

Black Devon Forth Nature Counts Survey Walk – Updated Route



Photo D Palmar

Black Devon is home to an Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) project led by the RSPB to restore the wetlands, creating fantastic habitat for wildlife and improving access for local people of all ages who wish to get closer to the wildlife of the Inner Forth. The project is enhancing the freshwater and grassland habitats to make them attractive to wildfowl, waders and invertebrates.

<http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/conserving-restoring/black-devon-wetlands>

As you walk around the route and the RSPB nature reserve keep your eye open for the many species of bird which make their homes here. The RSPB's interest is not just about the birds however, this is also a great site for mammals, invertebrates and plants.

Much of the site is a former landfill and the skyline is dominated by the huge electricity pylons overhead. Whilst this may not fit most people's ideal of a wildlife haven it is in fact a great example of how nature and people can co-exist.

The Survey Walk

The route around Black Devon is approximately 1.9km long and should take you about an hour to 90 minutes to walk. Remember to walk slowly, noting down everything you'd like to record as you go.

From Riverside View Alloa, FK10, enter the site via the gate at NS890918 and begin your walk.

Section 1 follows the grassy path south, heading through the rough grassland. Watch for birds underfoot as you walk, snipe love to hide in the long grass, waiting until the last possible moment before flying up and making their escape. (*NS890917 at centre*)

Although there is little change in habitat, **Section 2** begins as you pass through the next gate on the path, just before the electricity pylons. Changing sections will help to provide more accurate grid references for any records. (*NS891916 at centre*)

The start of **Section 3** (*NS891914*) continues to follow the main path leading down to the RSPB reserve, however there should be some change in the shrubs lining either side of the path. Keep a look out for various invertebrates amongst the vegetation, such as hoverflies, bumblebees and snails.

Section 4 begins as you reach the gate leading down to the main viewing structure and pools on the reserve. Look out for damselflies and amphibians in the small pools lining each side of the boardwalk. This section doubles back on itself, so once you have reached the viewing



structure (listening for reed warbler and water rail), turn around and head back to the gate at the end of the boardwalk. (NS892913 at centre)

To begin **Section 5** (NS892914), take the gate immediately to your right once you have exited the first gate. This then leads through the newly managed area of the reserve, passing the raised wildflower meadow on your left and heading north east over the boardwalk between two pools.

Section 6 starts when you reach a gate that marks the end of the official RSPB boundary and joins again with the public footpath leading towards Clackmannan tower.

Butterflies, birds and some small mammals can be seen along the path here. (NS894915 at centre)

Turning to the left, **Section 7** (NS894916) now follows the Black Devon river upstream through the gate in the deer fence. Mammal tracks can be seen following the fence line, and keep an eye out for patches of wildflowers to your left.

Section 8 begins as the path forks at the gate toward the woodland. Keep to the left of the fence, following the path through tall vegetation and broadleaved trees on each side. (NS893918 at centre)

As the path straightens out, this marks the start of **Section 9** (NS891919), taking you through a dazzling display of thistles in the summer. Keep watch for a variety of bumblebees and ringlet butterflies. The walk ends when you arrive at the gate from which the walk began.

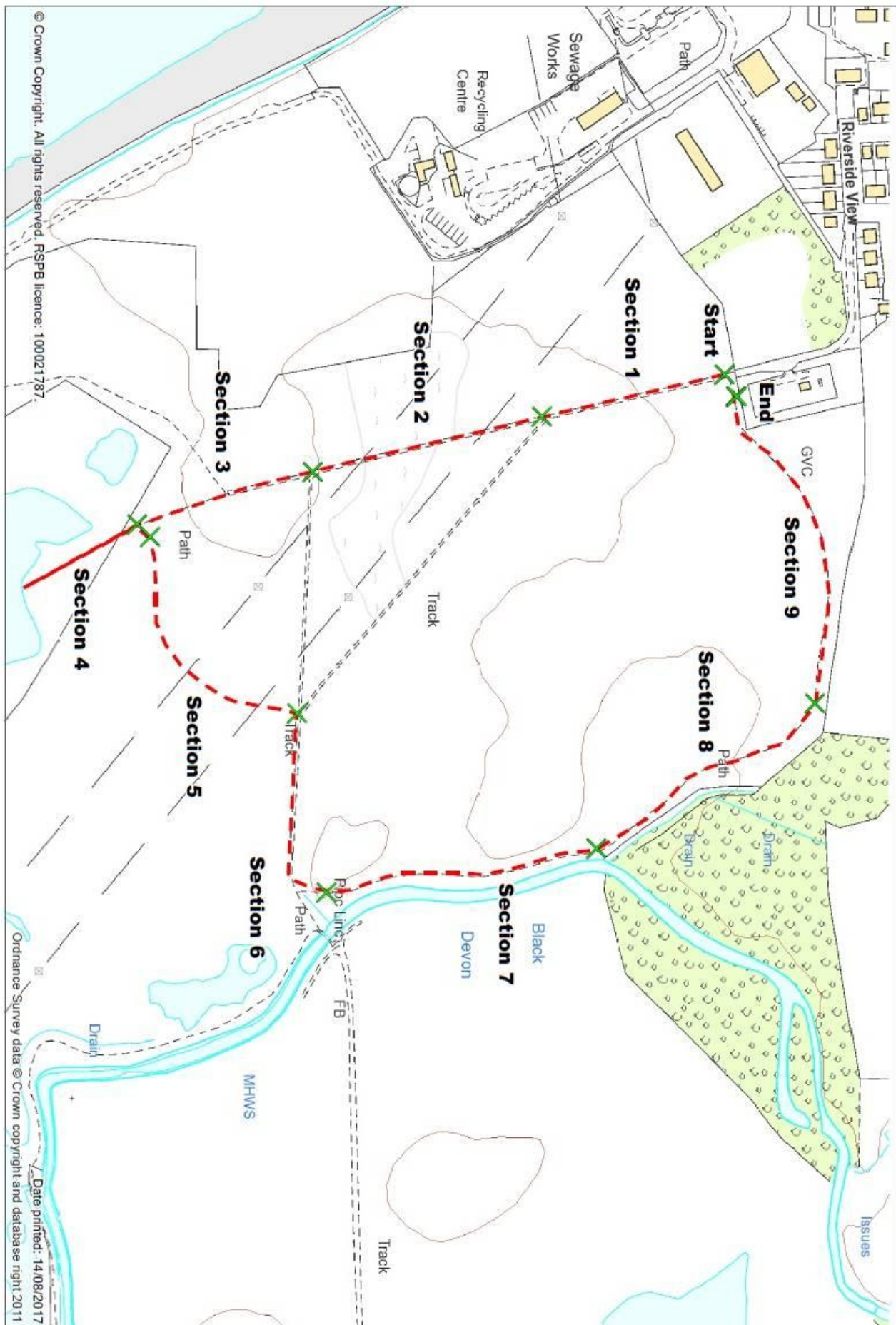
Thank you for taking the time to walk the Inner Forth Nature Counts survey walk around Black Devon. Don't forget to log on to iRecord and upload your records and play your part in making nature count in the Inner Forth: <http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-inner-forth-records>

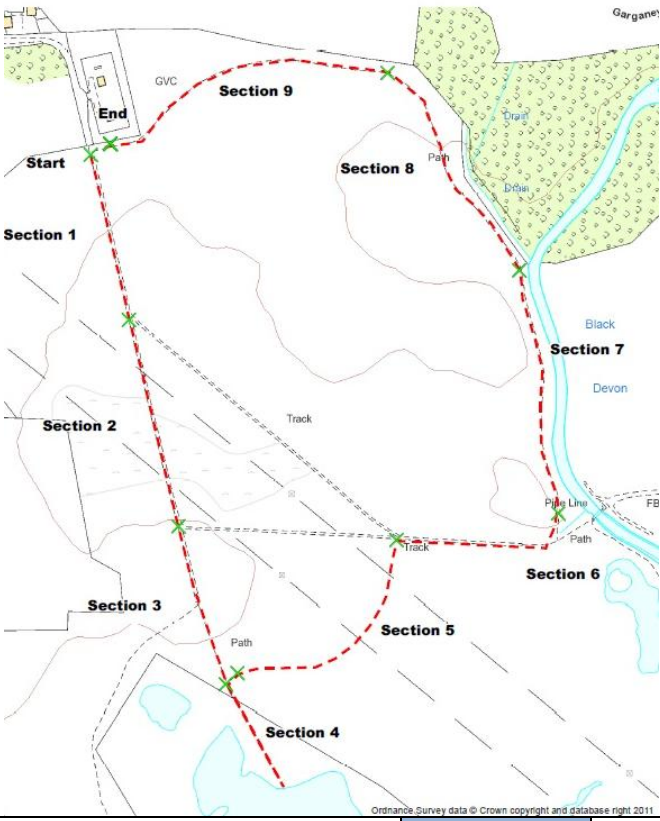
Thank you for making Forth Nature Count!

This survey walk is part of IFLI's Forth Nature Counts project which aims to increase the number of verified biological records for the Inner Forth area. We are doing this by encouraging volunteers and local people to become citizen scientists through surveying sites then adding their wildlife records to our iRecord page; running a series of free wildlife identification workshops covering a wide range of species; and promoting wildlife recording through IFLI's social media pages, website and e-newsletter. Find out more about this project on our website:

<http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/recording-celebrating/forth-nature-counts>

If you'd like more information you can contact Kate Fuller, IFLI Community Engagement Officer on info@innerforthlandscape.co.uk or 01324 831 568



Transect Name		Black Devon 2		
Insert a map or even a simple drawing of your transect location and route				
		Location name	RSPB Black Devon Wetlands	OS 6 fig grid ref (at centre of transect)
County		Clackmannanshire	Transect Length (m)	NS892916
Section	6 Figure Grid ref (at centre of section)	Length (m)	Habitat Description (e.g. farmland, urban etc.)	
1	NS890917	160	Rough grassland	
2	NS891916	195	Rough grassland	
3	NS891914	160	Rough grassland, shrubs	
4	NS892913	215	Rough grassland, shrubs, ponds/pools	
5	NS892914	220	Rough grassland, shrubs, ponds/pools	
6	NS894915	170	Rough grassland, shrubs, broadleaved trees	
7	NS894916	230	Rough grassland, shrubs, broadleaved trees, river	
8	NS893918	220	Rough grassland, shrubs, broadleaved trees,	
9	NS891919	290	Rough grassland, shrubs, broadleaved trees,	

A quick look at some species you might spot at Black Devon



Ringlet butterfly (*Aphantopus hyperantus*)

The ringlet butterfly can be seen bobbing along the tops of tall vegetation, often in dull conditions when many other butterflies would not be seen. The number of characteristic spots on the under wing can vary, although it's large size and distinctive flight pattern set it aside from other common species.



Brown lipped snail (*Cepaea nemoralis*)

Found clinging to nettle and thistle stems, this snail can reach around 20 – 24mm wide, although colouration and pattern can change between individuals. The brown band around the shell opening (or lip) defines it from its slightly smaller cousin, the white lipped snail.



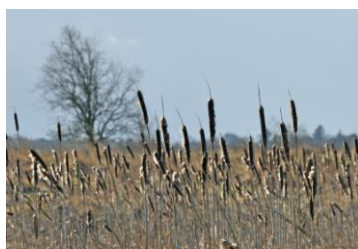
Grasshopper warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

More commonly heard than seen, the grasshopper warbler is a summer visitor, nesting in the reed beds from mid April through to September. Its shrill, ringing song could be mistaken for that of a grasshopper or similar, hence its name. If spotted, this small warbler will move like a mouse, creeping through the foliage.



Red-tailed Bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*)

A common bumblebee, seen from Spring right through to Autumn. Females are very large with a black body, red tail and no yellow stripes. Males are only seen later in the year and have two yellow bands on the thorax and one on the abdomen.



Reedmace (*Typha latifolia*)

A very distinctive wetlands plant, it has brown, sausage shaped seedheads and flat grey-green leaves which grow in a clump from the base. Historical confusion attributed to Victorian Sunday Schools means it is often (wrongly!) called the bulrush



Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

A deciduous tree commonly found in hedgerows which can grow up to 15m tall. Slender twigs covered in thorns, lobed green leaves which turn yellow in Autumn. Scented white/pink five petalled flowers which develop into deep red fruits.

Name			
Location		Date	

Section	Species Name	Comments