



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE



ENVIRONMENT
AGENCY

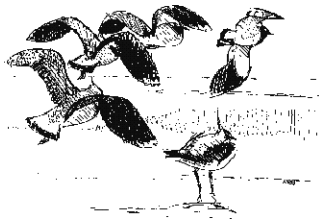


Winchelsea
Beach



Nature Reserve

Web site www.naturereserve.ryeharbour.org



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE THREE CIRCULAR WALKS

The Nature Reserve is managed by East Sussex County Council on land owned by the Environment Agency, the Sussex Wildlife Trust and individual farmers.

There is pleasant walking along a network of footpaths and an opportunity to see a great variety of plants and animals, many of which are rare. There is further interest in the geography and history of the area.

At Rye Harbour there is a large free car park, toilets, telephone, two pubs, a shop, lifeboat house, B&B, church, garage, moorings, sailing club, caravan site and the Nature Reserve Information Kiosk. On these walks you are asked to observe the Country Code, especially as some of the footpaths, which are shown on the map, are outside of the Nature Reserve.

WALK 1 - about 1 hour - follow points A-E

WALK 2 - about 2 hours - follow A-D, then F-K.

WALK 3 - about 3 hours - follow A-D, then F-I, then L-Q. This is a MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL, which is waymarked with arrows and green bands.



A - The Martello Tower near the car park. is No.28, completed in 1807 as part of the defences during the Napoleonic wars. When you leave the car park follow the private Environment Agency road beside the saltmarsh. You will soon pass the Information Centre that is often opened by volunteers and has a list of wildlife seen recently.

B - Colin Green Birdwatching Hide, with access for wheelchairs. The pool is flooded by high tides and attracts many wading birds, including species which breed on the Nature Reserve such as Redshank, Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher and Lapwing.

C - Interpretation board about military defences. Across the river mouth is Camber Sands where waders and gulls can be seen. At high tide in winter Common Seals and Eider may occur. Turn right here to follow the road that runs west, parallel with the shore. Along the road in spring and summer you will see and hear Little Terns (above), Ringed Plovers and Wheatears, together with Yellow-horned Poppy, Red Valerian, white Sea Kale, mauve Sea Pea, white Sea Campion, blue Viper's Bugloss and many other shingle flowers.

WARNING. This road is for the Environment Agency lorries that maintain the sea defences. They work mainly on weekdays, in the autumn and winter. Flags show when they are working. Please get right off the road to allow them to pass. Thank-you.

D – **Lorry Flag and Public Footpath**. If you are on the short **WALK 1** this is where you turn inland. Leave the road and walk inland across the shingle path. **For WALKS 2 and 3 continue to point F.**

E - **The Parkes Hide**. In the winter you may see several varieties of duck on the water and in summer Black-headed Gulls and Little Grebes may nest close to the hide. After leaving the hide turn left and follow the path round to the right on the raised bank, then over a bridge and through the Caravan Site back to your start.

WALKS 2 and 3.



F - **The Crittall Hide**. In the winter many ducks and waders are common, while in summer the islands are full of nesting Common Terns and Black-headed Gulls. In spring and autumn many different species of wader, like Oystercatcher (above) occur here, especially at high tide.

G - **The Old Lifeboat House**. Here an interpretation board describes the sad loss of the crew of the Mary Stanford in 1928. This can provide a sheltered place to watch birds on the shore or out to sea.

H – **Lorry flag and Nature Reserve notice**. Turn right, across some shingle and then along a raised path between fields.

I - **Long Pit**. The dividing point for **WALKS 2 and 3**.

WALK 2. Turn right and continue along the shingle track, past a group of cottages on your left and past the farm barns on your right. In summer see Yellow Wagtails, Turtle Doves and Corn Buntings. All year see large flock of Collared Doves and Sparrowhawk.

J - **Corner Pools**. Two small, reed filled ponds are, the summer home to noisy Reed and Sedge Warblers, Reed Buntings and Marsh Frogs. With care you may be able to see some of these well-camouflaged animals. Take the track to the left that closely follows the pits.

K - **Harbour Road**. After walking past the new houses on your right you reach the road, where you turn right to return to your start. If you have time, turn left and visit Rye Harbour Churchyard at **point Q**.



WALK 3. For the long walk continue straight on at point I, with the pit on your right, across a small field, over a ditch, then straight on, passing the cottage Bungho, on your right, until you come to a junction of four paths.

L - **Junction of four paths**. Turn right, over a stile, through some trees, past a cottage on the left, through a gate, then follow the path around the edge of the field with the trees on your right. This is a good place for many different types of woodland and farmland birds, such as Reed Bunting. At the stile you will see Camber Castle ahead, BUT turn right on the track until a waymark post directs you left along the end of the large pit - Castle Water. This pit has many aquatic animals that are rare and in the summer there are abundant water beetles and blue damselflies. Keep the pit on your **right** and follow a path through the gorse bushes.

M - **Birdwatching Hide**. At the stile you can turn right, thro' a gate into a birdwatching hide to watch ducks, grebes, waders and Little Egrets, or turn left towards the castle.

N - **Camber Castle**. Developed by Henry VIII at the end of a shingle spit to defend Rye. It was abandoned in 1642 because of the build up of shingle, and it now lies 2km from the shore. There is an interpretation board on the castle. On the walls are specialised flowers: Pellitory-of-the-wall, Wall Pennywort, Wall Germander, Wall Pepper and the yellow flowered Wallflower. Leave the castle, heading just to the right of Rye, over the undulating shingle ridges towards a large willow tree. Thro' the gate, follow the fence on your right, then thro' a gate, now with the fence on your left. Follow the path to another small gate at point **O**. In the fields to your left you can often see large flocks of Lapwings and smaller numbers of few Golden Plovers and Curlew.

O - **Gate**. From here you can see some of the work of the Nature Reserve in improving the edge of the pit for wetland wildlife, creating ponds and encouraging reeds and rough grassland. This is a favourite place for Grey Herons and Barn Owl. Go thro' the small gate and follow the path, inside the fence, with the fence on your right. Turn left and then, after 300m, right, over a causeway, past the warehouses on your left.

P - **Viewpoint**. From the path (behind Bournes/UTS) look to your right for a white post, this indicates the entrance to a raised viewpoint where you can look over a reedbed towards a wooded island. Cormorants, Bittern and Little Egrets can often be seen. Retrace your steps to the footpath and cross the grassy field diagonally to reach the road. At the road, turn right.

Q - **Rye Harbour Churchyard**. With a memorial to the crew of the Mary Stanford lifeboat and a wide variety of flowering plants. Then continue down the road to your start point.

If you have enjoyed one of these walks and want to find out more about the Nature Reserve please consider joining the **FRIENDS OF RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE**

2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex. TN36 4LU