

## Rye Meads

A large, ancient flood meadow which attracts vast numbers of a wide variety of birds and supports many other forms of wildlife. It is jointly managed by the Trust and the RSPB, whose site includes marshes and lagoons adjacent to the River Lea.



We've just had a new arrival at Rye Meads - four konik ponies! They will be helping our three water buffalo to graze the site. Koniks originate from Poland and are the closest living relative of the tarpan, which would have roamed the UK around 4,000 years ago. They are perfect for grazing wetland sites.

The seasonal flooding of the meadow combined with the rich soils and management of the site have resulted in a mosaic of [habitats](#). These habitats consist of reedbeds, marshy grasslands and tall [fen vegetation](#).



In and around the meadow there are ditches, streams and ponds which provide a home to many [invertebrates](#), as well as frogs, toads, newts and grass snakes.

The reedbeds and tall fen vegetation support nesting sedge and reed warblers as well as numerous cuckoos. Small mammals such as water shrew and harvest mice are abundant.

Rye Meads is part of a larger Site of Special Scientific Interest and has recently been designated a Special Protection Area for Birds. There is a visitor centre, signposted trails and excellent hide facilities. The reserve specialises in environmental education and has very good facilities for schools.

### The seasons at Rye Meads

In winter, water rail and bittern may be seen, as can roosting reed buntings and yellowhammers. The meadows attract waders and ducks when flooded - snipe, golden plover and teal.

In summer, the breeding birdlife includes several species of duck, water rail, common tern, lapwing, little ringed plover and redshank. Tits and both whitethroats can be seen, and occasionally grasshopper warblers and yellow wagtail. Meadowsweet and meadow-rue provide the pastel-coloured surroundings.

In autumn, passage can be spectacular with both county and national rarities occurring. Rye Meads is a good place to see snipe, teal and green sandpipers at this time of year. Water voles, water shrews and harvest mice are abundant, and otters have returned to breed after a gap of many years.

- [Get driving directions](#)
- [Find nearby public transport](#)

### How to Get Here

#### Location

Off Rye Road, Hoddesdon

#### Directions

In Hoddesdon follow Rye Road towards Rye House train station, pass station and go over bridge. Follow signs to Rye Meads Visitor Centre - car parking available.

#### Public Transport Links

Station is on the Liverpool Street line (approximately 1km to reserve entrance). Bus to Rye Park estate, Hoddesdon and walk towards train station.

#### Walking Links

#### Map Reference

TL 389103

#### Visitor Guide

## Size

34 hectares

## Access to site

Access is free. Open 10a.m to 5.00 pm (or dusk if earlier) daily, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. No dogs allowed, except for guide dogs. Binocular hire available.

## Access around site

All internal paths are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs and most hides are wheelchair-accessible.

## Walking time

## Advice on what to wear/bring

Wellingtons often required.

## Map of site (if available)

- [Rye Meads map](#)

A site map of Rye Meads Nature Reserve