

Kessingland Club Site Benacre Nature Reserve walk



Route Summary

A gentle 11-mile walk from the Camping and Caravanning Club Site at Kessingland to Benacre National Nature Reserve, with beautiful coastal views to reed beds and lagoons. Binoculars would be an advantage. Walk created by Skye Strolls Ltd.

Route Overview



Category: Walking
Length: 18.090 km / 11.31 mi
Last Modified: 27th April 2018
Difficulty: Medium
Rating: Unrated
Surface: Moderate
Date Published: 24th April 2018

Description

The coastal margins south of Kessingland to Southwold are a haven for wildlife, with a large area being incorporated within a National Nature Reserve. This unspoilt part of Suffolk has contrasting habitat areas that allow for a diverse ecological environment, from beach and dunes, to marshes, to the most southerly of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.

The contrast from the sounds of primates chattering, parrots calling to each other and lions roaring, to the gentle lap of the waves on the shore, to the tranquillity of breeze wafting through the reeds at Benacre is a delight, and probably unique in the country.

You will pass by marshes that are home to plants such as southern marsh orchid, hemp agrimony, gypsy wort and lady smock. Over these marshes birds will be seen that could include barn owls, marsh harriers, golden plover and lapwings. On the shore little terns make their nests during the spring months. These are sensitive areas and should not be encroached upon.

At Benacre Broad (which is privately owned so please remain on permitted paths) the more diverse habitats allow for a greater range of birds such as bearded reedling, water rail, bitterns, a variety of ducks, woodlarks and wheatears. At the south-east corner of the Broad a public hide can be used to enhance your view across the water.

From Benacre Broad there is a choice of returning the way you have come or continuing along the beach, to Covehithe. A small sleepy little village that belies its busy heritage, in the Middle Ages it was a prospering port and large enough to hold its own fair. Remains have been found within the village that indicate it was a settlement in Roman and Anglo-Saxon times. A PD James novel is set in the village, the area has also been used for several film location shoots.

The return journey along small country lanes take you around Benacre Broad and eventually back to the beach for the return to the Camping and Caravanning Club Site at Kessingland.

Please check tide times as part of this walk is along the beach.

Waypoints

1 Start at Camping and Caravanning Club site Reception

(52.41516; 1.70150)



From the Camping and Caravanning Club Site reception walk along the drive way to Whites Lane, turn right and continue along the road until reaching the beach. Consider that St Edmund's Church has been used for centuries by sailors using it as a landmark for either Kessingland or nearby Lowestoft.

2 End of Church Road, beach

(52.41153; 1.72784)



At the beach turn right along either the beach, sea defences, or sand dunes. On reaching the sluices that mark the boundary of Benacre Nature Reserve leave the beach and follow the track for a short distance. Where a lane joins from the right return to the beach until reaching the public hide at Benacre Broad. Take a moment to look at the bird life that calls this beautiful location home. With luck you will spot avocets, only recently returned to breed in this country.

3 Hide by Benacre Broad

(52.38410; 1.71706)



At this point for those not wishing to continue along the full route it is possible to turn back and retrace your steps. For those continuing, again take to the beach and wonder at the power of the sea where it is eroding these cliffs faster than any other part of the country. Sand martins may be seen flying in and out of their burrows, which need to be rebuilt every few years due to the cliffs subsiding.

4 Covehithe Broad

(52.36893; 1.70548)



Where the cliffs give way to marram grass and reeds turn inland by following the footpath between Covehithe Broad and the beach. On reaching the road, take a short detour to Covehithe Church where the newer 17th century church can be seen housed within the ruins of the medieval church. In 1672 due to the cost of maintaining the larger building locals were given permission to remove the roof and build a smaller church.

Continue your journey through the quiet country lanes and tracks enjoying the tranquillity this area has to offer. Keep an eye to the tree tops and sky line for fine aerial displays by marsh harriers and other birds in the area.

Back to beach for return journey

(52.39407; 1.72485)



On returning to the beach turn left, pass over the sluices and make your way back to the Camping and Caravanning Club Site. Possibly enjoying refreshments in the various local establishments on the way.

