

Exeter Canoe & Kayak Loops

Route Guide linking the River Exe and the Historic Canal



The River Exe & Canal

At the top of the Exe Estuary, the River Exe and Exeter Ship Canal link the estuary to Exeter Quayside.

This waterway is steeped in history and is a fantastic place to watch wildlife.

This guide is aimed at visitors using watercraft in the river and canal area, and outlines how to make the most of your visit whilst undertaking activities safely and with respect to other visitors and wildlife.

**Prevent litter:
Bin it or take it home**



Canoe & Kayak Loops

The Canoe & Kayak Loops are a series of self-guided circular canoeing / kayaking trails on the river and canal.

There are two loops which can be paddled from different access points and in different combinations.

Head down the river and back up the canal and join up loops for longer trips. It takes most people 5-6 hours to paddle each loop and the complete circuit from Exeter Quay to Turf Locks and back is 17km, which can take a full day.

To cross between the river and canal and avoid weirs and lock gates, it is necessary to carry craft overland. See map for routes and locations of access points (look out for way marker posts with a canoe symbol).



Plan A Safe Trip

Activities undertaken at the river and canal can be hazardous and are undertaken at your own risk. Follow the below code of conduct when visiting.

- Check conditions beforehand via weather reports, river levels and tide tables.
- Make your own assessment of dangers based on your knowledge, experience and the conditions.
- Let someone know your plans and expected return time.

- Carry a suitable means of communication for emergencies.
- Carry the relevant safety equipment, e.g. personal flotation device.
- Be visible: make sure lights are used at night.
- Only use recognised public access points and landing places, keeping access clear at all times.
- Watercraft should keep well away from anglers – pass quietly by the opposite bank.

Do not exceed the 10 knot speed limit within the river and 5 knots within the canal.



Watch Out For Wildlife

The whole of the Exe Estuary is an important site for wildlife, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). During winter, tens of thousands of birds depend on the Exe to rest and feed on their long migratory journeys from areas as far away as Siberia.



Kingfisher

To make sure the site can be enjoyed by future generations please:

- ✓ Give wildlife a wide berth and pass quietly – disturbance can affect their survival.
- ✓ Avoid areas where birds are feeding, resting or breeding, keep to the main river channel and avoid entering the reed beds of the Nature Reserve.
- ✓ Avoid lingering in river pools or below fish passes on weirs (where migratory fish rest).



Black-tailed Godwit

There are a number of Nature Reserves along the river and canal which provide feeding and resting areas for these protected species.

Although they are quiet, non-powered craft such as canoes, kayaks and paddleboards can cause disturbance. Enjoy watching the wildlife but keep at least 100m away.



Osprey



Otter



Want To Know More?

EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

Exe Estuary Officer 01392 382236

SAFETY

Coastguard Emergencies ONLY 999
or VHF Ch16
Police (non emergencies) 101

HARBOUR AUTHORITY (River & Canal Office)

Office hours 01392 265791
Out of hours emergency 0845 3511060

WILDLIFE

Natural England – Devon Office 0300 060 3900
SEDHRP Mitigation habitatmitigation@eastdevon.gov.uk
Officers

VISITOR INFORMATION

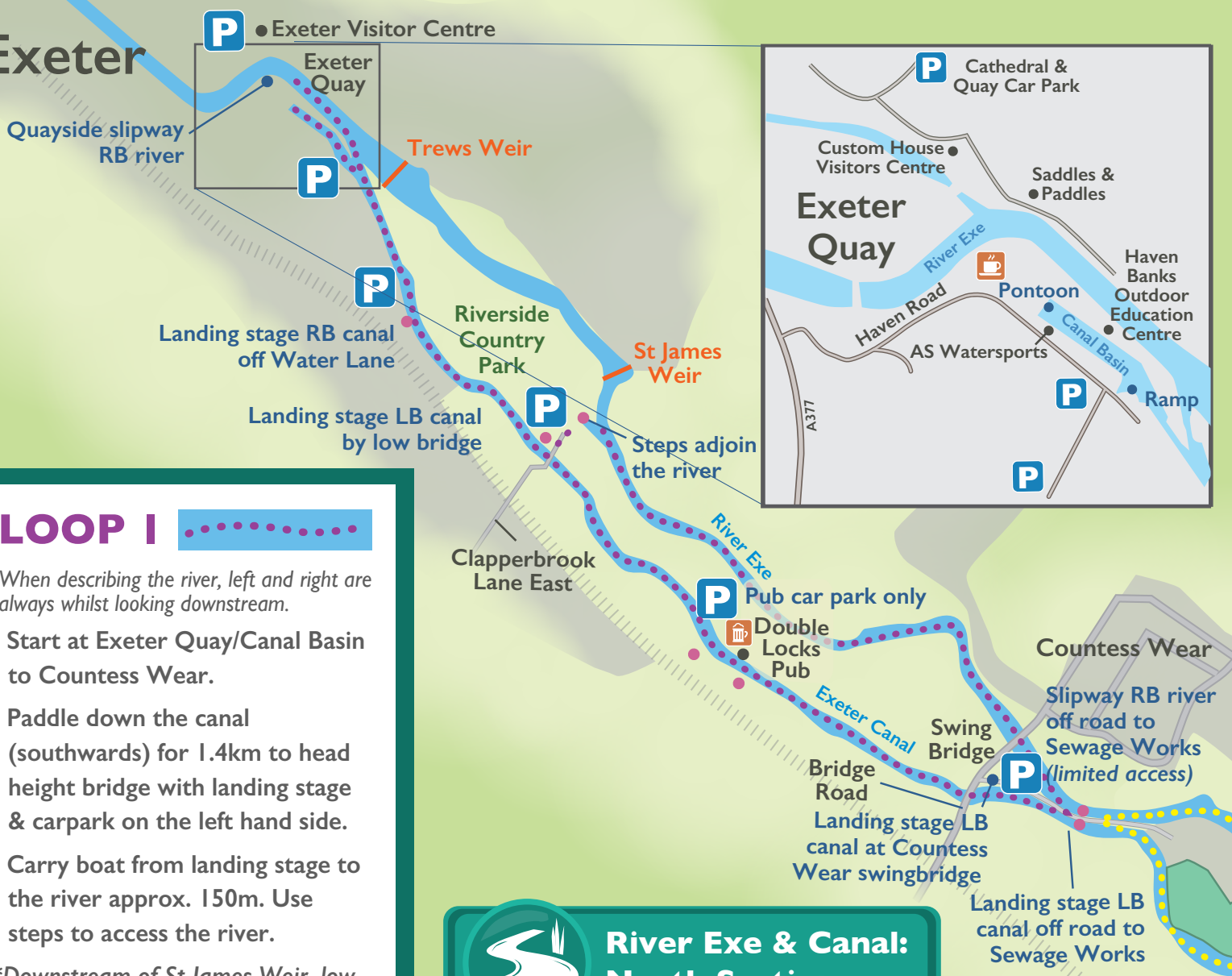
Custom House Visitor Centre 01392 271611

For further information, Exe leaflets and other codes of conduct, visit the Exe Estuary Management Partnership website at www.exe-estuary.org or contact the Exe Estuary Officer at exeestua@devon.gov.uk.

These codes have been produced by the Exe Estuary Management Partnership in collaboration with AS Watersports, Haven Banks Outdoor Education Centre, Saddles and Paddles and supported by local users and organisations.



Exeter



LOOP 1



When describing the river, left and right are always whilst looking downstream.

- Start at Exeter Quay/Canal Basin to Countess Wear.
- Paddle down the canal (southwards) for 1.4km to head height bridge with landing stage & carpark on the left hand side.
- Carry boat from landing stage to the river approx. 150m. Use steps to access the river.
- *Downstream of St James Weir, low tides can make the river shallow and some access points unusable for canoes/kayaks. It's safer to restrict tidal trips to fair conditions and 2 hours either side of high tide.

- Paddle downstream under footbridge continue on to Countess Wear road bridge, 150m after bridge there is a steep slipway on the river right.
- Cross over the sewage works road and use the landing stage to get back on the canal.
- Paddle back up the canal (northwards) to the starting point. A portage will be required at Double Locks, there are pontoons opposite the pub to access the canal either side of the lock gates.

River Exe & Canal: North Section



LOOP 2



When describing the river, left and right are always whilst looking downstream.

- Start at Countess Wear to Topsham Lock Cottage (shorter) or full distance to Turf Locks.
- Access the river via the slipway on the sewage works access road. Paddle downstream (southwards) under M5 bridge.
- *During lower tides, follow the main buoyed river channel in the estuary. Increased hazards on the estuary can include wind, waves, currents, boats and their wakes.
- The shorter loop: 1.1km after paddling under the M5 bridge there is a metal slipway on the river right, just beyond Topsham Lock Cottage this can be used to access the canal, but the ferry takes priority and boats must not be left unattended in the water or on the ramp. Paddle back up the canal (northwards) to the starting point.
- For the full distance, head past Topsham, carry on down the Estuary until you see the Turf Locks on the right hand bank. Using the pontoon here to exit the estuary, the ferry takes priority and boats must not be left unattended in the water or on the pontoon or ramp. Portage past the pub to access the canal. Paddle northwards on the canal back to the starting point.

River Exe & Canal: South Section

Key

- Nature Reserves
- Access & Portage Point
- LB - Left Bank
- RB - Right Bank
- Portage Point – involves carrying craft overland to cross between river and canal or bypass a weir or lock gate.
- P Parking
- Pub Cafe

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Caution Weirs

Water at the base of weirs can be dangerous, particularly in high flows. Hidden obstacles may be present under the surface.



While all reasonable care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is up to date and accurate, no warranty is given that the information contained on this map is free from error or omission. Any reliance placed on such information shall be at the sole risk of the user. Please verify the accuracy of the information prior to using it. Not to be used for navigation: the channel is susceptible to change over time, for up to date information on navigation contact the River and Canal Office.