

Two Tree Island Nature Reserve (Essex Wildlife Trust)

Location: Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

Directions by public transport:

Leigh-on-Sea station (London, Tilbury and Southend line) is around twenty minutes walk from the reserve. Turn right out of the station and follow the path alongside Leigh Marsh (a wildlife haven in itself) until you reach a left turning over a bridge onto the reserve. Once on the reserve there are pathways in either direction leading to coastal walks.

Birds

A very good site for coastal species with large numbers of Brent Geese, Knot and Dunlin present during the winter months. Redshank, Oystercatcher, Black-tailed Godwit, Ringed Plover, Turnstone and Curlew can also be seen offshore.

There are two hides, one overlooking a large lagoon which presents an ideal viewpoint, often yielding excellent views of Grey Plover, Avocet, Greenshank, Snipe, Lapwing and Little Egret.



On and around the island itself a wide range of species can be seen including Stonechat, Reed Bunting, Linnet, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Green Woodpecker and Kingfisher. Species of duck include Teal, Wigeon, Shelduck and Shoveler.

Other wildlife

A summer walk on the reserve can bring a pleasing range of butterflies including Marbled White and Essex Skipper. The island also provides a habitat for Common Lizard, all three species of carder bee and a wide range of saltmarsh plants including Sea Purslane, Sea Aster and Common Sea-Lavender.



Pros and cons

While a nature reserve, the site is also used by dogwalkers. Although most are responsible, inevitably some disruption to wildlife ensues. There is also an aircraft field used to fly remote control aeroplanes which leads to background noise within part of the island.

Outweighing the negatives the size of the island (640 acres) means there are always quiet areas to be found. A site unlikely to disappoint any nature lover with much to be discovered and enjoyed at close quarters.