



## Croxall Lakes, Alrewas

Our Reserves Officer, LUCY O'TOOLE, takes you on a guided walk of Croxall Lakes, a former gravel quarry that has undergone restoration to make it a great place for wildlife, particularly birds

**1** Before starting your walk, take a moment in the car park to look out over the lake and see which birds are about. You will see an island just off the shore. Over the winter this was cleared of scrub by volunteers to make it a more suitable nesting area for wetland birds. Ridge tiles on brick have been placed on the island to provide shelter and shade for the nesting birds and their young.

**2** As you walk up the track during spring and summer stop and listen to the variety of birds in both the hedge and reeds. Spring and summer brings a range of warblers including blackcap, chiffchaff, sedge warbler, willow warbler and whitethroat. These areas are also great for butterflies and other insects.

**3** Further up the track you will reach a bird hide, take time to have a seat and see what birds you can spot on the lake. In the winter you are likely to see teal, wigeon, little egrets, tufted duck, goldeneye and in the summer lapwing, ringed plover and

shelduck. Near here you will be able to see a tern raft floating in the lake, this is made out of recycled plastic, and has gravel and shelters which offer a safe place for terns and other species of wetland birds to nest.

**4** Continue up the track, through the kissing gate and continue straight on towards the river. During the spring and summer keep a look out for bee orchids which are known to grow on this track and also scarlet pimpernel.

**5** When you reach the river go under the viaduct. Here you can see the river profiling work that was carried out by the Trust a few years ago. The steep artificial banks of the river were removed. Shallows, backwaters and islands were created to both improve the habitat for wading birds and also to allow the river to carry out its natural processes, which include flooding the reserve during times of high rain fall. During the summer the beautifully agile common terns can be seen fishing here.

**6** Walk through the kissing gate and follow the path through the field. The area to your left is fenced off to allow birds to feed and nest with minimal disturbance. Here you may see kestrels hunting. There is another bird hide in the small woodland where you can sit and rest and see if you can spot any snipe, redshank or lapwing feeding on the shoreline and around the scrape. When ready you can walk back towards the smaller railway arch which will bring you out opposite the first bird hide, then you can follow the track back down to the car park.





Jim Higham

### Lapwing

Lapwings are often seen wheeling through winter skies in large flocks. Recognised by its long crest, black and white pattern, and very broad bluntly rounded shape of its wings.



Janet Packham

### Blackcap

While at the reserve, you should be able to hear different bird songs. Listen out for the blackcap. Easily confused with the marsh tit and willow tit, but can be distinguished by the lack of a black bib.



### Teal

While looking through the bird hide overlooking the lake, you should see plenty of wildfowl, including teal. Many of these birds are migrants from the cold climes of the Baltic and Siberia.



Derek Moore

### Little egrets

If you're lucky, you may also see the marvellous sight of a little egret. The little egret is a white heron with black legs and yellow feet. It has a black bill and long plumes on its head and neck during the breeding season.



Dawn Monrose

### Bee orchids

During the spring and summer keep a look out for bee orchids while walking around the reserve. A small orchid, the bee orchid has a rosette of leaves at ground level and two leaves that grow up the stem as a sheath.



Philip Precey

### Scarlett pimpernel

You may also see scarlet pimpernel - a common arable weed most famous for being the emblem of the fictional hero of the same name. Scarlet pimpernel has red flowers with five petals, each fringed with many tiny hairs.

## Croxall Lakes



### Getting there

The reserve is located on the opposite side of the river to the National Memorial Arboretum, south of Burton-on-Trent. Use the nearest postcode WS13 8QX.

### Useful information

Fairly flat, smooth paths. There are some areas where the public are not allowed due to sensitive wildlife, please see information on site. Please see on site information on the areas where dogs are permitted. Contact the Trust for disabled access information.