



Otter Estuary Visitor Guidance

The River Otter is not only beautiful but is an important site for wildlife, supporting good populations of breeding birds in the warmer months as well and over-wintering waterfowl and waders. The estuary, downstream from where the Budleigh Brook joins the main river, is protected as a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), part of the area is also a Marine Conservation Zone. Whilst exploring this area please follow this guidance to help protect this special place and show consideration to all wildlife and other visitors.

On land

- **Know where access is allowed.**
Footpaths provide circular routes and access alongside the river, including part of the South West Coast Path. Please only use dedicated access points and stick to paths around conservation areas and farmland. Cycling is not permitted on footpaths. There are a number of byways nearby including a section of the national cycle route NCN2.
- **Give wildlife space.**
Avoid disturbing wildlife, this can be any activity or noise that could change the behaviour of an animal (such as feeding, resting and breeding). When birds are disturbed, they might stop feeding or abandon their nest. As an easy guide: if birds become alert, move away!
- **Please keep dogs under close control.**
Dogs must be kept on the path to prevent disturbance of wildlife and damage to banks. Do not allow them to approach other visitors uninvited. Please use a lead if you are not confident that you can achieve this without one.
- **Always bag and bin your dog's poo.**
There are dog waste bins at main access points in Lime Kiln car park and White Bridge. Litter bins can also be used.
- **Share the space.**
Be aware of narrow sections of path where you may need to make way for others. The bird hides and viewing platforms are great places to watch wildlife, please enjoy them peacefully and always take your litter away with you.
- **Flying of drones is not permitted without landowner consent.**
- **Camping is not permitted.**
- **Fires or BBQs are not permitted.**
Please use the designated area overlooking the estuary at Lime Kilns or the beach.



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On the water

- **Know where access is allowed.**
There is the right of tidal navigation up to the high tide mark. This means you can enter the estuary from the sea/beach and go as far as White Bridge. However, this is not encouraged due to the site being a wildlife reserve. Launching or landing anywhere in the SSSI is also prohibited. This includes either side of White Bridge, the bank-side area adjacent to Lime Kilns car park or from the donkey turn in the lower estuary. Access on the river upstream of White Bridge is not permitted.
- **Keep noise and wake to a minimum to limit impact on other users and wildlife.**
Even users of quiet, non-powered craft such as kayakers and paddleboarders can take steps to look after the site and avoid disturbing birds.
- **Avoid areas where birds are feeding or roosting.**
In the summer please consider that many bird species will be using the whole site; nesting and raising their young in the reeds and feeding at low tide on the mud flats and marsh areas.
- **Avoid dragging vessels through shallow water as this can damage habitats.**

Visit our website or follow us on social media for more information and regular updates.

Please be aware that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in a SSSI or to damage or disturb land known to be an SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct an SSSI notice or sign.