

Holkham National Nature Reserve

With pinewoods, salt and freshwater marshes, sand dunes overlooking a vast and spectacular coastline this is an excellent place to relax, watch the tide ebb and flow, the migrating birds or a wonderful Norfolk sunset, there is something for everyone.



Distance

Fingerpost at entrance to beach indicates Beach viewing point 250 yards and the Hide walk half a mile (each way). Both walks are 'there and back' but there is scope for additional walks using the Norfolk Coast Path and Holkham park for circular walks, walk and ride or part of a long-distance.

Location

On A149 two miles west of Wells-next-the-Sea, entrance opposite The Victoria Inn and entrance to Holkham Hall (follow brown tourist signs)
Grid ref: TF891447. Postcode: NR23 1AB



Above: section from Holkham National Nature Reserve site map information board.

Planning your visit

Managed by Holkham Estate www.holkham.co.uk
Tel: 01328 710227

Main entrance: A149 coast road in Holkham via Lady Anne's Drive (opp The Victoria Inn)

OPEN: Beach open all year

PARKING: Lady Anne's Drive 6am-9pm April-Sept; 6am-6pm Oct-March. 2015 charges: Cars: Up to 1 hour £2; 2 hours £3; 4 hours £5; Over 4 hours £6.50 allows same day parking at the Hall; 7 days £20. Long vehicles £12.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Coasthopper bus service stop at Holkham village (half-mile to beach)

WALKING: on Norfolk Coast Path National Trail

CYCLING: on Holkham loop from the Norfolk Coast Cycleway

DOGS: Allowed

Accessibility

WHEELCHAIR/PUSHCHAIR: YES

GATES OR STYLES: NO

REFRESHMENTS: NO

DISABLED TOILETS: NO SEATS: YES

The site caters well for people with mobility difficulties with paths, boardwalks and viewing platforms on good well maintained surface with easy slopes. The viewing platforms in particular offering spectacular views across the expansive sands to Holkham Bay.

Designated a National Nature Reserve, the bay with its sandy expansive beach has appeared in many films and photos. The reserve is one of the largest and most diverse along the coastline stretching from Burnham Norton in the west to Blakeney in the east.

Away from the beach, Holkham village offers an interesting array of shops and the Victoria Inn. Holkham Hall and parkland is very popular and provides another unique experience. Full details including accessibility is on the Holkham.co.uk website. A wide variety of events also take place throughout the year.

Reviews: [last checked 8/10/2015]

From Lady Anne's Drive walk towards the beach entrance where there is a signboard. If arriving on the Coasthopper about half a mile level surface or by car there is car parking along the entire length, a disabled allocation closest to the beach.

Short walk - 1: A gentle incline then continue straight ahead following the fingerpost '**Beach viewpoint 250 yards with 1 rest stop**'. This leads onto a boardwalk, with some sand cover but in general good condition. The right hand side is mostly level with or cut into the adjoining ground but the first section to the left with no barrier or handrail drops away by varying amounts to the sand below. The handrail section starts with information signs on the features around you as the boardwalk continues along the tree line with some undulation and raised areas. A bench is set well back here allowing space for a wheelchair and providing a sheltered rest should the wind be coming direct off the north sea. The handrails continue all the way to the large viewing platform with its bench and ample wheelchair room to enjoy the superb panoramic views.

Advisory note: Wind blown sand can sometimes fill in the gaps along the wooden boardwalk and make the surface slightly slippy.

* The access to the expansive open sand below is via a boarded slope with a drop at the end so will be down to individual discretion and ability. Surface is sand which where compacted is firm enough for larger wide wheeled kids buggy's, but not likely to support heavier mobility scooters. By following the Norfolk Coast Path signs to the left it is possible to complete a circular walk along to the second viewing platform behind the George Washington viewing hide.

Contact: Holkham Estate for latest information and advice on 01328 710227. www.holkham.co.uk



Hide walk - 2:

From the beach entrance follow the fingerpost sign '**Easy access trail to hide ½ mile, 4 rest stops**' which bears to the left down a slight gradient along an unsurfaced access track. This wide path has a level surface with minimal potholes and is bounded by a mix of open low scrub and mainly deciduous tree cover to the south. With the pinewoods to the north protecting users from northerly winds this is a sheltered and relaxing walk. There is an abundance of birds, insects and flora to see, so rest up at one of the four benches along the track. Made from heavy duty recycled plastic, each bench is on a concrete platform with ample wheelchair room.

At the end of this track there are two boardwalks, one directly to the beach viewing platform over the dunes and the other in the shape of a zig-zag for disabled access up to the a George Washington viewing hide. Looking south out across a pond and grazing marshes towards Holkham Park the hide has a single door, bench seating and multiple viewing hatches. The the area directly in front of the entrance is clear for wheelchair use and the viewing hatch set accordingly lower.

From the back of the hide a connecting boardwalk links into the beach viewpoint boardwalk with far ranging views across the dunes and coast. Access from the viewing platform onto the sands is down steps and then via narrow gullies between the dunes with their abrasive marram grass and soft sand so unsuitable for easy access.

* Off the boardwalk through the woods there is a small ramp into the woods and onto the sand. At the last inspection 8/10/2016 there was a drop of between 4 and 8 inches from the ramp to the soft sand below. Surface is sand which where compacted is firm enough for larger wide wheeled kids buggy's, but not likely to support heavier mobility scooters.

Holkham beach: Walk 1. A picture guide for the short walk to viewing platform



(above) Start of walks; (below) fingerpost



Interpretation panel with site leaflet dispenser



Start of boardwalk to viewing platform (walk 1)



Section where adjoining sand has worn away



Barrier through wooded section



Access to viewing platform walk 1



Beach viewing platform

Holkham Beach: Walk 2. To the George Washington hide and beach viewing platform



Junction of boardwalk to hide and beach

1: Boardwalk up to Washington Hide.

2: Alternative option is to use beach viewing platform boardwalk



Holkham: Boardwalk linking Washington Hide through to the beach viewing platform



A: Access from the viewing area down onto the dunes and beach is a only suitable on foot as it involves steps, soft sand and the sharp marram grass.

B: The path from the Washington Hide to the Jordan Hide is over a variable surface.

C: There is access down into the pinewoods from the viewing platform boardwalk via a ramp