

WINTER	green woodpecker, barn owl, large flocks of finches, linnets, yellowhammers
AUTUMN	pear, rowan, blackberry
SUMMER	flower-rich meadows, knapweed, adder's-tongue fern, pepper saxifrage, whitethroat, blackcap, small copper, marbled white
SPRING	cowslip, primrose, yellow rattle, meadow vetchling, common spotted orchid, chittichaff, skylark, brimstone and orange tip butterflies

What to see



... the woodland path through the Orrels, a traditional name for alder carr, is an opportunity to see plants of marshy areas such as yellow flag iris and marsh marigold. The woody banks contain ancient woodland indicator species such as enchanter's nightshade, wood anemone and bluebells



... meadows support a huge array of wildlife – from butterflies and bees to the birds and mammals further up the food chain. During spring and summer months keep a lookout for small copper, meadow brown and marbled white butterflies as well as cuckoo and whitethroat.



... it's not just about the meadows; there's a beautiful old orchard here at Hollybed Farm Meadows. It's probably Victorian and contains local varieties of perry pears such as Longdon white and butt. We've already replanted these and other local varieties to ensure a continuity of habitat into the future.



... England has lost 97% of lowland meadows like Far Starling Bank in the last 70-80 years. Worcestershire is home to an incredible 20% of those that remain!



... in order to help increase the number and variety of wildflowers and grasses across the reserve, each summer we're taking some of the seed from Far Starling Bank and spreading it on the other fields. This is a chance for volunteers to have fun – throwing around the hay while doing something great for the wildlife that relies on our meadows.



... Far Starling Bank is Worcestershire's Coronation Meadow. The Coronation Meadows project was developed by HRH Prince Charles in 2013 to mark the 60th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; it celebrates both an existing meadow and the creation of a new one in every county of the UK.



Did you know...



Following a successful public appeal in 2013 and with help from our members, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Severn Waste Environmental Fund, we bought the 16 hectares Hollybed Farm Meadows with the vision of restoring these fields to their former glory.

One field, Far Starling Meadow, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its traditional hay meadow plants that include crested dog's-tail, common knapweed, meadow vetchling, sweet vernal grass, yellow rattle, goldilocks buttercup, burnet saxifrage and wild onion. The orchard and Roundhill Bank are also quite rich with knapweed, yellow rattle, ladies bedstraw, primrose, meadow vetchling and pepper saxifrage.

The circular trail is 1.7km (about an hour) and takes in most of the habitats found here. Most paths run through grassland but the permissive path has some steep sections that can be slippery in winter. There are several gates.

Cattle and sheep both graze the site during parts of the year and we're hoping that skylarks and other ground-nesting birds return to breed here. Dogs are welcome but please keep them on leads and leave gates as you find them.

You'll find our seasonal highlights overleaf but visit from late May until early July to see wildflowers dancing in the breeze in these beautiful meadows.



Location: Limited parking is available on the verge by the main entrance.
Nearest station – Great Malvern (7 miles)
Nearest bus – Castlemorton (1 mile)
Access: The reserve is open at all times. Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times.

Hollybed Farm Meadows is one of over 70 nature reserves owned and cared for by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust that form part of our vision for a **Living Landscape** for Worcestershire. By working with other landowners, managers and communities we aim to **restore, recreate and reconnect** fragmented habitats to achieve a landscape where wildlife can flourish and people can live happier and healthier lives.



- Ways to get involved:**
- Become a member
 - Volunteer
 - Make a donation
 - Leave a gift in your will
 - Buy a virtual gift
 - Buy wild bird food

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust relies on the support of its members and on donations and grants.



www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk

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Hollybed Farm Meadows Trail Guide



Creating a Living Landscape

Start from the entrance by the small parking area.

1 This first field is botanically one of the poorest on the site and has been spread with seed from the orchard to speed up the return to a wildflower-rich meadow.

Follow the path along the bottom of the field and pass through the gate into the next field.

2 This field is also botanically poor although occasional wild daffodils are found on the margins and wild service trees are in the hedgerows. Green hay was spread in 2013 and 2015 to help wildflowers recolonise here.

Follow the path along the bottom of the field and through the next gate to Far Starling Meadow.

3 This is by far the richest meadow on the reserve. The top of the field is slightly calcareous (containing lime) with a different range of species to the middle slope and the wetter section at the bottom. Crow garlic abounds across the whole field.

Follow the field edge along the bottom of the field. Walk on beyond where the public footpath leaves the reserve.

4 About halfway round the field you'll see a damper habitat following the small stream. During spring and summer this is a good place to spot dragonflies as well as plants such as southern marsh orchid and ragged robin.

Continue along the fenceline and take the path through the gate into the wet woodland. Please be aware the ground can be boggy in front of the gate.

5 Alder Carr is quite an unusual habitat in Worcestershire. The plants in this marshy section are different to those elsewhere on the reserve.

Follow the track along the bottom of the slope, looking out for the two old willow pollards on your right.

6 In spring, this area is carpeted with primroses and has bluebells and wood anemones in the sunnier areas.

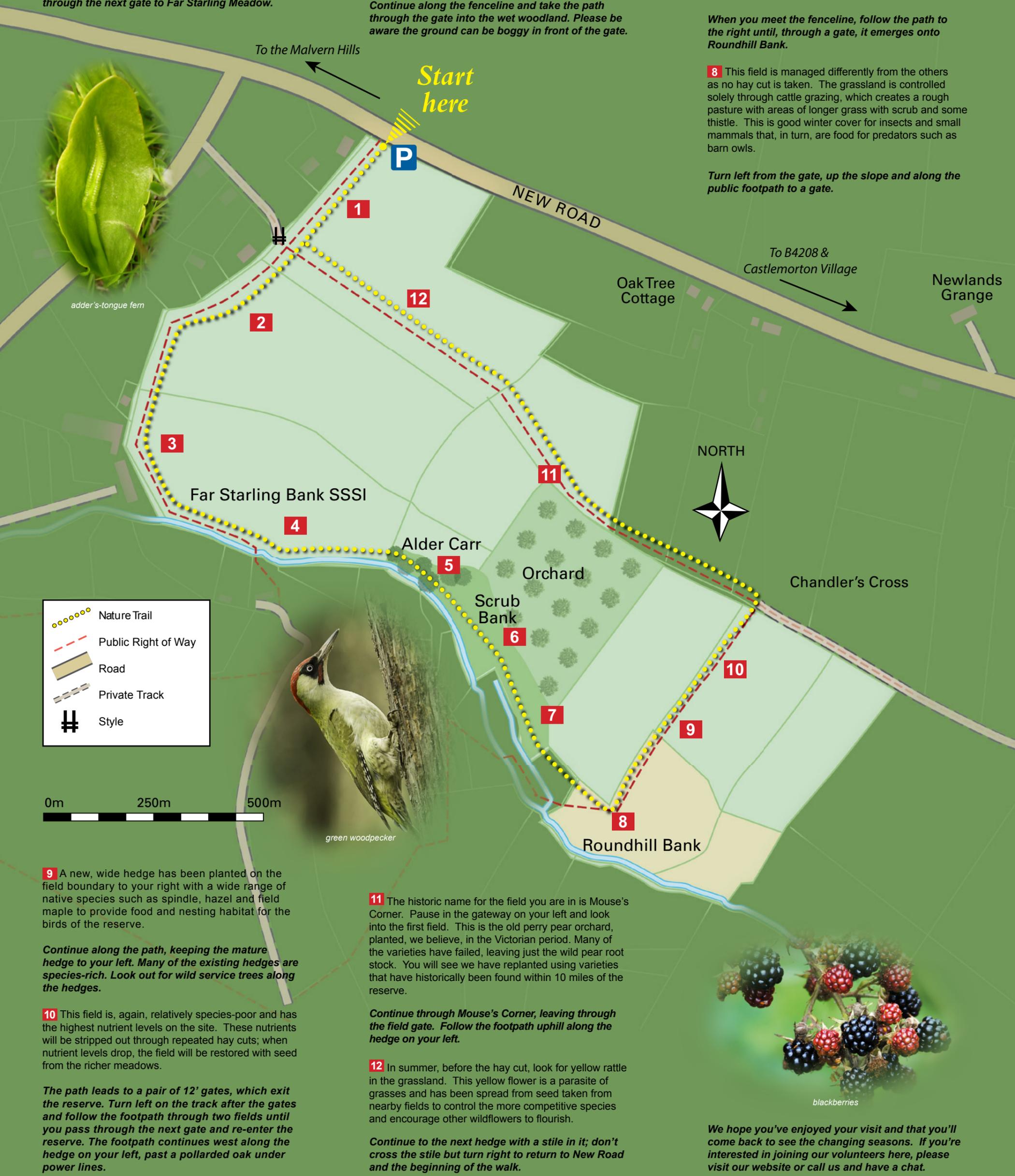
Follow the path up the slope.

7 Keep an eye out for the nestboxes erected by our volunteers.

When you meet the fenceline, follow the path to the right until, through a gate, it emerges onto Roundhill Bank.

8 This field is managed differently from the others as no hay cut is taken. The grassland is controlled solely through cattle grazing, which creates a rough pasture with areas of longer grass with scrub and some thistle. This is good winter cover for insects and small mammals that, in turn, are food for predators such as barn owls.

Turn left from the gate, up the slope and along the public footpath to a gate.



	Nature Trail
	Public Right of Way
	Road
	Private Track
	Stile

0m 250m 500m

9 A new, wide hedge has been planted on the field boundary to your right with a wide range of native species such as spindle, hazel and field maple to provide food and nesting habitat for the birds of the reserve.

Continue along the path, keeping the mature hedge to your left. Many of the existing hedges are species-rich. Look out for wild service trees along the hedges.

10 This field is, again, relatively species-poor and has the highest nutrient levels on the site. These nutrients will be stripped out through repeated hay cuts; when nutrient levels drop, the field will be restored with seed from the richer meadows.

The path leads to a pair of 12' gates, which exit the reserve. Turn left on the track after the gates and follow the footpath through two fields until you pass through the next gate and re-enter the reserve. The footpath continues west along the hedge on your left, past a pollarded oak under power lines.

11 The historic name for the field you are in is Mouse's Corner. Pause in the gateway on your left and look into the first field. This is the old perry pear orchard, planted, we believe, in the Victorian period. Many of the varieties have failed, leaving just the wild pear root stock. You will see we have replanted using varieties that have historically been found within 10 miles of the reserve.

Continue through Mouse's Corner, leaving through the field gate. Follow the footpath uphill along the hedge on your left.

12 In summer, before the hay cut, look for yellow rattle in the grassland. This yellow flower is a parasite of grasses and has been spread from seed taken from nearby fields to control the more competitive species and encourage other wildflowers to flourish.

Continue to the next hedge with a stile in it; don't cross the stile but turn right to return to New Road and the beginning of the walk.

We hope you've enjoyed your visit and that you'll come back to see the changing seasons. If you're interested in joining our volunteers here, please visit our website or call us and have a chat.