

Introduction to RSPB Fairburn Ings

Fairburn Ings is a large site (286 hectares or 700 acres), situated alongside the River Aire near Castleford. It is made up of areas of wetland, wet meadows, woodland, grasslands and fen.

[To see an aerial photograph of RSPB Fairburn Ings, click here.](#)

History

The landscape of this part of the Aire valley has been changed by 150 years of mining. All areas of open water on the reserve have been formed as a result of the subsidence of coal workings up to half a kilometre underground.

One third of the site has been developed from twenty-six million cubic metres of colliery spoil, which have been landscaped to create a large complex of grassland, wetland and woodland, ideal for an abundance of wildlife.

Fairburn Ings is owned by Leeds City Council but has been managed for wildlife and people by the RSPB since 1976.

Wildlife

Birds – 274 different species of bird have been recorded at Fairburn Ings so far – the highest number for any inland site in the country. Birds that you can often see there range from common garden species such as robins, sparrows, blackbirds and finches to common wetland species like swans, geese and ducks, to birds less often seen such as kingfisher, goosander, lapwing and redshank.

Other wildlife – As well as birds, Fairburn Ings supports an abundance of other animals such as butterflies, dragonflies, mammals (like harvest mice and bats) and amphibians (like frogs and toads), as well as some lovely wildflowers, shrubs and trees.

[To see photographs of species, click here.](#)

Visitor facilities

Up to 80,000 people visit the site each year. Visitor facilities include five bird hides, a pond dipping platform, a bird viewing platform, a visitor centre containing two classrooms and a shop, a series of footpaths, disabled access to some areas of the reserve, a car park and a picnic area. A varied events programme runs from the reserve, ranging from 'Family Bat Nights' to 'Birdwatching for Beginners' and a 'Wild Adventure' playscheme. To find out more ring 01977 603796 and ask for an events programme. We also offer a professional Field Teaching Programme for schools; for more details [click here](#).

[To see a map of the reserve, click here.](#)



RSPB Fairburn Ings Nature Reserve



Aerial view of RSPB Fairburn Ings from the western edge of the reserve



Wildlife at RSPB Fairburn Ings



Long-eared owl



Emerald damselfly



Stoat



Redshank



Red admiral butterfly



Swallow



RSPB Fairburn Ings Map

