

Wiltshire Ornithological Society Risk Assessment for Outdoor Walks and Field Trips

Possible Hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	How to control the risk	Action to be taken
Bad weather (including extreme temperatures)	Participants: risk of injury or illness. Risk of group getting lost.	Check the weather forecast and postpone/cancel if necessary. Walkers to bring suitable clothing and items for conditions, including water. Trip Leader to carry a charged mobile phone and a map if possible.	Trip Leaders to make decision prior to meeting and advise on the website under WOS Newsflash in the event of cancellation.
Busy roads	Participants: risk of collision with vehicle.	Avoid routes with busy roads and find a safe place for crossing during the recce if roads need to be crossed. Walk in single file facing oncoming traffic on roads.	Leaders to advise single file walking on roads with traffic.
Steep, slippery or muddy sections	Participants: risk of slipping, tripping.	Check for muddy/slippery sections on the recce and adapt the route if necessary. Advise participants of risk of inclines, mud etc and advise them to wear suitable footwear.	Information re length of walk, inclines and need for robust footwear and/or Wellingtons to be given in the description of the walk
Overhanging branches, exposed roots	Participants – risk of injury through contact or tripping.	Check route on recce.	Advise of any specific hazards during the briefing at the beginning of the walk.

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Livestock	Participants – risk of injury.	Check with farm where livestock are likely to be. Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together. Be prepared to divert around livestock if necessary. Follow the Countryside Code (England & Wales) and Access Code (Scotland). Leave gates and property as you find them.	Whenever possible leaders should try and ascertain whether or not there are livestock in advance of walk. If this is not possible follow guidance in second paragraph under “how to control risk”.
Cliffs or sheer drops	Participants: risk of falls.	Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary. Follow any warning signs.	Information to be conveyed in description of walk.
Insects, ticks etc	Participants: risk of bites, stings, Lyme disease.	Use insect repellents. Cover bare skin. Avoid long vegetation where possible. Check for ticks regularly and remove promptly.	Reminder to be given at beginning of walk.

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Adders	Participants: risk of bite.	Know likely sites/habitat where adders might be found. if bitten: stay calm; dial 999 and follow advice; keep part of body bitten as still as possible; lie in recovery position if possible; take paracetamol for pain.	Reminder to be given at the beginning of a walk.
Water bodies	Participants	Take note of any water body during the recce and avoid.	Reminder to be given at the beginning of a walk.
Health conditions or concerns	Participants	Participants are advised to notify leaders so that in the event of an emergency they will be able to take appropriate action.	