

Bowness on Solway

West of Carlisle



What to see

Southern hawkler, migrant hawkler and four-spotted chaser dragonflies, willow tit, ringlet butterfly.

Wildlife has recolonised this former gravel quarry with remarkable speed. Last worked in the 1970s, the nature reserve now has a range of habitats supporting far more species than you might think possible. Gorse, thorn and birch scrub have developed on the drier areas whilst willow is found in the wetter hollows. This scrub provides habitat for breeding willow warbler, willow tit and linnets amongst other species. Hawthorn provides a rich winter food source for birds such as redwings and fieldfares. The open areas have common spotted orchid, knapweed and bird's-foot trefoil, and some of these areas are grazed in autumn and winter to encourage greater species diversity. The flowers provide nectar for a range of insects. 19 species of butterfly have been recorded to date including ringlet, small copper, large skipper and peacock, which can be numerous in late summer, feeding mainly on knapweed. Nearly 100 species of moth have been recorded. The ponds are a major feature of the nature reserve and range from temporary pools to permanent open water. Here, plants such as branched bur reed, yellow iris and water mint can be found. 12 species of dragonfly have been recorded on the nature reserve, many of which breed in the ponds. The largest of these is the emperor, the largest dragonfly in Britain, which was first seen in 2005. Great crested newts, frogs and toads also breed in the ponds. Some of the ponds have recently been re-excavated to begin the process of colonisation again.

The nature reserve was given to Cumbria Wildlife Trust in 1977 by Tilcon.

Location

West of Carlisle

Map reference

OS 1:50,000

Sheet no. 85

Grid reference NY 206 617

Access

There is a waymarked circular route around the reserve (1km/0.6 miles) which has boardwalks over wetter areas and a small number of steps. The reserve is divided by a farm track which provides a short-cut back to the road from several points along the trail.

Directions

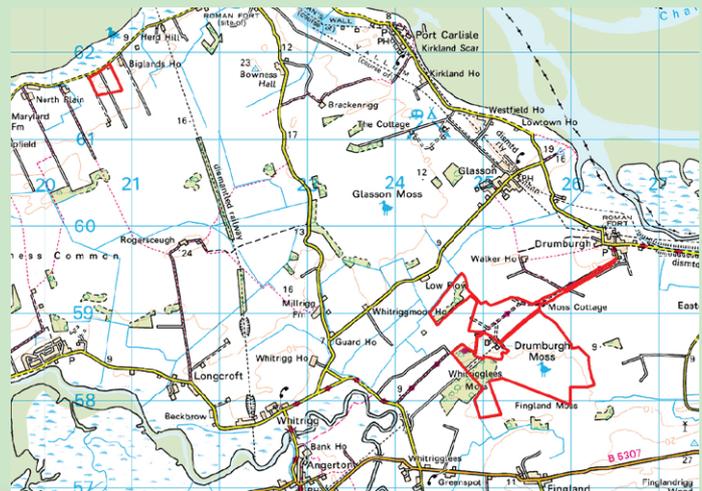
By car From Carlisle take the B5307 to Kirkbride and take right fork to Burgh by Sands before the city boundary. Follow this road all the way to Bowness on Solway and straight through the village. The reserve entrance is the track after Biglands House approximately 1.25km/0.75 miles from the village. From Wigton take the road to Kirkbride. In the village turn left for Anthorn and Bowness. Cross the river and turn right at the junction. At the T junction in Bowness village turn left and follow the road until reserve is reached. Park on the verge at reserve entrance. Please do not obstruct farm track through the reserve. By bicycle The reserve is on National Route 72 Hadrian's Cycleway. By public transport Buses run from Carlisle to Bowness on Solway village.

Size

7.3 hectares

Status

Local Wildlife Site



Map reference:

OS 1:50,000
Sheet no. 85
Grid reference NY 206 617

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