

SDOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form:

Assessor: Tony Benton : Date of Assessment 28 May 2023

Location: Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (RHNR) and Pett Levels (PL).

Brief Description: The walk at RHNR can be considered very low risk. The main hazard is the weather, as the reserve is very exposed and even in the summer, can be very chilly. RHNR has an excellent visitor centre - including a cafe and toilets. It is about 500 metres walk from the main car park. From there various hides can be visited, some close to the visitor centre and some about a mile away. Some paths are paved and some are on shingle and occasionally mud. Participants have a wide choice of walking routes and the main 'loop' is about 3 miles. Other parts of the reserve, such as castle water, are accessed via footpaths (flat) but muddy after rain. Pett Levels is flat and involves almost no walking, but is very exposed to the weather. Rudimentary toilets in Pett village. Pett levels is a low risk destination. Please note that any car sharing or use of a hired mini bus is a choice for participants, at their own risk, and that insurance cover is provided by the car driver or the mini bus hiring organisation.

Suggested clothing: Warm, waterproof clothing depending on weather conditions; strong footwear.

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
Uneven walking surfaces	All participants	Low	Suitable walking shoes or boots are recommended	Participants to ensure that suitable footwear is available to them
Muddy conditions	All participants	Low	Walking boots or wellington boots	Monitor weather forecast
Standing water and flooding	All participants	Low	Adjust route	Monitor weather forecast

Slippery surfaces	All participants	Low	Adjust route	One route is downhill but not steep. A walking pole or similar might help some people.
Steep slopes	All participants	Low - both Rye Harbour and Pett Levels offer very flat walking terrain.	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	Consult a GP if a tick bite is suspected
Snakes	N/a - not known at either destination.			
Farm or other animals	All participants	Low	Although unlikely, any farm animals encountered should be given a wide berth and not cornered	
Cycles	All participants	Low	National cycle route 2 passes through RHNR and is popular with cyclists - take care as their approach might not be heard	At RHNR the path parallel to the sea is a shared space. Don't assume it is a completely benign environment

Cars and other vehicles	All participants	Low	At Pett Levels birds are watched from either the side of the road or sea wall. Care to be taken, especially crossing the road. The road side verge is wide.	