

Holyford Woods

Local Nature Reserve



Holyford Woods is a beautiful woodland, nestled in a picturesque valley near Seaton. In the spring the woodland floor is carpeted in bluebells and the air is filled with the aroma of wild garlic. A goyle, or sunken stream runs through the heart of the woodland, feeding the Stafford Brook which runs into the Axe estuary at the nearby Colyford Common Local Nature Reserve.



Bluebells

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.



How to get there:

Driving along the A3052 towards Seaton and Colyford, turn right signed Seaton at the Seaton Heights filling station. Drive a little way and park on the right-hand side of the road. The entrance to the reserve is a short walk back to the main road, along a footpath opposite the Seaton turn-off. Walk down the edge of the field and the entrance of the wood is directly in front of you.

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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Photo: P Glendell

*An East Devon District Council
LNR for you to enjoy*

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Plants such as wood anemone grow in the woodland here, indicating that Holyford woods has probably been a wooded area for several hundred years, perhaps even longer. Look out for the delicate white flowers of the anemone between March and April.



Wild garlic abounds in the woodland and fills the air with a delicious smell in the early spring. A member of the same family as the garlic you can buy in the shops, the young leaves of wild garlic are excellent to eat.

Another edible plant that occurs in Holyford is wood sorrel. The leaves look like three hearts, joined at the pointed end, they have an intensely lemon zesty flavour. Wood sorrel flowers between April and May, with a small white flower with purple veins and a yellow centre.

Of course you can't think about a woodland without thinking about trees. Oak, ash and hazel abound at Holyford, with a very diverse range of ages from very young saplings to ancient trees and standing deadwood. When an oak tree gets to a very old age naturally it will have a large amount of deadwood contained within the living tree. This provides excellent crevices and features for a range of animals. Birds nest in holes in trees, bats roost in handy crevices and tangled roots can provide nest sites for weasels and wood mice.

Dormice are present in the wood. Look out for the signs they leave behind when eating hazelnuts. When a grey squirrel eats a nut it uses its powerful front teeth to crack the nut in half, whereas the dormouse makes a neat circular hole in the nut.

Access:

Please keep to the footpaths around the Local Nature Reserve. Dogs are welcome, but please keep them under close control. The paths can be very wet in places and stout footwear is advisable at all times of the year.

