



Visual accessibility guide for WWT Washington Wetland Centre

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Welcome

WWT Washington Wetland Centre is a wetland nature reserve and visitor attraction on the banks of the river Wear. Open 364 days a year, our family-friendly site offers visitors of all ages and abilities a host of unforgettable wildlife encounters and beautiful scenery whatever the weather.

Visitors can explore 103 acres of exciting wetlands, woodlands and meadows that are home to rare wildfowl, flocks of waders, Chilean flamingos, Asian short-clawed otters, Eurasian cranes and more.

Every season brings a host of different flora and fauna, including regionally rare favourites such as avocet and Northern marsh orchid, as well as a variety of insects and amphibians; meaning no two visits are the same.

At a Glance

Level Access

- The main entrance has level access with a ramp. The ramp is portable.
- There is level access from the main entrance to:
 - Dining Table
 - Admissions desk
 - Visitor toilets within the centre building
 - Compost toilet

- Gift Shop
- Cafe veranda
- The hide entrance has level access.

Hearing

- Some staff have disability awareness training.

Visual

- The walls and the doors have high colour contrast.
- We have information in large print.

General

- We have a complimentary ticket policy for personal assistants.
- There is at least 1 public toilet for disabled visitors.
- Some staff have disability awareness training.

Getting here

Pattinson
Washington
NE38 8LE

Travel by public transport

- You can get to WWT Washington Wetland Centre by bus.
- The centre is served daily by buses to the Waterview Park government building and is just a short walk down the lane. Please visit <https://www.gonortheast.co.uk/services> and search 'Waterview Park' for the latest timetable information. The bus stop is 0.5 miles / 0.8 km from WWT Washington Wetland Centre.

Travel by taxi

- You can get a taxi with Washington Taxis by calling 0191 415 1441. The taxi company has a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Parking

- We have a car park. There are accessible parking spaces. The parking is less than 50 metres from the main entrance. Parking is free. The route from the main car park to the visitor centre is sloped.
- The route is 1800mm wide, or more.
- There is a drop-off point at the main entrance. The drop-off point has a dropped kerb.
- From the lower car park to the entrance, there is level access.



Disabled visitor drop-off sign



Disabled visitor parking spaces in the main car park



Accessible path to the centre building from the main car park



Path slope to centre
from main car park

Arrival



Path to main entrance

- From the street to the main entrance, there is level access.
- There is a portable ramp.
- The path is 1800mm wide, or more.
- The path is sloped.



Main entrance

- The main entrance has level access.
- There is a portable ramp.
- The door is 980mm wide.
- The main door is side hung and manual.
- The door to the main entrance is always left open for visitors' ease on arrival.
- There is a 6cm lip at the entrance to the visitor centre - a portable ramp is available to aid entry. The ramp is portable and can be moved from the entrance to the exit door.
- The reception point/pay desk is immediately to your left upon entering the visitor centre.



Main visitor entrance
to the centre building

Getting around inside

Visual Impairment - General Information

- We have high colour contrast between walls and doorframes.



Ticket/ information desk

Admissions desk

- From the main entrance to the desk, there is level access. The route is 1800mm wide, or more.
- The desk has a low section.

Things to See and Do

- We have a concessionary rate for disabled visitors.
- We have a complimentary ticket policy for personal assistants.

Public toilet

Visitor toilets within the centre building

- There is a public toilet for disabled visitors.
- From the main entrance to the public toilet, there is level access. The route is 1200mm wide, or more.
- The direction of transfer onto the toilet is to the right.
- There is 1300mm at the side of the toilet. There is 1080mm in front of the toilet. The toilet seat is 430mm high. The toilets have handrails.
- The disabled toilet has a baby changing table which is at an accessible height. There is a family toilet with baby changing room also within the centre building, which has a bench and two changing mats.



Disabled toilet within the visitor centre with baby changing table

Public toilet

Compost toilet

- There is a public toilet for disabled visitors.
- From the main entrance to the public toilet, there is level access. There is a permanent ramp.
- The route is 1200mm wide, or more.
- The direction of transfer onto the toilet is to the left and right.
- The toilets have handrails.
- This compost toilet is located in between the Asian short-clawed otter enclosure and Northumbrian Water hide. It has a changing table and accessible space.



Compost toilet access

Shop

Gift Shop

- From the main entrance to the shop, there is level access. The route is 1200mm wide, or more. The route through the shop is 800mm wide, or more.



Shop access and space

Place to eat and drink

Waterside Cafe

- From the main entrance to the dining area, there is level access. The route is 1200mm wide, or more. To get to a table, there are no steps.
- The route through the dining area is 800mm wide, or more.
- Service is from a self-service counter. Visitors requiring assistance to carry trays of food and drink to a table should ask a member of staff.
- There is no background music.
- The table and plates have high colour contrast.
- We cater for vegetarian, gluten free (celiacs), lactose free (dairy free) and vegan specific diets.
- Staff are happy to assist by reading out menus and describing or locating products for those visitors with visual impairments.



Cafe counter and access

Getting around outside

Designated Walking Trail

Inner circle - our main animal collection

- The trail is 830metres long. The trail has a hard surface. The trail is sloped. The trail has seats.
- This part of the attraction includes various stopping points to view wildlife including areas with gates which are simple to push. The otter viewing platform has an accessible ramp to one side for viewing and the holt area is fully accessible with large viewing windows.



Ganderland exhibit approach and gate



Otter viewing platform
for disabled visitors
and buggy access



Gate into Close
Encounters



Close Encounters
bridge

Designated Walking Trail

Wild reserve

- The trail is 2600metres long. Some of the trail has a loose surface. There are a variety of small and large gates that visitors will be required to go through. The small gates are manageable in a wheelchair or on an electric scooter, however the larger fox-proof gates will require some assistance. The trail is sloped. The trail has seats. There are bird hides along the trail.
- All hides have moveable seating to allow access to wheelchair and mobility scooter users.
The path to Lagoon View hide is steep. It is accessible for mobility scooter users but with caution and at low speed. It is not suitable for wheelchair users. The path is not DDA compliant. Please ask the admissions team if you require any further assistance.
- Some sections of footpath in Spring Gill are steep and it is not recommended that wheelchair users or mobility scooters continue beyond the bridge. The steep section is clearly visible from the bridge as the path rises towards Top Meadow.
- A foxproof gate must be passed through at North Wood, which may prove difficult for larger wheelchairs and pushchairs.



Hawthorn Wood hide access



Northumbrian Water hide access



Paddy Fleming hide access



Diageo hide access



Lagoon view hide access



Fox proof gates and river viewpoint access



Amphibian ponds access



Accessible picnic bench at river viewpoint



Path from fox proof gates
at Hawthorn Wood down
to Lagoon View hide

Hawthorn hide

- At the hide entrance, there is level access. There is a permanent ramp. The door is 980.00mm wide.
- There are low windows in the hide, so wheelchair users can see outside.

Lagoon View hide

- At the hide entrance, there is level access. There is a permanent ramp. The door is 1000.00mm wide.
- There are low windows in the hide, so wheelchair users can see outside.

Northumbrian Water hide

- At the hide entrance, there is level access. There is a permanent ramp. The door is 1200.00mm wide.

Paddy Fleming hide

- The hide entrance has 1 step. There is no lift and no ramp.

Diageo hide

- At the hide entrance, there is level access. The door is 1200.00mm wide.

Prince's Trust hide

- At the hide entrance, there is level access. There is a permanent ramp. The door is 1000.00mm wide.

Picnic Area

Reedbed shelter

- The path is 1800mm wide, or more.
- Some tables have space for wheelchair users. You can bring your own food to the picnic area.
- There are a variety of picnic tables around site. Some of these are accessible for wheelchair / mobility scooter users with extended picnic benches for access.



Reedbed shelter picnic table with disabled visitor access



Sheltered accessible picnic table at the reedbed shelter

Cafe veranda

- From the main entrance to this area, there is level access. The route is 1200mm wide, or more. The entrance is 980mm wide.
- The cafe veranda is accessible from the main centre building and through the cafe itself.

Customer care support

Accessibility equipment

- The centre has a manual wheelchair available to hire during a visit.
- The centre also has a number of electric scooters also available to hire. Please book in advance on 0191 416 5454. A short induction programme is given to each new user of the electric scooters.
- We have an area to charge mobility scooters and battery powered wheelchairs.
- If you require something to be charged, please speak to a member of the admissions team who will get this arranged for you.

Emergency evacuation procedures

- We have emergency evacuation procedures for disabled visitors.
- We have a full evacuation procedure to clear the centre building with staff that will be available to assist all visitors if and when needed.

Customer care support

- Some staff have disability awareness training.
- We have information in large print.
- We can print a large scale visitor map on request for any visitors who may need it.

Dogs

- Fully trained, on duty assistance dogs (trained by member organisations of ADUK) are welcome on site. The admissions team can provide a bowl of water. Unfortunately we can't allow any other dogs or pets of any kind on site as our wildlife may become distressed. Assistance dogs must be kept on their lead, under control and their harnesses must state "working or assistance dog".
- Please ensure any dog waste is removed. If any of our birds/animals behaviour is affected by the presence of your dog, we respectfully ask that you understand that we may have to ask you to move away from the area.
- Please do not leave your dog in your car whilst visiting.