

Take part with us

Events

Discover more about the incredible wildlife and fascinating history of Pagham Harbour by joining one of our events.

Family activities

Follow seasonal trails, enjoy activities throughout the year and take part in special "wild families" events, from pond dipping to nature-inspired arts and crafts.

Get involved

Help give nature a home at Pagham Harbour by joining our enthusiastic team of volunteers – please get in touch to find out more.

For dates, prices and full details

about all our events, ask a member of the reserve team or visit rspb.org.uk/paghamharbour

In this area...

Other local attractions:

RSPB Medmerry, Start at RSPB Pagham Harbour Visitor Centre, PO20 7NE

rspb.org.uk/medmerry

One of the RSPB's newest reserves, a great place for walking, cycling and wildlife watching.

Chichester Cathedral peregrines, Chichester, PO19 1RX (7 miles)

rspb.org.uk/datewithnature

Join our friendly staff and volunteers in springtime and discover the story of our local peregrine family.

RSPB Pulborough Brooks, Wiggonholt, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2EL

Tel. 01798 875851 (23 miles)

rspb.org.uk/pulboroughbrooks

This attractive inland reserve features a fantastic shop, cafe and wonderful wildlife all year round.

“What a gem of a reserve... with differing habitats it's a wildlife enthusiast's dream.”
Gerry, Littlehampton



Welcome



One of the few remaining undeveloped stretches on the Sussex coast, Pagham Harbour is a great place to get away from it all. You can enjoy a wealth of wildlife, beautiful landscapes and a rich cultural heritage as you wander around the harbour's edge.

The sheltered harbour at the heart of the reserve fills and empties with the tide and changes with each season. Marvel at the whirling flocks of waders and the sounds of the Brent geese honking overhead in winter. In spring, search for new arrivals stopping off to rest and re-fuel, and listen as the reedbeds and hedgerows come alive with bird song. Look for greedy terns catching fish for their hungry chicks in summer.

Families can follow easy interactive trails, choose a longer adventure to the beach or encounter mini-beasts through special events. Pop into the visitor centre for a warm welcome, the latest wildlife sightings and a cup of tea.

Top things to do

Spring/summer

A busy time for nature and a great time for you to explore.

- 1 Hear your first cuckoo of spring and enjoy our talented choir of warblers.
- 2 Watch as rare little terns return to their beachfront nests with beaks full of sandeels.
- 3 Search for new arrivals feeding in the pools or hopping round the bushes at this migration hotspot.
- 4 Meet fascinating creatures at a "wild families" event, then enjoy delicious, locally-sourced ice cream.
- 5 Listen for the clash of dragonfly wings and admire beautiful butterflies.

Autumn/winter

Five things not to miss during the chillier months.

- 1 Listen to honks, quacks, whistles and squeals as thousands of ducks and geese make their winter home here.
- 2 Enjoy watching flocks of birds against spectacular sunsets before retreating to the visitor centre for a hot chocolate.
- 3 Go on a scavenger hunt during a bracing family walk along the beach.
- 4 Spot the speedy peregrines or graceful short-eared owls as they search for their supper.
- 5 Brave the wind and hold onto your hats, as you search the waves for divers and grebes.

How to get here

Nearest town: Chichester

By public transport: The nearest train station is Chichester, 7 miles away. The 51 Link bus service stops outside the visitor centre.

By car: From the A27 at Chichester take the B2145 south towards Selsey. Turn left approximately 200 yards beyond Sidlesham into the visitor centre car park. There is a small car park at Church Norton, PO20 9DT.

By bike: The visitor centre is the end of the Sustrans route 88 cycle path from Chichester.

RSPB Pagham Harbour visitor centre

Selsey Road, Sidlesham, West Sussex, PO20 7NE
Tel: 01243 641508 E-mail: pagham.harbour@rspb.org.uk

Opening times

The visitor centre is open 10 am–4 pm daily, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The nature reserve's public footpaths and trails enjoy year-round open access. Entrance to the visitor centre and car parks are free (donations are gratefully received).

rspb.org.uk/paghamharbour

The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

Helping to give nature a home:



Environment Agency



west sussex county council



The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.
Images: little egret by Richard Brooks, comma butterfly by Richard Revels, ruddy darter by Guy Rogers (all rspb-images.com) 860-1921-15-16



Pagham Harbour nature reserve



Unspoiled coastal wilderness with wonderful wildlife

A haven for wildlife and people all year round.

Discover ever-changing nature at this rich reserve.

Let the birds come to you on the rising tide.

Pagham Harbour

Finding your way around

Begin your adventure at our visitor centre where we can tell you about the exciting wildlife you could find and where you might get your feet wet at high tide!

Pagham Harbour is criss-crossed with public and permissive footpaths, taking in diverse wildlife, historical features and magnificent harbour views. We've suggested three of our favourite walks, which take in the reserve's highlights. All of our recommended walks can be extended by following the footpaths and connecting with paths to and from the visitor centre.

Discovery trail

Allow an hour to explore this 1¼ miles interpreted circular loop which introduces you to the fascinating cultural and natural history of the reserve.

Take a peek over Sussex Wildlife Trust's Ferry Pool and see how many ducks and wading birds you can spot. Wander along the historic tramway towards Sidlesham Quay to enjoy panoramic views whilst looking for elegant little egrets. Meander back through hedgerow-lined fields rich with bird song in springtime and busy with buzzing insects in summer. There is an option to take a shorter loop (¾ mile) which is suitable for wheelchairs.

Church Norton trail

Allow an hour or so to explore this area. From Church Norton car park it's 250 metres to the hide or 560 metres to the beach.

Perch on a bench to look across to Tern Island or head for Church Norton hide – it's a hotspot for migrant and rare birds in spring and autumn. Stroll towards the beach and enjoy a bracing walk along the shingle and the chance to see some seabirds. You can reach the visitor centre by following the footpath along the west side of the harbour (1¼ miles one-way). This footpath is not suitable for wheelchair users.

North Wall trail

Starting out from the Salthouse, our suggested walk covers 1,000 metres one way, or it is 2 miles if you continue on to our visitor centre along the public footpaths.

This is a great trail for keen birders, overlooking the Breach Pool which can be busy with waders and then wandering past reedbeds noisy with reed, sedge and Cetti's warblers. It's a lovely spot for a peaceful stroll too with magnificent views and beautiful sunsets.

In winter the incoming tide encourages vast flocks of brent geese and other wildfowl to fly overhead and gather noisily in the fields behind.



Key

- Sea
- Pasture
- Shingle
- Reedbed
- Intertidal mudflats
- Woodland
- Saline lagoons
- Intertidal Saltmarsh
- Wild bird seed crop
- V Visitor centre
- H Hide
- V Viewpoint
- P Car park
- Public and permissive footpaths
- Paths inaccessible at high tide
- Bill Way Cycle Route 88
- Discovery trail
- Church Norton trail
- North Wall trail
- Footpath to RSPB Medmerry

● For more information about the accessibility of RSPB Pagham Harbour, please visit rspb.org.uk/paghamharbour

● Land ownership within Pagham Harbour is complex, with the RSPB managing large parts of the nature reserve. Please keep to the public and permissive footpaths whilst exploring, take all litter home with you and be considerate of other footpath users, landowners and local residents.

● Dogs are welcome on the public and permissive footpaths. They should be kept on leads to avoid disturbing wildlife. There are limited "off-lead" areas around the harbour – signage is in place at these locations. Alternatively, please ask at the RSPB visitor centre for guidance.