

SDOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form:

Assessor: Tony Benton : Date of Assessment 12 April 2023

Location: **Cissbury from the south**

Brief Description: "This walk passes through a classic downland landscape for its whole length, with the exception of the inauspicious start in the Lyons Farm Retail Park. The mid-April timing is designed to catch the sweet spot between when birds such as whitethroats, corn buntings and yellowhammers are in full song and when leaf cover is complete making observation more difficult.

On the way up to Cissbury Ring we walk along the hidden gem of Lychpole Hill, and then have lunch right next to the 'fenced off yews' on the Ring. These are often referred to in birding reports, and are known spots for Ring Ouzels (and Wrynecks) on passage. We would be very lucky indeed to see either species, but a variety of raptors are likely, as is a raven or two at some point.

Note the length of the walk - 5.2 miles in total - but this is split by lunch and the going is easy. The climb up to the Ring is easier than the climb up from the Findon Valley side. With an early start of 8:30 we should be comfortably back by 1.30pm.

Parking is at the side of Currys BN14 9FB. There is room for 7 or 8 cars here, just beyond a white mobile food van. Please park on the right only as this is the access road to the back of Sainsbury's. Once these spaces are gone, the manager of Currys has suggested that it would be OK to park in the car park to the front of the store but if you choose to do this then as a courtesy we would suggest that you park towards the back, further away from the store entrance. We will meet by the mobile food van."

Brief description of the risks: Generally a low risk walk, but some slippery surfaces and mud will be encountered, as will the occasional car or farm vehicle. Speeding cyclists are also a hazard on an early section of the walk. Really good footwear is essential. A walking pole might help some people.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Bad weather	All participants	Low / Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Lightning storms	All participants	Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Snow and ice	All participants	Low / Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Darkness, cloud, fog	All participants	Low	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast

Hot weather	All participants	Low/medium	Participants should bring a drink and wear suitable clothing and consider the need for sunscreen	Monitor weather forecast - hot weather is not forecast for the April 2023 walk.
Uneven walking surfaces	All participants	Low	Suitable walking boots are recommended - or wellingtons if you are able to walk 5 miles in them.	Participants to ensure that suitable footwear is available to them
Muddy conditions	All participants	Low	Walking boots or wellington boots	Monitor weather forecast - it will definitely be muddy for the April 2023 walk.
Standing water and flooding	All participants	Low	Adjust route	Monitor weather forecast
Slippery surfaces	All participants	Low	Adjust route	A walking pole or similar might help some people. There are several sections where a combination of mud and an incline means that slipping is a possibility.
Steep slopes	All participants	Low	Participants to judge their own capabilities	
Trip hazards	All participants	Low	Participants to judge their own capabilities and take care	
Stiles and gates	N/a			
Barbed wire, electric fences	N/a			
Obstructive vegetation	N/a			
Stinging or thorny plants	N/a			
Falling trees or branches	N/a			
Biting insects	All participants	Low	If wearing shorts or similar, be aware of very low possibility of ticks (unlikely April 2023).	Consult a GP if a tick bite is suspected

Snakes	All participants	Low	Adders are known on the downs, especially in spring on warm days.	In basking snakes should not be approached or provoked.
Farm or other animals	All participants	Low	Although unlikely, any farm animals encountered should be given a wide berth and not cornered	
Cycles (and possibly horses being ridden)	All participants	Low	The occasional cyclist is not unusual: - take care as their approach might not be heard	It's worth participants recognising that some paths are a shared space. Don't assume that all paths are a completely benign environment
Cars	All participants	Low / Medium	On our reconnaissance walk we did encounter a few farm vehicles so care is required.	All participants need to look out for each other - approaching cars are not always heard.

Suggested clothing: Warm, waterproof clothing depending on weather conditions; strong footwear or wellington boots. For the April 2023 walk, walking boots as a minimum are recommended.