

TEACHERS' INFORMATION PACK



TEES VALLEY

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SECTION 1: Pre-Visit Information

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in visiting Tees Valley Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves. We hope that the experience will give your pupils inspiration and information.

The visit allows pupils to see for themselves what happens on a Nature Reserve works, in an enjoyable and safe environment.

This pack will help you to prepare a successful programme tailored to suit the needs of your group.

The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust is working with Natural England and has signed up to Environmental Stewardship and as a result can offer free visits to its nature reserves.

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust is a registered charity established in 1979 and is a member of the Wildlife Trusts Partnership with over 310,000 members. The aim of the Trust is to conserve within the Tees valley area, as varied a range as possible of wildlife habitats and species along with areas of geological importance. The Trust achieves this by:

- Working with local authorities, business and other to protect, manage and enhance land for wildlife.
- Promoting life long learning in environmental matters through a programme of education and training.
- Managing its nature reserves as example of good practise.
- Working with local partners to ensure that wildlife and natural places contribute to the environmental, social and economic regeneration of the tees valley.

This is primarily achieved through wildlife conservation, nature reserve management and education and community involvement working with schools in urban communities - areas that are generally socially and economically disadvantaged. The Trust believes that wildlife and natural places can contribute significantly to raising the Quality of Life for local people and contribute to the social and economic regeneration of the area.

Inspire and Learn

Take the classroom into the great outdoors for some fresh air and inspiring science lessons. There's no better way to introduce children to biodiversity than to take them outside to experience it for themselves.

Our aim is to give you a memorable day out on one of our beautiful educational nature reserves in the Tees Valley, where the children learn about nature in a safe, active, fun way. All our sessions instill an awareness of how to treat animals and plants with care and sensitivity and to observe them carefully. We also emphasise the need to look after our environment and see how we fit into the natural world and its links to farming

What is farming?

Farming is the age-old practice of producing crops and livestock for food, fuel and fibre. The origins of human civilisation are closely linked to the development of farming when primitive hunter gatherers were gradually replaced by farmers producing the first domesticated plants and animals.

Modern agriculture is a highly competitive global industry. The UK produces 70% of the food we eat, the rest coming from other parts of the world. It is the first link in a sophisticated chain to prepare and process our food before we buy it in the shops. What a farmer grows depends on individual circumstances such as location, weather conditions, size of the farm, history of the area and market forces.

Farming has created the landscape that we see. It is the hedges and walls that divide fields that give the landscape its pattern, along with areas of trees and the colours of different crops. By carrying out activities such as cutting hedges and planting trees, farmers are helping to look after much of the wildlife in the countryside.

Many farmers and land owners also now operate broader enterprises to include leisure activities and environmental management. Defra provides advice and funding through agri-environment schemes to encourage farmers to follow farming methods that enhance the landscape, encourage wildlife, protect resources, archaeological and historic features and improve opportunities for enjoying the countryside, by providing access.

By conserving our countryside in this way we also play our part in the international agreement to maintain the natural diversity of animals and plants throughout the world.

Site Information

Contact details:

Contact person: *Steve Ashton*

Contact address: *Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Margrove Heritage Centre, Boosbeck, Saltburn.*

Post code: *TS12 3BZ*

Tel no: *01287 636382*

Mobile no: *07713985450*

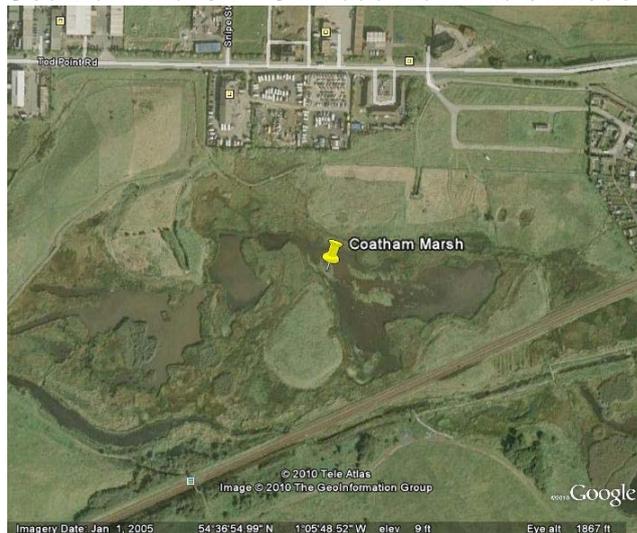
Fax: *01287 636383*

Email: *info@teeswildlife.org*

Website address: www.teeswildlife.org

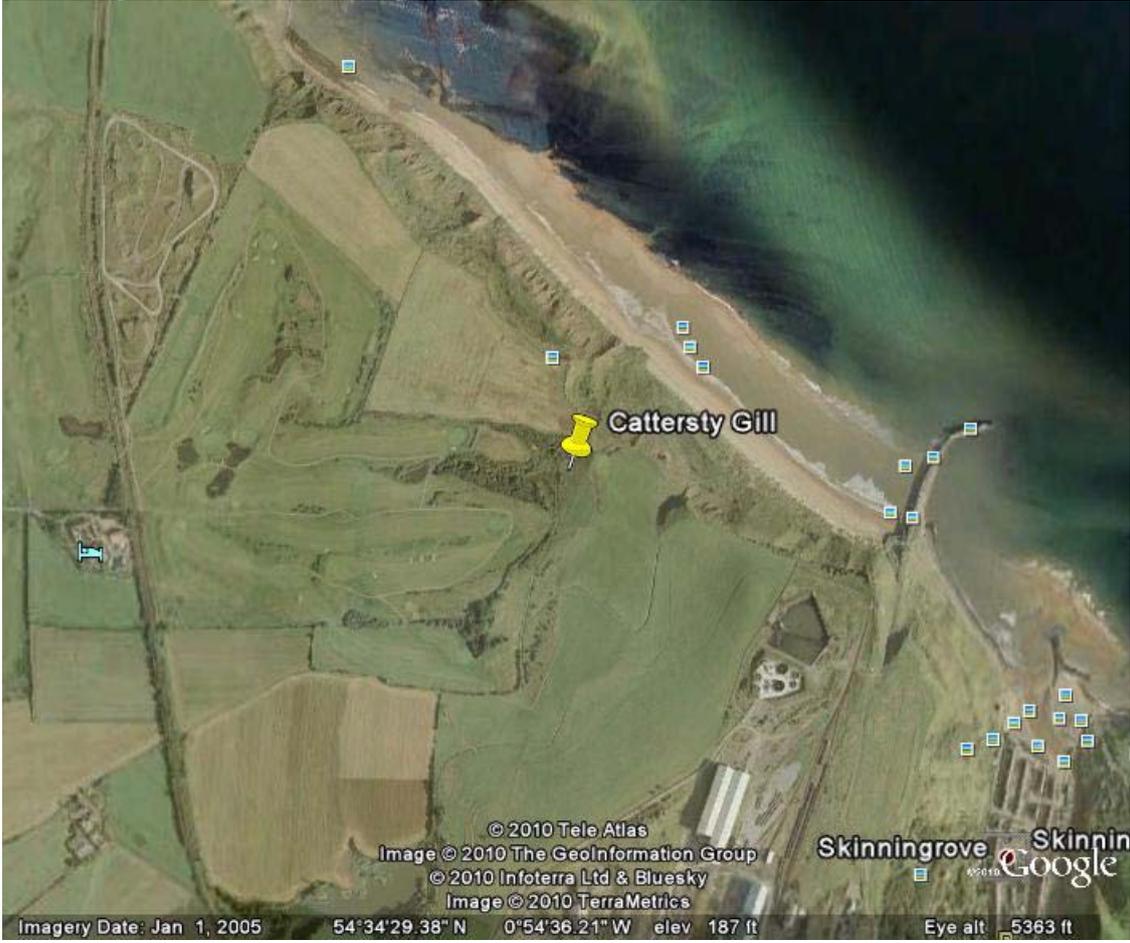
Reserves you can visit

Coatham Marsh - Off Todd Point Rd at Redcar





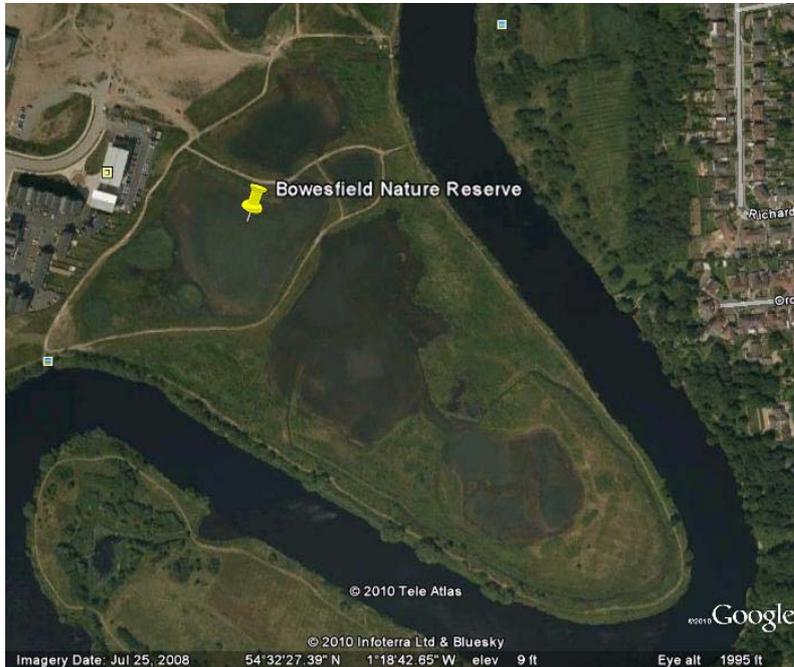
Cattersty Gill - near Skinningrove



Maze Park / Portrack Marsh - on the banks of the Tees at Stockton



Preston Farm / Bowesfield - just off the roundabout of Concorde Way, Myton and Bowesfield Lane between Stockton and Ingleby Barwick.



Booking a visit:

In the first instance, please telephone the Trust. **Visits are free** but you will need to organise and pay for transport. I will send booking form once a date has been agreed and this will be followed by a confirmation letter.

Cancellation arrangements:

If you are unable to carry out your visit, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements.

More Details

Name of reserve	Location	How to get there	Facilities
Coatham Marsh	Redcar NZ 586287	The reserve is best reached via the A1085 Redcar – Middlesbrough Trunk Road, at the crossroads with Kirkleatham Lane turn left and head up to the next mini roundabout. Turn left onto Tod Point Road and continue on for a further ¼ of a mile, having gone over the railway bridge the reserve is on your left hand side. Drop off only no parking on site.	No toilets on site
Cattersty Gill	Skiningrove NZ 705204	Access to site can be difficult and means a 15-minute walk from the nearest car park in Skinningrove. Drop off only no parking on site.	No toilets on site
Maze Park / Portrack Marsh	Stockton /Middlesbrough NZ467191 NZ465194 Nearest post code TS17 6QB	From the A66 follow signs for the Tees Barrage. After the bridge over the Marshalling Yards take the second exit at the roundabout and drive over the Tees Barrage, take the first right and then Second right into the car park. Car park with space for coaches on site.	No toilets on site
Preston Farm / Bowesfield	Stockton NZ440160 Nearest post code TS18 3NB	The reserve is situated alongside the River Tees in Stockton, just one mile south of the A66. At the roundabout on the junction of Bowesfield Lane with Concord Way, head east on Kingfisher Way onto the new Bowesfield Estate. Follow Kingfisher Way down to the River. A car park is provided on the edge of the nature reserve, immediately adjacent to Archers Law office.	No toilets on site

The reserves don't have toilets but it is possible for us to arrange for you to use local facilities.

More information can be found at <http://www.teeswildlife.org/reserves.htm>

On arrival:

You will be met by a member of Trust staff who will lead the session

The visit:

Visits can last either half day 10.00am-12.00pm or 12.30am -2.30pm.

Full day visits are also available.

Class size limited to around 30 pupils.

Unfortunately due to the nature of the terrain wheelchairs can be rather difficult to manage but we are open to suggestions, as we are to all disabilities. Please advise us of any issues and we can see what we can do – a pre-visit is advised.

We recommend a ratio of at least 1 adult to 10 pupils.

Evaluation Form:

This visit is provided free of charge. In order for us to be able to claim a payment as part of our *Environmental Stewardship Agreement* we require that you complete an evaluation form which we will provide. See appendix 1. Please take a few moments to complete this form after the visit and hand it to us before you leave. Additional feedback regarding the visit is also appreciated. Thank you.

Complaints procedure

If you have any complaints regarding your visit please inform us so that we are able to improve our service. You may also write to:

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Rural Development Service
Access Management Unit
Woodthorne
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV6 8TQ

Booking Form

School / Organisation

Address			
Postcode			
Telephone			
Name of teacher organising and leading visit			
Email address			
Local Authority			
Visit Details			
Date			
Intended arrival time		Departure time	
Number of teaching staff attending		Number of other adults	
Number of pupils		Year group(s)	
Details of additional needs or special requirements we should be aware of (i.e. wheelchair users, visually impaired etc.)			
Session/activity title(s)			
Any Specific Learning Objectives for the visit:			
Signed (Teacher leading visit)			

Cancellation Fees

As a charity it is our policy to charge a cancellation fee for the time spent in preparing for visits and the loss of other bookings.

If a cancellation is received within 3 weeks of the proposed session date a £10 fee will be charged. If cancellation is received within 10 days of the proposed session date £25 fee will be charged

Please indicate how you learnt about activities with the Wildlife Trust

LA Web / Bulletin Flyer Web Word of mouth Previous Visit

Other (please specify)

Section 2: The Countryside Classroom

The countryside offers an invaluable teaching resource. The visit can be used to teach all aspects of the curriculum through learning about the countryside and farming. We hope that this information pack will give you ideas to inspire your pupils and get the most out of your visit.

Please note that we regularly update this Teachers Information Pack. It would be greatly appreciated if following your visit you pass to us any lesson plans, activity ideas or worksheets that have been successfully used on our site so that they can be incorporated into our pack if appropriate. Please list any equipment needed for the activities.

Learning experiences outside the classroom are often the most memorable, helping young people to make sense of the world around them, and integrate new experiences and understandings into all aspects of their formal and informal learning. By realising that learning does not only happen within the classroom, young people start on the journey of lifelong learning.

To achieve our goal of making the UK the best place in the world to grow up in, children and young people need to have experiences that help them learn and flourish. They need to enjoy and achieve from their early years, through childhood as they become young people and young adults.

Learning outside the classroom clearly supports the principles and goals of the [Children's Plan](#) and [Every Child Matters](#), particularly in terms of identifying and realising the potential of all young people of all ages ([an alternative view of ECM](#)). [The big picture](#) expresses the entire planned learning experience for all young people.

There is an increasing body of evidence which clearly demonstrates the benefits for young people's learning and personal development outside the classroom. In summary, when young people learn outside the classroom, they:

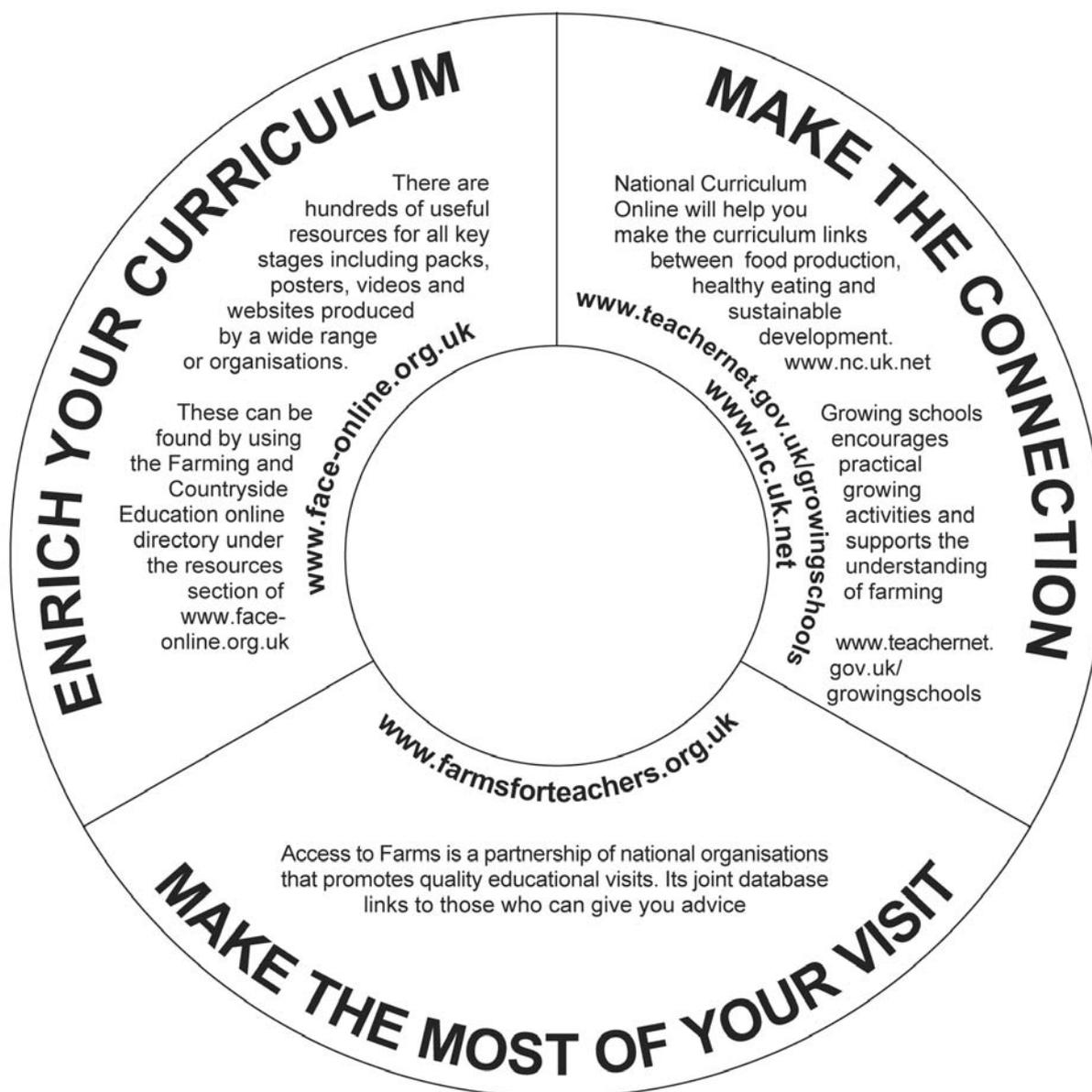
- are exposed to new experiences
- learn in different ways related to their learning styles
- are motivated to learn more and feel positive about learning
- become self-confident, developing self-esteem and self-awareness
- work collaboratively, fostering decision-making and teamwork

- improve communication skills with peers and adults
- are healthier, and their sense of well-being increases
- appreciate the links between formal and informal learning

Learning opportunities

The Nature reserves can be used to deliver different activities and different elements of the curriculum.

Name of reserve	Coatham Marsh	Cattersty Gill	Maze Park / Portrack Marsh	Preston Farm / Bowesfield
Pond dipping- Opal Investigations	√		√	√
Minibeasts	√	√	√	√
Sensational Senses	√	√	√	√
Habitat detectives	√	√	√	√
Reserve Management	√	√	√	√
All about birds	√	√	√	√
Eye project recording	√	√	√	√
Environmental Art	√	√	√	√



Links to the National Curriculum

At Key Stage 1 the site visit can widen the pupils' first-hand experience in a whole range of **visual, tactile and other sensory situations**. Within this are the important messages of **the life cycle** and **seasonal change**. There is a wealth of opportunity for **language development** and **literacy skills**.

At Key Stage 2 the visit can stimulate and excite pupils' curiosity. It also satisfies their curiosity as they begin to **apply their knowledge and understanding** of ideas. Pupils can consider the nature reserve as a good example of an

environment affected by human activity, think about **attitudes to conservation**, the rural environment and the **conflicts of interest** that arise. They talk about their work and its significance and **communicate their ideas** using a **wide range of language**.

At Key Stage 3 many different subject requirements can be satisfied. Pupils can **investigate and debate** a wide range of **complex issues** and begin to understand the **environmental, social and economic** implications.

At Key Stage 4 site visits can be used to deliver examination subjects both academic and vocational. Contact with countryside workers will help to focus on the real life **application of skills within the workplace**, engaging pupils with **contemporary issues** and focusing on their role as users and consumers.

Section 3: On the Site

Risk assessment

We recommend a pre-visit to our site, during which you can carry out a risk assessment and become familiar with the site. Any specific requirements or needs of the visiting group can be discussed. A copy of the site's risk assessment is available on request.

Health & safety

We comply with Health and Safety Regulations. However it is important that all pupils and supervising adults are aware of the correct Health and Safety guidelines.

The risk of infection is very small, but disease caused by an infection could be serious. By following simple guidelines, similar to everyday basic hygiene recommendations, the risk can be easily minimised.

Clothing

Make sure that pupils wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy outdoor shoes (not sandals) or wellington boots if possible.

Behaviour

Teachers/group leaders are responsible for the pupil's behaviour throughout the visit. Pupils' should understand how to behave on the farm and always follow the Countryside Code (see overleaf).

SCHOOL VISITS CODE OF PRACTICE

Our aim is to give all children a positive experience during their school visit. It is important that every child should be valued and encouraged to contribute to the best of their ability. Where possible all children will be given opportunities to be included and participate fully in all activities. We aim to create an environment in which everybody is respected and feels safe and secure.

In order to achieve this we aim to:

Provide access for all

When planning and delivering activities thought will be given to enabling children with a range of mental and physical abilities to participate.

Encourage mutual respect

By our friendly approach and group ethos we hope to create an atmosphere in which everybody is respected.

Value every child

While encouraging the individual to do their best, our aim is to engender a spirit of co-operation rather than competition.

Provide a safe and secure environment

All staff and volunteers who work with young people are CRB checked. At no time will a single child be alone with a Tees Valley Wildlife Trust adult. We ensure all employed staff working with children are trained in First Aid; the school, however, is ultimately responsible for their own First Aid. Any incident or accident will be recorded in the notes on the planning sheet and in the Accident Book.

Risk assessments for individual activities are available on the Trust on request. The Trust has £10 million Public Liability cover.

Provide trained staff

All employed staff running our activities will have appropriate qualifications. All activities are risk assessed annually in accordance with our Health & Safety Policy. Leaders are suitably qualified to work with a class; volunteers are trained to work with groups of up to 15 children. The Education team have a regular professional training programme.

The Countryside Code:

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Education packs are available from countrysidecode@face-online.org.uk

SECTION 4: The Sites

Coatham Marsh

Coatham Marsh is a 134 acre nature reserve bordered by Redcar on two sides, a Steel works and the Sea on another, but its wetland features attract a diverse and important number of birds. These features include two large lakes, Round Lake and Long Lake, which are fringed with Phragmites, and Middle and West Marsh which are low lying areas prone to flooding but also useful areas of exposed mud for waders to feed.

SPRING is often heralded by the return of the Shelduck that come to the Tees estuary to breed, but Coatham is also a good place to see spring migrants on passage and anything can turn up. In the past this has included Wood Sandpiper, Temmincks Stint, Black Redstart and even a Stone Curlew.

SUMMER sees the return of the Sedge Warblers as well as Grasshopper Warbler in some years. Swift, Swallow and House Martins are always present in good numbers as they hawk over the marsh for insects. But summer is when the grasslands come into their own with swathes of Marsh Orchids and small groups of Bee Orchids appearing, as well as Yellow Rattle, Eyebright and Knapweeds to name but a few.

AUTUMN is again a time for the birds with migrants returning to their wintering grounds; species to look out for are the occasional Ruff, Black – tailed Godwit, and Curlew Sandpiper. Other waders begin to build up in large numbers including Oystercatcher, Redshank and Snipe.

WINTER is the time for wildfowl with large numbers of Widgeon and Teal overwintering on the flooded grasslands as well as Shoveler, Gadwall, Tufted Duck and Pochard.

‘Did you know?’:

1.Coatham Marsh is the site of a battle between the Saxons and the Normans during William the Conqueror’s “Harrying of the North”.

2.Some of the smaller mounds on Middle Marsh are remnants of medieval salt workings, one of which is called Wryneck Salt Mound.

3. Coatham Marsh was the first nature reserve to be managed by the then Cleveland Wildlife Trust.

What's there?

Wildlife: Mammals: Fox, Stoat and Water Vole

Birds: Canada Geese, Lapwing, Snipe, Dunlin, Skylark, Wheatear, Reed Bunting, Linnet, Merlin, Sparrowhawk, Coot, Ruddy Duck and Little Grebe

Plants: Fragrant Orchid, Adders Tongue Fern, Purple Milk Vetch, Yellow Wort, Harebell, Tansy, Celery - leaved Buttercup, Lady's Bedstraw, Restharrow and Common Spike Grass.

Cattersty Gill

The reserve is comprised of several large tracts of scrub and several areas of lime - rich grassland. The scrub provides an important refuge and refueling stop for migrants since it is one of the first sources of food when reaching land. It can be a good place to see some of the winter thrushes, or flocks of goldcrests. Rarities in the past have included Dusky Warbler and Red - flanked Bluetail. The summer sees Pyramidal and Common Spotted Orchids appearing in the grassland as well as Common Centaury, Yellow Wort, Wild Marjoram and Harefoot Clover.

Maze Park

Situated next to the Tees Barrage the park is a regenerated site of the old railway marshalling yards, created in the 1990's. The 3 conical mounds support their own distinctive vegetation communities; one can be climbed to achieve splendid views of the Tees Valley. The plants and wildflowers in turn support 17 species of butterfly, including the rare Grayling and Dingy Skipper. Much of the grassland in the reserve is managed to benefit these species. The views over the River Tees also provide good opportunities to see Common Seal, Sand Martin and migrating Salmon.

Portrack Marsh

Situated next to the River Tees the marsh has a patchwork of habitats that support a wealth of wildlife including Kingfisher, Harvest Mouse and Burnet Moth. Visitors can use the extensive footpath network to access fringe open marshes leaving the centre of the site undisturbed for wildlife. The marsh plays host to overwintering ducks and in summer to many migrant visitors.

Bowesfield/ Preston Farm

This wetland reserve is formed by three loops in the River Tees, each with its own character and special wildlife. Bowesfield is home to a growing number of birds (such as stonechat, water rail, lapwing and curlew) which roost and feed in the rich, wet grassland and lakes found on the site. The reserve also offers opportunities to spot otters and sand martins along the river. Reedbeds on the site are home to reed bunting and harvest mouse, whilst roe deer can often be seen moving through the reserve.

The reserve includes the following habitats:

2.1 Ha of open water for wetland birds (over-wintering teal and shoveler)

9.4 hectares of floodplain grazing marsh (golden plover, curlew and redshank)

1.5 ha reedbed to support breeding birds (sedge warbler and grasshopper warbler and to assist the recovery of otter)

6 ha / 12,500 trees forming a new woodland, linking existing areas of woodland at Bassleton Woods and Preston Hall

Species/features of interest:

This depends on which reserve you visit but it is possible to see a range of species including: Wetland birds and invertebrates, Butterflies including grayling and dragonflies, Wildflower meadows. If you visit Bowesfield and Preston Park you have an opportunity to see how a relatively new nature reserve has been developed.

Wildlife, archaeological or landscape designations e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Park, Scheduled Monuments, Site of Special Scientific Interest etc

The reserves all fall under Local Wildlife Sites designations and contain a variety of BAP and LBAP priority species. Several scheduled monuments are visible at Coatham Marsh which are known as saltern mounds; a by-product of salt extraction - some of the earliest industry to take place on the site.

What is being done for conservation on the Nature Reserves?

The reserves are all managed with conservation in mind. At Coatham Marsh the grassland is being managed to provide nesting and feeding habitat for breeding and over-wintering migratory birds, while the reedbeds and open water bodies are managed for breeding waders, geese, swans and ducks.

The grassland at Maze Park is managed to support a number of rare invertebrates including some regionally scarce butterfly species, while the reedbed at Portrack Marsh is managed to support breeding birdlife.

The Bowesfield and Preston Park sites have recently been developed, with new reedbeds being created to help provide flood alleviation measures on the Tees floodplain. An otter holt has also been built at Bowesfield, and bird boxes installed to provide additional nesting opportunities.

Species list are available for all sites.

Section 5: What your site has to offer

We can offer the following activities:

Mini-beasts

Children will investigate mini-beasts from a variety of different habitats – including both land and pond mini-beasts. Habitats that we investigate can include: Grassland, Hedgerows, Trees, Leaf Litter, Log Piles and ponds. A number of different collection techniques will be taught these may include: sweep netting, tree beating, pond dipping and quiet hunting. (the habitats investigated and the time of year will dictate which of these techniques will be employed.) We encourage the use of keys to identify creature collected. If you wish to use worksheets the children will be asked to observe creatures carefully, draw them and answer questions about them.

Sensational Senses

The children will play a variety of senses based games – making smelly tea, distinguishing trees by their bark, listening to the sounds of the countryside and investigating different textures in the natural world.

Then, we will look at mini-beasts in our log pile and grass land, children will be asked to discuss how the animals move and what they look like.

Finally, if there is time, we will return to the centre to play some games to investigate the mini-beasts further, looking at animal body part vocabulary and various adaptations they have.

All about birds

The pupils will play a variety of games and do activities prompting them to discuss adaptation, feeding habits and variation. Then there will be a walk looking and listening to the local bird life.

Habitats Detectives

In this session children will get the opportunity to investigate a variety of habitats. The habitats that we will use will depend on the time of year and which ones will have most active wildlife in them at the time.

Habitats that we try to use are: Ponds, Grassland, Woodland and Hedgerows. As well as looking at the different habitats and considering comparisons between them the children will also get the opportunity to investigate the different creatures living in the different habitats.

We have a wide range of mini-beast and pond beast collection pots and viewers. Children are encouraged to use keys to identify the creatures that they find.

OPAL Water Survey

Help the OPAL water scientists with their water survey.

Animals living in the water can tell us a great deal about how polluted it may or may not be. Some species will struggle to survive in polluted waters, while others are more tolerant.

Eye Project

This will involve the class spending sometime recording the habitats and species of animals, birds and plants that can be found on the Nature Reserves.

This is followed by the pupils inputting the information onto a map based system through the internet back at school.

Reserve Management

Pupils become wardens for the session, they investigate what species of plants and animals can be found on the reserve. We look at what sort of management goes on and then pupils come up with their own ideas for improving the reserve.

Environmental Art

Pupils follow a sensory walk and a look at what species are found on the reserve, pupils get the opportunity to collect natural materials to do an art based activity. This could be sketching, painting, or natural sculptures.

More details about all these activities can be found at www.teeswildlife.org

School Membership

If you enjoyed your trip to one of our Nature reserve you might consider being a Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Schools Member.

We aim to give you access to high quality resources on wildlife and environmental issues in the UK. You will also be contributing to the only charity that looks after the biodiversity in the Tees Valley area.

By joining the Trust you can equip yourself and the school with the latest information about the state of wildlife, and the factors influencing our habitats and species. You will also be provided with ideas and templates for activities you can use to engage young people in biodiversity, citizenship and sustainable issues.

The package is suitable for use:

- in the curriculum
- within study support
- as extension work for gifted and talented,
- as a foundation for informal activities run as extended school activity
- to link with eco-schools and sustainable schools work.

The Package

When you join the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust you get a welcome pack and certificate plus 4 mailings a year.

You get

- 10% off all schools workshops.
- Wildlife Link for teachers - Bulletin of projects, publications, events and other initiative relevant to anyone engaged in education about environmental issues or biodiversity. It includes photocopyable activity sections.
- 4 mailings a year to include 5 copies of "Watchword" our children's magazine packed with wildlife features, environmental stories, quizzes, competitions, cartoons and news. A great way to make topics accessible to all. This includes an A2 full sized colour poster.
- Natural World. The Wildlife Trusts magazine that informs readers about UK conservation through news reviews and features relating to the work of "The Wildlife Trusts".
- Greenbits. Tees Valley Wildlife Trust's own publication packed with local news and details about the Trust work.

- Access to phone advice on Biodiversity and Environmental Education issues
- Opportunities to take part in free workshops linked to Trust projects

How to join Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

School Subscription to TVWT costs £40.00 per year.
Please fill in the form below and return to. Tee Valley Wildlife Trust,
Margrove Heritage Centre, Margrove Park, Boosbeck, Saltburn, TS12 3BZ

I wish to join the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

Main Contact

Address

Postcode

Telephone

I enclose cheque (made payable to Tees Valley Wildlife Trust) for £40.00.

I enclose official order form/number for £40.00