



SOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form:

Assessor(s): Derek Barber, Mike Scott Ham and Jonathan Cook

Date of Assessment 04 December 2024

Location: **Dungeness area, including the Bird Observatory and RSPB Reserve**

All day (bring lunch plus RSPB membership card or entry fee) approx three miles walk (in phases). Meet at Old Lighthouse car park at 9.30 am. 189/TR088168 What3Words ///innocence.seat.shopper. Will start with short seawatch and check of Observatory area and/or Fishing Boats (shingle terrain) before moving on to RSPB reserve. Reserve has visitor centre, toilets, hides and good paths. Leaders: Derek Barber & Mike Scott-Ham

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
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 all are appropriately clothed. If extreme cancel the event	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Lightning storms	All	Medium	Look at weather forecast. Possibly cancel the event. Care with tripods.	
Snow and ice	All	medium	Probably cancel	
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	Low	Look at weather forecast. If extreme heat, cancel the event. If normal summer heat, ensure the right clothing (hat, body covered), sufficient liquids carried and sun screen.	Leader takes additional water in case required by others.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
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.
Terrain	All	low	Some gentle ascents and descents. Take particular care on shingle.	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
River bank	N/A	NA		
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.
Muddy conditions	All	Low	Help people through particularly muddy areas and ensure appropriate footwear.	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Standing water/flooding	All	Low	Look at weather forecast. If extreme flooding cancel walk	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Slippery surfaces	All	medium	Occasional slippery parts of the path may be encountered	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	Less agile	low	There are no anticipated stiles	Ensure participants understand terrain and conditions to be encountered.
Barbed wire/fences	All	low	Care should be taken around these.	Not expected
Obstructive vegetation	All	low	Care in overgrown areas	

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk (Low/Medium/High)	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Stinging/thorny plants	All	low	Care in overgrown areas	
Falling trees/branches	All	Low	Look at weather forecast	Not expected on route
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	Low	Give a wide berth to livestock. Do not run away.	Dogs and livestock possible on walk.
Cycles and horses	All	Medium	Be aware of other users of the paths alongside the river	Footpaths only, no bridle ways in reservoir.
Cars and other vehicles	All	Medium	Take care in the car parks and crossing roads.	Common sense is required.
Desk assessment of mobile phone coverage in the walk's area https://www.signalchecker.co.uk/			Leader takes a fully charged mobile phone.	All major phone networks have coverage in the Lydd 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 kits	All	Low	SOS walk leaders may carry a basic small first aid kit, which SOS will supply. This does not imply that the leader has qualifications to use this content, but will act in a common sense way should a situation arise.	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 be maintained for ongoing replacement.

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