The Western Yar estuary is such an important area for nature conservation and landscape that it is protected by six different designations under national and international law. The Western Yar Estuary Management Plan helps to co-ordinate activities and conserve the environment. It is implemented by a wide range of local people and organisations. By keeping the estuary healthy we can ensure that it continues to support our activities in the future.

Welcome to the Western Yar Estuary

The Western Yar is a fascinating estuary with a wealth of wildlife and heritage.

Estuaries are one of the most productive and fertile parts of the planet, just 1m² of mud has the calorie content of 15 Mars Bars! The Western Yar is no exception and its mudflats are crammed full of snails, shellfish, shrimps and marine worms. These provide lots of food for a variety of wading birds and waterfowl including dunlin, redshank, curlew, black-tailed godwit, dark-bellied brent goose, shelduck, wigeon, teal, oystercatcher and little egret.

The estuary’s birds are all adapted to their own diet so large numbers of different species can live together. They have specially evolved beaks to help them take advantage of the small creatures that live near the mud’s surface.

A redshank can peck and probe the mud up to 40,000 times a day!

Saltmarsh

AONB

The Western Yar estuary is within the Isle of Wight’s Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is an important area for landscape that is shaped by people and their activities. It covers nearly half of the Isle of Wight (shown right as the dark green area) and is protected like a National Park. Lots of work goes into conserving and enhancing the area for people and wildlife.

The Western Yar is shaped by people and their activities. It is an important area for landscape that is shaped by people and their activities. It covers nearly half of the Isle of Wight’s Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is an important area for landscape that is shaped by people and their activities. It covers nearly half of the Isle of Wight (shown right as the dark green area) and is protected like a National Park. Lots of work goes into conserving and enhancing the area for people and wildlife.

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The Western Yar Estuary Circular Walk is approximately 3.8 miles/6.1 km long and at a fairly brisk pace takes about 1.5 hours.

Sea level around the Isle of Wight’s coast is rising at around 6mm a year. This rate is thought to be accelerating.

The railway linked Yarmouth with other Island towns between 1889 and 1953.

For more information about Yarmouth’s heritage visit the Tourist Information Centre.

The saltmarsh is a very vulnerable habitat and private land, please keep to the paths.

Please remember to wear suitable footwear!

The Western Yar Estuary Circular Ramble

The Western Yar Estuary is home to many different creatures and is a key spot for wading birds and waterfowl, especially in the winter. Keep an eye out for little egret, oystercatcher, curlew, brent goose, black-tailed godwit, lapwing, wigeon and redshank.

Many birds travel thousands of miles and use the estuary as a ‘service station’. They rest on the banks at high tide and stock up with food at low tide. They use a huge amount of energy each time they are disturbed so please keep dogs under control and away from the saltmarsh.

The tree-lined bridleway is a great place to catch a glimpse of red squirrels!

The old railway line is shared by many people. Please respect the needs of others and if you are cycling please give way to pedestrians and horses.

Yarmouth has been a settlement since about 991. Its old name of Eremue came from Ermud - meaning ‘muddy estuary’!

Before the bridge was built, a small ferry carried passengers across the estuary. The first road bridge was built in 1863 and replaced with the current one in 1987.

Yarmouth pier was built in 1876 and is reputed to be the longest timber pier in the country still open to the public.

The railway was built to defend the town and was completed by 1547.

Yarmouth Castle was built in 1547.

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Please take care, particularly across muddy fields and close gates behind you.

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The saltmarsh is a very vulnerable habitat and private land, please keep to the paths.

Key to features

Yarmouth Sailing Club
Information board
Yarmouth Mill
The old railway station
Yarmouth Castle
Freshwater Causeway
All Saints Church
The Red Lion (PH)
Harbour office
Tourist Information
Bus station
Information Board
Information Board

Please remember to wear suitable footwear!