

# Route Info:

To walk this route you must be competent with map and compass. Avoid walking if weather looks inclement.

## Start:

Combestone Tor car park, (Grid ref SX670718)

## Distance and timings:

The shorter route (6km) will take a minimum of three hours, depending on how much time you spend exploring the moorland bogs. The longer route (7km) will take between 3 and 4 hours.

## Terrain and description of paths:

Ground conditions include grassy slopes and rough, wet, boggy terrain and a reasonable level of fitness is required. Good route-finding skills are also needed.

## Essential equipment:

Waterproofs, warm clothing, sturdy boots, compass, OS 1:25000 map, OS Explorer OL28. Boots with gaiters are recommended during or after wet weather.

## Dogs:

Please help us protect wildlife and livestock by keeping dogs on short leads during the lambing and bird breeding season (1st March – 31st July)

The information in this leaflet was correct at the time of going to print. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the Magnificent Mires project and its partners cannot accept responsibility for any inaccurate, incomplete or out of date information, or any loss or damage that may result from reliance on it. Please be aware that you may find some walks challenging and that you should take care to exercise within your own limitations. Please remember that you walk all routes on Dartmoor at your own risk. You should always wear suitable clothing and footwear and carry a good map (Ordnance Survey or equivalent) and compass when walking on open moorland. This leaflet is not suitable as your only means of navigation.



Photo, Dartmoor National Park Authority

# Bog Walks:

## Combestone Tor to Aune Head

The head of the River Avon or Aune Head is an excellent example of an expansive valley mire. To reach Aune Head Mire from Combestone Tor, one of two routes can be taken. The easier (6km) route starts with a gentle climb up a grassy path and the more adventurous (7km) route follows some rougher, wetter ground alongside the O Brook. Both routes converge at the top of Holne Ridge where a small path known as Sandy Way takes you to look at the dramatic and remote Aune Head Mire. The return route re-traces a section of Sandy Way before passing some interesting old tin workings and takes in some spectacular Dartmoor scenery along its steady descent back to the start.

Enjoy your walk in the spectacular Dartmoor landscape but prepare to get your feet wet!

## Why are bogs important?

Dartmoor's bogs are of international importance, home to remarkable wildlife, they also provide vital services to our everyday lives.

There are two main types of bogs on Dartmoor, valley mires and blanket bogs. Many of Devon's major rivers start their journey on blanket bogs. Their ability to absorb and store water at the top of the hills helps to reduce the risk of flooding and drought.

The bogs also act as a carbon store to help combat climate change. As bog plants grow, they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The plants then die but are only partially decomposed as the waterlogged, acidic environment stops bacteria and fungi breaking down the dead plant matter. This partially decayed plant material forms the peat deposits which act as a carbon store.

This leaflet is part of a series of bog walks created by the Magnificent Mires project. To find out more visit:

[www.devonwildlifetrust.org/magnificent-mires](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/magnificent-mires)

Discover the Dartmoor story at  
[www.dartmoorstory.org](http://www.dartmoorstory.org)



# Magnificent Mires

Celebrating the internationally important blanket bogs of Dartmoor

## Combestone Tor to Aune Head

Challenging circular walk - 4.3 miles (7km)



*circular walking route*



# Combestone Tor to Aune Head Trail Route

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Photos by Matt Parkins unless otherwise stated

## Sundews

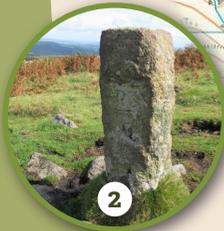
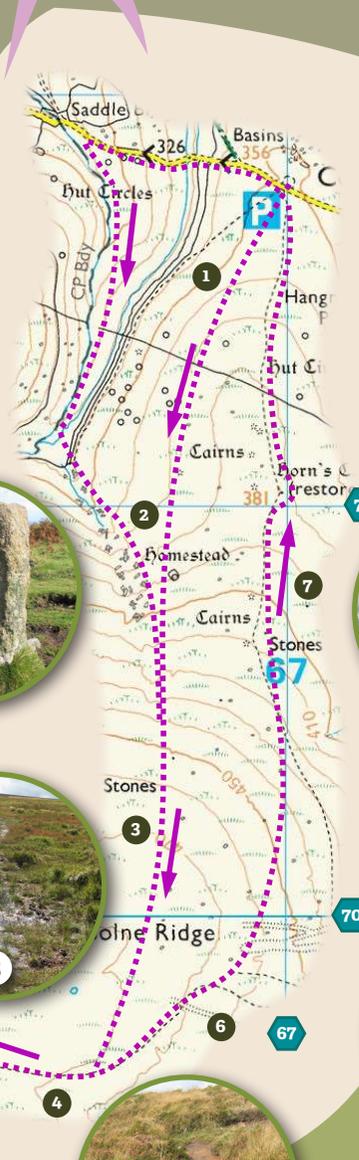
Sundews are insect eating plants. The peat in which they grow is nutrient poor so the sundews supplement their diet by luring unsuspecting insects with their glistening dew-covered tendrils. Once trapped in the plant's sticky dew, the insects then liquified and absorbed.

## Sphagnum moss

Twelve species of sphagnum moss can be found on Dartmoor, ranging from vivid greens to dark velvety reds. Look out for the variety known as *cuspidatum* or 'drowned kittern moss'. This is one of the more easily recognisable sphagnum species and looks like wet fur. You can spot it in and around pools.

## Common cotton grass

This familiar plant likes Dartmoor's boggy pools. Its roots can reach up to 60cm downwards into the waterlogged peat. Air canals in the stems of common cotton grass help it take oxygen from the air, down the plant and into its roots – a bit like a snorkel!



- 1 Start at the Combestone Tor car park. Grid ref SX670718. Cross the road and walk on a grassy path, gently rising through the bracken. After a few minutes, you will reach some ancient stone boundaries and the ruins of a square enclosure.
- 2 As the path continues to climb, you will see a dry water course on your right. A few small springs appear with patches of soft rush and sphagnum moss. You will find a boundary stone, marked with "RD H"
- 3 Continue your gradual climb up Holne Ridge. Patches of blanket bog begin to form one large area of bog and, on the high ground, you will see some remnants of old workings and spoil tips.
- 4 Follow the path through the blanket bog to the top of the Holne Tor ridge. Just as you begin to descend, turn right along Sandy Way where a narrow sandy path runs alongside a man-made gully.
- 5 Keep following Sandy Way until you arrive in a broad, shallow valley. Stop and take in the view the expansive mire where water collects at the head of the River Avon or Aune. On a clear day, you will be able to see the spoil heap at Red Lake Mire almost 3km to the south.
- 6 Once you have finished exploring Aune Head, re-trace your steps along Sandy Way. Keep going past the point where you joined the path and leave Sandy Way, curving left at the point where the old mineral workings are visible.
- 7 The views of Dartmoor's fields and forests, moors and tors are spectacular. Haytor can be seen in the distance and Venford reservoir is below you. Walk down the gentle descent, passing Horn's Cross and back to the car park at Combestone Tor.

## Map Key

Route:   
 Grid References: