



Location

Nearest town Malmesbury
Postcode SN16 9LQ
OS Map Grid Ref – ST983906

Access - the reserve is not suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. It can be wet in places. Dogs on leads are welcome.

Directions

If driving – from the Malmesbury to Cricklade road (B4040), turn off for Hankerton in village of Charlton. In Hankerton turn right into Cloatley Road, (signed for Cricklade and Minety). Reserve entrance and car park are on left after one mile, about 100 metres after the garage.

If using bus -. The number 93 bus stops in Hankerton. From here there is a 15 minute walk along Cloatley Road to reserve entrance. Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets

If cycling - Leave National Cycle Route 48 at Hankerton and follow Cloatley Road for reserve entrance. Cycle stands available in reserve car park. Visit www.sustrans.org.uk

Nearby reserves – Emmett Hill Meadows, Distillery Meadows, Ravensroost Wood

About Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Our vision is to create a county rich in wildlife and help people live sustainable lifestyles that protect the environment for the benefit of everyone.

We have about 18,000 members, look after almost 40 nature reserves, are supported by hundreds of volunteers, and work with local communities, schools, businesses and public bodies to achieve our aims. To do all this we rely on the support of our members.

If you would like to join us, or to find out about how you can help the environment, please visit www.wiltshirewildlife.org

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Cover Photo: Redwing, ChapManKj75



A sustainable future for wildlife and people
 Wiltshire Wildlife Trust **Nature reserves**

Cloatley Meadows



Cloatley Meadows

Size: 31.01 hectares

If you want to see how hay meadows might have looked in your grandparents' day come for a walk in Cloatley Meadows on the edge of the Braydon Forest.

The eight small meadows that make up this nature reserve during summer are awash with wildflowers and alive with insects. **The tall hedgerows provide secret places where you can sit and watch the wildlife.**

Three fields - Horse Leaze, Cow Leaze and The Hams - are within Cloatley Manor Farm Meadows **Site of Special Scientific Interest.**

In some meadows you can still see the parallel ridges and furrows left by medieval farming. Near the southern boundary, undulations in the ground are all that are left of a **medieval settlement.**

The common land was enclosed in the 16th century and subdivided into fields by planting hedgerows, which you can see today.

The fields drain into Braydon Brook, which crosses the north of the reserve. The site also has a copse and four ponds.

Wildlife

The flower display starts in April with cowslips and continues through summer with **meadow vetchling**, pignut, betony, heath spotted orchid, **bee orchid**, adder's-tongue fern and, in the copse, **moschatel**.

Come in June and July to see butterflies - marsh fritillary, small heath, shoulder-striped wainscot, brown hairstreak. The uncommon **chimney sweeper moth** lays its eggs on the frothy white pignut.

See if you can spot damselflies and dragonflies near the four ponds. Stay and watch for tadpoles and water boatmen.

Among wintering birds are **barn owl**, fieldfare, redwing and bullfinch while those that nest include the common whitethroat and possibly cuckoo.

Let's not forget the more than 30 species of spider that have been recorded.

In the hedgerows you may notice several oaks more than 200 years old. We cut only one third of the hedges every year as overgrown hedges provide food for birds during winter.

We cut the hay once every three years in July and graze the fields with our own **belted Galloway** cattle, and sheep, in the intervening years. This removes tough grasses so wildflowers can thrive.

We cut the hedges on a rotational basis with a third of the hedges on the property being cut every year. Overgrown hedges are good for biodiversity and feeding sites for birds during winter.

We have seeded some of the less spectacular fields with devil's-bit scabious, saw-wort, common knapweed and betony to boost wildflower numbers.



Photos: Barn owl, Darin Smith. Common darter, Andrew Kerr. Bee orchid, Rob Large WWT. Azure damselfly, Vicki Nall. Meadow vetchling, Rob Large WWT.

