

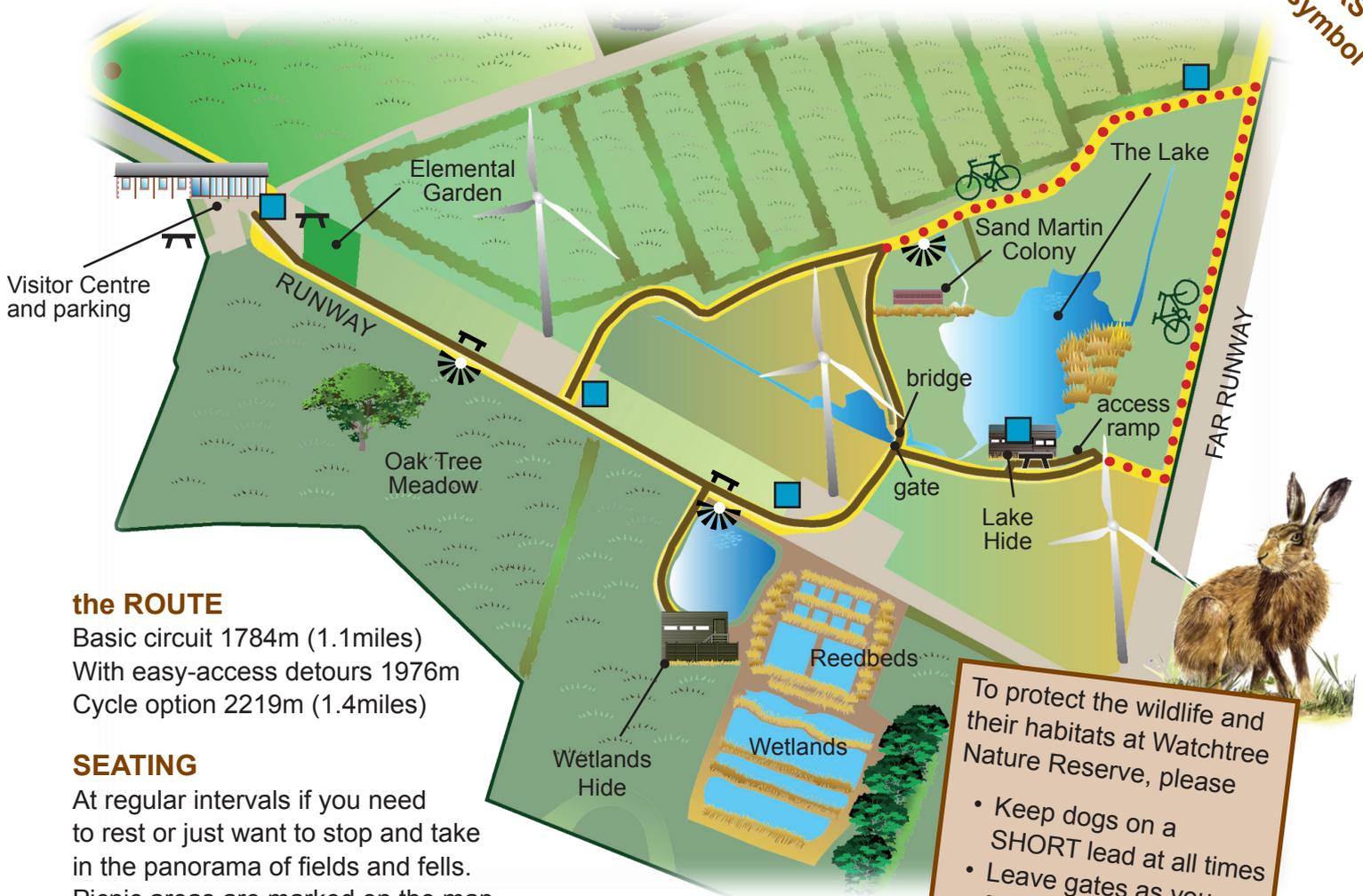
SPRING

a Breath of Fresh Hare



Welcome to Watchtree Nature Reserve's nature trails. If you have limited time or energy, or you're new to exploring the countryside and want to try a 'taster', the Breath of Fresh Hare Trail is for you.

follow WAYMARKERS with a HARE symbol



the ROUTE

Basic circuit 1784m (1.1miles)
With easy-access detours 1976m
Cycle option 2219m (1.4miles)

SEATING

At regular intervals if you need to rest or just want to stop and take in the panorama of fields and fells. Picnic areas are marked on the map.

the PATHS

All are suitable for cycles, wheelchairs and buggies, however, to avoid gates, we suggest cyclists follow the signed trail onto the far runway (see map).

the HIDES

There is ramp-access to the lower level of the Wetlands hide and the Lake hide.

along the WAY

There are waymarkers with icons showing the way. There are also 'rubbing plaques', part of the longer 'Explorer's Trail'.

To protect the wildlife and their habitats at Watchtree Nature Reserve, please

- Keep dogs on a SHORT lead at all times
- Leave gates as you find them
- Bring your litter back to the Visitor Centre for recycling or disposal
- Don't approach any creatures you see, or pick the wildflowers

THANK YOU
ENJOY YOUR VISIT!

LOOK OUT FOR

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



This trail may be relatively short in distance, but it's not short on interest! There's lots to see in spring, as nature comes back to life after the winter. Keep a special look-out for Brown Hares – they're hard to spot when they're lying still, but one may suddenly start up out of the grass anywhere along this trail.



Brown Hare

down the RUNWAY

At the start of the trail, you may like to make a short detour to the Elemental Garden, where many of the habitats to be found on the Reserve are represented in individual raised beds. Along the runway Small Tortoiseshell butterflies look for suitable food plants, such as thistles and nettles, to lay their eggs.



Hawthorn

in the HEDGEROWS

Hedges provide food and shelter for lots of birds, insects and mammals, so Watchtree has a programme of re-planting and re-laying, to keep our hedges thick and healthy. In spring, small birds – such as Chaffinch, Wren, Song Thrush and Blackbird – search among the twigs and leaves for nesting sites and materials. Purple Tufted Vetch scrambles through the hedgerows from early May.



Tufted Vetch



Wren



Cuckoo flower



Small Tortoiseshell



Nettles

among the REEDS

The Wetland reedbeds provide habitat for a number of species, especially the Reed Bunting. These small, sparrow-like birds are fascinating to watch as they flit among the reeds, flicking their wings and tail when perched on a stem or a prominent twig.



Reed Bunting

in and around the WATER

As you approach the Wetlands, you may see a Little Grebe emerge from its nesting place on the margins of the water to swim and feed. May brings migrant Swallows back, and Goldeneye ducks perform contortions with their necks to attract a mate.



Goldeneye



Dandelion



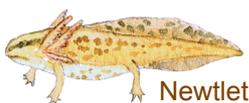
Skylark

under the BRIDGE

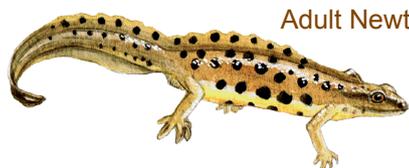
Look carefully over the rails of the bridge and you may spot newts in the ditch. In May, it is full of beautiful, golden Marsh Marigolds.



Marsh Marigolds



Newtlet



Adult Newt

in the MEADOWS

Watchtree manages its grasslands to attract and care for a wide variety of species. The open meadows are not grazed in spring, so that grasses, herbs and meadow flowers can flourish, and ground-nesting birds, such as the Skylark, can breed. Even if you can't see the Skylark, you'll almost certainly hear its lovely song as it soars and hovers high above the ground.