

# 15 RABBITBANK WOOD

A varied site that consists of oak woodland, marsh, willow carr and species rich wet pasture therefore offering something of interest in all seasons. The reserve is quiet and secluded and is a pleasant retreat.



Rabbitbank Wood



Hazel, Holly and Oak

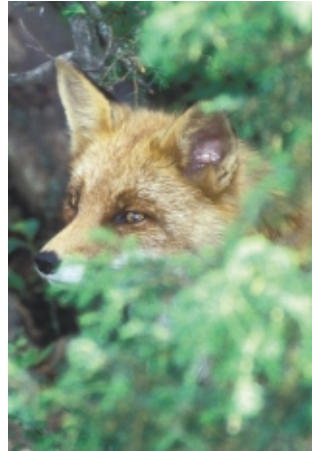
The woodland is dominated by sessile oak which is regenerating freely following erection of fencing to prevent browsing by sheep and deer. The ageing oaks provide nest sites for woodpeckers and support a wide variety of other woodland birds. The under-story consists of large amounts of Holly and some Hazel, the ground flora is typical of an acid woodland, including species such as Bluebells, Foxglove and the parasitic Cow-wheat. The woodland is very rich in mosses and lichens which in turn support interesting invertebrate populations. Woodland mammals include Roe Deer and Badger with Moles and Water Shrew recorded in the pasture.

Knitsley Burn and Beggarside Burn run through the site. Brook Lamprey, an eel like primitive fish has been recorded in the burns. Lamprey are found only in clean water.

The marshy grassland consists of dry hummocks and boggy hollows, with Meadowsweet, Marsh Marigold, Cuckooflower and Marsh Valerian common throughout. Frogs are common and a wide range of invertebrates associated with saturated soils occur.

Willow and Alder Carr habitat is rare in County Durham and has formed naturally where the two burns converge. These are the two species of trees that are able to tolerate the waterlogged conditions on site.

**Best seen – Spring time for woodland flora and birds.**



Fox

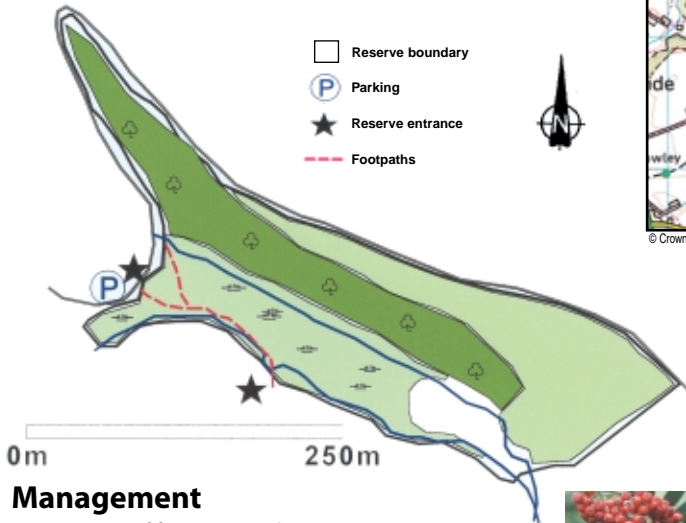


Red Campion



Foxglove

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## Management

Maintenance of fences around the woodland ensure that regenerating trees are not browsed by deer and sheep. Management of the willow carr is dependent on control of water levels to prevent excessive prolonged waterlogging. Coppicing is carried out to promote regeneration of the senescent willow.

The marshy pasture is managed through periodic cutting and stock grazing.

The site provides many opportunities for surveying the woodland invertebrates and gall fauna.

*Marsh Marigold*



*Rowan*

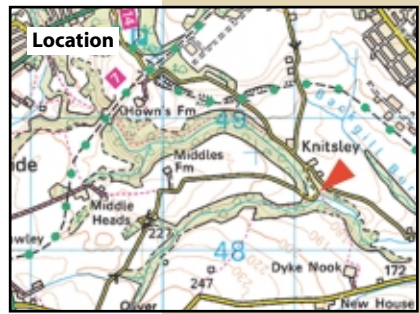
Holly has many practical uses, it was thought to have magical powers over horses and for this reason the white pliable wood was made into horse whips in the eighteenth century.



*Badger*

## Location

The reserve is between Consett and Lanchester, and best approached from the A68. Turn off eastwards at NZ088477, one mile south of Castleside and take the first turning on the left, down the narrow winding Knitsley Lane. The reserve lies to the west of the road where there is limited roadside parking for 3 cars. There is very limited access at this reserve, restricted to just two small area of public footpath over styles from the roadsides and across the marshy pasture.



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## General Information

**Ownership:**  
Durham Wildlife Trust

**Area:** 7.0 hectares

**Grid Reference:**  
NZ 112484

**O.S. Explorer Map No:** 307

**Parking access to site:**  
Parking is limited to 2 or 3 cars on the grass verge by the entrance. Limited access on foot via two public footpaths.

**Public transport:**  
Not accessible by public transport.

**Dogs:** Dogs must be kept on leads at all time.

**Accessibility:** ▲▲▲▲

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