

The London Wetland Centre (also called Barnes WWT) was created from the former Barn Elms reservoirs and provides over 40 acres of prime birding habitat in the centre of London. The site offers a range of habitats including open water, muddy banks, reedbed, grazing marsh and light woodland. Birding is good value all year with the following highlights:

Winter: Bittern have been regular since 2001, 1-2 Jack Snipe over-winter, higher numbers of Snipe are present but counts have declined from the regular highs of 50+ in 2001 and 2002, the Lapwing flock used to reach over a hundred birds but now usually peaks at a little over 50, good numbers of duck including Wigeon, Teal and nationally important numbers of Gadwall and Shoveler. Water Rails are present and are easily heard and seen daily. Stonechat used to be regular wintering birds but have recently (since 2012) become more erratic. Cetti's warblers were once only winter visitors but since 2010 have been resident breeders.

Spring & Summer: Breeding birds include Great Crested (4+ prs) and Little (8-10prs) Grebe, Mute Swan (3+ prs), Greylag, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Water Rail, Redshank, Little Ringed Plover, Lapwing, Common Tern (up to 10 pairs in 2007), Sand Martin (40-50 prs), Blackcap, Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Reed and Sedge Warblers, Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler (in some years), Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Reed Bunting and Cetti's Warbler. Rarer breeders have included Marsh Warbler (in 2000) and Avocets (failed attempts in 2006 and 2008). Cetti's Warbler has colonised the site as a regular breeder with at least seven singing males in 2013. Some commoner species have also become regular breeders including Collared Dove, Coal Tit and Goldcrest. Other species breed locally and are often seen on site including: Sparrowhawk (which also bred on site in 2013), Hobby, Peregrine and Stock Dove.

Spring passage usually includes: large raptors such as Buzzard, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier and Osprey; terns; and waders such as Common Sandpiper, Greenshank, Dunlin and Ringed Plover. Easterly winds and morning rain in May can produce scarcer waders (e.g. Grey Plover, Sanderling and Turnstone). April and May usually provide large gull numbers at high tide, with occasional Caspian and Yellow-legged Gull among the Herring, Lesser Blacked-backeds and Great Blacked-backeds. Passerine migrants include Water and Scandinavian Rock Pipits, White Wagtails, Wheaters (including Greenland race), Whinchats, various warblers and sometimes Ring Ouzel, Redstart, Firecrest and Spotted Flycatcher.

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Autumn: Passage starts in late June/ early July when early Green Sandpipers start to move through. Autumn passage migrants usually include Common Sandpiper, Greenshank, Little Ringed Plovers and Little Egret. Wood Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank, Ruff and other waders are less frequent visitors. Numbers of ducks (Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Shoveler) start to build up in late July or August, as do the numbers of Lapwing with post-breeders augmenting the resident birds. The first wintering Snipe appear from August. Garganey are regular with several birds often passing through each autumn. Late autumn (October-November) produces good visible migration, especially of Skylarks, Meadow Pipits, thrushes and finches.

The site regularly turns up excellent birds at a London and, occasionally, national level. Unfortunately these are often flyovers (e.g. White Stork, two Black Kites, Honey Buzzard, Hen & Montagu's Harriers, Common Crane, Arctic, Great & Pomarine Skuas, Leach's Petrel and Alpine Swift) or spend very little time on site (Great White and Cattle Egrets, Purple Heron, Spoonbill, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Corncrake, Stone Curlew, Pacific Golden Plover, Temminck's Stint, White-winged Black Tern, Caspian, Glaucous & Iceland Gulls, Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes). Some birds hang around for longer (e.g. Night Heron, White-spotted Bluethroat, Siberian Chiffchaff, Marsh and Yellow-browed Warblers).

Access and Location

Directions to the reserve can be found *here* and a map *here*. The reserve's address is: Queen Elizabeth Walk, Barnes, London, SW13 9WT.

Access

The Centre is well-equipped with a large visitor's centre, a café, a shop, toilets, a heated hide overlooking the main lake and even, well-marked paths. The tarmac car park is spacious with disabled spaces near the entrance. Bus 283 runs to the centre from Hammersmith London Underground station which is located on the Piccadilly, District, and Hammersmith & City lines. For up to date information visit the Centre's website here.

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Opening times and admission

Summer opening time - from 1 March until October 31

9.30am to 5.30pm (last admission 4.30pm).

Winter opening time - from 1 November until February 28 (or 29 when relevant)

9.30am to 4.30pm (last admission 3.30pm).

As usual, we will begin to close the routes, hides and Explore 1/2hr before closing time.

Early closing on 24 December (last admission 2pm, centre closes at 3pm). Closed on 25 December.
The summer route is closed during the winter.

Water's Edge Café

Last orders 4.00pm in winter and 5.00pm in summer
Closes 4.30pm in winter and 5.30pm in summer

The reserve closes early on Christmas Eve (24th December) with last admissions at 2.00pm. The reserve is closed Christmas Day (25th December), otherwise the opening times are as normal throughout the Christmas and New Year period, including 1st January. In the summer the reserve formerly open late on Thursday evenings, but this no longer happens.

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