

# Managing open spaces at Monkwood nature reserve



**Worcestershire Wildlife Trust**



Ragged robin

Open flowery spaces are really important habitats and range from wide margins of paths and half-moon scalloped edges to sun-filled glades and wildflower meadows.

These open areas encourage plants to thrive, which support the vast array of invertebrates for which the woodland has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In turn, the invertebrates form the basis of the foodchain for other wildlife throughout the woodland.

The glade in front of you is relatively wet, allowing damp-loving plants like meadowsweet and ragged robin to flourish. Other glades are very grassy and support grasshoppers and glow worms; we leave some areas long to ensure insects can complete their lifecycles over winter.



Bluebell

## Did you know?

Scrubby edges to these open spaces are really important for nesting birds like chiffchaff, blackcap and willow warbler. Not all birds nest high in trees, many nest at or near to ground level so it's really important that you stick to paths and keep your dogs on a lead.

## Your support

By volunteering, becoming a member, donating or leaving a gift in your will you can help us to manage this and more than 75 beautiful places for wildlife throughout Worcestershire. Your support really can make a difference, thank you.



Drab looper

Wood spurge is common throughout the sunny parts of Monkwood and is the only foodplant of the rare drab looper moth. These mousey-brown moths have a very restricted distribution and Worcestershire is on the northern edge of their range, although this may change as our climate warms.

Monkwood is jointly managed with Butterfly Conservation. Little Monkwood is co-owned by WWT and BC.



The purchase of land at Green Farm has been made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Severn Waste Services, The Banister Charitable Trust, Seddul.com Ltd, The LG Harris Charitable Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and generous donations from Trust members and supporters.



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# Welcome to Monkwood nature reserve



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Monkwood was first mentioned in 1240 when it was owned by Worcester Priory, having been managed by monks for centuries. It is thought that what is now a 60 hectare wood, whose boundaries haven't changed for nearly 400 years, was once part of a much bigger woodland of Weogorena Leah, now the Wyre Forest.

Over time, the landscape around Monkwood has become fragmented and wildlife has declined. In 2022 we bought 24 hectares of land at neighbouring Green Farm to recreate the past landscape of orchards, wood pasture and wildflower-rich meadows surrounded by ancient woodland, reconnecting habitats and supporting many species for the future.

As you walk around this peaceful nature reserve you will discover more about the wildlife, history and management of this site. We hope you enjoy your visit.

## Did you know..?

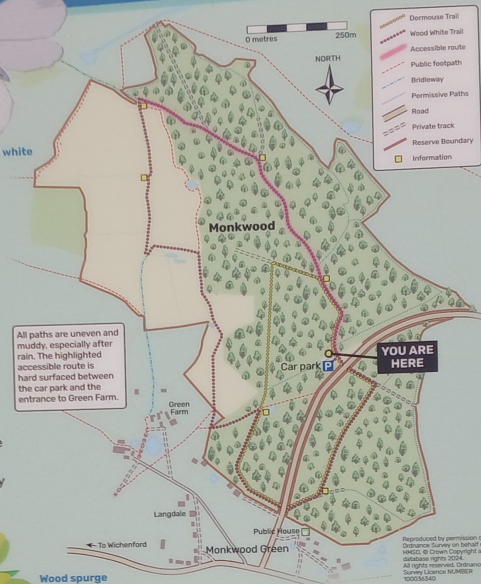
Up to 34 species of butterfly and over 850 species of moth have been recorded here. From spring to autumn, volunteers walk a designated route and count the number and species of butterfly seen to help monitor the populations.

## Help protect wildlife

- Thank you for helping to protect wildlife while you enjoy your visit by...
- keeping dogs on leads at all times and taking away their waste
  - sticking to paths



Wood white



Wood spurge

## Support us

We couldn't work to protect and conserve Worcestershire's fantastic wildlife and wild places without your help. Please support us by becoming a member, volunteering or donating.

## Seasonal highlights



**Spring:** brimstone, drab looper, chiffchaff, great spotted woodpecker, wood spurge, wood anemone, cuckoo



**Summer:** aspen leaf-rolling weevil, wood white, white admiral, marsh tit, bugle, southern hawker



**Autumn:** slow-worm, dormouse, brown long-eared bat, common darter



**Winter:** nuthatch, redpoll, buzzard, red fox

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# Birds

## at Monkwood nature reserve



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Monkwood is a great place for warblers. These mainly migratory birds arrive in spring and can be heard singing throughout the woodland for most of summer.



Spring highlight: chiffchaff



Summer highlight: marsh tit

Blackcaps, garden warblers, willow warblers and chiffchaffs rely on long grass and the growth of young scrub that's generated across the woodland by our management work. Whilst some nest at height, others like chiffchaffs can nest almost at ground level in vegetation at the edge of paths.

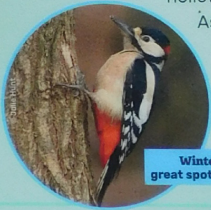
This makes them very vulnerable to people and their dogs straying from the trail.



Autumn highlight: redwing

Another important component of the woodland is standing deadwood with its varied crevices, hollow branches and rot holes.

As well as providing homes for bats and invertebrates, these are also perfect places for woodpeckers, treecreepers and nuthatches to create nests within.



Winter highlight: great spotted woodpecker



Butterfly Conservation

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# Woodland management at Monkwood nature reserve



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

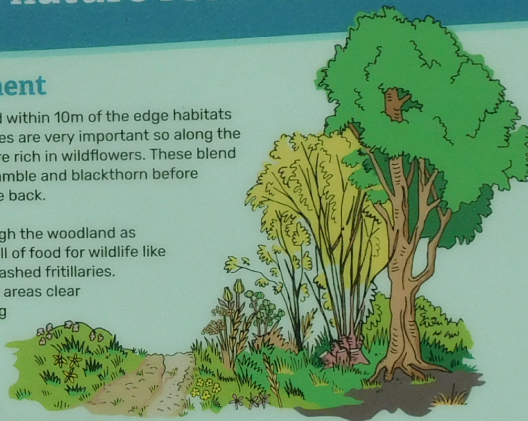
## Woodland management

90% of a wood's wildlife can be found within 10m of the edge habitats along rides and in glades. Sunny edges are very important so along the paths you'll see grassy verges that are rich in wildflowers. These blend into prickly thickets of wild roses, bramble and blackthorn before merging into the oak woodland at the back.

These edges provide corridors through the woodland as well as being warm, sheltered and full of food for wildlife like slow-worms, blackcaps and silver-washed fritillaries. During winter we work to keep these areas clear so that they're buzzing and humming with life in spring and summer.

## Coppicing

This semi-natural ancient woodland has been actively coppiced since the 14th century. Coppicing, the practice of cutting trees to ground level, allows trees to regenerate and the multi-branched regrowth has lots of uses for both people and wildlife. Each growing stage creates a different niche that is favoured by a range of plants and animals. Coppicing has taken place for so long that many of the UK's woodland species now rely on this regular cutting cycle to thrive.



## Thinning

By removing a number of trees within a plot, sunlight and warmth reaches the woodland floor and encourages plants like wood spurge, bluebells and wood anemones to flower. These nectar-producing flowers support insects such as hoverflies, bumblebees and butterflies.

The remaining trees have more light and nutrients as well as the space to develop into mature trees with many more opportunities for wildlife.

## Did you know?

Monkwood and the surrounding landscape once had more open grassy spaces with scattered trees, known as wood pasture. We're recreating some of this at Green Farm by planting oaks, limes and sweet chestnuts to become the veteran trees of the future.



## Get involved

Join us in managing Monkwood. Our volunteers meet regularly to manage this historic woodland and monitor the wildlife.

If you'd like to get involved, visit [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/volunteer](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/volunteer)

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Butterfly Conservation  
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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