

About the trail

The trail follows a series of marked posts around the internal footpath of the nature reserve. The trail itself is level and surfaced, although there is a slope just after entering the nature reserve.

Swanholme Lakes is signposted from the Visitor Centre in Hartsholme Country Park. Access to the Nature Reserve is through a wooden kissing gate.

The trail is 1000m long, and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. It is suitable for all ages, although young children should be accompanied at all times.



Since the habitats are still developing, many of them are fragile and vulnerable to disturbance. These areas are fenced off to allow them to protect the delicate plants found in such areas – please respect the sensitive nature of the site.

Old gravel workings are very deep, with many of the lakes having steep sided banks. Please keep to the main footpaths when walking around the reserve, and do not enter the water.

Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times on this site and be kept on footpaths.

About Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve

Swanholme Lakes LNR is made up of a series of flooded gravel pits and a mosaic of different habitats including heathland, grassland and woodland.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status was granted in 1985 in recognition of the numbers of dragonflies and damselflies, and the variety of aquatic plants found around the lakes of the Nature Reserve.

The Nature Reserve is managed for conservation, aiming to increase the biodiversity of the habitats which have developed naturally since industrial activity ceased in the 1960s.

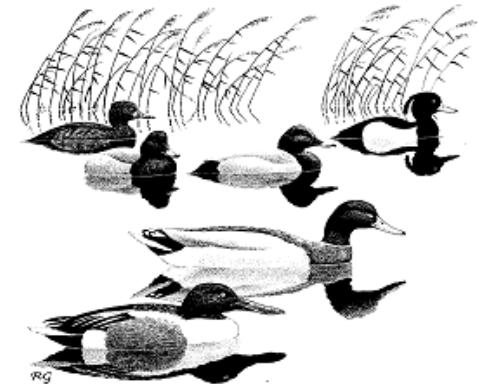


Throughout the spring and summer months, Park Rangers can provide guided walks around Swanholme lakes where you can learn much more about the habitats and species within.

For further information about the Country Park or Nature Reserve, please contact hartsholmecp@lincoln.gov.uk or call 01522 873577



Discover Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve



A place for nature in the City of Lincoln.

Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve is a peaceful haven for an abundance of wildlife – a far cry from the intense industrial activity that shaped the area.

Follow the trail to discover how nature has reclaimed this fascinating site.

1 Think back in time to when quarrying was taking place – the noise of machinery, dust, constant activity – not a very wildlife friendly atmosphere!



Gravel extraction

This area was bare sand – the tiny mosses and lichens growing here now have taken over thirty years to establish conditions where little else could grow. In the autumn, masses of bright red Fly agaric fungi can be seen, pushing their way through the thin layer of vegetation. You can learn more about these and other fungi by joining a guided walk in the autumn.

Now bring yourself back to the present and savour the peace and tranquillity. The nature reserve is full of life just waiting to be discovered – who knows what could be around the next corner...



Grey Heron

2

Dragonfly Lake stretches out in front of you. It is home to many of Swanholme's birds, including Coots, Mallards and many Geese.

Look across to the right hand corner of the lake, where you might be lucky enough to spot one of the resident Grey Herons. They can often be seen flying overhead or standing motionless, watching for fish to feed on.

3

These majestic Scots pine trees are the largest trees on the nature reserve, providing food for many creatures.

Tiny Goldcrests can be seen and heard around these trees, listen out for their high pitched call and you may see them flitting around the ends of the branches, searching for insects to feed on.



Goldcrest

5

This area has developed as a dense thicket of shrubs, providing food, shelter and nest sites for some of Swanholme's summer visitors, including the melodious Willow Warbler, a migrant from Africa. The small bird is difficult to spot, so listen out for a series of descending notes and you might have found one!



Willow Warbler



Sand Martin

6

A large sand bank can be seen through the trees on your right. This was formed when tonnes of sand were piled up, having been extracted from nearby pits. The holes you can see in the bank are old Sand Martin nest holes. These birds no longer nest here, but can still be seen as they swoop over the lakes, catching insects to feed on.

Look for Sand Martins in late spring, when they start to arrive from Africa. They migrate thousands of miles to their breeding grounds in Britain and the rest of Europe.

7

Another area left bare after quarrying, this part of the nature reserve is developing into an important heathland habitat. This type of habitat is characterised by mosses, lichens, grasses and heather, also known as Ling.



Ling

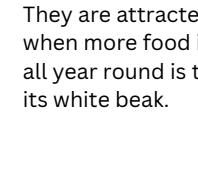
The fencing helps to protect this sensitive habitat, as well as providing feeding perches for Common Darters - small dragonflies which dart out from a perch to catch their insect prey.



Gadwall

8

The lake in front of you is excellent for watching wildfowl, particularly in the winter when the resident birds are joined by hundreds of migrants from Scandinavia and further north.



Coot

They are attracted by the milder winters, when more food is available. A familiar sight all year round is the Coot, unmistakable with its white beak.

9



Blue-tailed Damselfly

During the summer months Swanholme Lakes is alive with dragonflies and damselflies. Watch out for the delicate Common Blue and Blue-tailed damselflies, or the spectacular Brown Hawker, a large dragonfly with stunning amber-tinted wings.

10

Swanholme's meadows are small but perfectly formed! They have a great variety of wildflowers, from small yellow Birds-foot Trefoil to tall Purple Knapweed.



Common Blue



Small Copper

All these flowers are like a gourmet restaurant to Swanholme's butterfly populations, many of which can be seen gathering nectar from these irresistible sources of food. With the dainty Common Blue to the startling Small Copper, this area is filled with colour throughout the summer months.

The History of Swanholme Lakes - from gravel pits to wildlife haven

1860s The site, an area of plantation woodland belongs to the Hartsholme Hall Estate.

1930s Quarrying for sand and gravel begins. The materials were used in aerodrome construction.

1960s The quarrying finishes, leaving a desolate landscape. Public access is forbidden.

1970s Two of the lakes are stocked with trout and run as a private fishery. Interest in the area's wildlife gathers pace.

1985 English Nature designated Swanholme a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

1991 Swanholme Lakes Local Nature reserve is declared, and opened to the public.