

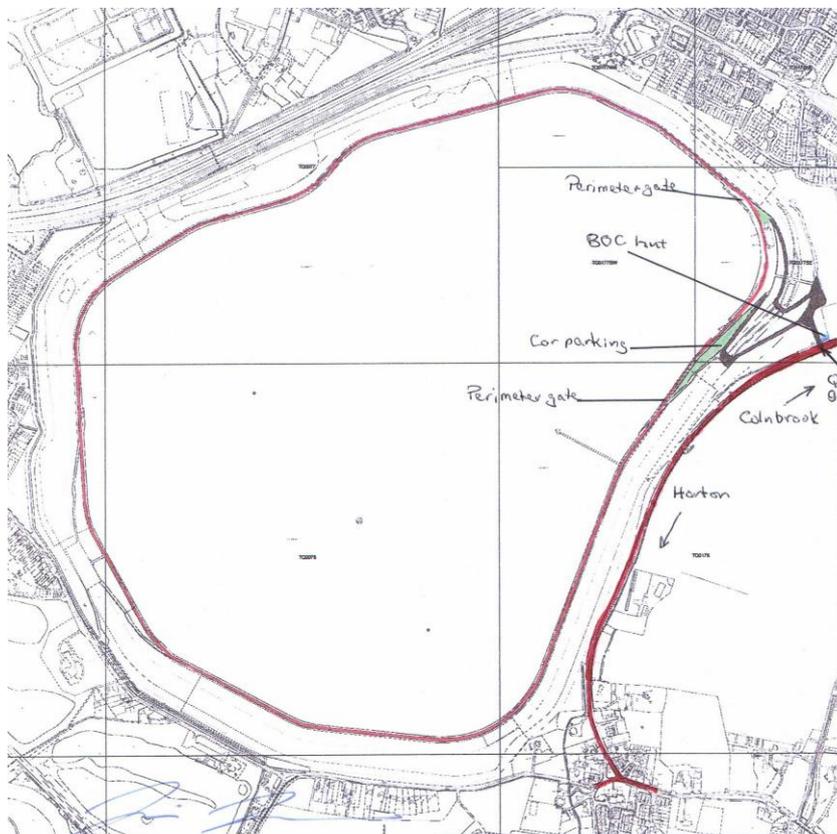
## Berkshire Ornithological Club Queen Mother Reservoir access

Thames Water offers access at Queen Mother Reservoir for bird-watching through the Berkshire Ornithological Club under the conditions of a Thames Water Operational Safety Authorisation and license issued to the Club. The Berkshire Ornithological Club may issue permits to its members and may withdraw the permit without notice if the conditions of issue are breached. Access is permitted from dawn to one hour after sunset to the area around the sailing club and to the perimeter pathway only (the wave wall and grass banks are out of bounds).

There is no drinking water available around the perimeter, so an adequate supply should be taken. There are no toilet facilities around the reservoir and urination on the site is strictly prohibited. Please ensure that no litter is left anywhere within the reservoir site.

The Datchet Sailing Club has said that, when the clubhouse is open, birdwatchers may use its toilet facilities; its café, open Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, may also be used.

Thames Water is responsible for security of this sensitive site: please ensure that you lock gates securely immediately after you and that you do not encourage or allow non-permit holders to access the site. Any suspicious behaviour should be reported immediately to Thames Water's helpline (see permit card for details).



For access from the M4, take exit 5, then A4 towards Colnbrook. After about 200m turn right following signs to Colnbrook. At the village, follow the main road sharply to the right along the eastern side of the reservoir. The second gate on the right hand side gives access to the reservoir (at TQ016,769).

The BOC entrance is on the right side and has a combination lock panel. Please ensure that the chain is correctly replaced around both gates and the hasp inserted securely in the lock immediately after entry or exit. The gate may not be left open unattended at any time.

Permit holders must **sign in at the BOC hut**, which is immediately on the right of the gate and can be entered using the combination code provided. Cars should then be parked on the car parking on either side of the sailing club building. Please record bird observations in the log book provided in the hut.

If the BOC gate is unavailable (we will endeavour to give notice should this happen), permit holders may enter via the sailing club barrier, which is open during sailing club hours (9-5, closed Mondays); exit passes to open the barrier may then be obtained from the sailing clubhouse.

## Health and Safety at Queen Mother Reservoir

You are very unlikely to have any problems with health or safety when visiting QMR, as long as you stick to some very simple precautions.

**Weather:** the perimeter path is about 5 km long and there is no shelter. Make sure you have the right clothing and equipment for the weather. It can be anything from very cold with strong wind exposure in the winter to hot and sunny in the summer.

**Facilities:** no drinking water or toilets are provided for bird watchers. Datchet Sailing Club is happy for permit holders to use the toilets in their clubhouse when it is open, and its café, which is usually open at weekends.

**Access:** please keep to the perimeter path, entrance roadways and car park. All these areas should be safe to access, but do keep your eyes open for any problems. Stay away from the grass banks and the wave wall.

**Lone visitors:** if you are by yourself, please carry a mobile phone so you can get help if necessary. Tell someone where you are going. The emergency number for Thames Water is on your permit.

**Ticks & Lyme disease:** there is a slight risk of picking up a tick while at QMR, so please follow this advice. About a third of ticks carry Lyme disease. You can find out more via the links on the QMR page of the BOC website, including what to do if you are bitten.

- Avoid getting bitten by keeping your skin covered. Cover arms and legs, tuck trousers into socks, wear shoes or boots. Use a spray-on insect repellent if you are concerned.
- Inspect your clothing and skin for ticks, before you leave QMR. Check your skin when you undress.
- If you have been bitten by a tick, remove it as soon as possible. Don't panic – use the link on the BOC website to find information on how to remove ticks safely.
- When you have removed the tick, find out about the symptoms of Lyme's disease and monitor yourself. If you develop symptoms, see your GP.

**Weil's disease (Leptospirosis):** this can be caught by contact with fresh water contaminated by rat or cattle urine. It is very unlikely to be a problem for visitors to QMR, but it is very easy to prevent infection. There is more information on the QMR page of the BOC website.

- Infection usually happens when open wounds are immersed in contaminated water.
- Keep to the perimeter path, well away from the water.
- Cover any open wounds such as cuts and scratches with waterproof plasters.

**Brown Tail Moth caterpillars:** there have been infestations in the boat park in the past. The caterpillars are brown with red and white markings. Contact with them causes rashes, irritation, headaches and breathing difficulties. They are active in spring and early summer. The vegetation in the boat park has been removed, but please be vigilant – if you see any, do not touch!

**Problems:** please tell both Thames Water's helpline and the BOC about any accidents, emergencies or other problems that arise at QMR. All the numbers are on your permit.