



Decoy Heath

Birdwatching

Butterflies

Lichens and Mosses

Planned Outing arranged by:

Keith Taylor / David Plant

Date: Friday 27/05/22

Arrive: 8:30 – 8:45

Location: RG7 2PF

Decoy Heath

Here you will see some of the best displays of dragonflies and damselflies in Berkshire, including the downy emerald dragonfly and the rare small red damselfly, as well as wild flowers and birds.

Location

9 miles south-west of Reading

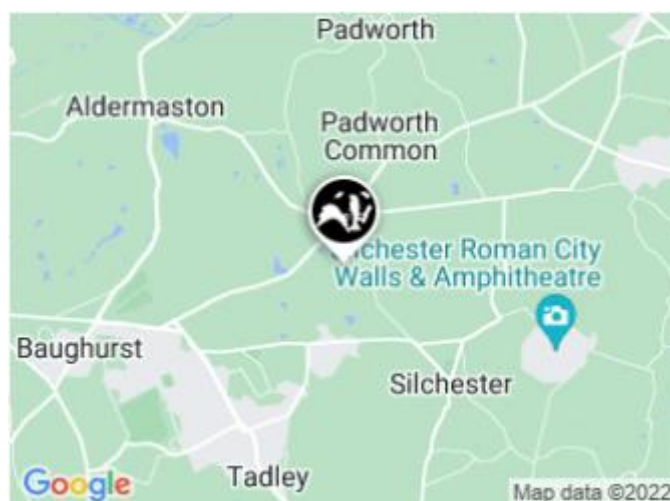
Located on Soke Road between Aldermaston and Silchester, about ¼ of a mile south from the Reading Road roundabout. Gate to car park is opposite Neale Brothers Export Packing and adjacent to a track signposted Bodyshop.

Berkshire

RG7 2PF

OS Map Reference

SU 613 634



Website

<https://www.bbowt.org.uk/nature-reserves/decoy-heath>

Decoy Heath

Know before you go

Size	8 hectares
Entry fee	No
Parking information	Surfaced car park - there is a combination lock on the gate, please call (01635) 35157 to arrange vehicular access
Grazing animals	Yes
Access	Waterlogged patches in winter; sloping; rutted paths; kissing gates
Dogs	On a lead
When to visit	
Opening times	Open at all times
Best time to visit	All year round

Decoy Heath

About the reserve

Dragonflies galore

Decoy Heath is one of the best sites for dragonflies and damselflies in Berkshire. No fewer than 23 species have been known to breed around its shallow pools. They include the keeled skimmer, white-legged damselfly, emerald damselfly and the small red damselfly with its bright red legs. This scarlet species prefers shallow, unshaded streams and bog pools with overlaying bog-moss mats. By creating new pools, the Trust has significantly expanded the available habitat for these delightful insects.

Fascinating bogland

Insects are attracted to flowers at the margins of the pools. Lesser skullcap, bog pimpernel and marsh violet are three of the more uncommon flowers that favour these boggy conditions. Rushes and sedges provide cover for nesting moorhens.

Heathland rarity

An important population of adders is present on site and doing well, thanks to habitat management by the Trust to create special basking platforms and protect hibernacula. Adders are very vulnerable to disturbance so please don't lift the tins; instead go quietly and you may well come across one basking in the open.

Many uncommon mosses and liverworts inhabit the wet heath, while the drier areas favour grey and red lichens. Honeysuckle, foxglove and primrose can be found here. More than 80 species of birds have been recorded at Decoy Heath. Some years scarce ground-nesting birds including nightjar and woodlark make their homes here.

Species

Common Gorse	Marsh Violet	Broom	Foxglove
Green Woodpecker	Woodlark	Snipe	Tawny Owl
Keeled Skimmer	Four-spotted Chaser		Glow-worm
Grayling	Adder	Slow worm	

Habitat

Lowland Heath	Wetlands	Woodland
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Decoy Heath

Contact

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

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Environmental designation

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)