

**The purchase and restoration of a traditional fenland landscape at Willow Tree Fen in South Holland is increasing Lincolnshire's remaining fenland by 200%.**

It will help a range of wildlife including rare aquatic plants, insects, fish, otters, water voles and birds, such as lapwing, redshank, snipe and marsh harrier.

Less than 1% of Lincolnshire's wild fenland remains. The special plants and animals associated with these lost wetlands are now rare or threatened with local extinction.



Baston Fen nature reserve (Geoff Trinder)

The last remnants of the wild fenlands in Lincolnshire cover just 55 hectares within two nature reserves: Baston Fen and Thurlby Fen. These reserves shelter the last of Lincolnshire's natural, inland fenland landscapes and some of its special wildlife. But they are too small to support some of the larger fenland birds and animals, and possibly too small to cope with the changing climate.

Critically, the 114 hectares of Willow Tree Fen is linked to these remaining fenland reserves by the River Glen and the wildlife-rich Counter Drain. From those reserves, the fenland species will be able to colonise.

## Willow Tree Fen nature reserve

114.00 hectares (282.00 acres)  
Situated between Bourne and Spalding,  
south of the River Glen on the  
Tongue End to Pode Hole road.

The entrance bridge is at  
grid ref TF 181213.

### Contact:

Marcus Craythorne  
Community, Project & Education Officer  
Lincolnshire Fenland for People & Wildlife Project

Tel: 01778 422107

Email: [WTFofficer@lincstrust.co.uk](mailto:WTFofficer@lincstrust.co.uk)

### Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Banovallum House, Manor House Street,  
Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 5HF

Tel: 01507 526667

Email: [info@lincstrust.co.uk](mailto:info@lincstrust.co.uk)

[www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk)

The project has been made possible with financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England, Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, Environment Agency and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust members.



Registered charity no. 218895.

Cover photo: Lapwing (Geoff Trinder)

April 2011

# Willow Tree Fen nature reserve

Restoring a Lincolnshire fenland landscape for wildlife and people



Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust



# Willow Tree Fen

Witness the development of an exciting new nature reserve with a diverse and wildlife-rich landscape of reedbeds, shallow meres, seasonally flooded pastures and hay meadows.

Hairy dragonfly (Dean Eades)



Orange Tip (Les Blims)

Alongside the huge benefits for wildlife, Willow Tree Fen will provide access and activities that will encourage learning, exploration and discovery of the natural, cultural and historical features of this traditional landscape.

Work has been on-going since the purchase of the land in 2009.

## Drainage and ditches

With support from the Environment Agency ditches and dykes have been connected together and overgrown ditches cleared of choking vegetation.

The connectivity of these wet 'highways' is vital for the health of the future aquatic population of Willow Tree Fen, including eels and other fish species and aquatic invertebrates such as dragonflies and diving beetles.



## Meadows and grassland

The 7 hectare dry field has been established as a wildflower-rich hay meadow. The mix of flower and grass seeds will attract insects such as bees and butterflies feeding on the nectar.

90 acres is being developed as fen grassland and has been sown with a mix of seven different grass species suitable for wet fenland conditions. Green hay from Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust reserves Baston Fen and Sotby Meadows has been spread on the site to increase the diversity of plants.

Across the site, fencing has been installed to enable sheep and cattle grazing.



John Redshaw

## Archaeological surveys

Prior to the restoration and re-wetting of Willow Tree Fen, archaeologists investigated the site.

In January 2010, over 120 visitors helped a team from Heritage Lincolnshire's Archaeological Project Services carry out a geophysical survey, field-walk the site, auger test deposits and dig test pits. Four trenches were dug crossing the site of a Roman drainage ditch.

The fieldwalking yielded two new Iron Age/Roman saltmaking sites and a selection of Roman domestic pottery.

Heritage Consultants Andrew and Annelise Fielding made a prehistoric kiln and demonstrated open pan saltmaking reflecting the use of the site in the Roman period.



lapwing • golden plover • redshank • oystercatcher • brown hare • azure damselfly • marsh harrier • snipe  
curlew • hairy dragonfly • skylark • yellowhammer • buzzard • reed bunting • mute swan • variable damselfly