

## Did you Know...



Fen peat

...The area was drained for agriculture in about 1850 but the drainage system became blocked and the land returned to wetland. The vegetation on some of the land adjacent to the reserve still indicates the larger extent of what would have been Feckenham Moor. Fen peat is uncommon in Worcestershire. The reserve has one of only a handful of active peat layers that remain in Worcestershire.

...The reedbed is one of the biggest in the county, making it a very important habitat. Look out for reed buntings and reed and sedge warblers bringing the area to life in spring and summer. Moths such as the obscure wainscot, a wetland specialist, can also be found.



Reed warbler

...We manage the fen meadows to ensure they remain flower-rich. A rough hay crop is removed in July and cattle are then left to graze for several months. This ensures that nutrients are kept low and prevents rushes and reeds from choking more delicate plants.



Longhorn cattle



Broad-bodied chaser dragonfly

...17 species of dragonfly have been recorded around the ponds and pools at Feckenham including large red damselfly, several hawkers and chasers and the spectacular emperor dragonfly.

...Alder woodland provides useful cover for wintering and nesting birds. We coppice the trees to ensure they allow light onto to the ground to encourage ground flora and do not become too large to dry out the area. Coppicing is a traditional method of managing trees and ensures constant new growth and a variety of habitats



Alder

...We ensure that wildlife can move around the reserve by a cyclical programme of pollarding our willows and coppicing the hawthorn hedging – this keeps the reserve relatively open which is great for species like overwintering snipe. The reserve holds good numbers for its size and is an important resource for this once common bird.



Pollarded tree

...Over 150 plants have been recorded here from the pink ragged robin and delicate lady's smock to common spotted and southern marsh orchids. Look for wetland specialists such as fen bedstraw and marsh arrowgrass.



Fen bedstraw

## What to see

SPRING	cuckoos, ragged robin, cowslips and orange tip butterflies
SUMMER	common spotted orchids, dragonflies and kingfishers
AUTUMN	migrating birds, chiffchaff, tufted ducks and little grebe
WINTER	snipe, siskin, redpoll, fieldfare and redwing

Photos: Paul Lane, James Hitchcock, Pete Walkden, Paul Meers, Wendy Carter, Karen Summers.



This tranquil nature reserve is the last remnant of an extensive marsh that once lay in the valley of the Brandon Brook, south of Feckenham. The 29 acres (11.5 hectares) of this rare Worcestershire landscape support a wide range of plants and animals.

The reserve is accessible on foot from several public footpaths and lanes in the wider countryside. This trail starts at the main entrance in the north-eastern corner of the reserve – an easy 10 minute walk from the village.

The trail is a 1.5km circular walk. Although flat all the way round it can be very muddy and sturdy footwear, preferably wellington boots, is advised. There are a number of stiles on the route.

Follow the instructions in the leaflet and use the map to help you find your way around. The path through the reedbed has been closed to protect an important breeding bird area.

Cattle graze the meadows throughout the year so we ask that you leave gates as you find them and keep dogs on leads.

**Location:** Access to the reserve is on foot from Moors Lane, which runs south from the B4090 in the village of Feckenham. Please park in the public car park in the village and walk up the lane – the reserve is on the right. There is no public car park on Moors Lane.

Nearest station – Redditch (4.5 miles)  
Nearest bus – Feckenham (0.5 mile)

**Access:** The reserve is open at all times. Information is available on the reserve and in the hides. There is no parking and no toilets on site. Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times. If you'd like to make a donation for the upkeep of the site please text WILD04 followed by the amount you'd like to donate to 70070 (eg WILD04 £5).

**Group and school visits by arrangement:** 01905 754919

Feckenham Wyldes Moor is one of over 70 nature reserves owned and cared for by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust that form part of our vision for a Living Landscape for Worcestershire. By working with other landowners, managers and communities we aim to **restore, recreate and reconnect** fragmented habitats to achieve a landscape where wildlife can flourish and people can live happier and healthier lives.



### Ways to get involved

- Become a member
- Volunteer
- Leave a gift in your will
- Adopt a species
- Buy wild bird food

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Worcestershire Wildlife Trust relies on the support of its members and on donations and grants.

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Charity No. 256618

## Feckenham Wyldes Moor Nature Reserve

### Trail Guide



Worcestershire



Follow the yellow dotted line through the nature reserve. We've marked places of interest on the way.

This meadow **1** is probably the most flower rich. In spring a bright pink swathe of ragged robin spreads across the grassland. Look out for orange tip butterflies, whose larval food-plant is lady's smock, dancing across the meadow in late April and May – a sure sign that spring is under way and a welcome splash of colour. The hedgerows and field margins are a good place to see sedge warblers in spring, listen out for their scratchy and erratic song which can contain mimics of other birds calls. These birds winter in Africa, returning each year in late April to breed.

This second meadow **2** is wetter so look for lesser pond sedge and, if you are lucky, you may spot a southern marsh orchid. The vegetation at the edge of the meadow is markedly different to the middle. This is because the reserve is a big bowl of clay that has filled up with peat over many hundreds of years. This clay rises up to the surface along the boundary so the ground stays drier and the flowers that grow here are different.



Southern marsh orchid

Stop at the hide **3** looking over the pool. In spring a striking show of yellow can be seen as the coltsfoot flowers along the banks of the pool. Little grebes nest on the far side as it is quiet and undisturbed; look for the young learning to fish in the summer. Look for a grass snake swimming to one of the islands in search of a meal or the bright blue flash of a kingfisher dropping in for some fishing, diverting their travels along the nearby Brandon Brook.



Kingfisher

The edges of this bottom meadow **4** are higher and drier. Cut and cleared of the vegetation each year by a dedicated band of volunteers and then grazed by cattle in the autumn, this area has become rich in flowers. Cowslips are abundant in spring, followed by orchids in the summer.

The piles of grass make excellent habitat for reptiles like slow-worms too. The remainder of the meadows are too wet to cut and have developed into tall fen that is characterised by the purple loosestrife and angelica flowers in summer.

We have fenced off two areas of blackthorn along this boundary **5** since discovering eggs of the brown hairstreak butterfly on the young blackthorn which is their larval food-plant. From late July, the adult butterflies spend much of their time in the tops of ash trees, the females coming down to lay eggs on blackthorn in late summer. The reedbed path has been closed to protect important numbers of breeding and wintering birds – re-trace your steps as you leave the reserve and follow the public footpath network for a short while.

Cross the stiles **6** and turn right along the hedgerow. This field is a grazed pasture and contains a lot of rushes. Our soil maps show that this is an area where there is peat and at one time was probably part of the wetland.



Cross the stile **7** and walk over one of two ditch outflows from the reserve. Water flows from here to the nearby Bow Brook which is an important wildlife corridor. Continue on the footpath until it joins a bridleway, **8** follow this to your right and walk through a poplar plantation. This area can be boggy in winter so stout footwear is advisable. These trees make a great buffer for the reserve - their root systems help to filter the water that flows through the soil onto our reserve.

Re-join the reserve after crossing a bridge and going through the bridleway gate. **9** You can turn right and head back through the nature reserve to the small hide which looks out over a dragonfly pool and some of the reedbed. Alternatively, you can head straight on to the reserve entrance.

We hope you've enjoyed your visit to Feckenham Wylde Moor and that you'll come back and see the changing seasons here.

Ragged robin

Feckenham pool