

# Join us today!

You can help to support our vital work protecting Scotland's wildlife.

- Free entry to all our visitor centres
- Subscription to *Scottish Wildlife* magazine
- A copy of the *Exploring Reserves* guide
- Invitations to exclusive talks and events

Visit [scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk) for more information or call 0131 312 7765.

## You might also like to visit...



### Falls of Clyde Visitor Centre

Visit for waterfalls, walks and wildlife. Look out for dippers, kingfishers and otters. Join the ranger for badger watching and other events.

New Lanark ML11 9DB T 01555 665 262

E [fallofclayde@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:fallofclayde@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

[@TheFallsOfClyde](https://twitter.com/TheFallsOfClyde) [@TheFallsOfClyde](https://www.facebook.com/TheFallsOfClyde)



### Montrose Basin Visitor Centre

Spectacular views over the wildlife reserve, exhibitions with interactive displays and a host of children's activities.

Montrose DD10 9TA T 01674 676 336

E [montrosebasin@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:montrosebasin@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

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### Loch of the Lowes Visitor Centre

Interactive displays tell the story of Lowes and its wildlife - ospreys, red squirrels, beavers and much more. Observation hides over the loch.

Dunkeld PH8 OHH T 01350 727 337

E [lochofthelowes@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:lochofthelowes@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

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For information on places to see near you, visit our website: [scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/visit](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/visit)

# Ayrshire Reserves

The reserves are open every day all year round and entry is free to all visitors.

[@scottishwildlifetrust](https://www.facebook.com/scottishwildlifetrust) [@ScotWildlife](https://twitter.com/ScotWildlife)

## Events and activities

To find out what's on at the reserves, visit [scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/events](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/events)

## Local groups

Passionate about the wildlife of Scotland? Join our Ayrshire Group - run by volunteers, we are active in local conservation projects: planning, fundraising and organising events to inspire and engage people in Ayrshire.

## Health and safety

- Please keep to the footpaths for your own safety and to protect sensitive plants and animals.
- Dogs must be under close control (on a lead if necessary) to avoid disturbance of livestock, birds and other wildlife. Please remove dog mess.
- Be vigilant about ticks, which may be present on the undergrowth.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly, visit [outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://outdooraccess-scotland.com)



[scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

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# Get out and about in Ayrshire!



# Ayrshire Wildlife Reserves

# Ayrshire wildlife

## Mammals

Deer, foxes, bats and small mammals such as mice and voles find safe haven in the woods and meadows of our reserves.

## Birds

Each reserve has a rich and varied collection of birds all year round, from resident robins and wrens to visiting little egrets.

## Trees

Trees are the foundation of many of our reserves, with hundreds of species depending on them for survival.

## Wildflowers

Wildflowers provide food for mammals and caterpillars, whilst birds and small mammals rely on their seeds and berries in winter.

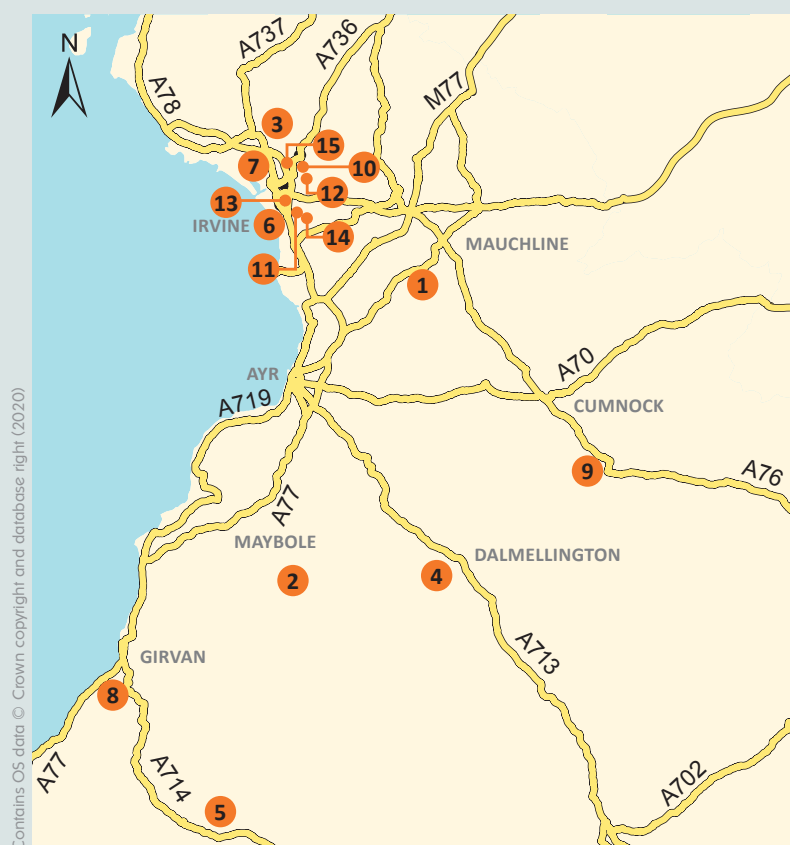
## Pollinators

Bees, butterflies and hoverflies benefit from a profusion of flowers and nesting sites across our reserves.

# Explore the wilder side of Ayrshire

Discover special places for wildlife and for people, on your doorstep

*The Trust's 15 Ayrshire reserves cover a whole range of different habitats, providing a home for a wealth of wildlife throughout the seasons.*



- |                       |                         |                       |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Ayr Gorge Woodlands | 6 Gailles Marsh         | 11 Oldhall Ponds      |
| 2 Auchalton Meadow    | 7 Garnock Floods        | 12 Perceton Wood      |
| 3 Corsehillmuir Wood  | 8 Grey Hill Grasslands  | 13 Shewalton Sandpits |
| 4 Dalmellington Moss  | 9 Knockshinnoch Lagoons | 14 Shewalton Wood     |
| 5 Feoch Meadows       | 10 Lawthorn Wood        | 15 Sourlie Wood       |

## Woodlands

Rich and diverse, woodlands support special and often spectacular wildlife, and more invertebrates than any other habitat. Deadwood is an important part of a woodland, providing shelter and food for many species.

## Wetlands

Wet conditions promote luxuriant vegetation where many creatures can safely set up home. Boggy ground and tangles of willows mean that disturbance by people is minimal.

## Meadows

The Trust grazes or cuts meadows on reserves, to prevent grass from smothering the wildflowers, or scrub from taking over. There may be horses, sheep or cattle present, depending on the goal.

## Rivers and Ponds

Water greatly increases a site's species diversity. It teems with tiny life forms, which are a source of food for larger species. At the top of the chain are mammals and birds, who also use it for drinking and bathing.





© gillianswalks.com

### Ayr Gorge Woodlands

The reserve features a steep ravine of sandstone cliffs covered mainly with oak, ash and some very old majestic beeches. It is one of the most important ancient woodlands in Ayrshire for invertebrates, plants, fungi and bats. This reserve is on the popular River Ayr Way walking route.

- Access:** surfaced footpaths, including several steep sections and steps.
- Duration:** Allow 1 to 3 hours.
- Location:** KA5 5TF, nearest town Failford.



© Gill Smart

### Feoch Meadows

A mosaic of dry and wet grassland, fen meadow and mire characterise the reserve. There is an orchid-rich area on the banks of the Feoch Burn. Traditional livestock farming, without the addition of modern chemicals, ensures an abundance of wildflowers and insects. This site is particularly good for butterflies and moths.

- Access:** no footpaths and ground is very boggy in places. Livestock usually present.
- Duration:** Allow 1 to 3 hours.
- Location:** KA26 ORE, nearest town Barrhill.



© Gill Smart

### Knockshinnoch Lagoons

Open water, marshland and reedbeds make this reserve important for birdlife in the Nith Valley, especially during their autumn migration. Plant and insect enthusiasts can enjoy the partially vegetated coal-spoil heap in the main public area of the reserve.

- Access:** mostly level, surfaced paths and two viewing hides.
- Duration:** Allow 1 to 2 hours.
- Location:** KA18 4NF, nearest town New Cumnock.



© Harry Richards

### Shewalton Sandpits

Fashioned out of disused sand and gravel pits in the 1980s, the sandbanks, ponds, woodland and riverbank here are now a haven for invertebrates, plants and birds. The sheltered conditions mean that butterflies and dragonflies can be numerous on a sunny day.

- Access:** level, unsurfaced footpaths.
- Duration:** Allow 1 hour.
- Location:** KA11 5AB, nearest town Irvine.



© Gabrielle Horup

### Auchalton Meadow

This flower-rich reserve is on the site of 19th Century lime workings. Kilns, spoil mounds, tracks and a small quarry can still be seen. Orchids, including fragrant orchid and greater butterfly orchid, thrive in these impoverished soils. During the summer, the wildflowers attract large numbers of pollinating insects, including butterflies such as Scotch argus (pictured).

- Access:** mostly level but no footpaths. Livestock may be present.
- Duration:** Allow 1 to 2 hours.
- Location:** KA19 7QF, nearest town Crosshill.



© Philip Precev

### Gailes Marsh

This reserve features dry coastal grassland, marshland and a pond, all sheltered by mixed woodland. The species-rich grassland attracts many butterflies, bees, hoverflies and other pollinating insects. Mining bees (pictured) in particular find the conditions favourable for nesting.

- Access:** level ground but no footpaths. Horses may be present.
- Duration:** Allow 1 hour.
- Location:** KA11 5AE, nearest town Irvine.



© Bob Coyle

### Lawthorn Wood

This reserve is a small, mature deciduous woodland. The tall canopy is mainly made up of ash trees, with some beech and sycamore. Elm trees were once prominent and their dead trunks provide nesting sites for bats and birds, including the great spotted woodpecker (pictured).

- Access:** level, unsurfaced footpath.
- Duration:** 15 minutes but close to Sourlie Wood and Eglinton Country Park for a longer route.
- Location:** KA11 2AY, nearest town Irvine.



© Margaret Holland

### Shewalton Wood

With its woodland, grassland and wetland areas, this reserve hosts many small mammals, amphibians and songbirds, which attract birds of prey and other predators. A network of water-filled channels and two large ponds provide an ideal habitat for frogs, dragonflies and damselflies.

- Access:** level, surfaced footpath.
- Duration:** Allow 1 to 2 hours.
- Location:** KA11 5AT, nearest town Irvine.



© Gill Smart

### Corsehillmuir Wood

This natural woodland reserve sits in the famously pastoral landscape of North Ayrshire. Its canopy of mature birch, ash, alder and willow shelters a mossy and ferny ground flora and woodland birds thrive here.

- Access:** surfaced footpaths with only one steep section.
- Duration:** 30 minutes but close to Eglinton Country Park for a longer route.
- Location:** KA13 7LA, nearest town Kilwinning.



© Richard Steel/2020VISION

### Garnock Floods

Garnock Floods is a low-lying floodplain pasture with shallow pools and marshy areas. The reserve is grazed by cattle to keep the ground suitable for the wildfowl and waders that flock here during winter. Kingfishers have been seen along the river and songbirds, such as grasshopper warbler (pictured), heard in the surrounding scrub woodland.

- Access:** viewing hide and short, unsurfaced footpath. Cattle may be present.
- Duration:** Allow 1 hour to visit the hide and short riverbank trail.
- Location:** KA12 8SP, nearest town Irvine.



© Scottish Wildlife Trust

### Oldhall Ponds

A mosaic of woodland and tussocky grassland surrounds the two ponds of this reserve. The open water and emergent vegetation are attractive to breeding and wintering waterfowl and other pond life, including dragonflies and damselflies.

- Access:** level, surfaced footpath.
- Duration:** 30 minutes but close to Shewalton Wood for a longer route.
- Location:** KA11 5DH, nearest town Irvine.



© Scottish Wildlife Trust

### Sourlie Wood

Sourlie Wood is an attractive native woodland that has developed on a derelict coal yard. There is a small area of grassland, a large pond and a good supply of deadwood that benefits invertebrates, which attract songbirds and bats.

- Access:** level, surfaced footpath.
- Duration:** 15 minutes but close to Lawthorn Wood and Eglinton Country Park for a longer route.
- Location:** KA11 2AY, nearest town Irvine.



© Pete Matthews

### Dalmellington Moss

This reserve is a raised bog on the floodplain of the River Doon. Hummocks of heather and deergrass are interspersed with waterlogged hollows full of Sphagnum mosses and cotton grass, allowing beetles, spiders and dragonflies to thrive. Specialised bog plants, such as bog rosemary (pictured), do well in these conditions.

- Access:** no footpaths and ground very boggy.
- Duration:** Allow 1 hour.
- Location:** KA6 7PY, nearest town Dalmellington.



© Shirley Freeman

### Grey Hill Grasslands

The ultrabasic serpentinite rock foundation makes this reserve a botanical hotspot. Species-rich grassland, heath and mire support many rare plants, including the nationally scarce spring sandwort (pictured). The hilltop route provides opportunities to take in the impressive views of Arran, Ailsa Craig and the Clyde coast.

- Access:** no footpaths on this steep hill. Livestock usually present.
- Duration:** Allow 3 to 4 hours.
- Location:** KA26 0HT (for parking - access is 1 mile from here), nearest town Girvan.



© Gill Smart

### Perceton Wood

This long-established plantation originated as part of the nearby Perceton House estate. The old trees provide crevices for birds and bats, and the plentiful deadwood supports insects and fungi. The carpet of ivy gives way to a natural ground flora interspersed with attractive garden plants. There is a small pond.

- Access:** level, unsurfaced footpath.
- Duration:** Allow 30 minutes.
- Location:** KA11 2AQ, nearest town Irvine.



### Interested in volunteering?

Much of the work to keep the reserves rich in wildlife and accessible to people is undertaken by volunteers.

Get in touch if you would like to be involved!

[scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer)