

# Summer

The busiest time of the year for people and wildlife sees the Trail and its bordering habitats alive with plants and animals.

Butterflies, moths, dragonflies and other insects are at their most abundant, providing food for birds and bats.

Saltmarsh plants such as sea lavender bring colour to the marshes of the estuary, while the woodlands south of Bideford are at their most lush providing welcome shade on hot days.



Common Blue



Dormouse



Fern

# Autumn

As the days begin to shorten, the Trail settles into a different rhythm. Berries including sloes, hawthorn and rosehips provide essential food for animals such as the elusive dormouse, which need to build up fat reserves to get through the coming winter.

With the cooler weather the woodlands at places such as Petrockstowe become a great place to discover the amazing variety of fungi that thrive there.

The first heavy rains to swell the river Torridge encourage migratory salmon to attempt to jump the weirs at Beam.



Fly Agaric

# A YEAR ON THE TRAIL



Beautiful Demoiselle



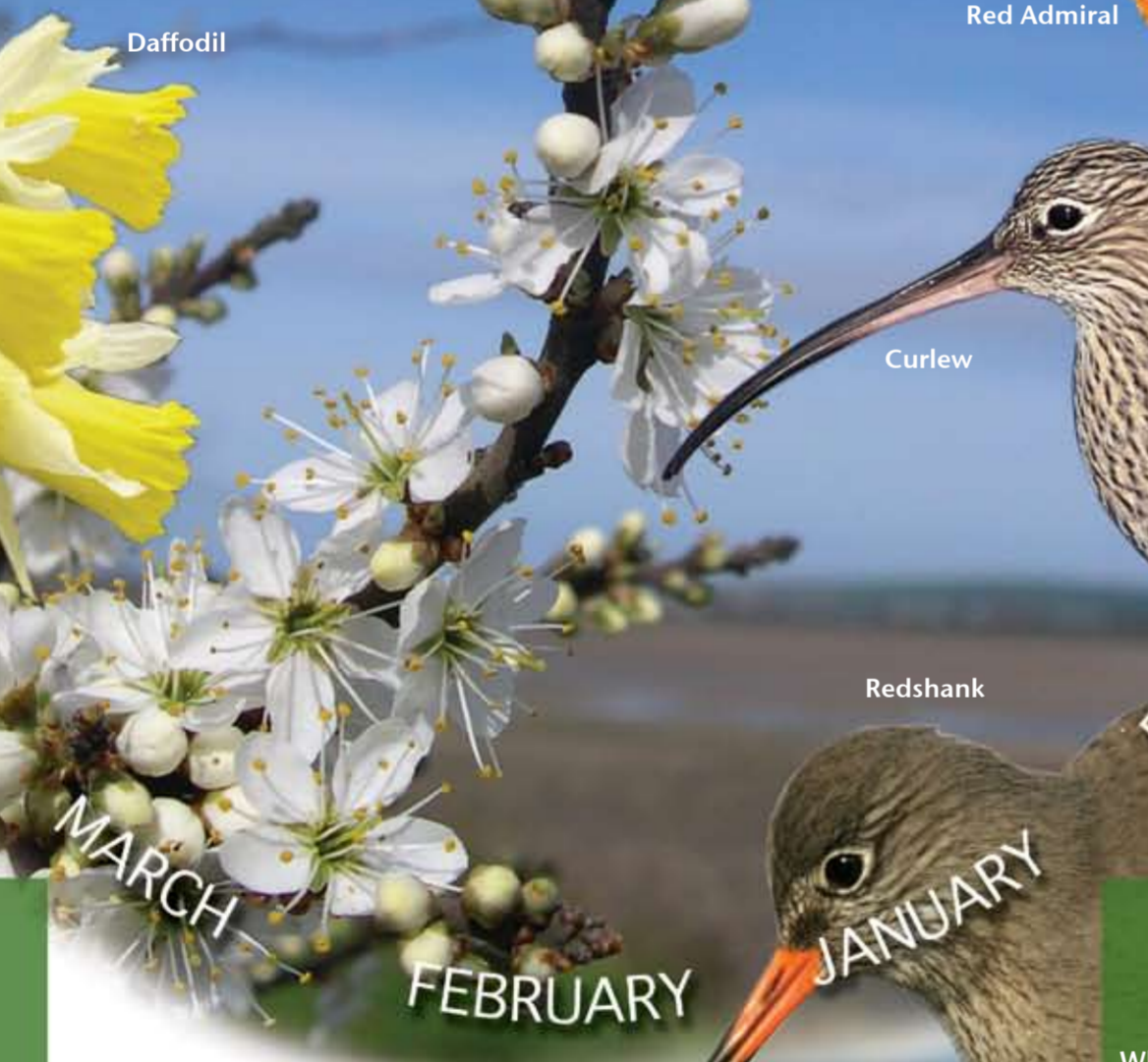
Reed Warbler



Daffodil



Otter



Curlew



Redshank

# Spring

In spring, the Trail bursts into life. Verges and woodland edges are transformed as plants such as primrose, wild daffodil and wood anemone flower, taking advantage of the light before the trees come into full leaf.

As the season progresses resident bird numbers are boosted by migrants as nesting gets underway.

Particularly good areas for spring flowers can be found at Fremington Cuttings and the coppice woodlands between Torrington and Watergate.



Bastard Balm



Violet

# Winter

When much of the Trail is relatively quiet, the Taw Torridge Estuary is at its busiest. A trip along the trail from Barnstaple to Braunton or to Fremington offers the chance to enjoy some of the thousands of waders and wildfowl that make it their winter home.

Birds including golden plover, curlew, redshank and maybe even spoonbill can be seen from the Trail as they feed on the rich food sources of snail and shrimp that can be found in the mud and sand at low tide.

**Do I need a mountain bike to ride on the Tarka Trail?**  
Most of the trail between Braunton & Torrington is well surfaced and suitable for all bikes. Beyond Torrington the surface is more rural and less suitable for bikes with road only specific tyres.

**Is there a speed limit?**  
No, but it is not a race track and accommodates a wide range of users so please follow the code of conduct.

**Is the Tarka Trail suitable for wheelchairs & pushchairs?**  
Yes, much of the trail is ideal for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

**Can I ride a motorbike on the Tarka Trail?**  
No, motorbikes are not allowed on any part of the Tarka Trail.

If you have any further questions please contact the Coast and Countryside Service Tel: 01237 423655

# OVER 30 MILES OF EASY, FAMILY-FRIENDLY CYCLING

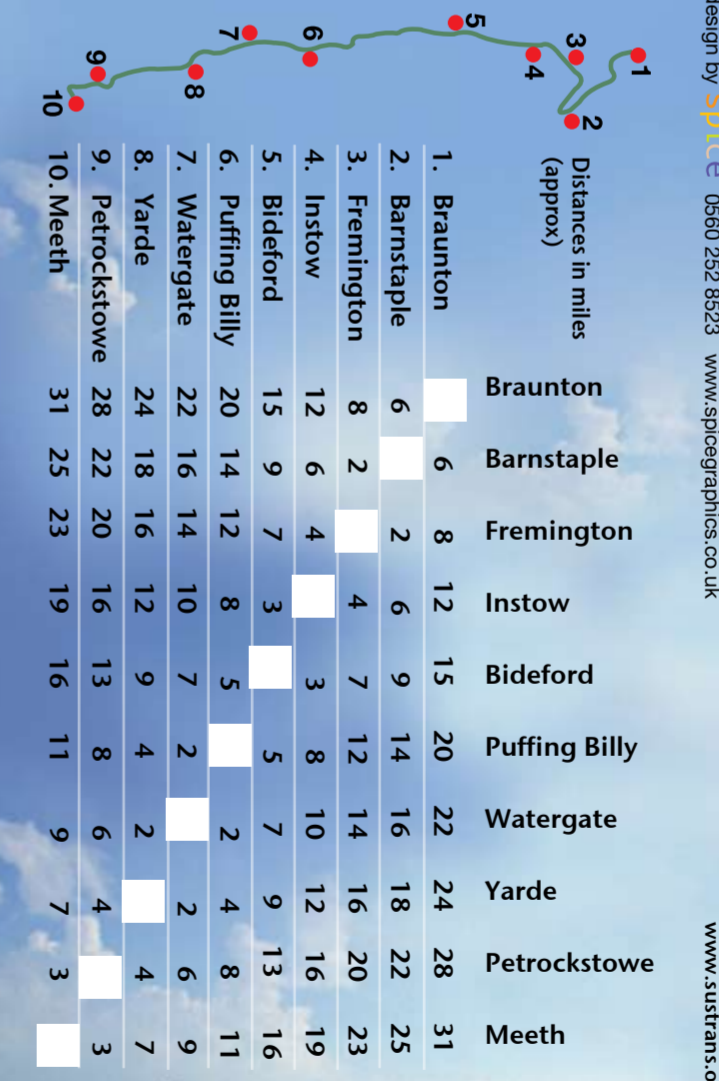


The route of the Tarka Trail follows the travels of Tarka the Otter in Henry Williamson's famous book, written in 1927

# HOME OF TARKA THE OTTER

The River Torridge remains today a stronghold for this iconic species and with a little luck and a lot of patience; you may catch a glimpse of one from the Trail at places like Beam Weir near Torrington.

Cover pic: Nick Turner/Sustrans



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## DISCOVER THE TARKA-TRAIL

Braunton to Meeth

### Over 30 miles of car-free trail

through beautiful North Devon

3D map packed with information



What to look for - all year round  
Places to visit • Tourist information

**Braunton to Barnstaple**  
From the Trail's start at Braunton, the Trail follows the northern edge of the Torridge Estuary. This provides an excellent opportunity for bird watching, with many places to stop and get the binoculars out. This section also has some excellent flower-rich verges. As you approach Barnstaple, the new bridge comes into view. Here you can either cross the new bridge, avoiding the town centre, or take some time to explore one of Devon's oldest towns.

**Barnstaple to Bideford**  
From Barnstaple, the Trail runs along the south side of the estuary with views across the saltmarsh, before arriving at Fremington Quay, where there is a Heritage Centre and Cafe. Fremington's past as a busy port. Another highlight of this section is the quiet resort of Instow with its associated facilities and great views across the estuary to Appledore and Bideford.

**Bideford to Torrington**  
From Bideford station with its train carriage cafe, the Trail follows the river Torridge upstream where saltmarsh and mudflat give way to woodland. Passing over bridges and through cuttings and tunnels the Trail crosses the river three times before reaching the old Torrington station, now the Puffing Billy pub. It was the river bank in the shadow of Beam Aqueduct that Henry Williamson describes as Tarka's birthplace in the book Tarka the Otter.

**Torrington to Meeth**  
This is the quietest and most tranquil section of the Trail. Here the route leaves the Torridge Valley and climbs gently through rich woodland until it reaches its highest point near Yarde. Continuing south there are tantalising glimpses of Dartmoor as the trail passes through some of Devon's finest and most unspoilt countryside before arriving at Meeth with only the occasional ivy covered platform as a reminder of the Trail's railway heritage.

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