Rye Harbour Nature Reserve lies to the south of Rye and Winchelsea in Sussex. There are several entry points but the main one is in the village of Rye Harbour where there is a large car park next to the Martello Tower – the nearest postcode for Sat Nav is TN31 7TX, the OS grid reference is TQ442189.

The railway station in Rye is just an 11 minute walk from the north part of the nature reserve near Brede Lock, or there’s a regular bus service from Rye station to Rye Harbour village.

You can explore all of the reserve along a network of footpaths. A private tarmac road runs through the southern part of the reserve and the four bird-watching hides here are suitable for most wheelchairs. The northern part of the nature reserve, Castle Farm, is served by shingle and grassy paths which are usually dry, and a fifth hide overlooks Castle Water - fabulous for ducks, especially in winter.

getting there …

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

Find out much more by visiting: www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

Keep up-to-date with news and goings-on at Rye Harbour on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/RyeHarbourNR


Nature reserve office phone: 01797 2277 84

Sussex Wildlife Trust Registered Charity No. 207005
Breeding birds...
With more than 90 species of birds nesting, the specialties here are little, common and Sandwich terns, avocet, redshank, lapwing, oystercatcher, and ringed and little ringed plovers, Mediterranean and common gulls, which all benefit from the protection of our fences.

Reedbed creation...
Very few areas of this tall wetland grass survived extensive land drainage during the past 100 years. We created 20ha adjacent to a large gravel pit in 2005 which is now home to reedbed specialists bittern, marsh harrier, water rail, bearded tit, garganey and many insects.

Saltmarsh recreation...
A national and local decline in this intertidal habitat has encouraged the recreation of this wetland by the Environment Agency as part of sea defence improvements. We worked together in 2011 to produce 20 hectares rich in plants, birds and the tiny animals they feed on, with up to 10,000 tiny shrimps in a square metre – great for avocets.

Grazing...
Many areas of the nature reserve are managed with grazing animals, otherwise it would quickly go to scrub and then woodland. We use sheep and goats to maintain the grassland suitable for ground nesting and feeding birds. They stop it from turning to scrub and woodland, which are habitats we encourage elsewhere.

Fences...
Some of our fencing is electrified to reduce the losses of our ground nesting birds from foxes and badgers looking for a tasty egg supper at night. Other fencing is to allow our sheep and goats to manage the vegetation so that it remains suitable for our special wildlife.

Shingle flowers...
Living in this very harsh environment with little soil or fresh water, some species thrive among the pebbles: sea kale, sea pea, sea campion, viper’s bugloss, yellow horned-poppy and two very rare species – least lettuce and stinking hawksbeard.

Invertebrates...
In our scarce habitats we have more than 200 endangered invertebrates. Most of these are tiny and rarely seen, but have an important influence on our management. This large hairy caterpillar of the pale grass eggar moth is a rare species, which can often be seen crossing the road along the shore and provides a major food source for our cuckoos during May and June.

take the trails...
**Short trail** about 2 miles or 3½ kilometres:
from the Rye Harbour car park - follow 1, 2, 3, 4

**Long trail** about 5½ miles or 9 kilometres:
follow 1, 2, then 5 and follow the numbers all the way round to 15 to rejoin the Rye Harbour Road

breeding birds...