

Moor Green Lakes, Manor and Fleethill farms

A birdwatchers nature reserve, Blackwater River, restored lakes and a working fruit farm

Park at Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve free car park (RG40 3TJ). Follow the footpath towards the lake. There is a lovely old mature hedgerow and a more recently planted version keeping the path and bridleway separate.

You will soon pass Colebrook Lake but first check out the meadows in spring and summer. There is an impressive array of flowers and butterflies including day flying moths. Many birds breed here in summer, especially on the islands with recent nests of Oystercatcher and Mediterranean Gull amongst the Black-headed Gulls and Common Terns. Wintering wildfowl are varied and include good numbers of Goosander. Waders also appear here mainly on passage in spring and autumn. You can get into the birdhides by joining the local Moor Green Lakes [conservation group](#). 222 species have been recorded in this area.

At the bird hide entrance look right and cross the bridleway to the right, follow the rough path to a spot where the birdwatchers often see occasional migrants in the reed fringed pools. Often there is somebody there to point them out. Next rejoin the footpath going over the wooden bridge, keep walking apart from stopping at the viewing screen for more bird life.

When you reach the river turn right. The path follows the river now and on the right beyond the trees and bushes are restored reed fringed areas and if you search hard some distant Barn Owl boxes that are often inhabited. The land opens out; the old gravel workings here are the last to be restored. Birdwatchers often make interesting finds in visible places and the river and banks provides a great deal of interest. At the end of this pleasant stretch as the path divides, take the right hand track next to the small sewage works and when you emerge onto the road cross over to the signed footpath opposite.

This recently restored area looks beautiful now and following the path without taking a right turn, you soon reach the river path and also have good views over the lake. The reed (mainly bullrushes) around the fringe provides homes for birds and you'll see coots, tufted ducks and swans. The path, a wide track, turns right through the old trees with further views of lakes both right and left. Stay on this path now without turning off. It passes the old Blackwater Valley path and continues past the woodland on the left called Fleet Copse. At the right times you can hear Tawny Owls here. Many of the elusive Mandarin duck use the small wet channels and old trees in the Copse to nest.

Carrying on you reach the very pleasant housing in Longwater Lane. Follow the lane go across the crossroads into the cul de sac and emerge onto Jubilee Road. Cross here to the roadside footpath opposite continuing in the same direction up the hill.

Soon, after a bit of uphill walking opposite two very large semi-detached properties, you will see a permissive footpath and a stile on the right. Cross the stile and it's downhill all the way! This wide track passes through fields of a horticultural business, the path is well signposted.

They were growing blueberries, strawberries and raspberries on my last visit. Red Kites and Buzzards are often overhead. On the left you will see some irrigation ponds where ducks and geese can be seen. You pass offices and barns of the business turning right at the end following the track to the stile in the hedgerow.

Cross the stile and turn left onto Lower Sandhurst Road. Now it's just a short walk back to your car in the car park on the right hand side.