

Waterford Heath

A former quarry which supports the rare grizzled skipper butterfly

Fantastic news: Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has secured a long lease at Waterford Heath from Lafarge, which means protection and a future for the wildlife there. The Trust will be caring for the 100 acre site near Hertford for the next 85 years!

Waterford Heath is a former sand and gravel quarry north of Hertford. Quarrying ceased on the site in the early 1990s and work was undertaken to restore it to create a 'community nature park'. It contains a range of habitats including grassland, scrub, plantation woodland and a small area of ancient, semi-natural woodland.

There are two distinct areas within the reserve. The northern section is characterised by poor quality soils - and as a result supports diverse grassland flora, including viper's bugloss, common centaury, carline thistle and bird's foot trefoil. It also has large populations of wild strawberry, the food plant of the locally scarce butterfly, the grizzled skipper. Other butterflies found on the Heath include purple hairstreak.

The southern section of the Heath has much richer soils - and therefore less diverse flora. Scrub dominates a number of areas - although in surviving open areas common spotted orchid and broad-leaved helleborine have been recorded. It does contain a number of sandy banks which are valuable habitat for a range of warmth loving insects.

Skylarks and willow warblers are known to breed on the site. In the autumn and winter fieldfares and redwings are regular visitors. Kestrels and sparrowhawks have been known to breed in the conifer plantations - as have goldcrest. Reptiles include slow worm, common lizard and grass snake.

The River Beane flows adjacent to the northern tip of the reserve. Kingfisher may be spotted in this area.

- [Get driving directions](#)
- [Find nearby public transport](#)

How to Get Here

Location

Waterford, north of Hertford

Directions

Take the A119 to Waterford. In Waterford turn onto Bullsmill Lane. Turn right onto Sacombe Road and next right onto Vicarage Lane. The reserve car park will be on your right.

Public Transport Links

Bus: Waterford High Road, 10 minute walk. Rail: Hertford North 15 minutes by bus/walk or cycling

Walking Links

Cole Green Way; Hertford-Ware towpath

Map Reference

TL 318150

Visitor Guide

Size

38.5 hectares (95 acres)

Access to site

From Vicarage Lane

Access around site

Easy walking around the reserve, relatively dry

Walking time

1 hour

Advice on what to wear/bring

Map of site (if available)