

In Spring, the vibrantly coloured yellowhammer can often be heard singing from a high point in the hedge. It's call is often described as resembling 'little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese'.

In Summer, common pipistrelle bats hunt for moths and insects along this pathway. On a warm evening, you may see them flying up and down the hedge catching prey as they go.



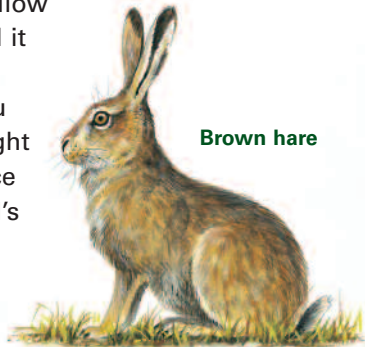
Pipistrelle bat

#### 4 Field Margins

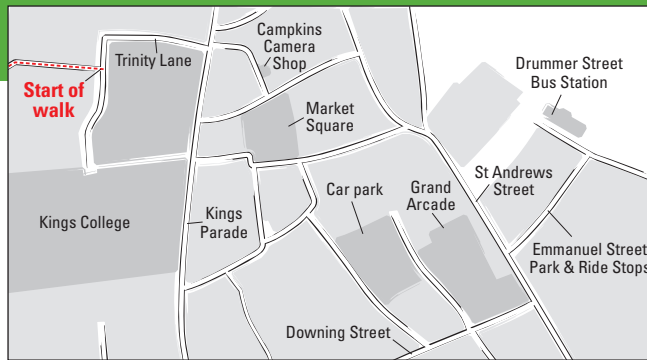
With a hedge leading off to your right, bear left and cross over the wooden bridge. Follow the edge of the field around to your right. After a short distance go over the stile into the next field and turn left.

The grassy margins around the arable fields are important for local wildlife. The crops and grass provide cover for the hares as, unlike rabbits, they live above ground. Hares are larger than rabbits and have black tips to their ears. As you walk by, you may see them dashing across the fields with their characteristic long leaps.

On your right is a small wooded area. In the Autumn, the leaves on these trees are rich reds, yellows and oranges. Continue to follow the paved footpath until it brings you back onto Grange Road where you should bear left. Turn right by the postbox to retrace your steps along Burrell's Walk and Garret Hostel Lane and back into the city centre.



Brown hare



#### Access

This is a circular walking route, which is approximately 3.5 miles/5.6km. For a leisurely walk you should allow 2 hours. The route is flat and follows roadside pavements and then slightly uneven footpaths. In Winter some sections may be muddy. The nearest car park is the Grand Arcade multi-storey, accessed via Downing Street.

#### Bus Information

The city centre bus station and the Park and Ride stops are a short walk from Trinity Lane. Detailed information is available from [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

#### About the Wildlife Trust

Your local Wildlife Trust protects the special wildlife and habitats of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough. We are a charity dependent on voluntary contributions. If you would like more information about our work in Cambridgeshire, please contact: The Wildlife Trust, The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, CB23 6DH. Tel: 01954 713500  
Email: [Cambridgeshire@wildlifebcnp.org](mailto:Cambridgeshire@wildlifebcnp.org)  
[www.wildlifebcnp.org](http://www.wildlifebcnp.org)

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GreenCambridge

# Wildlife on the Fringe

A circular walk to the west of Cambridge  
Approx. 3.5 miles/5.6km

Illustrations by Mike Langman, Cover image © P. Precey

Protecting wildlife  
close to home

# Wildlife on the fringe

To the west of Cambridge, beyond the city centre's grand college buildings and bustling shops, lies a peaceful slice of the Cambridgeshire countryside. Interspersed with arable farmland and sports fields, ribbons of chalk grassland, rich with flowers, are waiting to be explored. This walk takes you out of the city along the Coton footpath. You will loop back between the fields and to the city centre.

## 1 The Backs

From Trinity Lane, take Garret Hostel Lane across the River Cam and into the area known as The Backs. This network of ditches and open grassland forms the back of a number of colleges and is an important green corridor along the river. The ditches here are home to many plant species including the vibrant yellow flag iris and the delicate pink ragged-robin. In the Spring, you can often see families of moorhen and duck in and around the ditches.



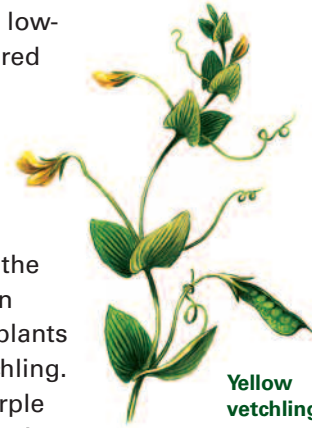
Ragged-robin

Cross over Queen's Road and continue straight ahead along Burrell's Walk. Bear right on Grange Road and take the first left into Adams Road.

## 2 Path Verges

At the end of Adams Road, follow the footpath ahead alongside the university sports ground. The path now leads you out in to the Cambridgeshire countryside. The arable land, hedges and verges here contain at least four nationally scarce species of plant – yellow vetchling, slender tare, spreading hedge-parsley and broad-leaved spurge. These, and many other wildflowers, thrive in amongst the grasses and provide nectar for bees and butterflies throughout the

Summer. Also, look out for the low-growing bird's-foot-trefoil. The red tinge to this plant's yellow flowers has given it the nickname 'eggs-and-bacon'.



Yellow vetchling

Just beyond the small wooded area, the path bends right and the verge rises up to form banks. In Summer you can see the rare plants of slender tare and yellow vetchling. Slender tare has very small purple flowers and grows up neighbouring plants. The small yellow flowers of creeping cinquefoil and the small pink flowers of cut-leaved crane's-bill can also be seen on these sunny banks. This selection of flowers attracts butterflies such as the orange coloured large skipper which flits from plant to plant on warm Summer days.

At the end of the paved path, bear left through the kissing gate and through the woodland belt. With the

hedge on your left, follow the path along the edge of the arable fields.

## 3 Hedges

The mature hedges along the path are an important source of food and shelter for many birds. In Autumn, the hedge is laden with hawthorn berries and rose hips. As well as feeding the birds, these berries are also eaten by mice and voles that live under the hedges.



Field vole

The promise of berries and seeds in this area has attracted a range of bird species. Listen out for the "prrrink prrrink" of chaffinches. Male chaffinches are easily recognised by their deep pink breast, blue-grey head and bold white wing feathers.

