
SEND NATURE TRAILS

PAPERCOURT MARSHES (TQ 034 562)

WHAT IS IT?

The nature reserve comprises 9.68ha (24 acres) of rich, diverse habitats including reedbeds, willow carr, open water, grassland and woodland edges.

WHERE IS IT?

To the north of Send, close to the parish boundary with Ripley, it has Tannery Lane running along its eastern and northern boundaries.

WHAT'S ITS HISTORY?

The area is on the site of a worked out gravel pit which was landscaped in 1995 and Surrey Wildlife Trust has managed the site under a lease from CEMEX since 2000.

The inundated reedbeds and associated habitats at Papercourt Marsh are an important feature of the local landscape. Once widespread in the low-lying river valleys of the south-east, such habitats are now very restricted and often rely on artificial sites like gravel pits. The site forms part of the wider Papercourt Site of Special Scientific Interest.

HOW CAN I ACCESS IT?

Due to its past history, access to the site is restricted and is by permit only.

WHAT MIGHT I SEE?

Fauna

Many of the common Surrey mammals can be found on the site including Fox, Badger, Rabbit and Roe Deer along with their smaller cousins Wood Mouse, Bank Vole, Yellow Necked Mouse and Shrews.

Rich in amphibians and reptiles, summer days are punctuated by the Marsh Frogs' noisy chorus and Great Crested and Common Newts breed in the shallow margins. Dragonflies and Damselflies can also be seen skimming over the water and patrolling the pond edges; including the Downey Emerald.

Flora

A mixture of soil types was used in the restoration of this site, resulting in an interesting mix of plant species often not associated together. Highlights of these are the Orchids including the beautiful Bee Orchid. The short rabbit-grazed grasslands are rich in lichens, and rare mosses can be found on the muddy drawdown zones of the scrape. Unsurprisingly, many of the rarer plants are those associated with wetlands, and include Pink Water-speedwell, Marestalk, Grey Club Rush and Blue Water-speedwell.

Birds

The rich variety of habitats provides a valuable home for many bird species through the seasons with Reed Warbler, Water Rail and Sedge Warbler breeding in the summer. The winter brings large roosts of Reed Bunting, Redwing, Fieldfare and Jackdaw along with increasing flocks of ducks, notably Teal.