

SCHOOLS *Go wild!* at Lorton Meadows



Dorset
Wildlife Trust

A guide for schools and groups



About Lorton Meadows Conservation Centre

Dorset Wildlife Trust is the largest nature conservation charity in Dorset. From small beginnings in 1961 based entirely on voluntary effort, we now have over 27,000 members, 42 nature reserves, four visitor centres, one conservation centre and a thriving programme of outreach with communities.

Lorton Meadows nature reserve in Weymouth is a haven for wildlife. Originally farmland, the 75-hectare (185-acre) reserve has been managed by Dorset Wildlife Trust since 1998 and boasts species-rich meadows of national importance with ponds, hedgerows and small woodlands. These areas are untouched by artificial fertilisers and pesticides. As a result, they are home to a huge array of wonderful wildlife.

The picnic area and Withy Woods near the conservation centre offer a 'snapshot' of Lorton's varied habitats, perfect for younger key stages and those with limited mobility. The varied habitats and conservation management within an urban setting provide plenty of opportunities for higher key stages and other interested groups.





Lorton Meadows

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Public footpath | Reserve boundary | Gate |
| Other paths | Field boundary | Picnic area |
| Public bridleway | Pond (⚠ be aware of deep water) | Toilets (at Park & Ride) |
| Cycle path | Trees/hedges | Parking |
| Woodland | Orchard | Pedestrian access |
| Grassland | | |
| Private land | | |

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| △ 30 | Height in metres |
| Short circular walking trail | |
| Medium circular walking trail | |
| Long circular walking trail | |
| Legacy walking trail | |
- Map produced by Dorset Wildlife Trust.
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The Facilities

The conservation centre houses informative displays about the species and habitats of Lorton Meadows, along with an interactive touch table of natural items found around the nature reserve.

There is an outdoor classroom and picnic area opposite the main building.

There are toilets (including an accessible toilet) and hand-washing facilities inside the centre.

There is a small car park adjacent to the centre; due to the nature of the lanes that lead to Lorton Meadows, it is only accessible by car or minibus.



The Visit

Educational visits range from one hour to a full school day, for all key stages and further education groups. You are welcome to eat your lunch on site on the picnic tables or in Meadow Barn, but please take your litter away with you.

Our learning programme supports the requirements of the National Curriculum, but if you can't find an activity to meet the needs of your group, please contact us to discuss your topic.

We supply all the equipment necessary for activities overleaf, including age-appropriate worksheets and ID guides.



Safeguarding and Health and Safety

Dorset Wildlife Trust is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and we follow all safer recruitment practices. All our staff have full DBS clearance and are first aid trained. All activities and sites are fully risk assessed. We advise that a site visit and risk assessment be carried out in advance, staff can provide a risk assessment guide and support with this if you need assistance.

Accessibility

Activities can be adapted for students with additional educational needs. The centre has an accessible toilet and parking bay. There is also an accessible pond dipping platform, as well as an access for all mesh path around Withy Woods and picnic area. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Costs

The cost of sessions helps us to fund vital conservation work to protect Dorset's wildlife.
Two-hour visit: £100
Four-hour visit: £200

Booking

To discuss your requirements and book a visit please contact us:

T: 01305 206191

E: education@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

For further details of the nature reserve and conservation centre please visit **dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/lorton**



Session	Cost	Duration	Links to the National Curriculum
Guided Walks Seasonal walks around the nature reserve discovering different habitats, plants and wildlife along the way. Please let us know if you have a particular focus or topic that you would like us to tailor the walk around.	£50 per group* £100 per group*	From 1 hour	Animals, including humans Living things and their habitats Plants Parts of a plant Species ID Seed dispersal (dependent on time of year) Flowers and pollination
Pond Dipping A fascinating opportunity to learn about the creatures that call our pond home. Each dip offers a unique chance to discover the incredible biodiversity that lives beneath the surface. The session lasts for 2 hours and will be tailored to meet the National Curriculum requirements for the Key Stage and year group of your class.	£100 per group*	2 hours	Animals, including humans Living things and their habitats, including microhabitats Classification Food chains Adaptions Life cycles Identifying animals Ecosystems Biodiversity
Minibeast Detectives Your class will become minibeast detectives as they go on a bug hunt and learn to classify invertebrates by different characteristics. The session lasts for 2 hours and will be tailored to meet the National Curriculum requirements for the Key Stage and year group of your class. Depending on the time of year we can offer the following mini beast detective sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland – hunting under logs and in the undergrowth • Woodland – tree shaking • Meadows – sweep netting (weather dependent) 	£100 per group*	2 hours	Animals, including humans Living things and their habitats, including microhabitats Classification Food chains Adaptions Life cycles Identifying animals Ecosystems Biodiversity
Owl Pellet Dissection As apex predators in Dorset, barn owls sit at the top of the food chain and are therefore a great way to investigate food chains and webs. Your class will get the chance to learn about the inter-relationships between predators and prey. The session will start with a talk about the owls at Lorton and their importance within the food chain. We will then go out for a walk around the meadows looking at the different habitats that the barn owls hunt in and the prey that lives there. During the session, pupils will get the chance to dissect owl pellets and use the bones they find to identify which species the owls have been eating.	£100 per group*	2 hours	Animals, including humans Living things and their habitats, including microhabitats Classification Food chains Adaptions Life cycles Identifying animals Ecosystems Biodiversity
Tremendous Trees Your class will learn the different types of trees we have in Dorset and the vital role of the play in our ecosystem. Your pupils will learn about the different parts of a tree, from anchoring roots to light-gathering leaves. Pupils will become 'Tree Detectives' as they go on a walk through Withy Woods. They will learn to identify common native trees like oak and beech. Throughout the walk, pupils will learn how trees create habitats for a variety of wildlife, from insects to birds to mammals.	£100 per group*	2 hours	Animals, including humans Living things and their habitat Classification Food chains Adaptions Life cycles What plants need Plant life cycle

***Maximum group size = 30 students. Learning opportunities can be tailored to suit individual groups. Please get in touch to discuss your requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs. Sessions are available from April to October.**

How to find us

© Vicky Ashby



Lorton Meadows
Conservation Centre,
Lorton Lane,
Weymouth DT3 5QH

We look forward to
welcoming you.



Dorset Wildlife Trust map © Tom Woolley



© Hazel Ormrod



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