The Wildlife of WREN’S NEST
National Nature Reserve

Rock exposures are often unsafe and visitors must bear this in mind. The footpath network provides good access to the main areas of interest. The areas within the safety fences are strictly out of bounds. Visitors to the Reserve do so entirely at their own risk. Neither Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council nor Natural England can accept liability or responsibility for loss, damage or injury to property or, in the absence of negligence, to persons.

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Illustrations drawn by David Hill and Kumi Earnshaw
Photographs by Anna Gorski

KEY
Geological trail markers - see separate field guide
View point
Footpath
Steps
Safety fence
Reserve Boundary
Access Point
Woodland
Scrub
Limestone Grassland
Other Grassland
Bare Ground/Rock
Pool

PLEASE KEEP TO THE FOOTPATHS PROVIDED AND OBSERVE ANY PATH DIVERSIONS. TAKE SPECIAL CARE IN FORMERLY QUARRIED AREAS.
NO HAMMERS PERMITTED ANYWHERE ON THE RESERVE.
The Dudley Bug

Redwings on Hawthorn

The green island rising from a sea of housing that you see today has been used by man for many centuries, but time and nature have begun to disguise the scars of its industrial past and clothes the outworkings of quarries in grassland and ash woodland.

When quarrying ceased, the bare rock became colonised by grassland and ash woodland - flowers, fruit & leaf - flowers, fruit & leaf.  Much of Mons Hill in the northern part of the Reserve is covered by Ash woodland, the natural endpoint of succession on thin and limy soils in our damp, mild climate.  Much of this is woodland, and nest-sites for birds.  The woodland is an early stage in the natural process called succession.  In this intermediate stage between grassland and woodland, flowers, fruit & leaf, Light levels reaching the ground are high, particularly in late Spring.  Consequently, ash woodland has a good range of butterflies and a wide assortment of moths.  Many of the insects also take advantage of flowers, fruit & leaf, and nesting sites for birds.

The richness of the flora and the presence of three distinct woodland layers (tree layer or canopy, shrub layer and ground layer) provide a wide range of habitat for invertebrates, mosses and fungi and as a source of food and nest-sites for birds.

In winter, mixed flocks of Long-tailed Tit, Blue Tit and Great Tit may be found moving through woodland areas.  You will see one only if you are lucky, but you may hear the territorial song of Great Tits as they flit from one tree to another.  If you are in luck, you may also see Blackthorn and Hazel catkins, while in late spring, the woodland on Mons Hill rings with the territorial song of Blackcaps, while Wood Warblers can be seen. Although many of the large elm trees on the Reserve are dead trees, the crown has become woodland. Much of Mons Hill is covered in grassland, the natural endpoint of succession on lime soil and sandy soils in our cold, cold, cold climate.  On Wren’s Nest Hill the woodland is grassland.  The Reserve most of the old Ash, Birch and Sycamore are survivors of trees planted over the last 200 years.  You won't see many of these, however, on a sunny day, a walk across Wren’s Nest should allow you to see as many as commonest mammal on the Reserve is probably the Bank Vole, although Field Mice may be found moving through woodland areas.  These areas are a good place to see butterflies flitting from flower to flower.  Many of these insects also take advantage of flowers, fruit & leaf, and nesting sites for birds.

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