

County: North Yorkshire **Site Name:** Gouthwaite Reservoir

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

Local Planning Authority: Harrogate Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SE 129693 **Area:** 147.7 (ha) 365.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 99 **1:10,000:** SE 16 NW, 17 SW

First Notified: 1969 * **Date of Revision:** 1984

Other Information:

1. Gouthwaite Reservoir is managed as a private nature reserve by the Yorkshire Water Authority.
2. During the 1984 revision the area of the site has been reduced.

*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

Description:

Gouthwaite Reservoir lies in Upper Nidderdale, having been built as a compensation reservoir for the Nidd in 1899. It is an important site for breeding wildfowl, and provides sheltered feeding grounds for passage and wintering birds. At the north-western end there is an extensive shallow area where mud flats and lagoons are exposed when the water-level falls. It is this area which is particularly attractive to feeding ducks and waders. Over 200 bird species have been recorded, and the reservoir attracts large numbers of wintering duck, including up to 500 teal and 2,000 mallard.

The margins at the north-western end are the favoured breeding area of great crested grebe, shoveler, ringed plover, redshank, yellow wagtail, reed bunting and meadow pipit, among others.

The marsh vegetation at the head of the reservoir is dominated by soft rush *Juncus effusus*, bladder sedge *Carex vesicaria*, lesser pond sedge *C. acutiformis* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* with some reed grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. Herbs present include lesser skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata*, water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre* and marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus*. Areas of exposed mud are being colonised by species such as bulbous rush *Juncus bulbosus*, procumbent pearlwort *Sagina procumbens* and shoreweed *Littorella uniflora*. The stony former shore-line supports tasteless water-pepper *Polygonum mite*, water-pepper *P. hydropiper*, marsh cudweed *Gnaphalium uliginosum*, marsh yellow-cress *Rorippa palustris* and greater plantain *Plantago major*. Birch *Betula pendula* and rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* are associated with the old railway line on the north-east side of the lake and mixed woodland has been planted at the south and west ends of the lake. Areas of grassland are limited in extent and are neutral-acidic in character.