SCHOOLS Go wild! at Chesil

Dorset Wildlife Trust

A guide for schools and groups



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About The Fine Foundation Wild Chesil Centre



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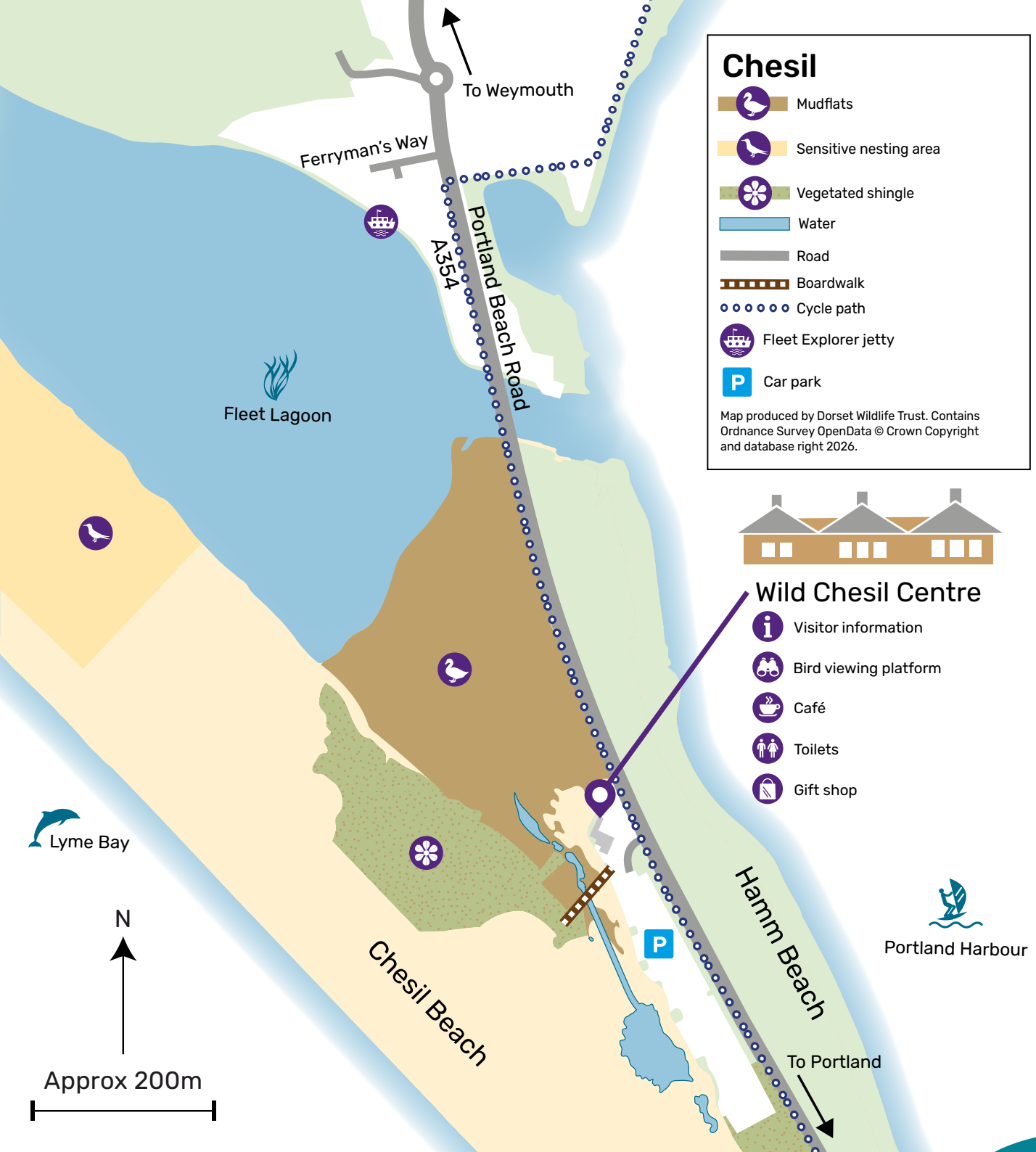
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Dorset Wildlife Trust is the largest nature conservation charity in Dorset. From small beginnings in 1961 based entirely on voluntary effort, we now have over 27,000 members, 42 nature reserves, four visitor centres, one conservation centre and a thriving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

The Wild Chesil Centre is the gateway to the stunning Chesil Beach and Fleet Lagoon. Located between Weymouth and Portland, it provides great access to the world-famous Chesil Beach. This natural barrier beach stretches for 18 miles along the Dorset coast. Protected from the elements by the beach, along the inner flank of pebbles lies The Fleet, England's largest saline lagoon of its kind, which is home to a vast array of unique marine wildlife, birdlife and coastal plants.

Chesil Beach and the Fleet Lagoon form an internationally important nature reserve and with the adjacent offshore Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Lyme Bay combine to create an inspiring place to explore and learn about coastal and marine wildlife and the Jurassic Coast.

Climb a bank of 180 billion pebbles, explore an underwater world exposed by the low tide or learn how to protect Dorset's amazing wildlife.



The Facilities

The Wild Chesil Centre has interactive displays about the wildlife, formation and history of the world-famous Chesil Beach and Fleet Lagoon. The centre is open seven days a week all year round.

The centre has displays about the local wildlife as well as the formation and history of Chesil Beach and Fleet Lagoon. There is a birdwatching area in the centre where you can use the binoculars and telescope to get a closure look at the bird species found on the mudflats, along with a marine touch table. The centre has picnic tables where you can have your lunch, along with a gift shop and toilets on site.

The council pay & display car park adjacent to the centre is accessible to coaches. The visitor centre is located on a frequent bus route to and from Weymouth.

The nearby Rodwell Trail offers a traffic-free walking and cycling route between Weymouth town centre and Ferrybridge.

A great way to experience Chesil and the Fleet is to take a trip on the Fleet Explorer boat. Regular sailings operate during the summer season (weather dependent).

The Visit

Our learning programme reflects the seasons and wildlife found on the reserve and supports the requirements of the National Curriculum. Activities take place both on the beach and in our dedicated indoor education room. If you can't find an activity that meets the needs of your group, please contact us to discuss your topic. We supply all the necessary equipment.


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Sustainability

We encourage visitors to be mindful of their impact so we ask that all rubbish (except beach litter) be taken away with you. As a Refill station we are happy to top up water bottles. Visits to our sites are great conversation starters about sustainability, including how to reduce single use plastic.


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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 special educational needs. The visitor centre, education room, toilets and bird viewing platform are all wheelchair-accessible. Due to the nature of the beach and foreshore, access for those with limited mobility is harder, though sessions can be adjusted. Please call and discuss any requirements.

Disabled parking is available but council charges still apply.

Costs

The cost of our sessions helps us to fund vital conservation work to protect Dorset's wildlife.
One-hour visit: £50
Two-hour visit: £100

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 visitor centre, visit:

dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildchesilcentre



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Sessions available and curriculum links

Session	Cost	Duration	Key stages	Links to the National Curriculum
An Introduction to Chesil Beach and its wildlife In this session, learn how Chesil Beach was formed, the diverse habitats that make the area so unique and the wonderful wildlife that lives here. This session includes a talk as well as time to look round the displays in the visitor centre and explore the different nature items on our touch table.	£50 per group*	1 hour	All years	Living things and their habitats Animals, including humans Geology – formation of Chesil Beach
Discover Chesil Beach and the Fleet Lagoon This session builds on the Introduction to Chesil Beach and its wildlife talk by including a walk around the centre and nature reserve to discover the wildlife that lives here, and understand the importance of the different habitats found on the reserve.	£100 per group*	2 hours	All years	Identifying animals Ecosystems Geology – formation of Chesil Beach Living things and their habitats, including microhabitats Animals, including humans
Marine Scavengers The session will start in our education room with a talk about what lives in the sea off Chesil Beach, the importance of the nature reserve and the environmental problems associated with marine litter. We will then head onto the beach to search for natural and human-made objects along the shore. The session will end back at in the education room to identify the items which have been found such as shark eggcases using a classification key.	£100 per group*	2 hours	KS1/2	Life cycles Identifying animals Food chains Adaptations Ecosystems Living things and their habitats, including microhabitats Animals, including humans
Seashore Detectives After a talk in the Education Room, we will explore the Fleet Lagoon at low tide to discover the wealth of wildlife found in the different habitats. During the session we will learn how the different species have adapted to survive in this harsh habitat. This session is tide dependent and wellies will be needed.	£100 per group*	2 hours	All years	Identifying animals Classification Adaptations Ecosystems Biodiversity Living things and their habitats Animals, including humans
Our Changing Seas Learn about the current issues that are affecting our Dorset seas and marine wildlife such as; rising tides, temperature changes and unsustainable fishing techniques. The session will start with a talk in our education room before carrying out a beach clean. We will then head back to the education room to conduct a litter survey. We will look at what has washed up, where it has come from and consider ways to combat the issue of marine litter.	£100 per group*	2 hours	All years	Climate change Changes to environment Sustainability Ecosystems Biodiversity Living things and their habitats Animals, including humans
Visit the Wild Chesil Centre The Wild Chesil Centre is the ideal starting point for visiting Chesil Beach. The visitor centre features interactive displays about the beach and its wildlife, a bird watching area, touch table and during the summer, an underwater camera.				It's free to visit the centre, however, you must book your visit in advance.
Private hire of the Education Room This makes an ideal base for pupils, equipment and somewhere dry to eat lunch with direct access to the beach. The centre seats 40 and is fully equipped with a computer, large screen and tea and coffee facilities.				Please get in touch for prices and availability.
Wildlife boat trips on the Fleet Explorer The Fleet Explorer is a shallow drafted boat specifically designed and built to explore the lower reaches of the Fleet Lagoon discovering wildlife along the way. The boat can be chartered and can take groups of up to 12 people. The boat runs during the summer, weather permitting.				Contact us for prices and availability.

*Max. 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.

How to find us



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The Wild Chesil Centre is situated halfway along the causeway between Weymouth and Portland.

The Wild Chesil Centre,
Portland Beach Road,
Portland DT4 9XE

We look forward to welcoming you



Dorset Wildlife Trust map © Tom Woolley



© Stuart Lamont

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