

Formerly known as Gwent Levels Wetlands Reserve

On Wednesday 16 April 2008, eight years after it was officially opened, Newport Wetlands Reserve was recognised as a nationally important haven for wildlife and designated as a National Nature Reserve.

Created as part of a compensation package for wildlife habitats lost when the Cardiff Bay barrage was built, during its short life, the Reserve has developed and matured. Over 65 hectares of reedbeds were planted on what were the nearby power station's pulverised fuel ash disposal areas. These now attract nationally important numbers of breeding water rail and cetti's warbler and are the only known breeding site for bearded tit in Wales. At the other end of the reserve, are the famous saline lagoons, which have become a home to Wales' first pairs of breeding avocets.

Between these two habitats you will find the wet grasslands, where the ancient ridge and furrow field system has become an important feature of the Reserve. Here, a number of new furrows were excavated to help manage water levels on the Reserve to support breeding lapwing and redshank.

Newport Wetlands is home to otters, water shrews, brown hares and polecats as well as a wide range of dragonflies, moths and butterflies. The pulverised fuel ash near the reedbeds provides a substrate for six species of orchid to flourish as well as scarce plants such as narrow-leaved birdsfoot trefoil, dittander and narrow-leaved everlasting pea.

A 6km network of paths has been re-surfaced around the Uskmouth Reedbeds to allow access for all. There are benches approximately every 100m

. The paths are level with some gentle slopes and a 'zig-zag' ramp to climb the 5m up to the raised level of the reedbeds

. Viewing screens have been installed across the deepwater channels of five of the reedbeds and one of the reedbeds has a raised viewing platform and there is a bird hide over-looking one of the reedbeds

. A floating pontoon also forms a direct route to the East Usk Lighthouse.

A stunning, new Environmental Education and Visitor Centre, owned by RSPB, opened at the reserve in March 2008. The centre includes space for group and family activities, conference facilities, a large RSPB retail area and coffee shop. The shop stocks a range of wildlife books, bird food and feeders, nest boxes and RSPB and Viking optics. All of the tea and coffee served in the coffee shop is Fairtrade and organic. They also sell a range of delicious cakes, cold drinks and sandwiches. There is a bus service, No 63, from Newport Bus Station to the Reserve car park on Mondays to Saturdays (no service on Sundays).

- Events – [Click on link](#)
- Cycling – is only allowed on the way-marked Cycle Track at Uskmouth.
- Dogs – dogs (accept assistance dogs) are not allowed in the Visitor Centre, environs or wider reserve (except on Public Rights of Way – the only one at Uskmouth being the Cycle Track).
- Directions - The Reserve car park is on West Nash Road, 0.3km before the entrance to Uskmouth Power Station, grid reference ST 334834. Follow the 'brown duck' signs from the western entrance to Llanwern

Steelworks.

- The Cardiff Bay Development Corporation funded the purchase and construction of the reserve, as part of compensation measures for the loss of the Taf/Ely Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest, following the construction of the Cardiff Bay Barrage. Newport Wetlands was transferred to NRW in March 2000.

- The Natural Resources Wales (NRW) manages the reserve and works in partnership with Newport City Council (NCC) and the RSPB to maximise the full visitor interpretation and educational potential of the site.

- A European Objective 2 grant, supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, funded the reserve's new environmental education and visitor centre. Funding also came from Newport European Partnership, Newport City Council's allocation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Local Regeneration Fund, Newport City Council's Landfill Tax Credit Scheme and Visit Wales. The overall vision is to create a thriving wetland area for people and wildlife.

- The RSPB Environmental Education and Visitor Centre at Newport Wetlands opened in March and includes space for group and family activities, conference facilities, a retail area and coffee shop. To find out more about visiting, please telephone the centre on (01633) 636363 or visit www.rspb.org.uk/reserves

- The Natural Resources Wales is an Assembly Government Sponsored Body, working for a better Wales where everyone values and cares for our natural environment. More information about our work is available on www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk / www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk