

Goring Wild Walk

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire



Explore Goring: enjoy magnificent views of the River Thames and rare chalk grassland species

Starting in Goring, this 8 km circular walk takes in the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT) Hartslock nature reserve and a section of the Thames Path

- 8 km/5 miles (about 2½ hours)
- There are some short, steep climbs and descents on the route
- There are additional paths in Hartslock nature reserve to explore further
- The route follows a section of the Thames Path. This National Trail follows the River Thames from its source in the Cotswolds to London

How to get to the start

Postcode: RG8 0EP **Grid ref:** SU 602 806

By bus: Check www.traveline.info for information about local buses

By train: The route starts at Goring & Streatley railway station. Check www.nationalrail.co.uk for train times

By car: There are pay & display car parks at Goring & Streatley railway station and in Goring centre

By bike: There is cycle storage at Goring & Streatley railway station



Please help us look after wildlife by keeping dogs on short leads at Hartslock and picking up after them.

Hartslock Nature Reserve

This small, steep remnant of chalk grassland, untouched by fertiliser and pesticides, is the scenic and wildlife highlight of the walk. The far-reaching views over the River Thames and Goring Gap are worth the climb up the hill.

In spring, the ground erupts with hundreds of orchid spikes breaking through the turf. Finest among the host of different species is the rare monkey orchid that only grows in two other places in the UK.

Later, wild marjoram carpets the ground in mauve and scents the summer air that is now filled with butterflies such as brown argus, chalk hill blue and common blue. Scrubby field margins provide shelter from winds, keeping the ground warm to benefit insects such as rufous and stripe-winged grasshoppers.

In summer, swallows skim the grassland whilst red kites soar overhead. Sheep graze the grass after the main flowering season, continuing the traditional downland management once commonplace in the area. This stops scrub and coarser grasses from dominating the grassland and encourages the wild flowers to bloom here each year.

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

BBOWT relies on the support of our members to help us look after local wildlife. By joining BBOWT you can help to secure the future of special landscapes like Hartslock. [Join us today!](#)

NATURE NOTES



Orchid flowers have evolved in shape to attract specific insect

pollinators. The lower petal or lip is usually the most elaborate. In some cases, such as the bee orchid, it mimics a female insect to attract a male to visit the flower. Orchids also rely on specific soil fungi for nutrition. This specialisation makes many orchids extremely rare.



The male **chalk hill blue** butterflies are a pale, silvery blue. You can see them flying

from around mid-July to September as they feed on knapweed and scabious. The brown females are harder to spot. After mating, the females lay eggs on horseshoe vetch, a yellow pea flower that the caterpillars feed on. These butterflies are only found on chalk grassland where this plant grows.



Red kites are large tree-nesting raptors feeding mainly

on dead animals and occasionally small mammals. They can be distinguished from the similar-sized buzzards by their forked tail and reddish-brown colour. Look for them soaring overhead, often in pairs or groups. Following a re-introduction programme there's now a large population in the Chilterns.



The **wayfaring tree** has creamy-white, five-petalled

flowers. In late summer it forms juicy red berries that turn black when ripe, you can often find red and black berries growing on one tree at the same time. The berries are eaten by birds and small mammals. This tree is generally found on limestone or chalky soils.

STAGE 1

Start to Little Meadow Nature Reserve

From Goring & Streatley railway station, cross the road bridge over the railway and follow the main road into Goring. Bear left just before the bridge over the Thames, past Goring Mill to reach the riverside. Turn left and follow the Thames Path beside the river and across pasture to Little Meadow Nature Reserve.

Look out for grey heron stalking fish beside the riverbank, and the blue flash of a passing kingfisher.

KEY

-  BBOWT Nature Reserve
-  Steep gradient
-  Railway station
-  Bus stop
-  Parking

STAGE 4

Great Chalk Wood to Goring & Streatley railway station

Follow this path through the wood, ignoring minor paths to left. Leave the wood and follow the footpath around the field margin with the mature blackthorn hedge on your right; uphill, then bearing left, past the cemetery. Head downhill and turn right, go across the playing field on to Whitehills Green. Bear left and then right for Reading Road. Head down the hill and turn left for the railway station or right to the village.

Look for wayfaring tree in the hedge and orange-tip butterflies feeding on flowers in the grassy field margin in spring.

Streatley



STAGE 2

Little Meadow Nature Reserve to Hartslock Nature Reserve

Continue on the Thames Path, passing under Brunel's railway bridge to the cottage (formerly Gatehampton Ferryman's cottage). Turn left, over the bridge, between the horse paddocks, then turn right on to the bridleway. After 500 metres, just after entering Lower Hartslock Wood, turn left on to the footpath, up a short, steep slope to enter HARTSLOCK NATURE RESERVE. Follow the fence up the slope, before pausing at the summit to admire the view across Goring Gap.

In summer, look for the nodding blue harebell among the chalk grassland and the many butterflies including the chalk hill blue.

STAGE 3

Hartslock Nature Reserve to Great Chalk Wood

Continue down the slope and turn right on leaving the reserve. Follow the path up to the road and turn left. After 400 metres, turn right at the derelict farm buildings on to the bridleway. Enter Great Chalk Wood and bear right. Follow the path almost to the exit by Stapnall's Farm, then turn left on to another bridleway that gently descends past the hazel coppice on the right. After 400 metres, turn left on to the footpath that gently climbs through mixed beech and spruce.

Look for the green-barked spindle with its bright pink berries in autumn in the wooded lane, and in spring listen for chiffchaff in the wood.

WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Butterflies dancing over drifts of colourful wild flowers					✓	✓	✓	✓				
Chorus of woodland bird song				✓	✓	✓	✓					
Orchids growing at Hartslock Nature Reserve					✓	✓	✓					
Waterbirds raising young along the river's edge				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Red kites soaring over the ridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓