

A The Start

Start at the car park at Middle Trendlebere Down (SX782 793) and enjoy the spectacular view northwards along the Bovey Valley before heading east along the heath. Exit the car park in the bottom right corner.



View from the car park towards Lustleigh Cleave

B

After a few minutes you will reach the Lower Trendlebere car park. Follow a small, informal path down through the gorse and bracken to meet the Old Manaton Road. When you meet the stone track, turn left down the hill. *Vehicles do use the Old Manaton Road, so please be aware.*

C

As you walk down the track, the heath on your left gradually gives way to woodland. Walking into the woods you will find a large rounded boulder or "pudding stone" beside the track.

D Longer Route

The two routes split here. To take the longer route into Houndtor Wood, continue down the Old Manaton Road which follows the Becka Brook. To follow the shorter route, go through the gate on the right to Hisley Bridge and follow the route description from P.

You may see bat boxes on the trees here. A number of woodland species live in these woods. The most notable species is the rare barbastelle bat that roosts in holes and under the bark of oak trees.



Houndtor Bridge

E

You will pass a wooden footbridge on your right, continue on the track to the old stone arch of Houndtor bridge. You are following a favoured foraging route for bats; both above and below the canopy.

F

Cross the bridge and you will see the woodland changes its character. This is a Douglas fir plantation.

G

Gradual thinning of the trees allows sunlight to regenerate the broadleaf understorey that grows very slowly in the shade. If you are quiet, you may see roe deer in the spaces between the trees. Often you hear the sound of cracking twigs as they run away. They usually see you long before you see them!

H

Climb up the stony zigzag track, this route is steep in places. At the bend in the track take a rest and take in the view.

I

An area of conifer woodland between the track and the Becka Brook below was felled some years ago. The regenerating birch and gorse scrub is a perfect home for the endangered dormouse.

J

Continue up the track passing a viewpoint, and up a steep section of track to meet a T-junction. Turn right, heading uphill towards the gate. The route now follows the top boundary of the wood, passing the large western red cedar trees with the fluted bases.

K

As the track dips down and up, look carefully for a small path to the left, marked with a public footpath sign. Walk through a small gate and pass the ancient earthworks of Houndtor Fort. From the top of Houndtor Ridge, descend a narrow path through the oak woods, known as Woodash.



A cache of acorns

L

This ancient oak wood is perfect for the energetic wood mouse. It is not a hibernator so it builds up stores of acorns, holly seeds and ash keys in dry cavities between the roots of oak trees.



Track along the old stone wall

M

Turn right at the old stone wall, following the public bridleway towards Clam Bridge.

You will also see a network of burrows, tunnels and runs between the mossy boulders of the old stone wall.

N

Walk downhill to the River Bovey at Clam Bridge. Stay on this side of the river and follow it downstream. Walk carefully along the rocky riverside path through the ancient oak wood. *Please note in wet conditions this path can flood.*

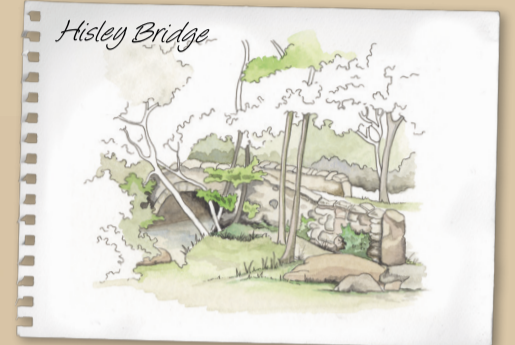
O

As you get near to the end of the steep ridge on your right, follow the path sharply round to the right where you meet the Becka Brook. Cross the wooden footbridge and turn left on the Old Manaton Road, then retrace your steps back to the start.

P Shorter Route

Cross the River Bovey using the ancient pack horse route over Hisley Bridge and turn right to follow the river.

The bat boxes are in the trees to provide the woodland bats with places to roost. There are many species in the valley and they fly along the river to forage for insects.



Hisley Bridge

Q

Continue through the gate and into the meadow - look up at the steep ground to the left.

This slope covered in shrubs and scrub is a perfect site for dormice. They build nests in the bramble and gorse and find food by climbing through the trees and shrubs to find flowers, insects, seeds and their favourite, hazelnuts.



Dormouse in hibernation nest

R

Continue along the river bank and look in the river for fallen trees and prominent boulders. This is where the otters mark their territories. Keep following the path downstream, around the curve in the river, and you will see the woodland character change. The mature oak woodland on the left hand side is good habitat for wood mice.

S

Leave the woodland, passing through a gate and walk across the field. Leave the field by the gate and follow the lane. Please ensure gates are shut as stock graze this field.

T

Turn right and cross the river at Drakeford Bridge. Turn right again into Pullabrook Wood car park. Once you are back in the woods, follow the main track.

U

As you walk through the woods look out for eroded paths going up the steep bank on the left of the track. Badgers and roe deer can be found in these woods and may leave clues as to where they cross the forest track at night. Sometimes you may even be able to see their prints in the bare soil.

Follow the track all the way through Pullabrook Wood where it rises high above the river. Leave the wood through the gate and turn left on the Old Manaton Road. Then retrace your steps to the start.



These two walks take you along woodland tracks and riverside paths to look for the tracks and signs of woodland mammals. The shorter walk of 4km (2 ½ miles) follows a route with gentle inclines and should be completed in around 2 hours. The longer, more challenging walk of 7km (4 ½ miles) will take 3 ½ to 4 hours. This walk follows the Old Manaton Road, climbing steeply up through Houndtor Wood before returning along a rocky path beside the River Bovey (this path can flood in winter). In each case, good boots will be required for the wet ground.

Whether large or small, woodland mammals can be difficult to find. Many of them live in these woods and some are rare and protected by law but, when you know where to look, you can see their tracks and signs.

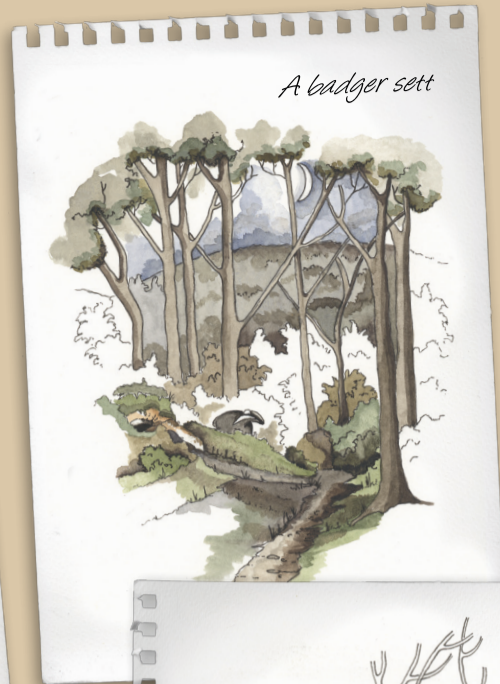
Voles

Two species of vole live around the woods and heaths of the East Dartmoor NNR. While the field vole, with its shorter tail, is more likely to forage and nest among the grasses and bracken on the heath, their habitat will overlap with the bank vole. The bank vole is more likely to make burrows in earth banks, but they are both very elusive as they scurry and hide among the leaves to avoid predators such as birds of prey and weasels.



Dormice

As a small, rare nocturnal mammal that spends a lot of time high in the trees, dormice are very hard to see, but they do leave clues. The best way to identify where they live is to search under the hazel shrubs. Dormice feed on hazel nuts, gnawing the shell away with a circular motion. This leaves a very neat hole in the nutshell and when they drop the empty shells, you may be able to find them among the leaves.



Badgers

Badgers are a large mammal that live in family groups and, if you find a series of big holes in the ground with soil piled outside the entrances, it could be a badger sett. One of the best signs of badger activity around a woodland is where you see an area, away from the sett, where excavated pits are filled with dung. These are badger latrines.



Otters

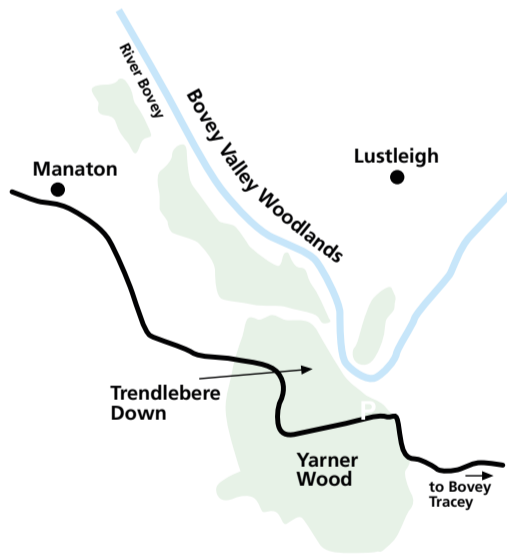
The otter is a true favourite of all the mammals. They live and hunt along the River Bovey and the Becka Brook, looking for fish and many other aquatic creatures. They are rarely seen but they do leave clues to show other otters, and us, where they have been. Some of the big river boulders are used as markers where the otters leave spraint – droppings that contain the oily remains of fish bones and other prey.

Roe deer

If you see deer in these woods, they are most likely to be roe deer. Often alone, but sometimes in small groups, you may see them looking towards you with their large ears standing up. They may stay and watch you for a while, but you are more likely to see their white rump as they run away.



Discover the Dartmoor Story



For further information on local heritage, or if you would like to get involved with helping to save our woodlands, please contact:

Woodland Trust
Tel: 0330 333 3300
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Dartmoor National Park Authority
Tel: 01626 832093
hq@dartmoor.gov.uk

Natural England
Tel: 0845 600 3078
enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk



The Woodland Trust is a registered charity, numbers 294344 and SC038885.

www.dartmoorstory.org

Please use an OS map alongside this leaflet



Moor than meets the eye
Landscape Partnership



Tracks and Signs of Woodland Mammals

East Dartmoor NNR

