

Damage to Nature Reserves

Vandalism, anti-social behaviour and illegal acts all occur on nature reserves

Usually when we visit nature reserves they are tranquil places and it is easy to imagine the job of a reserve manager being an idyllic one. With the opportunity to really get to know a reserve and it's wildlife, what better job could there be for someone with a passion for natural history? However, visitors picking flowers is just one of the anti-social and often illegal acts that reserve managers, staff and volunteers have to contend with.

Our reserve officers and wardens work hard to limit damage to our reserves. Incidents, ranging from the seemingly harmless like dogs off their leads to those which have financial implications such as the theft or destruction of fencing, gates, benches and signs. And there are both serious and disturbing.

In 2008, a hide at [Rye Meads Nature Reserve](#) was destroyed by vandals. Fly-tipping is also an on-going problem, from emptying car litter and small bin bags, garden waste (which can bring unwanted plants on to reserves), to furniture and domestic appliances, car tyres and large amounts of builders' rubble. Nature reserve signs and waymarkers are regularly targeted for vandalism and cost hundreds of pounds a year to replace.

All these unsavoury incidents take time to deal with, cost financially and can be demoralising for staff and volunteers. They also have detrimental impacts on habitats and wildlife. Youths driving scramble or quad bikes on reserves may disturb flocks of wading birds and prevent them from feeding and the tracks in the soft soil damages and kills plants; the habitat may take years to recover.

As visitors to reserves, you can also help. Please report any incidents on reserves to the Reserves team at [Grebe House](#).