

Spring into the Mendip National Nature Reserve

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April to early June is the prime window to experience the reserve's spectacular wildflowers and wildlife.

Visitors to Mendip National Nature Reserve (NNR) will enjoy the richest wildlife experience between April and early June when the limestone grasslands and woodlands of Somerset come into full bloom.

This is the finest season to explore the reserve. The meadows and slopes will fill with spring flora, including a wide variety of orchids some of which are only found on Mendip, such as the Cheddar Pink.

Adders emerge from hibernation in spring, making this one of the best times to spot them basking in the sunshine. Skylarks fill the air with song, small pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies take flight, and greater and lesser horseshoe bats, both nationally endangered, become increasingly active.

Louise Treneman, Senior Reserve Manager for Natural England, said:

The King's Series National Nature Reserves are about celebrating the very best of England's nature. Mendip National Nature Reserve is a rich landscape, and the spring is a wonderful time to visit the ancient woodlands, see rich wildflower grasslands and enjoy the stunning geology of Mendip.

Working collaboratively, at scale, on this distinguished nature reserve is central to Natural England's Strategy, and we are delighted to be part of such a strong and successful partnership.

The reserve, declared in October 2023, as the 2nd in the King's Series of reserves, spans an archipelago of sites linked together by the Mendip Way, and included the world-famous Cheddar Gorge. It covers over 1,400 hectares of some of England's most precious habitats, from rocky gorges to wetlands stretching toward the Severn estuary.

Rachael Fickweile, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management for Somerset Wildlife Trust said:

The Mendip National Nature Reserve is the perfect place to visit this springtime. We encourage local people and visitors to enjoy the range of nature, explore the landscape and experience the positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

The Mendip NNR brings together 31 existing nature reserves and more than 400 hectares of undesignated land. It has 440km of public rights of way and at Brean Down the NNE meets the Kings Charles III England Coast Path.

The partners are Natural England, the National Trust, Butterfly Conservation, the Woodland Trust,

Mendip Hills National Landscape, Longleat Estates, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Avon Wildlife Trust, and South West Heritage Trust.

Notes to editors:

- The King's Series aims to establish 25 new National Nature Reserves by 2028. The 13 declared so far cover 17,000 hectares the equivalent to twice the size of Brighton.
- Mendip NNR is accessible to a large urban population exceeding 700,000 people from the surrounding towns of Bristol, Weston-Super-Mare and Bath.
- More information is available on this blog: Mendip 'super' National Nature Reserve - Defra in the media
- More photos available on request.
- Natural England spokesperson available on request.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spring-into-the-mendip-national-nature-reserve>