



# East Dartmoor

## National Nature Reserve

Front cover image: Hisley Wood  
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## Welcome to East Dartmoor

East Dartmoor National Nature Reserve is one of the best places in the country to enjoy the outdoors and to encounter wildlife. The Reserve lies just a stone's throw from the iconic Haytor Rocks, and straddles both the high open moors and lower wooded valleys of Dartmoor National Park. It comprises three joined but distinct areas; Yarner Wood, Trenderbere Down and the valley of the River Bovey.

Nature Reserves safeguard some of Britain's most important wildlife for present and future generations to cherish and enjoy. East Dartmoor is managed by Natural England in partnership with the Trenderbere Down Commoners Association, the Woodland Trust and Dartmoor National Park Authority.





## What's special about East Dartmoor?

The Reserve is internationally important for its extensive ancient upland oak wood, heathland and mires. These habitats support a great range of plants and animals; from abundant species like the Great-spotted woodpecker to the rare Blue Ground beetle and Barbastelle bat.

In recognition of its nature conservation work, the Reserve is legally protected as a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest.



Ottery Scouts receiving their Naturalist's Badge

## Getting around

You are welcome to walk the entire area of the Reserve. There is an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and tracks to explore, as well as trails to guide you. For further information about the granite tramway and the Templer Way, please see the Templer Way leaflet.

There are car parks at Yarner Wood, Trendlebere Down and nearby Pullabrook Wood. Please see the site map for locations.

There is a public toilet with disabled facilities at the NNR office located at the Yarner Wood car park.



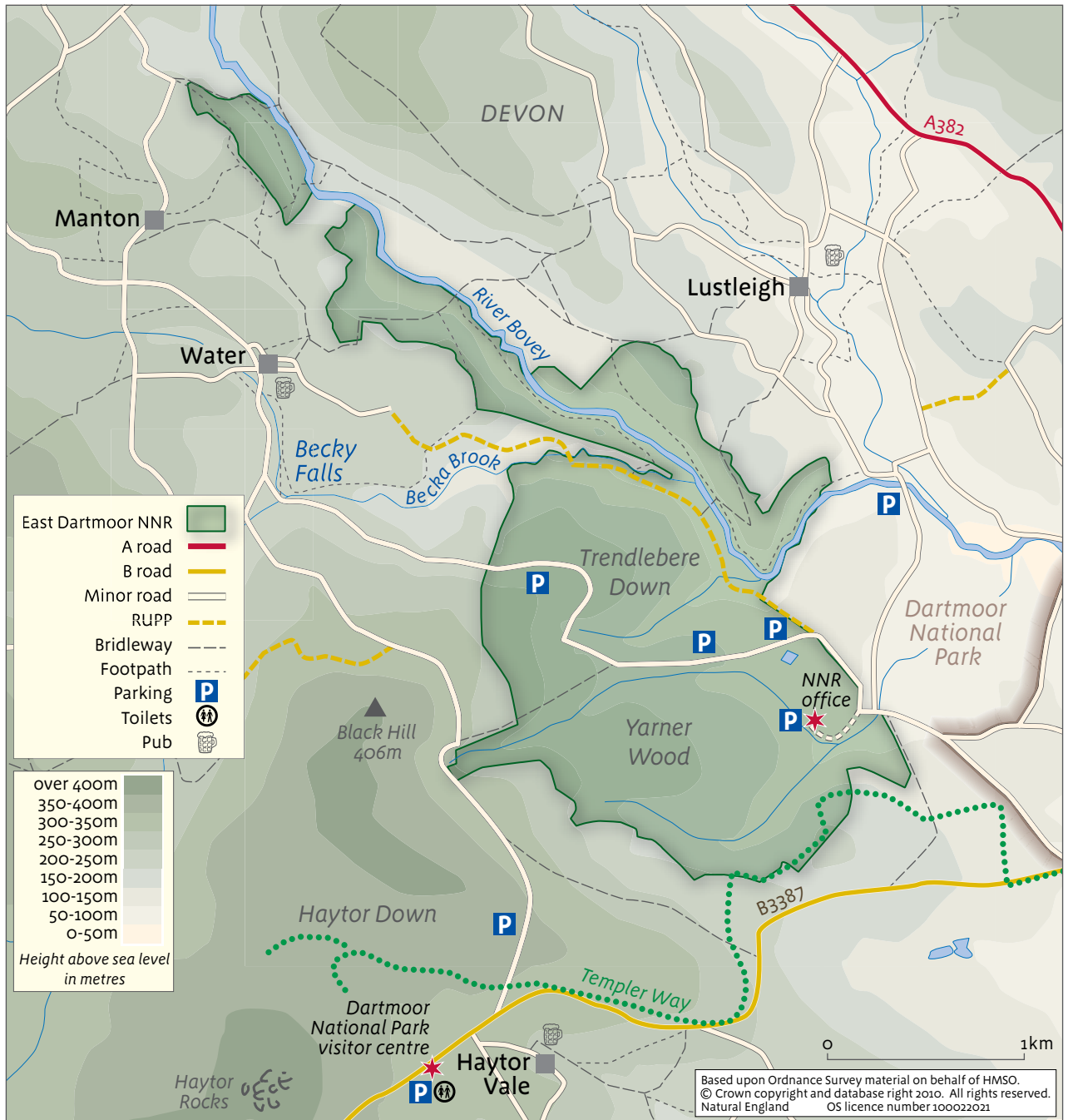
Tony - getting round the NNR on his Tramper






















Granite tramway on the Templer Way, Yarner Wood

Dogs are welcome but please respect other visitors, wildlife and livestock by keeping dogs under close control at all times. The bridleways and byways on the reserve are open to horse riders and mountain bikers.

Further information is available at the NNR office, where you can find up to date wildlife news, information boards, volunteer opportunities and details of events. Natural England staff are usually on hand to help with enquiries.



- East Dartmoor NNR 
- A road 
- B road 
- Minor road 
- RUPP 
- Bridleway 
- Footpath 
- Parking 
- Toilets 
- Pub 

over 400m	
350-400m	
300-350m	
250-300m	
200-250m	
150-200m	
100-150m	
50-100m	
0-50m	

Height above sea level in metres

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## Past and Present

East Dartmoor has a rich and colourful past, and human occupation has had a big part to play in shaping today's landscape.

Today the Bovey Valley is almost entirely wooded, but once it was covered in small farmsteads, each with its own fields and copses. About 100 years ago, new ways of farming changed this way of life and gradually the farms were abandoned. Numerous stone walls and earth banks within the wood give the biggest clues to their almost hidden past.

Houndtor Camp, positioned on the highest ground in the Valley, is most likely to be one of a series of lookout posts along the valley, built and used during the English Civil War. Commanding views up and down the valley would have given early warning of invading forces. Each lookout post would be able to see the next, so that they could communicate the impending peril.



The moorland of Trendlebere Down has been occupied and farmed since at least the Bronze age. The myriad of historic 'lumps and bumps' left behind show that people once lived here. Look out for the row of stones, cairns and hut circles which all date from that period as well as more modern features such as the Bovey Pottery leat.

Just like a mill 'race', the leat is a man-made stream that took water to the famous potteries in Bovey Tracey. Although the leat is no longer in commercial use, it still picks up water within Yarner Wood and takes it to the Pottery Ponds. Now a haven for wildlife, the ponds were originally constructed to store water to power machinery at the potteries. You can visit the pottery museum at the House of Marbles and the Pottery Ponds in Bovey Tracey.

The majestic oaks of Yarner Wood are testament to an ancient past and a long history of woodland management. In the past, large blocks of woodland were felled to make charcoal. And the legacy of trees re-growing in similar-aged groups can still be seen today. If you spot flat, circular areas about 5 metres across, you've probably found one of the many old charcoal hearths that still remain here.

Locally, charcoal was needed during the industrial revolution to smelt iron, lead and copper. The charcoal at Yarner Wood was used at the Yarrow copper mine in the late 19th century.

Yarner Wood was purchased in 1952 by the Nature Conservancy and became England's first National Nature Reserve. Subsequent purchases by Natural England's other predecessors have created a much expanded area now known as the East Dartmoor National Nature Reserve.





## What you can see

### The Bovey Valley

The woodlands and wet meadows of the River Bovey are the perfect place to experience the more dramatic side of Dartmoor. The fast flowing river follows a steep-sided valley that was originally formed by the Sticklepath geological fault. The middle and upper reaches provide challenging terrain for dedicated walkers.

At Neadon Cleave, the most northerly point of the Reserve, you'll see a spectacular section of river. Here the Bovey is almost choked by huge boulders. In dry periods, the river flows almost hidden underneath but in flood the water crashes and tumbles over the top of the boulders. Making use of the boulders as large stepping stones, the public footpath crosses the river at this point – take care here, it's not for the faint-hearted.



To the south, the valley widens and the river slows, and the woods become mixed with a series of small wet meadows. These wildflower-rich meadows are grazed by Dartmoor Heritage ponies and are a great place to see silver-washed fritillary and marbled white butterflies.

The old stone pack horse bridge at Hisley Wood is a wonderful place to stop for a picnic. It is also a useful vantage point to see brown and sea trout and the occasional salmon, as well as birds like dipper and kingfisher.



## Trendlebere Down

This section of the Reserve is just one part of an extensive tract of open moorland that encompasses Haytor Rocks. This is all common land that has been grazed, burned and cut by local people for many centuries. The Commoners' ponies, cattle and sheep move freely over the entire area.

From the Higher Trendlebere car park you can enjoy stunning panoramic views over south Devon, stretching as far as the coast at Teignmouth. The lower car park provides an equally beautiful vista of the Bovey valley as well as a good starting place for walks in this area.

A summer stroll along the paths and firebreaks of Trendlebere Down will often be rewarded with sightings of grayling butterflies, tree pipits and dartford warblers – once a rarity, these skulking birds can now be seen all year; their scratchy call from a gorse bush often being the first thing to give them away.

Follow the small stream into the combe to see bog-loving plants like bog asphodel and the carnivorous round-leaved sundew. In spring and early summer, this is one of the best places to spot pearl-bordered and dark green fritillary butterflies.

## Yarner Wood

The Wood is renowned for its towering stands of ancient oak woodland; drenched with lichens, mosses and ferns. There are many woodland paths and tracks to cater for walks of any length at any time of year.

Yarner Wood is a favourite and well-known haunt for bird watchers. You can see woodland birds of



all kinds here, but the wood is famous for its pied flycatchers, lesser spotted woodpeckers and wood warblers. April to early June are the best months to see these beautiful and enigmatic birds.

In winter, well-stocked feeders at the bird hide attract hundreds of woodland birds who come to feed. In summer, tracks near the hide are frequented by gliding silver-washed fritillary butterflies gathering nectar from bramble flowers.

From the hide, follow the track westwards for a few hundred metres to see the former Yarrow copper mine. The timber building here, which is now a classroom and workshop, is sat on the site of the mine's crushing plant. Continue west uphill to peer over the remains of the main shaft and engine house. There is an information board by the main shaft that tells you much more about the history of the mine.

## Health, outdoor learning and volunteering

Medical evidence shows that contact with the natural environment improves health and well-being, prevents disease and speeds recovery from illness. The Reserve's large network of paths and tracks caters for all levels of fitness and abilities.

East Dartmoor NNR is a 'living laboratory' with a long-history of scientific research and monitoring undertaken by staff, volunteers, universities and students of all ages. It is a very special place to learn about wildlife. Natural England has an ongoing education and community engagement programme in addition to public events and activities.

There are many opportunities to get involved in managing the Reserve; from helping with events and visiting groups or monitoring wildlife and historic features. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the NNR office at the address overleaf.

To find out what is going on, please check for up to date information at the NNR office or visit [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk).



## How to get to East Dartmoor

By car, from Bovey Tracey take the B3387 to **Manaton** (taking care not to take left fork to Haytor). After about 1.5 miles, you will see the Yarner Wood car park signs on the left. Follow the driveway for 300m to the car park and the NNR office.

By bus, use Carmel Coaches, Service 671, Okehampton to Newton Abbot, Wednesday only.

## Contact details

Natural England Office  
Yarner Wood  
Bovey Tracey  
TQ13 9LJ  
Tel: 01626 832330  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



Ottery Scouts receiving NE Naturalists Badge