

# Broxa Forest

## The nightjars of Broxa Forest

Broxa Forest is a mix of pine, other conifers and semi-natural woodland, with heath-like clearings left by felling forestry trees. It's a habitat that supports the mysterious nightjar, a nocturnal bird that has various curious legends attached to it – not least the ancient, if mistaken, belief that nightjars sucked the udders of she-goats. The nightjar nests on the ground in the bracken and wakes at dusk to feed, snacking on moths and other insects – its huge, moon-shaped eyes are adapted to the dark. Perhaps even odder than its appearance is its love call – an unearthly churring sound that rings through the trees – accompanied by an energetic courtship dance.



## An ancient forest?

The North York Moors was once covered in natural woodland, though many areas – including around Broxa – were cleared by farmers and settlers during the early Bronze Age. There was also a later Iron Age settlement in Broxa. In the 12th century, much of the land between Pickering, Scarborough and Whitby was declared a royal hunting forest, while after World War I the government set up the Forestry Commission to care for Britain's woods and establish strategic timber reserves. This explains the mix of woodland in Broxa and elsewhere – only about 20 percent of woodland in the North York Moors is old woodland or on the site of old woodland.



Along the edge, into the woods

**G**et a birds-eye view of gorgeous Harwood Dale from the escarpment edge on a circular walk (just under 6 miles) that starts and finishes in the shade of Broxa Forest. Tree-felling has opened up the views on the first part of the walk, and you really feel on top of the world as the path swings round the scarp edge. The return is through the dappled shade of mixed woodland, so this is a walk for all seasons – and it's one which can be shortened by a mile or so if you wish, by taking a shortcut halfway round.

### Did you know?

The 16-mile (26km) Blue Man Walk also starts at Reasty Hill Top, connecting Broxa, Langdale and Dalby forests in one long, linear woodland walk. It's waymarked and signposted in places, and the Forestry Commission has plans to restore and improve the route.

<b>Great for:</b>	woodland wanders, nature nuts
<b>Length:</b>	5¾ miles (9.3km)
<b>Time:</b>	2 hours 30 minutes
<b>Start/Finish:</b>	Forestry Commission car park at Reasty Hill Top, 4½ miles (7.25km) northwest of Scalby, near Scarborough
<b>Grid Reference:</b>	SE 964 943
<b>Map:</b>	OS Explorer OL27
<b>Refreshments:</b>	Harwood Dale, Scalby, Cloughton
<b>Toilets:</b>	Scalby village (4 ½ miles/7.25km)



Closest pub to the start and finish of the walk is the Mill Inn at Harwood Dale, 1½ miles (2.4km) northwest, and there's also the Country Tea Rooms at The Grainary in Harwood Dale village.

# ...along the edge, into the woods...

## Route instructions

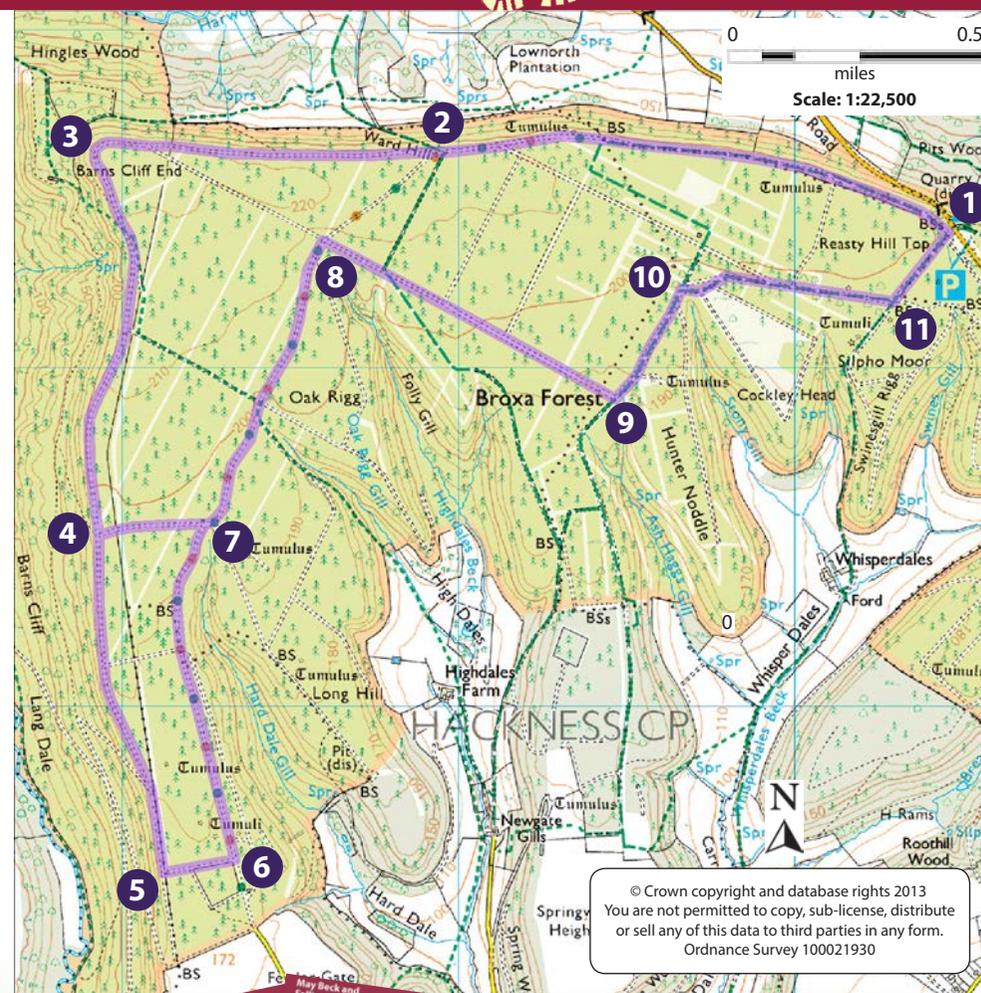
- 1 Walk to the far end of the car park (ie, towards the viewpoint), cross the road, walk down a short path (signposted as 'Public Bridleway') and turn right on the track signposted 'Reasty to Allerston'.
- 2 Leave the main track as it bends left. Pass a metal barrier and continue ahead along the top of the escarpment on a level track.
- 3 The track bends left.
- 4 Reach a junction with a grassy track on the left. For the long walk, continue ahead, entering the trees. (For a shorter walk, turn left and follow the track to point 7, then turn left again.)
- 5 Turn sharp left at a fork in the woodland and continue ahead.
- 6 After the metal barrier, turn left onto a forest track.
- 7 A grassy forest track comes in on the left past a metal barrier – the short walk rejoins here. At the junction, keep ahead and left on the slightly uphill track.
- 8 At a crossroads, leave the main track (which rises up ahead) and turn right past a metal barrier on a level track.
- 9 At a T-junction with a stone forest track, turn left.
- 10 At a junction go right on the gravel track. Continue on the main track through mixed woodland.
- 11 Turn left at a metal barrier and return to the road and the car park.



The walk is on good stone and gravel forest tracks, with some scrub and woodland sections which can be muddy after heavy rain. It uses a mixture of public rights of way and other paths and tracks over Forestry Commission access land – tracks may occasionally be closed for tree felling or other operations, although the land is usually always open at weekends. There are no stiles en route, but watch out for occasional vehicles on the main forest tracks.



You can let your dog off the lead in Forestry Commission woods, but always make sure they are under control. Part of the route in Broxa Forest follows the Moor to Sea Cycle Network – it's safer if you put your dog on a lead when cyclists pass.



**Like this walk?**  
Forestry Commission woods are great for dog-walking – so why not also try our woodland walks at May Beck and Falling Foss, and at Clay Bank and Greenhow Plantation?