

Denbies Hillside (National Trust)

Location: Dorking, Surrey

Directions by public transport:

Dorking Central Station (Southern line) is around twenty minutes walk from the site. Walk straight ahead on leaving the station and take the underpass beneath the A24 before heading right a short distance and then left on to Ashcombe Road. Follow the road straight down until Ranmore Road, at which point you will see the entrance to the woodlands path opposite which leads towards the hillside.

Alternatively Dorking West Station (North Downs line) is barely a stone's throw away from the entrance to the woodlands path (turn left out of the station and walk a short distance down Ranmore Road) but can involve a less direct train journey changing at Redhill (Southern line).

Butterflies

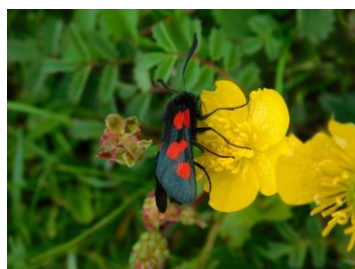
Denbies Hillside is a haven for uncommon butterfly species from spring (Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Adonis Blue) through midsummer (Chalkhill Blue, Dark Green Fritillary, Marbled White) to late summer (Silver-spotted Skipper). During July Chalkhill Blues grace the hillside in large numbers and are a sight to behold.

Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady provide a reliable migrant contingent while all the standard species can also be found, ensuring a high butterfly count on any extended visit during the summer months.



Moths

An equally impressive range of daytime moths can be found during the season including localised species such as Speckled Yellow and the rare and delicate Lace Border. Other species to look out for include Five-spot Burnet, Speckled Yellow, Silver Y, Mother Shipton, Powdered Quaker and Mint Moth.



Other wildlife

A wide range of other insects can be seen including southern based species such as Summer Chafer and Black-headed Cardinal Beetle. Dragonflies can sometimes be found resting in the hedgerows including Migrant Hawker.



The many colourful wildflower species on the slopes include Bee Orchid, Horsehoe Vetch, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Cowslip, Rose of Sharon, Traveller's Joy and Robin's Pincushion.



Gazing skywards can bring outstanding views of Buzzard, Red Kite, Kestrel and the occasional Raven. Other birds to look out for are Yellowhammer, Whitethroat and Green Woodpecker which can be seen and heard in the hedges and grassland areas.

Pros and cons

Denbies Hillside features in the [National Trust's Top 20 butterfly sites](#) and more than merits its inclusion. While joggers and dogwalkers use the path above the hillside there are few disturbances on the slopes below.

Treading carefully through the more secluded areas during the season means being rewarded with a myriad of eye-catching insects at every turn. For those who enjoy their wildlife in miniature, few outings can compare with a summer's day on Denbies Hillside.