

FIRST WALK ALONG THE RIVER FORTH TO SEE WILDLIFE RESERVES OWNED BY THE SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST

These pleasant walks are circular, starting and finishing at Cambus village. Walk 1 is about 7.2 km in length and passes two small island reserves known as "Tullibody Inch" and "Alloa Inch".



Car Parking

There is easy car parking at Cambus (Grid Ref: NS 845 935) by a dead-end road, close to the weir on the River Devon and in front of Diageo's whisky depot. This parking area can be used for both walks.

Refreshments

The Tearoom at Cambus is an excellent place to have a coffee or lunch stop. It is located 4 Main Street, Cambus.

WALK 1 DETAILS: See map below

The walk starts at Cambus village close to a weir on the River Devon.



FACING Cambus village, turn right into Forth Street. Walk to the end and go through a gate onto a good surfaced, fenced track.

FOLLOW this track through a thin wood and follow it left as it reaches the River Forth.

In the field on the left of the path, look out for flocks of Curlews as well as other water fowl and waders such as Mute Swans, Whooper Swans, Oystercatchers and occasionally Bar-tailed Godwits.

CONTINUE along the path and pass through a narrow kissing gate.

On the opposite side of the river can be seen a number of large sheds which were part of an old military munitions storage site at Bandedeath, dating back to World War 1 and used again in the Second World War. A derelict crane can be seen on a small jetty at the edge of the site by the river. The site closed in 1978.



View of Bandedeath

As you go through the gate look out for small yellow birds, called Yellowhammers, eating grain from sheep feeding troughs, as well as other finches and buntings such a Reed Bunting with its black head and throat, white collar and a moustache. There may also be a Heron sitting on a small gravel beach and numerous ducks such as Golden Eye, Mallard, Teal and Shelduck swimming along the river.

CONTINUE along the path by walking along the river embankment until another gate is reached.

Look out for ducks, such as Teal and Wigeon, a Reed Bunting flitting in amongst the reeds and, in winter, migratory Pink-footed Geese.

Soon the main river winds away to the right with a muddy channel following the river embankment. This is marked on OS maps as Rhind Rack. On the other side of the channel is the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Tullibody Inch Nature Reserve. This consists mainly of an important reed bed.

Once again, look out for flocks of Yellowhammers. Shelducks are often seen on this stretch of water. They are the largest birds of the duck family in the UK. Reed Buntings can often be seen flitting amongst the reeds and Otters also live in this area.



View of the Tullibody Inch Area

CONTINUE along the river embankment and go through a pedestrian gate, opposite Tullibody Inch Nature Reserve. This section of the path can be muddy after rain.

At dusk Swallows can be seen roosting in the reed bed where they gather prior to their autumn migration. Watch out also for flocks of Starlings.



View of the glass works in the distance to the left

PASS through another narrow kissing gate and continue, straight ahead, along a good, firm tractor track, towards a farm and with a view, in the distance, of the Alloa glass factory.

The Glass Works has a preserved old "brick bottle-shaped kiln" the top of which can be seen below the sloping conveyor belt. The factory produces more whisky bottles than any other glass works in the UK.

Look out for flocks of finches, including Yellowhammers. Twite (other name Mountain Linnet) may also be seen here during the winter, returning in spring to the Scottish uplands. Look for a small bird with a yellow beak and a pinkish streaked breast.

This area is known as Longcarse and is an ancient site, a farm showing on the oldest maps.

AFTER about 0.2 km go through a kissing gate and almost immediately turn right through a gate leading into a field and onto a wide, firm path on a slight embankment. This is the track bed of the old Caledonian Railway branch line from Alloa to Larbert. Continue along this track until the remains of an old, partly demolished bridge across the River Forth is reached.

The bridge, which was referred to as "the other Forth railway bridge" was completed in 1885 and had a swinging central section powered by a steam engine. It carried regular passenger services until January 1968 and freight until May of that year. It was partly demolished in 1971.



The old railway bridge

This is a good area for wading birds such as Snipe and Lapwings. Herons can also, sometimes, be seen fishing from the banks. And look out for Cormorants sitting on the bridge drying their wings.

From the bridge, if you look in the direction of the glass works, some derelict buildings can be seen close to the river. These buildings are on an island which is now the Scottish Wildlife Trust's nature reserve "Alloa Inch".



Looking towards Alloa Inch with Alloa in the distance

This island was originally grazing marshland but was enclosed by a one mile embankment in 1806 to prevent tidal water covering the island. It was then converted into 77 acres of arable land. A farmhouse and steadings were built and the island was farmed until 1983 when a breach in the embankment occurred resulting in the island being flooded at each high-tide. But the farming family and all their stock left the island in the late 1970s as their fresh-water supply pipe, from the mainland, had been damaged and part of the replacement pipe stolen. In 1996, the island, under which coal workings lie, was bought by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, from the National Coal Board for £1. It is now managed as a salt marsh reserve and has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The island is an important refuge for Pink-footed Geese, which feed up on their migration route north in spring, and for other birds such as Shelduck.

EITHER walk down the slope to the left of the bridge abutment and turn left onto the river bank, or retrace your steps until the field gate is reached once more but, this time, carry straight on along the old railway track. If following the river bank, walk along it for about 0.8 km until the river starts to make a right turn. Leave the river bank here and walk half left across the field to rejoin the old railway line.

CONTINUE to walk along the old railway, with the farm on the right, until a pedestrian gate is reached, with a field gate by the side of it. Go through the pedestrian gate and continue walking along the track. After about 0.3 km the track reaches a good tarmac road. Turn left opposite two large, white office buildings.

This is a good habitat for a range of common birds.

WALK along the road which is sign-posted "Public Path Cambus 2 km" then turn right at a sign saying "National Cycle Route 76". Follow this surfaced path back to Cambus and the starting point, passing The Tea-room at Cambus on the left, just before the end of the walk.



Public path to Cambus 2 km

Birds you may see on the above walk:



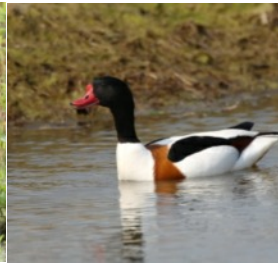
Curlew



Yellowhammer



Heron



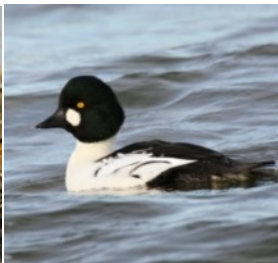
Shelduck



Swallow



Oystercatcher



Goldeneye



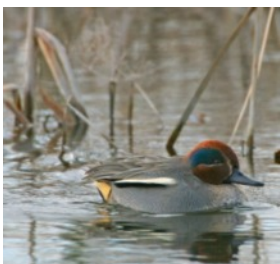
Bar-tailed Godwit



Cormorant



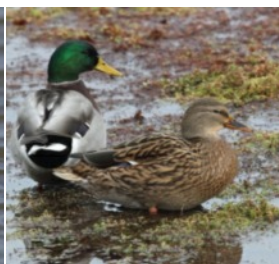
Lapwing



Teal



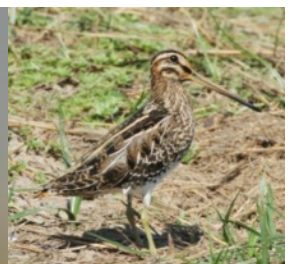
Widgeon



Mallard



Reed Bunting



Snipe

Grateful thanks to Barry Boswell of Upper Boddington, Northamptonshire, for allowing us to use his wonderful pictures of birds to illustrate this walk and the walk below. For more information go to: www.britishbirdphotographs.com

Many thanks also to Joan and John Newman for compiling both the above walk and that below. Joan and John are new-comers from the south of England and keen to learn more about the area and its wildlife. Watch this page over the coming month for further walks.