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Not far from where we live there is a local nature reserve, crossed by a stream. It is of little interest to anyone beyond our village, but for a family of young boys it is a world of adventure and discovery. In the summer we play poohsticks and scour the shallows of the stream for finds. In the autumn we gather sloes from prickly blackthorn bushes. Each spring promises another year of exploration. This is what the outdoors means to me – the freedom to experience nature's infinite pleasures and delights, and to return each time with a child-like sense of wonder and curiosity.

We hope our little guide will inspire you to explore, discover and enjoy the great outdoors.

Ben Cowell
Regional Director, East of England

What makes our places so special?



We care deeply about our places and the rich diversity of life they support...



Hatfield Forest evokes the atmosphere of a medieval forest like no other.



of plants and animals.

Set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the chalk grasslands of **Dunstable Downs** have been sculpted over time, decorated by nature and enjoyed by generations. Then there's **Blakeney Point National Nature Reserve** on the Norfolk
Coast with its breeding
colonies of seals and sea
birds. A wildlife lover's
paradise.

Where's special to you?

Amazing views



East Anglia may be largely flat, but the view is unspoilt...

Wander through Sheringham Park and you'll discover why it became the personal favourite of its designer, Humphry Repton. Or head to Dunstable Downs, the highest point in the East, where you'll see for miles and feel on top of the world!

- · Sheringham Park
- Dunstable Downs
- Orford Ness
 The remote wilderness of the Ness is like no other.
- Horsey Windpump
 For a great view of the
 Norfolk Broads.
- Flatford & Dedham Vale Made famous by landscape artist John Constable.

Stunning sunsets



Don't be in a rush to leave, stay and watch the sunset...

Big open skies are a defining feature of the landscape in the East. Take the time to watch the sun go down, at what is the most magical part of the day. Why not share the moment with someone special and make it a memory to treasure forever?

- Dunstable Downs
- Wicken Fen
- · Hatfield Forest
- Norfolk Coast

These places are also great if you fancy a spot of star gazing. On a clear night you can see some 4,000 stars sparkling in our universe.

Wildlife



Find a pond, ditch, hedgerow or meadow...

You can enjoy nature at all of our outdoor places, but Dunstable Downs is the best spot for butterflies and Wicken Fen is great for dragonflies. Look out for Britain's largest dragonfly, the impressive emperor, or the pretty yellow brimstone butterfly.

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- Wicken Fen Brimstone butterfly (April onwards)
- Blickling Estate –
 Speckled wood butterfly (May onwards)
- Horsey Swallowtail butterfly (June to July)
- Sharpenhoe Clappers
 Dark green fritillary butterfly (July)
- Hatfield Forest Silverwashed fritillary butterfly (July)

Wildflowers



Spring to autumn, enjoy our wonderful wildflowers

From a spectacular display of bluebells to a single orchid in a meadow, flowers can lift the spirits. Our hedgerows are superb too. From cow parsley flowering in spring, to the berries in autumn that are so important for birds during the winter months.

- Blickling & Wicken Fen Yellow flag iris (May)
- **Dunstable Downs** Pyramidal orchid (May to June)
- Wicken Fen Marsh orchids (June)
- Orford Ness Yellow horned poppy (June)
- Norfolk Coast Sea lavender (July)

History & archaeology



Our landscapes hold the key to our past, every lump and bump has a story to tell...

Next time you're out and about, look for the clues that are all around us. Mounds of earth, deep ditches, coppiced trees in our woodland - they all reveal more about the people that once lived, worked and loved the places we do today.

- · Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon royal burial site
- · Hatfield Forest Medieval hunting forest
- Dunstable Downs Bronze age burial site
- Orford Ness Top secret military testing site
- Branodunum Roman fort
- Wimpole Deserted medieval villages

Hidden treasures



Escape the crowds and visit one of our places that not many people know about...

As well as the iconic landscapes of the East, there are some hidden gems that come into their own with the changing seasons. Tucked away, often with limited parking, these places are best explored when out on foot.

- · Blake's Wood, Essex
- · Copt Hall Marshes, Essex
- Danbury Common, Essex
- Northey Island, Essex*
- · Pin Mill, Suffolk
- · Kyson Hill, Suffolk
- Heigham Holmes, Norfolk*
- West Runton & Beeston Regis, Norfolk
- Sharpenhoe Clappers, Bedfordshire

^{*} Limited access, check our website

Nature's calendar



Wintering thrushes Hatfield, Wicken, Wimpole



Koniks with their young **Wicken**



Bluebells burst forth Blickling, Blake's Wood



Snowdrops
Anglesey, Peckover, Oxburgh,
Sheringham, Ickworth



April

Spring migrants e.g. cuckoo Wicken, Orford, Hatfield, Ickworth, Danbury Common



June

Wild orchids - Dunstable, Wicken, Hatfield, Blakeney

This is just a snapshot of the amazing wildlife and wildflowers that can be seen at our places...



Dragonflies & butterflies Wicken, Dunstable, Horsey



Berry bonanza Flatford, Wimpole, Hatfield



Grey seal breeding season Blakeney Point



Heather in bloom **Dunwich Heath, Danbury**



Deer rutting season Hatfield, Ickworth, Dunwich



Wintering ducks and geese Northey, Norfolk Coast, Wicken

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Essex has a reputation of urban sprawl and jarring accents, but the truth is a far different picture. Whether it's walking along the sea wall at Copt Hall with the wind in your face, or simply strolling through Blake's Wood with the smell of fallen leaves, the countryside is full of evocative sensations, which always stay with me on the drive home from work. And the seasons only serve to enhance the experience. "

Stuart Banks Head Ranger Essex Coast & Countryside



So what can you do and where can you do it ...

	Walking	Cycling	Geocaching	Running	Birding	Boating	Horse riding	Fishing	Camping	Natural play	Nature
Anglesey Abbey	•		•		•					•	•
Blickling Estate	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•
Blakeney & Morston	•				•	•					•
Blake's Wood	•			•	•						•
Brancaster Activity Centre	•	•			•	•					
Copt Hall	•			•	•						•
Danbury & Lingwood Common	•		•	•	•		•				•
Dunstable Downs	•	•	•	•	•					•	•
Dunwich Heath	•		•		•						•
Felbrigg Hall	•	•	•	•	•					•	•
Flatford	•	•	•	•	•	•		•			•
Hatfield Forest	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Horsey	•				•			•			•
Houghton Mill	•			•		•		•	•		
Ickworth	•	•	•	•	•					•	•
Kyson Hill	•			•	•						
Melford Hall	•										
Northey Island	•	•			•				•		•
Orford Ness	•				•						•
Oxburgh Hall	•				•					•	•
Pin Mill	•				•						
Sharpenhoe Clappers	•			•							
Sheringham Park	•	•	•	•	•					•	•
Sutton Hoo	•				•						
Wicken Fen	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Willington Dovecote	•										
Wimpole Estate	•	•	•	•	•		•			•	•

Walking



One of the best ways to discover the great outdoors has to be on foot...

So, whether you're looking for a little amble, jolly ramble or something more challenging - we have a great selection of walks to choose from. You can join our expert guides, download a self-led trail, or join one of our regular health or Nordic walks.

- Hatfield Forest walk
- Wheathampstead to Shaw's Corner walk
- Blakeney Freshes walk
- Cock-up bridge silly walk at Wicken Fen
- Constable Country walk

Over 60 downloadable walks are now online www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ gonewalking



If you enjoy a faster pace of life, how about a two-wheeled adventure?

There are plenty of routes to explore, along quiet lanes and traffic free trails. You can even cycle between National Trust sites. Blickling to Felbrigg and The Lode's Way between Wicken and Anglesey Abbey (9 miles) are proving very popular.

- Blickling Estate
- Hatfield Forest
- Wicken Fen
- Ickworth (hotel)

From bikes and helmets, trailers, child seats and tag alongs - we've got everything you need for a great day out for the whole family.

Bird watching



Grab your binoculars, as we've got some great places for a spot of birding...

Our most famous places for birds are Blakeney, Orford Ness and Wicken Fen. But there can be great sights at all of our places, from the scarce Dartford warbler at Dunwich Heath to the great crested grebe at Blickling and Hatfield Forest.

- Wicken Fen
- Hatfield Forest
- Dunwich Heath
- Flatford
- · Copt Hall
- Northey Island
- Ickworth

Orford Ness run seasonal bird ringing mornings and Brancaster Millennium Activity Centre offer birdwatching breaks too.

Water adventures



Love the coast? Explore our waterways inland too ...

You can now enjoy a boat trip at Hatfield Forest, Flatford (River Stour Trust) and Wicken Fen.

Boat operators leave regularly from Morston Quay too if you want to see the seal colony at Blakeney Point. Hugely popular with wildlife lovers.

Brancaster Millennium Activity Centre is the ideal place to bring the family for an adventure on the coast. - whether you're novices or advanced, you'll have fun. Activities include:

- Kayaking
- Sailing
- Muddy harbour rambles
- Raft building
- Smugglers' quest

Running and fitness



If you're looking to get fit, why not try our outdoor gym?

Train outside and feel great inside; for starters, the views beat running on a treadmill.

The trim trail at Ickworth offers fitness objects to try en route and for those needing a challenge - Regiment Fitness train twice a week at Dunstable Downs.

Warrior Adrenaline Race

Dunstable Downs

Attack obstacles, hills, and lots of mud - it's not just a run, it's a challenge (5k and 10k race on 27 April 2013)

Parkrun

 Sheringham & Wimpole Weekly, 5km timed runs.

Also: 10k and half marathon at Wimpole, 10k at Ickworth.



Why not turn your walk into a high-tech treasure hunt?

Geocaching is a great way to combine technology with a good old fashioned treasure hunt. With hundreds of acres of countryside, there's lots of caches to discover. All you need is a GPS device and a sense of fun. Why not try our new nanocache trail at Danbury Common?

- Dunstable Downs
- Wicken Fen
- Dunwich Heath
- Hatfield Forest
- Wimpole Estate
- Felbrigg Hall
- · Sheringham Park

Pre-booking is often advisable to avoid disappointment. Feel free to bring your own device.

Horse riding



Fancy horse riding along our network of permitted bridleways?

If you own a horse or are part of a riding group, why not explore our quiet narrow tracks and wide open plains? Riding on horseback is a great way to venture deep into the countryside, you can even sign up for our heavy horse driving courses at Wimpole.

Hatfield Forest

Enjoy the Forest on horseback with one of our day or annual permits.

· Wicken Fen

Explore this fenland landscape, with our downloadable horse riders' map, mounting blocks and gates that can be opened from the saddle.



From lake to river, there's something for every keen angler...

Our well stocked waterways contain a variety of coarse fish such as carp, roach and perch, including some larger specimens.

Why not try crabbing at Brancaster Staithe harbour or Blakeney Quay?

Speak to our rangers about where to get a fishing permit...

- Blickling Estate
- · Hatfield Forest
- · Flatford
- Horsey
- · Houghton Mill

Camping



Why not make your next holiday a camping adventure?

Our campsites are set in the most beautiful locations, ideal for exploring the surrounding countryside. From hard standing pitches to rustic camping shelters - enjoy a night out under the stars. For more info visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/eastofengland

Wicken Fen

Our wild campsite of four camping shelters, eco toilet & fire pit.

· Hatfield Forest

Sleep out under the stars at one of our wild camping weekends.

· Houghton Mill

Perfect for caravans and tents (operated by the Caravan Club).



Be brave - play, explore, discover and create your own adventures...

You can have lots of fun playing with natural materials, all you need is a little inspiration - build a den, search for creepy crawlies or create a piece of wild art.

Be sure to visit our new tree house at Anglesey Abbey.

- Hoe Fen Wildlife Area at Anglesey Abbey
- The Bower at Sheringham Park
- Chute Wood Playscape at Dunstable Downs
- · Wicken Fen
- Hatfield Forest
- Oxburgh Hall

Highlight events



There are lots of great events planned for 2013, here are some of our highlights...

Fancy being Castaway on Northey Island? (14 - 16 June)

Dunstable Downs annual Kite Festival is always a crowd pleaser (27 - 28 July)

Then there's Hatfield Forest's popular music festival Woodfest (6 - 8 September)

We've tracked down the 50 coolest things to do outdoors before you're 1134, including:

- Hunt for bugs
- Build a den
- Climb a tree
- · Camp out in the wild

For the ultimate list visit www.50things.org.uk

Walkies... Dogs are welcome

We welcome dogs at the majority of our places - at Dunwich Heath they're even welcome in the tearoom! All we ask is that you keep your four-legged friend under control and deal with its waste thoughtfully. In return, we offer some fantastic locations to explore.

Look out for notices at your favourite spot. There may be restrictions at certain times of the year or areas where dogs need to be on a lead - often when cattle are nearby or ground-nesting birds are raising their young.

Great places for walkies:

Blake's Wood, Blickling Estate, Copt Hall, Danbury Common, Dunstable Downs, Dunwich Heath, Felbrigg Park, Flatford, Hatfield Forest, Ickworth, Kyson Hill, Pin Mill, Sharpenhoe Clappers, Sheringham Park, Wicken Fen and Wimpole Park.

Family muck-in days...

Looking for something different to do with your family? Come along to one of our family volunteering days and help to make a huge difference whilst having great fun.

- Wicken Fen
- Anglesey Abbey
- Brancaster Millennium Activity Centre



The National Trust

Did you know we care for 33,000 acres of countryside and 50 miles of coastline in the East? 43% of which is designated for its wildlife significance.

For more information about our places visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/eastofengland

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