

Wildlife Watching

With its huge variety of habitats, Greensand Country is home to an abundance of wildlife. Go nature spotting at one of several nature reserves, whilst exploring the Ridge, or wherever you find yourself... there's so much to discover!



Whether strolling through intimate woodland, exploring an expanse of open heathland, following the flow of a river or taking in the colour of a wildflower meadow, you'll always be surrounded by wildlife in Greensand Country. The area is famous for its flora and fauna, and many of the best wildlife watching sites are all within a short drive or walk of each other, so you can easily visit several in a single day.

Notable species include Adder and Common Lizard on the dry heaths at Stockgrove and Rushmere; Otter on the Flit river; and Purple Emperor, White Letter Hairstreak and White Admiral butterflies in the woods at Chicksands and Kings Wood. Bee Orchid flower in the spring on the dry grassland at Old Warden Tunnels and Sandy Smith, while Pyramidal Orchid turn the ground purple in the summer. Even the tiny reserve at Duck Hill near Maulden is home to 14 different species of dragonfly!

In the east of Greensand Country is the RSPB headquarters at Sandy and the wet meadows of the Riddy, one of the few remaining places in the county where you can see a Water Vole dropping with a 'plop' into the water.

Red Kites soar in the skies right across the area, searching for food and Green Woodpeckers yaffle from the trees.



Common Adder

People Say:

"Countryside, wildlife, fresh air and exercise... it's just perfect!"

"It's really encouraging how local organisations and volunteers work together here to protect wildlife".

"We love walking in the woodlands. Very pleasant countryside and plenty of wildlife, especially birds. Chicksands Woods is a really special place for butterflies".

"I love exploring by foot or by bike, through the pine wood and varied countryside, taking in the views and discovering all sorts of wildlife along the way".

"Had a super day at Ampthill. It has a lovely park, very varied, with great history and wildlife".

"The nature trail at RSPB The Lodge is great for families!"

"Lots of owls and birds of prey around Chicksands Wood; nice views too! I've also seen swans and kingfishers on the River Ivel".

"Ampthill Forest School is great for helping children to explore and learn about nature".

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Action Points:



Download copies of the handy Wildlife Guides, produced by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (free to use for personal or education use).



Visit the Bedfordshire Natural History Society website for reports on all the different wildlife in the area, including updates and interesting sightings.



Share books and guides to local wildlife with your visitors, so they can find out more for themselves.



Encourage wildlife into your own grounds by providing bird feeders, nesting areas, wildflowers and other plants to attract insects and birds – you'll be surprised how much you can see and learn from your own window!



Talk with local enthusiasts to discover the best wildlife-spotting places on your doorstep. Often the less well-known locations are better than some of the more popular attractions. Share some of these secrets with your visitors!



Promote local guided walks or events run by wildlife organisations.

Info and Resources:

Wildlife Trust resources:

www.wildlifebcn.org/wildlife/wildlife-guides

www.wildlifebcn.org/wildlife-explorer

Bedfordshire Natural History Society:

www.bnhs.co.uk/index.php