

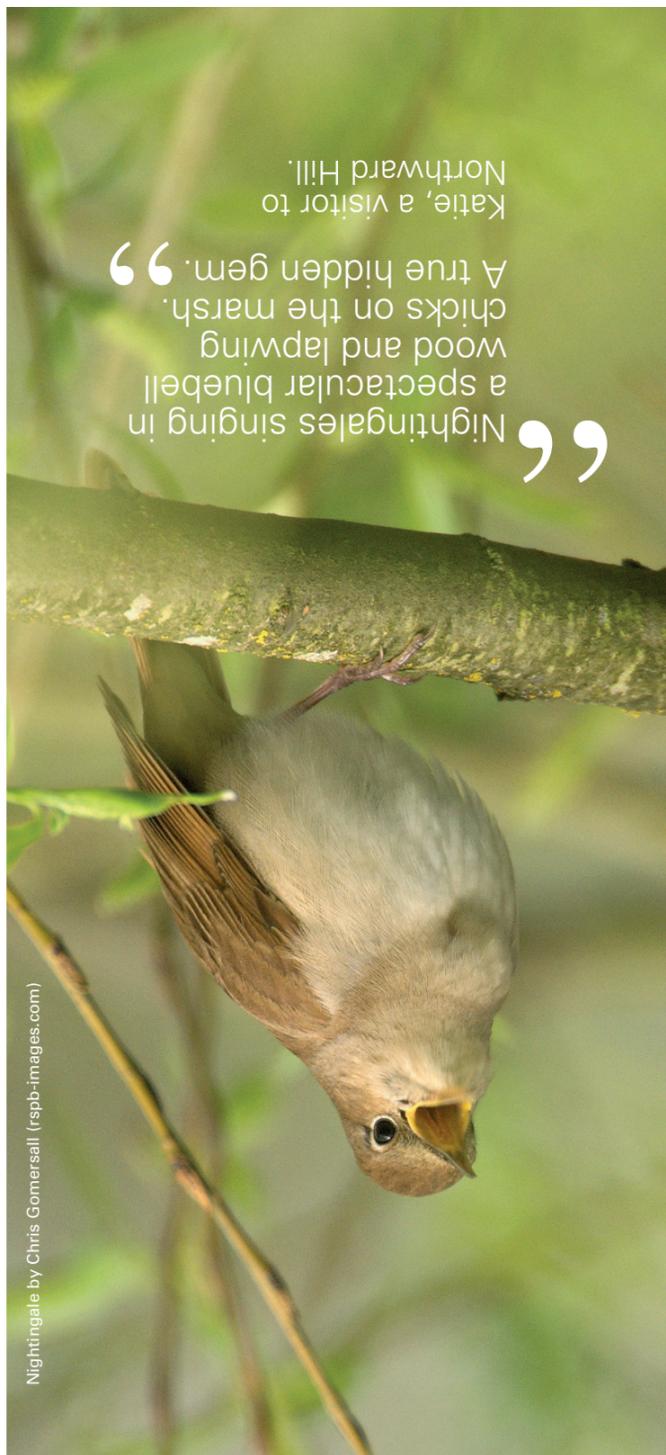
On a ridge above the Thames Marshes, Northward Hill nature reserve offers spectacular views and spectacular wildlife in peaceful countryside.

Vander miles of trails, and explore marshes and hayfields, bustling with birds, a beautiful wood awash with bluebells in spring, and even a cherry orchard. Northward Hill is a working farm, with grazing cows and sheep.

In summer, there's plenty of wildlife to enjoy in the day and evening, including butterflies and dragonflies, bats and moths. In winter, the reserve is busy with flocks of winter ducks, and the drama of a huge roost of rooks and jackdaws at dusk. You might spot some exciting birds of prey, and perhaps a short-eared owl.

Whenever you come to visit, you will find a glorious landscape, touched by people but shaped by – and teeming with – wildlife.

# Welcome



“Nightingales singing in a spectacular bluebell wood and lapwing chicks on the marsh. A true hidden gem.”

Katie, a visitor to Northward Hill.

Nightingale by Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)

## Take part with us

### Events

RSPB Northward Hill is a quiet enjoyment site, with occasional events. See our webpages for details of any organised events.

### Get involved

Our wardening team at Northward Hill also cover nearby sites, including Cliffe Pools. We are supported by some great volunteers and interns. If you'd like to join our work parties, or find out more about volunteering opportunities, we'd love to hear from you. Please send us an email or give us a call.

## In this area...

### Other local attractions:

**RSPB Cliffe Pools, Salt Ln, Rochester** ME3 7SX. Tel 01634 222480 (3.5 miles) [rspb.org.uk/cliffepools](http://rspb.org.uk/cliffepools)

Large pools attract wetland birds throughout the year and nightingales in summer.

Cliffe Pools and Northward Hill both lie on the Saxon Shore Way, a 163 mile coastal path taking historic ports and castles. It runs from Gravesend in Kent to Hastings in East Sussex.

**RSPB Blean Woods, Rough Common Rd, Rough Common, Canterbury CT2 9DD.** Tel: 01227 464898 (40 miles) [rspb.org.uk/bleanwoods](http://rspb.org.uk/bleanwoods)

A working woodland reserve with a 20 mile network of footpaths and bridleways to help visitors get close to nature.

## Top things to do

### Spring/summer

A busy time for nature and a great time for you to explore.

- 1 Walk amongst the bluebells in the wood.
- 2 Watch the action at one of the UK's largest heronries – don't miss the egrets!
- 3 Look for tiny avocet chicks on the reservoir islands.
- 4 Catch a glimpse of hobbies and marsh harriers hunting.
- 5 Listen for cuckoos calling, especially at the Sweeney viewpoint.

### Autumn/winter

Five things not to miss during the chillier months.

- 1 Listen for mixed flocks of long-tailed tits, blue and great tits in the woodland.
- 2 Scan the wildfowl on marshland floods. How many species can you see?
- 3 Watch redwings and fieldfares as they search for food in the orchard.
- 4 Enjoy the spectacle of thousands of rooks and jackdaws gathering to roost.
- 5 With luck, you might spot a short-eared owl, hunting over the marshes in daylight.

## How to get here

**Nearest town:** Hoo, Kent

**By car:** A228 towards Grain, turn onto Christmas Lane to High Halstow, left onto Cooling Road.

**By bike:** Sustrans cycle route.

**Nearest railway station:** Higham, 6 miles away.

**Nearest bus stop:** High Halstow, 1.5 miles. No pavement.

### Opening times

Open at all times; the main car park is open dawn to dusk, except for Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

### Admission charges

Entry is free, but donations to help us continue our work here are welcome.

### RSPB Northward Hill

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E-mail: [northkentmarshes@rspb.org.uk](mailto:northkentmarshes@rspb.org.uk)

[rspb.org.uk/northwardhill](http://rspb.org.uk/northwardhill)

We'd love to know about your visit and the wildlife you saw. Please share your experiences with us on social media.

@RSPB\_SouthEast

@RSPBSoutheast

#RSPBNorthwardHill

The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654. Images: Bluebells by Ruby Merriman, Nightingale by Chris Gomersall (all [rspb-images.com](http://rspb-images.com)); Lapwing (istockphoto.com) 860-1444-17-18

 giving nature a home

# Northward Hill

## nature reserve

## Escape into peaceful countryside

Wander through bluebells.

Marvel at spectacular wildlife.

Take in the fantastic views.

# RSPB Northward Hill

## Finding your way around

Almost all of the trails are easily navigable, and they are mostly level except for some steep gradients in the woodlands, which can get very muddy in winter. Fully accessible toilets with baby changing facilities are located at the car park near the picnic tables.

Dogs are allowed on the Saxon Shore Way, but are not permitted elsewhere on the reserve. Please remember this is a working farm, with occasional vehicles on some trails and livestock in the fields and orchard.

On a clear day, from the Sweeney viewpoint looking north towards the Thames, you can glimpse Holehaven Creek on the Essex banks, with Canvey Island to the right and London Gateway Port to the left.

### Yellow trail

**This three-quarter of a mile circular trail, sometimes referred to as the Short Trail, offers you great views across the grazing marshes. Allow 30 minutes.**

Take a while to watch the wildlife action from Ernie Hemsley viewpoint; in late summer and early autumn, this is a good place to see dragonflies buzzing past you. At the Sweeney viewpoint and Gordon's hide, look for weasels and stoats hunting in the grass, or spot green woodpeckers and linnets.

### Heronry trail

**At about two miles each way, this linear trail takes you past the Sweeney viewpoint and Gordon's hide to a viewpoint at the edge of the wood. Allow 60 minutes to the Heronry viewpoint and return.**

Watch the waterfowl on the marshes, and in spring, hear the clamour from the heronry of dozens of pairs of herons and egrets. This trail is not accessible to wheelchairs, and there is a stile to cross.

### Woodland trail

**This 2.3 mile circular trail takes you up into the woodland. Allow 1.5 hours.**

On this slightly more challenging walk you can enjoy the bluebells in spring. In summer, you might see a rare white-letter hairstreak butterfly. In autumn, look for redwings and fieldfares in the orchards below. Catch your breath at the woodland viewpoint. This trail is inaccessible to wheelchairs. There are benches at irregular intervals.

