

Wildlife

Surveys done in 2001 show that there are over 70 different species of herb to be found at Jumping Downs Local Nature Reserve.

Many of these plants are found exclusively on chalk downland sites. Some are important in the life cycles of specific invertebrate species. For example the caterpillars of many blue butterflies feed on legumes such as bird's-foot-trefoil and horseshoe vetch, both found at Jumping Downs.



Bird's-foot-trefoil

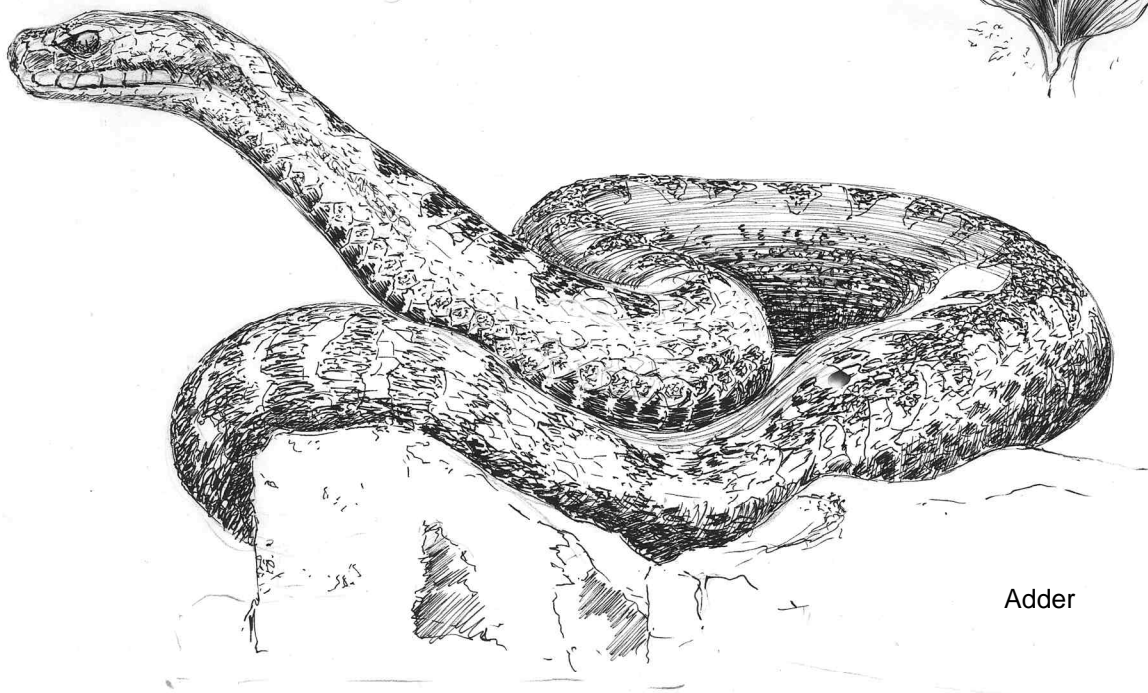
The site has three orchids: bee, pyramidal and lady. Other plants to look out for are common centaury, marjoram, rock rose, salad burnet, yellow wort and wild strawberry.

Although part of the site is 'improved' pasture, i.e. fertilised and re-seeded, Jumping Downs has retained much of its chalk downland flora that thrives on the thin soils and sunshine on the steep south facing slopes.

Other wildlife found at Jumping Downs includes a healthy lizard population, adder and badger. Kestrels can be seen regularly and merlins have been spotted occasionally.



Bee orchids



Adder

Community

Education

The site is an ideal learning environment for a wide range of studies within the national curriculum. School groups are encouraged to use the site, although we do ask that you book with us first. We have produced an education pack aimed at Key Stages 2 and 3 which is free to schools. If you would like a copy please contact us.



Volunteering

We have practical tasks, wildlife surveys and events running throughout the year. It's a great way to put something back into the community, meet new people and learn about the rural environment. If you would like to join in please contact us to find out what our next event will be.



Mammal survey event with local expert

Management

Management at Jumping Downs is aimed at maintaining the diversity of the chalk downland plants. The site is grazed by cattle between July and March each year. This allows the flowers to grow in the spring and set their seed in early summer, so ensuring they will return the following year. Other important management operations include cutting and removing vigorous species such as dock and removing ragwort, which is harmful to cattle. The woodland is contained at the top of the slopes by controlled cutting in the winter of each year. This maintains what is there, but doesn't allow it to spread onto the wild flower areas.

Volunteers mowing the grassland



Enjoying Jumping Downs

There is an information board at Jumping Downs, near the entrance gate. This gives information about the site and what you might see. There are two log benches, which you may use for admiring the views or picnicking. Please follow the Countryside Code and keep dogs on leads.