

Linnean Society Field Trip 2019

FSC Slapton Ley



Date	Level	Sole occupancy	Shared room	Non-resident
Fri 16 Aug - Sun 18 Aug	Open to all	£280	£260	£190

About Slapton Ley

Slapton Ley is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and was declared a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 1993. The 214 hectare reserve supports a diverse range of habitats including coastal vegetated shingle, woodland, reedbed, open water and mixed farmland. The Ley itself is the largest natural freshwater lake in Southwest England.

The Field Studies Council at Slapton Ley manages the reserve as an "outdoor laboratory" for education and conservation for over 50 years. The Centre, established in 1959, is a base for educational courses and research, which integrate with reserve management.

Course Overview

This field course aims to provide a snapshot of the natural history of Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve and the surrounding South Devon coastline. Guided by experienced Tutors from the field centre, this course will explore a diverse array of habitats, spotting and identifying flora and fauna, introducing some biological survey techniques and learning about conservation management techniques.

Timetable

Friday evening

Following a welcome talk and dinner, we will take a walk through the National Nature Reserve to the Ley. This will be a great introduction to the diverse range of habitats on the reserve as we pass through wet meadow, woodland and reedbed on route to Ley itself, a 70 hectare expanse of water separated from the sea by the thin shingle ridge of Slapton Sands. As well hopefully spotting some

of the key species of flora and fauna that make this area so special, we will discuss the management strategies used to protect and promote them.

Saturday

A full day exploring the spectacular coastline around Prawle Point, Devon's southernmost tip. This headland offers a fantastic opportunity to see the rare Cirl Bunting, a charming relative of the yellowhammer, confined in the UK to the South Coast of Devon and Cornwall. We will explore the rich biodiversity of exposed and sheltered rocky shores, and hopefully spot some other marine wildlife. We will also get a fascinating glimpse into the past; the relict features of the coastline revealing how changing climate has helped shape the geomorphology of this area.

After dinner we will head out to observe some of the nocturnal wildlife of the reserve. Slapton Ley is a great place to see bats: there have been 14 species recorded on the reserve (there are 18 found in the UK), it has one of the highest population densities of soprano pipistrelles and it has the second largest maternity roost of lesser horseshoe bats in Devon. We will see how many species we can spot or at least detect!

Sunday

A morning further exploring the different habitats of the National Nature Reserve. We will head up to Slapton Wood, an area of Ancient Woodland, and consider how the variety of woodland habitats across the reserve that are managed in different ways and attract distinct wildlife. We will also visit the famous Slapton Sands, known by botanists for its diverse assemblage of coastal shingle vegetation. We will identify some of key plant species in this relatively rare habitat of high conservation importance.

About the Tutor

The course will be led by experienced tutors from Slapton Ley Field Centre - outdoor enthusiasts and biology specialists who have been teaching groups of all ages about the natural history of the area for many years.

What to Bring

- Lunch box and water bottle, thermos flask
- Strong footwear, ideally walking boots
- Waterproofs (can be hired from the centre) and warm clothes
- Binoculars not essential, but well worth bringing if you have some
- Notebook, pen, pencil

Start and Finish Times

Resident participants are requested to arrive for registration between 1:00pm and 4:00pm on arrival day, after this time self-directed arrival information will be posted on the front door. There will be an introductory welcome talk, typically at 5:30pm, followed by supper, normally at 6:30pm. The course will end at 4:00pm on Sunday. Breakfast is from 8am. On the final day please vacate your room by 9:00am; storage is provided for your luggage.

How to Book

Please book online via www.linnean.org/events or email events@linnean.org.