

Willow Tree Fen



Location & Access

OS: 130 • **GR:** TF 181 213 • 112.0ha (276.75 acres) • Freehold 2009

Habitat type: Wetland

Willow Tree Fen is situated between Bourne and Spalding, south of the River Glen on the Tongue End to Pode Hole road. The entrance bridge is at grid ref TF 181 213.

It can also be viewed from the Macmillan Way long distance path which runs along the bank of the River Glen, access is via the Pinchbeck Fen Slippe Road.

Description & Management

Willow Tree Fen is a new nature reserve purchased by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust in 2009. Formerly arable land growing beans and cereals with a number of low depressions that become waterlogged in wet periods, the fen is being restored to a typical wet fenland landscape. The nature reserve will include a mixture of reedbeds, shallow meres, seasonally flooded pastures and hay meadows, providing habitats for rare and threatened wetland species such as otter, water vole, hairy dragonfly, spined loach, redshank, snipe and marsh harrier.

Critically, Willow Tree Fen is linked to the last remnants of the wild fenlands in Lincolnshire by the River Glen and Counter Drain. Covering just 55 hectares, the Baston Fen and Thurlby Fen nature reserves represent the last of Lincolnshire's wild fenland landscapes and are home to special fenland wildlife. These reserves are too small to support some of the larger fenland birds and animals, and to cope with a changing climate, but from here the fenland species will be able to

colonise Willow Tree Fen.

Increasing Lincolnshire's remaining fenland by 200%, the reserve will also provide opportunities for local people and schools to get involved in wildlife and landscape conservation. It will provide benefits for tourism, through improved access and help raise awareness of the importance of our ecological heritage and historic landscapes.

The purchase and restoration of Willow Tree Fen has been made possible with financial support from Natural England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, Environment Agency and the members of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. It is part of

the wider South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership.

Work has been on-going since the purchase of the land in 2009. Over the first three years, wildlife has returned with large winter flocks of lapwing and golden plover, together with ruff, black-tailed godwit, snipe, woodcock, both ringed and little-ringed plover and greenshank. Summer has seen typical farmland birds including corn bunting, turtle dove and red-legged partridge as well as breeding lapwings and swallows feeding amongst the grazing cattle.



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GR at E TF 181213