

North Wales Wildlife Trust

Spinnies *Aberogwen* Nature Reserve

The Spinnies, Aberogwen Nature Reserve (4 hectares) is managed by volunteers and staff from the North Wales Wildlife Trust. They work together to maintain a varied environment which supports many plants and animals and is ideal for bird-watching.

Set amid a small woodland, a series of ponds and a lagoon provide shelter and food for many species of wildfowl and waders during the autumn and spring migrations. The reserve is immediately adjacent to the estuary of the Afon Ogwen and a large area of tidal mudflats.

History

At the beginning of the nineteenth century land around the Ogwen estuary was acquired by Penrhyn Estate and enclosed by a high wall which still stands on the western boundary of the reserve. The diversion and canalisation of the River Ogwen cut off a sharp meander of the river near the coast. This meander is now part of the Spinnies, Aberogwen lagoon.

The Lagoon

The Spinnies, Aberogwen is one of North Wales Wildlife Trust's most popular reserves with over 185 species of bird being seen on or around the reserve. With a range of habitats and the constant ebb and flow of the tides, it can attract some amazing species. Birdwatchers are well catered for as there are two hides on the reserve, one of which overlooks the lagoon and the estuary.

The tall, graceful stands of common reed around the lagoon provide dense cover and sheltered nest sites for breeding species such as the Moorhen, Mallard and Sedge Warbler. Little Grebe feed on the lagoon, diving for small fish and invertebrates, and Snipe may be seen probing the mud for worms, crustaceans or molluscs. The lagoon margins are also an excellent place to watch the Grey Heron and the white Little Egret.

Between September and March the brightly coloured Kingfisher will be a familiar sight around the lagoon in search of prey, along with Teal, Widgeon and Greenshank.

The adjacent estuary and mudflats are known as Traeth Lafan. The area is internationally important for the large number of ducks and waders which spend part of the year here.

Traeth Lafan is managed by Gwynedd Council as a Local Nature Reserve.

Around the Reserve

Whilst walking the paths, be sure to keep an eye out for Broad Leaved Helleborine, a locally rare orchid, along with Hart's Tongue and Male ferns growing in shady spots. Up in the trees, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler are just some of the spring migrants that can be heard. Different types of brightly coloured fungus can also be seen, with the small Scarlet Elf Cup being commonplace during winter.

In February a white and green carpet of Snowdrops and Dog's Mercury emerges, whilst in summer the Stinging Nettle provides food for caterpillars such as the Red Admiral and Speckled Wood. Holly Blue, Orange Tip and Small Copper butterflies can all be seen on the small open grassland area adjacent to the beach.

Why not stop for a few moments at one of the pathway benches to enjoy the sounds and sights of the reserve?

