

BAT TRAIL-2

Bovey Tracey-Trendlebere Down & Yarner Wood



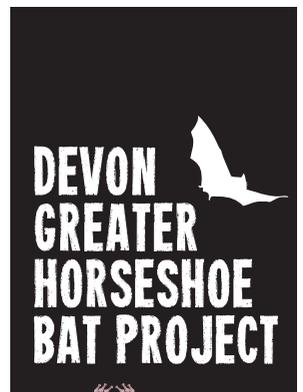
Photo:Trendlebere Down, Matt Parkins

Bovey Tracey, a historic market town, sits amongst parkland dominated by the river Bovey, ancient meadows, pastures and woodlands nestled in rolling hills on the fringes of Dartmoor. Much more than a gateway to Dartmoor, Bovey has a bustling high street, home to the Devon Guild of Craftsmen.

Rare greater horseshoe bats have a roost nearby and make great use of the surrounding countryside as they hunt for insects. Bats are nocturnal and use a system called echolocation to navigate, making high frequency calls as they fly and listen to the returning echoes to build up a sonic map of their surroundings.

Most bats shout sounds from their mouths but the greater horseshoe bat uses its unusual-shaped 'nose-leaf' to find its way around and hunt for prey at night.

Look out for bats if you do this walk during a summer evening, as some bats come out at dusk, like the noctule bat, whilst others including the greater horseshoe wait until dark. This walk will take you through some great 'batty' places, so look out for the different things described in the directions as you travel along.



ROUTE INFO

Start:	Middle Treadlebere Down car park
Distance and timings:	2 miles (approximately 1.5 hour)
Circular Walk:	Yes
Terrain and Description of paths:	Steep, unmade paths. Not suitable for wheelchairs
Obstacles and Gradients:	Earth & stone tracks with steep climbs
Public Transport:	Haytor Hoppa (Bus Service 271) operates in summer months only
Toilets:	Natural England offices
Refreshment Facilities:	n/a
OS Map:	OS Explorer OL28
Grid Reference and postcode:	SX 782 793



Photo: Cattle grazed pastures, Matt Parkins



Photo: Phil Richardson



Photo: Frank Greenaway



Photo: Yarner Woods, Matt Parkins



Photo: A well managed hedge

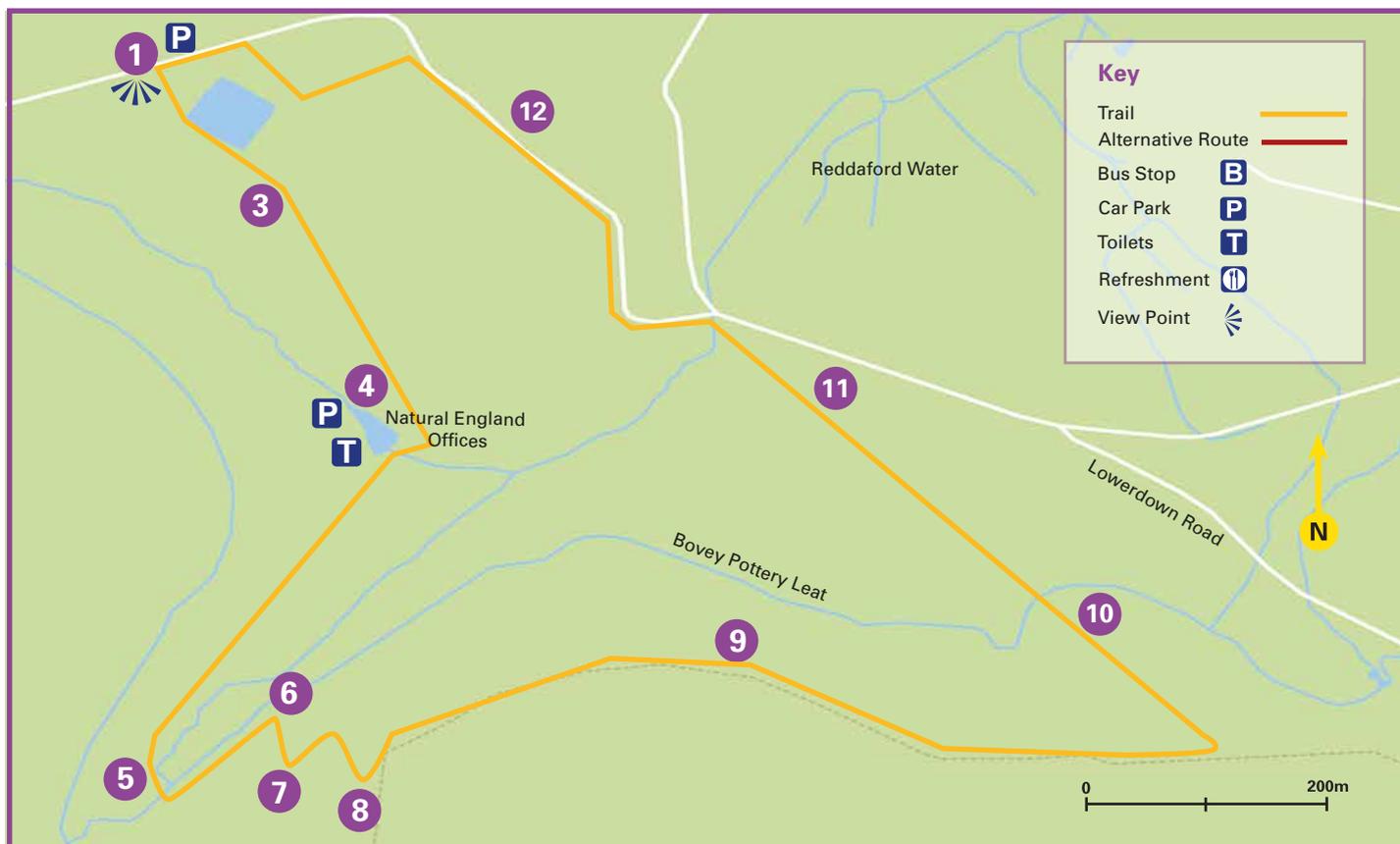


Devon
Wildlife Trust



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DIRECTIONS

- 1** The view from the car park looks down into the Bovey Valley where a colony of rare barbastelle bats has been studied by researchers from the University of Bristol. From the car park cross the road, turn right and take the track on your left leading around the reservoir. Standing water is vital for some bats to feed – the Daubenton’s bat uses its large feet to scoop insects from the surface of ponds, lakes and rivers.
- 2** As you enter Yarner Wood look out for old trees and standing dead wood which make good roosting sites for some bats. Greater horseshoes do not roost in trees, instead they use the branches to hang on and eat their prey. Continue along the track.
- 3** Bat roosting boxes have been mounted on trees around the nature reserve to provide additional roosting sites. They are used by lots of types of bats, particularly noctules, pipistrelles and brown long eared bats.
- 4** Follow the path with a line of oak trees on your left and a scrubby woodland edge on your right. This is perfect hunting ground for bats, as insects will gather here to shelter from the wind. Walk past the Natural England office, turn right onto the concrete track and enter the ancient oak woodland.
- 5** Many woodland bats inhabit this area, hunting for insects between the trees and along the tracks. The buildings at the Woodland Centre are potential bat roosts – and may have a few birds using them too!
- 6** At the Woodland Centre turn left to continue following the track. The ruined buildings and shafts of the disused Yarner Copper Mine are an ideal roosting site for bats. Greater horseshoe bats roost in mines, caves and buildings – they need a big opening so that they can fly straight in and grab on with

their feet. Other bats, like pipistrelles, are able to land on the side of a building or box and then crawl into the roost.

- 7** Follow the track uphill looking out for cracks and splits in the oak trees. These make good roosting sites.
- 8** Old and dying branches of oak trees provide many opportunities for bats; flaking bark on a dead branch is a perfect place to shelter. Continue uphill, when the track splits take the left hand path, keeping to the interior of the wood.
- 9** After around 300 metres turn left onto the bridleway. Look out for ivy on tree trunks – this is an excellent place for birds, bats and other small mammals to shelter.
- 10** Hedge lined grazing meadows next to scrubby woodland edges are perfect places for bats to forage for insects. Grazed fields are important for greater horseshoe bats as they love eating dung beetles – so they need lots of cow pats! Keep going across four fields.
- 11** Hedges help to connect roosts with good feeding grounds; greater horseshoes need these to help them get around. At the bottom of the hill join the road, cross the stream and get back on the path on the left hand side.
- 12** Cross the lane at the main entrance to Yarner Woods, make your way up the hill on the edge of the heath. The heathland is managed to encourage lots of insects, perfect for bats. Descend next to the reservoir and you will come back out onto the road opposite the car park.