



SOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form:

Assessor: Jonathan Cook and Paul Matson

Date of Assessment May 11, 2024

Location: Black Down and environs

Brief Description: Meet at 09.00 at the small car park at the far (east) end of Tennyson's Lane on the sharp bend. From Haslemere (via A286 and A287) leave on B2131, turn right up Haste Hill, follow onto Tennyson's Lane. This is an all day walk, of approximately 5-8 miles) over undulating country, so bring lunch and plenty of water. It is important to note that if information is available about potential bird spectacles in nearby areas (eg Woolbeding to see raptors) the plan for the day may be adjusted. This Risk Assessment has taken that factor into account, and covers the walking access to potential sites, but not the driving between.

Suggested clothing: Warm, waterproof clothing depending on weather conditions; In summer, sun hat, sunscreen and appropriate clothing for sunny weather. Good footwear is recommended.

Fluids: Please bring sufficient fluids appropriate to the weather conditions.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Dynamic risk assessment	All	Varies	Circumstances may change from expectations during the walk, eg the weather, livestock being in an unexpected place, an accident involving a participant.	The group leader will make considered pragmatic alterations to plans depending on the circumstance.
Losing participants	All, particularly the those who walk at different paces, wander off route, linger longer and those who need to leave early	Low	Head count in and out. Leader walks at the pace of the slowest and appoints a 'fit' back marker.	Brief the group at the start to keep together
Bad weather	All	Varies	Look at weather forecast	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
			Ensure all are appropriately clothed. If extreme cancel the event	
Lightning storms	All	High	Look at weather forecast Cancel the event. Care with tripods.	
Snow and ice	All	Varies	Look at weather forecast. Probably cancel the event unless a light dusting and ice does not make it too slippery	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Darkness, cloud and fog	All	Varies	Keep the group close together, torches in the case of darkness and making people more aware of trip hazards.	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Hot weather	All	High	Look at weather forecast. If extreme heat, cancel the event. If normal summer heat, ensure the right clothing (hat, body covered), sufficient liquids and sun screen.	Leader takes additional water in case required by others.
Contact with biological agents	All	Medium	People advised not to handle plants/animals and to wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking if any contact is made. Where appropriate, participants are briefed on ticks and Lyme disease (risks, precautions and symptoms) before the walk	Participants warned of possible presence of these before start walk and along walk.
Uneven walking surfaces	All	medium	Announce at start, walk at a pace where people can negotiate, warn if there's particular locations	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Muddy conditions	All	medium	Help people through particularly muddy areas and ensure appropriate footwear.	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Standing water/flooding	All	varies	Look at weather forecast. If extreme flooding cancel walk	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Slippery surfaces	All	medium	Help people through particularly muddy areas and ensure appropriate footwear.	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Trip hazards	All	medium	Announce at start, walk at a pace where people can negotiate, warn if there's particular locations	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Stiles/gates	Stiles and gates Not applicable on this walk		Help participants over or through these, especially in slippery/muddy conditions.	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Barbed wire/fences	All	low	Care should be taken	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Obstructive vegetation	All	medium	Care in overgrown areas	This can become an issue, particularly in the late spring and summer months with abundant growth. Ensure participants are briefed.
Stinging/thorny plants	All	medium	Care in overgrown areas	This can become an issue, particularly in the late spring and summer months with abundant growth. Ensure participants are briefed.
Falling trees/branches	All	Low	Look at weather forecast	Cancel the walk if very windy conditions are forecast.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Biting insects	All	Varies	Warn participants of this and if anyone needs to carry an EpiPen, they have it with them.	
Snakes	All	Unknown	Take care, particularly on warm, sunny days	If bitten, keep the victim calm as possible and not to move around.
Farm and other animals	All	Medium	Give a wide berth to livestock. Do not run away.	
Cycles and horses	All	Low	Part of the routes around the site may be used by cyclists and equestrians. Be aware.	Blindly stepping back when focused through optics, can have unfortunate consequences,
Cars and other vehicles	All	Low	Single file walking, Walk on pavement if there, the right hand side of road if sensible unless the other side is better due to a bend for driver's awareness.	Take care in the car park and any roads on the walking route
Desk assessment of mobile phone coverage in the walk's area https://www.signalchecker.co.uk/			Leader takes a fully charges mobile phone.	All major phone networks have good coverage in the Haslemere area for voice and 4G connectivity.
If a serious accident occurs during the event.	All	Low	SOS walking groups are not required to have trained first aiders present and advice is to contact the emergency services immediately.	in the event of a serious incident, even if there happens to be a member present who has attended a first aid course.
First Aid kit	All	Low	SOS walk leaders are required to carry a basic small first aid kit, which SOS will supply. This does not imply that the leader has qualifications to use its content,	Please note that the contents of these kits will become expiry dated and SOS will replace these when required. A central register of who was sent these kits will

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
			but will act in a common sense way should a situation arise.	be maintained for ongoing replacement.

The Sussex Ornithological Society is a Registered Charity in England and Wales No 256936