**Course Overview**

Spend a week on the spectacular Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve, immersing yourself in nature, making new friends and learning new skills. This is an amazing opportunity to work with the Nature Reserve and Education staff at Slapton Ley Field Centre, surveying the variety of wildlife found on the reserve and engaging in vital conservation work to help protect and enhance it.

This course is suitable for your Duke of Edinburgh Gold Residential (always check with your DofE Leader before booking); but is open to anyone looking to get first-hand experience of conservation in action.

**Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve**

Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve has been managed by the Field Studies Council as an "outdoor laboratory" for education and conservation for over 50 years, in partnership with the owners Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, Natural England and South Hams District Council. It is probable that more research has been carried out at Slapton than on any other nature reserve in Britain. The Ley is the largest natural freshwater lake in the South West and is separated from the sea by Slapton Sands, a barrier beach. The ley is surrounded by reed, fen and woodland habitats and the reserve is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
**About the Centre**

Opened in 1959 and situated on the Start Bay coast and surrounded by Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve, Slapton Ley Field Centre has been delivering high quality, inspirational curriculum related outdoor education. We provide courses for schools, universities, individuals and anyone with an interest in the natural world. The surrounding coastline, nearby coastal towns and Dartmoor National Park provide unrivalled opportunities for field courses.

**Provisional Programme**

Please note the following programme is designed to give an overview of the types of activity involved in the residential but may be subject to change, for example due to weather or tide times.

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td><strong>Lunch, Welcome and Introductions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Familiarise yourself with your surroundings and get to know your team.&lt;br&gt;- Explore the stunning Slapton Ley National Nature reserve&lt;br&gt;- Discuss personal aims and objectives for the week&lt;br&gt;- Team building games</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td><strong>Mammal trapping</strong>&lt;br&gt;An introduction to the use of Longworth traps and small mammal surveys.</td>
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| Day 2  | All day    | **Practical Conservation with the Nature Reserve Team**<br>A day with our nature reserve staff, carrying out practical conservation projects around the reserve. Help us improve the mosaic of habitats in the reserve or improve access for the general public.<br>Tasks may include:<br>- Removing non-native species in our woodlands<br>- Cutting scrub, to stop encroachment into grassland<br>- Constructing steps or stiles and clearing paths |
|        | Evening    | **Bat walk**<br>Slapton Ley is a great place to see bats: with 14 species recorded on the reserve (there are 18 found in the UK), a high population density of soprano pipistrelles and a large maternity roost of lesser horseshoe bats. You will hopefully get to see and hear (using specialist detectors) some of these species on a dusk bat walk. |

| Day 3  | Morning    | **Exploring Slapton Ley**<br>A morning based around the focal point of our nature reserve, Slapton Ley, the largest natural freshwater lake in the South West. You will have a unique opportunity to explore the lake by canoe and conduct freshwater invertebrate surveys – used as indicators of water quality. |
|        | Afternoon  | **Ancient Woodland**<br>A rare opportunity to enter ancient Slapton Woods, one of our restricted access sanctuary areas. What makes this area so special? You’ll look for tracks and signs of wildlife, including making your own small mammal footprint traps. |
|        | Evening    | Use our microscopes to take a closer look at some of the invertebrates from the ley. You’ll also set a moth trap up to see what species we can collect overnight. |
**Course Tutors**

Your Slapton Tutors will all be experienced natural history enthusiasts who have taught Biology for a number of years and have extensive experience of working with groups in the outdoors. You’ll also work with members of our reserve team, hugely experienced in practical conservation management.

**Start and Finish Times**

Participants are requested to arrive for registration by 12:00 on Day 1. A train station pick-up is offered at 11.00 from Totnes train station. Lunch will be provided on arrival. Supper is usually at 18:30. Breakfast will be from 08:00 in the morning. The course will end at approximately 16.00 on the final day. Please vacate your room by 09:00 on day of departure. Storage is provided for your luggage. A train station departure will leave from the centre at 16.15. Please allow 45 minutes for the station transfer.
Course Fee

Includes:
- Expert guidance by fully trained FSC staff
- Rigorous health and safety procedures including 24-hour emergency cover
- Full board and accommodation including a cooked breakfast, picnic lunch, home-made cakes and an evening meal
- All activities during the course

How to Book

You can check availability and make a provisional booking by telephoning the Centre on 01548 580466 or by completing the online form on the FSC website:


What to Bring

- Boots with good tread and ankle support
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers *
- Wellies *
- Personal medication
- Warm hat and gloves
- Wash kit and towel
- Warm clothing, plenty of layers and changes of clothes
- Small day rucksack
- Head torch (or other torch)
- Water bottle and lunchbox
- Sun hat and sun cream

* These items can be hired from the field centre.

Directions

We are easily accessible via road or rail.

By car we are 20 miles from the A38 Devon Expressway, via the A384 to Totnes then the A381 towards Kingsbridge. It is 13 miles from Totnes.

By train: Totnes Station is on the South West main line. It is under 3 hours direct from both London Paddington and Birmingham New Street. Pick-up and drop offs to Totnes station are available (see above).