

Chew Valley Lake Recreation Trail

Approx distance 1 to 2.5 miles
Approx duration 30 to 60 minutes



A short walk on an all-weather path. You can stop at the country park (1.5 miles), or carry on round to Woodford Lodge (2.5 miles). You could even continue the circuit around the lake, though after Woodford Lodge, some of this will be on the road.

Please note dogs are welcome in this area but it is a country park and they should be kept on a lead at all times.

Leave site via the Caravan Park driveway and turn left down Ham Lane for approx 800 yards.

At the T junction turn left into the no-through road, after approximately 100 metres you will see the start of the trail in the wood on your right.

Take this path through the wood until you reach the wooden bridge*, cross the bridge and follow one of the well marked all-weather paths for roughly one mile to the first picnic area (toilets available here).

Pass through the picnic area and continue along the path leading to second picnic area, where there are more toilets and the [Salt and Malt](#) café. Note, Salt and Malt varies its opening hours with the season.

After refreshments you can return by retracing your steps or continue to follow the trail out of the country park, across the dam, then left and around to [Woodford Lodge](#). This offers further refreshment and meals. It's also where you get fishing permits.

From here, either return by retracing your steps, or if you're feeling adventurous (and want an extra 5.5 mile walk), you can walk along the driveway to the road, turn left and continue the circuit around

the lake, back to the village. Note that much of this will be along the road, often without a pavement.

Shortly after [The Blue Bowl](#) pub (another good place to stop for a refreshment), take the road on the left to West Harptree and at the T-junction, left again towards Bishop Sutton. The road here is especially narrow, so take extra care. Along the way, you'll also see the entrance for [New Manor Farm Shop & tearooms](#) (for more refreshment). Eventually you'll return through Bishop Sutton, turning left opposite The Red Lion into Ham Lane.

* Instead of walking across the bridge and along the recreation trail, you can bear left at the bridge and follow the **Bittern Trail**. This is a 1 mile circular walk, which includes a bird hide and lookout tower, open to all (without a permit), but it's not all surfaced and can be muddy in places. Dogs are not allowed on this trail.

About Chew Valley Lake

Over 270 species of birds have been recorded at Chew, and the lake is the third most important site in Britain for wintering wildfowl. It is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA).

From late July to February up to 4,000 ducks, of twelve different species, may be present, including internationally important numbers of shoveler and gadwall. Some 400 great-crested grebes gather on the lake in autumn.

Chew Valley Lake often attracts rare birds, including osprey, the scarcer grebes and an American wader or duck appears most years.