



UK NATURAL RIVERS POTTERIC CARR WETLAND EXTENSION



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WWF and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust are demonstrating how wetlands can benefit both people and nature and help achieve the aims of the EU Water Framework Directive.



Back to nature

Potteric Carr is a 130-hectare wetland nature reserve in South Yorkshire, which offers visitors easy access to a rich diversity of wildlife. Around 95 species of birds breed every year including kingfisher, long-eared owl and woodpecker. Ten species of dragonfly and 27 species of butterfly have also been recorded. Potteric Carr is protected by law as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its rare water plants.

Once one of the largest areas of wetland in England, Potteric Carr was drained in the 19th century for agricultural use and most of its wildlife was lost. In the 1950s mining subsidence occurred under part of the Carr and within 20 years parts of the area had returned to wetland conditions. Since the 1970s Potteric Carr has been a reserve of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

A £1.4 million project between WWF, HSBC, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the European Union LIFE Bittern II project is transforming an additional 75 hectares of farmland adjacent to the reserve back to a wetland mosaic of lakes, reedbeds and wet grassland.

Better water management

Water flowing into Potteric Carr includes partly treated waste from 20,000 taps and toilets in nearby Doncaster. Water quality is improved as it flows through the site because wetland plants naturally act as filters as they extract pollutants. By the time it flows out of Potteric Carr, the water is clean enough to swim in. Potteric Carr also stores flood water to help protect Doncaster, as well as valuable farmland and communities downstream. Indeed, the extension will be capable of holding an additional 500,000 cubic metres of flood water in the event of extreme conditions (which become more likely as climate change takes hold).

Increasing wildlife

Potteric Carr already supports rare species of breeding birds and invertebrates. The extension will encourage rare species such as the bittern to feed and breed successfully. This will help the UK meet international agreements on wildlife protection.

Providing space for people

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust provides high-quality facilities for visitors of all ages at Potteric Carr, as well as access for the less able. HSBC staff regularly volunteer for a programme of activities including conservation work such as vegetation clearing and path maintenance. The wetland extension will encourage even more visitors to enjoy this unique urban haven throughout the year, which in turn will help provide jobs and support for the local economy.

A national demonstration site

Today, Potteric Carr demonstrates the many benefits that wetlands can bring to people and nature. It shows how a nature reserve, flood defence system, water treatment works, recreation area, education centre and tourist attraction can be provided cost effectively and on one site. Once the extension is complete, these benefits will be further enhanced and Potteric Carr will be a national demonstration of how wetlands can help achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. WWF will use Potteric Carr to persuade decision-makers in government and industry to provide more cities with a similar multi-functional wetland.



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