

WEIR WOOD RESERVOIR

The reservoir was created in 1954 by damming the River Medway. Originally built to supply water to Crawley, it is now used only as a control source. It is owned by Southern Water and is just over 2km long by 200m to 300m wide. It covers an area of 150 hectares.

Because of the rich community of breeding, migrating and wintering birds the whole reservoir was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1966. The western end was classified as a Local Nature Reserve in 1988. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) manages the SSSI in consultation with Natural England with input from the Friends.

THE NATURE RESERVE

In addition to the reservoir, there are various habitats, including: water meadows, marsh, pools, reed and streambeds, hedgerows, mature and coppiced woodland. There is a heronry with 20 nests visible from the hide. Great Crested Grebes are present all year round.

Surveys have identified:

- 200 plant species, some uncommon or rare to Sussex, such as the Orange Foxtail.
- 257 species and 5 subspecies of birds.
- 28 species of butterfly including White Admiral.
- 17 species of Damsel and Dragonfly.
- 140 species of moth.

Mammals from Roe Deer to Wood Mice are regularly seen; together with many insect species and snakes.

To avoid disturbance to wildlife access inside the nature reserve is limited to organised parties. These are arranged from time to time by the ESCC Ranger and publicised in the Newsletter and in the ESCC Guided Walks programme. They can be seen at www.eastsussex.gov.uk

FRIENDS OF WEIR WOOD SOCIETY

Formed at the end of 1996, we work with the ESCC Ranger to maintain the Reserve for the benefit of wildlife and to develop the biodiversity of the site.

The full aims and objectives of the Society are set out in our constitution. Members of the Society carry out much of the biological survey work.

Recent conservation work includes: planting hedgerows; creating reed beds, building the Kingfisher bank and creating the Tern rafts.

We maintain over 100 bird-nesting boxes plus bat and dormouse boxes

We have a licensed bird ringer who records for the British Trust for Ornithology.

We keep records of all birds seen at Weir Wood, which are submitted to the Sussex Ornithological Society for the Sussex Bird Report.

The results of our natural history surveys are submitted to the relevant County recording organisations.

During the winter we set up and maintain bird nut and seed feeders by the hide car park.

We publish quarterly Newsletters which are sent to members.



Volunteering

Please come and help us with conservation or survey work. We can find something for all ages and abilities. You will be most welcome.

Working parties meet at the hide on Tuesday mornings at 10am. The dates of weekend working parties are announced in the Newsletter.

Keeping it clean.

Every effort is made by the Friends to keep the hide and car park free of litter.

WHEN TO WATCH BIRDS

Spring and Autumn are good for passing migrants, Ospreys are occasional visitors. When the water level is below 70% then waders can feed at the margins.

Winter brings large numbers of wildfowl to the reservoir. The feeding station by the car park attracts many bird species - and bird watchers. There may be close views of less common species such as Siskin, Marsh Tit, Brambling, Reed Bunting, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Redpoll. Nesting starts in the heronry on the north bank early in the New Year.

Breeding time. The variety of habitats supports a high breeding population. Whitethroats in front of the hide, Mandarin Duck deep in the reserve, Common Tern on the rafts, Great Crested Grebe below the heronry. Check the Kingfisher bank on the north shore opposite the hide.

Post breeding season sees young birds exploring, and the unexpected may occur such as a Night Heron, Spotted Flycatcher or Red Kite.

Raptors such as Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, and Buzzard can be seen regularly throughout the year.



WHERE TO WATCH BIRDS

There is a hide and viewing area by the free car park at the western end of Legsheath Lane.

Other viewing possibilities are from roads (caution):-
Legsheath Lane - south side of reservoir, and
Whillet's Bridge - on the west side.

The Sussex Border and the Millennium footpaths, on the north side, give views across the reservoir. Follow the signs to the Millennium Path car park by the Pumping Station at the dam end.

Those carrying their membership card are permitted to use the path past the Water Bailiff's office by the Weir Wood Sailing Clubhouse at the dam end.

JOIN THE FRIENDS

To join, please complete the form below and return it to :-

Membership Secretary,
10 Woodlands, Pound Hill, Crawley
West Sussex RH10 3DL.

Minimum subscription **£3** per person. All additional donations will be most welcome and will go into the conservation fund

Name

Address

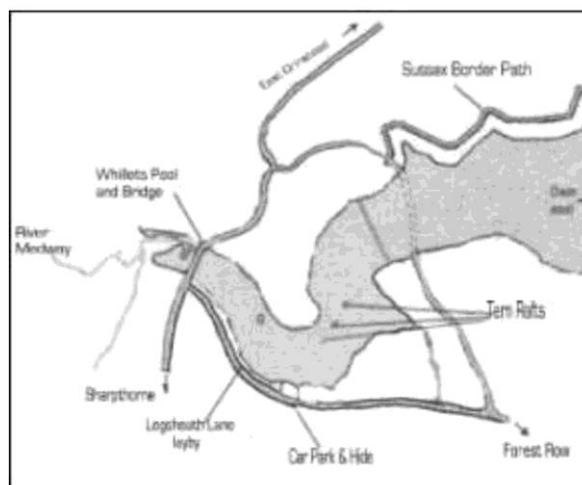
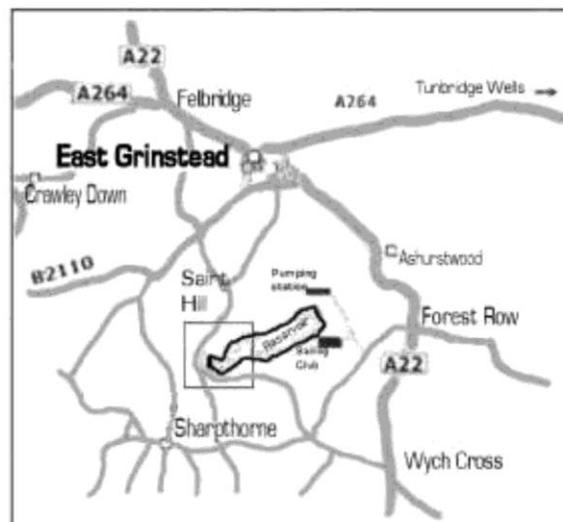
Telephone no.....

I enclose £

Any cheques must be made payable to the
'Friends of Weir Wood', Thank you.

LOCATION

Maps not to scale
OS grid reference TQ3834



Western end and nature reserve.

Bus route 84 crosses Whillet's Bridge.

FRIENDS OF WEIR WOOD SOCIETY



For more information visit
www.weirwood.me.uk