



# WILDLIFE TRAIL



Suitable  
for teens  
and adults

Duration: 1 hour

Take care:  
you are responsible for the  
safety of yourself and your  
party. **Respect Covid-19**  
social distancing and  
group gathering guidelines.

Respect  
any ancient  
monument and  
remember to put  
your rubbish in a  
bin or take it home  
with you.

On behalf of Colchester  
Borough Council, welcome to  
Colchester's Castle Park.  
Please enjoy your visit.



The park is located at the edge of the town centre and the nearest **car parks** are  
**Priory Street**, **Britannia** and **Leisure World Colchester**: [colchester.gov.uk/parking](https://colchester.gov.uk/parking).

If you don't want to drive why not catch the bus to Colchester High Street?

Please check Castle Park **opening hours** prior to starting the trail [colchester.gov.uk/parks](https://colchester.gov.uk/parks)

Recycle this sheet if you printed it out at home





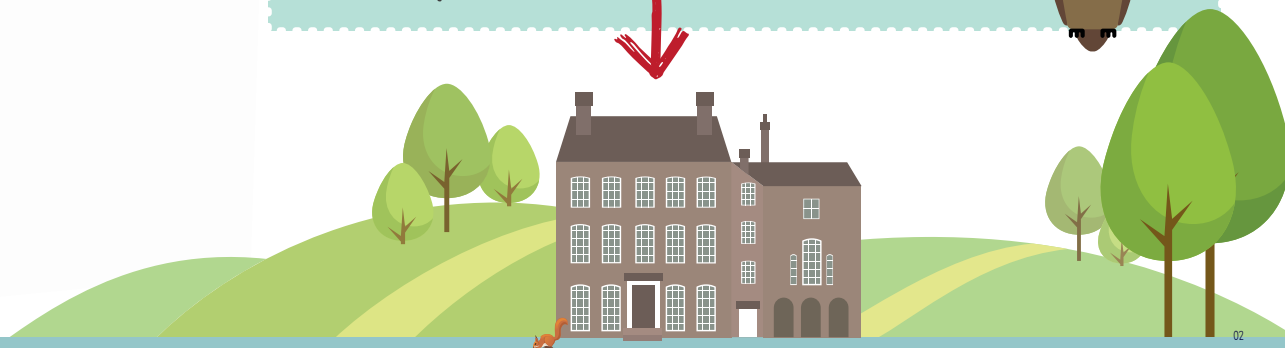
## INTRODUCTION



Wildlife trails following specific routes are notoriously difficult to piece together because of the simple fact that wildlife doesn't sit still! With this in mind, this trail is designed to inform you of the **natural flora and fauna** that we find in the Park with some information about how we manage it. It will highlight some good areas to see a selection of wildlife but I'm afraid there are no guarantees.

If it's nature that stands still that you're after, our Tree Trail is a fascinating insight into the array of trees in the Park and they tend not to move!

You begin at the Sensory Garden, next to Hollytrees.



## 1 Sensory Garden

Starting in the **Upper Park**, the **Sensory Garden** is a fantastic habitat for bees and butterflies. Peacock butterflies, painted ladies and common blues are regularly seen here as well as a host of solitary and bumblebees. The bryony bee has a local population that is doing well and is of note as it only visits the white bryony plant for its pollen. With these two species sharing such a vital symbiotic relationship, we are keen to protect the growth of white bryony around the Park.

The Upper Park in general is an area where you are very likely to bump into grey squirrels. Although fully naturalised and operating in the same ecological niche as red squirrels, these greys are an invasive species which carry a pox (only harmful to other squirrels) which, alongside their aggressive behaviour has seen the widespread collapse of the red squirrel population in England. Within the Park, we advise people not to feed them as keeping their numbers artificially high has a detrimental impact on the other wildlife.



We'd love to see photographs taken on the trail. Why not share your pictures with us at [@YourColchester](#) [@EnjoyColchester](#) or [@Better Colchester](#) using [#ColchesterCastleParkTrail](#)



## 2 Imola Pond and back of Colchester Castle

The foliage of the trees around the Imola Pond and up onto the bailey mound behind Colchester Castle is a common feeding ground for numerous **bat species** including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctules. Bats tend to come out to feed around 20 minutes after sunset and a bat detector is a fantastic asset to help identify what you are seeing.



## 3 Snake Steps



The trees lining these twisting steps are alive with **birds**. Owing to their maturity and diversity of species, the trees are home to common garden species such as blue tits, great tits, pigeons, magpies, long tailed tits, blackbirds and robins. The Ranger team regularly install bird boxes in an attempt to maintain these species around the Park.





## 4 Lower Park Riverside



The Boating Lake is almost certain to have ducks in residence although it is likely these would happily make their home on the river if it wasn't for people feeding them in the lake. You are also likely to see swans using the area - look at the notice boards for information on how to report the swans you see. Pied wagtails and grey wagtails have also been seen here regularly. Walking along the river in the direction of the



bowls green, a selection of damselflies and dragonflies can be seen during the summer months, including: large red damselflies, red eyed damselflies, banded demoiselles, four-spotted chasers and hairy dragonflies. Fish species in the Colne include: pike, roach, perch, eels and chub and this section of river has a healthy population. There is also a chance you will see kingfishers, water voles and the elusive otter too so keep your eyes peeled.



**You now have the choice** to make your way back up to the Upper Park or **continue along the river** out of the gates and towards **East Bay**. If heading up past **Putt in the Park**, take a moment to look over the five-bar gate into the **Wildlife Garden** area that abuts the walkway between Putt in the Park and the **Roman Wall** - it is a good site for woodpeckers, muntjac deer and plenty of insects.

If continuing along the river, the route will take you past the **Riverside Lake** with its range of waterfowl including mallards, shovelers and goosander, as well as occasional cormorants and herons. This is also a site where terrapins are regularly spotted basking in the sun (an invasive species causing headaches for conservationists up and down the country).

Coming off the main footpath and heading between the riverside lake and the river itself, you are likely to see various species in

the tit family and have a chance of seeing the green woodpecker that feeds in this area.

Heading along the river towards **East Bay**, muntjac deer, foxes and a sparrowhawk are all seen fairly regularly across the river amongst the foliage that makes up the border of **Cowdray Marshes**. We are also pleased with how the wildflowers are developing here thanks to a change in the grass cutting regime.

Once in East Bay, enjoy the view back along the river from the weir and if its low tide upstream, look out for otter prints in the mud.

Please note, on your way back you may want to consider a stroll across the bridge towards Leisure World Colchester and into Bull Meadow which is a small nature reserve home to many of the species mentioned throughout this trail.



We hope you enjoyed this trail. Why not check out what else we have to offer at [colchester.gov.uk/parks](https://colchester.gov.uk/parks)

