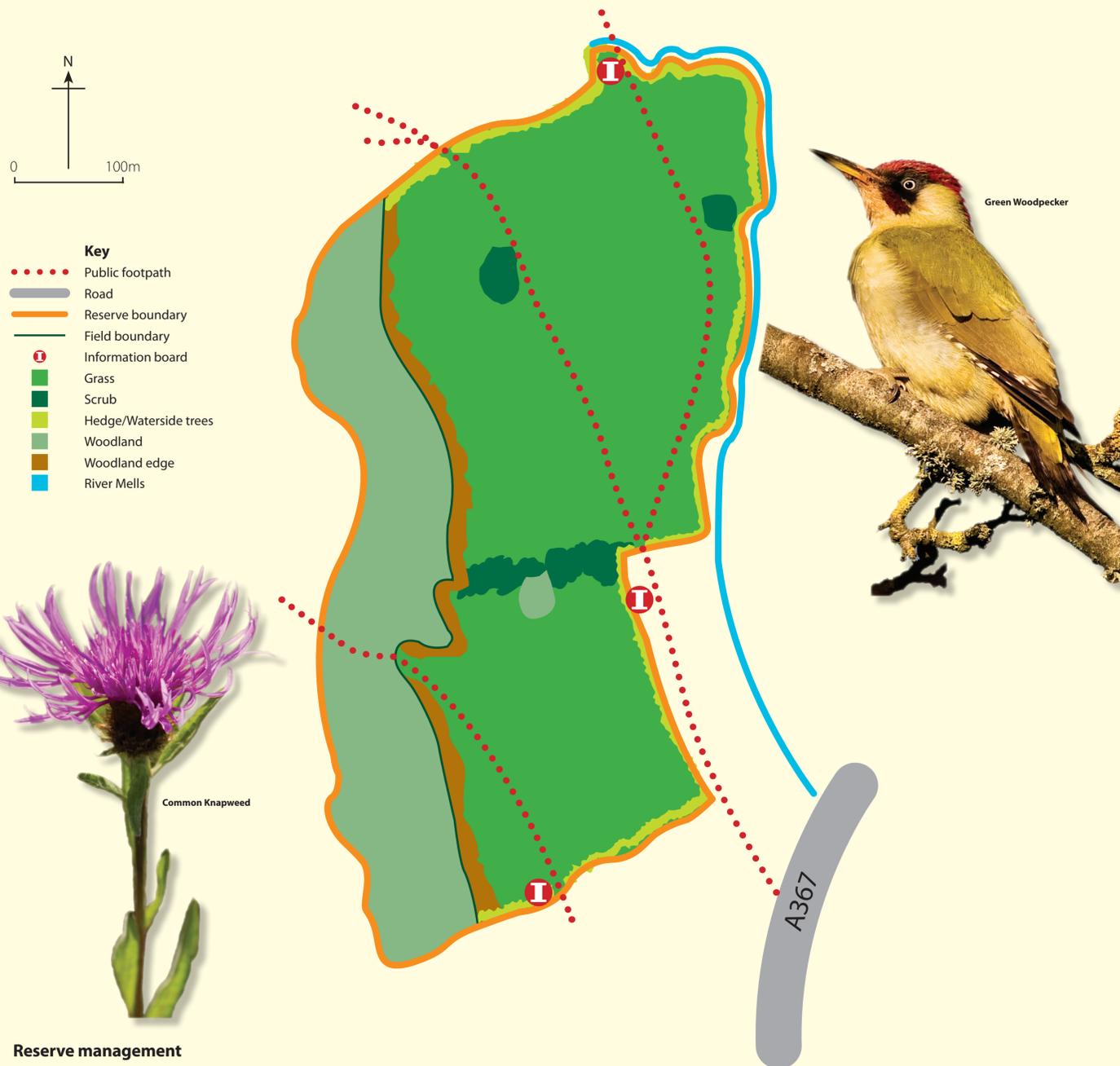


Welcome

Why this is a special place:

- The shaped earthworks and spoil mounds you can see survive from opencast coal mining activities by the Romans. It is likely that coal was extracted and transported on the nearby Fosse way, possibly to be burnt at Aquae Sulis (Bath).
- A gin-circle also remains as a distinctive circular earthwork from a horse powered winder or pump. The whole reserve is a scheduled ancient monument for the important post-medieval coal mining features it contains.
- This old industrial land is now beautiful species-rich grassland supporting a variety of grasses and wildflowers. See if you can spot Devil's-bit Scabious and Common Knapweed as well as Lousewort, a hemi-parasitic plant that takes nutrients from other plants around it.
- A wet fen area at the bottom of the site is home to Meadowsweet, Ragged Robin, Marsh-marigold, Water Avens and many rushes and ferns.
- Listen out for the laughing 'yaffle' call of Green Woodpeckers and watch for them flying over the fields. Their bright plumage and distinctive, undulating flight makes them easy to recognise.

Cockles Fields Nature Reserve comprises two fields of neutral, species-rich grassland on undulating and sloping land, edged by species-rich hedgerows and a strip of ash-dominated deciduous woodland. The lowest area of the grassland, along the banks of the Mells River, is very wet and hosts different species to the dry grassland. Somerset Wildlife Trust bought this 5 hectare (11 acre) site in 1999. It is a small, diverse and fascinating place to explore.



Reserve management

Cattle graze the grassland throughout spring and summer to keep vegetation low, allowing flowering plants to thrive. Invasive species are controlled to ensure they do not dominate the grassland and woodland. Along the edge of the woodland the fields are managed as woodland edge, which along with the scrub on site, provides plenty of shelter for insects and birds. The woodland is managed to retain good structure and ground flora.

Save Our Magnificent Meadows

This interpretation panel has been produced as part of Save Our Magnificent Meadows - a UK-wide partnership project to transform the fortunes of our vanishing wildflower meadows, grasslands and wildlife, primarily funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. magnificentmeadows.org.uk



Access and safety

- Visitors on foot are welcome to walk in the reserve throughout the year.
- The paths and tracks have uneven surfaces in places and can be slippery or very wet and boggy. The lower path may flood.
- Animals may be grazing at any time of year, therefore please keep dogs under close control and clean up after them.
- Be aware that machinery may occasionally be operating on site. Please follow any safety instructions given on temporary signs.
- There are areas of natural rock face on the reserve so please take care to avoid any unprotected drops and be aware of the potential for falling rocks.
- Beware of falling branches and trees.
- Camping and fires are not permitted.
- Horses and cycles are not permitted.

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.