

Carry on along Southdown Avenue and when the road ends ...

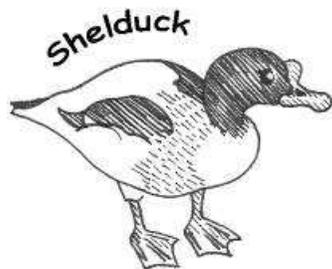
enter the reed bed. Home for many birds (male reed buntings with their black faces and white collars are easy to see all year round), but that is not all. Come along here at night and see Daubenton's bat flying over the water.

Turn left at the crossroads (turn right and you can head up to Lorton Meadows) and you now have reeds either side of you.

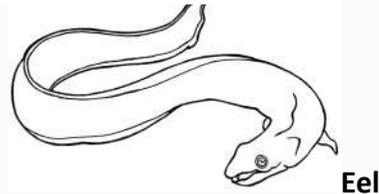
One of the successes of Lodmoor is the breeding of marsh harrier. Rarer than golden eagles, these large birds of prey can be seen gliding over the reeds looking for prey, stay here for long enough and there is a good chance of seeing one overhead.

Turn left when you can and start heading back towards the sea following the route of the Legacy Trail.

Here you get a great intimate feeling of how the habitat changes as you get closer to the sea. The reeds make way for a more open habitat. If you're very lucky you may get sight of an otter, they've been seen in the ditch to the right of you. The more open areas are fantastic for close up views of birds you would normally need a telescope to see... look for little egrets (small white herons) as these stand out at a distance.



If you have enjoyed this walk why not try one of the other circular walks at different places along the Legacy Trail. There are nine in total.



The Legacy Trail and circular walks from key 'waypoints' are part of the Wild About Weymouth and Portland Project funded by the Big Lottery Fund through Natural England's Access to Nature programme.

It aims to improve access in and between wildlife sites and encourage local people and visitors to discover and explore the wonderful natural environment of Weymouth and Portland.

For more information about the Legacy Trail and sites along the way visit:

www.visit-dorset.com/about-the-area/countryside/weymouth-and-portland-legacy-trail



Discover the Wild side

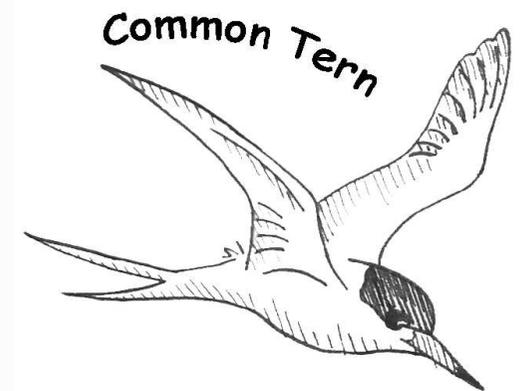
LEGACY TRAIL

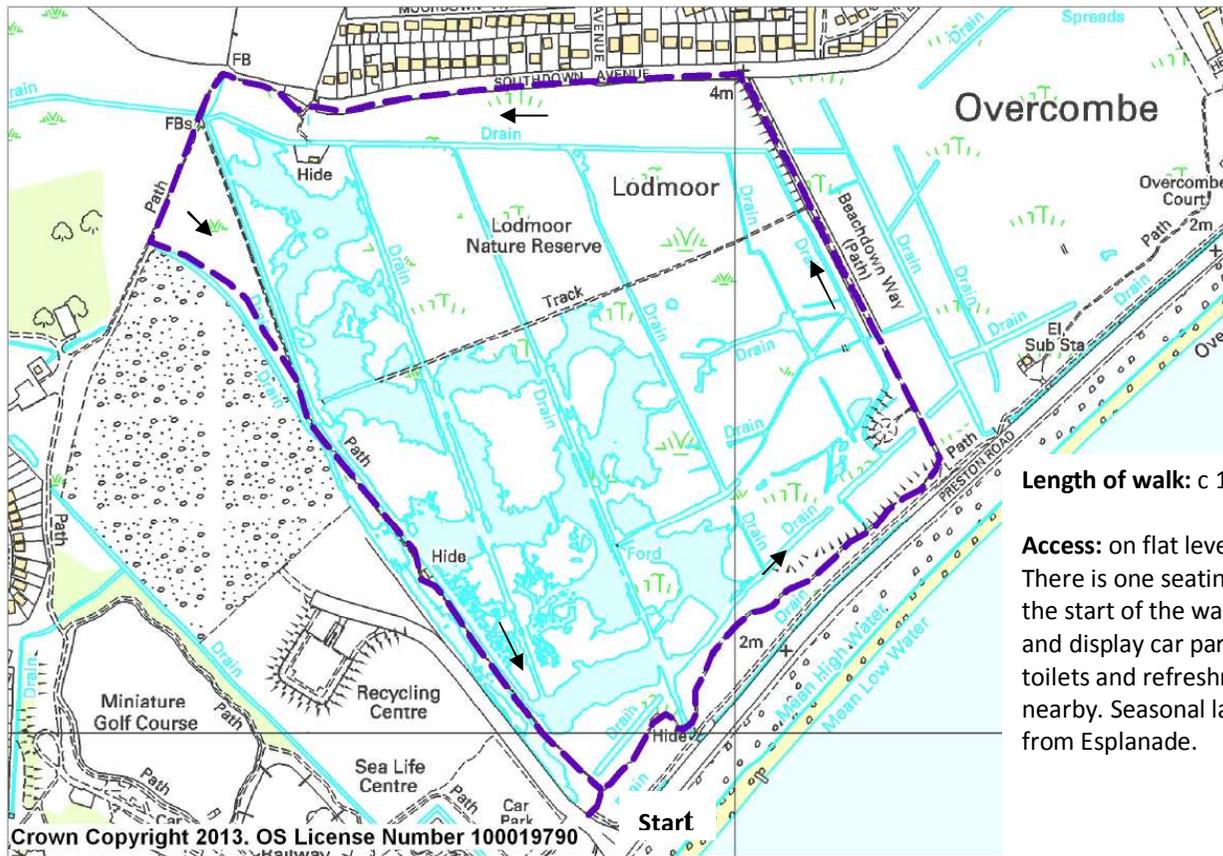
Circular walk

2

Around RSPB Lodmoor

1.5 miles





Length of walk: c 1.5miles

Access: on flat level ground. There is one seating area at the start of the walk. Pay and display car park with toilets and refreshments nearby. Seasonal land Train from Esplanade.

Depending on the time of year that you visit, the entrance to Lodmoor can be incredibly noisy. In summer you'll be greeted by sights, sounds and smells of over 50 pairs of common terns nesting on small shingle islands. In winter flocks of lapwing and Canada geese feed on the wet grass. Look out for shelduck, they breed here.

Stop at the viewing shelter ...

Whether or not the terns are in town (having come all the way from central and southern Africa), there will be plenty to see. Lots of waterfowl over-winter here, look for waders too. Even though it's on the edge of town many rarities are found every year. Look up, past Lodmoor, and the land rises into the Lorton Valley largely protected and managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Carry on along the path, parallel with the sea, turning left onto a main path called Beechdown Way.

The water gets deeper either side of you. See how the types of animal and plant change (and then when you look further into the reserve you ought to be able to tell which bits are shallow and which are deeper).

Turn left at the end of the path walking on the grass verge along Southdown Avenue.

You get some great views of the reserve here, and the pools in front of you are the last to freeze, (come and stand here on a cold morning and hope for rare birds). For several years bitterns (a rare bird - think brown heron - that nearly went extinct from the UK) have been overwintering. This is a great spot to look for them. Kingfishers are also seen around here from time to time.

In winter, there are sometimes large flocks of starlings roosting in the reedbeds, and they coordinate themselves in large murmurations – a fantastic sight to see and hear.

Go for a stroll around RSPB Lodmoor getting up close and personal with an urban wetland

Although both Lodmoor and Radipole are wetlands, exploring them gives very different experiences. Lodmoor is more open, with shallower water, in contrast to Radipole Lake (circular walk 4) which has more open water, more reedbed and is very much in the heart of town. As with most of Weymouth and Portland, the landscape is largely man made. Imagine what it would be like without the sea defence. Lodmoor had many uses before the RSPB took over management in the 1980s. Imagine horse racing taking place now, or aeroplanes coming into land!

Much of what you see today has been created by the RSPB. They took over the management of Lodmoor and have deliberately flooded the land. This has created perfect conditions for reeds, and therefore marsh harriers!

For up-to-date information on what has been seen and what is happening at Lodmoor, pop into the Wild Weymouth Discovery Centre at Radipole Lake. Or call the centre on 01305 778313.

From the entrance to Lodmoor take the right hand path that leads parallel with the beach.