

Sites of wildlife interest



8 Boldon Flats



One of the top wildlife sites in the Borough, Boldon Flats is an area of damp pasture which is flooded from October to March to attract a spectacular show of bird life.

The Flats has traditionally been a low-lying, wet area, managed as grazing pasture. Since 1986 the Council has carried out a controlled annual flood to attract winter birds. The shallow lake created attracts thousands of wildfowl such as wigeon, teal, mallard and pochard, as well as mute and whooper swans. Wading birds like redshank, curlew, lapwing and golden plover also use the site in their thousands, especially during high tide at the coast, two miles away. Occasionally a bird of prey like a merlin or peregrine will visit to take advantage of the ample food available.

Summer birds include snipe, skylark and whitethroat, whilst many passage rarities such as little stint, curlew, sandpiper and ruff are also possible.

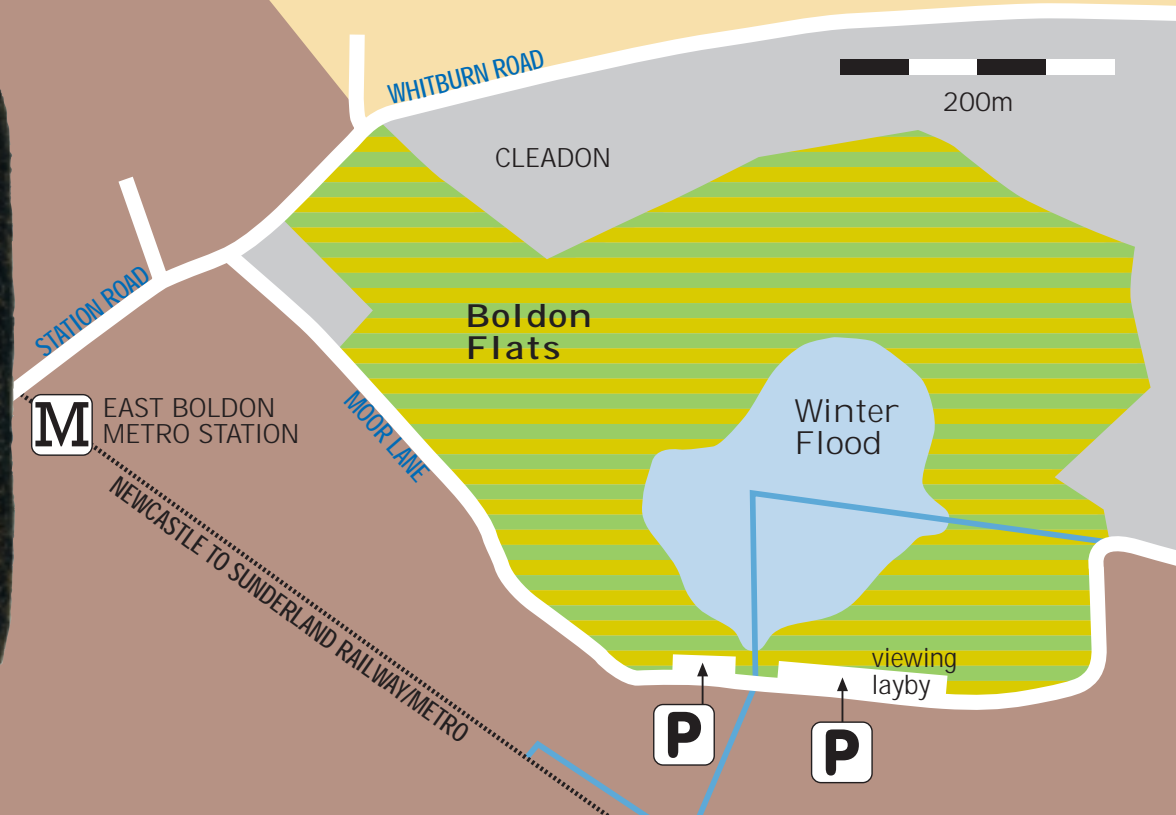
Part of Boldon Flats is a nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest, as it holds an area of wildflower rich grassland which has not been cultivated for centuries (the ancient ridge and furrow ploughing pattern can still be seen).



REED/ICE

ACCESS

The bird life can be conveniently viewed through binoculars from the lay-by on Moor Lane. Being privately owned, there is no public access on to the Flats themselves. It is essential that this is respected if the wildlife is to thrive. South Tyneside Council organises occasional guided walks onto the site during the summer when the rich flora can be seen. For further information contact the Countryside Officer (see back page for details).



TRANSPORT

East Boldon Metro Station is 10 minutes walk away. There is also a regular bus service along Station Road (nos 30 and 34).



POCHARD