

## WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT MILLHOPPERS?

As you pass through the gate that leads you into the reserve there is an immediate feeling of being transported back in time; a feeling of a landscape that has remained essentially unchanged, bringing with it a sense of peace.

Around the periphery of Millhoppers there are numerous

Black Poplars which are representative of the high density of these special trees in the Vale of Aylesbury, but rare elsewhere in Great Britain. We also have the oldest known Black Poplar in the area, possibly about 350 years old. These trees are a valuable habitat for over 100 insects including some species of moth, and produce beautiful red catkins in the spring, which

are an early source of nectar for bees.

Many dragonflies and damselflies can be seen in the summer months and numerous species of birds have been identified, including raptors such as

Buzzard, Red Kite and Sparrowhawk, common residents

Blackbird, Wren, Robin,

Great tits, joined by Chiffchaff and Blackcap in March and April.



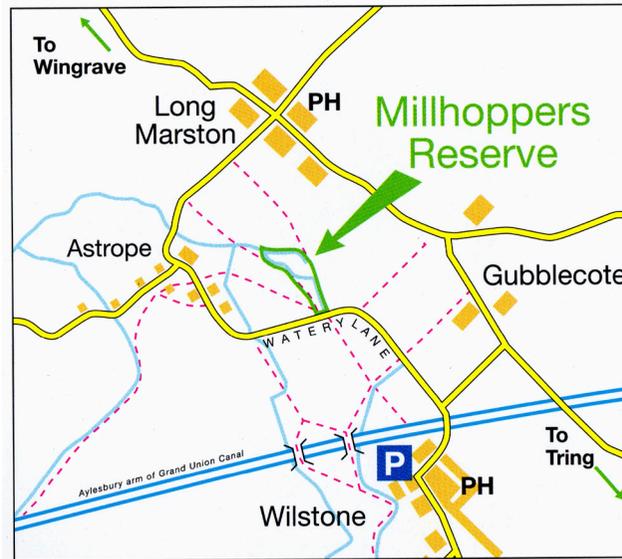
Black Poplar



Broad-bodied Chaser

## ACCESS TO MILLHOPPERS

Access to the Reserve is free and it is open to everyone all year round. Dogs are welcome, except when sheep are present. The main entrance to the reserve is from Watery Lane, at grid reference SP 899 148, a narrow lane where there is little parking, although access can also be achieved by footpaths from Long Marston, Wilstone and Puttenham. Parking is available in Wilstone.



If you would like to join Butterfly Conservation visit  
[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)

For more information about the Herts & Middx branch  
or the Millhoppers Reserve email us at  
[info@hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:info@hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk)



### Herts & Middx Branch

[www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk)



**Butterfly Conservation Company** limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (2206468).

Registered office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP.

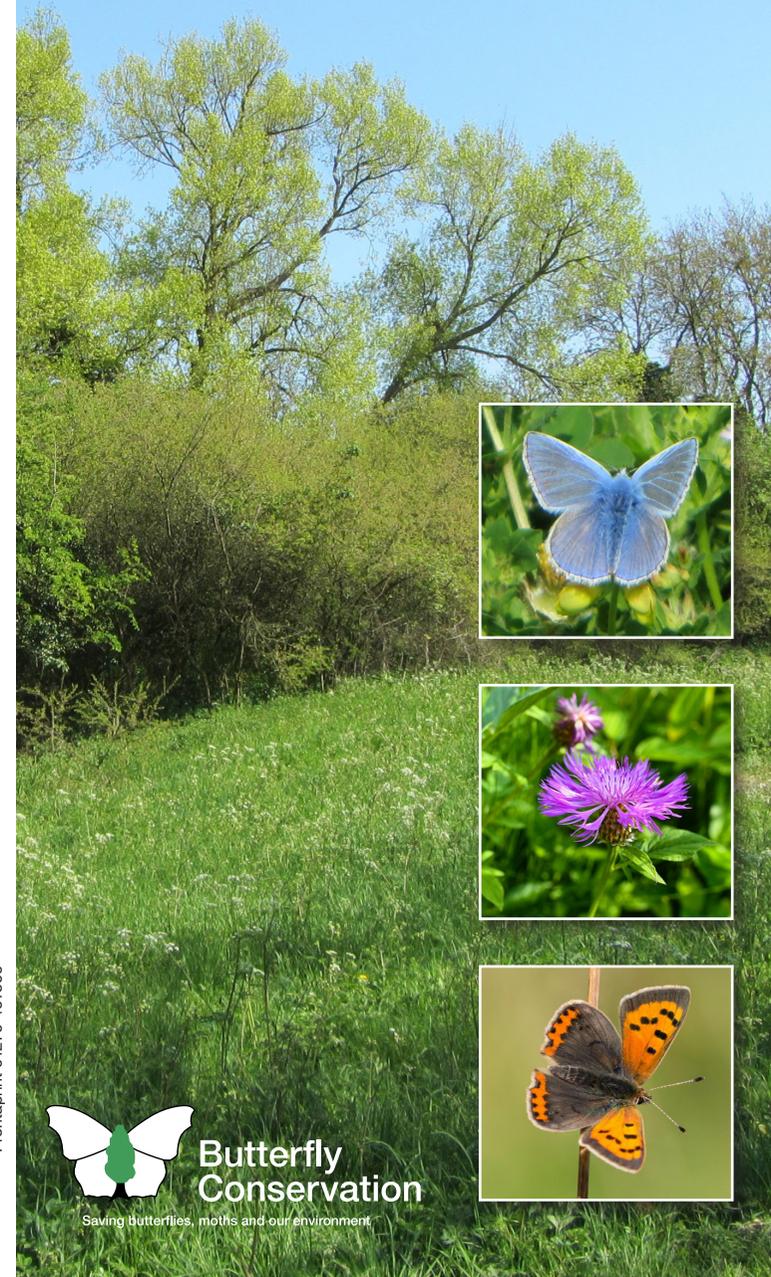
Charity registered in England and Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SC039268) VAT No GB 991 2771 89

**Photographs** by Bob Eade, Chris Hilling, Iain Leach, John Murray, Paula Reid, Stuart Reid

**Text** by Margaret Noakes and Christine Ridley

**Cover Designed** by Chris Hilling

# MILLHOPPERS RESERVE



**Butterfly Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment.

## MILLHOPPERS

A recognised wildlife site, Millhoppers is an area of 3.5 acres of unimproved grassland, acquired in 1998 as the first reserve of the Hertfordshire and Middlesex branch of Butterfly Conservation.

The name indicates the early presence of a mill on the site and 'hopper' meaning a small enclosure or field that is likely to be marshy.

## DESCRIPTION

A small stream crosses the middle of the site and forms part of the boundary of Millhoppers, both to the west, north and east, with a public footpath following its flow some of the way. Much of the reserve is bounded by blackthorn hedge and trees, including Ash, Field Maple and Black Poplar.

## MANAGEMENT

Management of the varying habitats on Millhoppers is vital to the success of the wildlife on the reserve. The main management activities are scrub control, and grass cutting with the removal of the cuttings, both of which are completed by volunteers. The reserve is also grazed for some of the year. This type of management encourages nectar-rich wildflowers, such as Cowslips, Knapweed, Devil's-bit Scabious and Bird's-foot Trefoil to thrive, all of which are very attractive to butterflies.



Blackthorn



Sweet Violets

## BUTTERFLIES AND MILLHOPPERS

This beautiful and tranquil spot is full of butterflies during the summer months, and 21 different species have been recorded on the site, most of which breed here.

Monitoring of butterflies takes place at Millhoppers from the beginning of April to the end of September to record both the abundance and the distribution of species. Grassland butterflies predominate, with Large Skipper and Ringlet plentiful in June and July, while Marbled White, Small and Essex Skipper, Gatekeeper, Common Blue, and Small Copper can be seen in July and August. We have also recorded many hundreds of moths, including those associated with Poplars, in particular the striking Poplar Hawk-moth.



Essex Skipper



Poplar Hawk-moth



Magpie Moth

Mating Ringlets



## VOLUNTEERING

Looking after this beautiful site takes a lot of work, though great fun and excellent exercise. We are always looking for new volunteers and any time you can give is appreciated. If you are interested in wildlife and would like to help, please contact us on: [millhoppers@hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:millhoppers@hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk)