

NATURE RESERVE ROUTE

Distance: 6½ miles/10.5km

Start: Searsons Farm, Cordys Lane.

Trains: Greater Anglia Railways run a regular service from Felixstowe and Ipswich stations every hour and all stop at Trimley Station. This is about a 0.5 km from the start. Turn left out of the station and make your way to the end of the houses in Cordys Lane.

Buses and bus stop: Felixstowe Flyer buses numbers 75 and 77 from Felixstowe and Ipswich stop at the top of Station Road. It is about 1 km from the bus stop walking along Station Road which becomes Cordys Lane after the level crossing. Searsons Farm is at the end of the properties in Cordys lane on the left.

Car Park: There is a small free car park opposite Searsons Farm, Cordys Lane.

Eateries: The Mariners pub, High Road. Gulliver's Fish and Chips, High Road. Mrs I Crafts is a cafe with drinks and homemade cakes, Wednesday- Saturday. 10am – 3pm. Cordy's Lane, beside the railway crossing.

This is a long, circular route mainly on the level and no steps involved. This would be an excellent route for bird lovers as you will visit a nature reserve with 6 bird hides and a large lake with a number of different species. You will walk on field tracks, bridleways and woodland paths and a short way along a road without a pavement. There is hardly any walking beside roads on this route. As this is such a long route, you may wish to take a picnic. There are picnic tables at the Nature Reserve and benches all along this route. There are toilets at the reserve, but only if the Visitor Centre is open. This is an interesting route as you will have wonderful views over the river Orwell and you will be close to the cranes at the Port of Felixstowe.

① From the car park, turn right (south west) along the popular bridleway past **Searsons Farm**, Cartlodge and barn and Bidwells' buildings on the left. The wide track slopes gently down towards the **Port of Felixstowe** so you will see the cranes in the distance. There are lovely views over the countryside to the river Orwell on your right. About half way down the bridleway is a bench on your left to enjoy the views. Carry on through a row of trees called **Christmasyard Wood**.

② About half a mile from the start there is a track going to the right to the **Nature Reserve, Trimley Marshes**. Just before the path look over to your left and you will see a **Pill Box** in the trees. Take this bridleway to the right. It is 1¼ miles to the Reserve from here. You will have a wood on your left where the blackthorn is attractive in Spring and a drain on your right. A short way along you should be able to see Levington Marina in the distance.

③ After about half a mile you will come to a gate which is the entrance to the Reserve. A few metres from this, there is an open viewing platform with steps up on your left. The track then goes round to your left and you will see the cranes from the **Port of Felixstowe**.

④ When the bridleway reaches the River Orwell you will have a close up view of the cranes on the docks. At this point there are two parallel tracks, one on the embankment and a lower one. The lower one will give you easier access to the hides. The track loops round to the right and follows the River Orwell shore. There is a hide on your right (Woodgate Hide), just before the visitor centre.

⑤ There is also a hide at the Visitor Centre, for opening times visit www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org. From the centre there are 3 more hides, Longhurst Hide 200 metres, Cobb hide 400 metres and Benson Hide 600 metres. You will be able to sit inside and have a good view of the wildlife on the inland lakes. There are plenty of posters to help you identify the birds. Continue walking till there is a bend round to the right around a bay.

⑥ At this point you may wish to scramble up the embankment where you will have excellent views over the river Orwell to the Shotley peninsular. However you will be exposed to the wind. If you prefer a more sheltered route, stay on the bridleway, though this may be muddy after heavy rain. Both paths run parallel to each other. The paths then bend round to the left round mudflats created in 2000. The two paths eventually come together. You will come to a hill on your right called **Sleighton Hill**. The path opens out to where there is a bench and a lovely view of the River Orwell. A little further on are good views over the countryside on your righthand side. The bridleway goes uphill and then through trees and hedgerows which are attractive in the autumn.

⑦ At this point where 3 tracks meet there are 2 options:

a) A brief detour straight ahead to have a look at an inland lake called **Loompit Lake**, with swans, ducks and geese, a bird lovers paradise or

b) Turn right up the hill with trees on your left and a field on your right. You may be lucky enough to hear nightingales here in the spring and early summer. Keep on the bridleway and you will have open countryside views on your left. Over to your left you should be able to see the rooftop of **Waterworks Cottage**.

⑧ Just after the bench on your righthand side, take the tree lined track to the right. When the trees open out you will have lovely views over to the River Orwell and will be able to see again the cranes of the Port of Felixstowe. You eventually come to a metal gate, go past this and the track joins a road.

⑨ Turn right and walk along the road. On your right are **Alston Hall** cottages at the end of the road.

⑩ Take the footpath to the left through the wood. Walk through this wooded area. The path is fairly straight.

⑪ When you emerge from the woods take the footpath to your right which go past some farm buildings belonging to **Grimston Hall** on your left. Continue a little way down the track.

⑫ When you come to the woods on your left you should see a footpath sign. Turn left here. (It may be very muddy here after heavy rain.) You now follow the meandering path through Kiln Wood. You will go past a lily pond which is attractive in the summer. Go round the pond and follow the footpath sign to the right. Continue to follow the footpath sign through the trees to your left and slightly uphill, **Fingerbread Hill**. A little further on this path is a bench with beautiful views over the River Orwell. The path is straight for a short while then meanders to the right and left and then continues straight through another avenue of trees. It can be very muddy and you may wish to take a short detour to your left.

⑬ Eventually you emerge out of the trees and ahead of you is a multi-way junction of farm tracks and paths. Take the permissive bridleway 45° to the right. This goes around **Keeper's Cottage**. You can also see the cranes from the docks over a reservoir here. Ignore a footpath to your right. When another farm track joins from the left, continue straight ahead through an avenue of trees. On your left through the trees, you will see some interesting **Anti-aircraft Site** Cold War buildings.

⑭ Finally, the bridleway joins Cordys Lane. Turn right here and make your way back to the car park.

N.B. The words that are emboldened can be referenced in a separate Gazetteer also found in this section of the website.



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