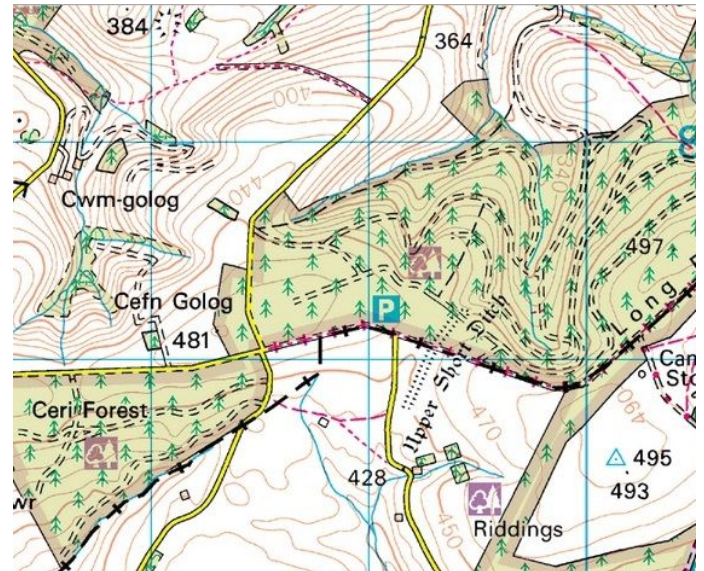


Places to Visit - Ceri Forest, Ceri - by Paul Leafe

Ceri Forest is large coniferous forest situated on the Montgomery/Shropshire border. With the large trees and various stages of clear-fell being surrounded by a mixture of improved and unimproved farm land, this area has a lot to offer for several notable species of bird.

Although there are several access points to the forest, and lots of places you could leave your car, there is a car park about 2km north east of Anchor at SO190871, and this will put in a fairly central position.

As well as a main track along the ridge of the forest, there are several other tracks and paths all over, so there will always be somewhere new to explore.



What to see:

Spring/Summer: As spring arrives, so do a lot of migrants. With it being situated on high ground there's a good chance of passage birds as well as summer visitors. Any of the surrounds fields could be hiding something, Wheatear, White Wagtail, Ring Ouzel and even Dotterel have all been seen. The clear-fell areas come alive in May, with Stonechat, Tree Pipit, Willow Warbler, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Whitethroat and even Nightjar breeding. Cuckoos are also scattered about the forest on the lookout for any unattended nest to lay their eggs. The taller trees also offer breeding sites for birds of prey and Crossbills. The latter will have long fledges by now, but can still be seen in family groups.

Autumn/Winter: As the last of the summer migrants depart, the first few winter migrants start to appear. Large numbers of Fieldfare and Redwing can be found foraging almost anywhere, finch flocks start to build up towards the end of autumn, some years flocks of Brambling, Siskin and Redpoll get well in to the 100s. A regular Golden Plover flock uses the surrounding fields at this time of year too, it can be anything from 50-500 strong. Other waders (seen more at night time) include Lapwing, Woodcock, Common and Jack Snipe. Great Grey Shrike is an irregular visitor to this area, but with the forest being so big it could just be that some years it's not found?

All year: This area seems to attract a lot of birds of prey, and in the right conditions several can be seen in a single days birds watching. Buzzard, Red Kite, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel are regular, with Goshawks, Peregrine, Merlin and even Hen Harrier sometimes seen. Owls are also up here, though seen far less, but Tawny, Barn, Short-eared or even Long-eared can be encountered. As well as the bird life, there are also good numbers of Roe Deer, Hare and Fox living here too.

