

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Moor Farm



Location & Access

OS: 122 • **GR:** TF 226 635 • 47.7ha (118.00 acres) • Freehold 1970

Habitat type: Heathland

The reserve is situated on the north-east of Woodhall Spa, some 500 m north from the junction with the Woodhall Spa-Kirkby road. The entrance is on the west side of Wellsyke Lane. There is parking space inside the gate on the right. Visitors are requested to close the gate and keep to the waymarked route.

Description & Management

Moor Farm, which includes Rushbottom Close, is a mosaic of heath, dry and wet pastures, bog and woodland, on Fenedge sands and gravels. Much of the woodland has developed from abandoned pastures during the last 80 years. The diversity of habitat supports a wide range of plants and animals, some of them now rare or localised in the Trust's area. Over 240 species of plant, 100 of bird, 24 of butterfly and 250 of moth have been recorded.

The woodland is managed to develop maximum natural interest by selective thinning, while the bog area has been cleared of scrub, and measures are taken to retain a high water-level. The grassland areas are grazed or mown in a traditional manner in order to retain their existing characteristics. Adders occur in the reserve.

Waymarked Route

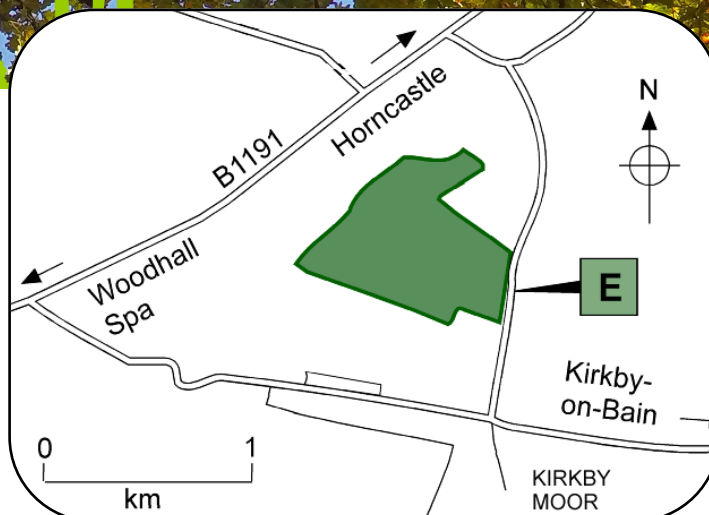
Short route: 1.6km (1 mile)

Long route: 2.5km (1.5 miles)

From the parking area follow the waymarked route, branching right from the main track. Pass the gorse and woodland on the left where linnets may

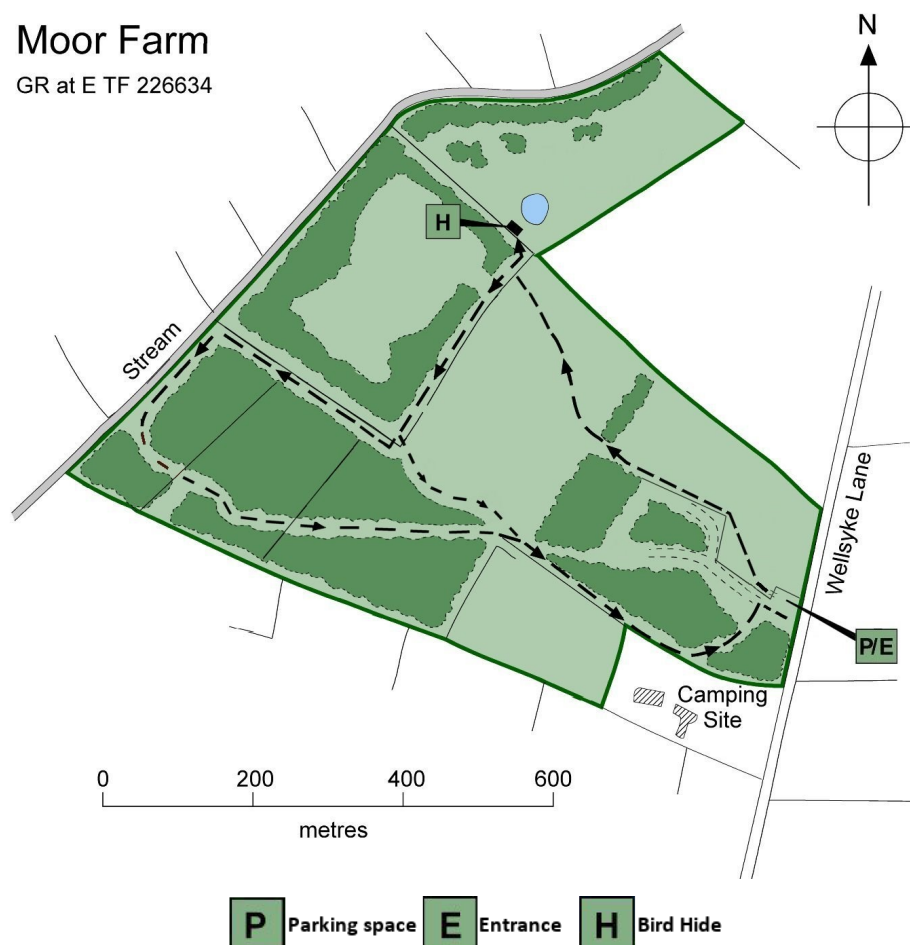
be seen in the summer and redpolls in winter. The field on the right is closely grazed and is noted for its Brecklandtype flora, with cudweed, common centaury, common bird's-foot-trefoil, crane's-bill and stork's-bill. Pass between the pair of large European larch into the big field, which has many interesting plants including both silver hair-grass and early hair-

grass, the uncommon creeping St John's -wort, shepherd's cress and basil thyme. Green woodpecker and mistle thrush are often be seen here.



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Cross the field along the path heading for the kissing-gate near the far corner. Through the gate the route turns left along the woodland edge, but a short diversion to the right leads to a hide giving views over Rushbottom Close, which is let for cattle grazing. The wetter parts have a tall herb community, including ragged-robin, purple loosestrife, lesser spearwort, clubrushes and various sedges. Snipe and lapwing have nested in the area. There are often coot, moorhen and little grebe on the small pool, and several species of dragonfly.

Return along the woodland edge path. Opposite the kissing-gate there are views of wet heath and bog on the right, where there is an extensive area of purple moor-grass with patches of cross-leaved heath, common cottongrass and bog mosses. Tree pipits nest in this area, which is grazed by cattle at certain times of the year. Please do not go beyond the edge of the trees. Continue along the woodland edge path. At the junction with another track on the edge of the woodland there is a choice of routes. The short route to the left skirts the edge of the big field and re-joins the main route at the corner of the Heath Field.

Turn right for the longer route, passing through the mixed woodland with birch, oak, alder and rowan. In autumn the wood is especially rich in fungi. Woodcocks are often to be seen in the wood throughout the year. The path leads to a brook, which marks the parish boundary, and turns left to follow it. The swift-flowing, clear water is full of aquatic plants and, in winter when the level is high, mallard, teal and grey wagtail may be seen. Continue until the path turns left into the birch woodland. This winding path crosses

two wooden bridges over ditches marking old field boundaries and leads, via a stile and bridge, to the corner of Heath Field.

The Heath Field has a wet heath flora with cross-leaved heath, devil's-bit scabious, heath spotted-orchid, lousewort and cottongrass. The waymarked route follows the edge of the field beside the fence. The field is grazed by cattle for part of the year. The route turns back into the woodland at the farther end of the Heath Field. This woodland is more mature than that seen earlier, with many large oaks

and pines. All three species of woodpecker, spotted flycatcher, jay, treecreeper, and many other birds may be seen here. The path leaves the wood and winds through interesting woodland edge and scrub habitats with gorse and heather. This is a likely spot to see slow-worm, grass snake and adder.

Soon the path comes to the main track only a short distance from your starting point. Turn right to the parking area.

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