



Wild Walks

Dunsford

Explore winding paths through woodland along the banks of the stunning River Teign



A Dartmoor classic

This Wild Walk includes one of Dartmoor's most beautiful woodlands, riverbank footpaths along the Teign Valley and open moorland with panoramic views. There is an optional loop to explore the wooded upper slopes of Dunsford nature reserve where pied flycatchers nest from May to July. Alternatively follow the level path close to the river and look out for goosanders, dippers and herons. Dunsford offers enjoyable walks at any time of year but especially in March for wild daffodils, in May for bluebells or in autumn for wild fungi and golden woodland colour. This walk includes areas where the rare high brown fritillary butterfly can be spotted in late spring/early summer.



Photo: Simon Williams

Essentials

- Approx time: 3.5 hours
- Approx distance: 7.5 miles
- Use Ordnance Survey Map OL 28 Dartmoor
- Terrain: Woodland, farmland and moorland paths, some fairly steep climbs, short section of sometimes busy 'B' road with no pavement. Stream to be crossed on stepping stones so we do not advise walking this route after heavy rain.
- Start: Car park at Steps Bridge, grid ref SX880883
- Child friendly? Suitable for older children
- Dog friendly? Yes, but on a lead in the nature reserve
- Public transport: Exeter - Moretonhampstead bus, no 359. Steps Bridge stop



Photo: pied flycatcher by Rob Coll

Directions

From Steps Bridge car park (1) cross the road and follow a track signposted 'Youth Hostel'. 50 yards later leave the bridlepath and fork left up the concrete path to the Youth Hostel. By the Youth Hostel steps fork right on to a footpath. 200 yards later turn left and follow the footpath uphill through a wood, bearing left at two yellow waymarkers, the second at the edge of the wood. Continue through the lefthand gateway to another gate. After two fields turn left at a public footpath sign. Follow the path through the wood, emerging on to a minor road where you turn right then left just before Lower Heltor Farm. Follow the footpath through several fields and over two stiles to another minor road. (2)

Turn right on this lane, then right again at a sharp bend near Westcott, downhill to the B3212. Here turn left and after 200 yards turn right at a 'Footpath' sign down a field, then cross the stream on stepping stones and up the other side to a gate and a track between two stone walls. At a 'Path' sign go right through a gate and up a well-trodden path to two gates leading to another 'Path' sign to the right. After a bungalow take the first track on the left through an iron gate and keep on

along this track to a gate on to open moorland. (3)

Bear very slightly left, along a grassy path until you reach a minor road, a car park and the Headless Cross (marked on the OS map). Do not follow this road, but turn sharp right, almost doubling back on yourself, on to another wide grassy path from which you shortly see a row of telegraph poles on the left marking another minor road. At a junction of paths turn left to this lane. Here turn right and follow the road for just over a mile to Clifford Bridge. Turn right, cross the bridge over the river and at a crossroads turn right. (4)

After 700 yards you will find the entrance to DWT Dunsford nature reserve on the right at a bend in the road. Go through the gate and – if you wish to walk close to the river – fork right whenever a path appears in that direction. Or if you wish to walk the loop on the wooded slopes, follow the bridleway then turn left uphill at the yellow arrow (5), following this loop until it rejoins the bridleway. Both routes end at the Steps Bridge entrance to the reserve on the B3212. Turn right to cross the bridge and follow the road back to the car park.



Photos: high brown fritillary butterfly and dipper by Chris Root

