

Taking a walk in the countryside is great for your health and happiness. To keep you, your dog, livestock and wildlife healthy too, ensure your dog is regularly wormed, treated for fleas and ticks and please clean up after your dog. If you are out in the wilds, it may be appropriate to use a stick to flick the poo off the path but in villages, parks and fields it is usually best to bag it. If there is no dog bin nearby, please take the bag home with you. Most of all, enjoy your walk. Exmoor National Park offers some of the most stunning landscapes and opportunities for exploration for you and your dog.

### Further information

For more information about how to get the best out of your time on Exmoor, please visit one of our National Park Centres, Local Information Points or the National Park website: [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

# Dog Walkers Welcome

## Top tips for a cracking day out



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Everyone is welcome to enjoy the delights of Exmoor National Park, 267 square miles (693 square kilometres) of moorland, woodland, coastal cliffs, hidden valleys and a farmed landscape with a history stretching back thousands of years. And what better way than to explore and discover with your faithful, four legged friend? As with any activity, there are a few simple things that you can do that will make everyone's experience a good one and keep you coming back time after time.

### Do I need to keep my dog on a lead?

Generally, your dog should be under close control at all times and there are specific areas and times of the year that they need to be kept on a lead. There are around 620 miles (1000 kilometres) of public rights of way (e.g. footpaths and bridleways) on Exmoor for you and your dog to enjoy. On



public rights of way there is no legal requirement to keep your dog on a lead but, unless you are very confident about your dog's obedience, we strongly recommend that you do. There are all sorts of scents and smells that

may prove too tempting to resist and result in your dog disappearing into the distance. You will inevitably meet other people, dogs, cyclists and horse riders at some point. There is potential for confrontation if your dog is out of control. There are over 18,000 hectares of open access land for you to explore. Although you have a right to explore open access land on foot, your dog must be kept on a lead of less than two metres during the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st July) and at all times near livestock.

### There are good reasons for keeping your dog under control:

#### Wildlife

Wildlife is easily disturbed. During the ground-nesting bird season (1st March to 31st July), disturbance can lead to eggs not hatching or young chicks being taken by predators whilst unguarded by their parents. By keeping your dog on a lead and using defined tracks and paths between these dates you can help protect and conserve Exmoor's vulnerable moorland birds.

#### Livestock

If you come across cows or sheep it is likely that they will react to you and your dog.

- ❁ **Sheep** - on the whole, sheep and lambs will run away but can be pursued by the dog. Although great fun for your dog, it is distressing for the sheep and, in the worst case, a landowner can shoot your pet if it is felt that the dog is 'worrying livestock'.
- ❁ **Cattle** - cows are naturally inquisitive and will come towards you. If there are calves present, the cows may become aggressive and try to protect their young from the 'threat' of your dog. If this happens, drop the lead and get to a place of safety - a dog is likely to be able to get clear of any danger on its own.
- ❁ **Ponies and horses** - can react to dogs in a variety of ways, and will sometimes approach you. If in doubt please drop the dog lead and get to a safe place.



Perro at Twitchen Farm

Bramble

Jet and Storm in West Wood

Alf in Burrigge Woods

Tom on Tarr Steps

Jasper

Ochre

Dog Walk: Dunkery

Ollie

Patch on Mill Hill