

## SDOS Birding Walks Assessment Form

**Assessor:** Tony Benton **Date of Assessment:** December 2024

**Location:** Arundel riverbank adjacent to the Black Rabbit Public House & Arundel Wetlands

**Advisory notice:** all participants are asked to read this document carefully. Walk leaders are not provided with First Aid kits, nor are they expected to be First Aid trained. All participants must take this into account and must also bring with them any medication that might be required.

**Brief Description:** This risk assessment relates to outings that are designed to observe the Harrier roost at Arundel Wetlands Centre, mostly viewed from the car park at the Black Rabbit pub, or by walking along the river bank. Although on a level surface, the river bank walk is **extremely** muddy after rain.

**Clothing and footwear:** As this is likely to be a winter walk, appropriate clothing is required - the view point is exposed to the elements. In addition, the riverside walk is notoriously muddy after rain and welly boots are highly recommended.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk	Risk mitigation measures	Risk grading after controls put in place	Comments
Adverse weather conditions, including (but not confined to) torrential rain, very high winds, snow, ice, thunder and lightning.	All participants	High/Medium	It is essential that any weather warnings issued by the Met Office are adhered to, especially if the public are asked to avoid non-essential travel.	Low	Adverse weather conditions can affect outings in different ways. By following Met Office advice, risks should be reduced to 'low' and where necessary, outings should be cancelled.

Risk of trips, slips and falls.	All participants - but especially people with mobility and balance issues.	Medium to Low - the route is level.	Walk leaders will highlight any challenges at the beginning of the walk, and participants have a responsibility to assess their own capabilities. Slips and falls are only likely if the conditions are very muddy after rain.	Low to negligible	The route along the riverbank footpath is level, but after prolonged rain can be very muddy. A walking pole or similar will help participants who do not have good balance - but the risk should be low if care is taken and footwear is appropriate.
Obstructive vegetation	All participants	Medium to low	Obstructive vegetation which might snag clothing or skin is possible if the bank side vegetation is very overgrown. Care should be taken by all participants.	Low	By being aware of this possible risk, participants should be able to make any necessary adjustments and take appropriate care.
Falling trees and branches	All participants	Medium to low	This risk is most likely after high winds/gales, so this should be considered at the beginning of the walk.	Low	The route beside the river does not have overhanging trees but around the car park there are trees, so awareness reduces the risk to low.

Flood/deep standing water	All participants	Medium to low	Most likely after prolonged periods of rain and/or if the river has flooded. A visual check should be made, and the route should be adjusted accordingly.	Low	If the river has flooded and there is any doubt about the depth of standing water then the river bank walk should not be attempted.
Risk of the group becoming separated on the river side walk	All participants	Medium to low	If the walk is going to conclude after sunset then extra care is required. Ideally the walk leader will ask someone to act as a 'back marker', to ensure that the group stay together.	Low	Participants should consider taking a torch or a mobile phone with a torch facility.
Falling into the river	All participants	Medium to low	The riverside path is not particularly close to the river but this can change with very high water. Care should be taken by all participants.	Low	The riverside route should not be attempted if the water is very high and there is a lot of mud which could result in slips.
Cars and other vehicles	All participants	Medium to low	When viewing from the car park, be aware of vehicle movements.	Low	Participants must position themselves to not obstruct vehicle movements.
Dogs that are not under control - risk of being bitten	All participants	Medium to low	Be careful around dogs that are not on leads.	Low	Ask dog owners to control their dogs. Avoid shouting or sudden movements.

Risk Assessment Template 13/12/2025 TL