




Threave Estate



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- 1 Countryside Centre
- 2 Woodland
- 3 Threave Castle
- 4 Wetlands and marshes
- 5 Railway line (disused)
- H Bird hides
- O Osprey viewing platform

-  Bird hide footpaths
-  Estate walk – 2½ miles / 4km
-  Footpath to Castle Douglas



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Threave Estate

Estate walk

Description

At Threave Estate a patchwork of fields and woodlands sweeps down through wetlands to the ruins of an island castle on the River Dee. This broad river valley is home to a wide range of animal and plant species and provides an important refuge for large flocks of wildfowl in the winter. Visitors are able to explore a low-level circular waymarked trail from the car park at the rear of Threave Garden. Additional pathways lead down to Threave Castle and to hides on the River Dee and marshes.

Grade

Easy

Terrain

Generally flat and unsurfaced

Distance

Estate walk 2½ miles / 4km

Time

Estate walk 1½-2 hours

OS Map

Landranger Sheet 84

Estate Facilities

Parking
Suitable for picnics
Shop
Restaurant



1 COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE

The centre provides an introduction to Threave Estate and its wildlife. An exhibition and audio-visual interpretation explains the flora and fauna of the area and what visitors can expect to see throughout the year.

2 WOODLAND AREAS

The patchwork of woodlands scattered throughout the estate hark back to a time when Threave functioned as a gaming estate. Recent management has favoured deciduous woodlands, with conifer plantations slowly being replaced with native broad-leaved trees such as oak, ash and birch. Roe deer can often be seen grazing in grassy glades or slipping quietly through the cover of young saplings.

Spring is a brilliant time to explore the woodlands. The first wildflowers provide a colourful carpet with lesser celandine, pink purslane and banks awash with bluebells. Resident bird species find their voices after the long winter months and are joined by a chorus of summer migrants. Listen out for the drumming of great spotted woodpeckers, the loud rattling trill of the nuthatch or the melancholy song of the willow warbler.

3 THREAVE CASTLE

The history of Threave Castle is one of ruthlessness, deceit, betrayal and finally dereliction. Constructed in the 14th century, it was one of many strongholds for the 'Black' Douglas clan. Prevented from governing their lands in person, they left administration of Threave Castle to a steward, giving rise to the name Stewartry by which the area is still known.

The castle was entrusted into the care of the state in 1913 and remains under the management of Historic Scotland. Visitors are able to take a trip across to the island throughout summer by ringing a bell on the jetty to summon a ferryman.

Nowadays the island in the middle of the River Dee provides a refuge for wildlife. Ravens and barn owls can be found nesting on the castle walls during the spring and summer.

The Trust is supported by 
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Great spotted woodpecker



Roe deer buck



Osprey

4 WETLANDS

Although well known for its wildfowl, the wetlands at Threave are a haven for many other species of birds. Mud-ringed pools and long tussocky grass have waders flocking to the area throughout the year. Snipe, redshank, curlew and oystercatcher all favour these habitats in which to feed and breed. Ospreys often stop during the summer to take advantage of the plentiful fish stocks in the River Dee, while hen harriers and peregrines swap their upland breeding grounds for the more hospitable low-lying marshes during winter. If you are really lucky you might glimpse an electric blue flash, as a kingfisher whizzes down the river.

5 DISUSED RAILWAY LINE

Part of estate walk follows the old Glasgow and South railway line. This dismantled railway provides a valuable wildlife corridor through surrounding farmland – look out for roe deer.

H BIRD HIDES

With its mixture of pasture, marshland and open stretches of water, Threave is a magnet for migratory geese and ducks during the winter months. It is one of a network of sites in Britain to be afforded special protection due to the large numbers of visiting wildfowl species which includes pink-footed geese, Greenland white-fronted geese and whooper swans. The hides at Lamb Island, Stepping Stones and Blackpark Marsh offer great viewing opportunities.

O OSPREY VIEWING PLATFORM

Ospreys have been seen regularly at Threave over the years, either passing through or prospecting for potential nest sites. More recently they have been spotted fishing in the Dee river system. In 2007 an osprey nesting platform was put up in an attempt to encourage the birds to nest, and in 2009 three chicks were successfully reared. Since then ospreys have been regular breeders at Threave and a special viewing platform has been erected next to the River Dee.