

Kirkby Gravel Pits



Location & Access

OS: 122 • **GR:** TF 236 609 • 14.8ha (36.50 acres) • Freehold 1991

Habitat type: Marsh/Wetland

Situated on both sides of the Old River Bain about 1.5km (0.9 miles) south of Kirkby on Bain, this reserve lies to the east of a minor road that connects Kirkby on Bain with Tattershall. A small car park is provided, with a birdwatching hide nearby, giving excellent views of the largest pit. In order to minimise disturbance, the only other access is from the car park northwards to join the public bridleway along the north-east boundary.

Please note that surrounding pits are private and can only be viewed from public rights of way.

Description & Management

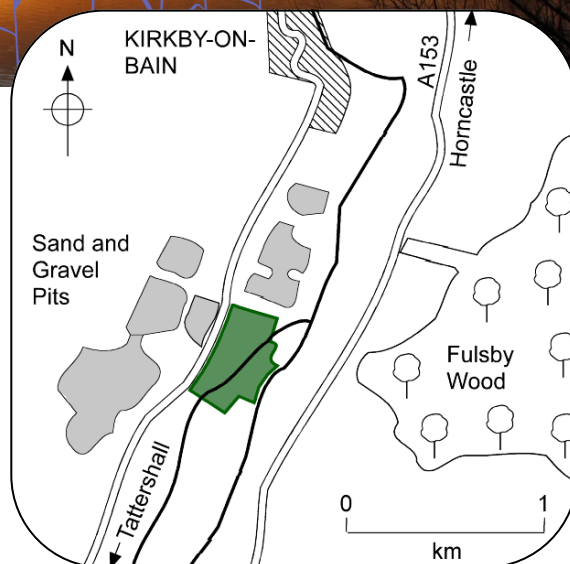
Much of the reserve consists of flooded sand and gravel pits, fringed by reeds and willows. There are also small areas of sparse vegetation, grassland, scrub, and maturing woodland. Birds are the main wildlife interest, with something of interest all year round. In spring and summer, the pits attract many breeding water birds, often including pochard and gadwall, while the islands have nesting little ringed plover and common tern, and surrounding habitats support turtle dove and eight species of warbler. Late summer and autumn bring migrant waders such as green sandpiper along with congregations of teal and other ducks. In winter the reserve is an important refuge for a variety of wetland birds. Kingfisher and green woodpecker can be seen at any time of year. Uncommon birds are always a possibility, particularly in spring and autumn; rarities in recent years include spoonbill, Temminck's

stint, Baird's sandpiper and caspian tern.

Notable amongst the other wildlife are grass snake, small numbers of bee orchids, and a good variety of butterflies and dragonflies including brown argus and banded demoiselle.

Management of the main pit is focused on controlling the water level by means of a tilting weir installed in 2001. The level is lowered in spring to provide islands for nesting birds, and further lowering in late summer produces shallow water for passage waders and wildfowl. Maximum level is reached during the winter, covering the islands to a sufficient depth to remove all vegetation and prevent them from becoming overgrown. The diversity of other habitats is maintained by coppicing some of the woodland and mowing or grazing the grassland.

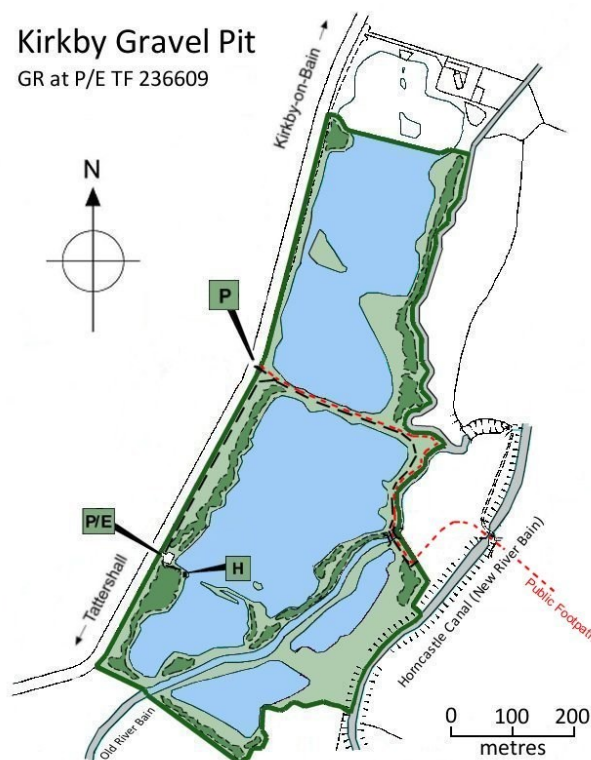
Riverslea Lake next to Kirkby Gravel Pits nature reserve was purchased in 2009 thanks to funding from Biffaward, a multi-million pound environment fund managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), which utilises landfill tax credits donated by Biffa Waste Services (a smaller portion of the lake is in private ownership).



Riverslea Lake can be viewed from the public footpath that runs between the lake and the existing Kirkby Gravel Pits nature reserve.

Kirkby Gravel Pit

GR at P/E TF 236609



P Parking space **E** Entrance **H** Bird Hide