

SDOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form:

Assessor: Tony Benton, with input from Terry Goble : Date of Assessment 21/6/2024

Location: Southwater complex, woodland near Horsham. Car parking and travel arrangements to be advised to participants.

Brief Description: This walk would be combined with an outing to Knepp, for which a separate risk assessment applies. The Southwater complex comprises mainly broad woodland paths, where the target is butterflies. The paths are generally good, but a little uneven, and could be muddy after prolonged rain. This is a very low risk woodland walk.

Suggested clothing: clothing appropriate to the weather forecast, and similarly footwear.

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	Low/medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Snow and ice	All participants	Low	Cancel or curtail walk	Unlikely in spring and summer when walks are most likely.
Darkness, cloud, fog	All participants	Low	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Hot weather	All participants	Low	Participants to wear suitable clothing and bring a drink.	Monitor weather forecast
Uneven walking surfaces	Might affect less mobile participants	Low	Participants might wish to bring a walking pole if balance is an issue.	Participants have to make judgements and take care
Muddy conditions	All participants	Low	Participants need suitable footwear and to take care.	Monitor weather forecast - only an issue after heavy or prolonged periods of rain

Standing water and flooding	N/A			
Slippery surfaces	N/A			
Steep slopes	N/A			
Trip hazards	N/A			
Stiles and gates	N/A			
Barbed wire, electric fences	N/A			Should not be encountered - but stick to paths.
Obstructive vegetation	All participants	Low	Stick to paths	Follow the advice of the very experienced leader.
Stinging or thorny plants	All participants	Low	Stick to paths	
Falling trees or branches	N/a			
Biting insects	All participants	Low	Participants vulnerable to biting insects should take their usual precautions.	
Snakes	All participants	Low	Suitable footwear mitigates any risks.	Unlikely to encounter snakes, but follow the directions of the walk leader.
Farm or wild animals	All participants	Low/medium	Any animals must be given a wide berth, especially if they have young.	Deer might be encountered.

Railway crossing	N/A			