The Weatherman Walking maps are intended as a guide to help you walk the route. We recommend using an OS map of the area in conjunction with this guide. Routes and conditions may have changed since this guide was written. The BBC takes no responsibility for any accident or injury that may occur while following the route. Always wear appropriate clothing and footwear and check weather conditions before heading out.
Weatherman Walking

Start: Conwy RSPB Reserve
Starting ref: SH 797 773
Distance: Approx. 1.6 miles
Grade: Easy
Walk time: 2 hours

This short circular walk is one for the senses, as we set off to explore the sights and sounds of RSPB Conwy’s Nature Reserve. It’s an accessible walk for all abilities through a range of habitats from wetlands to estuary mudflats, and is a temporary home to migrating birds from all over the world.

Bring your binoculars and get set for a Welsh wildlife encounter!

Directions

Parking is free at the RSPB Reserve, but there is an entrance charge for non-RSPB members.

To begin your walk, head for the visitor centre and pick up a map on your way through. Continue through the café and follow the path straight ahead leading you onto the board walk. This takes you through the tall reed beds, and during April through to mid-June, you'll be treated to the ‘sounds of Africa’ from the many migrating birds passing through and making the reed beds their temporary home.

Conwy RSPB Reserve (SH 797 773)

The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) Reserve at Conwy is a purpose-built nature reserve created from the leftover mud dug out for the A55’s Conwy Tunnel in 1990.

Initially it was a mud-filled waste land, with talk of making it into a concrete car park; but thankfully the land was offered to the RSPB who began to develop the site for birds and wildlife by creating pools and reed beds, as well as building hides and walkways, a visitor centre and café.

Since then it’s been a great success with both human and feathered visitors, as well as becoming an important site for all kinds of wildlife.
Weatherman Walking

Conwy

Keep on the board walk and listen out for the song of the reed warblers and sedge warblers who make a temporary home in the reeds. They are very hard to spot, so it’s all about ‘bird listening’ not ‘bird watching’ here.

After leaving the board walk and reed beds, continue on the path until you reach a path on your right signposted to the Tal y Fan Hide and Carneddau Hides. From here you can spend some time scanning the pools for roosting and feeding ducks, geese and waders.

Now head back to the path and turn right following the main path to walk around the outside of the reserve. Cross a small wooden bridge and pass through a couple of gates. The path then joins onto the more open and grassy part of the reserve.

This section is where you can expect to come face to face with a handful of Carneddau Mountain Ponies brought in to graze and maintain the grassy habitat on this part of the reserve. But they are wild animals so do not approach them, and pass with caution.

Carneddau Ponies

The wild Carneddau ponies of Snowdonia are a unique breed that recent studies show, have existed in complete isolation for hundreds of years.

Left to roam the Carneddau mountain range, they are annually rounded up for routine health checks and head counts, before being released back to the wild again.

At the reserve they play an important role, by grazing the grassy pastures in order to attract and sustain several species of birds as well as wildflowers and insects.

Stick to the main path that circles the outer edge of the reserve, and walk along the water’s edge. But if you’re feeling adventurous there are smaller paths, and ‘hides’ dotted around the inland section for you to explore.

However if you stick to the main path you’ll soon arrive at the Conwy estuary with the extensive mud flats visible at low tide. Like all estuaries, it’s a vital source of food for many species of waders and wildfowl, and a key landmark for migrating birds.

Keep an eye out for the striking shelduck and little egret as well as redshank, curlew and oystercatchers.
The path now joins a public walkway that follows the estuary back towards Conwy, providing extensive views of the estuary and the imposing Carneddau mountains in the distance.

Ahead you’ll be treated to views of the impressive Conwy Castle dominating the town of Conwy in the distance.

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**Conwy Castle** (SH 785 773)

Conwy Castle is one of several castles built by Edward I during his conquest of Wales in the 13th century. It’s also one of the finest examples of medieval fortification in Britain. As well as the castle itself, the town was protected by a fortified wall which still exists to this day.

Although abandoned and neglected following the end of the English Civil War in 1665, the castle has survived remarkably well and is a major tourist attraction under the care and protection of CADW.

Edward I’s other equally impressive castles can be found at Harlech, Caernarfon and Beaumaris.

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Follow the path back along the side of the estuary before passing through a couple of gates on your right until you are back at the reserve car park.

From here you can return to your car or go and enjoy a nice cup of tea before stocking up on bird food and heading home to create your own bird reserve!