



Welcome to South Efford Marsh nature reserve

A lost landscape returns



Devon

The fields that stretch before you were once a saltmarsh and mudflats supporting huge numbers of wildfowl and wetland birds. Working together it is the plan of the Environment Agency and Devon Wildlife Trust to restore this wildlife haven.



Shoveler
Photo, Neil Bygrave.

Saltmarshes naturally occur in the inter-tidal zone, where they are flooded by about half of all high tides before draining again at low water. The saltmarsh here was lost around 250 years ago when a sea wall was built around its 17 hectares. Without the influence of the sea South Efford Marsh became grazing pasture.

Since 2011 Devon Wildlife Trust has managed the site as a nature reserve under a lease from the Environment Agency. The long term aim is to restore parts of South Efford Marsh as saltmarsh and mudflats.

A tidal gate, developed and funded by the Environment Agency, has been installed in the sea wall at the far end of the reserve allowing saltwater to flow in on some high tides before draining out as the tide ebbs. The clever piece of kit is able to control the maximum level of water coming in, guarding against increased flood risk to nearby houses.

The return of saltwater is bringing change. Fields of grass are gradually being replaced by saltwater tolerant plants including sea purslane, glasswort and sea spurry. In other places there are now shallow lagoons which make important nursery grounds for young fish.

South Efford Marsh is beginning to take on the appearance of saltmarsh and mudflats once more. The many wading birds and wildfowl that now visit regularly to feed are the most obvious sign of this.



Enjoy the view

Go right from this panel on a path which leads you around the nature reserve's boundary. Watch out for the tracks of the otters that cross the path at regular intervals. After ten minutes or so you reach a wildlife hide with wonderful views over South Efford Marsh and the River Avon.

Support us!

Devon Wildlife Trust is an independent charity which manages 50 nature reserves for the benefit of people and wildlife.

If you would like to make a world of difference for local wildlife then support our work at www.devonwildlifetrust.org

South Efford Marsh is being managed by Devon Wildlife Trust as a place which people enjoy and in which wildlife flourishes.

- To minimise disturbance to birds no dogs are permitted on this nature reserve.
- Keep to the path at all times. There is no public access to the nature reserve's interior or beyond its wildlife hide.
- Cycling and horse riding is not permitted.

Contact Devon Wildlife Trust on 01392 279244 or contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org
Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter



DWT is a registered charity, number 213224



This panel was produced with funding from the Environment Agency.

Five to find

These birds are often to be seen at South Efford Marsh nature reserve...



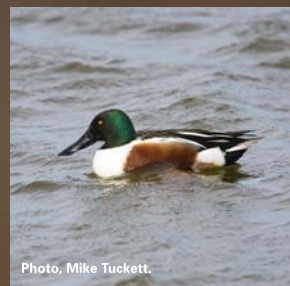
Photo, Neil Bygrave.

Curlew: the UK's largest breeding wading bird is a common sight at South Efford Marsh. It uses its long, curved beak to probe for worms.



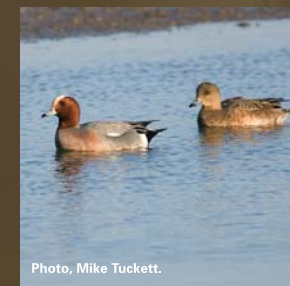
Photo, Neil Bygrave.

Little egret: snowy white plumage make little egrets stand out. In spring and summer this member of the heron family also grows long white feathers on its head.



Photo, Mike Tuckett.

Shoveler: look along the water's edge to see this duck using its shovel-shaped bill to filter water in the search for tiny water snails and insect larvae.



Photo, Mike Tuckett.

Wigeon: loose flocks of this small duck are often seen grazing on the nature reserve's grassy areas.



Photo, Gillian Day.

Shelduck: this large duck can be seen here year-round. They use old rabbit burrows and even holes in trees in which to build a nest and hatch a clutch of up to ten eggs.



Otter
Photo, Hugh Clark.

Key

- Way marked trail
- Nature reserve boundary
- ☼ Wildlife hide

0 250m

Protecting Wildlife for the Future