

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve



geology

The magnificent cliff sections reveal some of the oldest rocks in south-east England which are rich in fossilised plants and animals.

for your safety

Some areas are very hilly and exposed to all weathers, please wear suitable footwear and clothing. The cliffs are unstable due to natural erosion.

WARNING

There is no longer access to Ecclesbourne Glen from the East Hill. Landslips continue to make this area unsafe. To access the Glen and the rest of the nature reserve please follow the diversions signs from Rocklands Lane.

access

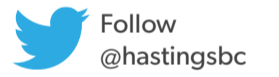
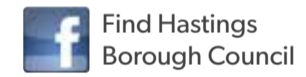
The park lies to the East of Hastings and can be reached either by car via Fairlight Road, by bus from Hastings or Rye, or by foot via the East Hill (see map).

history

The East Hill is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument because of the Iron Age hill fort that once overlooked Hastings. The park was essential to the 18th and early 19th century smuggling trade. Using makeshift pulleys known as 'Derricks', the Smugglers often winched their contraband up the face of the cliffs and into the arms of the waiting 'tubmen' who would spirit the contraband goods away.

find us

Sign up to our Facebook page and twitter for information an all up and coming events.



the Friends of Hastings country park nature reserve

If you have been inspired by this beautiful nature reserve, its landscape and wildlife then please join the Friends to help contribute to looking after the site. Information about the Friends can be found on www.friendsofhastingscountrypark.org where a membership form can be downloaded or you can pick up a membership form at the Visitor Centre. The Friends run a series of events throughout the year. Details are available from their web site or on the councils Facebook page.

volunteers

A series of conservation events and tasks are organised at the reserve. For more information contact parks@hastings.gov.uk or visit the councils Facebook page for information on all events.

visitor centre

Call into the visitor centre to meet our friendly and dedicated volunteers who can help with information to make your visit more enjoyable.

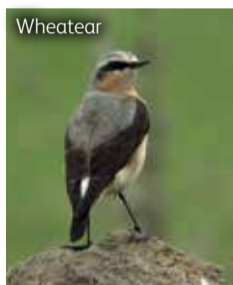
wildlife

Much of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is of national and European importance for its special wildlife and habitats, which is why it has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The diverse cliff vegetation, which includes specialist cliff plants such as thrift and hoary stock, acid grassland, heathland, freshwater marsh and ancient gill woodlands are all found along this unique area of maritime cliff.



Heather

The gill woodlands, Warren Wood, Fairlight Glen and Ecclesbourne Glen, are of national importance for the rare and very sensitive mosses and liverworts which thrive here. These glens are also outstanding in spring for the stunning display of bluebells, wood anemones and yellow archangel that carpet the woodland floor. These woodlands also support an important population of dormice.



Wheatear

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is an outstanding site for bird watching. Notable species include peregrine falcon, yellowhammer, raven, buzzard, linnets, dartford warbler and wheatear.



Peregrine

The site is most well known for the spring and autumn migration that can be witnessed here. Most conspicuous is the inshore migration of brent geese and common scoter in spring and the spectacular swallow, house martin and woodpigeon migration in autumn. Many continental

birds and insects use the site on migration and rarer migrants such as wryneck, red-rumped swallow, pallas's warbler, and yellow-browed warbler have been seen in recent years.



Long-horned bee

The heathland, cliffs, cliff top grassland and woodland are home to many rare and unusual insects, some of which are found in very few other places in the country. The sandy heathland and acid grassland is home to many different ground nesting bees, wasps and beetles, including the bee-wolf wasp and green tiger beetle. The sandy cliffs are home to a large population of grey bush-crickets, long-horned bees and six-belted clear-wing moths.

Exmoor ponies and Belted Galloway cattle can be found roaming within a wide area of the Country Park. They are the most effective and sustainable way to manage large areas of the Nature Reserve. These animals are intelligent and resourceful, will graze the grass and regrowth from tree stumps, young gorse and other scrub.

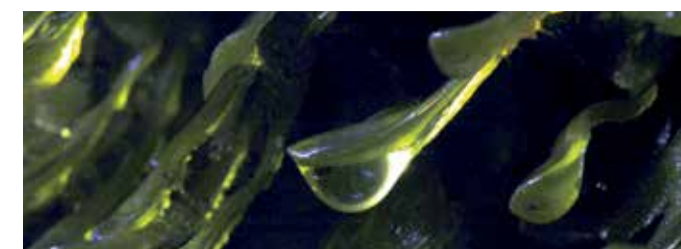
You may well come across a pony or Beltie on your walk. Please be aware that these animals are wild and although they will welcome you on your walk, we respectfully ask you not to feed them and to keep your dog/s under control.



Belted Galloway cattle

Warren Glen

Historically important site, farmed by Stone Age inhabitants and used as a free rabbit warren in 1254 and 1317 (hence the name). Impressive show of spring flowers.



Fairlight Glen

Romantic haven Lovers Seat was once located near here but has now been lost due to erosion leaving only a stone in its place. Many interesting plants and animals together with popular Victorian attraction The Dripping Well. (John Logie Baird is said to have drawn inspiration for the idea of television whilst on a long walk over Fairlight Glen).

Ecclesbourne Glen

Heavily wooded with many ferns and mosses, this was the landing place and entrance to the Iron Age hill fort. A Coastguard watchtower was built here in 1819.

East Hill

Important historical and archaeological site with fine views of Hastings Old Town. Barbecue facilities provided.

Fairlight Road picnic site

Quiet area, ideal for picnics. Barbecue facilities provided.

North's Seat

Highest point in Hastings. Fine views of Wealden Sussex. Named after Frederick North, formerly Hastings Mayor, local MP and father of biologist and botanical artist Marianne North.

places of interest

The visitor centre

Fascinating history, geology and wildlife displays. Open Friday to Sunday only.

The Firehills

Main car park and visitor centre. Excellent views to France and Dover across panorama of colourful Heathland. Two 'Access for All' trails are present, which are suitable for wheelchairs, leading to picnic tables and stunning viewpoints.

contacts

01424 451066 ask for 'Parks'
or email parks@hastings.gov.uk

For more information

hastings.gov.uk/countryside_nature

In an emergency, dial 999

and ask for the Coastguard or one of the other Emergency Services.

You report it, we'll sort it!

Access your council services online at my.hastings.gov.uk

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve



Produced by Hastings Borough Council - May 2019.
Photographs by Bob Mazzer, Julie Apps, Andy Phillips and Mali Halls. Map by Paul Collycutt.

Map Inside

01424 451066
my.hastings.gov.uk



welcome...

A picturesque nature reserve of national importance with stunning coastal views sited within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The nature reserve has 345 hectares (853 acres) of ancient gill woodland, heathland, grassland and farmland together with 5 kilometres of dramatic sandstone cliffs and coastline. Much of the area has been designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to the unique wildlife & fossil rich soft rock cliff and slope.

Help us protect this extraordinary nature reserve. When visiting, PLEASE follow the countryside code, walk on designated footpaths and be careful of farm machinery and livestock. Cycling on designated route only. No access to farm fields unless waymarked.

Remember:

- Pick up after your dog
- Keep dogs under control
- Barbecues are only permitted in designated areas at the East Hill and the Fairlight Road picnic sites
- The use of metal detectors is prohibited
- Do not pick wildflowers, please leave for everyone to enjoy