

# 1 BAAL HILL WOOD

Baal Hill Wood consists of 15.5ha ancient semi-natural upland oak/birch woodland which was owned in the fourteenth century by the Bishops of Durham. 'Bishops Oak' an impressive veteran oak tree, over 400 years old can be found near the northern end of the site.



*Above: Bishop's Oak and Bluebells*



*Baal Hill woodland path*

Baal Hill Wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) occupying an ancient woodland site which originally extended several kilometres north to Tunstall Reservoir.

The woodland was originally an upland oak/birch woodland, but is now part dominated by secondary birch woodland as a result of a series of clear fells and replanting over the last 100 years. The planting of exotic species such as Giant Redwoods, Monkey-Puzzle and mixed conifers took place when part of the site was owned by the Hollywood Estate.

At present the woodland has an even aged structure with sparse tree regeneration due to browsing from deer and rabbits, nevertheless the ground flora is very rich and includes ancient woodland indicators such as Dog's Mercury and Wood Sorrel with carpets of Bluebells, and also a wide variety of bryophytes and fungi. The woodland is home to an abundance of birds including Woodcock, Wood Warbler, Redstart, Pied-flycatcher and Buzzard. Roe Deer are frequently seen throughout the woodland.

Baal Hill was historically managed as a coppice woodland and charcoal was produced from this timber. This was used in the local lead smelting industry and the word 'Baal' (or Bail) is the local term used to describe this activity. Baal Hill Wood is typical of slightly disturbed dale woodland, however, few of these areas survive in County Durham.

**Best seen – April spring time for the Bluebells and ground flora.**



*Bluebell*



*Roe Deer*

*Charcoal burning*



# BAAL HILL WOOD

Parking facilities for this reserve have been changed. Please see the revised map on page 3 of this card



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**Wood-sorrel**, sometimes called 'Alleluia' because its white flowers appear around Easter and Whitsun, is a plant that is associated with the celebration of Resurrection and Ascension

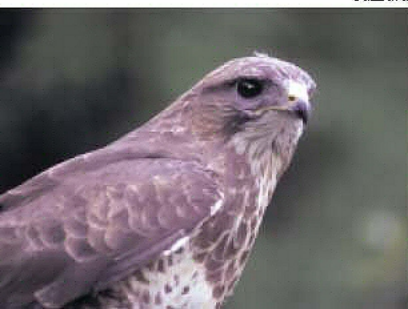
*Wood-sorrel*



## Management

The management aims on this site are to enhance the semi-natural character of the site by concentrating operations on those areas, which have been altered by man's activities in the past. Neglected or birch plantation areas of the woodland with an even aged structure are being thinned to improve the woodland structure and non-native species removed. Areas that have been clear-felled in the past are to be planted up with native broadleaf trees of local provenance, with tree shelters provided to protect them from deer and rabbit browsing.

*Buzzard*



*Woodcock*



## Location

The reserve is situated approximately one and half miles North of Wolsingham. When entering Wolsingham from the East on the A689 turn right at the Market Square onto the B6262, cross the Waskerley Beck and take the second left to Baal Hill Farm. Follow this rough track until it divides and take the left-hand fork.

The entrance onto the site is through a gate, follow the waymarkers around a circular walk. The terrain is uneven and at times quite slippery so care is needed.

## General Information

**Ownership:** Durham Wildlife Trust

**Area:** 15.5 hectares

**Grid Reference:** NZ 074376

**O.S Explorer Map No:** 307

### Parking and access to site:

No official car park. Permission granted to park outside Baal Hill Farm buildings.

### Public transport:

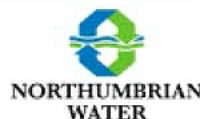
Buses are available from Durham Bus Station, nearest bus stop Wolsingham which is about one and half miles walk to the reserve.

**Dogs:** Dogs permitted on a lead.

**Other:** Please follow the Countryside Code and close gates Behind you.

**Accessibility** ▲▲▲▲

This card is kindly sponsored by:



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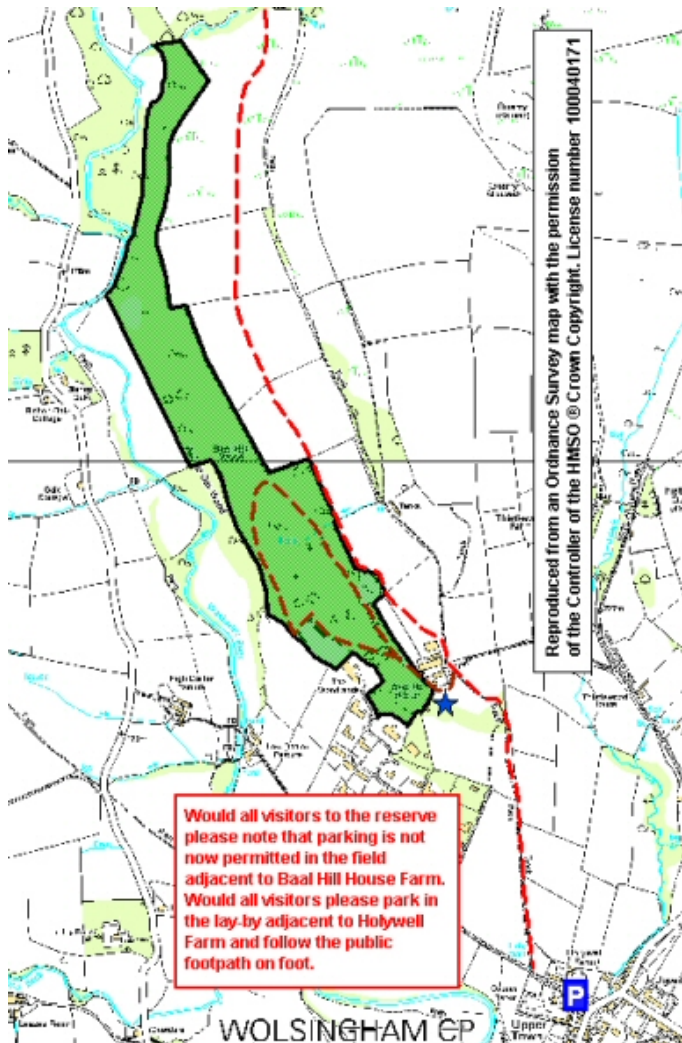
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# BAAL HILL WOOD REVISED PARKING LOCATION



- Key
- Reserve boundary
  - Parking
  - Reserve entrance
  - Footpaths
  - Track