



Corporate report

# Leicestershire's National Nature Reserves

Updated 20 May 2024

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**Applies to England**

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# Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood

This site is part of the [King's Series of National Nature Reserves](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/kings-nature-reserves-to-leave-lasting-legacy-for-people-and-nature) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/kings-nature-reserves-to-leave-lasting-legacy-for-people-and-nature>).

Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood NNR supports a medieval deer park, ancient woodland, and is dotted with historic ruins and follies. Prominent rocky outcrops are a highlight of the site, this geology is among the oldest in England.

Management: Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood is managed by the Bradgate Park Trust.

## Features of interest

The park presents the first page of England's geological story, and the wood is an important habitat containing ancient trees which provide the home to many species of mammals, birds and insects. It is also a popular destination for visitors and close to the City of Leicester.

The site illustrates the association between geology, habitats and species. Some of the rocks contain fossils from more than half a billion years ago and the ancient woodland has hundreds of veteran trees which are home to a rich variety of butterflies, moths and birds.

Important grassland and some of the only heath found in Leicestershire make up other habitats on the estate. The parkland is regarded as one of the best examples in this part of the country and offers several inclusive access trails for visitors to experience the nature reserve.

Further information about the NNR, its wildlife and features of interest is on the [Bradgate Park website](https://www.bradgatepark.org/) (<https://www.bradgatepark.org/>).

## Contact

Bradgate Park Trust

Telephone: 0116 236 2713

[Bradgate Park web contact form](https://www.bradgatepark.org/forms/contact-us) (<https://www.bradgatepark.org/forms/contact-us>)

If you need to speak to Natural England about the site, contact us by email: [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

# Charnwood Lodge

Charnwood Lodge is an important geological site, with rocks that are amongst the oldest in England. Around 600 million years ago Charnwood was part of a volcanic island chain.

Main habitats: geological

Area: 80 hectares

Management: Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

## Features of interest

Further information about the NNR, its wildlife and features of interest is on the [Charwood Lodge page on the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust website \(http://lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/charnwood-lodge/\)](http://lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/charnwood-lodge/).

## Contact

Significant areas of this important and sensitive nature reserve have no public access. Other areas have limited access to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust members and other permit holders only. For a map, contact Neil Pilcher on 0116 248 7363 or e-mail [npilcher@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:npilcher@lrwt.org.uk).

# Cribbs Meadow

The reserve was once a single field, part of a local field pattern thought to have been created by the enclosure of Edmonthorpe Parish in 1580. The meadow, together with the field to the north, was 'glebe' land belonging to the vicar of Edmonthorpe.

Main habitats: lowland grassland

Area: 4 hectares

Management: Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

## Features of interest

Further information about the NNR, its wildlife and features of interest is on the [Cribbs Lodge Meadow page on the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust website \(http://lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/cribbs-meadow/\)](http://lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/cribbs-meadow/).

## Contact

Email: [info@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:info@lrwt.org.uk)  
Telephone: 0116 262 9968

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## Muston Meadows

Muston Meadows is one of the finest lowland meadows in England. The meadows are rich in plant life, with 33 types of grass and over 100 other species of flowering plant. The reserve is most notable for its colony of over 10,000 green-winged orchids.

Main habitats: lowland grassland

Area: 9 hectares

## Features of interest

The meadows contain a wealth of wildlife, including invertebrates, amphibians and birds. The site supports a variety of insects, including many butterflies and moths. Ponds - originally dug to provide water for grazing animals - are now home to dragonflies, frogs and the rare great crested newt.

Skylarks and meadow pipits build their nests in the long grass, while yellowhammers, linnets and whitethroats nest in hedgerows.

There are large numbers of small mammals such as bank and field voles, and on summer evenings bats can be seen hunting for insects over the site.

The old ridge and furrow meadows are managed in the same way today as they have been for generations, with hay cut in July followed by grazing throughout late summer and autumn. No man-made fertilisers or pesticides have ever been used on these fields.

The best time to visit the site is during May, for the green-winged orchids.

## Directions

The reserve is 1 kilometre south of Muston village, 3 kilometres south east of Bottesford and 10 kilometres west of Grantham. The Grantham Canal passes the southern boundary of the reserve close to Longore Bridge.

By car, access to the reserve is via minor roads from the A52. The minor road from Muston to Stenwith (1 kilometre to the east) passes near the eastern boundary of the reserve.

There is a [mainline train station in Grantham](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/gra/details.html) (<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/gra/details.html>) and a [station in Bottesford](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/btf/details.html) (<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/btf/details.html>).

There are bus services from Grantham to Bottesford, along the A52. There is an infrequent service from Bottesford to Muston. See see [Lincolnshire County Council's Bus Travel](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/transport-travel-and-roads/public-transport/bus-travel/) (<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/transport-travel-and-roads/public-transport/bus-travel/>).

Stenwith is on [Cycle Network Route 15](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/national-cycle-network/route-numbering-system/route-15) (<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/national-cycle-network/route-numbering-system/route-15>) and close to the Belvoir Ride Link to Route 15.

## Contact

For more information about the site:

Email: [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk) Telephone: 0300 060 6000



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