

Location

Grid ref SP7 9AZ

Access

Much of the wood is damp and not suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Dogs on leads are welcome.

Directions

If driving - On the A30 from Salisbury to Shaftesbury turn right to Donhead St Mary. Once in village, go past church and head for Semley. After one mile turn right, just before Fairview House (with postbox in wall). Park on verge at Gutch Common and entrance to reserve is a wooden gate located next to the 'Woodside' bungalow.

If using bus - bus route 247 travels from Shaftesbury to Tisbury and stops at Sem Hill in Semley. Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets

If cycling - visit www.sustrans.org.uk

Nearby reserves: Middleton Down

What to see locally - Larmer Tree Gardens (6 miles), Hambledon Hill Nature Reserve (7 miles), Fiddleford Manor (7 miles), Chettle House (8 miles)

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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 Join us on [Facebook.com/WiltsWild](https://www.facebook.com/WiltsWild)

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Registered charity no. 266202



Cover photo: Fledgling tawny owl, Richard Bowler

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

A sustainable future for wildlife and people

Nature reserves

Oysters Coppice



Oysters Coppice

Near Shaftsbury 5.58 hectares

Oysters Coppice nestles on a gentle slope offering spectacular views over the Vale of Wardour. A circular route leads you through areas of interest.

Although Oysters Coppice is ancient woodland, and its history can be traced back to the tithe map of 1839, it has the feel of a very young wood as many of the trees were felled, probably for firewood, in the 1950s. Most trees are now under 100 years of age.

Today the fantastic displays of woodland flowers flourish largely through the work of our volunteers who create sheltered, warm and sunny openings where they can thrive.

Hedges run around approximately half the wood and are part of a layering and coppicing programme to promote their long-term sustainability and provide better wildlife habitat.

Wildlife

Take a walk in late February and March to see the wild daffodils – a native plant whose numbers have tumbled since the 19th century.

Woodland wildflowers make the reserve particularly beautiful during spring. Bluebells, wood anemones, primroses and wood sorrel brighten the woodland floor.

Moschatel also grows here. It is known as the 'town hall clock' because of its unusual flower structure.

From March to May you can smell the garlicky scent of the **ramsoms**, or wild garlic.

Rising springs create boggy areas, streams and a swampy pond in a southern corner of the reserve and invertebrates thrive in these damp areas.

The mix of trees reflect the ground conditions. Oak grows on the drier soils, ash on damper ones, and alder in wet areas. **Ferns** flourish on the lower, wetter slopes of the wood.

Such variety is good for birds – **bullfinch**, song thrush, great spotted woodpecker and **tawny owl** to name a few.

Walk to the pond where smooth newts and **frogs** thrive. Emperor and common darter dragonflies, and large red and common blue damselflies hunt above the water.

In the autumn and winter, nibbled hazel nuts on the woodland floor give away the presence of dormice.

Well camouflaged **woodcock** probe for insects and worms in the leaf litter.



Bullfinch, Graham Coules. Ramsoms, WWT. Frog, Darin Smith WWT
Woodcock, Margaret Holland. Lady fern, Rob Large WWT. Moschatel, Rob Large WWT