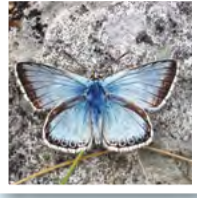


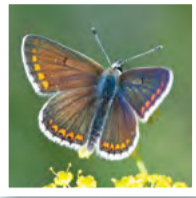
Stoke Camp & Westbury Beacon Reserves



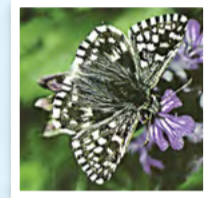
Stoke Camp and Westbury Beacon form part of the Mendip Hills Carboniferous Limestone ridge from which there are spectacular views over the Somerset Levels and Bridgwater Bay.



Stoke Camp is 10.7ha (26 acres) and was acquired in 1994 as a wonderful example of species-rich limestone grassland with Green-winged Orchids, Autumn Ladies Tresses as well as Kidney Vetch, the food plant of the Small Blue and Horseshoe Vetch the food plant of the Chalk Hill Blue. Within the Reserve there is an Iron-age Hillfort, which has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument by English Heritage.



Westbury Beacon is 8.3ha (20.6 acres) and was acquired in 2015. It is part of the Rodney Stoke Site of Special Scientific Interest and also includes two Grade II Listed Royal Observer Corps monitoring posts. Species include Dark Green Fritillary, Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus, Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper.



The land is designated for public open access on foot and may be enjoyed according to the Countryside Code.

For more information about Butterfly Conservation reserves and activities please visit our web-site at www.somersetbutterflies.org.uk
Telephone Head Office 01929 400209
Registered charity: 254937 (England & Wales) Company no: 2206468



Rodney Stoke National Nature Reserve

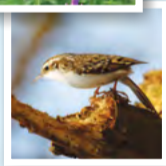


With stunning views across the Somerset Levels and a rich flora and fauna Rodney Stoke is a fine example of the ash woodlands that can be found on the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills. Now managed by Natural England the site was designated a National Nature Reserve in 1957.

The reserve has two main habitat types, broadleaved woodland and calcareous grassland.



During the first and the second world wars much of the traditionally coppiced woodland cover was removed for the war effort. Since then the woodlands have recovered with ash as the dominant species with a rich mixture of other tree species present. The woodland is now managed by limited thinning with coppicing of some ash and hazel.



There is a diverse range of ground flora species, many characteristic of ancient woodlands. In the spring blue bells and wood anemone are found in abundance. Rarities on site including autumn crocus, nettle leaved bell flower, purple gromwell and bird's nest orchid.

During the summer months the woodland floor is alive with armies of wood ant (look for their distinct mounds on the woodland floor) whilst many breeding birds have been recorded including Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Lesser Whitethroat. The site is also incredibly important for many bat species including pipistrelle, noctule and bechstein bat.

Conservation grazing using a mixture of sheep and cattle occurs on the grassland that surrounds the woodland. This encourages a rich sward, containing species such as early-purple orchid, birds foot trefoil, marjoram, rock rose and salad burnet. This flower rich community in turn benefits a wide variety of insects including butterflies such as dark green fritillary, grayling and brown argus. Rodney Stoke NNR is an open access site. However to avoid disturbance to wildlife and grazing livestock Natural England please ask that visitors keep dogs under effective control and follow way marked routes.



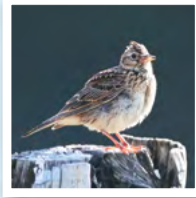
Natural England
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england
E-mail : somersetavonandwiltshire@naturalengland.org.uk
Or telephone 01458 860120

Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



The Mendip Hills is a place of such scenic quality that it was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1972.

This designation recognises that the Mendip Hills is one of England's finest landscapes, an area treasured by everyone with special protection and management.



The Mendip Hills throughout its long history has been all things to us; a place to live and work, a place to worship or defend, a place to exploit through mines and quarries and a place to enjoy. All of these are still valid today. Each use has left its mark on the land and over time these characteristic marks have formed what we see today. Stoke Camp, also known as Westbury Camp is an Iron Age hillfort with a Bronze Age barrow near its centre. This is part of a concentration of round barrows in this area, stretching along the southern edge of the plateau.

The south facing slopes were used for grazing cattle when the Levels flooded during the winter months and the area was once known as the 'Strawberry Belt' due to the number of strawberry fields. Today, although there is less horticulture than there used to be, local growers still sell from roadside stalls along the A371 selling strawberries and other soft fruit and vegetables. Grazing is still an important part of managing the limestone grassland that is part of the landscape character but also a valuable habitat for many species of wildlife particularly wildflowers and butterflies.



Enjoy your visit today to these sites to see the variety of wildlife and stunning views along the Mendip Hills and across the Somerset Levels.

Planning your visit

These sites are located on the south facing slopes of the Mendip Hills close to the A371 that links Cheddar and Wells and is a bus route. It is recommended that you use public transport and follow footpaths shown on the map. There is limited roadside parking on New Road at the entrance to Draycott Sleights.

Greentraveller Guide to the Mendip Hills
www.greentraveller.co.uk/mendip-hills
Free e-guide packed with tips on where to sleep, eat, shop & visit
Relevant OS Explorer maps are 141, 153 and 155 and Landranger 182

Draycott Sleights & Draycott Housegrounds Somerset Wildlife Trust



The reserves consist of 50 hectares (123 acres) of predominantly species rich grassland with some small areas of woodland. Draycott Sleights reserve is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The flora varies dependent largely on the depth of soil present. In areas of thin soil the influence of the underlying limestone & conglomerate rocks allows plants such as Horseshoe Vetch, Kidney Vetch & Common Rock Rose to thrive. The deeper soils are more neutral in pH with species such as Agrimony, Black Knapweed & Marjoram in evidence. In spring the grasslands sport a fantastic display of Cowslips, Green Winged Orchid & Spring Cinquefoil.

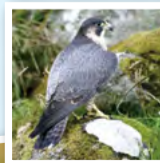


A wide range of butterfly species are present including the Chalkhill Blue, Grizzled Skipper, Marbled White & Dingy Skipper. Skylarks are a common sight and can be heard singing over the grassland, whilst Peregrine Falcons can often be seen hunting overhead.

The reserve is managed through mixed grazing between April & November. The amount of scrub cover on the reserve is being reduced and we are working to re-establish species rich grassland in these areas by controlling bramble and invasive plants.

There is a 1.7km way-marked trail to help you explore the reserve - follow the green way-marked posts from the reserve entrance.

Join us
Become a member today by visiting www.somersetwildlife.org/membership or by calling 01823 652400
E-mail: enquiries@somersetwildlife.org
Registered charity no: 238372
Company no: 818162



Visitors on foot are welcome year round but please do not ride or cycle off bridleways.
Never leave valuables on view in your car.
If visiting the reserves by car please park responsibly in designated car parks and do not block gateways or park on roadside verges.
Consider other people.
Always clean up after your dog and keep dogs under close control and on leads when near livestock.
For the protection of plants and animals take your litter home.
Leave gates and property as you find them.
The terrain in some parts of the sites are very steep. The nature trails and paths have uneven surfaces and can be slippery in areas of exposed rock.
Check weather conditions and dress appropriately.
Be safe - plan ahead and pay attention to all safety signs.

For your safety:
For the full Countryside Code visit www.gov.uk
The Countryside Code - Respect, Protect, Enjoy
area for your next visit
You can help look after yourself and safeguard the rural beauty of the memories of your time spent here. By following the Countryside Code, We want you to get the most out of your visit and leave with happy
The AONB guide to a good day out

(charity no 1094446)
Partnership and the Somerset Community Foundation
The Mendip Hills Fund is a partnership between the Mendip Hills AONB
If you would like to donate please visit www.somerset.org.uk for more information or call 01749 344949
and social and economic enterprises.
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