



# National Cat Centre Nature Trail

Ashdown Forest



A trip to the National Cat Centre, set in delightful woodland, is a memorable experience for all the family.



**Adoption Centre**  
Come and meet our gorgeous cats and kittens looking for loving new homes at the largest cat adoption centre in the UK.

**Visitor Centre**  
The Visitor Centre features a café selling delicious hot and cold meals, a gift shop and conference facilities that can be hired.

**Nature trail**  
Take a walk on the wild side and learn all about the natural world.

**Meet the sheep**  
Owned by the Conservators of Ashdown Forest, this unique flock of Hebridean sheep graze the forest all year round.

Cats Protection is the UK's largest feline welfare charity. We find new homes for thousands of cats and kittens every year through our nationwide network of volunteer-run branches and adoption centres.

*Thanks for your support  
xx*

**How to find us:** We are situated directly off the A275 at Chelwood Gate. Use RH17 7DE for sat nav directions.

National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate,  
Haywards Heath, RH17 7TT

**Entry and parking:** Free

**Open:** 10am – 4pm daily

Please see our website for any additional opening times. Site closed: Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day

**Adoption Centre**

**T:** 01825 741 330 **E:** [ncac@cats.org.uk](mailto:ncac@cats.org.uk)

**Visitor Centre**

**T:** 01825 741 370 **E:** [visitorcentre@cats.org.uk](mailto:visitorcentre@cats.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.cats.org.uk/ncac](http://www.cats.org.uk/ncac)

**Free entry**

Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)



## Welcome to our nature trail

The trail begins outside the administration building and covers a distance of approximately 2km. We estimate it will take between 1 – 2 hours to complete at a leisurely pace. Interpretation boards giving information on the natural environment can be found throughout the trail. Each board is marked on the map with a symbol.

The route passes through woodland, grassland and lowland heath. We are allowing some areas to revert to wildflower meadows which will improve over time.

### Seasonal highlights

#### Spring

- Listen out for chiffchaffs, blackcaps and cuckoos
- Enjoy the beautiful spring flowers
- Spot adders and grass snakes emerging from hibernation
- Hear woodpeckers drumming on trees

#### Summer

- Look out for the rare silver-studded blue butterfly
- Nightjars can be heard 'churring' on the heath at dusk
- Grass snakes can be spotted swimming across the pond

#### Autumn

- Admire the rich, gold and crimson hues of autumn leaves
- Look out for stags arriving for the rut or mating season
- Spot different types of fungi

#### Winter

- Huge flocks of starlings spin and twirl in the dusk sky before settling down to roost
- Great grey shrikes visit for the winter before heading back to Scandinavia
- Grey squirrels search for buried food stores
- Great tits form large flocks with other tits to scour the countryside for food

Please follow these simple guidelines to ensure your visit is a pleasant and safe experience:

- Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times and should be supervised, especially near the pond
- This site contains the natural flora, fauna and wildlife that is common in this area, including potentially hazardous creatures such as adders
- The ground level is uneven in places, so please tread carefully
- There are no surfaced paths, so unfortunately the trail is not suitable for those in wheelchairs
- Parts of the trail get very muddy after rainfall, so it is advisable to wear wellingtons or walking boots
- Please protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Smoking, barbeques and fires are forbidden







# Trail map and information

## Adoption Centre



## Visitor Centre



## Other



## Nature Trail



Information boards are positioned throughout the nature trail. The symbols show their approximate location on the site.

