

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 500m 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.

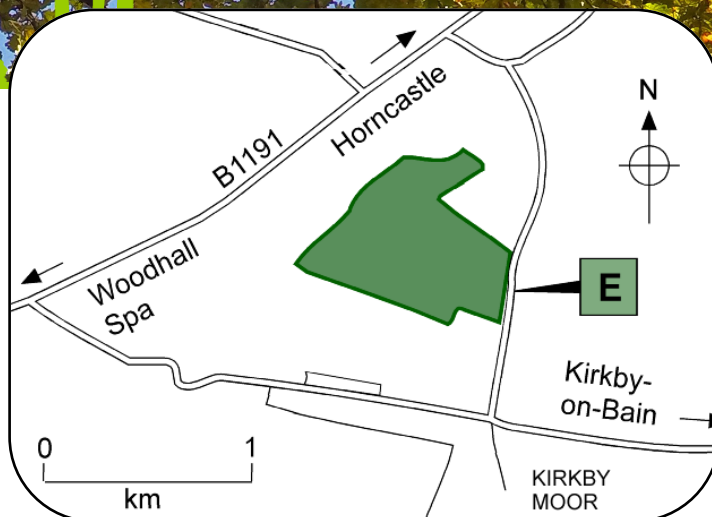
Waymarked Route

Approximately 2.5km (1.5 miles)

From the parking area follow the waymarked route to the left. Pass the gorse and woodland on the right where linnets may be seen in the summer and redpolls in winter. These woodland edges are a likely spot to see slow-worm, grass snake and adder.

Follow the path to the left passing through the birch woodland. Continue along the path as it leads to a mixed woodland of birch, oak, alder and rowan. This path crosses old field boundaries via two wooden bridges. In autumn the wood is especially rich in fungi. Woodcocks are often seen in the wood throughout the year. Follow the winding path through the restored heathland where heather is

beginning to recolonise. This area is grazed with Hebridean sheep and cattle.



The path leads to a brook, which marks the parish boundary, and turns right 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 along the woodland edge to the right and at the end of the path at the junction, go left.

There are views of wet heath and bog on the left, 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.

The end of the path leads to a hide

giving views over Rushbottom Close, which is also grazed with pedigree Lincoln Red cattle. 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 back on yourself along the woodland edge path with the wet heath on your right until you come to a junction before re-joining the woodland path. Turn left for a shortcut back to the edge of the big field which re-joins the main route at the corner of the Heath Field.

The field on the left 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. Green woodpecker and mistle thrush are often be seen here. Pass through the stock corral and re-join the main route. The Heath Field on your right. During the summer cottongrass, heath spotted orchid and lousewort can be seen here. Follow the main path back through the mature woodland to your starting point, with the car park on your right at the end of the track.

