

Mendip Hills AONB



TRAIL TYPE

Walking

GRADE

Moderate

DISTANCE

8km (5 miles)

TIME

2-2½ hours

OS MAP

Explorer 141: Cheddar Gorge & Mendip Hills West

Landranger 172: Bristol & Bath

CONTACT

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FACILITIES

Pub and village shop at West Harptree.

Bristol Water's Woodford Lodge on the north-western shore has a restaurant, bar, toilets and tackle shop.

Bristol Water's Chew Valley Lake Visitor Centre and tea shop and a picnic area on the north side of the lake.

New Manor Farm Shop and Tea Room near Herriotts Bridge.

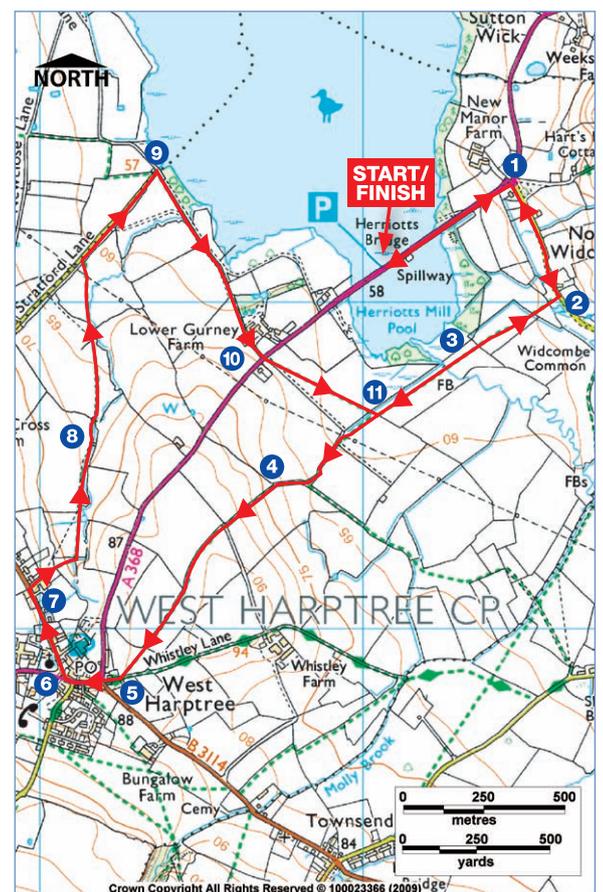
Chew Valley Lake

The largest lake in south-west England, Chew Valley Lake was created in the 1950s as a water supply reservoir for Bristol. In the half century since this 1200-acre lake was created, it has acquired such importance for its natural history that it has been classified as a Site of Special

Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The lake's 10 miles of shallow and reedy shoreline supports a huge population of waterfowl and other birds – more than 260 species (one of the longest lists of birds recorded at any inland site in the UK) have been recorded here. The southern end around Herriotts Bridge is a nature reserve where islands, lagoons, bays and channels have been created to provide safe areas for birds to roost, nest, feed and shelter. The rich waters of the lake teem with aquatic insects and water plants, which provide both protection and food. More than 30 species of mammals live around its shores, including numerous species of bat as well as the occasional otter. The level of the lake falls by several feet during most summers, to be replenished by winter rainfall. In spring, Chew becomes home to birds returning from hotter climates and those looking for somewhere to mate, nest and breed. The greatest variety of birdlife is recorded in the autumn, when many species stop over on their journey south.



Peter Roworthy/Natural England



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START/END

Herriotts Bridge,
OS Grid Ref ST 571 581

HOW TO GET THERE

BY BIKE

Herriotts Bridge is 1 mile off the Sustrans National Cycle Route 3 www.sustrans.org.uk

BY BUS

Service 672 Bristol to Chew Valley stops near point 1 on the walk route.

BY CAR

The free lay-by car parking is on the A368 between East Harptree and Bishop Sutton.

DIRECTIONS & INFORMATION

Waymarking: Look for the waymarkers wherever there are stiles, gates or changes of direction.

Starting from Herriotts Bridge car park, follow the footpath north-east alongside the A368 and turn right down the lane **(1)** towards North Widcombe.

Opposite the cottages, turn right **(2)** and follow the marked footpath along the back of Herriotts Mill Pool **(3)**.

This section of the footpath can get very boggy so be prepared to walk around any problem areas.

Continue along waymarked footpath **(4)** until you reach West Harptree. Turn right into Whistley Lane **(5)**.

Walk past the village shop, cross the A368 and bear right on to the B3114 **(6)**.

After 200m look for the public footpath sign **(7)** and turn right following waymarked path **(8)** to Stratford Lane.

Bear right and walk to the end of Stratford Lane **(9)**, turn right and follow marked footpath to Lower Gurney Farm **(10)**.

Cross A368, take footpath opposite and rejoin path behind Herriot's Pool **(11)**, turning left to return to car park.

Other things to look out for at or near Chew Valley Lake

- Drowned Roman villa and road – when the level is low in the late summer you may be able to see the roadway and humpback bridge from Heron's Green on the west shore.
- The lake is an internationally important trout fishing venue and

has a fleet of motor boats for anglers, who may be seen most days from March to October casting their flies for the rainbow and brown trout, of which around 40,000 are caught each season.



Adrian Boots