

Location

Ravensroost Wood, Meadows and Avis Meadows Grid ref SU241877

Access – not suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs other than the surfaced central ride. Can be very muddy. Dogs on leads are welcome.

If driving – The reserve is located about 1.5 miles north of Brinkworth. From Royal Wootton Bassett take the B4042 Brinkworth and Malmesbury Road. Take first right after the motorway underpass, onto the B4696 signposted to Ashton Keynes and Cricklade and follow it northwards. After two miles take the second left signposted to Garston. Go straight on at next cross roads (after a further mile) and Ravensroost car park is just under 0.5 miles on right.

If using bus - bus 31 from Malmesbury to Swindon via Brinkworth. Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets

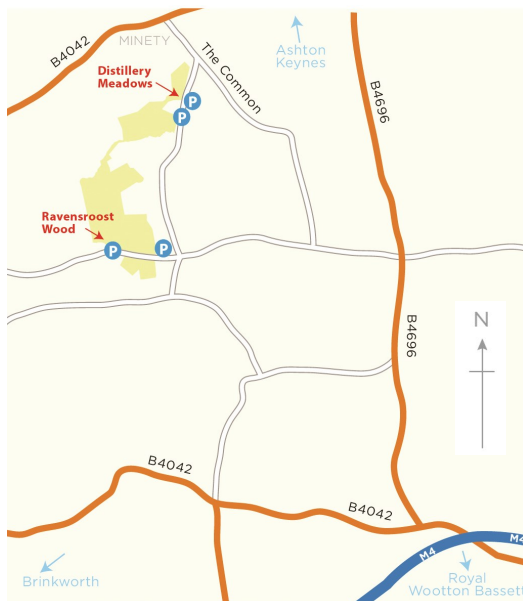
If cycling – Follow National Cycle Route 254 northwards from Callow Hill along Wood Lane and then left onto Queen Street. After about one mile leave Route 254 and turn right towards Minety and then left at next crossroads. Reserve is just under 0.5 miles on right. Visit www.sustrans.org.uk

Distillery and Warbler Meadows Grid ref SU031892

If driving - Distillery Meadows lies about one mile south of Minety. From the Turnpike Inn crossroad in Minety turn south off the B4040. After about 500m take the first right, signposted to Brinkworth. The Hill Ground part of the reserve is the first field on the right, with parking in the gateways. For the rest of the reserve continue down the lane for about 400m to a double gateway entrance to the reserve on the right.

If using bus - Bus stops in Minety. Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets

If cycling – Visit www.sustrans.org.uk



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: Barn owl, Darin Smith

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

A sustainable future for wildlife and people

Nature reserves

Ravensroost Wood and Meadows



Ravensroost Wood

Including Ravensroost, Avis, Distillery and Warbler Meadows.

Malmesbury Total complex 97.11 hectares.
Ravensroost Wood 39.49 hectares

Ravensroost Wood is full of interesting wildlife and history and you can walk into surrounding wildflower fields for a contrasting experience. To the east are Ravensroost and Avis Meadows, and to the north are Warbler and Distillery Meadows.

The wood's northern section is a fine example of **ancient woodland**, meaning it has been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD.

The south was almost completely cleared from the mid-1600s to make way for agriculture, before being replanted in the 19th century. We bought the wood in 1987.

One of the rare ancient woodland tree species found here, is the **wild service tree**, also known as chequers. In the past its berries were used to make alcoholic drinks.

Follow the surfaced path, known as the Jack Smith Ride, through the wood until you come to the Shooting Hut. This was built in the 1930s and auctions were held here to sell coppiced wood.

Lots of smaller rides criss-cross the wood and there are ponds.

Ravensroost Wood is a **Site of Special Scientific Interest** and fantastic for birds. Winter is a good time for foraging birds such as redwing and nuthatch. The tawny owls are at their noisiest in December as they start to pair bond. Great and lesser spotted woodpeckers start drumming in January.

Come for the Dawn Chorus in May and listen to warblers, blackcap, wren and treecreepers sing for their mates.

Bats, including **pipistrelle**, forage at dusk and in autumn more than 450 species of fungi can be found here, such as the jellied mass of **brain fungus**.

Ravensroost and Avis Meadows

Malmesbury 26.28 hectares

Wildflower-rich grasslands are some of the most threatened habitats in the country and in this chain of six meadows we cut the hay in late summer and follow it with grazing to help the flowers spread.

The western field of Avis Meadows is particularly colourful and contains pignut, pepper-saxifrage, oxeye daisy, **devil's-bit scabious**, **meadow vetchling** and betony.

The meadows are surrounded by mature hedgerows. They contain plenty of blackthorn, which is the food plant of the rare brown hairstreak butterfly's caterpillar. Sixteen species of dragonflies and damselflies are drawn to the ponds in the middle of Ravensroost Meadows. **Barn owls** nest in the vicinity and forage over the meadows.

Distillery and Warbler Meadows

Malmesbury 31.34 hectares

Distillery Meadows are a reminder of how the countryside looked in the pre-war era, when it was covered with small, traditionally managed family-run farms. The meadows take their name from a failed distillery venture.

The best fields for wildflowers are Wood

Ground for green-winged, **heath spotted** and common spotted orchids; Hill Ground for common knapweed and sneezewort; and Ten Acres for yellow rattle, bugle and saw-wort. It has carpets of **dyer's greenweed**, which is actually bright yellow. Each field is a designated **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**.

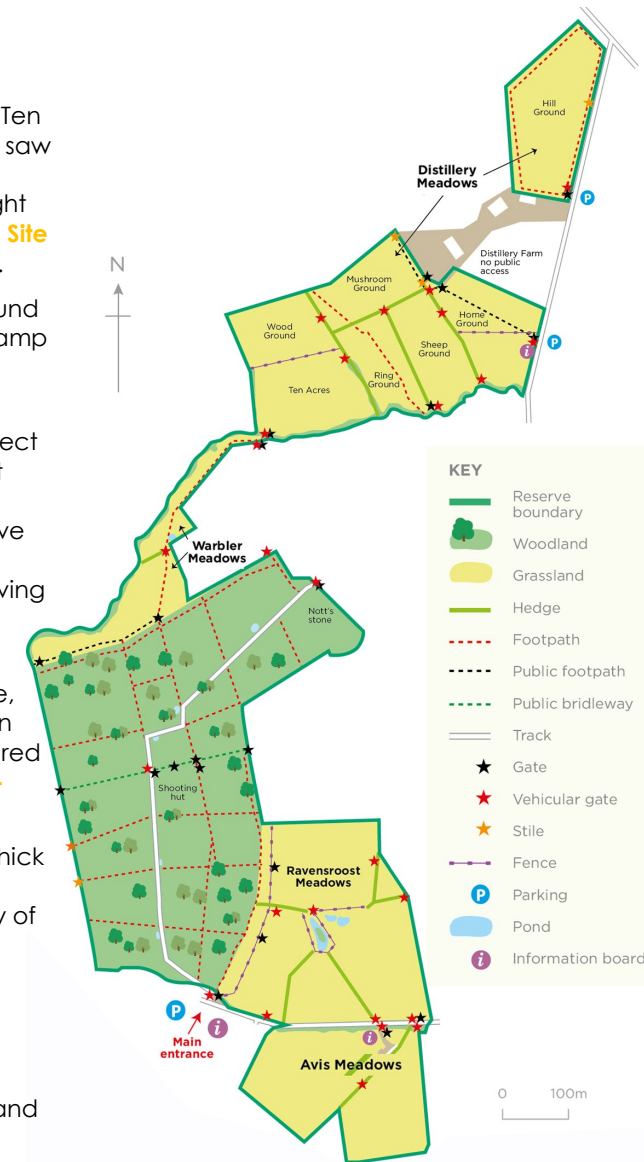
Mushroom Ground and Ring Ground are also SSSI and provide rushy damp grassland along the stream.

Warbler Meadows are a recent addition to the reserve and connect Distillery Meadows to Ravensroost Wood, thereby creating a green corridor that allows wildlife to move safely. By joining up wildlife-rich I and in this way we are creating living landscapes.

Some butterflies found here include orange-tip, common blue, holly blue, meadow brown, brown hairstreak, white-letter hairstreak, red admiral, white admiral and **silver-washed fritillary**.

Surrounding the fields are huge, thick hedges stuffed with species that provide an important early supply of food for insects and birds such as thrushes, **chiffchaff**, bullfinch and goldfinch.

Since we took over the reserve in 1990 we have continued to farm traditionally with careful grazing and hay cutting.



Ravensroost Wood, Steve Day WWT. Wild service tree, Stephen Davis WWT. Pipistrelle bat, Amy Lewis. Brain fungus, Les Binns. Devil's-bit scabious, Rob Large WWT. Meadow vetchling, Rob Large WWT. Heath spotted orchid, Rob Large WWT. Silver-washed fritillary, Stephen Davis WWT. Chiffchaff, Amy Lewis

