

Sites of wildlife interest



1 Hebburn Riverside

This is an attractive area of riverside grassland and woodland rising steeply above the River Tyne with spectacular views of the valley and its bustling life.

Hebburn has existed since at least the 8th century, when as a small fishing village it was plundered by Vikings. From 1800 until the 1960s the area was dominated by coal mining, shipbuilding, chemical works and heavy engineering. Since then the riverside has been transformed into a pleasant area with a surprising variety of wildlife.

The northern section comprises amenity grassland with planted trees such as willow, cherry, field maple and hawthorn. Further south lies rough grassland and less formal scrub planting with shrubs like the golden-berried sea buckthorn. The grasslands have flowering cowslips in the spring and yarrow, bird's foot trefoil and knapweed later in the year. Damp areas hold northern marsh orchids and glaucous sedge. There are also showy wasteland plants like tansy and large bindweed.

On the river you may be lucky enough to see cormorants diving to catch flounders or, during the autumn, terns (also called sea swallows) dive-bombing for sprats. At low tide redshanks, curlews and dunlins probe for food in the rich mud.

Keep your eyes peeled for colourful butterflies such as small tortoiseshell, peacock and red admiral. Foxes are also regularly seen in this area, taking cover in the plantations.



ACCESS
The site is well served by tarmac paths although some are quite steep in places. It is home to the Hebburn Riverside Nature Trail and passing through is the C2C cycle route, which runs all the way to the west coast of England.
An extended circular walk can be made by taking in Bill Quay Farm, to the south.

TRANSPORT
The site is 15 minutes walk from Hebburn Metro Station. There is a regular bus service along Prince Consort Rd (no 538).