

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

# Rauceby Warren



## Location & Access

**OS:** 130 • **GR:** TF 034 441 • 8.80ha (21.90 acres) • Freehold 1968

**Habitat type:** Grassland

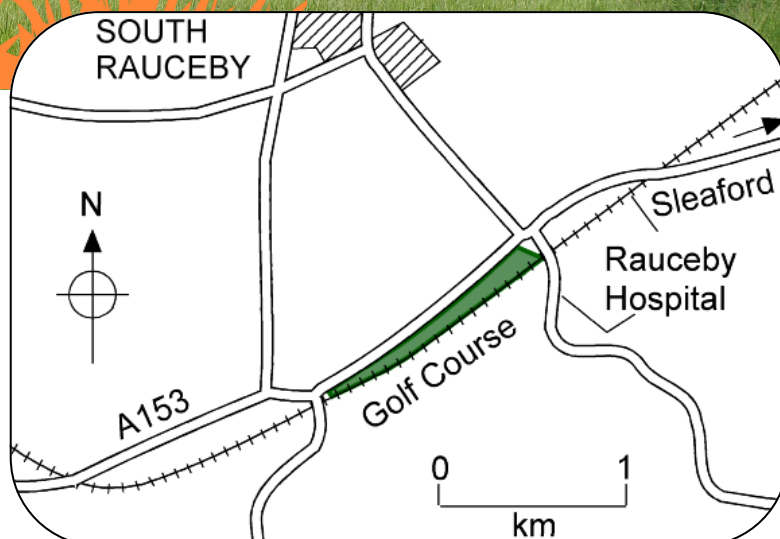
The reserve consists of a 1.3km linear strip that runs along the south side of the A153 Sleaford-Grantham road, about 4 km (2.5 miles) west of Sleaford. There is parking on the open space at the western end.

## Description & Management

The reserve lies on the sandy warrens overlying limestone formed by glacial melt waters, which carried sand through the Ancaster Gap. Few patches of the old heathland turf of these deposits now remain. Much of the reserve consists of abandoned sand and gravel pits, which were worked between 1920 and 1967.

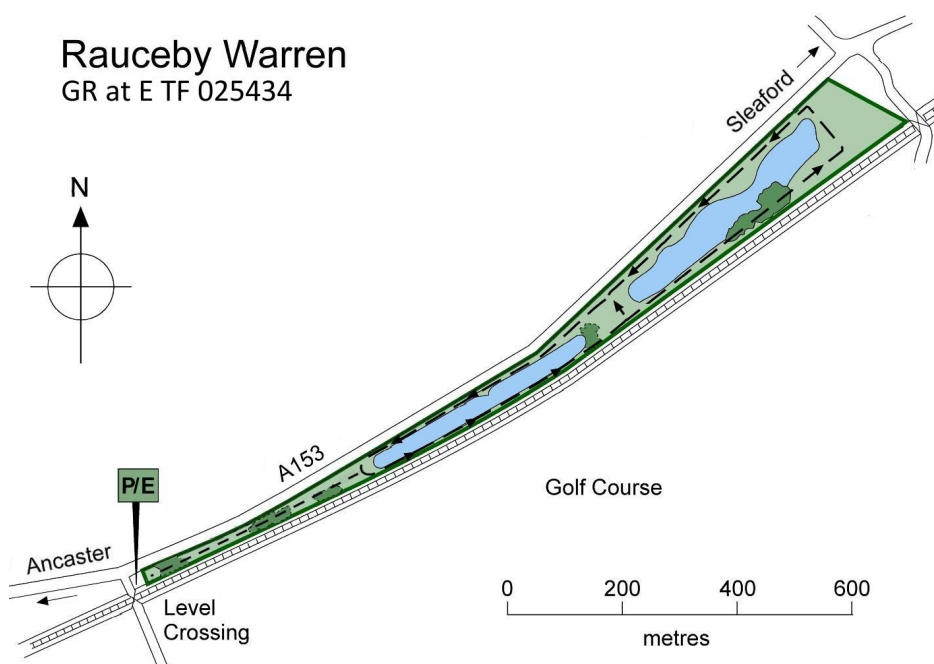
The mixture of calcareous and acid soils gives rise to a varied flora rather like that of the Breckland of Norfolk and Suffolk. Over 320 plants have been recorded, including many localised species and one national rarity, the smooth rupturewort. Over 90 species of birds have been recorded of which 25 are known to nest. Records also include 60 species of aculeate wasps and bees.

Management consists largely of mowing grassland and tall herb vegetation, preventing scrub invasion, planting trees and repairing the stone wall on the northern boundary.



## Rauceby Warren

GR at E TF 025434



Parking space



Entrance



Bird Hide

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## Waymarked Route

**Short route: 1.3km (0.9 miles)**

**Long route: 2.4km (1.5 miles)**

Before starting on the waymarked route, a close examination of the 50 or so species of plants in the car park is recommended. These include hoary cinquefoil, common cudweed and the rare smooth rupturewort. Then turn right towards the western end of the reserve and walk along the northern boundary. In summer there is a fine display of viper's-bugloss. In winter look out for stoats hunting the rabbits along this stretch. The short route turns left to the railway, but the long route continues along the wall side. Keep a look out for grass snakes and common lizards. Twenty-two species of butterflies have been recorded. Common blues are numerous in May and August.

Follow the bed of the old quarry railway. The bank is covered with flowering plants, including dwarf spurge, small toadflax, Canadian and blue fleabane and mignonette. Look also for bird's-foot trefoil, knotted pearlwort, scarlet pimpernel and smooth rupturewort.

At the end of the lagoon, cross over to the railway side and turn eastwards. There are displays of purple milk-vetch, tuberous pea, field scabious and toadflax to be seen. Continue along the fence, rejoining the short route on the way.

In the tangled vegetation at about the centre of the reserve, mallard, red-legged partridge, reed bunting and pheasant nest. Spotted flycatcher, various species of finches and tits, whitethroat, willow warbler and many other birds are to be seen along the route. Woodcock sometimes winter in

the area.

When reaching the end of the hawthorn scrub, turn left across the springy, rabbit-grazed, mossy turf to the edge of the eastern lagoon, which retains water longer than any other. Tufted duck, pochard and little grebe are generally present in the winter and early spring, and Canada geese successfully nest on the banks of the lagoon. Great crested newts also breed here. To avoid undue disturbance to the birds, and if the water-level is low enough, turn left through the willows and cross the centre of the lagoon to the car park. On this part of the route, spectacular displays of evening primrose are to be seen from July onwards, though the reserve management plan includes the progressive removal of this alien species.

