

# FONTBURN RESERVOIR WALK

Fontburn Reservoir is one of our smaller waters and consequently has a reputation as being a friendly, family orientated fishery. It is located within easy reach of Tyneside and offers a stunning circular walk and a spacious picnicking area for you to relax at.

Starting at the car park at the northern end of the dam (A), where there are ample parking spaces, head west along the footpath which skirts along the edge of the reservoir.

After just over 1km the footpath along the northern shore ends and you have to take a northerly route onto the surrounding moorland for a short detour. The path is marked by marker posts and takes you towards the western extent of the reservoir. Sections of this walk can be muddy and boggy.

The path is not always clear along this section of the route so keep an eye out for the marker posts. After a short while you will enter woodland and the footpath crosses several streams some of which have bridge crossings. This peaceful part of the reservoir is a good place to spot otter, which have been known to frequent this area, which is also the official nature reserve for the site where no fishing is allowed.

As the path rounds the head of the reservoir you are halfway through the walk. Keep walking across the moorland with the reservoir boundary on your left. Along the way keep an eye out for Fallowless burial site on the woodland edge. This is a large mound of earth and stone and is a 3,000 year old Bronze Age burial site.

Just over halfway along the southern shore follow the path through a kissing gate and drop down into the woodland along the southern shore. The woodlands around the reservoir which you are now walking through include mature Sitka Spruce, Scots Pine, mature birch and alder. Some of these areas are described as wet woodland which is an important wildlife habitat.

All of Fontburn Reservoir is designated as a local wildlife site, and it provides a home to a wide variety of species of conservation concern, including red squirrel, badger, roe deer and stoat. The reservoir is also well-used by anglers which you may see as you near the car park and fishing lodge at the far eastern end of the reservoir shore.

Go past the car park and walk across the dam, keeping an eye out ahead for the Exmoor ponies which graze the fields around the lagoon area at certain times of the year. These lagoons support a wide range of plants, such as Grass of Parnasus and Blue moorgrass. All three native species of newt are also found in these ponds, including our largest and most protected, the Great Crested Newt.

Reptiles are also present throughout the area so keep an eye out for adders basking in the afternoon sunshine in the warmer months.

**Parking:** Car park at northern end of dam

**Distance:** Approximately 5.6km (3.5 miles) – allow 2 hours, suitable footwear required.

