



Grafham Water Nature Reserve
a site of special scientific interest, owned by Anglian Water and managed by The Wildlife Trust



Grafham Water nature reserve

Grafham Water nature reserve was created in the mid 1960's. The site is a mosaic of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats. The reserve covers 80 hectares, is owned by Anglian Water and managed in partnership with the Wildlife Trust.

Grafham Water is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) mainly due to the wetland habitats that attract nationally important numbers of birds.

Designation as a SSSI is primarily a mechanism to protect sites that are of national conservation interest because of the wildlife they support.



Common Spotted Orchid



history of Grafham Water

Grafham Water reservoir was created to provide people with drinking water. The area chosen was a shallow valley containing farms and woodland, and was completely flooded in 1966.

The Wildlife Trust has been managing the nature reserve since English Nature designated the site as a SSSI in 1986.

The nature reserve includes fragments of the lowland landscape that existed before the reservoir was created. These fragments include ancient woodland, unimproved meadow and farm ponds. The reserve also covers part of the reservoir and the dynamic shoreline habitat.



Great Crested Grebe

Part of the nature reserve is a bird sanctuary covering the areas of Littleless and Dudney creeks. This also includes 18 hectares of the reservoir surface.



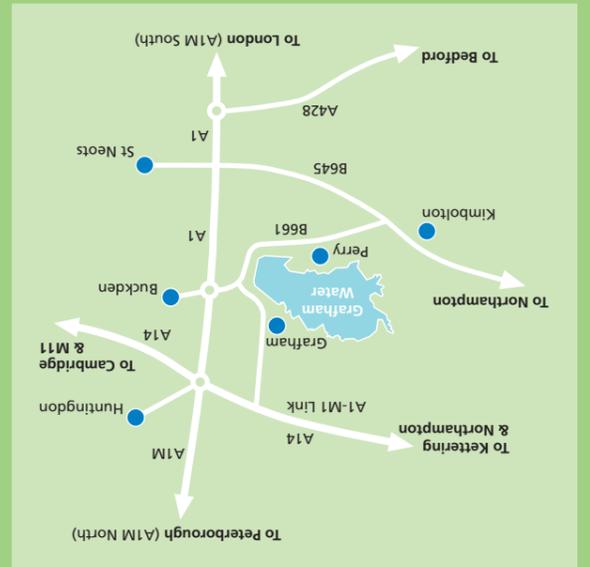
Speckled Wood butterfly



Meadow Cranesbill



Marsh Woundwort



how to find Grafham Water

- please do not obstruct any gateways when parking
- bring stout footwear as the ground within the woodland can be wet and slippery
- please follow the Country Code – keep to the paths and keep dogs on leads. **Thank you.**



access points to the reserve

The access points are via entrances at Mander Car Park in the village of West Perry and at the Fishermen's Car Park near the village of Graham. The reserve is also crossed by the Three Shires Way.

To find out more about the reserve or how you can help support us, please contact:
The Wildlife Trust,
The Manor House,
Broad Street, Great Camboorne,
Cambridge CB3 6DH
Tel 01954 713500, Fax 01954 710051
email Cambridgeshire@wildlifetrusts.org
website www.wildlifetrusts.org



further information

water birds

Grafham Water is probably one of the prime 'birding' sites in the county, with rare and scarce birds such as Grey Phalarope and the occasional Great Northern Diver alongside the more familiar resident Mallards and Greylag Geese.

With nine miles of shoreline and over 120 species recorded each year, there is something to see at most times of the year; the autumn drawdown zone attracts a variety of waders such as Common Sandpiper and Dunlin. Flocks of wintering water birds are what make Grafham special, earning it SSSI status with nationally important numbers of Coot and Tufted Duck along with significant numbers of Great Crested Grebe.



Sulphur Tuft fungi



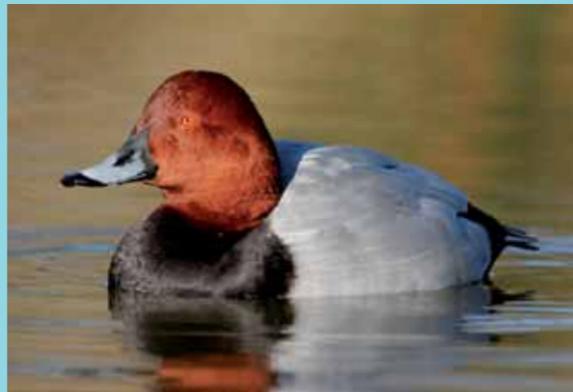
Cowslip



Spindle berries



Primrose



Pochard

Other winter visitors include Pochard, Goldeneye, Goosander, Smew and Wigeon.

The reservoir can be great for gull watching too with upwards of 30,000 birds roosting in mid-winter along with sightings of Mediterranean, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls. There are five bird hides around the reserve but many species can be viewed from the three car parts around the site.

map of reservoir



- Nature trails and woodland paths
- Footpaths and cycleways
- Bird hides
- Nature reserve and woodland
- Bird sanctuary
- Parking
- Toilets
- Visitor information
- Restaurant
- Refreshments



Bee Orchid



ponds

The reserve has several ponds, the largest being the Dragonfly Pond, which was created in 1987 in a horseshoe shape to provide maximum bank territory for the many species of dragonfly and damselfly that can be seen during the summer months. The pond is also home to Great Crested Newts, which hibernate in the surrounding grassland and return to the pond in the spring to mate and lay their eggs. This once-rare and protected species is now quite common in our region and can often be seen in the water on a warm afternoon.



male Great Crested Newt

The platforms around the pond provide a safe area for school children on educational visits to pond dip and discover for themselves the amazing variety of creatures that live in the water. Family learning events are run throughout the year on a variety of topics to encourage families to visit the reserve and find out more about the wildlife here.

pond dipping

woodland

There are two woodlands both having areas that are ancient, meaning they are at least 400 years old. Ancient woodlands are important as they are our richest and most diverse habitats and the best link to the original wildwood that existed before people came to Britain.



Savages Spinney

Little Wood is an abandoned coppice of Ash, Oak and Hazel. There is diverse ground flora including Bluebells, Ground Ivy and Dog's Mercury.

Savages Spinney is also ancient woodland of standard Oak trees grown for timber. The ground flora of Savages Spinney is similar to Little Wood but also has the shiny leaved Spurge Laurel. Nuthatches, Tree Creepers and Greater Spotted Woodpecker can be seen foraging within the woods. The rides (paths) within the woodlands are home to many invertebrates including Glow Worms.



Bluebells

woodland enhancement projects

Unfortunately, only very tiny fragments of ancient woodland exist scattered and isolated. These woods are very susceptible to change such as the introduction of alien animals and plants. Muntjac Deer from Asia eat the ground flora and young saplings in the wood preventing natural re-growth. The Wildlife Trust in partnership with Anglian Water has worked to conserve areas of ancient woodland by erecting deer fences within the woodlands.

scrub

Scrub areas consist of prickly species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn and other small trees mixed with climbing plants, Bramble and Dog Rose. This provides a home to invertebrates, insects, spiders and molluscs and a safe nesting site for birds. The reserve has a nesting population of Nightingales which nest near to the ground in areas of scrub.



Bramble (blackberry)



Nightingale

grasslands

The grasslands around the reserve are species rich, containing Common Spotted Orchids, Oxeye Daisy and Cowslip. Inhabiting the grassland is a wide range of invertebrates including butterflies such as the Common Blue and Marbled White, whilst birds feeding on the invertebrates include the Green Woodpecker. The grasslands are managed by taking a hay cut in the late summer months.

volunteering

If you would like to help out with conservation work on the nature reserve, a mid-week team meets every Wednesday at the Mander Car Park.

For more details, please contact the Wildlife Trust on 01480 811075.



volunteer



charcoal burner