

## How the Trust cares for this reserve

We aim to keep the lakes as open and welcoming for birds as possible. We manage the lakes by cutting and removing the fringing willow. This gives the birds a clear view of their surroundings. Removing this growth also allows marginal vegetation such as sweet grass, common reed and many types of rush to develop. This vegetation is invaluable to invertebrates, feeding birds and others who use it for cover.



Great burnet

Aldwinckle Lake's islands are designed as isolated areas for birds to breed in, away from predators. On one island, we cut, rake and burn the vegetation every year. This creates breeding habitat for geese and wading birds such as oystercatchers and lapwing.

In mid July, we mow the meadows to the north of the reserve, we cut the long meadow annually for hay. It has a wildflower rich sward, which our flock of Hebridean and Manx Loughton sheep graze after mowing. This maintains low soil fertility and stops coarse grass and invasive plant species taking over. The higher density scrub at the southern end of the site is fantastic for small birds. We cut this on a rotational basis. From spring to autumn, this area is

also grazed by rare breed cattle. They help to keep it open, which encourages wildflowers including bee and pyramidal orchids.



Wildfowl

We hope you enjoy your visit

### Access

There are four access point to the reserve. The main point is from Aldwinckle, where the car park is situated.

The Nene Valley Way long-distance path runs along the western edge of the reserve. A public footpath runs along the southern and eastern edges. This is level, but it can get quite wet so boots are advisable.

To protect wildlife, please keep dogs on leads. Thank you.

### How to find reserve

Leave the A605 to Peterborough at Thorpe Waterville. Follow the road to Aldwinckle. Pass the church and take the first left onto Lowick Road. After about 250m, the car park is on the left-hand side of the road.

**OS Explorer Map 224 grid ref TL 007 806**

If you would like more information about this reserve or other reserves in Northamptonshire, please contact: Reserves Manager

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Bedfordshire  
Cambridgeshire  
Northamptonshire  
Peterborough

# Welcome to Titchmarsh Nature Reserve



Photograph by Lucy Ryan Illustrations by Mike Langman

Protecting wildlife  
close to home

Titchmarsh is a 76 hectare nature reserve and part of the Thrapston Gravel Pits complex. It lies within the Upper Nene Valley gravel pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The larger lake is Aldwincle Lake. It provides a large area for overwintering birds, as well as islands to encourage breeding. The smaller lake is the Heronry Lake, which is enclosed by marginal vegetation. The Heronry lake is the old duck decoy and is home to one of the largest populations of breeding grey herons in the county. Surrounding the wetland areas is a variety of scrub and grassland.



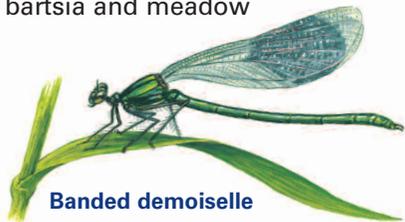
Heron

The Wildlife Trust's vision is to create a valley with naturally functioning, interlinked wetlands, rich in wildlife for the enjoyment of everybody. Restoring and creating habitat between nature reserves will produce a more natural and diverse riverscape. Known as the Living Landscape, this project will provide havens for wildlife and people as well as space for species to move and adapt to a changing climate.

## What to look for

The variety of habitats within the reserve means many different species thrive here. In spring, migrant birds start to arrive. Chiffchaffs, willow and Cetti's warblers migrate from the Mediterranean and northern Africa to spend the warmer months here. Other breeding birds, such as swans and great crested grebes, also come to Titchmarsh.

Spring is also a great time for flowers. In the long meadow, great burnet, meadowsweet, red bartsia and meadow



Banded demoiselle



Meadow vetchling

vetchling are among those springing into bloom. These attract butterflies, such as common blue and small copper. You will also see various dragonflies, including the rare hairy dragonfly and the stunning green and blue emperor, who enjoy the habitat here.

In winter, large numbers of shoveler, goosander, wigeon and gadwall amongst others can be seen on the lake. Keep an eye out for Kingfishers on the path near Harpers brook, as well as signs of otters, which pass through here.

The fringing reed and small reedbed to the south of the lake provide habitat for many birds, including reed and sedge warblers. The UK's smallest mammal, the harvest mouse also likes the reeds. It builds its nest by creating a tight ball of dried-up reed.



Common blue on bird's foot trefoil



Kingfisher

-  Scrub
-  Reedbed
-  Mixed woodland
-  Deciduous woodland
-  Dry grassland
-  Open water
-  Permissive/reserve path
-  Public right of way
-  Reserve boundary
-  Car park
-  Wheelchair access

