



THE WILD WATCH



THE KINGFISHER TRAIL

Route length: 3 miles. Time: 1 hr 30 minutes.
Difficulty rating: medium.

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The Kingfisher Trail is a circular three-mile walk that takes you along part of the River Nidd, starting and finishing in the beautiful village of Darley. In the heart of Nidderdale's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, The Kingfisher Trail follows the river, through woodlands and meadows, abundant in wildlife.

Parking options: On Main Street, a relatively quiet wide street with plenty of parking.

Local facilities: The Wellington Inn, community shop and café, children's play area, Birchfield Ice Cream Parlour.

Public transport options: Bus service available.

1 From Darley start on Station Road, off Main Street, signposted to Darley shop, post office and café, which leads towards the River Nidd. You'll walk past a community shop, sports field and children's play area. At the end of Station Road, take the narrow lane to the left of the gateway down to the river.

2 From here the path turns left over a stone stile. Follow the main river for 1.5 miles, keeping right across a footbridge over a stream then several stiles.

Careful! The river path is good, but narrow in places, and some short stretches could be slippery when wet.

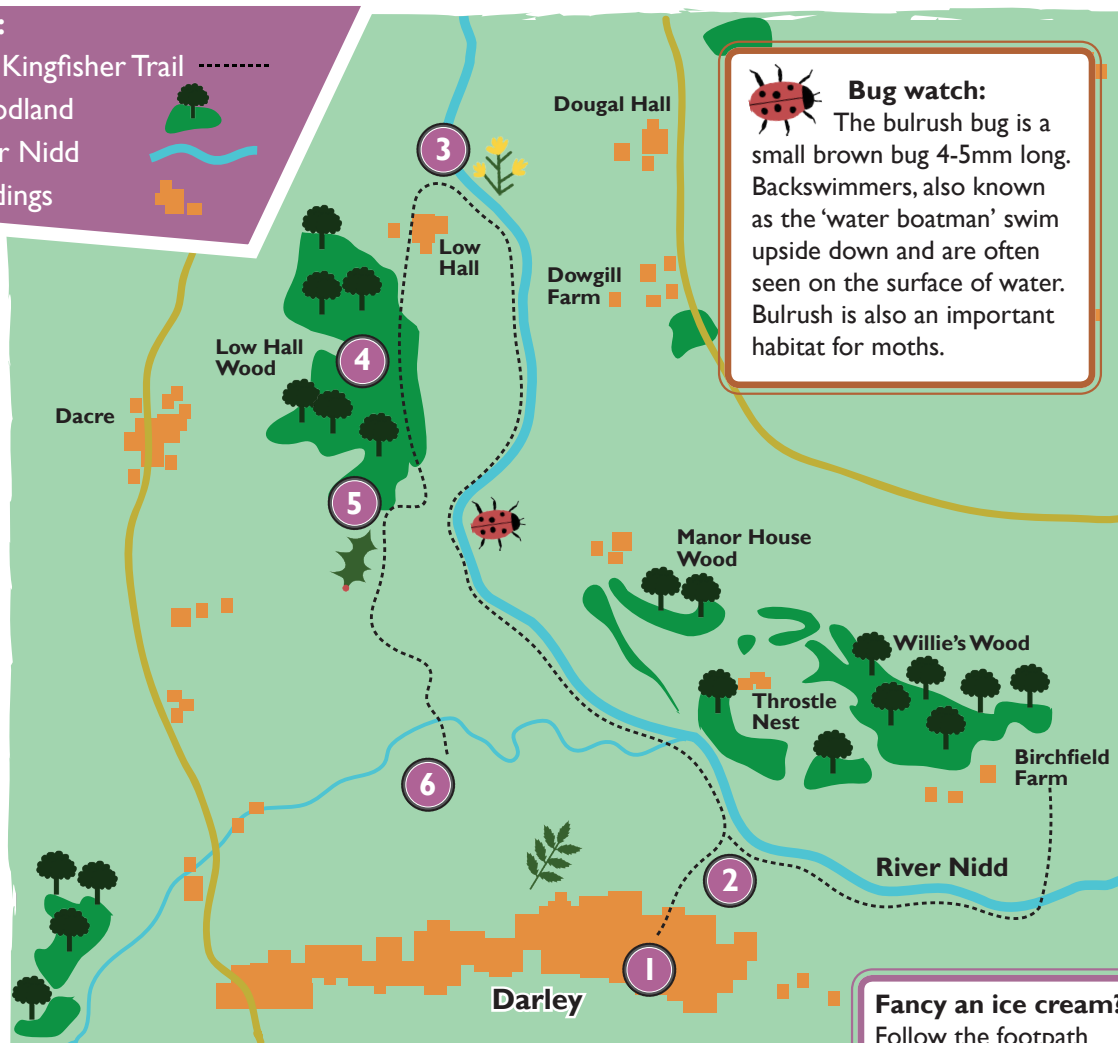


Plant watch:

Gorse hedges have dense, dark green shoots and vicious spines. This shrub offers a dazzling feast of colour in early summer with its fragrant, pea-like, vibrant yellow flowers, which smell of coconut. You can put the flowers in salads and cocktails!

Key:

The Kingfisher Trail
Woodland
River Nidd
Buildings



Bug watch:

The bulrush bug is a small brown bug 4-5mm long. Backswimmers, also known as the 'water boatman' swim upside down and are often seen on the surface of water. Bulrush is also an important habitat for moths.



4 The path on the railway line passes through Low Hall Wood. The woodland at Low Hall features large oaks, providing habitat for lots of songbirds.

5 After leaving the wood, turn right at a metal gate, cross a field, then left at the end of a broken-down wall. The path then turns on to a footpath through fields, until the route leads back to Main Street, Darley via Green Lane.



Tree watch: As you reach the end of the woodland, look out for big hollies. Their leaves are smooth at the top and prickly at the bottom. The leaves are only spiky low down where animals can browse them. Traditionally, the upper branches were cut for fodder.



Tree watch: Ash trees are abundant and very important locally for wildlife. Wood from ash trees is very strong and used for tools.

Fancy an ice cream?

Follow the footpath easterly, along the river. Take the footbridge and head into Birchfield Farm.

3 After crossing a stile with two horizontal metal bars, turn left leaving the river and pick up the path along the disused railway line at Low Hall.

6 Careful! This part can get a bit wet. After crossing the beck the route back to Darley is directly ahead of you.

HOW MANY OF OUR TOP 10 WILDLIFE WONDERS CAN YOU SPOT? DON'T FORGET SOME OF THESE WILL DEPEND ON THE TIME OF YEAR!

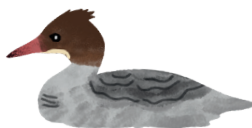
1. Grey wagtail - more colourful than its name suggests with slate grey upper parts and distinctive lemon yellow under-tail.

2. Kingfisher - small but unmistakable bright blue and orange birds that fly rapidly, low over water. They hunt fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering over the water.



3. Dipper - short-tailed, plump songbirds that can swim and dive under water to feed. Keep an eye over fast-flowing water and rocky patches.

4. Goosander - freshwater, handsome, diving ducks on the river. They have distinctive, long, serrated bills used for catching fish.



5. Bat - if you're walking at dusk, bats often feed on insects above slow, smooth stretches of river.

6. Bulrush - a superplant! Found in wetland habitats, bulrush flowers form a dense, sausage-shaped spike on the stem. In spring, the roots feature small, pointed shoots that can be peeled and eaten in salads or stews. The bases of the leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. By early summer the pollen spikes can be boiled and eaten. Loved by moths and bulrush bug.

7. Alder - a deciduous tree with tiny cones. It's a tree that likes to have its feet in water. Alder is used for smoking food and for woodworking, including furniture. The wooden piles under Venice, the Italian city built across a group of small islands separated by canals, are built from alder – its wood is very slow to rot!



8. Gorse - can you find this super spiky, evergreen bush? Gorse hedges have dense, dark green shoots and vicious spines. This shrub's dazzling and fragrant flowers are a vital food source for many different insects and birds.



9. Backswimmer or water boatman - backswimmers, also known as the 'water boatman' which swim upside down and are often seen on the surface of water.

10. Red kite - a majestic, medium-sized bird of prey with a distinctive forked tail, which swoops above the fields south of Low Hall.

WILDLIFE WONDERS WORD SEARCH



Find all of our top 10 wildlife wonders in our word search!
Which one is missing? _____

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