

# Wrabness

## Explorer Guide

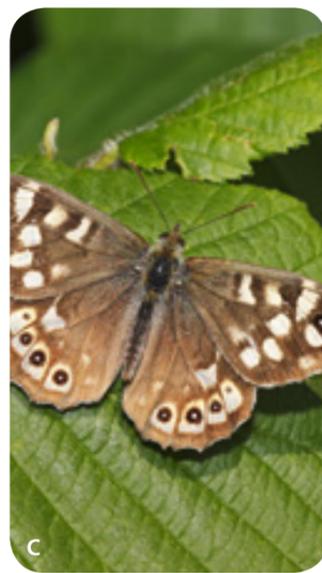
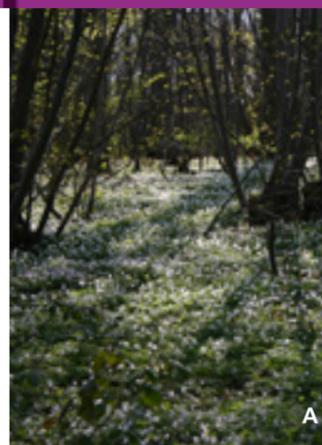


Delight in two easy walks. Start from Stour Wood or Wrabness Railway Station. Both walks feature superb views of the River Stour.



### Highlights of Wrabness

- 1 Stour Wood** is part of the RSPB's Stour Estuary Reserve and is an ancient woodland. The sweet chestnut trees in the wood have been 'coppiced' for many centuries. Coppicing is a way of managing woodland by cutting trees and shrubs almost to ground level to encourage many small stems. This practice is maintained to manage the woodland today. Other trees in the wood include oak, small-leaved lime and the rare wild service tree. On the woodland floor are many interesting plants, including wood spurge, yellow archangel and bluebells. In early April, the woodland is carpeted with the white flowers of the wood anemone. Stour Wood is home to around 40 species of breeding birds, including treecreeper and wren. In spring and early summer you may even hear the song of the nightingale. In the autumn, redwing and fieldfare visit to feed on berries. Insects thrive here, including butterflies like the white admiral and the speckled wood.



Images: Front cover – Lane to the foreshore. A. Wood Anemones – carpet the woodland floor each spring. B. Wood Anemone Flower. C. Speckled Wood Butterfly (Justus du Cuveland FLPA). D. All Saints Church and Bell Cage – a 300 year old temporary structure! E. Ringed Plover (Imagebroker/FLPA). F. Copperas Bay – once the source of an important mineral.

Welcome to Wrabness, a quiet village on the Essex shore of the River Stour. Wrabness is in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) wider project area. The parish includes miles of attractive countryside stretching down to the estuary and Stour Wood, an ancient woodland with many fine trees.

- 2 All Saints Church, Wrabness** dates from the Norman period, but has been much altered since. In the late 17th century, the bell tower collapsed, so a 'temporary' bell cage was built in the churchyard. The bell and bell cage remain to this day. The church is partly built of septaria, a local stone found in clay. The septaria used to build the church may have come from the shore at Wrabness.



- 3 The River Stour** abounds with wildlife, particularly birds. The salt marshes and mudflats are home to avocet, ringed plover and redshank. Migrating birds, including Brent geese, grey plover and greenshank can be seen in the Spring, late Summer and Autumn as they stop to rest and feed. Huge flocks of birds arrive for the winter and can be seen on the mudflats. The river was once an important trade route, carrying goods to and from the port of Mistley. Small ships and pleasure craft still ply the river today.

- 4 Copperas Bay** is so named because it was once dredged for copperas, or iron sulphate. Iron sulphate was a vital ingredient in cloth production as it was used to fix dye. The copperas was dredged from the mud and used in the manufacture of dyes, inks and sulphuric acid. It was used to produce indigo ink.



### The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

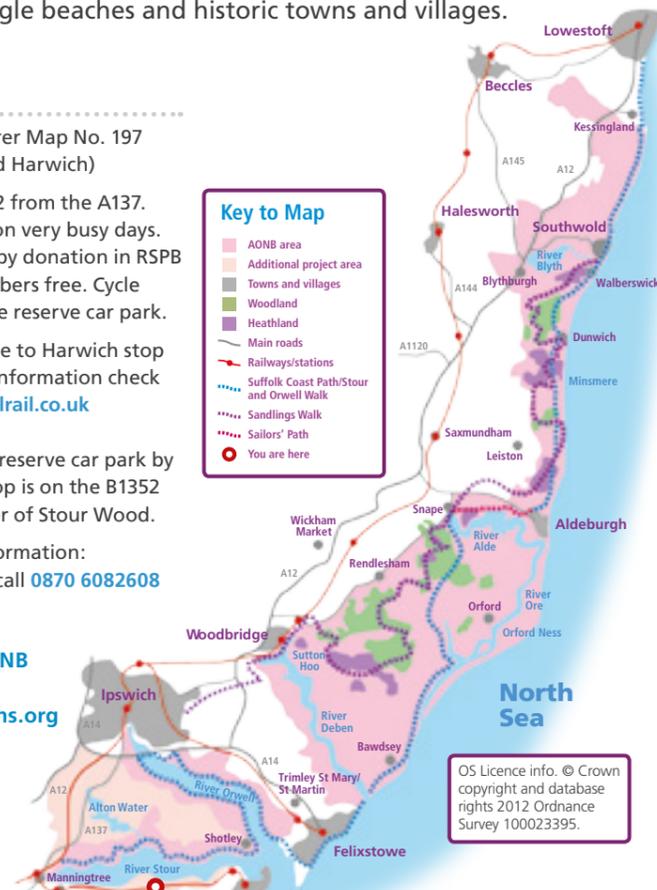
The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour Estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and then north to Kessingland. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

### Visiting Wrabness

- Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No. 197 (Ipswich, Felixstowe and Harwich)
- Car: access via the B1352 from the A137. Parking can be limited on very busy days. Parking at Stour Wood by donation in RSPB honesty box/RSPB members free. Cycle racks are available in the reserve car park.
- Trains from Manningtree to Harwich stop at Wrabness. For Train information check online at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or call **08457 484950**. Buses stop at the RSPB reserve car park by request. Nearest bus stop is on the B1352 at the south-west corner of Stour Wood. For Public transport information: [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) or call **0870 6082608**

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB  
01394 445225  
[www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is a partner of the BALANCE project, part-financed by the European Union through the Interreg IV A 2 Seas Cross-border Programme.



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## 'Woodland and River Ramble'

Distance  
4.2 miles (6.7 km)

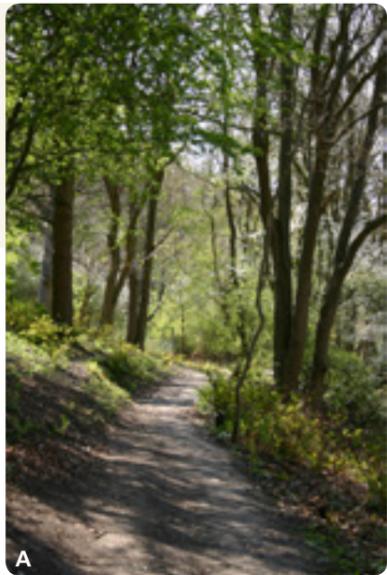
These routes are open to the public for quiet recreation. Enjoy your visit.

**Time:** 2 hours 30 mins

**Terrain:** Paths and tracks, which can be muddy after rain. Some sections on minor roads. Take care crossing railway. The path along the river wall is exposed. No cycling permitted on RSPB land.

Leave Stour Wood car park via the path to left of wooden shelter. Follow a wide path through wood and bear right when path divides. At the T junction, turn left. At cross paths, go straight and then follow track to right. Pass cottage and turn left. Follow path through woodland and between fields. At T junction with track, turn right and cross bridge over railway.

Turn left on the far side of bridge and follow path parallel with railway. At T junction with lane, turn left. Follow lane back over railway and then to right. Walk straight ahead along Station Road. At junction with Church Road, turn right, crossing the railway again. Follow lane past entrance to Shore Farm and around a gentle bend to the left. Take the next footpath on your right down Stone Lane. You may wish to take a detour at this point to visit Wrabness Church.



Follow lane down hill to river, passing caravan park on left. At bottom of hill, turn right just before wooden buildings. At this point you can continue along the path or walk down to the beach.



Follow path parallel with river, along river wall, through woodland and beside fields. Ignore all right turns. Go through tall kissing gate and along edge of garden. Continue along edge of fields, keeping river to left.

After some distance, follow path into woodland and take the left hand fork, following signs for Essex Way.

Other shorter walks can be enjoyed in Stour Wood by following the trails.

Keep on path until railway bridge. Cross bridge and turn sharp right along permissive path. Follow path parallel with railway back into woodland. Ignore first left, but take second left, indicated by white arrow. Follow white arrows back to car park.



## 'Stour Wood Stroll'

Distance  
2.2 miles (3.6 km)

**Time:** 1 hour

**Terrain:** Paths and tracks can be muddy after rain. Because of grazing animals and ground nesting birds, please keep dogs on leads. The route follows Public Rights of Way and permissive routes.

Leave Stour Wood car park via the path to left of wooden shelter. Follow a wide path through wood and bear right when path divides. At the T-junction, turn left. At cross paths, go straight and then follow track to right. Pass cottage and turn left. Follow path through woodland and between fields. At T-junction with track, turn right and cross bridge over railway.

Turn right and follow the path along edge of a field to river. When you reach a path running parallel to the river, turn right. Go through tall kissing gate and along edge of garden. Continue along edge of fields, keeping river to left.

After some distance, follow path into woodland and take the left hand fork, following signs for Essex Way. Keep on path until railway bridge. Cross bridge and turn sharp right along permissive path. Follow path parallel with railway back into woodland. Ignore first left, but take second left, indicated by white arrow. Follow white arrows back to car park.



Images: A. Woodland Path – beautiful throughout the year. B. Bluebell – one of our finest spring wildflowers. C. Country Track – draws you towards the river. D. Boats on Wrabness Beach. E. Views from the Essex Way. F. Permissive Path – the RSPB has opened up routes for you to enjoy.

