

Birds to see...



Avocet. The UK's first inland-breeding avocets nested at The Flashes in 2003 – a 24hr vigil was established to protect their eggs. Their numbers have grown each year; in 2019 19 pairs fledged 43 chicks and in 2024 a record 78 adults were recorded on site.

Curlew. The now rare curlew are still holding on at Upton Warren and can be seen throughout autumn and winter, roosting at The Flashes most evenings.



Water rail. These elusive birds often give themselves away by their pig-like squealing. The best chance for spotting one is in front of the Water Rail Hide at The Moors.



Bullfinch. As you walk along the paths keep a look out for the bright peachy breasts of a male bullfinch in the hedges and trees; their bills are specially adapted to eat seeds and buds but in summer you may see them catching insects to feed to their young.

Cetti's warbler. These small brown birds are true skulkers but listen for their loud bursts of song from the cover of reeds or scrub; if you're lucky you may catch sight of a dark warbler dashing through.



Shelduck. In 2024 a pair of these beautiful ducks bred at The Flashes. They nest in holes in the ground so we think they fledged their eight young from old rabbit burrows.



Spotted sandpiper. This is just one of many rare birds that visit The Moors and The Flashes pools during spring and autumn when birds are migrating to and from summer breeding grounds (often in the Arctic or Scandinavia) and wintering grounds (often Africa).



Seasonal highlights

- SPRING** Yellow wagtail, reed warbler, sedge warbler, common tern, cuckoo, black-tailed godwit and other passage waders
- SUMMER** Avocet, little ringed plover, oystercatcher, black-headed gull, Mediterranean gull, banded demoiselle
- AUTUMN** Shoveler, teal, lapwing, passage waders (often unusual birds), southern hawk dragonfly
- WINTER** Snipe, curlew, water rail, kingfisher, siskin, redpoll, redwing, fieldfare, otter



The Flashes © Wendy Carter, avocet © Pete Walkden

Welcome to The Christopher Cadbury Wetland Reserve at Upton Warren

This nature reserve is in two distinct parts – The Moors Pools (freshwater) and The Flashes Pools (saline). The pools and surrounding habitat are home to an unusual range of plants and wildlife and the reserve is the county's best birdwatching site.

Separating these two areas is a privately owned lake that was formed as a result of quarrying for materials to construct the nearby M5 motorway in the 1960s. The Sailing Pool, now home to water activities, provides an important link between The Moors and The Flashes, creating a significant block of habitat that acts as a corridor and allows wildlife to move across the whole site.

Access Wildlife Trust members must carry their membership card with them as non-members are required to purchase a permit for £5 from our online shop www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/shop, Lower Smite Farm, an onsite volunteer or The Boatshack Café. Please see back page for parking information.

Hides There are a number of bird-watching hides around the Trust's pools; please see map inside for wheelchair accessible ones and contact the Trust for access details.

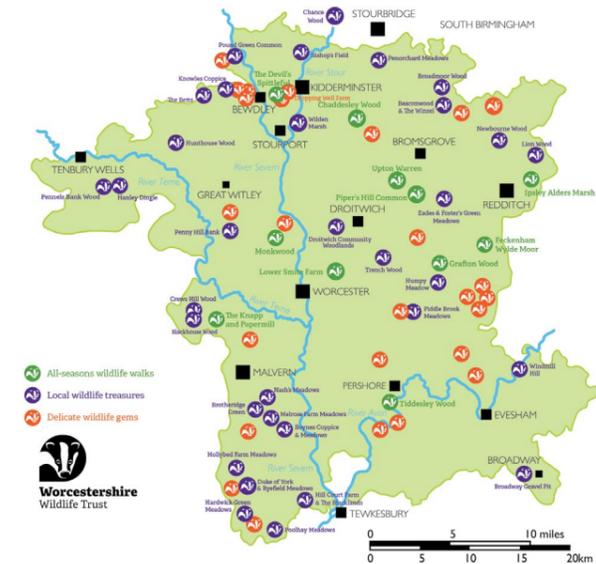
Paths To avoid disturbance to wildlife, please stay on the marked paths. Paths can become muddy.

Dogs Dogs are not allowed on this nature reserve.

There are separate car parks for The Moors and The Flashes, parking is free for members of the Trust and day permit holders. The Moors is open dawn to dusk. The car park for The Flashes is owned by Aztec Adventure and opening for The Flashes reflects their core opening hours – Apr-Sep 9am–4.30pm, Oct-Mar 10.30am–3pm. The Flashes may be open beyond this time but please check the noticeboard in the car park for daily closure times.

Group and school visits by arrangement: 01905 754919

The Christopher Cadbury Wetland Reserve is one of over 75 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.



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

For more information about the Trust and how to join or support our work visit www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk

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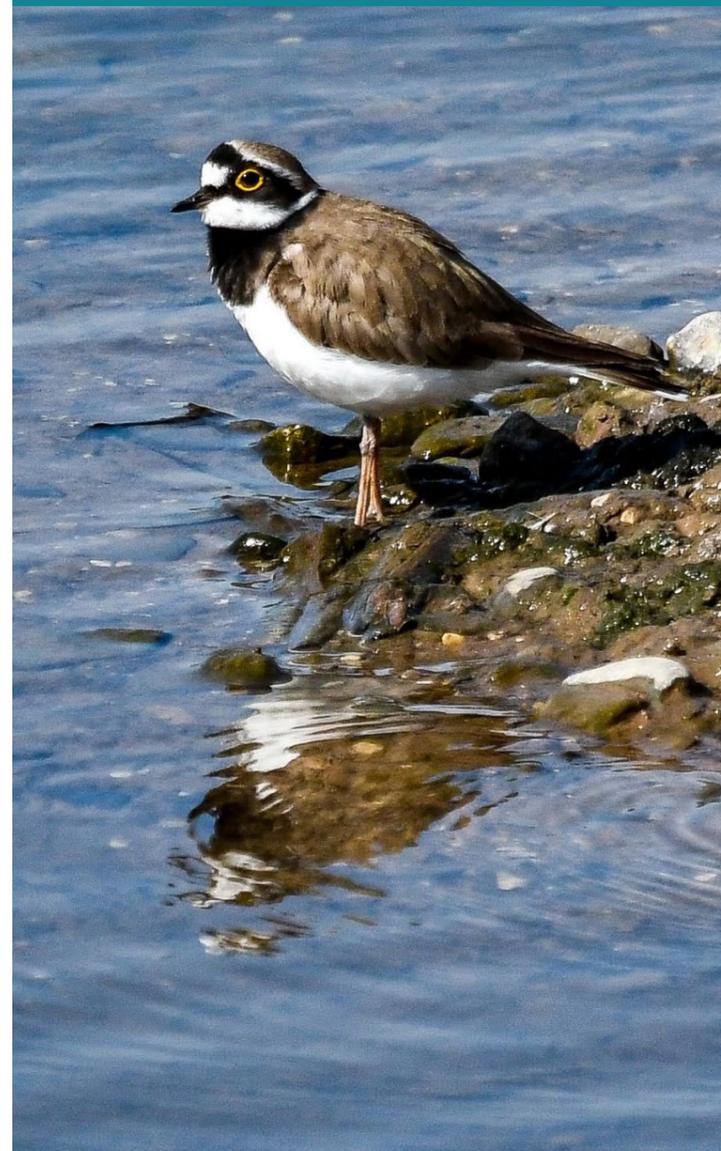
Charity No. 256618

Photo: Ian Byrnes (front cover).

The Christopher Cadbury Wetland Reserve at Upton Warren



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Protecting wildlife where we live

The Flashes

The underlying salt deposit at The Flashes, Droitwich halite, was formed around 200 million years ago. Subsequent underground brine extraction caused subsidence and flooding – the saline pools and saltmarsh were born. The saltmarsh and the unusual collection of birds and other wildlife that it supports has resulted in the nature reserve's designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The Moors

The Moors pools are situated on former agricultural land. The great expanse of open water attracts a wide range of birds but to keep the open nature of the pools here periodic restoration is needed – from clearing reeds to dredging new channels.

Hedgerows

The site is surrounded by a network of hedges and associated scrub vegetation that provides vital connectivity throughout the site. As well as acting as corridors, the hedgerows provide shelter and nesting opportunities for both birds and small mammals. The hedgerows are also full of food for most of the year – insects, blackberries, hawthorn berries, rosehips and much more. In the summer months, look out for white-letter hairstreak butterflies along the hedgerows; the larvae only feed on elm.

Reedbeds

These blocks of habitat are vital for birds like breeding reed warblers and over-wintering bitterns as well as for fish that seek refuge here rather than in the open water. We cut the reedbed on rotation to prevent the build up of nutrients and dead plant material. In 2015, we created a series of deep-water channels in the main Moors pool; whilst we had hoped to tempt a pair of bittern here, within two months a rare red-necked grebe visited for a couple of days.

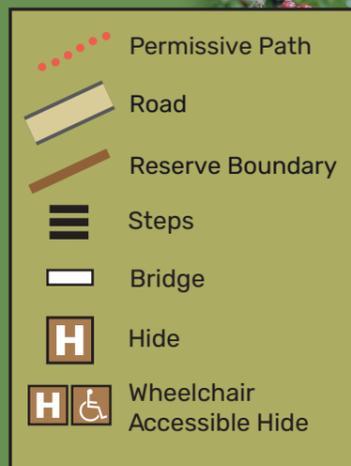


Streams and rivers

The Hen Brook and River Salwarpe are important habitats in their own right as well as providing corridors for wildlife to move through the reserve. Otters are often seen on the reserve and will use the waterways to move from place to place; one day we hope that water voles may colonise Upton Warren from the populations in nearby Bromsgrove. From spring until autumn, look out for damselflies and dragonflies such as large red damselfly, banded demoiselle or emperor dragonfly.

Trees and woodland

Trees of differing ages, whether in hedgerows, woodlands or alongside the pools are important places for shelter, food and linking Upton Warren's habitats. In order to ensure the pools maintain their open nature, needed for many species of birds to enable them to fly in and land, we pollard trees around the edges of pools. This involves cutting them above head height and allowing them to re-grow from there; as we do this on a cyclical basis, we ensure that trees of different ages are maintained – great for lots of wildlife species that have differing needs.



	Permissive Path
	Road
	Reserve Boundary
	Steps
	Bridge
	Hide
	Wheelchair Accessible Hide

Saltmarsh

The saltmarsh includes plants that are rarely found inland such as sea spurrey and reflexed saltmarsh grass. The muddy margins are home to numerous invertebrates at different stages of their lifecycle – it's this mass of food and salinity that attracts the birds. As well as supporting avocets, which would normally be found in more estuarine and coastal environments, the saltmarsh attracts breeding birds like ringed plover and lapwing. It is remarkable for the waders that drop in while migrating – birds such as wood sandpiper, black-tailed godwit, ruff as well as rarities like red-necked phalarope and even two American wading birds, Baird's sandpiper and least sandpiper.

Making it Work

Member subscriptions and day permits help to fund our conservation work but our volunteers are vital in managing these habitats and other important features that wildlife relies on at Upton Warren – from maintaining islands for breeding birds and clearing vegetation to managing trees and hedges to maintaining visitor access. Grazing cattle help to keep reeds and other vegetation in check.



Hidden Wildlife

Whilst otters may be one of the more obviously elusive species to spot at Upton Warren, there are some that most visitors will never see...

- Once so common that they were a form of currency, eels are now endangered. Some live out part of their lives here in the mud at the bottom of the pools, feeding and growing until they return to the Sargasso Sea to spawn.
- Harvest mice are our only rodent with a prehensile tail – they use it like a fifth foot! Their nests consist of a ball of woven grass wound amongst stalks of grasses, reeds or brambles; it's one of the reasons we leave patches of long grass and scrubby areas.
- During the breeding season, the eyes of male three-spined stickleback become blue and parts of the head, throat and belly turn bright red. Mostly feeding on midge larvae, these small fish can live in fresh, brackish or salt water – so Upton Warren is perfect for them!

Our volunteers meet weekly – if you'd like to join in, visit our website for more information or get in touch with us on 01905 754919 or enquiries@worcestershireswildlifetrust.org

