

ATTENBOROUGH NATURE RESERVE

The Nature Reserve

This beautiful complex of flooded former gravel pits and islands covers provides 360 acres of exceptional habitat for a wide range of plants, birds and other wildlife. The Nature Reserve is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the award-winning Nature Centre is an ideal gateway to the reserve.

The reserve was established in 1966 and opened by Sir David Attenborough. Attenborough owes its current appearance to gravel and sand extraction and careful restoration work. Extraction began in 1929, and still takes place today just upstream of the nature reserve. The material left over after the extraction process formed the various islands and shallows which, together with the open water, created a mosaic of habitats that are attractive to many different birds. Between the ponds are drier areas of scrub and grassland as well as native willow trees.

The reserve is best known for its birds. The area is an important site for winter wildfowl and often holds a high proportion of the county's shoveler and diving ducks, with larger numbers of mallard, teal, and occasionally wigeon. Scarcer wildfowl such as sawbills and sea ducks are recorded regularly and cormorants are common. All the British grebes have been recorded. In the spring and autumn, many migrants birds pass through and the Delta area attracts a wide range of waders in small numbers including the iconic bittern. In the summer, the breeding birds include great crested grebe, shelduck, little ringed plover and common tern. A substantial population of reed and sedge warblers, and some rarer species such as grasshopper warbler, may also be present.

As well as discovering the birdlife of Attenborough, lots of other wildlife can be found on the reserve. In the spring and summer the reserve is a hive of activity with butterflies visiting the many wildflowers and dragonflies and damselflies hunting and patrolling the water's edge. Foxes, voles, shrews, harvest mice, otters and bats also make their home here in the reserve.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust staff and volunteers work hard to maintain and develop the diverse habitats at Attenborough. This includes maintenance of the footpath network and public areas, as well as designated areas of restricted access (such as the Delta Sanctuary) where the diversity of habitats and associated flora and fauna must be maintained. Much work has been done around the reserve to create new reedbeds and extend existing ones, and to re-landscape specific areas of the reserve to attract and encourage more wildlife.

Facilities

The Nature Centre is a great place to discover more about the reserve and its wonderful wildlife, as well as enjoying the interactive displays, shop and café facilities. Attenborough's three hides (one of which is raised for the perfect vantage point) are ideal places to observe the birdlife without disturbing their peaceful habitat.

There is ample car parking and the majority of the reserve is wheelchair-accessible. Visitors can follow one of the two signposted walking routes around the reserve, or join in one of the regular guided walks. The new Audiotour provides an opportunity to learn about the reserve and its wildlife using your mobile phone as a guide.

How to get there

The Nature Centre and Reserve are situated just off the A6005 between Beeston and Long Eaton (SK515339). Turn onto Barton Lane at the traffic lights at Chilwell Retail Park (McDonalds and Porcelanosa). Follow Barton Lane with the Village Hotel on your left, over the railway crossing and the car park is at the bottom. You can also follow the brown tourist signs from the A52 between the M1 exit at junction 25 and Bardill's Garden Centre.

Further Information

If you would like further details about the reserve, please call the Nature Centre on 0115 972 1777 or visit www.attenboroughnaturecentre.co.uk.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust also cares for more than 60 other nature reserves around the county. To find out how you can support our vital work by becoming a member of the Wildlife Trust, please call our Membership Team on 0115 958 8242 or visit www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org.



Key to Map

- Grassland
- Woodland
- Open Water
- Reedbed
- Tufted Duck Trail
- Kingfisher Trail
- Skylark Trail
- Observation Hide
- Viewing Screen
- Railway Crossing
- Dog Waste Bin

