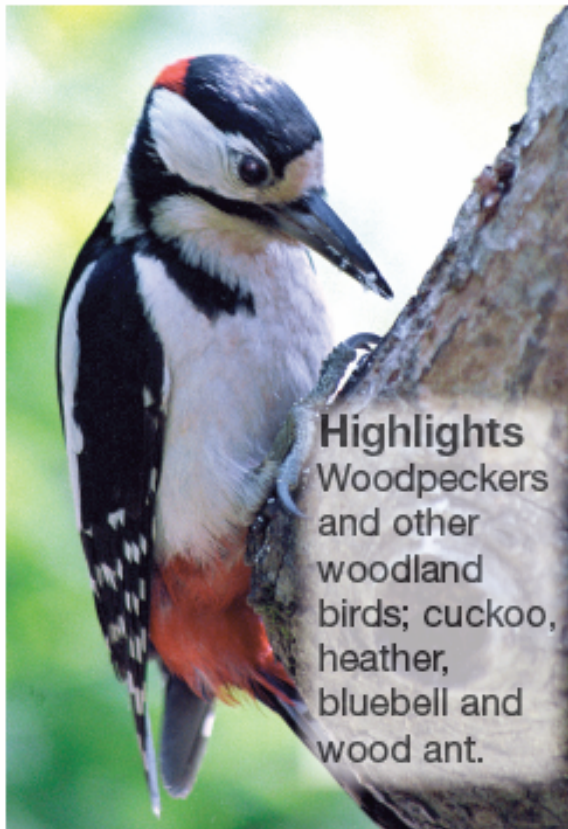


## Selwyns Wood

### A mixture of woodland types with heathy glades and streams

The very name of Heathfield, just three miles from Selwyns Wood, is an indication of the kind of landscape that once existed in this area. The sandy soils of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are ideal for the development of heathland, but sadly there is very little of it left now outside Ashdown Forest.



**Highlights**  
Woodpeckers  
and other  
woodland  
birds; cuckoo,  
heather,  
bluebell and  
wood ant.

great spotted woodpecker

Alan Price

However, at this nature reserve a heathy habitat is returning in patches where the tree cover has been reduced. The pale mauve flowers of heather cover one side of the valley in late summer, and the plant is sprouting up wherever enough light can seep in between the leafy canopy in rides and glades. Other acid soil-loving flowers are here too, such as the yellow-flowered tormentil, goldenrod and broom. Much of the woodland here is sweet chestnut coppice, typical of East Sussex, where it was grown and regularly cut to provide fuel for the local iron industry and

poles for hop gardens. This wood is now used chiefly for fence posts as it is extremely durable and resistant to rot. In places, it has been allowed to grow into large trees; elsewhere coppice stools have been gradually thinned to provide a more open heath, much loved by birds including woodcock.

There are also some areas where oak, hazel, hornbeam and cherry were planted after the 1987 storm. Here dormice scamper through the undergrowth looking for honeysuckle, a favourite food. Overall this reserve is an intimate mix of heath and different woodland types, fostering the diversity of wildlife that can be seen here at any time of year.



Clockwise broom, wood ant, grass snake