

Gosforth Nature Reserve Facilities & Visitor Information for Educational Visits



Gosforth Nature Reserve is a 60-hectare site of open water, reedbed, woodland, grassland, and ditches. It is managed for wildlife and is kept as natural as possible, and also as a place of learning and nature observation for people across the North East.

Covid-19

The reserve is managed in line with current government guidance. Please look out for posters on site, including on hides and by the entrance. These explain current measures implemented to keep yourself and other visitors safe.

Supervision

You will be accompanied on your visit by our Education Rangers who are familiar with the reserve and who will lead the activities you are going to do. However, the children/group members and their behaviour will remain the responsibility of the visiting school/group leader and the leader will need support from visiting teachers/adults. Children/group members will need to be supervised at all times.

The children/group members will need to break into small groups for activities and they will get the most out of these if they have an adult to help them. We ask for a maximum ratio of **1:10** adults to children per group (not including our Education Rangers).

Facilities

Toilets

There are two toilets at the reserve. A portaloo, complete with baby-changing facilities, can be found near the reserve entrance. Mid-way along the boundary ride to the Western edge of the reserve, is the eco-loo. Disinfectant hand gel is provided in all toilet facilities. An outside tap is available at the reserve entrance for washing hands/shoes on departure.

Equipment

We will provide equipment for any activities that you book with us; however your school/ group is responsible for ensuring that children/group members have appropriate clothing, etc. If you wish to carry out and lead your own activities, then you will need to bring any equipment with you.

Shelter

There are three viewing hides (see posters on site in respect of Covid-19) and a canopy, located near the reserve entrance, that provide shelter. Most of the educational activities take place outside, except for bird watching, which takes place in the Ridley Hide and/or the Feeding Station.

Parking

There is parking next to the reserve entrance for around 20 cars. If the layby parking is full, free street parking is available at the northern end of Gosforth Park Way.

Accessibility

Trails & Paths

There are several unsurfaced trails around the reserve. They are uneven and have small trip hazards such as tree roots. From October-June or during damp summers, paths may be muddy or slippery and walking/wellington boots are recommended.

Wooden boardwalks and bridges are provided to access or cross damp areas. Some of these have been covered with wire to provide grip but they can still be slippery when wet and care should be taken. There are no handrails on these structures and visitors should take care.

The site is flat. The circuit walk around the reserve is approximately one to two miles depending on the route taken. Please keep to the paths to avoid damaging flora and disturbing wildlife.

Assistance Dogs

Dogs and pets are not allowed in the reserve to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Guide dogs are permitted.

Information about the site

Wooded Areas

The woodland is managed to support as much wildlife as possible. For this reason, there are a lot of dead branches in the trees. During high winds, after heavy summer rain and during heavy snow there is a risk in the woodland from falling trees or branches. In these conditions we recommend that you only use the South Lakeside Path.

In **exceptional weather conditions** the reserve may close. This will be advertised on the NHSN website and we will inform you of any cancellations or changes to your

visit as soon as we can. If bad weather conditions prevail during your visit, we may need to adapt the activities so that we can conduct the visit safely or cancel the visit.

Plants & Insects

During summer months stinging plants such as nettle grow alongside some paths and vegetation may hang down across paths. Also during summer, biting insects such as mosquitoes and deer ticks are present, especially in the wooded areas.

Please wear long trousers and long sleeves and, if necessary, use insect repellent. You can find out more about ticks and what to do if you find one here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tick-surveillance-scheme>

Watching Wildlife

There are three hides and a viewing screen at the reserve, which are kept open during visitor hours. We can provide binoculars or a spotting scope for some activities, such as bird watching, to help group members see the wildlife better.

There is a pond dipping platform that visitors can use to catch and study aquatic invertebrates. Nets can be supplied to educational groups.

You may be fortunate enough to encounter wildlife up close, though it often requires time, patience and a bit of luck. You are likely to see birds and evidence of animals, and in the summer, plenty of plants and insects.

In an Emergency

To report a minor incident, please contact staff and volunteers present on site. Reserve Ranger, James Dodsworth, can be contacted by phone at **07765 447086**. NHSN Volunteer Rangers can also be found at the information hut by the reserve entrance.

If a serious incident occurs, please call 999. The nearest A&E hospital is:

Royal Victoria Infirmary
Queen Victoria Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 4LP

Tel: 0191 233 6161

If you have any questions, please contact us via email: nhsn@ncl.ac.uk