

Fire Beacon Hill

Local Nature Reserve



The top of Fire Beacon Hill offers you a birds eye view of the surrounding countryside. On a clear day you can almost see from Berry Head to Portland, the entire length of Lyme Bay and on a windy day it puts you on eye level with soaring buzzards and ravens.



East Devon District Council LNRs

East Devon District Council manages a number of Local Nature Reserves, for the protection of wildlife and for public enjoyment. Fire Beacon Hill is managed in partnership with the owners, Sidmouth Town Council.



How to get there:

From the A3052, heading towards Sidmouth from Newton Poppleford, turn left off the main road at the Bowd Inn, signposted Ottery St Mary. Take the first turning right and then next left, 100 metres further on there is a public footpath to the right, leading directly up to the top of the hill

For more information about other Local Nature Reserves and a range of activities for you to enjoy in East Devon, please contact the Countryside Service.

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Yellowhammer,
S Morsch



Fire Beacon Hill

As its name suggests, Fire Beacon Hill was the site of one of the beacons used to inform Elizabethan London of the approaching Spanish Armada. At that time the entire East Hill escarpment would have been covered in lowland heath vegetation, similar to that found here. Unfortunately, just this small patch remains, as lowland heath has disappeared beneath forestry plantation and agricultural improvement, making this habitat increasingly uncommon.



Exploring the bracken

Stonechat,



Dartford warbler,
A Bright



Yellowhammers breed on the Local Nature Reserve, as does the nationally scarce dartford warbler. Look out for them skulking amongst the low growing bushes. A good tip to spotting 'dartfords' is to look out for the more conspicuous stonechat. These beautiful birds sit prominently on trees and shrubs making a distinctive call, like two stones being hit together. When you see a stonechat, look in the bushes beneath and you may see a dartford warbler, using the stonechat above as a sentry keeping watch.

Nightjars are heathland specialists that can be heard at night hunting for moths over the Local Nature Reserve. During the day they remain perfectly camouflaged, nesting on the ground.

Grayling



Grayling butterflies breed on the nature reserve. About the same size as a tortoiseshell, graylings are often disturbed into flight while sunbathing on the paths around the local nature reserve.



Access:

The site is criss-crossed with bridleways, footpaths fire-breaks and the East Devon Way, so exploring on foot is easy. The steep gradients and uneven nature of the footpaths and bridleways make it unsuitable for wheelchair access.