

Many of the higher parts of Exmoor are characterised by open and relatively wild places known as moorland. These areas, rich in archaeology, wildlife and inspiring views, are found in few other places in the world.



The high moorland of Exmoor has an atmosphere all of its own with big skies, stunning views and a sense of open space that has been inspiring people for thousands of years. Bronze Age people buried their leaders in distinctive mounds or "barrows" that can still be seen on the high ridges by the many walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers who enjoy the moorland today.

Some areas of moorland, known as mires, are like giant sponges, where peat deposits hold huge amounts of water and provide a special habitat for those species that enjoy these wet acidic places. These include fly-catching sundew plants, sphagnum mosses and bog asphodel.

On drier areas of moorland, including on the coast, grasses and heather thrive. To keep these habitats in good condition swaling (controlled burning of vegetation) is carried out periodically in late winter.

Moorlands are the best place to catch a glimpse of free roaming herds of Exmoor ponies and the famous wild red deer.

Some great places to explore Exmoor's moorland:

Dunkery, North Hill, Haddon Hill, Molland Moor, Brendon Common, Badgworthy, Winsford Hill. Hurlstone Point, Holdstone Down, Great Hangman, The Chains.

- 1 Meadow pipit
- 2 Merlin
- 3 Bronze age burial mound
- 4 Recently swaled heather
- 5 Short-eared owl
- 6 Grass moorland
- 7 Prehistoric standing stone
- 8 Red deer
- 9 Exmoor pony
- 10 Stonechat
- 11 Heath fritillary butterfly
- 12 Cuckoo
- 13 Cotton-grass
- 14 Reed bunting
- 15 Mountain bumblebee
- 16 Black darter



- 17 Snipe
- 18 Frog
- 19 Whirligig beetle
- 20 Sphagnum moss
- 21 Adder
- 22 Bog asphodel
- 23 Sundew
- 24 Fox moth caterpillar