

Long Wood Nature Reserve



Somerset Wildlife Trust

Welcome

Why this is a special place:

- In spring the woodland floor is carpeted with Bluebells and Ramsons, which is also known as Wild Garlic. Their flowers make a striking contrast of colours and fragrance. You may also spot Early Purple Orchids, Wood Anemone and the unusual Herb Paris
- The reserve contains a small area of flower rich grassland known as the Orchid slope. In the summer this a good place to look for plants such as Common Spotted Orchid, Twayblade and Salad Burnet.
- A stream runs from the north into the wood and disappears below ground at Long Wood swallet into an extensive cave system before finally emerging at the lower end of Cheddar Gorge. In the past, water from the stream was diverted to the nearby lead workings at Velvet Bottom nature reserve to wash the lead ore.
- You maybe able to hear the distinctive sound of woodpeckers. Green Woodpeckers with their laughing or 'yaffling' calls are often seen on anthills in the grassland looking for food. Greater Spotted Woodpeckers can be heard drumming on trees within the woodland. Other birds to look and listen out for are Nuthatch, Marsh Tit and Song Thrush.
- Deadwood is an important habitat both for invertebrates, such as the unusual Pink Woodlouse, and many species of fungi including the Scarlet Elf Cup. Fallen trees and some cut timber are left to decay where possible on the reserve.

Long Wood is a 17 hectare (42 acres) nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is one of Somerset Wildlife Trust's oldest nature reserves having been leased from Bristol Water in 1969, until it was purchased in 1998.

Scarlet Elf Cup © Chris Lawrence



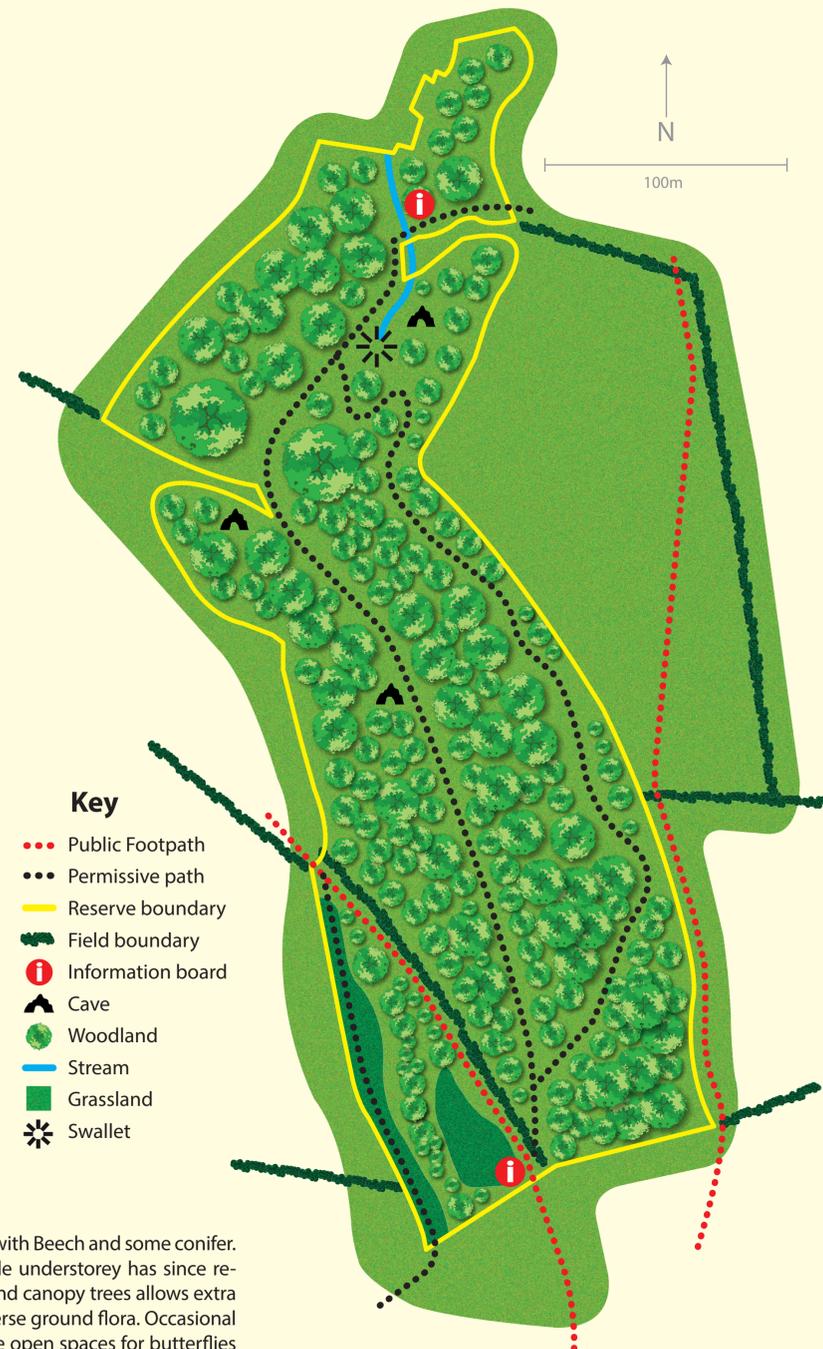
Herb Paris © Philip Precey



Roe Deer © Jeff Bevan

Reserve management

The majority of the wood was felled in 1953 and replanted with Beech and some conifer. Ash and Oak, with a predominantly Hazel and Field Maple understorey has since re-colonised the wood in large areas. Thinning of the woodland canopy trees allows extra light to reach the woodland floor to help maintain the diverse ground flora. Occasional Hazel coppicing and annual glade cutting helps to provide open spaces for butterflies such as the Silver Washed Fritillary. The Orchid slope is grazed in late summer which helps to keep the vegetation low to allow flowering plants to flourish.



Pink Woodlouse © Wikimedia commons



⚠ Access and safety

- Visitors on foot are welcome to walk in the reserve throughout the year. Please keep to the paths. A way-marked nature trail (1 km) follows a circular route through the wood.
- Horses and cycles are not permitted.
- Be aware of the risk of falling branches and trees during high winds.
- The paths and tracks have uneven surfaces in places and can be slippery in areas of exposed rock.
- During periods of high rainfall the swallet may overflow and flood water will flow down the valley. Do not walk through flooded areas as the water may be deep in places and contain hidden hazards.
- The cave entrances on the reserve are locked and access is controlled by the Charterhouse Caving Company.
- Animals may be grazing the Orchid slope at any time of year, therefore please keep dogs under close control and clean up after them.
- Camping and fires are not permitted.
- Be aware that machinery may occasionally be operating on site. Please follow any safety instructions given on temporary signs.

Are you able to help support our work?

Somerset Wildlife Trust works all year round to protect the wildlife you love. Alongside managing over 1,700 hectares of land across the county, we also provide wildlife-friendly land management advice, campaign and educate to make sure Somerset remains one of the most wildlife-rich places in the UK. With limited resources and funding we are only able to do this thanks to the help we receive from our members and supporters - and people like you who visit these special places and understand their value.

For information about how you can get involved and support our work, including becoming a member or volunteering on this site and others, please go to www.somersetwildlife.org or call 01823 652 400.

Protecting the species you love
in the county where you live

