

Sandhurst Wild Walk

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire



Explore east Berkshire: this gentle walk passes through heathland, pasture and forest

Starting in Sandhurst, this 9 km circular walk takes in the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT) Wildmoor Heath nature reserve and part of Crowthorne Wood.

- 9 km/5.6 miles (about 2.5 hours)
- There is a 2.4 km/1.5 mile circular Wildlife Walk and other additional paths through Wildmoor Heath to explore further
- Parts of the route through Wildmoor Heath can get very wet under foot

How to get to the start

Postcode: GU47 9BL (Sandhurst library) **Grid ref:** SU 839 614

By bus: Check www.traveline.info for information about local buses

By train: There are railway stations at Sandhurst and also Crowthorne if you prefer to start at a different point on the walk. Check www.nationalrail.co.uk for train times

By car: Parking is available in Sandhurst as well as in Crowthorne and at Wildmoor Heath nature reserve

By bike: The walk starts in the centre of Sandhurst



Please help us look after wildlife by keeping dogs on short leads at Wildmoor Heath and picking up after them.

Wildmoor Heath Nature Reserve

Heath once covered much of south and east Berkshire, but today only 2% of this area survives, having been destroyed for housing and forestry. Wildmoor Heath's gently rolling landscape of heather, gorse and pine is part of this tiny percentage of remaining heathland.

The reserve is most colourful when the heather flowers in late summer, turning the reserve shades of purple and pink with an accompanying buzz of bees and flies feeding on this rich nectar source.

However, there is plenty to see throughout the year. Cushions of yellow, green and red sphagnum mosses glow even brighter after fresh rain. There are drifts of white feathery cottongrass dotted with golden-yellow bog asphodel. Dragonflies and damselflies dart back and forth over mirrored ponds. Stonechats and Dartford warblers sing from the tops of gorse bushes.

The reserve is managed by BBOWT in partnership with Bracknell Forest Borough Council for its wildlife and for public recreation. Cattle browse the young pine, birch and purple moor-grass to keep the vegetation at the right height for ground-nesting birds such as nightjars, and for reptiles like adders and lizards.

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

BBOWT relies on the support of our members to help us look after local wildlife. By joining BBOWT you can help to secure the future of special landscapes like Wildmoor Heath.

[Join us today!](#)

NATURE NOTES



Small red damselflies can be seen darting over bog pools from early

June to early September. Typical of many damselfly species, the males will grasp the females behind the head to lay eggs 'in tandem' on plant stems below the water. The larvae hatch from the eggs and live in the pools for two years before emerging as adults.



Heathland is ideal habitat for reptiles. Common lizards bask

on patches of bare ground in the early morning sun to warm their bodies, cooled by the night air, before hunting for small insects. You may also catch a glimpse of basking **adders** at Wildmoor Heath. They are identified by a distinctive zig-zag pattern on their back. The males are smaller and paler than the females.



Silver-studded blues are tiny butterflies which are found on

heathland and occasionally on coastal habitats. Their name comes from the tiny dots on the underwings which can look metallic and silvery. On heathland, the caterpillars eat heathers and gorse. They are tended by ants, which provide some protection against predators. The adults fly during July and August.



Dartford warblers are small, shy birds that live on lowland

heathland like that at Wildmoor Heath. You may be lucky enough to spot one singing from the top of a gorse bush or flying between bushes in search of insects to eat. They nest among the gorse or heather from April to June. Parents are kept busy feeding the two broods of 3-4 chicks with small insects and other invertebrates.

STAGE 1

Start to Wildmoor Heath nature reserve

From Sandhurst Library, turn left on to The Broadway, then right on to Wellington Road and left on to Thibet Road. At the end of the road, continue straight on along the footpath as you enter WILDMOOR HEATH NATURE RESERVE.

STAGE 2

Wildmoor Heath nature reserve to South Road

Continue straight on at the footpath junction, taking the boardwalks across the bog and pools. As you pass under the power lines, follow the boardwalk to the right, past the raised inspection cover, to the path junction. Turn right on to brideway and follow to the edge of the heath.

In summer, look for dragonflies and damselflies flitting around the many bog pools, and common lizards basking on the boardwalks.

STAGE 3

South Road to Crowthorne Wood

Turn left on to South Road, go through the gate and follow the path for 200 metres, before turning right on to the footpath. Follow this up and around the wooded hilltop and down to Broadmoor Farm. Continue straight on up the sunken Eastern Lane with its bracken-covered banks. Take the footpath straight on as the road bends to the left.

Look for common blue, meadow brown and other butterflies over the pasture in spring and summer.

STAGE 4

Crowthorne Wood to Broadmoor Hospital

Cross the road, go through a gate and continue on into Crowthorne Wood, taking the left fork down to the fish pond at Butter Bottom, and on for 400 metres to a wide path junction. Turn left on to The Devil's Highway following this restricted byway for about ½ mile, then just past the Broadmoor Hospital car park, turn left on to the footpath.

Look for coppiced sweet chestnut along the forest path.

STAGE 7

Wildmoor Heath nature reserve to Sandhurst library

Descend to Wildmoor Bottom and continue straight on at the footpath junction, this area can get quite boggy. Go up and over the rise and turn left at the next footpath junction. Follow the footpath around the edge of the bog, and along the boardwalk through an area of wet wood before leaving the reserve. Follow the road opposite, slightly to your right (Beech Ride), and take the footpath as the road bends right, cross Wellington Road and take Albion Road back to the library.

Listen for Dartford warblers singing from the tops of gorse bushes, and look at the colourful mosses in the bog.

STAGE 6

Edgbarrow School to Wildmoor Heath nature reserve

Turn left beside the school car park following the footpath for 200 metres before turning right between the playground and sports field, and back into WILDMOOR HEATH. Follow the permissive path straight on to the brideway junction, and take the footpath straight on, under the power lines, and up to the highest part of the heath.

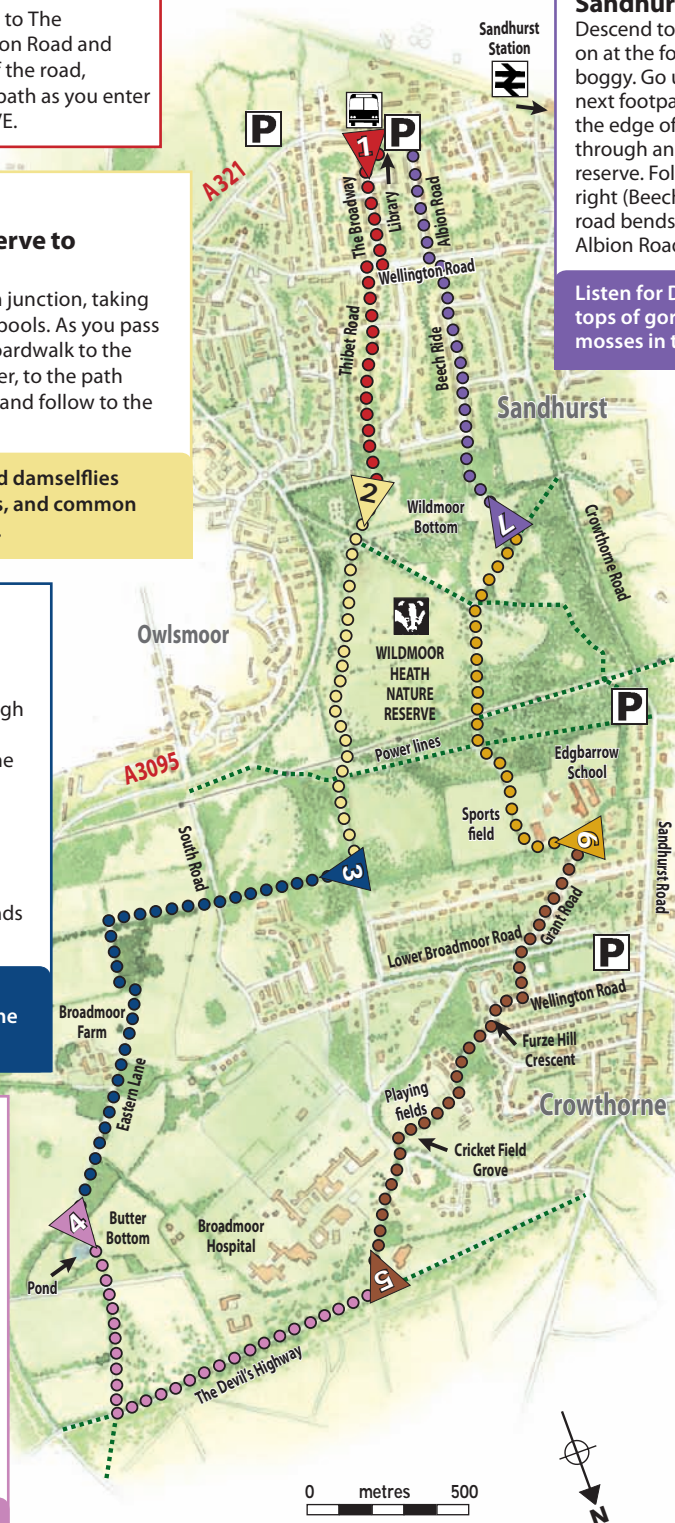
Take a closer look at the bell-shaped flowers of heathers, and watch for the many insects that feed on their nectar.

STAGE 5

Broadmoor Hospital to Edgbarrow School

Follow the pavement with the hospital on your left and turn right by the sports field on to Cricket Field Grove. After the small car park, turn left and follow the path downhill through the trees. Turn left at the road (Furze Hill Crescent), then right on to Wellington Road. After 100 metres, turn left and follow the footpath between the houses, across Lower Broadmoor Road and follow Grant Road, slightly to your right through the gap in the trees, cross one road and on to Edgbarrow School.

Listen for the high-pitched call of goldcrests high up in the pine canopy.



WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
'Wild' landscapes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carpets of flowering heather on the heath								✓	✓	✓		
Dragonflies and damselflies darting around bog pools					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Swirling drifts of cottongrass over the wet heath					✓	✓	✓					
Chorus of bird song at dawn and dusk					✓	✓	✓					

KEY

- BBOWT Nature Reserve
- Railway station
- Bus stop
- Parking