

Wensum Valley Raptor Watchpoint [Gateley]

This raptor viewpoint opened in spring 2002 and complements the long established viewpoint at Swanton Novers [site 2.17]. The main attraction is the Honey Buzzards, but many other birds of prey can be seen.

Birds

Year Round: Common Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Little Owl

Spring and summer: Honey Buzzards (late May to end of August), Hobby (hawking insects over Sennowe Park), Marsh Harrier

Location [Car park TF 970256]

Turn off the A1067 Fakenham to Norwich Road signposted to Great Ryburgh. After less than a mile, you will come to a single track bridge controlled by traffic lights, cross over and enter the village, at the junction by the Boar Pub, turn left and drive past St Andrew's church. After a further half a mile you will come to a junction, follow the road around to the left following the sign for North Elmham. Cross a bridge over a disused railway line and the Raptor Watchpoint car park is on the right about one hundred yards further on. From the car park follow the mown path along the edge of the field to the roped off area at the top of the hill. A map of the site can be found at: <http://www.multimap.com>, just type the grid reference into the search field.

Management

Managed by English Nature with the kind permission of the land owner Mr T Cook of Sennowe Park.

Opening times and access

Open May to August during daylight hours. Please note that all the surrounding fields and woods are private with no public access.

Other amenities

Great Ryburgh has a pub, shops and a telephone, other amenities in Fakenham.

Birdwatching Tips

Honey buzzards are at their most active on sunny days between about 10 am and 3 pm. There is an information board in the car park with details of the most recent sightings and English Nature staff and volunteers are often on duty to update you. It is worth spending some time before your visit reading up on flight identification of buzzards. Scan the fence posts and old oaks in the meadows below the viewpoint for Little Owls. The Wensum Valley acts as a migration flyway for birds of prey and in 2002 Red Kite, Osprey and Black Stork have all been seen from either the Wensum Valley or Swanton Novers raptor watchpoints.

Please do not block the very narrow roads around the viewpoint or trespass on private land. A collection is being taken by the landowner for a local church, so please give generously.