



Accessibility guide (updated 2023)
WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre



Address: WWT Slimbridge, Bowditch, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire,
GL2 7BT

Email: info.slimbridge@wwt.org.uk

Phone: 01453 891900

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Welcome

Founded in 1946 by Sir Peter Scott this attraction bordering the River Severn in Gloucestershire is a haven for birds, wildlife and people. It is ideal for birdwatchers, families or individuals who want some peace and calm away from the stresses of life today.

Your experience

Our Wetland Centre exists to fulfil founder Sir Peter Scott's vision of connecting people with nature, so we make it a principle that our wetlands and wildlife are accessible to everyone.

With wide-open spaces and wetlands full of the sights and sounds of nature, there's plenty to see and do. Meet our feathery friends, marvellous mammals and awesome amphibians at daily talks. Take crisp close ups of birds and other wetland creatures against stunning wetland backdrops overlooking lakes and the Severn Estuary where you will be able to see a huge variety of wild birds.

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Facilities at a glance

General

- Trained and accredited assistance dogs (Assistance Dogs UK <https://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/>) wearing the appropriate branded jacket and lead/harness and - where possible - with the accompanying ID card are welcome.
- Unfortunately, animals in training are not permitted on site.
- We would appreciate it if visitors call ahead to let us know they will be visiting with an assistance dog on **01453 891900** so we can advise our animal care teams.
- Accessible toilets can be found in the car park, throughout the visitor centre and grounds. There are 6 accessible toilets across the site in total.
- Free car parking with tarmac surface and reserved bays for disabled visitors.
- Lifts in the Severn view Observation Tower and the Estuary Tower Hide: provide views across the site and the Severn Estuary.
- We offer free tickets for essential carers when accompanying a disabled visitor.

Hearing

There is a portable hearing induction loop in the admission foyer and fixed loops in our cinema and living wetland theatre.

We have a mobile induction loop available if needed for other areas of the centre. Look out for the symbol.



Visual

Enlarged versions of maps and menus can be provided on request

Lowered access windows in our hides.

Floor to ceiling windows and glass doors have markers.

Getting here

By car

Our postcode for Satnav is **GL2 7BT**

Located near to the M5 between Gloucester and Bristol. Exit at either junction **13** or **14** and follow the brown signs with a duck.

We have a large free car park with 17 designated accessible spaces.

Coaches and minibuses are also very welcome, with parking available close to the Visitor Centre and toilets.

When travelling through Slimbridge village please be mindful of our neighbours and reduce your speed to 20mph once you leave the A38.

By bus

Unfortunately we are not easily accessed by bus. The bus stop is on the A38 near the roundabout turnoff to WWT Slimbridge. It is three miles away from the Centre.

By rail

Our nearest railway station is located at Cam and Dursley Station and is a short bicycle or taxi journey away. (Approx 4 miles)

By bike

Download a copy of Sustrans' National Cycle Network map. We are located on the Sustrans route, [number 41](#).

Free bike racks are situated outside the centre - Please bring your own lock.

By taxi

When in the area there are a number of local taxi services. Our postcode is **GL2 7BT**, please search online for the most up to date contact info for taxi firms.

Opening times and admission prices

WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre is open 7 days a week, 364 days a year. We only close to the public on 25 December.

- November, December & January | 9.30am – 4.30pm (last entry 3.30pm)
- February & March | 9.30pm – 5pm (last entry 4pm)
- April – October | 9.30am – 5.30pm (last entry 4.30pm)

We offer free entry for essential carers. Latest prices for tickets can be found here

<https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge/plan-your-visit/prices/>

Car parking

We have two rows of spaces at the front of our free car park which are designated for users with disabilities. This surface is covered with tarmac. These 17 spaces are wider and are also closer to the ramp to enter the visitor centre.



Further overflow parking is on the orchard or field; these surfaces are either gravel or grass.

Our car park has a large toilet block, baby changing in both male and female toilets and also an accessible toilet with level access onto a covered paved surface from the tarmac.



Arrival

Path to entrance

The approach to the main entrance is via a ramp which is easily accessed from the car park via a smooth brick paved path that leads to a brick paved ramp which turns to wooden boarding as the ramp traverses a bridge section to the entrance. The entrance ramp is 350cm wide



There are two powered doors opened by a conveniently placed wheelchair-accessible button that leads you through into the foyer.

There are two sets of doors, one is 87cm wide and the manual double doors are 170cm wide.



Admissions, membership desk and foyer

Entrance area

The entrance Foyer contains 4 admissions desks, one of which is at a lower level.

Information desk – sells bird food so visitors may hand feed the birds and provides information on daily bird sightings.



[Please note: This is available when feeding is allowed under Avian Influenza restrictions]

Membership desk – sign up point for new memberships, lowered desk and seating available.

Access to 2 x disabled toilets.

Lift and stair access to the tower. (This is a narrow lift and not suitable for large buggies or mobility scooters.)

A ramp to the ground floor.

Exhibition about WWT's founder Sir Peter Scott, with an accompanying short video which is subtitled. Large print guide to the exhibition is available.

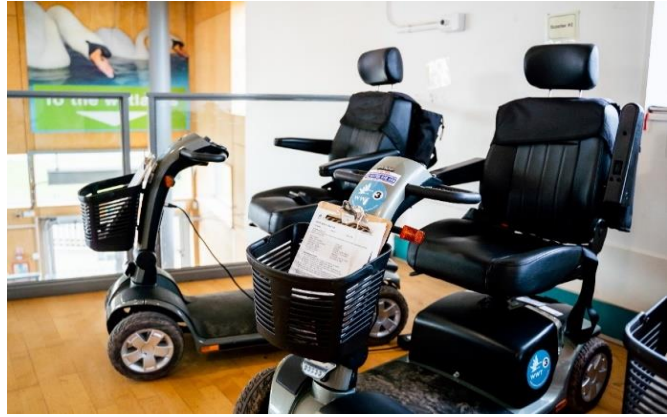
Welcome board with details of events on site each day.

Lots of friendly staff and volunteers are available to assist and answer any questions you have.

Accessibility equipment

We provide wheelchairs for free.

We have mobility scooters for hire (available 7 days per week) at £10 per day which includes an introductory briefing. A £25 deposit per scooter is also required, refundable on the safe return of the hired scooter.



We recommend calling in advance to book our equipment on 01453 891900, Monday to Friday.

- These have a weight limit of 18 stone.
- Call 01453 891900 to book wheelchair or scooter to ensure availability on the day.

Getting to the ground floor

There is a ramp which takes you down from the foyer to the ground floor of the visitor centre. The ramp is wide enough for mobility scooters, wheelchairs and large buggies. If you need assistance taking your mobility scooter down our ramp, just ask our team.



If you would prefer, we also have a lift which can be used to access the ground floor, please ask staff if you wish to use this. The lift is not suitable for large buggies or mobility scooters due to its narrow size. There is no music played in our lift and it has LED lighting.

Ground floor, the entrance to our grounds

At the base of the ramp there is:

- Ladies, gents and unisex accessible toilets.
- Baby changing room.
- Gallery.
- Access to the grounds.
- The Kingfisher Kitchen restaurant.
- Gift shop.
- An indoor soft play area for children.
- Toad Hall – exhibition of amphibians, including toads, newts and frogs.
- Cinema (fitted with hearing loop) which is used for our amphibian talks and presentations.

Animal contact areas

Around site, in addition to our bathrooms we have outdoor sinks so that you can wash your hands.

We also hand sanitiser available throughout our visitor centre and grounds.

Welly Boot Land

This fenced off play area does have a gate which is opened by a latch on the top to keep youngsters inside safe. The gate latch is 126cm high. Our team can help with this if you need assistance.

Within Welly Boot Land there is plenty of space with benches and picnic areas. Welly Boot Land is close to the visitor centre for the nearest toilets, and we also have a café kiosk nearby (open at peak periods). Welly Boot Land is open all year. Water flow is turned off from October to February to protect from frost.

Riverlife

Our playground at Riverlife has a loose bark surface and features a range of play equipment including steps and wobbly bridge. Around the play area is a large open area with ample seating. Toilets and a café kiosk (open at peak periods) are close by.

Food at WWT Slimbridge

Kingfisher Kitchen

We have a selection of hot and cold food, snacks, drinks and ice cream available for you to enjoy with us and fuel your wetland adventure.

The Kingfisher Kitchen is open 10am – 4pm daily and we have a selection of eat in options available.

If you have any allergies, please speak to a member of our team on the day who can advise you or email us in advance info.slimbridge@wwt.org.uk.

Other food and drink

We have vending machines at our Flamingo Kiosk and next to our Living Wetland Theatre.

These accept cash or cards. A selection of drinks and snacks is available from these as an alternative.

There are two kiosks on site, one at Riverlife and one at Welly Boot Land. During November and December and off peak times, the kiosks will not be open. Please check the kiosk opening times at admissions on the day of your visit.

We cater for most dietary needs in our restaurant and our kiosks. There are vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options available. Please visit the Eat and Shop website page for more details: <https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge/experience/eat-drink-shop/>

You are welcome to bring your own food and drink and make use of our picnic areas.

Hides

Most of our hides are accessible for those with limited mobility. Very few have steps and some, due their age may have narrower doorways. Our range of hides overlook different areas of the wild reserve. Many of these have dropped viewing platforms.



Other Hides - The majority of our hides are wheelchair accessible including:

- Sloane tower (via lift in main centre building).
- Estuary Tower (all levels using a lift).
- Robbie Garnett Hide (lower level).
- Willow Hide.
- Knott Hide (lower windows).
- South Lake Discovery Hide (this is a larger hide and is suitable for a mobility scooter).
- Zeiss Hide (lower level, via ramp).
- Van de Bovenkamp (via ramp).
- Kingfisher Hide.
- Peng Observatory (this is a larger hide and is suitable for a mobility scooter).

Daily Presentations

We run a programme of daily talks and feeds about our collection animals and wild birds. The timings of these talks are listed on our welcome board in the admissions foyer. We use microphones for these talks where possible.

Please ask our team for more information.



Living Wetland Theatre

Relax and watch one of our films or interactive live demonstrations hosted by the specialist team as they uncover the science behind wetland conservation.

All our films are subtitled, audio is played through speakers around the theatre.

At the open-air theatre watch our amazing birds flying overhead during the demonstrations. The staff will wear a microphone when giving a talk or presentation. There is a fixed hearing loop in the LWT, please set your hearing aid to the 'T' setting.



We have a large tiered seating area with a ramp leading up to the top. The ramp is 180 cm wide. This is accessible to all, but caution is advised for mobility scooter users as there are narrower areas at the top of the seating and the turning circle can be tight.

Please ask our team for advice as to the best view on the day and where best to park if you are using a scooter. There is a wide 280cm area here to park.

Cinema

Our cinema has tiered seating and areas for wheelchair and mobility scooter users. There are doors to enter/exit so no need to turn around. These doors are both 90cm wide. The cinema uses a large screen for presenting and has an induction loop.



Information and signage

All of our exhibits, hides and open areas use signage to communicate our conservation efforts and display more information about our collection.

We use images and text.

Most of our information and signs are placed at approximately 50cm from the ground. Larger maps and information may be taller.

Some exhibits have objects and displays which can be touched and handled (Arctic Adventure and Mission Possible). Some exhibits use films, which have subtitles, and may have audio.

We run a range of engagement activities most of which are accessible, these can include an interactive sandbox, pond dipping, family science presentations, and researcher activities. All of these activities provide opportunities for hands on learning. Please check the 'What's On Today' board in the entrance foyer to see what is running when you visit.

Toilets in the visitor centre (admissions area)

- There are two public toilets for disabled visitors.
- From the main entrance to the public toilet there is level access through a set of double doors.
- Right hand side toilet
 - The toilet door is 90cm wide.
 - The door opens outwards to the right.
 - There are wall bars on the left and a drop down grab bar on the right.
 - There is 70cm clear space in front of the toilet.
 - There is an emergency pull cord to sound an alert.
- Left hand side toilet
 - The toilet door is 90cm wide.
 - The door opens outwards to the left.
 - There are wall bars on the right and a drop down grab bar on the left.
 - There is 70cm clear space in front of the toilet.
 - There is an emergency pull cord to sound an alert.

Toilets in the visitor centre (ground floor)

- There is one public toilet for disabled visitors. There is level access through the door.



- The toilet door is 90cm wide.
- The door opens outwards to the right.
- There are wall bars on the right and a drop down grab bar on the left.
- There is 120cm clear space in front of the toilet.
- There is an emergency pull cord to sound an alert.

Toilets in the grounds

Toilets opposite the Peng Observatory

- There is one public toilet for disabled visitors opposite the Peng Observatory. It is the middle toilet of the three that are there.
 - Entrance doors are 90cm wide.
 - The toilet door is 90cm and pulls to the right.
 - There are wall bars on the left and a drop down grab bar on the right.
 - There is a 170cm clear space in front of the toilet.
 - There is an emergency cord to sound an alert.

Canoe Kiosk

- There is one public toilet for disabled visitors, this is to the right of the canoe kiosk building.
 - Entrance doors are 90cm wide.
 - The toilet door is 90cm wide, pulls open to the right.
 - There are wall bars on the right and a drop down grab bar on the left.
 - There is 90cm clear space in front of the toilet.
 - There is an emergency pull cord to sound an alert.

Living Wetland Theatre

- This toilet is at the top of the access ramp to the Living Wetland Theatre
- There is level access through two pull doors to this unisex toilet area which includes accessible stall.



- Entrance doors are 90cm wide.
- The toilet door is 80cm wide, it has a sliding door which slides to the right.
- There are wall bars on the right and a drop down grab bar on the left.
- There is 90cm clear space in front of the toilet.
- There is an emergency pull cord to sound an alert.
- Baby changing facilities are in the unisex area outside the stall.

Changing Place

We have a fully-equipped and accessible Changing Place facility on site. The facility is located opposite the Rain Garden, next to the Visitor Centre and it includes a toilet, bed and hoist.



Baby changing area

We have a large baby changing room located directly opposite the door of the Kingfisher Kitchen restaurant.



Picnic areas

WWT Slimbridge has many large open areas of grass to rest and eat. There are also many benches and picnic benches in some key areas. Mainly, you will find these next to play areas, catering outlets and toilet facilities.



Smoking areas

We allow smoking in outdoor areas away from playgrounds and eating areas. Occasionally we may put in place no smoking zones in the summer months if the wild fire risk is high. Smoking is **not** allowed in any of our indoor areas. Please dispose of cigarette butts responsibly.

Wild Safari

Wild Safaris run from May to September on Saturdays, Sundays and every day throughout school holidays. During these times, safaris will run twice daily and last for 90 minutes. They are weather dependent and it is advisable to wear sturdy footwear and/or warm protective clothing especially during cold or wet days.



Booking on arrival is essential as places are limited. Safari tours are in addition to the normal admission charge. We have a lift installed in the trailer so that wheelchair users can go on safari. A few alterations do need to be made to the trailer so please give at least two hours' notice if you are wishing to take a wheelchair on the trailer. The trailer is not suitable for buggies or mobility scooters.

Summer Walkway and Viewing Platform

During the summer months (open April – October) explore the natural wildlife and landscapes of the Severn Estuary. Look out for amphibians, dragonflies and butterflies in the new ponds on your journey.

Visit the new fully wheelchair accessible walkway and viewing platform overlooking the River Severn. See if you can locate May Hill and the Forest of Dean on the other side of the river! More information can be found on our website.

South Finger Walkway and hides

Through a portal door there is a short walkway past the South Finger Reedbed where you can spot natural wildlife. This also leads to the Kingfisher and Van De Bovenkamp hides. These areas have natural paths and are accessible to confident wheelchair and mobility scooter users.

Canoe Safari

The Canoe Safari may not be suitable for those with mobility issues. For safety, users of the Canoe Safari must be able to enter and alight from the canoe easily, and be comfortable in waist height water should the need arise. Please ask our canoe safari staff for advice on suitability.



Canoes are priced at £10 per boat and can seat up to three people.

The canoes are suitable for children aged 3+, but this is subject to conditions.

Each canoe hired must be accompanied by at least 1 adult (18+).

Open times are seasonal running from April - October: 11am to 4pm allowing the hirer the allotted 1hr on the water, with all canoes off the water by 5pm. Opening and timings are weather dependent, so please check our website or call for the latest information.

Gift shop

- Lower height till point
- Exit accessible door is 89cm wide, with 175cm push door
- Customer displays
- Well trained and friendly staff

Exiting to the car park

- Level access from shop to car park
- Gate is not on latch, 125cm wide

Further information

If you have any questions or need any more detail regarding anything included in our accessibility guide, please do get in touch.

Other relevant information

We have separate accessibility guides for our onsite self-catering accommodation Bewick's Lodge;

<https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge/experience/bewicks-lodge/>

And for our conference space The Garden Room;

<https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge/plan-your-visit/venue-hire/>

We hope to see you soon,

WWT Slimbridge