

SUMMER

# 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.

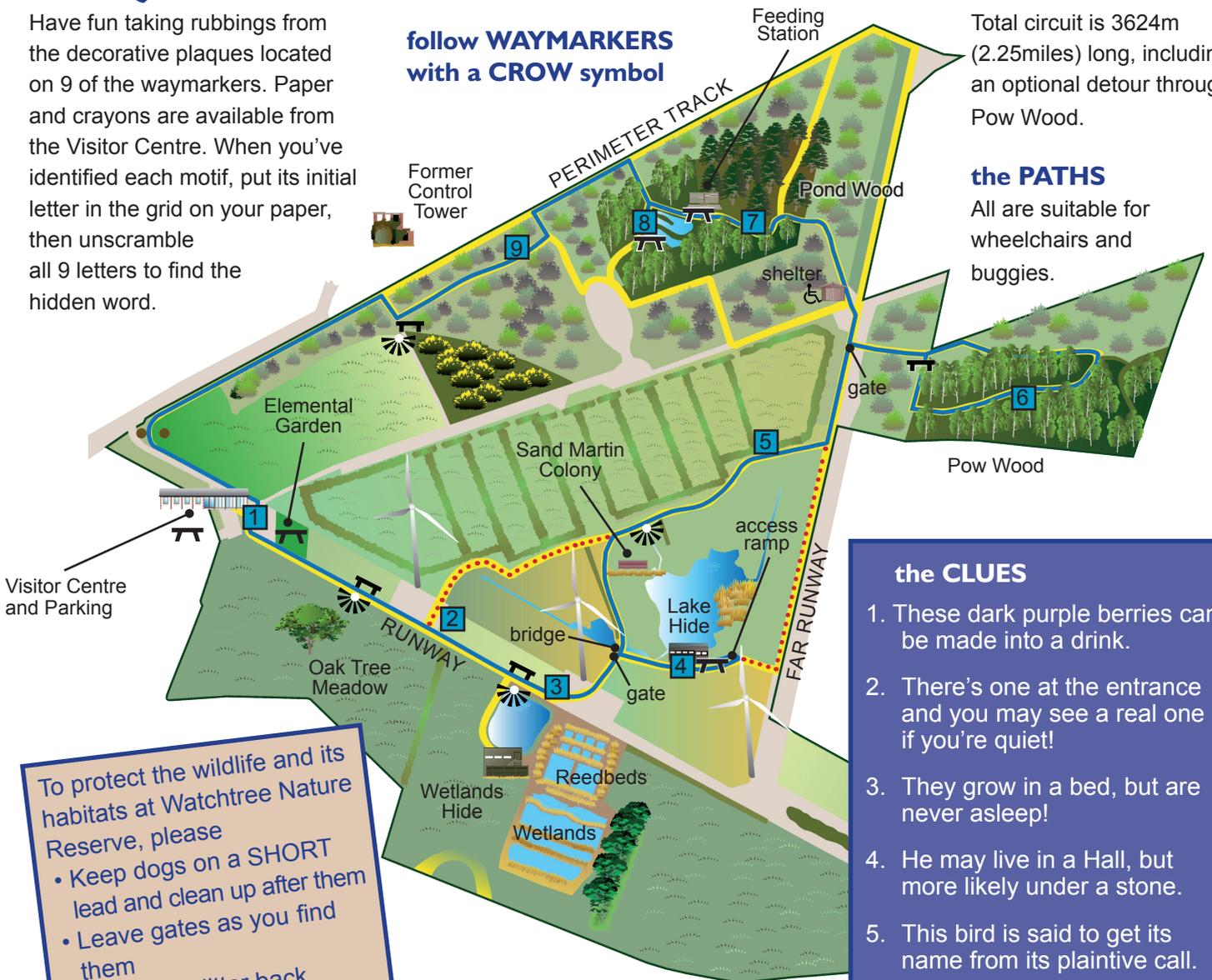
## follow WAYMARKERS with a CROW symbol

## 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!

There's so much to look out for at Watchtree in summer, as nature responds to longer days and higher temperatures. Grasses, flowers and trees are at their most productive, giving birds, insects, mammals and amphibians the food and habitat they need to flourish.

### down the RUNWAY

The old runways are a valuable habitat for wildlife. Nesting Skylarks gather food for their young in the hay meadows. Wall butterflies like to bask in the sun or flit among Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Ragged Robin and other meadow flowers.



Wall



Ox-eye Daisy



Ragged Robin

Knapweed



Brown Hare

### in the HEDGEROWS

The hedgerows teem with life in summer. Red Campion attracts hoverflies and bees. Ladybirds search for aphids. Hawthorn Shield Bugs feed on Hawthorn leaves, and the fledglings of Dunnock, Blackbird, Linnet, Whitethroat and Tree Sparrow fly the nest.



Chiffchaff



Red Campion

### among the REEDS

In summer, the Reed Bunting is joined by a visitor to Watchtree – the Sedge Warbler, with its distinctive, white eye-stripe and its loud, unusual song.

Reed Bunting



Ringlet



Skylark

### in and around the WATER

The Watchtree lakes are a great place to see Swallows, House Martins and Swifts in summer. Their high speed aerobatics are a wonderful display of precision flying as they hawk for insects over the water.

Swallows



Yarrow

Meadow Vetchling

### in the MEADOWS

Until late July, the uncut meadows are a haven for ground-nesting birds and a treasure-trove of other wildlife. Yarrow, Meadow Vetchling and Ox-eye Daisy flower among grasses, which include fescues and Yorkshire Fog. Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Large Skipper butterflies gather nectar from the flowers. In late summer, you may find the 'tent' webs of the Nursery Web Spider.

Hawkbit



### beside the BRIDGE

Common Blue and Emerald Damselflies can often be seen around the ditch under the bridge.

### through the WOODS

You may catch sight of Roe Deer in Pow Wood. Woodland glades, edged with Foxgloves, provide long grass favoured by Ringlet butterflies. Many species of bird can be seen in Watchtree's woods including Willow Warbler, Chaffinch and Blue, Great and Coal Tits.



Foxglove

Pond Skater



Moorhen



Bird's-foot Trefoil

Scots Pine



### in the POND

Pond Skaters, Water Boatmen, Whirligig and Water Beetles thrive in the pond. Common Hawker and Four-spotted Chaser Dragonflies flit over the surface. In the water, look for young Moorhen and the long, green leaves and spiky flower-heads of the Branched Bur-reed. On the banks, the flowers of Purple Loosestrife add a bright splash of colour.

Branched Bur-reed



### on the HOME STRAIGHT

Growing in the cracks of the perimeter track, the small, clover-like plant with the bright yellow flowers is Bird's-foot Trefoil. Another yellow flower, the Hawkbit, is scattered through the grassland. At the entrance to the Reserve, English Ash and Scots Pine are symbols of both sides of the Solway.

what other wildlife did YOU SEE or HEAR?