



Peregrine (Neil Aldridge)

In early **JULY** the meadows are ready to be cut for hay. In the past communities would turn out in force to cut the Ings by hand, with families each having their own strip or 'flat' which they took hay from to feed their animals. Today half a dozen local families tenant the land from the Trust and take this annual hay cut.

By **AUGUST** the grass begins to grow again and sheep and cattle are turned out to graze the re-growth or 'fog' as it is known. Animals stay on the Ings until grass growth slows and river levels start to rise in **LATE AUTUMN** causing the meadows to flood.

In **WINTER**, the floods attract a spectacle of thousands of ducks, geese and waders. The most obvious species are teal and wigeon, plus lots of pintail, mallard and shoveler. Icelandic whooper swans sometimes use the site for roosting and large numbers of greylag geese should be checked for pink-footed, white-fronted or tundra bean geese that occasionally drop in. On the deeper water overlooked by pool hide, tufted duck, pochard and goldeneye can be seen. Large groups of lapwing and golden plover gather, with smaller numbers of ruff, dunlin and curlew. The hordes of wintering birds attract predators including peregrines.



Teal (Martin Batt)



Common blue resting on Yorkshire fog (Bob Coyle)

Whilst not as conspicuous as the wild flowers, Wheldrake Ings supports a whole host of grasses and sedges, from the towering common reed in the wet areas, to the tiniest fescues in the meadows. Key species to look out for are meadow barley, timothy, meadow foxtail and Yorkshire fog.

In early **MAY**, whimbrels gather each evening as they pause during their northbound migration. Reed and grasshopper warblers, lesser whitethroats and garden warblers, fill the marshy areas and willow scrub with their songs. Orange-tip and brimstone butterflies flit along the sunny riverside path. Flotillas of young duck families scoot into the overhanging willows around the pool edges and cerise ragged robin flowers appear in the grassland.

Late **JUNE** sees the meadows at their best with up to 25 plant species per square metre. Look for the raspberry-like heads of great burnet and the cream sprays of meadowsweet. Bright yellow meadow vetchling scramble through the grassland and the large showy heads of ox-eye daisy can easily be seen from the riverside path. This type of meadow community is uncommon now, and the area at Wheldrake Ings is of international importance, designated a Special Area of Conservation.

The nature reserve hums with insects during the **SUMMER**, including lots of dragon and damselflies and some very rare beetles. Fish such as pike and rudd can be glimpsed in the ditches and otters have bred on the reserve on several occasions in the past few years. Look for them from Pool Hide or along the river.



Great burnet and meadow foxtails (Carol Warren)

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a local charity working to protect and conserve Yorkshire's wild places and wildlife for all to enjoy.

We care for over 95 nature reserves throughout the county and run loads of events so that everyone can get out and experience wild Yorkshire for themselves.

Get in touch

Call: 01904 659570

Email: info@ywt.org.uk

Find us: YO19 6AS

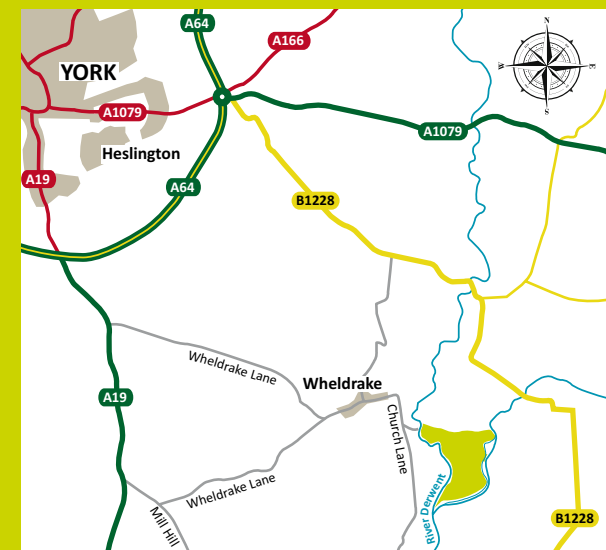
Grid reference: SE694444



It is thanks to the fantastic support of our members, volunteers and supporters that we are able to continue with this work.

Why not join us?

Joining is easy! From a small amount per month you can support Yorkshire's Wildlife and wild places and get involved with loads of fab activities and events. Visit www.ywt.org.uk or ask a member of staff for details.



Location

Wheldrake Ings is 8 miles south-east of York, 4 miles east of the A19. From Wheldrake follow the road (Carr Lane) towards Thorganby. Half a mile after the sharp right hand bend, look for a narrow road to your left and the nature reserve sign.

Drive down to the bottom and park on the stony area next to the bridge over the River Derwent. York - Selby buses stop on the Wheldrake to Thorganby road 25 metres north of the top of the entrance road.



www.ywt.org.uk

Yorventure

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is registered in England No.409650 and is a registered charity No. 210807



Yorkshire
Wildlife Trust

WHELDRAKE INGS

Nature Reserve



Love Yorkshire, Love Wildlife



Snipe are long-billed wading birds that can be heard calling 'chipa-chipa-chipa' high in the sky, especially early in the morning or in the evening, before diving down with their tail fanned. This springtime activity results in a vibrating hum caused by air rushing over the outspread tail feathers, known as drumming.

For centuries **WHELDRAKE INGS** has been managed in a traditional way, working in harmony with the natural cycle of the seasons and their effect on the land.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

As **WINTER** floodwaters recede the rich meadows burst into life and cuckoo flower and marsh marigold are the first to add splashes of colour to the landscape. Brown hares and roe deer can be conspicuous.



Marsh marigold (Suzanna Bird)

In **MARCH**, spring is heralded by the arrival of shelducks and oystercatchers and as wintering birds leave, scarce migrant species such as black-tailed godwits and garganey can sometimes be seen.

APRIL sees a rush of summer visitors, with sand martins and swallows hawking insects over the marshes, cuckoos, willow warblers and sedge warblers singing, whilst the air is filled with the calls of displaying lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe.



Hare (Mark Davison)

WHELDRAKE INGS NATURE RESERVE
Trail Navigation Map



HISTORY

A Yorkshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve since the early 1970's **WHELDRAKE INGS** sits at the heart of the Lower Derwent Valley Living Landscape.

Management here is a fine balance of controlling water levels to support the wintering, passage and breeding birds, whilst also creating the right conditions for the rare floodplain grassland to thrive.

Hay cutting and grazing takes place annually and regular maintenance and cleaning of the ditches and pools is required, which each winter receive deposits of silt as the River Derwent bursts its banks and spreads across its floodplain. Willow scrub, though valuable in places, needs to be kept out of the meadows, and invasive plants such as ragwort, dock and Himalayan balsam are controlled.



Otter (Wildstock)

Accessibility/Reserve information

- Opening times:** All the time. No dogs on site at any time.
- Bird hides:** There are four along the path
- Car park:** At the main entrance
- Interpretation:** Storyboards along the path and Identification boards in hides
- Paths:** Muddy after wet weather. Special access kissing gate allows buggy entrance.