

Dog Walkers Welcome

Top tips for a cracking day out



for birds
for people
for ever

Registered charity no 207076



Everyone is welcome to enjoy the delights of Exmoor National Park, 692 sq. km of moorland, woodland, coastal cliffs, hidden valleys and a farmed landscape with a history stretching back thousands of years.

And what better way than to explore and discover with your faithful, four legged friend. As with any activity, there are a few simple things that you can do that will make everyone's experience a good one and keep you coming back time after time.

Why do I need to keep my dog on a lead?

Generally, your dog should be under close control at all times and there are specific areas and times of the year that they may need to be kept on a lead. There are good reasons for keeping your dog under control:

Wildlife

Wildlife is easily disturbed.

During the ground-nesting bird season (1st March to 31st July), disturbance can lead to eggs not hatching or young chicks being taken by predators whilst unguarded by their parents.

By keeping your dog on a lead and using defined tracks and paths between these dates you can help protect and conserve Exmoor's vulnerable moorland birds.



Andy Hay, rspb-images.com

A ground-nesting Snipe. Around 8 pairs nest on Exmoor

Livestock

If you come across cows or sheep it is likely that they will react to you and your dog.

- Sheep - on the whole, sheep and lambs will run away but can be pursued by the dog. Although great fun for your dog, it is distressing for the sheep and, in the worst case, a landowner can shoot your pet if it is felt that the dog is 'worrying livestock'.



ENPA - Steve Gascott

- Cattle – cows are naturally inquisitive and will come towards you. If there are calves present, the cows may become aggressive and try to protect their young from the 'threat' of your dog.

If this happens, drop the lead and get to a place of safety – your dog will be able to get clear of any danger on its own.

- Ponies and horses – can react to dogs in a variety of ways, and will sometimes approach you. If in doubt please drop the dog lead and get to a place of safety.



ENPA - Heather Lovelace

And where can we go for a walk?

On Footpaths and Bridleways

There are over 1000km of rights of way on Exmoor for you and your dog to enjoy.

On 'public rights of way' there is no legal requirement to keep your dog on a lead but, unless you are very confident about your dog's obedience, we strongly recommend that you do.

There are all sorts of scents and smells that may prove too tempting to resist and result in your dog disappearing into the distance.

You will inevitably meet other people, dogs, cyclists and horseriders at some point. There is potential for confrontation if your dog is out of control.

In open country

There are over 18,000 hectares of open country for you to explore.

Although you now have a right to explore open country on foot, your dog must be kept on a fixed lead at all times near livestock and at ALL times from 1st March to 31st July during the bird nesting season.



Hale & Hearty - Walking for Health

Taking a walk in the countryside is great for your health and happiness.

To keep you, your dog, livestock and wildlife healthy too, ensure your dog is regularly wormed, treated for fleas and ticks and please clean up after your dog.

Most of all, enjoy your walk. Exmoor National Park offers some of the most stunning landscapes and opportunities for exploration for you - and your dog!

Further information

For more information on this and general information about how to get the best out of your time on Exmoor, please visit one of our National Park Centres, Local Information Points or check out the website: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk



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*Looking after Exmoor's environment for all to enjoy,
in partnership with a thriving community*