



Holkham NNR

Welcome to the National Nature Reserve

Holkham is the most extensive, diverse and dramatic nature reserve on a coastline famous for nature reserves. Windswept tidelines, a maze of creeks and saltings, miles of dunes and sandspits, shady pinewoods, green pastures and marshes: the mix of habitats and blend of wildlife make Holkham National Nature Reserve a unique place, somewhere to catch your breath in a busy world.

The NNR is a delicate and fragile home for hundreds of rare and important wildlife species. Look out for majestic marsh harriers hunting for prey over the grazing marshes and the aerobatics of lapwings in spring, when you may also hear the distinctive call of the natterjack toad on the dunes. The NNR is home to tens of thousands of waterfowl in the winter including wild geese, wigeon and teal.



Dark-bellied Brent Geese occur in the Winter

A changing coastline

From Burnham Overy to Wells the low lying grazing marshes north of the coast road used to be tidal saltmarshes, separating offshore shingle and dune ridges from the main coastline. The tidal creeks

were large enough to allow ships to load cargo from a staithe at Holkham village. From 1639 onwards a series of embankments were constructed by local landowners. By 1859 when the Wells embankment was completed about 800 hectares of saltmarsh had been converted to agricultural use.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, pine trees were planted on the dunes, creating a shelter-belt to protect the reclaimed farmland from wind-blown sand. Today the ribbon of mature woodland still separates seascape from farmscape. These farmland fields and dykes, ridges and trackways have become part of the natural mosaic.

Even today, there are changes affecting the way the nature reserve is managed. Milder winters have led to continued grass growth on the grazing marshes. This has made it challenging to achieve the short sward favoured by breeding waders in the spring.

Exploring Holkham can be a healthy experience!

Holkham National Nature Reserve covers about 4,000 hectares from Burnham Norton to Blakeney. You can explore most of the area on foot by following the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail from the main settlements – just look out for the wooden signs with the acorn on!

The core section of the NNR, between Wells and

Holkham Bay is permissive open access with public rights of way allowing access to all the best wildlife habitats. Please help to look after the plants and other wildlife by staying on paths and tracks, and do not walk on the grazing marshes. To the east of Wells the path skirts a large area of saltmarsh and mudflats; tidal creeks are dangerous on a rising tide and this area should be avoided unless you have expert local knowledge.

There are two easy access trails leading from Lady Anne's Drive car park. A short trail leads to a viewing platform overlooking Holkham Bay and a 1km trail leads west to a bird-watching hide and a second viewing platform.

There is a tower hide located further along the track but please note that this is not part of the easy access trail.

Look out for the finger signposts and information boards that will help you to orientate yourself.

The NNR is protected by several conservation designations that highlight the internationally important contribution it makes to wildlife. Please help to keep the Reserve special:

- Look out for signs showing how to prevent damage to plants and animals.
- Keep dogs on a lead or under close control.
- Reduce erosion by keeping to paths and established routes.
- Avoid disturbing birds and other animals. Birds that live on the beach are particularly at risk.
- Leave wild flowers for others to enjoy.
- Please do not light any fires, stoves or barbecues.
- Use your bicycle but only on authorised routes.
- Please take your litter home.

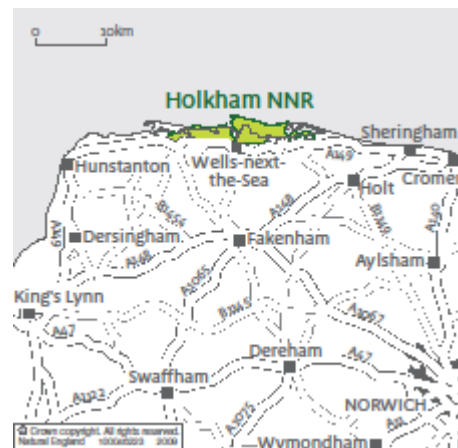
Warning: Unexploded ordnance from World War II is occasionally found throughout the Reserve. Do not touch any suspicious items. Report all findings to the Coastguard on 999.

Events & Guided Walks

Natural England runs a regular activity programme to discover the differing aspects of the NNR from family activities to specialist guided walks. The events can be found at www.naturalengland.org.uk or on the information boards at the main entrances.

How to get here

Holkham is well serviced by frequent buses from King's Lynn, Hunstanton, Fakenham and Sheringham. There are train stations at Sheringham and King's Lynn.



Why not cycle to Holkham? National Cycle Route 1 passes close by Lady Anne's Drive and runs through the Reserve to Wells. Bike racks are provided at the main car parks. Cycling is not allowed on the dunes to protect the fragile vegetation.

There are two main car parks - Lady Anne's Drive at Holkham and Wells Beach Road at Wells-next-the-sea. Both are owned and managed by the Holkham Estate who charge for parking throughout the year. More information can be found at www.holkham.co.uk.

Holkham National Nature Reserve is owned by the Earl of Leicester's Holkham Estate and the Crown Estates. The Reserve is managed by Natural England and Holkham Estate.