

Further information

Avon Biodiversity Partnership -
www.avon-biodiversity.org.uk

English Nature (Natural England from October 2006) -
www.naturalengland.org.uk

South Gloucestershire Council -
www.southglos.gov.uk

North Somerset Council -
www.n-somerset.gov.uk

National Trust -
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main

Severn Estuary Partnership -
www.severnestuary.net/sep

Avon Wildlife Trust -
www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

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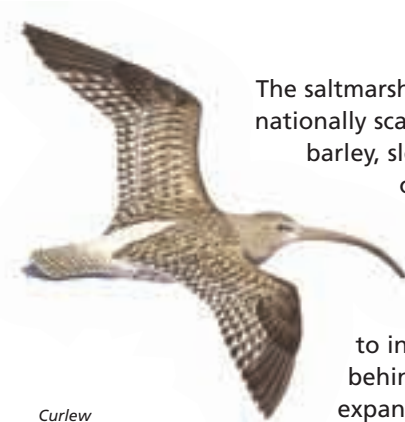
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Designed by CJHGRAPHICS.

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Curlew
(Severn Estuary Partnership)

The saltmarsh has a number of nationally scarce plants including sea barley, slender hare's-ear and sea clover on its upper reaches, some of them on the sea wall. In 2004 the sea was allowed, once again, to inundate the low-lying field behind the Victorian sea wall, expanding the area of salt marsh.

Access

Drive into Uphill from Weston-super-Mare and park near the large sluice gates on the left (Grid Ref: ST313586) or by Uphill Way in the lay-by. Walk past the boatyard either along the metalled track or along the sea wall to reach the reserve. There is open access to the grassland areas but please keep off the salt marsh to avoid disturbance to birds.

4 Sand Point (North Somerset) has plenty of space, great views across the Severn Estuary to Wales and up the Severn bridges, and lots of wildlife and archaeological interest to explore. It is owned by the National Trust, and still farmed. There is flower-rich limestone grassland along much of the stretch from Sand Point to Middle Hope and a number of scarce plants grow here and on the low rocky cliffs. In summer the saltmarsh displays sea aster and sea lavender.



Sea Lavender (English Nature)

In spring, migrant birds such as whitethroats, willow warblers and wheatears can be spotted amongst the scrub. A good walk runs east along Middle Hope to the military site at St Thomas's Head.

Access

There is a small car-park (Grid Ref: ST330659), and a steep path up to the ridge. The path to the point is narrow so take care.

5 Poets walk (North Somerset)

This is a very popular walk to the west of Clevedon and is a LNR owned by North Somerset Council. The coast walk goes around the pill to the Blind Yeo sluice, and then along the sea-wall, giving good views across the estuary. An important site for wintering and migratory birds.

Access

Poet's Walk is close to Clevedon. There is a public car park on Salthouse Road, and some parking space along Old Church Road. (Grid Ref: ST392707).



Salmon (Severn Estuary Partnership)



Severn Beach (AWT)

6 Severn Beach (South Gloucestershire)
The Severn Way down to Chittening Warth has extensive saltmarsh where many wading birds roost at high tide outside the breeding season. Over 250 bird species have been recorded in the area over

the years. Migration times can produce birds such as wheatear and various warblers on the short grass and in the scrubby bushes. Westerly gales in autumn can sometimes blow scarce seabirds such as Leach's petrel up the funnel of the estuary and into this area.

Access

The Severn Beach itself has street parking (Grid Ref: ST540853). The Severn Way goes down to Chittening Warth in the south or can be followed north to Northwick Warth, another huge stretch of saltmarsh.

7 Aust Cliff (South Gloucestershire)

It is possible to walk down to the shore here and the Cliff itself is famous geologically for its range of fossils. During migration, especially in October in the early mornings and in the right weather, migrant birds such as finches, wagtails, meadow pipits and skylarks can be seen moving south.



Aust Cliff (AWT)

Access

Park at the motorway service station (Grid Ref: ST572896) and you can walk south along The Severn Way to the Old Passage pier, or north along Littleton Warth to Littleton Brick Pits, an Avon Wildlife Trust reserve.

Clevedon Coast (AWT)



The walks and wildlife of the Severn Estuary

Welcome to the Severn estuary! At around 24700ha, it is one of the largest estuaries in Britain and has the second largest tidal range in the world. It forms the border between Wales and England in south-west Britain at the mouth of three major rivers; the Severn, Wye and Avon.

We hope this leaflet helps you to enjoy the estuary, and at the same time understand more about the wildlife you share it with.

Natural History and conservation

The inter-tidal zone of mudflats, sandbanks, rocky platforms and saltmarsh is **one of the largest and most important for wildlife in Britain.**

The extreme conditions created by mud, sand and rock can only be tolerated by a few plants and animals. However there are high densities of ragworms and lugworms which are an important food source for migrating and overwintering waders.

Saltmarsh, the upper part of intertidal mudflats, is found all along the estuary's fringes in Avon. Only a limited number of salt tolerant plants can grow in these conditions, including nationally scarce species such as slender hare's-ear, sea clover and bulbous foxtail. Saltmarsh also provides important feeding and roosting areas for waterfowl and waders.

Over winter, the area **regularly supports about 85,000 waterfowl** including shelduck, wigeon, teal, grey plover, lapwing, dunlin, redshank and curlew. Bewick's swan, white-fronted goose, pintail, gadwall and pochard also occur. Whimbrel and ringed plover pass through in large numbers on migration, the former particularly in spring. The river also attracts migratory fish species such as salmon, sea trout, twaite and allis shad.

The wild bird populations are of European importance, and the estuary is classified as a Special Protection Area and Ramsar site. Most of the estuary is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is being considered as a Special area of Conservation (SAC).



Severn Estuary Partnership

Dunlin (Severn Estuary Partnership)

Although the Severn Estuary is internationally important for nature conservation, there are still threats from development, disturbance, pollution and dredging for aggregates.

Access to the Severn estuary

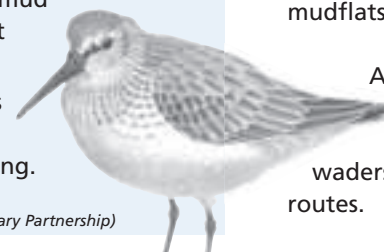
We want you to enjoy the estuary, but at the same time please be considerate about the wildlife you share it with. In particular many of the birds that use the estuary are disturbed by close human proximity, sudden movements, noise and dogs, which can flush them from their feeding, roosting or breeding areas.

It is important to:

- Keep to public footpaths. Please don't walk on the foreshore or on the salt marsh to avoid disturbance to birds.
- Keep dogs on leads and close gates as you may encounter cattle as well as wildlife.
- Take litter home.
- Avoid sites that you know are used by birds at certain times of year or states of tide.
- Keep noise to a minimum, both on the shore and on the water. Birds are very sensitive to both noise and visual disturbance.
- Avoid any damage or disturbance to saltmarsh and coastal grazing marsh

Safety:

- Check the tide-tables, as this is probably the biggest hazard along the coast. The following tide time web site may be useful: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides/west.shtml>
- Beware of very strong currents, deep mud and dangerous cliffs. Swimming is not advised and do not use inflatables.
- Watch out for the weather, as there is little shelter. Always wear suitable footwear and take water proof clothing.



7 walks along the Severn Estuary

1 Bridgwater Bay (Somerset) is a large National Nature Reserve (NNR). The reserve's habitats include intertidal mudflats with saltmarsh, shingle ridges and sandflats.

Approximately 190 species of birds have been recorded on the reserve including large numbers of visiting waterfowl and wintering waders. The area is also used as a stop-off on migration routes.

Bridgwater Bay (AWT)



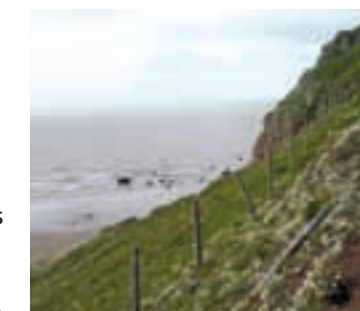
footpath along the coastline on the western edge of the reserve.



2 Brean Down (Somerset), rich in wildlife and history, is one of the most striking landmarks of the Somerset coastline, extending 1.5 miles into the Bristol Channel. It is maintained as a wildlife reserve by the National Trust. Palmerston Fort, built in 1865 and then re-armed in the Second World War, stands at the point. The area supports typical limestone grassland plants including the rare white rockrose in flower in June. The site is also important for butterflies including the rare chalkhill blue and has wonderful views across to Steep Holm. During spring and autumn migration the site is superb for birdwatching as migrants often stop and rest on the Down.

Access

Accessible from a car park at its foot (Grid Ref: ST297586). From there it is a steep climb up to the ridge, along which is a good path. A very narrow path along the north edge skirts the vertical cliffs. There is also a good path down to the point.



Brean Down (AWT)

3 Uphill and Walborough (North Somerset)

These Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), managed by North Somerset Council and Avon Wildlife Trust respectively, have saltmarsh and limestone grassland with rare plants and insects. The limestone



Uphill, Walborough (AWT)

grassland is a SSSI with an exceptionally rich flora including Somerset hair-grass, honewort, green-winged and early purple orchid, autumn lady's tresses and abundant cowslips. The area is important for butterflies including brown argus, grizzled and dingy skipper and grayling.



Grizzled skipper (Chris Harris)