

Knapp Copse

Walk: 1.4 miles

Time: 1-1.5 hours

Terrain: Moderate-Hard (depending on ground conditions) with steep sections, steps and stiles.

What to bring: Wellies or stout walking boots are essential.

Car park: There is free car parking at Knapp Copse Local Nature Reserve. The nearest postcode is EX10 0QG.

Knapp Copse spans both sides of the steep Roncombe valley within the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site used to be part of an active landfill site until 1982. Since then it has been managed by East Devon District Council Countryside team as a Local Nature Reserve on behalf of Devon County Council.

From the car park continue down the track through the main gate for 100 yards, until you reach a fingerpost which marks the start of the 'Permissive path' on your left. Follow the route marked by striking blue posts along hedgerows and through grazed fields, down onto the valley floor.

The hedge has recently been restored by the East Devon District Council Conservation volunteers to enhance biodiversity by providing habitat for dormice and bats.

At the base of the valley the path joins up with the East Devon Way, providing options for longer walking routes. The Permissive Paths passes through the metal gate and immediately turns right into a recently planted orchard. Take the left hand fork in the track and continue to follow the blue posts uphill.

Take in the attractive mosaic of ancient woodland, grazed meadows and spring line mires as you go uphill. Grassland management has increased the number of small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly and scrub clearance has improved plant diversity in the mires.

At the top of the hill, turn right and right again through two wooden gates. The path then follows a fence line, descending through ancient woodland until it crosses a tarmac track. Pass straight across through the gate and back uphill to the car park.

The remote location of the reserve makes it a perfect spot for stargazing. It has even been designated as a Dark Skies Discovery Site.

Follow the East Devon District Council countryside team on social media @wildeastdevon
Visit wildeastdevon.co.uk or contact the team via email: wild@eastdevon.gov.uk phone: 01395 517557.