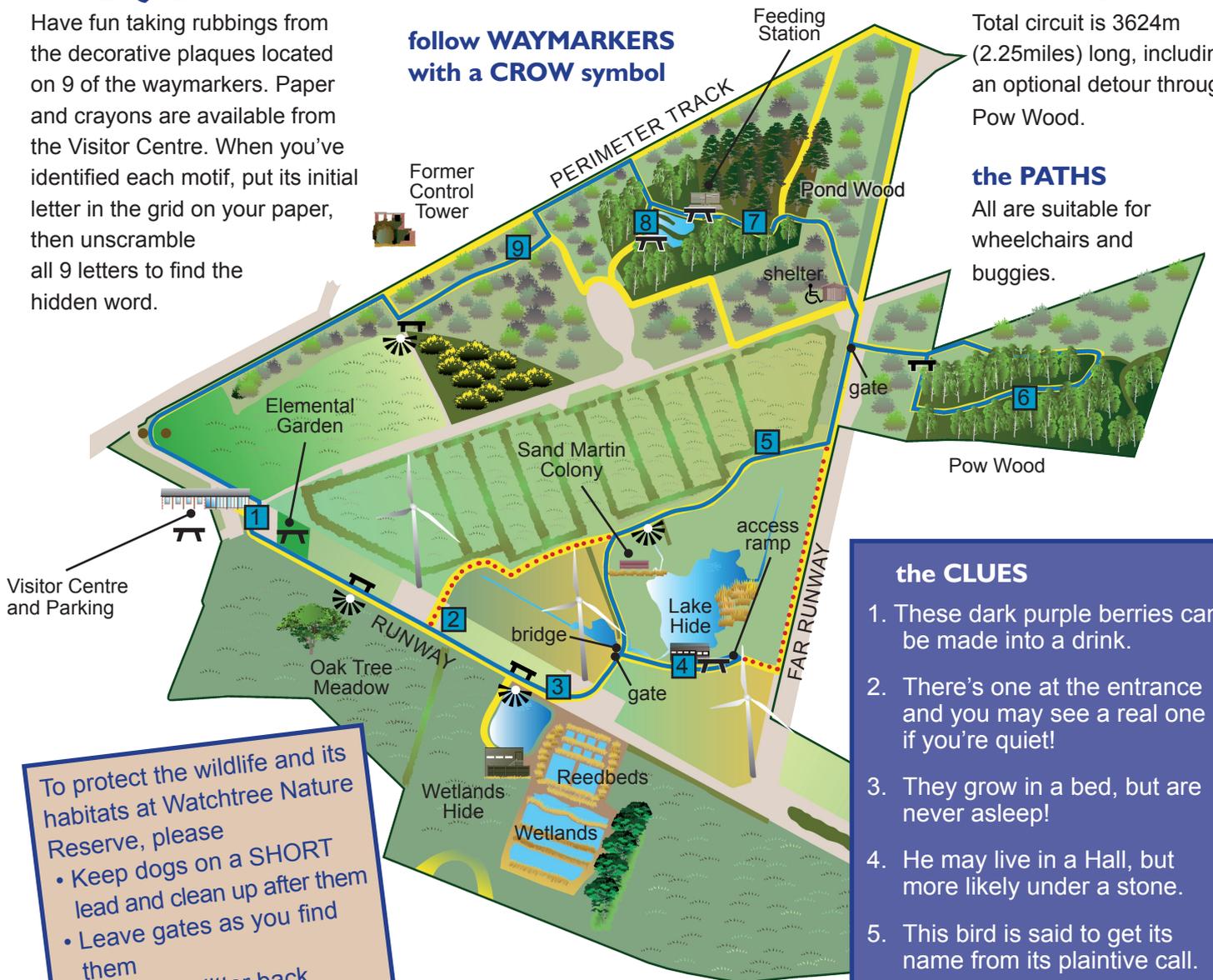
follow WAYMARKERS with a CROW symbol

the ROUTE

Total circuit is 3624m (2.25miles) long, including an optional detour through Pow Wood.

the PATHS

All are suitable for wheelchairs and buggies.



the CLUES

1. These dark purple berries can be made into a drink.
2. There's one at the entrance and you may see a real one if you're quiet!
3. They grow in a bed, but are never asleep!
4. He may live in a Hall, but more likely under a stone.
5. This bird is said to get its name from its plaintive call.
6. They use their strong beak to make holes in trees and telegraph poles
7. This tree thrives in wet ground
8. In spring, there are thousands of these in the pond.
9. They're sometimes made of chocolate – but not at Watchtree!

LOOK OUT FOR

Explorer's Trail	Rubbing plaque
Cycle option	Toilet
a Breath of Fresh Hare Trail	Viewpoint
Picnic table	Seat

- To protect the wildlife and its habitats at Watchtree Nature Reserve, please
- Keep dogs on a SHORT lead and clean up after them
 - Leave gates as you find them
 - Bring your litter back to the Visitor Centre for recycling or disposal
 - Admire the wildlife you find, but leave it in its natural home

THANK YOU
ENJOY YOUR VISIT!

Spring is a great time to explore Watchtree Nature Reserve, as nature shakes off its winter coat and the yearly cycle of life begins again. The waymarker on the left of the gate into the reserve starts you off on the trail and on your quest for the hidden word!

down the RUNWAY

The cages at the start of the runway house our Marsh Fritillary breeding project. The caterpillars are visible in March and April, followed by the chrysalises in late April, and finally, in May, the butterflies. The short grass alongside the runway is a good place to watch out for Brown Hares.

Marsh Fritillary



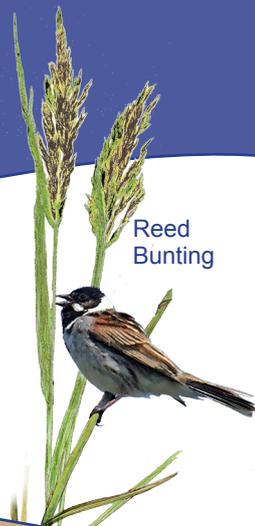
Hawthorn



Brown Hare



Reed Bunting



in the HEDGEROWS

In spring, Chaffinches, Song Thrushes and Blackbirds search in the hedges for nesting sites and materials, and mice, voles and shrews use the grass as cover while they, too, hunt for food and make their nests.

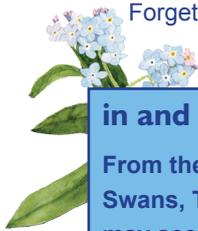


Vole

among the REEDS

The reedbeds filter the water that flows into the lagoon and provide sheltered nesting for the Reed Bunting, safe from predators such as weasels. In spring, the male is easily identified by his black head and the white 'moustache' on either side of his black bill.

Water Forget-Me-Not



Yellow Flag Iris



in and around the WATER

From the bird hides you can watch for Mute Swans, Tufted Ducks, and Little Grebes, and you may see House and Sand Martins in April and May. Around the edges of the water, Yellow Flag Iris and blue Water Forget-Me-Not are part of the spring palette.

Oystercatcher



Skylark



Dandelion



Great Spotted Woodpecker



Tufted Duck



under the BRIDGE

Newts, frogs and toads live in and around the ditch. In May, it's full of beautiful, golden Marsh Marigolds. Please take care as you look over the bridge!

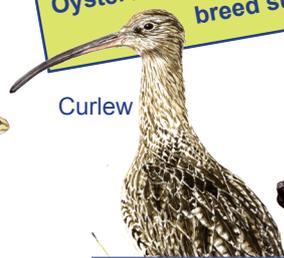
in the MEADOWS

There's no grazing stock at Watchtree in spring, so that grasses, herbs and meadow flowers can flourish, and ground-nesting birds, such as Skylark, Oystercatcher and Curlew, can breed successfully.

through the WOODS

You may catch sight of Roe Deer in Pow Wood and you're likely to hear Great Spotted Woodpeckers at work. In April and May, listen for the Cuckoo. The scent and colour of Honeysuckle and Dog Violets attract bees and other insects to the woods.

Curlew



Scots Pine



Ash



Newtlet

Adult Newt



Marsh Marigold

Whirligig Beetles



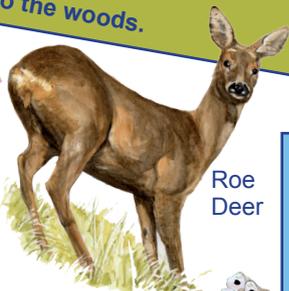
Mayfly Nymph



Violet



Roe Deer



in the POND

This is the best place to look for frog and toad tadpoles, and there are lots of 'bugs' such as Water and Whirligig Beetles and Pond Skaters. Please take care when looking over the platform rails.

Toad spawn



Frog spawn and tadpoles

what other wildlife did YOU SEE or HEAR?

on the HOME STRAIGHT

As you head back towards the Visitor Centre, look out for Bullfinch, Chiffchaff and Blackcap flitting among the young pines and scrub. The Scots Pine at the Reserve entrance renews its needles throughout the year, while the black buds of the Ash burst into leaf in spring.