

Ponies have lived on Dartmoor since prehistoric times. Although herds of ponies roam freely on the moor, they all belong to different pony keepers. Most have not been handled so you should not approach them too closely.

The owners round up their ponies every year in the autumn at the annual pony 'drifts'. They then decide which ponies to keep on the moor and which to sell. The foals are usually weaned from their mothers at this time.

The ponies are very hardy and actually thrive on Dartmoor despite the harsh weather and poor vegetation. In fact, by grazing the moorland they play a vital role in maintaining a variety of habitats and supporting wildlife.

Because of their calm temperament, strength and surefootedness, the ponies have been used for many varying purposes, and this has led to the breeding and development of the different types that are seen on the moor today. Over the years they have been used as pit ponies, for shepherding, or taking the family to market and on occasion even carrying the postman to deliver the mail.

The very small ponies are the result of breeding with Shetlands and were used originally in the mining industry. The single coloured ponies are the traditional type and share some of the same ancestors as the 'registered' pedigree Dartmoor Pony, which is famous worldwide. Ponies with mixed colouring (e.g. brown and white, black and white and spotted) have been bred to meet more recent popular demand. With proper training, the various types can make excellent driving or children's riding ponies.

How you can help

Please do not feed the ponies

- It encourages them to stay near the road where they might be killed or seriously injured.
- The food we enjoy is not a natural or healthy diet for ponies and can make them very ill.
- Please do not dump your garden waste on the moor – it has the potential to cause much suffering and even death.
- Ponies will learn to expect food from people and might frighten or hurt them in an attempt to get more food.
- It is illegal (Dartmoor National Park Byelaws).

Keep well away

- The ponies are untamed – they can be unpredictable and may kick and bite if approached.
- Keep dogs under control in the vicinity of ponies and livestock in general.

Park only in designated car parks

- Pulling in on the roadside causes damage to moorland verges and is potentially dangerous to other road users. It also attracts ponies to the road looking for food.

Keep to the 40 mile per hour speed limit

- This is the maximum speed limit on many of Dartmoor's roads. Always drive cautiously according to road conditions and visibility.

Take all your litter home

- A plastic bag or ring pull from a can will cause terrible suffering if swallowed.

Please follow the advice contained in this leaflet. With your help animal accidents on Dartmoor can be prevented.





Ponies on Dartmoor

Please contact

We all enjoy seeing the ponies looking happy and healthy on the moor. But if you see an injured pony or a pony in distress please contact:

- Dartmoor Commoners' Council
Tel: (01822 618892)
- or
- Dartmoor National Park Authority
High Moorland Visitor Centre,
Princetown
Tel: (01822) 890414
- or
- Project Ranger (Livestock Protection)
Tel: 07873 587561
- or
- Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society
 - South Brent Tel: (01364) 73121
 - Shaugh Prior Tel: (01752) 839376
 - Mary Tavy Tel: (01822) 810303
 - Mobile: 07976 446263

If you are involved in a vehicular accident with a pony YOU MUST telephone the police. If you witness such an accident please also telephone the police. We can then ensure an injured animal is not left to suffer.

Supporting the ponies

Moorland ponies are an integral part of the Dartmoor landscape. They help to graze the moor and maintain its character. In recent years, their numbers have declined. The members of the Pony Working Group are working together to safeguard their future.

The Pony Working Group:

- Dartmoor Commoners' Council
www.dartmoorcommonerscouncil.org.uk
- Dartmoor Hill Pony Association
www.dartmoorhillpony.com
- Dartmoor National Park Authority
www.dartmoor-mpa.gov.uk
- Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust
www.dpht.co.uk
- Dartmoor Pony Society
www.dartmoorponysociety.com
- Duchy of Cornwall
www.duchyofcornwall.org
- Natural England
www.naturalengland.org.uk

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Dartmoor
Hill Pony
Association



DUCHY of CORNWALL



The Pony Working Group
working together to support the
ponies on Dartmoor