



National Nature Reserves

East Midlands

Front cover photograph: Lathkill Dale.
© Peter Wakely / Natural England



Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

© Natural England 2009

ISBN 978-1-84754-118-6

Catalogue Code: NE149

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Natural England publications are available as accessible pdfs from:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information:

0845 600 3078 or email

enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Printed on Defra Silk comprising 75% recycled fibre.





Visiting National Nature Reserves

This leaflet describes eleven superb Reserves in the East Midlands that you can visit for quiet enjoyment, and the map shows a further three National Nature Reserves in the region.

Wildlife conservation and the peaceful enjoyment of nature are always the goals here – so please follow the Countryside Code at all times.

National Nature Reserves are open all year round, but the seasonal interest varies. Spring is best for woodland flowers and birds, and summer and early autumn for grassland flowers and insects. Migrating birds pass through in spring and autumn, while winter provides good opportunities to see large numbers of ducks, geese and swans. Remember, these places are working Reserves and not parks. Each entry in this leaflet has symbols showing the visitor facilities that are available and if dogs are permitted, but it is best to check availability before you visit by calling the local telephone number provided.

Many of the Reserves have a programme of exciting events (check websites for details) or can offer guided walks to organised groups.

If you would like to get involved in your local Reserve – there are often opportunities for volunteers to help with a range of work including habitat management and wildlife recording.

Car crime is a problem in some rural areas – don't leave any bags or valuables on display in your vehicle.

Please make sure that you have suitable clothing and footwear and be prepared for changes in the weather.

Your chance to see nature at its best!

The East Midlands has an outstanding variety of wildlife habitats, everything from rocky limestone grasslands to remnants of England's ancient wildwood, and windblown sand dunes to vast marshes and mudflats.

The best examples of these habitats are protected as National Nature Reserves – Britain's finest wildlife sites. As well as offering protection, National Nature Reserves are places for scientific research, demonstration of good conservation management – and they also give the public a chance to experience wildlife at first hand.

These are places where you can still see meadows shimmering with butterflies, smell the scent from carpets of bluebells, and hear the wild calls of sea birds over the marshes.

Site facilities key

 Partial easy access	 Visitor centre
 Car park	 Picnic area
 Toilets	 Cafe/ refreshments
 Public transport	 Hides
 Dogs admitted (if under control at all times)	 Leaflets available

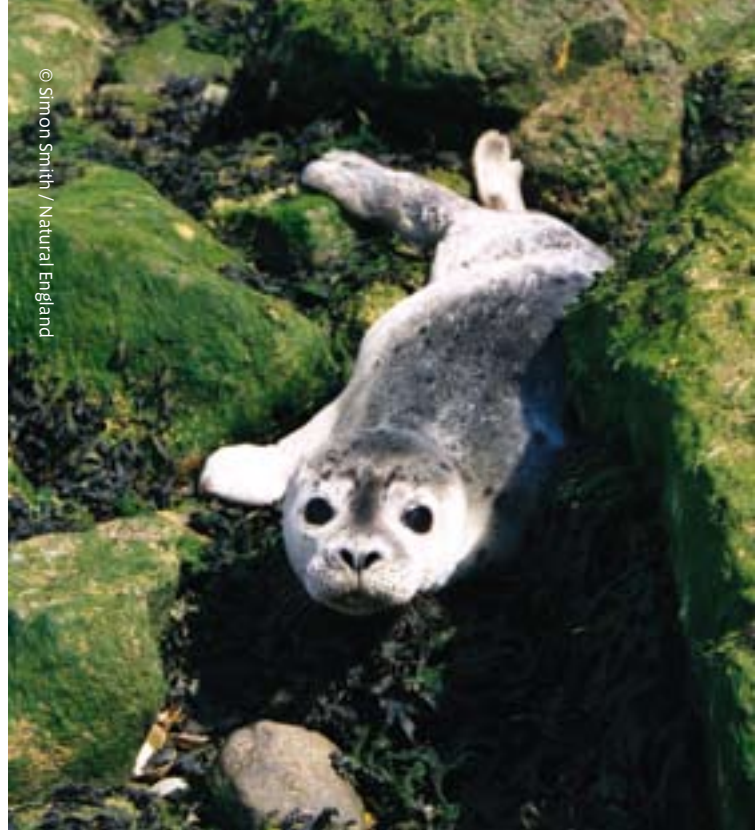
The Wash



The South East corner of the Wash forms the largest National Nature Reserve in England and is considered to be one of the last coastal wilderness areas in the UK. This large expanse of mudflats, sandbanks and saltmarsh supports huge numbers of wintering and migrant birds such as grey plover, knot, dunlin, oystercatcher and bar-tailed godwit which come to feed on the mud dwelling invertebrates. Large numbers of duck and geese, including pink-footed and brent geese, wigeon, shelduck, pintail and mallard also use the Reserve for feeding and roosting during the winter. The vast saltmarshes are important for breeding waders and the offshore sandbanks are inhabited by common seals.



© Natural England



© Simon Smith / Natural England

Common seal pup

The Wash National Nature Reserve lies on the southern shore of the Wash between the outlet of the River Nene and the estuary of the Great Ouse river. The nearest towns are King's Lynn and Sutton Bridge which are connected by the A17. By car, access to the site is via minor roads from the A17. The nearest car parks are near Guy's Point on the River Nene, and Ongar Hill, 1 km from the coast on the eastern side of the Reserve.

Grid reference: TF 570270

Telephone: 01205 723614

Natural England:

www.naturalengland.org.uk



© Natural England

Longhorn cattle in Sherwood

Sherwood Forest



Once part of the vast Royal Forest of Sherwood, this ancient woodland and heathland is believed to be at least 1,000 years old. The trees are mainly oak along with others such as birch, rowan, holly and hawthorn. There are over 1,000 veteran oak trees over 500 years old and the most famous, the Major Oak, may be twice that age. The woodland is home to a rich mix of plants and animals including birds, bats, beetles, spiders and 200 species of fungi. Budby South Forest is open heathland, a habitat which was formerly much more extensive across Sherwood. Nightjars and green woodpeckers can be seen on the Reserve's heathlands.

Sherwood Forest NNR is 25 km north of Nottingham and 4 km west of New Ollerton. Road access is from the B6034 (via the A616 or A6075).

Grid reference: SK 626677
Telephone: 01623 823202
Nottinghamshire County Council:
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/countryparks

Gibraltar Point



Gibraltar Point Reserve has a variety of coastal habitats including sandy and muddy sea shores, sand dunes, saltmarshes and freshwater marshes and ponds stretching from the southern end of Skegness to the entrance to the Wash. In the winter, the beach provides a high tide roost for thousands of wading birds. The Mere attracts many migrating birds while the ponds are home to a wealth of freshwater animals such as toads, newts and dragonflies. Breeding birds include little terns on the beach, skylark on the dunes and redshank on the saltmarsh.

Please note that dogs are not permitted on the beach and foreshore during summer.

The Reserve is situated 5 km south of Skegness, Lincolnshire, and is signposted from Skegness town centre.

Grid reference: TF 556581

Telephone: 01754 762677

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust: www.lincstrust.co.uk

Redshank



© Natural England

Dovedale



Dovedale has long been appreciated for its stunning scenery and wildlife. The names of the crags, such as Lion Head Rock and Tissington Spires, originated with Victorian tourists, as did the famous 'Stepping Stones'. It's one of the best examples of an active ravine in the country, carved out of the limestone by the River Dove over millions of years. Large areas of flower-rich grassland and the rare Jacob's ladder are two highlights. The steep woodlands are dominated by ash, with less common species such as field maple, yew and rock whitebeam. Visit the National Trust tearoom, shop and visitor centre at nearby Ilam park.

The NNR is approximately 6 km north of Ashbourne and 28 km northwest of Derby. There is car parking near Thorpe (not NT) and at Milldale.

Grid Ref: SK148510

Telephone: 01335 350503

National Trust:

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/peakdistrict

© David Stade



The River Dove runs through the Reserve.



Brent goose

Donna Nook



This Reserve stretches for 10 km along the Lincolnshire coast – right into the mouth of the Humber Estuary – and consists of sand dunes, saltmarsh and sand/mud flats. The dunes have a wealth of flowering plants and the dense clumps of sea buckthorn provide cover and food for breeding and wintering birds. The saltmarsh is a refuge for ground-nesting birds and together with the mudflats, attracts large numbers of geese and wading birds during the winter. Raised sand bars provide hauling-out and breeding areas for grey seals and shingle ridges support nesting shorebirds.

This is an exciting and dynamic coastline, constantly changing, where the wildlife lives in harmony with the military jets.

Please note that much of this Reserve is an active bombing range and under no circumstances should anyone enter the danger area when red flags are flying (every weekday). The Reserve continues up the coast from the Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and there is access from the A1031 at four car parks near the villages of Saltfleet and North Somercotes.

Grid reference: TF422998

Telephone: 01507 338611

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust:

www.lincstrust.co.uk

*Please note that toilets, leaflets and refreshments are only available in seal season (Nov/Dec).



© Natural England

Birdwatching, Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe

Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe Dunes



This natural coastline stretches some 8 km along the north-east coast of Lincolnshire. The dunes, which were first created by storms in the 13th century, were once a bombing range, but are now home to a wealth of wild flowers, butterflies and rare natterjack toads. Many of the dunes are covered in scrub, particularly of sea buckthorn, which provides nesting and feeding sites for a variety of both breeding and wintering birds. The freshwater marsh behind the dunes has a good display of orchids, but the most stunning sight is the flowering of the sea lavender in late summer on the saltmarsh.

The site is located on the coastal dunes to the east of the A1031, between Saltfleet and Mablethorpe. There are seven car parks offering access to the Reserve.

Grid reference: TF467917
 Telephone: 01507 338611
 Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Cribb's Meadow



The Reserve is named after the nearby Cribb's Lodge, which commemorates the occasion when, in 1811, the famous prizefighter, Tom Cribb, fought Tom Molyneux in the last bare-fist prize-fight to take place in England.

Beautiful wild flowers, once typical of Leicestershire's chalk clay pastures grow here, including cowslips, green-winged orchids and greater burnet. Scarce butterflies such as dingy and grizzled skipper can also be found here, as well as the black chimney sweep moth. Other habitats include ponds, home to great crested newts, and a disused railway line with scrub and mature trees.

The Reserve is 2 km north west of the village of Thistleton. The eastern boundary of the Reserve is formed by the minor road from Thistleton to Wymondham, 5 km to the west.

Grid reference: SK 899188
 Telephone: 0116 2720444
 Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust:
www.lrw.org.uk

Pyramidal orchid



© Simon Cooter / Natural England

Collyweston Great Wood & Easton Hornstocks



One of the largest remaining ancient woodlands in the Rockingham Forest; it is dominated by small-leaved lime trees. Birch, oak and ash are also common, and added interest is provided by open glades, rides and clearings. There are outstanding displays of woodland flowers including bluebell, primrose, wood anemone and wild garlic in the spring. Woodland birds and butterflies are also plentiful.

The woods have been coppiced for centuries and this traditional form of management is continued today. Trees are felled on a 15–20-year rotation, creating a series of open, sunny glades and patches of dense shrubby re-growth.

Please note that dogs are not permitted on the site and access to the Reserve is by permit only.

The Reserve is approximately 14 km west of Peterborough, just south of the A47. The nearest villages are Collyweston, 2 km to the north west, and Duddington, 2 km to the west.

Grid reference: TF 013007

Telephone: 01733 405850

Natural England:

www.naturalengland.org.uk

© Peter Wakely / Natural England



Lime coppice with ramsons

Calke Park



Parts of this magnificent National Nature Reserve are the remnants of a grazed medieval woodland, with many trees at least 400 years old, including oak, beech and small-leaved lime. At its core, this wood pasture is dominated by more than 200 huge, stag-headed oaks which are some of the largest, most ancient trees in Britain – one is thought to be over 1,200 years old! The Park is also well known for its fungi, woodland birds, over 350 species of beetles and at least eight species of bats.

The Reserve is approximately 12 km south of Derby and 5 km north of Ashby de la Zouch. Access by car is via the village of Ticknall on the A514.

Grid reference: SK 363228

Telephone: 01332 863822

National Trust: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Bardney Limewoods



This group of small but beautiful woods are the most important small-leaved lime woodlands in Britain. Spring and summer are the best times to see the fresh green leaves of the limes, and the variety of woodland flowers, including lily-of-the-valley, early purple orchid, yellow archangel and bugle. Butterflies to look out for include white admiral, purple hairstreak and brown hairstreak. These medieval woods are also home to nightingales and woodcock along with many other woodland birds.

The car park can be found just past the Chambers Farm Wood Centre, signposted from the B1202 Wragby Bardney road.

Grid reference: TF 148738

Telephone: 01623 822447

Forestry Commission: www.forestry.gov.uk

Calke Park site





Common rock-rose in Monk's Dale'

Derbyshire Dales



A collection of five of the region's finest limestone valleys make up this extensive Reserve. Their steep sides enclose a world of clear streams, mossy rocks, precipitous woodlands and flowery grasslands.

The Reserve is perhaps best known for its abundant woodland wildflowers in spring and, as May arrives, early-purple orchids and cowslips on the open dalesides. The showy blue heads of Jacob's ladder, a rare plant indeed, are best seen in mid-June. More than 20 species of butterfly occur; dippers, water voles and wheatears find the unspoilt habitats to their liking, and are often easy to see.

Lathkill Dale is situated 3 km south west of Bakewell, between the villages of Over Haddon, Monyash and Youlgreave. There are car parks at Over Haddon and Moor Lane, Youlgreave.

Cressbrook Dale is situated 11 km north of Bakewell, between the villages of Wardlow and Litton. There are car parks at Upperdale in Monsal Dale, Monsal Head, Tideswell Dale and Ravensdale.

Monk's Dale is situated 15 km north west of Bakewell. The nearest car park is at Miller's Dale station.

Long Dale is situated 10 km south of Bakewell, near the village of Elton. There are car parks at Minninglow, Friden and Elton.

Hay Dale is situated 13 km north west of Bakewell, between the villages of Wheston and Peak Forest. The nearest car park is at Miller's Dale station.

Grid reference: SK 188 658

Telephone: 01629 816640

Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk