

SDOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form:

Assessor: Tony Benton : **Date of Assessment** 3 May 2024 - based on a site visit.

Location: New Forest - primarily Acres Down and nearby tracts of the forest.

Brief Description: At Acres Down, there is a Farm Shop and Tea Rooms. It might be possible to use the adjacent camp site toilets, but as a courtesy something should be purchased in the shop or Tea Rooms. The walk through the forest at Acres Down is on good forest tracks, muddy after rain. This applies elsewhere within the forest. The walk to the raptor view point involves a short but steep incline on a good to muddy track. Approx 150 yards to the crest of the ridge.

Suggested clothing: Participants should check the weather forecast, but likely to need layers and waterproofs, even on a summer visit. Walking boots should suffice, unless there has been prolonged heavy rain.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Bad weather	All participants	Low / Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Lightning storms	All participants	Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Snow and ice	All participants	Low / Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Darkness, cloud, fog	All participants	Low	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Hot weather	All participants	Low/medium	Participants should bring a drink and wear suitable clothing and consider the need for sunscreen	Monitor weather forecast
Uneven walking surfaces	All participants	Low	Suitable walking shoes or boots are recommended	Participants to ensure that suitable footwear is available to them
Muddy conditions	All participants	Low	Walking boots or wellington boots. Welly boots would be	Monitor weather forecast

			best after prolonged heavy rain.	
Standing water and flooding	All participants	Low	Adjust route	Monitor weather forecast
Slippery surfaces	All participants	Low	Adjust route	One route - from raptor view point- is downhill but not too steep. A walking pole or similar might help some people.
Steep slopes	All participants	Low	Few steep slopes, participants to judge their own capabilities	
Trip hazards	All participants	Low	Participants to judge their own capabilities and take care	
Stiles and gates	N/a			
Barbed wire, electric fences	N/a			
Obstructive vegetation	N/a			
Stinging or thorny plants	N/a			
Falling trees or branches	N/a			
Biting insects	All participants	Low	If wearing shorts or similar, be aware of very low possibility of ticks	Consult a GP if a tick bite is suspected

Snakes	All participants	Medium	Snakes, including Adders, are present. Do not deliberately approach or interfere with snakes under any circumstances. Walking boots offer protection.	Snakes are most likely on heathland sections of the Forest.
Farm or other animals	All participants	Low	Although unlikely, any farm animals encountered should be given a wide berth and not cornered	Forest ponies roam free and should not be fed or approached.
Cycles (and possibly horses being ridden)	All participants	Low	The forest is popular with cyclists - take care as their approach might not be heard. Similarly give horses being ridden a wide berth.	It's worth participants recognising that the footpath is a shared space. Don't assume it is a completely benign environment
Dogs off the lead	All participants	Low	Be aware of dogs off the lead - if approached stand still, stay calm, and ask the owner to get the dog under control.	