

Woodgate Valley Wildlife Tour

5.6km (3.5 Miles)

Flat

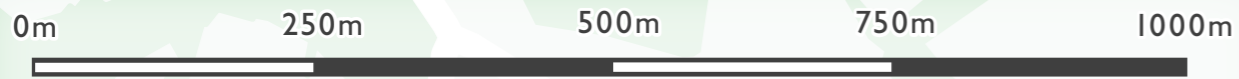
Mountain bike / hybrid bike

Off-road cycle trails



Key

	Parking (Start/Finish)		Horse Trekking Centre
	Play Park		Take Care: Mud
	Picnic Area		Route: Hard Surface
	Urban Farm		Route: Muddy



POINTS OF INTEREST



01 Hollow below
Just beside the visitor centre and café there is a sunken area of paving; this is caused by the ground below being hollow. Deep underground are the remaining sections of the Dudley Canal no. 2 tunnel. This 12-mile long arm of the canal was started in 1794 and took just four years to construct; a remarkable achievement which included a 60-ft-high embankment and 2.2-mile-long tunnel – the remains of which are underneath where you are standing today. In 1917 the tunnel collapsed and was uneconomical to repair; from here it became overgrown and fell into disrepair. Now, thanks to a hardy group of enthusiasts, the section from Selly Oak to the existing Dudley Canal no.2 is being restored for recreation and public benefit – but with the tunnel section being circumvented to avoid problems with the unstable soil type.

02 Erratic boulders
Halfway down this field there is a large boulder, known as an erratic boulder, that looks very out of place. This boulder started its life in mid-Wales not far from Bala,

and is formed of compressed ash from a now extinct volcano in the Arenig range. This boulder, contained within the ice of a glacier, travelled across the country to rest in South Birmingham.

As you travel around, you'll see this boulder is not alone – several other large boulders can be seen beside the tracks, mostly originating from the same area.

03 Nature
Woodgate Valley Country Park is very rich in flora and fauna; over 250 species of plants have been recorded in the park. The damp meadows surrounding the river produce very rich and colourful displays of wildflowers in the summer, attracting butterflies in their hordes to sample the nectar. Over 90 different bird species have been recorded in the area too.

The park itself was created from merging several farm fields, and although there has been pressure on the area from the surrounding developments especially in the 1960's and 70's, the park was declared a 'Country Park' in 1984.



04 Moat
A section of moat has been uncovered in the flat meadows to the south of the trail. The moat, thought to date from the 12th & 13th centuries, would have surrounded wooden buildings to protect livestock and crops. The only indication of the moat today is a large pond that forms during wetter weather.

This isn't the first suggestion of settlement in the area; there have been finds of burnt mounds and basic tools that date the earliest evidence of human activity to approximately 2000 BC.

05 Hedges
Many of the hedgerows seen in the country park today are old hedgerows that were used to segment the local farms fields. Previously there would have been many more hedgerows, which have since been removed turning smaller fields into larger fields.

06 Bourn Brook
The Bourn Brook which dissects the park, takes its name from becoming the boundary between the old



counties of Worcestershire, Shropshire and Staffordshire. It would have been used as a valuable source for drinking water for the surrounding farms.

07 Trees
Woodgate Valley Country Park is a 450-acre area of countryside on the southern edge of Birmingham, which is a mix of open farmland and wooded areas. The woods have undergone thinning in recent years, and this has allowed more native species to thrive in the area. Trees to look out for are ash, beech, birch, hawthorn, hazel, willow, and oak trees which are all thriving in the woods amongst many other species.

08 Watery Lane
There is evidence that this lane, which was used to transport salt from Wales to Lincolnshire, was part of the Salt Road network that spread across the country creating many highways for trade.



WOODGATE VALLEY WILDLIFE TOUR CYCLE ROUTE

BRITISH CYCLING **Ordnance Survey**

ROUTE DIRECTIONS

- 01 Starting by the visitor centre, head away from the car park down through the horse pastures.
- 02 At the end of the path, turn right and follow this windy trail through the country park.
- 03 At the end of the trail, just before you reach the road, you have two options. Either return along the paved trail you have just taken, or take the muddier path to the left, and back along the opposite side of the brook.



- 04 At the third brook crossing (which joins the path back to the visitor centre), take the paved path and continue to follow the brook.
- 05 Where the path forks, take the shallow steps up to your left and then pass straight through the gates to follow the route back to the car park.

Scan to follow the route digitally with OS Maps



BIRMINGHAM CYCLE ROUTES

RESERVOIR COGS
SPAGHETTI UNION

CITY SIGHTS

SMALL HEATH PARK & CANAL

WOODGATE VALLEY WILDLIFE TOUR

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Milan ILLUSTRATOR