

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our guests/visitors.

## **Access Statement for RSPB Stour Estuary reserve**

### **Introduction**

The entrance to the reserve is situated within a large block of ancient woodland, with several paths serving the woodland, and leading to different parts of the reserve which include wooded trails and public footpaths adjacent to the Stour Estuary. There is a visitor information point in the reserve car park, 2 further mini-information boards elsewhere, two bird hides and one viewing screen.

Some of the paths are on upward or downward slopes and to reach the furthest parts of the reserve where the hides are, or to do a circular walk there are some moderately steep slopes. Most of the sloped paths are surfaced to give improved grip, whereas the remaining paths have a natural clay surface which does get very wet and muddy at times.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 01206 391153/392119 or email [stourestuary@rspb.org.uk](mailto:stourestuary@rspb.org.uk).

### **Pre-Arrival**

- For a map and directions of how to reach us please see:  
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/s/stourestuary/index.asp>
- The nearest railway station is Wrabness, details are on:  
<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/wrb/details.html>

### **Car Parking Facilities and Arrival**

- The free car park is signposted off the B1352 Manningtree to Harwich Road, and is hard-surfaced.
- We close the car park at night, it is open at 6 am, closed at 7 pm (or dusk if earlier)
- There is sufficient room for up to c.30 cars, which serves the reserve well apart from during the Easter and Autumn holidays when the car park is often at capacity. There is a height barrier to prevent higher vehicles from parking (there is a layby 100m away from the car park, towards Manningtree, where you can park a higher vehicle)

The information point is in the car park, and there is the opportunity of leaving a donation in the cairn there.

## **Nature Trails**

- The reserve has a mix of different types of paths that are both flat and undulating/sloped where walks can be enjoyed.
- The trails are clearly signposted using white arrows and/or routed wooden signs.
- It is possible to walk a short route around Stour Wood, which lasts up to 30minutes and is c.1/2 mile long
- For a longer route it is possible to walk a circuit from Stour Wood to the Stour Estuary and back, which takes 1 1/2 to 2 hours and is c. 2 1/2 miles long.
- There are many variations on this theme and you can extend your walk to include the hides, which would increase the time to up to 3 hours, and the distance by a further 2 miles, by going off RSPB property.

## **Viewing Facilities**

- There are 2 bird hides and 1 viewing point along the trails (see map)
- Deep Fleet hide has near-level entry. There are 5 or more steps leading to both the viewing point in Copperas Bay and Bramble Creek hide and this would probably preclude wheelchair access.
- The route to both hides is quite long (2 miles), with many steps, small bridges and moderate slopes across a range of path surfaces. Considering that there are many steps and moderately steep slopes to contend with before you get to Bramble Creek hide it is very unlikely to be accessible by wheelchair or the less mobile.

## **Public Toilets**

- The nearest public toilets are in either Manningtree or Harwich.
- Manningtree: by the market square or in the Co-operative Supermarket
- Harwich: at the end of the A120 by Ha'Penny Pier.

## **Catering**

- There are no catering facilities at this reserve.

- There is a small shop open during normal hours in Wrabness within 100m of the railway station there.
- Supermarkets, cafe's and other larger eating establishments are available in both Manningtree and Harwich, c. 4 miles away from the reserve east or west.

### **Additional Information**

- Information is available for our other reserves.

### **Future Plans**

- Every year we ensure that our trails are maintained in the best possible condition, bearing in mind the remote nature of the site and that it is a working wood.
- We have no planned major works, but always take visitors' views into account when planning work.
- Each autumn and winter we coppice around 2 hectares of the woodland, which means that some of the wood might be a bit noisy at times. Safety signs will clearly indicate where this is taking place. Also, we do carry out other management work, mainly on Wednesdays, throughout the year.

### **Contact Information**

Postal address (Inc  
postcode): RSPB Unit 1 Brantham Mill Industrial Estate Bergholt Road  
Brantham Manningtree Essex CO11 1QT

This is not a public office and there are no visitor facilities there.

Telephone: 01206 391153/392119

Email: [stourestuary@rspb.org.uk](mailto:stourestuary@rspb.org.uk)

Website: [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/s/stourestuary/index.asp](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/s/stourestuary/index.asp)

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