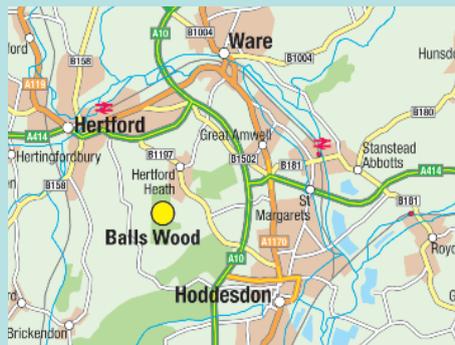


# Enjoying our nature reserves

To enjoy your visit please...

- Respect wildlife.
- Keep dogs under strict control.
- Bring your binoculars and wear suitable clothing for watching wildlife.
- Take your litter away with you.
- Keep to the footpaths.



## Protecting Balls Wood

Hertfordshire is noted for its oak-hornbeam woodlands, but many of them are disappearing under roads and buildings. Those that remain are precious. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust cares for Balls Wood by removing non-native trees and keeping the rides open. Our work would not be possible without the support of our members and volunteers.

## How you can help us

We need your support to continue to protect local wildlife.

Why not:

- **Join as a member** – the majority of our income comes from our membership. We need you!
- **Volunteer** – work parties take place in winter months; please contact us if you would like to help.
- **Fundraise** – get your workplace or school involved and have fun raising money at the same time.

Visit our website to find out more  
[www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk)

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust  
Grebe House, St Michael's Street,  
St Albans, AL3 4SN  
01727 858901 • [info@hmwtr.org](mailto:info@hmwtr.org)  
Registered in England: 816710  
Registered Charity: 239863



Herts and Middlesex



## Balls Wood Nature Reserve

### Watch out for...

- White admiral butterflies
- Grass snakes and slow worms
- Wildflowers in spring

# Welcome to Balls Wood Nature Reserve

Take a walk around Balls Wood and discover some of the reserve's diverse wildlife.

Balls Wood is one of Hertfordshire's characteristic oak-hornbeam woodlands. It has a fantastic array of wildlife and over 200 plant species, double the number found in most woods in Hertfordshire.

Throughout the wood there are open and sunny rides. These abound with dragonflies and butterflies in summer, including white admirals, silver washed fritillaries and the occasional purple emperor. In spring they are full of birdsong and wildflowers. The reserve is also a great site for amphibians and reptiles, including great crested newts, slow worms and grass snakes.



## Getting around

Size: 58.5ha (144.6 acres).  
 Trails: Two waymarked trails around the wood.  
 Hornbeam Trail: 1 mile  
 Admiral Trail: 2 miles  
 Surfaces: Unsurfaced path, uneven in places.  
 Muddy in winter.

**4** See **butterflies** feeding on the tops of bramble bushes and the variety of life in the pond from the specially constructed viewing platform and boardwalk.

**5** The **wide sunlit rides** are great places for spotting butterflies, including ringlets, white admirals and silver washed fritillaries.



**6** Look out for **dragonflies** patrolling the rides. Brown hawker and large emperor dragonflies are distinctive ones to watch out for.

**7** Take a break on the **dozing dormice seat**, one of seven carved seats dotted around the reserve. Perfect for some peaceful wildlife spotting.

**3** Learn how to tell the difference between hornbeam and beech trees.

**2** **Hornbeam** was often planted to mark the boundary between properties. It was then coppiced (cut down to near ground level) or pollarded (cut above head height) which extended the life of the tree. There are some fantastic old boundary trees in this part of the wood.

**1** **Discover** which wildlife to look out for in the wood, whatever the season.



**8** This is one of over twenty **ponds** in the wood. The ponds are great for dragonflies, water invertebrates and amphibians, including smooth and great crested newts. If you're lucky you might even spot a grass snake swimming through the water as it hunts for frogs.



**Key**

- ..... Wildlife Walk
- - - - - Admiral Trail – 2 miles (approx 1 hour)
- - - - - Hornbeam Trail – 1 mile (approx 30 mins)
- Rides
- ..... Restricted Byway (access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders)
- i Information
- 🪑 Seat
- 🚪 Kissing Gate
- 🟦 Ponds