

TEESDALE RESERVOIR WALK

Teesdale Reservoir walk, starting at Balderhead Reservoir, offers an invigorating walk with stunning views of three of Northumbrian Water's six reservoirs in Teesdale.

Balderhead Reservoir was built in 1965 and is surrounded on its Northern and Southern shores by the Lune Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest and Cotherstone Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Starting at the car park at the northern end of the dam, head south across the dam, then head east leading past Blackton Grange and down towards Blackton Reservoir. Continue to head east joining the Pennine Way to East Friar House then up on to Cotherstone Moor past Goldsborough Hill and over Yawd Sike burn.

When the path forks take the route on your left and follow the path for 1km before taking another left on to a footpath which will take you down to West Briscoe farm. When you reach the road head west along the southern shore of Hury Reservoir, this will eventually lead right onto a footpath towards the dam over the reservoir. Hury Reservoir, built in 1894, has high numbers of waders such as oystercatcher and lapwing during the breeding season and is also an excellent wild roach fishery.

At this point Mere Beck Meadows SSSI will be on your left. This small meadow supports important plant communities, characteristic of northern hay meadows maintaining by traditional farming methods.

Once over the dam, take the path left and head west across fields along the northern edge of Blackton Reservoir towards Hannah's Meadow and Birk Hat crossing Hunder Sike burn halfway along the path. Hannah's Meadow is designated as a SSSI and is managed by the Durham Wildlife Trust and is another excellent site for summer flowers.

Take time to visit the Hannah's Meadow interpretive centre and the Northumbrian Water bird hide which offers

pleasant views of the reservoir. Built in 1896, Blackton Reservoir is the shallowest of the Teesdale reservoirs and its western end is designated as a Local Wildlife Site, so keep an eye out for birds such as wigeon, common sandpiper and tufted duck.

From the bird hide continue west along the footpath for a short while before heading up to High Birk Hatt. From here it is only a small distance west along the footpath back to the car park and finishing point of this walk.

Parking: Car park at either end of dam wall at Balderhead Reservoir.

Distance: Approximately 12.6km (7.8 miles) – allow 3 to 4 hours, suitable footwear required.

