



Location

Royal Wootton Bassett
Postcode SN15 5EF
Grid Ref – SU039854

Access - Not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs. Dogs on leads are welcome.

Directions

If driving - Leave Royal Wootton Bassett on the B4042 towards Brinkworth and Malmesbury. Take second right (Wood Lane) 1.5 miles after the motorway underpass signposted Minety. About 0.5 miles along Wood Lane, after crossing a small bridge, turn right down a track signed as bridleway to car park. Reserve entrance and information board are on the right at the entrance to the car park.

If using bus – - Route 31 travels from Malmesbury to Swindon via Callow Hill and Royal Wootton Bassett. At Callow Hill there is a crossroads - opposite Callow Hill is Wood Lane. Walk 10 minutes northwards on Wood Lane and Echo Lodge is on right. Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets

If cycling – Follow National Cycle Route 254 along Wood Lane until right turn into track, as above. Visit www.sustrans.org.uk

Nearby reserves – The Firs, Ravensroost Wood and Meadows

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 18,500 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: Snipe, Margaret Holland

A sustainable future for wildlife and people

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Nature reserves

Echo Lodge



Echo Lodge Meadows

15.39 hectares

Visit these three meadows in spring and summer for their vivid wildflower displays.

Wood Field is a large area of grassland that was a part of **Webb's Wood** until the area was cleared during the 1950s.

Skinner's Ground and Ditch Field are much older, sheltered, **flower-rich meadows** laying either side of Woodridge Brook, which has its own special habitat and forms much of the southern boundary.

Wildlife

Skinner's Ground has the most wildflowers - more than 80 species have been seen here. Orchids include **pyramidal**, heath spotted, southern marsh, **early purple** and green-winged.

Golden hues provide contrast - cowslips, meadow buttercups, yellow rattle, bird's foot-trefoil and ladies bedstraw.

In the middle is a pond, overhung by an old oak pollard, where gipsywort can be found.

Webb's Wood surrounds Skinner's Ground on three sides, giving a woodland edge to Ditch Field and Wood Field. This is favoured by butterflies - the **purple hairstreak**, **white admiral**, purple emperor and silver-washed fritillary to name a few. Also there are lots of moths, including the forester moth.

A small copse contains the uncommon small-leaved lime. Spot the delicate spindles of **enchanter's nightshade**.

More than 400 species of fungi can be found on the reserve, so look closely at old trees, dead wood stumps and rotting logs - places you are most likely to find them.

As for birds, the barn owl, **snipe**, woodcock and raven make their home here.

We are using a variety of approaches to restore Echo Lodge Meadows. It was put into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme in 1993 and since then has been cut for hay with aftermath grazing.

We continue this pattern for Skinner's Ground and Ditch Field - cutting hay in July and then grazing with cattle or sheep in the autumn. This keeps the more vigorous grasses under control, allowing the wild flowers to thrive and spread to sparser areas of the fields.

Wood Field has fewer flowers so we will mostly manage it by grazing, which will benefit invertebrates while still encouraging plants to increase. We will delay grazing until June which we hope will encourage curlews to nest and benefit adder's-tongue fern.

The ancient hedgerows and woodland edges of Ditch Field and particularly Skinner's Ground are rich in blackthorn. This is coppiced on a rotational basis to provide a succession of young growth as brown hairstreak butterflies lay their eggs on young shoots.



Pyramidal orchid, Rob Large WWT. White admiral, Stephen Davis WWT. Purple hairstreak, Giles Martin. Early purple orchid Philip Precey. Enchanter's nightshade, Rob Large WWT. Wildflowers at Echo Lodge, Steve Day WWT

