

Information Sheet

March 2007

Swains Lane Local Nature Reserve, Wellington

Come and enjoy the nature and wildlife of Swains Lane

Directions:

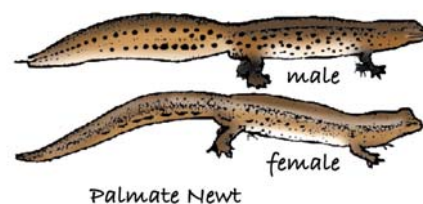
From Swains Lane, Wellington turn into Burrough Way and then right into The Brambles. Near the northern end a narrow pathway on the left gives access to the reserve.

Swains Lane Local Nature Reserve

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comprises two fields, one an old orchard,

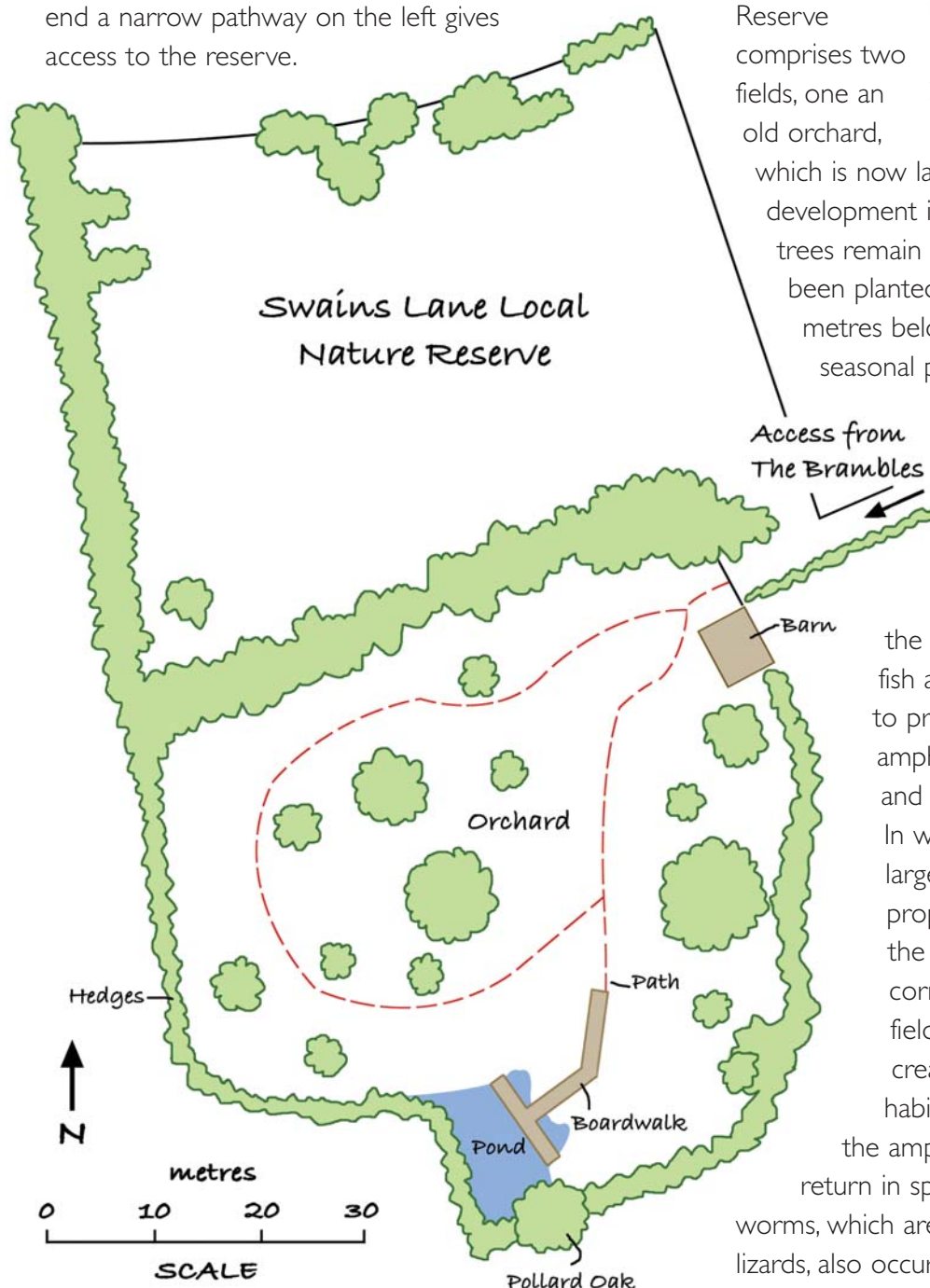
which is now largely surrounded by new housing development in Wellington. Several older apple trees remain and new cider apple standards have been planted. The southern field, which lies several metres below the northern field, contains a seasonal pond.



Swains Lane Local
Nature Reserve

Access from
The Brambles

This pond holds an important population of amphibians including the rare great crested newt and other species such as palmate newt, frog and toad. Because the pond tends to dry out in the summer fish are not present to predate the amphibian eggs and tadpoles. In winter a large proportion of the lower corner of the field floods creating an ideal habitat to which the amphibians can return in spring. Slow worms, which are actually legless lizards, also occur.



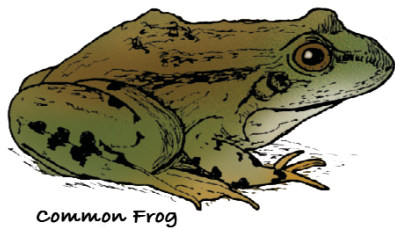
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The pond is heavily vegetated with flote grass and water-pepper; while water crowfoot, fan-leaved water crowfoot and brooklime are also present.

The surrounding grassland is semi-improved but contains occasional cuckoo flower, meadowsweet, dove's-foot crane's-bill, self-heal, red clover and other herb species.

Banked hedgerows bound most of the site and are mainly of English elm, much of which continues to die back from Dutch Elm Disease. Ash, elder, field maple, common dogwood, hawthorn, blackthorn and spindle also occur and there is an old pollard pendunculate oak adjacent to the pond. Bluebells, dog's mercury, hedge woundwort and red campion can be found below the hedges.

Smaller birds, including song thrush, dunnock and robin, nest in the hedges and a wryneck has been seen in the orchard trees on passage. A sparrowhawk sometimes visits the reserve in search of prey.



Common Frog

The remains of a small barn stand adjacent to the entrance and it is hoped that the roof and cladding of the

building may be used by roosting bats such as common pipistrelle or soprano pipistrelle. Bats vary their roost sites throughout the year, and species such as pipistrelle favour warm roof eaves in summer to give birth to their young.



A boardwalk has been constructed to improve access and a circular pathway is cut through the grassland during the summer. Ideally, the grassland should be lightly grazed or cut for hay in late July.

Useful Contacts

Somerset Wildlife Trust

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English Nature (Somerset Team)

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Bengali

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Hindi

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Polish

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