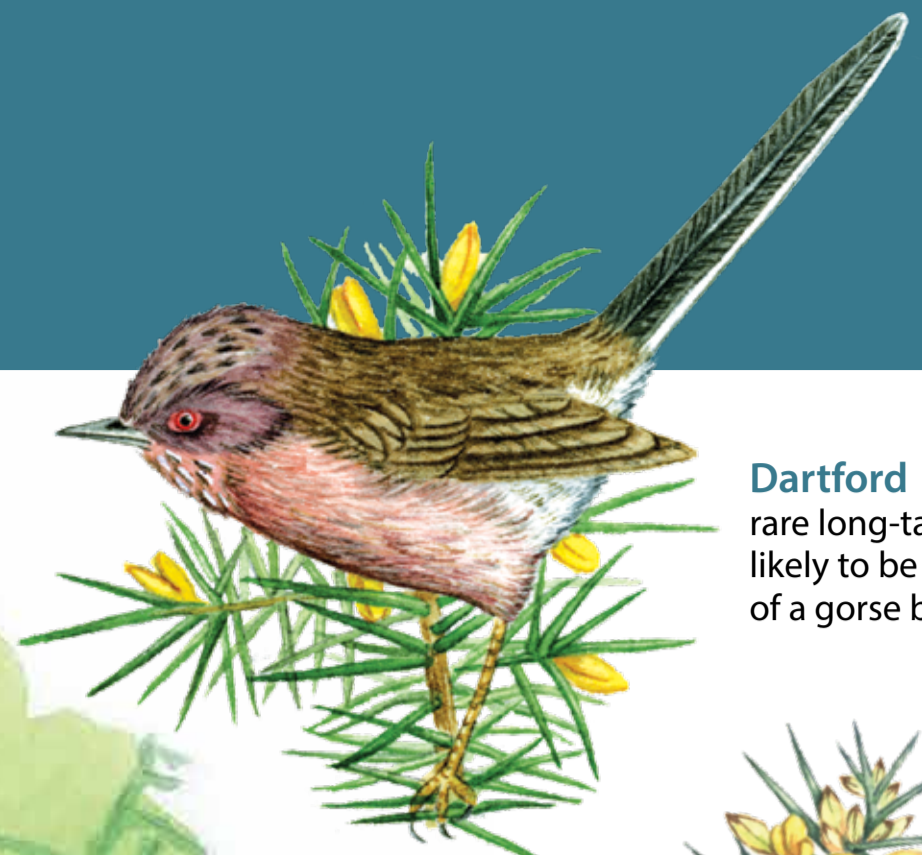
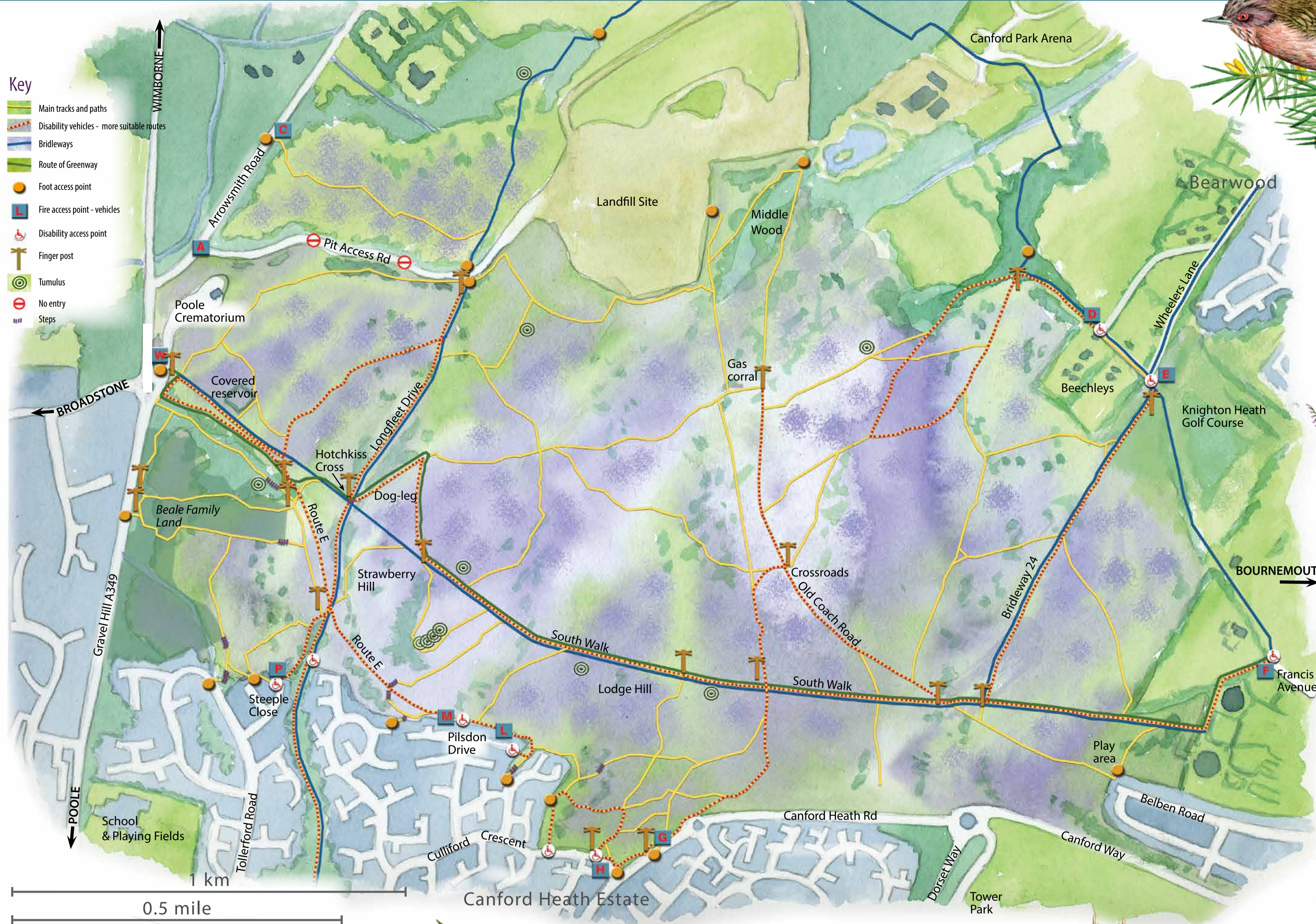


Habitat & Wildlife of Canford Heath

Canford Heath is one of the largest remaining heaths in Dorset covering over 850 acres, but it was once much bigger. It is a popular place for walking, cycling and horse riding. Many people visit to enjoy the diverse wildlife and views of Corfe Castle and the Purbecks. Due to the rarity of the habitat and its wildlife, Canford Heath is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and part of the western end as a RAMSAR site. This means this important site must be managed to protect its future. Long-horned cattle were introduced to graze the heathland and trees are managed and felled to mimic past times. This keeps the habitat suitable for rare animals such as the sand lizard, Dartford warbler, nightjar, smooth snake as well as rabbits, hares, foxes and roe deer.

From a flora perspective, the floor of the heath is dominated by purple-coloured common and bell heather and the yellow flowers of the western gorse. There are some barrows on the heath (also known as tumulus) that are classed as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and there are also some elderly noble pines that were planted in the 19th Century that linked ornamental drives from Canford House to the town.

- Key**
- Main tracks and paths
 - Disability vehicles - more suitable routes
 - Bridleways
 - Route of Greenway
 - Foot access point
 - Fire access point - vehicles
 - Disability access point
 - Finger post
 - Tumulus
 - No entry
 - Steps



Dartford warbler - these rare long-tailed birds are most likely to be seen sitting on top of a gorse bush singing.



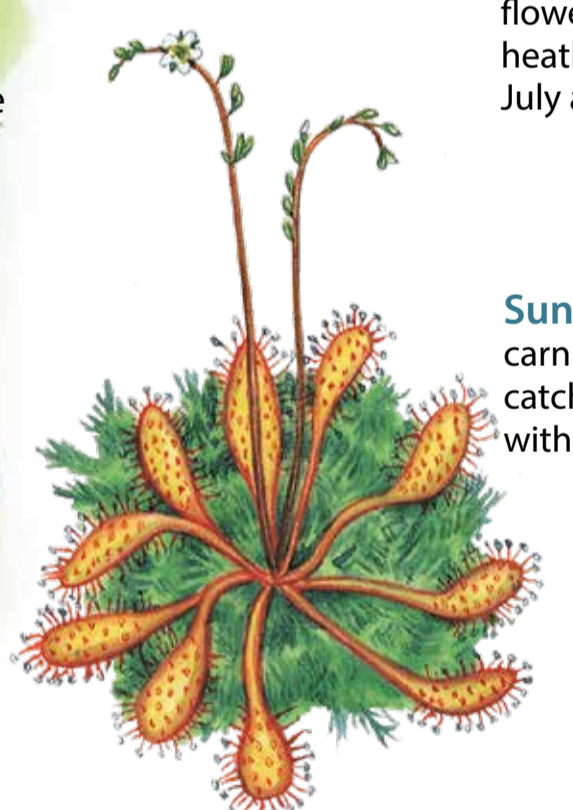
Gorse - this familiar spiky yellow flowering shrub provides shelter and food for many insects and birds.



Common heather - this pink flowering heathland plant attracts all kinds of nectar feeding insects.



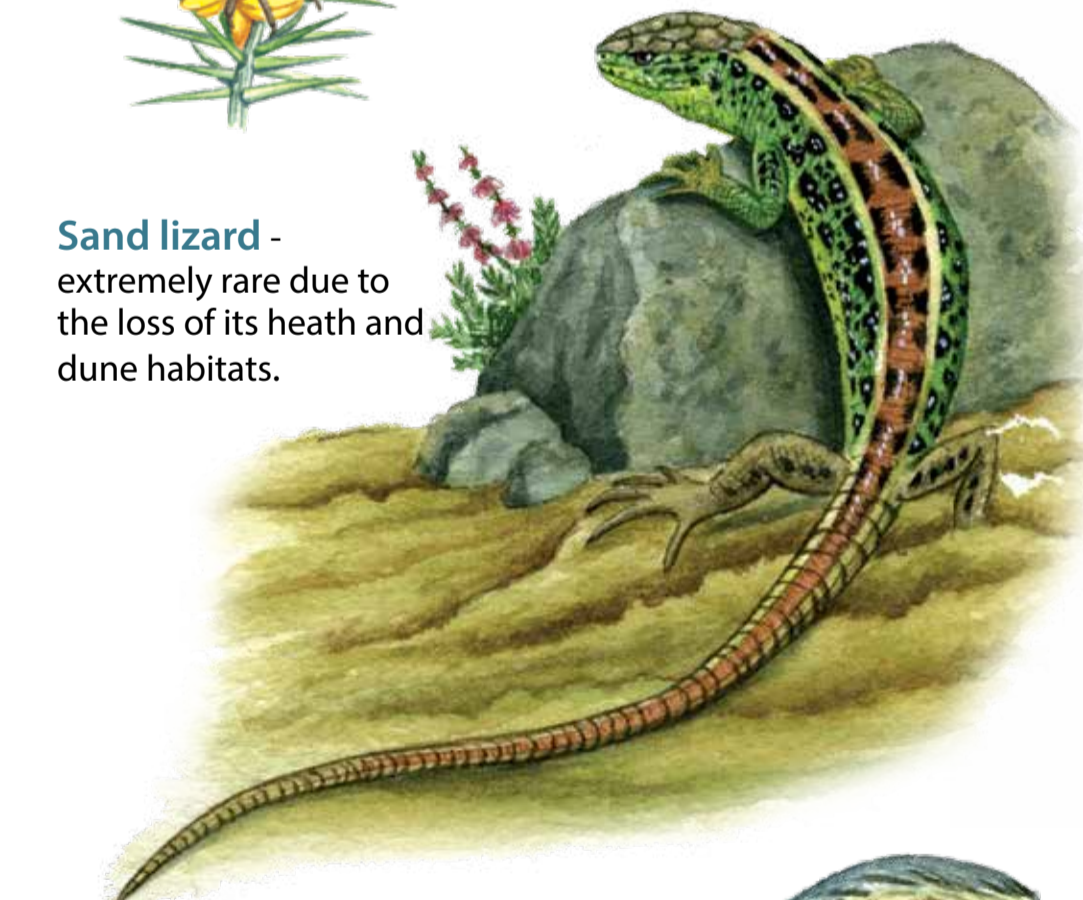
Bell heather - Its bell shaped purple-pink flowers carpet the heathland between July and September.



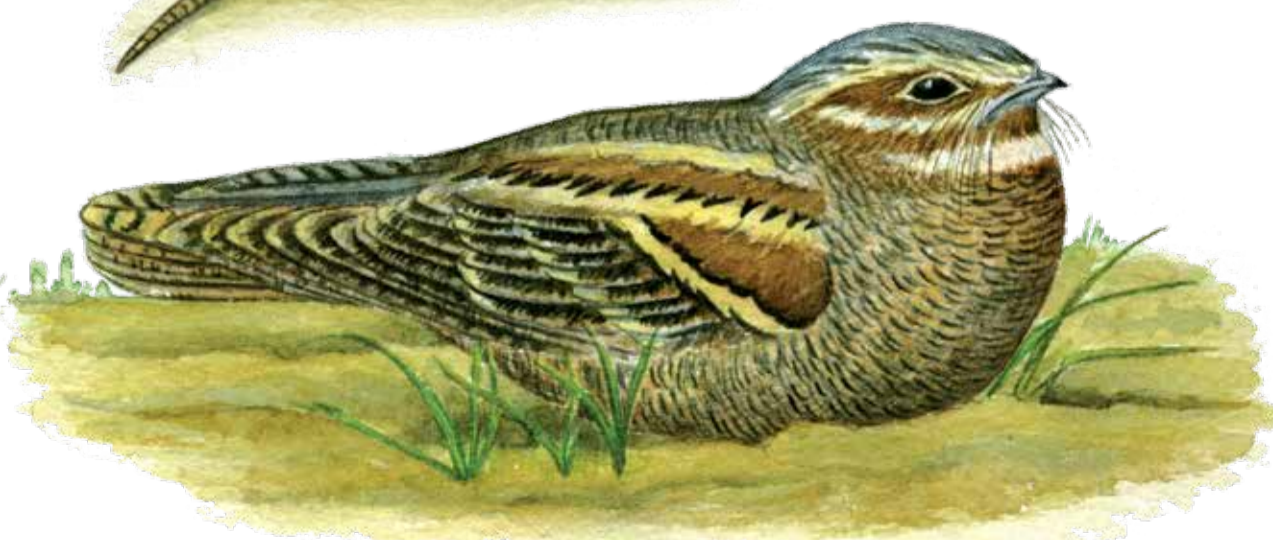
Sundew - this carnivorous plant catches insect prey with its sticky tendrils.



Stonechat - it is said that the song of a stonechat sounds like two stones being hit together.



Sand lizard - extremely rare due to the loss of its heath and dune habitats.



Nightjar - these nocturnal birds are hard to spot during the day due to their brown, mottled plumage that provides excellent camouflage. It has a distinctive churring call.



Keeled skimmer - a medium-sized dragonfly that enjoys heathland habitats with shallow pools. Can be seen from June to September.



Southern hawker - a large fast flying dragonfly that catches its prey mid-air. It can be seen from June to October.



Smooth snake - this non venomous snake is rare and is only found in a few heathland sites in the UK.



Roe deer - a small antlered deer with reddish fur in the summer that turns dull brown in the winter. Look out for the flash of white rump as it runs across the heath.



BBQs BURN MORE THAN BANGERS
BBQs are illegal on Heathland

