

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our guests/visitors.

## **Access Statement for Loch of Strathbeg**

### **Introduction**

The Loch of Strathbeg and surrounding wetlands is a haven for lots of different wildlife. Great for birdwatching and home to a spectacular pink footed goose roost in the winter. There is a small visitor centre with a small flight of stairs and stairlift to a viewing platform. There is an accessible toilet and baby changing facilities up a short ramp. Whilst parts of the reserve have gravel and gently undulated paths there is one hide which has been adapted for wheelchair use. There are also alternative paths with a grass surface or boardwalk. It is possible to access the reserve at the north and south extremities with car parks at Rattray and in the village of St Combs. These are not maintained by RSPB and access is by unsurfaced track.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 01346 532017 or email [strathbeg@rspb.org.uk](mailto:strathbeg@rspb.org.uk).

### **Pre-Arrival**

- For a map and directions of how to reach us please see the 'How to get here' section of our website, which has a link for sat navs.
- Alternatively you can plan your journey by public transport or car using [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) using the link from our website.
- Nearest railway station is 30 miles (48 km) away in Inverurie - public transport links are very difficult.
- Nearest bus stop is in Crimond village. In the village, walk towards the church. Beside the church is a small road with a

brown nature reserve sign. Follow signs to visitor centre (roughly 1 mile). Once you leave the village, there are no footpaths to walk on but the road is not busy. The entrance track from the road to the visitor centre is gravel and uneven.

- The visitor centre is open 8am to 6pm. Hides are open all day everyday.
- There is no charge for entry
- Registered assistance dogs are welcome.

### **Car Parking Facilities and Arrival**



Car park with Visitor Centre and toilets on the left

- The car park with 20 spaces is adjacent to the visitor centre. There are 2 marked bays designated for Blue Badge users about 10 m from the visitor centre and toilet entrance.

- There is no charge for parking and no height restrictions; it is an unlit car park.
- The carpark surface is gravel and concrete and reasonably level.
- The visitor centre has a glass and wooden door that opens inward and has an opening width of 900mm

### **Visitor Centre**



Visitor centre entrance with toilets at the top of the ramp

- The main entrance is on the ground floor with a short flight of seven steps (with stairlift) to the viewing area. There is a wheelchair at the top, free to use.
- The floor is surfaced in carpet tiles; seating (on a range of chairs, with and without arms) is available in both the main visitor centre and the viewing area.

- The area is well lit with a mixture of fluorescent lights and spotlights.
- There are fixed binoculars and a telescope. These are not height adjustable but there is a small step.
- The visitor centre is usually only manned at weekends. At other times the reserve office is only 100m away with staff usually, but not always, present.
- Binoculars and pond dipping kits are available for hire.
- A good mixture of interpretation in clear print is available in the visitor centre with details of upcoming events on the notice board.
- There are a variety of events and activities available throughout the year: please ask staff for more details including their suitability for your access needs.

### **Nature Trails**

- The path to Tower Pool Hide from the Visitor Centre is 850 m long and takes no more than 20 minutes to walk. The path has a fine gravel surface with some grass growing in the middle. The path has gentle slopes and undulations and has bench seats every 200m.
- The wildlife garden and little woodland walk, including Willow Hide, have paths that are surfaced with woodchip and bordered with logs. These paths are 200m in total and start from the car park. Width of the path is approximately 1 m
- From the airfield car park the paths to the hides are grass surfaced and undulating. There are often muddy patches. The path to Fen hide includes 160m of boardwalk with a hand rail on one side. The boardwalk is 1.2m wide and has passing places. There is also a vehicular gate or stile, either of which can be used (please make sure the gate is latched).



Boardwalk to Fen Hide



Start of path to Tower Pool Hide

### **Viewing Facilities**

- The viewing area of the Visitor Centre is accessed by a short flight of seven steps with a handrail on both sides. There is also a stairlift with instructions. At the top there is a wheelchair for anybody to use. The windows have low access points and can open, but this would be difficult from a seated position.
- Tower Pool Hide is 850 m from the visitor centre and is accessed by a shallow ramp with handrails on either side. One section of the hide has been adapted for wheelchair users with moveable benches, a lowered window and extra knee room beneath. The door opens inwards with a knob handle, opening width of the door is 900mm. The hide windows open inwards and upwards and secured with easy to operate latches.

- Willow hide is on the woodland walk next to the car park and 150m from the visitor centre. It has one step at the entrance and lift-up viewing slots. There is no seating in this hide but there are a range of viewing slots at different heights. Door opens inwards with a latch and the entrance is 850mm wide.
- Fen hide is accessed up a rather steep but short flight of five steps with a handrail. The door opens inwards with a knob handle, opening width is 800mm and the hide windows slide downwards - sash window type. Fen Hide is accessed from the airfield car park, which is 3.25miles/5.25km from the main reserve car park. From the airfield car park Fen Hide is 280m along a track that can be a little muddy and then along a boardwalk which is 1.2m wide with passing places.
- Bay hide is up a rather steep step, the door opens inwards with a knob handle, door opening width of 900mm. windows open inwards and upwards, secured with a latch. Bay Hide is accessed from the airfield car park, which is 3.25miles/5.25km from the main reserve car park. From the airfield car park, the path to Bay Hide is 200m from the airfield car park and is an uneven grass surface with no fixed sides.
- There is a range of interpretation in all of the hides, adding to and complementary to that found in the visitor centre. All the interpretation is in a clear print format with good contrast and using matt encapsulation.
- Maps of trails and hides are available in the Visitor Centre, but are not currently downloadable from our website.

### **Public Toilets**

- The public toilets are next to the Visitor Centre and car park. There is an accessible toilet with a door width of 900mm. Space for a wheelchair is at the right of the toilet which is 450mm from the floor. There are grab rails at either side.
- There is no emergency call system for visitors requiring assistance.
- The floor is flat and smooth, painted concrete. The taps are lever taps.

- There is a baby changing facility in the accessible toilet, which is useable from a seated position

### **Catering**

- The only on site catering is a small hot drinks vending machine in the viewing area of the visitor centre. This is a coin operated machine and is self-service, but staff will be happy to assist when present.
- The nearest place to get hot food is in Crimond village 1 ½ miles /3km from the reserve

### **Picnic Area**

- There are several picnic benches and other benches in the area around the wildlife garden and little woodland walk. At the moment none of them are adapted for wheelchair users.
- Visitors are welcome to bring their own food as there are no cafe facilities on site

### **Future Plans**

- We are currently looking at options to improve access to the fixed binoculars and telescopes in the Visitor Centre viewing area.
- In 2013 there will be a new 1200m long footpath between the visitor centre and the airfield hides. There may be some unavoidable access restrictions because of the nature of the terrain.
- Help us improve accessibility by sending feedback to the Site Manager.

### **Contact Information**



Address (Inc postcode): Loch of Strathbeg Nature Reserve  
Starnafin Farmhouse Crimond  
Fraserburgh AB43 8QN

Telephone: 01346 532017

Email: [strathbeg@rspb.org.uk](mailto:strathbeg@rspb.org.uk)

Website: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Grid Reference: NK066598

Hours Of Operation: The visitor centre is open 8am to 6pm  
or dusk if earlier, seven days a week.  
The hides are always open

Local Accessible Taxi: Kininmonth Cabs, Peterhead 01771  
622209

Local Public Transport: 01224 664586