

Wild Wonders of Cornwall

A visitors guide
to enjoying
Cornwall's wildlife
and wild places

Creating a **Cornwall**
where **nature** thrives

Bottlenose dolphin

© CREDIT: JOHN MACPHERSON

— IN PARTNERSHIP WITH —



Cornwall
Wildlife Trust

Welcome to Cornwall

A place with incredible wildlife and wild places that has captivated the hearts of both locals and visitors alike. This guide is your gateway to discovering the wonders of our region's natural treasures, showcasing the most amazing spots to witness Cornwall's diverse flora and fauna in all their splendor. As you embark on these unforgettable journeys, we invite you to not only revel in the beauty of our wildlife but also to join us in our mission to protect these precious habitats for the enjoyment of future generations.

Cornwall's rich biodiversity has been evolving and developing over centuries, creating unique ecosystems that house a myriad of species, all special in their own way. However, as the popularity of our wildlife havens grows, so does the need for responsible exploration and

conservation. In this guide, you'll not only find information on the best locations to observe our wildlife but also guidance on how to do so with minimal impact, ensuring that our natural heritage remains preserved for years to come.

Our commitment to protect these wild places goes hand in hand with the pleasure we take in sharing them with you. Learn about the species that call Cornwall home, from the enchanting dolphins with whom we share our coastlines to the mesmerizing buzzards that soar high above the moors. But beyond mere observation, we encourage you to be a steward of our environment. Discover how your actions can help minimize wildlife disturbance, from respecting nesting sites to reducing marine disturbance by keeping a safe distance from wildlife and avoiding loud

noises or activities that could disrupt marine habitats.

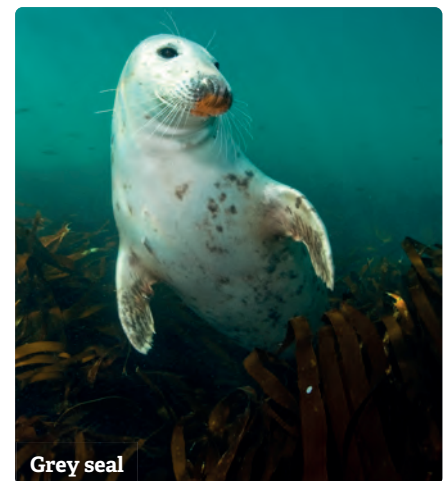
Visiting our reserves is free and, in part, made possible by local businesses, such as the one you have made your booking through; whose generosity is helping us preserve Cornwall's wildlife and wild places. If you would like to support our work there is an opportunity to donate or join us on page 13 of this document.

Thank you and enjoy your stay.

Happy wildlife watching!



Matt Wallpole,
Chief Executive
Cornwall Wildlife Trust



Grey seal



Bell heather



Beautiful demoiselle



Otter




Redshank



Bluebells Pendarves Wood

Finding our reserves:

Look out for the  what3words icons throughout this document, then simply download the app, enter the unique three-word address to get a precise location.

Please remember to park responsibly and think of others.



spring  summer 
winter  autumn 

Throughout this guide, these symbols indicate the best time of year to visit each reserve.

Read on for our guide to visiting Cornwall's wildlife and wild places.

Explore our Destination Reserves



Scan for a full list of our nature reserves

While primarily managed with wildlife in mind, many of these nature reserves have infrastructure, such as parking and footpaths, that make them suitable for visitors.

Most are amongst our largest reserves and are distributed across Cornwall – from Bartinney in remote West Penwith, with an Iron Age hill fort and from where you can see the Isles of Scilly on a clear day, to Looe Island, our only marine nature reserve, where the waters around it teem with life.

This guide features some of our Destinations Reserves throughout Cornwall.

Tell us what you see!
Your wildlife sightings provide vital information for research and conservation

www.ORKS.org.uk

DOWNLOAD THE ORKS APP

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For more information:
cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves



Bartinney



Helman Tor



Looe Island



Cabilla & Redrice Woods

1 Bartinney



After four thousand years the 'hill of fires' still glows

what3words typically.glossed.monk

Exploring the site

The reserve covers Bartinney Downs and Carn Glaze. Atop the Downs sits Bartinney Castle, a circular earthwork enclosing a number of stony mounds. Never excavated - this site could be either a Bronze Age ceremonial enclosure with burial mounds, or an Iron Age hillfort with hut circles.

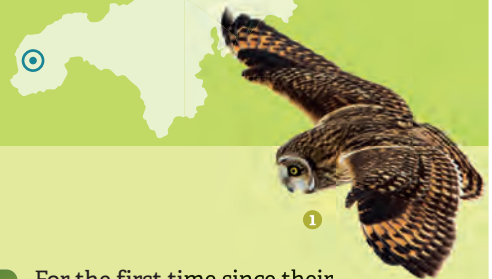
To protect ground-nesting birds (meadow pipits, skylarks) in the summer, and ground-feeding birds (snipe, woodcock) in the winter, dogs should be kept on a lead.

Cattle graze on this site (April to October).

Getting there

At Crows-an-wra, turn off the A30 towards Land's End Airport until reaching Chapel Carn Brea car park. Cross the road and follow the track opposite, turning off onto the first smaller track on the left. The track is uneven and in the winter can be very wet and is sometimes impassable.

RESERVE SIZE
185 acres (75 hectares)



Observe from a DISTANCE



see page 14

Enchantingly calm

A beautiful hillside site in Penwith, consisting predominantly of grassland, ponds and heathland habitats, Bartinney offers panoramic views over the surrounding countryside and beyond to the Atlantic Ocean.

The site's earliest structures are thought to date from the Bronze Age. The name Bartinney (or Bartinè) means 'the lighted eminence', or 'the hill of fires' (*Bretanow* in the Cornish language).

This is a particularly important site for birdlife, the majority of which nest on or near to the ground, so please ensure dogs are kept under close control.



Wildlife



The short-eared owl 1, unusual amongst owls as it prefers to be out and about during the day, can be seen here, usually in winter as it escapes the colder temperatures of northern England, Scotland, Scandinavia and beyond.

Measuring around 35 – 42cm in length, this owl is mottled yellowy-brown above, paler underneath and has dark circles around its yellow eyes. As with all owls, a group of this species is known as a 'parliament'.

The cuckoo is a regular early summer visitor to Bartinney. You may be lucky enough to spot one during the spring amongst the grassland, feeding on large hairy caterpillars, which are poisonous to other birds. Cuckoos are well-known brood parasites 2; the females lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, particularly meadow pipits.

For the first time since their return to Cornwall's coastline, Cornish choughs 3 have also been seen at Bartinney. Identifiable by their distinctive red beaks and feet, their presence here reflects the richness of this reserves for wildlife and how well they are doing in Cornwall.

The reserve provides a home to various other wildlife associated with heathland, including adders and butterflies such as the grayling, wall, small pearl bordered fritillary and small heath 4.



2

Baker's Pit

Nature heals the scars of industry



/// what3words sharpens.evenings.tumble

Exploring the site

From the entrance, a 1.5 mile circular trail passes many archaeological features including an engine house, a china clay pit (now flooded to provide habitat for wildlife) and the remains of a Bronze Age settlement. Footpaths can be muddy so suitable footwear is advised

Getting there

From the A30 at Crowlas, head west on the B3309 and continue to the junction at the top of the hill. Turn right onto the B3311 and continue until the road drops into Nancedra, then turn left towards Georgia. After a few hundred yards, turn left, then left again (sign-posted to Georgia). Pass Georgia Farm and follow the road, which becomes a track. There is a pull-in on the righthand side, with room for two or three cars.



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A colourful history, from Bronze Age to white gold...

Baker's Pit is home to a wealth of wildlife and archaeological features, including the remains of 18 Bronze Age roundhouses, which would have provided homes for people who farmed here 4,000 years ago.

Also present are several reminders of the site's more recent history as a china clay works (1758–1942). Several structures designed for drying clay, an engine house and the clay pit itself can be found around the site.

Wildlife



The reserve consists of heathland, small areas of pasture, and open water, which was created by flooding the disused clay pits.

Wildlife typically associated with heathland which can be found at this site includes common lizards 1 and adders, both of which will bask in the sun during spring and early autumn, before darting for cover should they feel threatened.

Between June and September, you may spot the grayling 2, a butterfly often associated with heathland. It has a wingspan of 55 – 60mm and rests with its forewings tucked behind its hindwings, making the butterfly appear smaller. Its hard to spot when resting but when in flight

it will display pale yellow-orange bands and eye spots.

Whitethroats 3 visit regularly in summer (having flown from sub-Saharan Africa), while merlins, hen harriers and peregrines all visit during winter months.

In late summer, much of the reserve bursts with vibrant yellow as western gorse (one of two gorse species found in Cornwall) flowers. Western gorse is important for various insects and birds, including the stonechat 4 and linnet.



3 Upton Towans



Where wildlife-rich dunes embrace the fresh Atlantic breeze



PICKING UP DOG POO IS IMPORTANT

It keeps our environment healthy and helps stop the spread of harmful germs that can stick around in the soil and pose risks to people and animals. Leaving dog waste behind adds extra nutrients to the soil, which can mess up local ecosystems and cause harmful algal blooms in water.

/// what3words belief.reflector.daisy

Exploring the site

Multiple paths cross the reserve, some of which are suitable for wheelchair access. The area is dotted with mine shafts and the remains of the National Explosive Works, which was created in 1888 to provide dynamite for the local mining industry and later manufactured military supplies.

After just twelve months, the company was producing three tonnes of dynamite daily! It was an important local employer, providing work for 175 people in 1889, increasing to more than 1,800 (mainly women) during the First World War.

Getting there

The reserve is about 1km from Gwithian village as you travel from Hayle.

There is a small, free car park just off the B3301, on the way to Cornwall Council's Gwithian long stay car park.



Dynamite dunes!

The sand dunes at Upton Towans – part of the stretch from Hayle to Godrevy – are a haven for wildlife that relies on this increasingly rare habitat for its survival, including the internationally rare and obscure petalwort and the striking silver-studded blue butterfly.

The National Explosives Works, was sited among the dunes to restrict the impact of blasts from accidental explosions.

The word 'towans' means 'sand dunes' in the Cornish language, and is sometimes seen in its older form, 'tewan', in placenames such as Pentewan.



Wildlife

Britain's coastal dunes, which provide a sanctuary for a variety of rare species, are internationally important for wildlife, and are listed as one of the most threatened habitats in Europe.

Upton Towans is home to a diverse range of wildlife including toads ❶, adders, lizards, orchids and masses of butterflies.

The reserve is important for the rare silver-studded blue ❷, a small butterfly that gets its name from the light blue reflective 'studs' (scales) found on the underside of its wings. The upper wings are blue with a dark outer rim and males are bluer than females, which are more of a dull brown.

They flutter over the dunes in summer, finding sheltered patches of bare



ground or short vegetation on which to lay their eggs, preferably near an ant colony, as ants will – in return for a sugary substance produced by the larvae – protect them in the spring.

Summer visitors should also look out for the pyramidal orchid ❸, a highly distinctive wildflower with a pyramid shaped head of bright pink flowers.

Birds found here include the skylark, kestrel, stonechat and, perhaps most abundantly, the meadow pipit. As this songbird's name suggests, its preference is for open land with low vegetation, like sand dunes, where they can be seen year-round. Females build their nests on the ground but, despite hiding them amongst dense vegetation, they're often highjacked by cuckoos who appear to favour meadow pipits as foster parents!



4

Windmill Farm



Nature knows why each wind blows...



what3words balancing.dome.panels

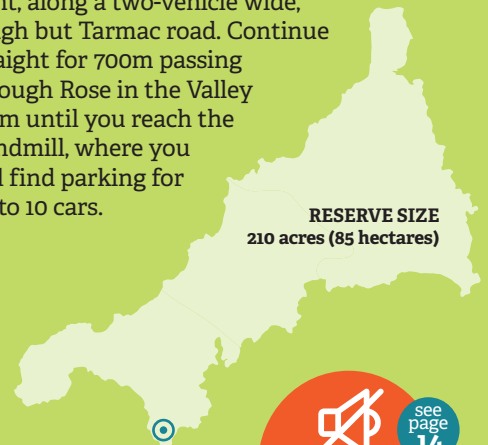
Exploring the site

There are two way-marked trails at the reserve: a Nature Trail (which passes some of the reserve's most important features for wildlife) and a WWII Trail (which reveals some of the buildings that were once part of RAF Predannack, an airfield established in 1941).

During the war, the windmill was commandeered by the local Home Guard as an observation post.

Getting there

On the A3083, head south towards Lizard village. Keep going past Trevelyan Holiday Homes and take the third turning on the right, along a two-vehicle wide, rough but Tarmac road. Continue straight for 700m passing through Rose in the Valley Farm until you reach the Windmill, where you will find parking for up to 10 cars.



RESERVE SIZE
210 acres (85 hectares)



A history as varied as its wildlife

The reserve is of particular importance for its lowland heathland habitats and the variety of rare and specialist wildlife, including Cornish heath – an internationally rare plant that, in Britain, only grows on parts of the Lizard with underlying serpentine rock.

The site is also home to a range of historic features, including the 17th century windmill (a Scheduled Monument) and two Bronze Age 'barrows' (ancient burial mounds), one of which is now topped with a Second World War pillbox!



© CREDIT: BEN WATKINS, RICHARD STEEL

Wildlife



The reserve's heathlands are part of the Lizard Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Since purchasing this former dairy farm in 2001, ancient trackways have been rediscovered, and more than 30 pools and scrapes (shallow water bodies) have been created.

The scrapes dry out during the summer and their muddy margins provide suitable conditions for specialist plants, invertebrates and wading birds. This has encouraged rare plants, helped establish the reserve as a key site for dragonflies and damselflies 1 (17 species are regularly recorded here), and benefitted other species such as newts and rare stoneworts.

Windmill Farm is a great site for bird watching because of its many pools,

grown-out hedges and extensive grazing pasture. In spring the reserve hosts many warblers such as white throat, reed, sedge and willow.

The most distinctive is the grasshopper warbler 2 – a secretive summer visitor whose insect-like, reeling song is unmistakable.

The old tracks are perfect for the rare and endangered pygmy rush 3. At less than 3cm tall it can be tricky to find, but its purplish colouring in June can be distinctive. Three-lobed water-crowfoot, a very rare member of the buttercup family with small, white, starry flowers thrives in the reserve's wet muddy gateways and temporary pools.



5

Helman Tor

FREE ROAMING
CATTLE
so please keep
dogs on
leads

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Rugged trails winding through wild landscapes, beneath open skies

A site rich in both history and wildlife

At over 700 acres, this is our largest reserve; a complex mosaic of habitats, including heathland, mire, scrubland, bog, ancient woodland, wet woodland, and acid grassland.

The tor itself boasts commanding views of the surrounding countryside – on a clear day, both north and south coasts are visible from its granite bouldered summit. The reserve has Scheduled Monument designation due to archaeological features, including a Neolithic tor enclosure and traces of a Bronze Age field system.



Wildlife

Explore Helman Tor, a stunning nature reserve where rewilding efforts are bringing life back to rare heathland and wet woodland habitats. Wander through landscapes where wild-roaming grazing cattle help manage the land naturally—an important part of our conservation efforts.

These rare heathlands, which have declined globally by 85% in the last 150 years, are a haven for breeding birds like cuckoo, yellowhammer, grasshopper warbler, and stonechat. As you walk through the extensive wet woodlands, you'll find yourself surrounded by mosses, lichens, and ferns clinging to branches, creating an enchanting atmosphere. These woods also provide a home for a multitude of bird species, including the elusive willow tit ¹, one of the UK's rarest birds, identified by its distinctive black cap and small black bib.

Helman Tor is also a stronghold for the rare marsh fritillary butterfly ², a species once widespread in Britain but now in sharp decline. Its bright

orange and pale yellow wings make it a remarkable sight, and the reserve's damp grasslands are crucial for its survival. By supporting Cornwall Wildlife Trust, you help maintain these vital habitats, ensuring the future of this and many other species.



Whether you're a birdwatcher, a butterfly enthusiast, or simply someone who loves the outdoors, Helman Tor offers a unique opportunity to connect with nature and witness the positive impact of conservation efforts firsthand.

Helman Tor
Nature Reserve

Visitor Map



KEY TO HABITATS

- PASTURE
- HEATHLAND
- PONDS & SCRAPES
- SCRUB
- WET WOODLAND
- WOODLAND & SCRUB
- FEN
- HEATHLAND & FEN
- SCRUB & GRASSLAND
- ACID GRASSLAND
- RUSH PASTURE
- HAY MEADOW
- ARABLE / GRASS

KEY TO SYMBOLS

- PARKING
- SITE ENTRANCE
- INFORMATION BOARD
- VIEWING POINT (HELMAN TOR)

TRAIL ROUTES

- Wilderness Trail
- Alternative route
- Additional route

TICKS ARE PRESENT AT HELMAN TOR.
Check yourself, your children and your dogs after your visit. Ticks can carry Lyme disease, so if you feel unwell in the weeks following, seek medical advice.

Exploring the site

There is no shortage of fantastic walking at the reserve, including the 8-mile wilderness trail, suitable for a variety of walking abilities, with information boards along the way.

The Saints Way, a 30-mile walk from the northern harbour town of Padstow to the southern port of Fowey, also passes through the reserve.

Getting there

From the A30 / A391 roundabout (south of Bodmin) turn north to Lanivet and take the first right under the A30 bridge. Shortly after the bridge, take the first left up the hill. After ½ mile turn right at Reperry Cross and immediately take the fork left to Trebell Green. After a sharp right bend, take the left turn (between the granite posts).

At the top of this road, on the left, is a rough car park.

RESERVE SIZE
736 acres (298 hectares)



what3words
shield.scary.apparatus

5

Helman Tor

STEPPING FURTHER INTO THE WILD

Beavers are back!

Once native to the UK, beavers were hunted to extinction over 400 years ago. Now, they have been carefully reintroduced at Helman Tor, helping to restore natural processes that our landscapes have been missing for centuries.

Beavers shape the landscape in ways no other species can. Their dams slow the flow of water, reduce flooding, and improve water quality. In the process, they create wetlands that store carbon and provide rich, diverse habitats for other wildlife.

You are unlikely to see a beaver in the wild. They are nocturnal and very shy. But if you know what to look for, their presence is easy to spot:

- Trees with distinctive “pencil point” gnaw marks ❶
- Dams made from branches, mud, and vegetation ❷
- A complex of new pools and side channels

Beavers are often called ecosystem engineers. They reshape entire habitats, creating space for a wide range of species to thrive. In and around these wetlands, you might spot:

- Dragonflies and damselflies ❸
- Frogs, toads, and newts
- Birds such as herons, kingfishers and willow tits
- Bats feeding over the water at dusk



Please be aware, beavers are sensitive to disturbance, so please keep noise to a minimum when exploring Helman Tor. Stick to marked paths, keep dogs on leads and out of streams and ponds, and respect the landscape. This is a working nature recovery site, and these small actions help protect fragile habitats and allow wildlife to thrive.



Making a Difference, from Tor to Shore:

Helman Tor is also the starting point for Cornwall's largest landscape recovery project. From here, we are restoring natural processes through species reintroductions and habitat management, working along the Par River all the way to St Austell Bay. Here lie some of the UK's largest seagrass and maerl beds, vulnerable and sensitive habitats that play a vital role in carbon storage and provide important nursery grounds for marine life.

By connecting these landscapes, we are creating a joined-up approach to nature recovery where wildlife can move, thrive, and adapt.

Find out more about Tor to Shore on our website:

cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/tor-to-shore



Things you can do

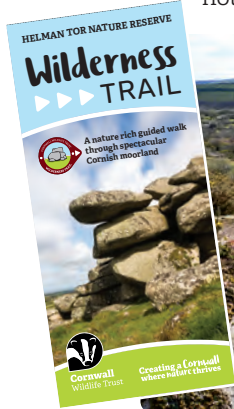
Explore a trail



Helman Tor Wilderness Trail



Looking for a day out exploring the rugged landscape of Cornwall? You will be right at home on the Wilderness Trail, an 8-mile (13 km) circuit around the heart of the reserve. The terrain can be challenging so suitable clothing and footwear is a must. Boardwalk is available in certain areas, but not the entire course of the trail.



Wildlife disturbance - how you can help



- Give the animals **SPACE** and **TIME**
- **Observe from a distance** – use binoculars if you can
- **Look for signs you've been spotted by wildlife** and avoid actions that scare, startle or panic them
- Large groups and mothers with young are **best avoided completely**
- **Be calm and quiet** while you enjoy your encounter
- **Leave wildlife and the environment as you found it**
- **When renting a kayak, SUP, or boat, always consider getting a guide** - they'll know the best spots to see wildlife and also how to avoid disturbing sensitive areas.

For additional information on avoiding wildlife disturbances, visit: cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/our-conservation-work/at-sea/marine-and-coastal-code

Join Cornwall Wildlife Trust at an event



The **Cornwall Beaver Project** runs bookable weekly beaver walks from spring through to autumn. Visitors can see the beaver dams in daylight then sit until dusk to try and glimpse the animals as they emerge.



Support Cornwall Wildlife Trust



DONATE

If you've enjoyed your stay in Cornwall, perhaps you would consider supporting our efforts. Your donation will help to create

a Cornwall where nature thrives and precious wildlife and wild places are protected. Every single penny makes a difference, whether it's a one-off donation or a regular membership gift. We couldn't do it without your support!

To donate, visit: cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/donate



JOIN CORNWALL WILDLIFE TRUST

Make a difference to wildlife in Cornwall!

For as little as £3 per month, you can help us keep Cornwall's wildlife and habitats thriving, ready for your next visit. Your support will ensure that future generations can continue to experience the natural beauty and unique species that make Cornwall so special.

For more details: cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/support-us/become-member

6

Five Acres



All paths
lead to home!

/// what3words tram.pocket.encloses

Exploring the site

In addition to wildlife, the reserve is also home to two Bronze Age bowl barrows, which can be found in the wildflower meadow. These ancient funeral monuments would have been constructed from earth and surrounded by a ditch. Today, the barrows survive as grass covered mounds.

There are several trails through the reserve, which is also home to our HQ.

Getting there

The reserve is just off the B3284 from Truro to the A30 and is signposted. Parking is available.



Observe
from a
DISTANCE



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Our natural home

Left in a legacy to Cornwall Wildlife Trust by Dr. George Allsop (one of our co-founders) and his wife, Five Acres became the Trust's headquarters in 1989.

The buildings on the site are used by staff, volunteers and visitors. It is also the home of both The Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) and Cornwall Environmental Consultants CEC.

ERCCIS gathers biological and geological data to help improve the understanding of our natural environment, while CEC provides ecology and landscape solutions for local businesses.

Wildlife

Before being planted with conifers in the late 1970s, the woodland area of the reserve was used for farming. Since taking ownership of Five Acres, Cornwall Wildlife Trust has created several ponds, gradually thinned the conifers, and encouraged broadleaved trees and native scrub to improve its value for wildlife.

It's now home to – or visited by – an array of bird species,

including, song thrush ¹, tawny owl, nuthatch, goldcrest, sparrowhawk and bullfinch.

Part of the reserve, Allet Bog, has Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated status and is an excellent example of Southern Atlantic wet heath, characterized by its Dorset heath (a nationally rare plant species).



Other notable flora include bog pimpernel devil's bit scabious ² and crossed-leaved heath. Otters ³ have been recorded at the site.

Finally, there is a wildflower meadow at the reserve, which bursts into a riot of colour in spring and early summer. Southern marsh orchid, meadow buttercup, bird's foot trefoil, common knapweed, selfheal, common sorrel, ox eye daisy ⁴, yellow bartisia, and yellow rattle are all found here.



7

Cabilla & Redrice Woods

Ancient oaks hold the echoes of days long past...



/// what3words mastering.confident.speedy

Exploring the site

A public footpath runs through the woodland as well as a waymarked permissive path (passing the mine works) and a circular path around Redrice Wood. The trails can become slippery when wet and there are some steep inclines.

Visitors can also see medieval charcoal burning platforms and features, including an engine house relating to East Jane mine which was worked for lead from the 1850's.

Getting there

From the A30, take the A38 eastbound towards Liskeard. After approximately 2.5 miles, turn left at a crossroad (the right turning has a railway bridge going over it). Cross the bridge over the River Fowey, and access is via the first track on the right.

Park in the car park adjacent to the reserve entrance.

RESERVE SIZE
190 acres (77 hectares)



Leave wildlife as you found it



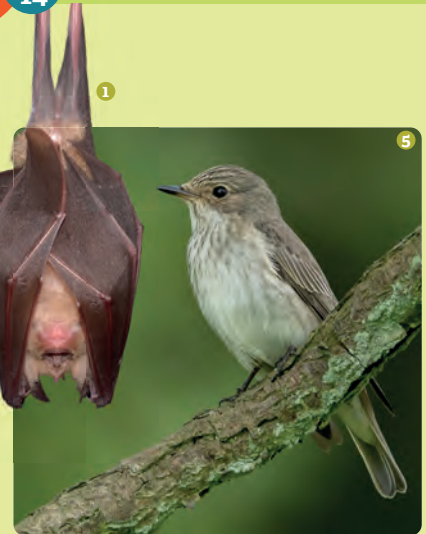
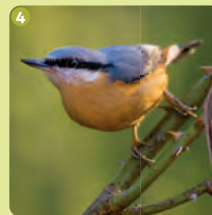
see page 14

Oak and hazel coppice, riverbanks and wetland belts

An extremely peaceful location, Cabilla and Redrice Woods is one of the finest ancient woodlands in Cornwall, where veteran (150 – 300 years old) and ancient (over 400 years old) oak trees are found alongside a tributary to the River Fowey, which runs through the western end of the reserve.

In spring, the woodland is a sea of blue and purple, as bluebells cover the ground, whilst in autumn dappled light shines through onto the oranges, reds and yellows of fallen leaves.

Wildlife



The reserve is home to six species of bat, including the greater horseshoe bat and lesser horseshoe bat ①. Otters ② visit this stretch of the Fowey and, if you're lucky, you may come across foraging roe or red deer ③ deep in the woodland.

Listen out for resident woodland birds in early spring, such as nuthatch ④, marsh tit, and song thrush, and summer visitors, including willow warbler, blackcap, chiffchaff and spotted flycatcher ⑤.

Butterflies can be spotted along woodland rides (open, sunny corridors in the woodland) throughout the spring and summer on warm still days. Look for brimstone and comma in April and silver washed fritillary ⑥ in July.



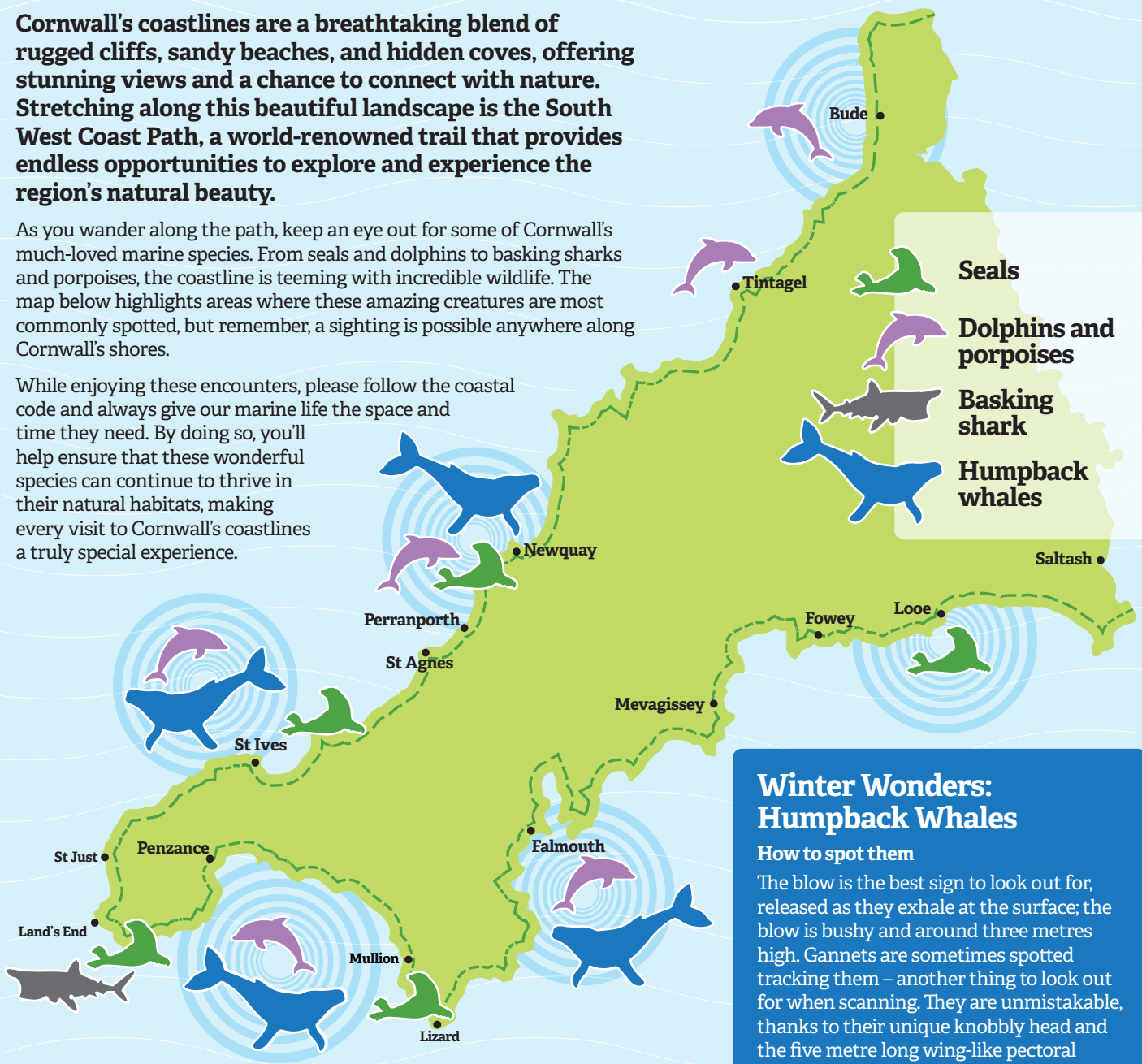
Exploring Cornwall's coastline

A guide to spotting marine wildlife

Cornwall's coastlines are a breathtaking blend of rugged cliffs, sandy beaches, and hidden coves, offering stunning views and a chance to connect with nature. Stretching along this beautiful landscape is the South West Coast Path, a world-renowned trail that provides endless opportunities to explore and experience the region's natural beauty.

As you wander along the path, keep an eye out for some of Cornwall's much-loved marine species. From seals and dolphins to basking sharks and porpoises, the coastline is teeming with incredible wildlife. The map below highlights areas where these amazing creatures are most commonly spotted, but remember, a sighting is possible anywhere along Cornwall's shores.

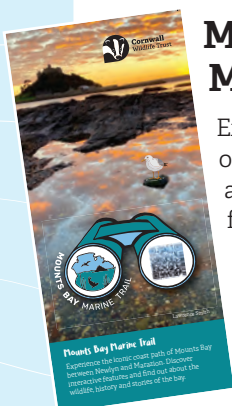
While enjoying these encounters, please follow the coastal code and always give our marine life the space and time they need. By doing so, you'll help ensure that these wonderful species can continue to thrive in their natural habitats, making every visit to Cornwall's coastlines a truly special experience.



Winter Wonders: Humpback Whales

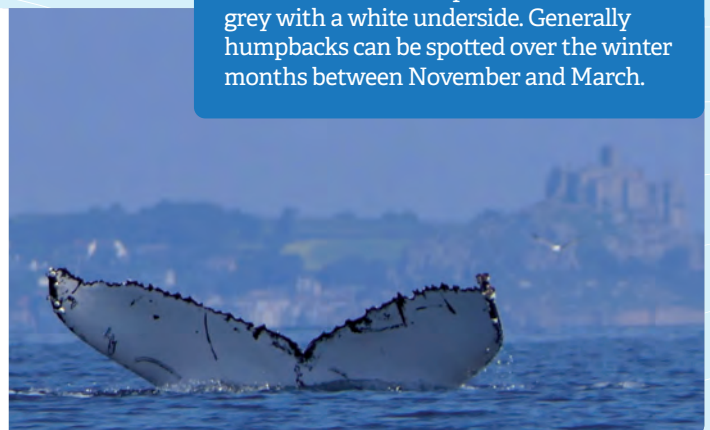
How to spot them

The blow is the best sign to look out for, released as they exhale at the surface; the blow is bushy and around three metres high. Gannets are sometimes spotted tracking them – another thing to look out for when scanning. They are unmistakable, thanks to their unique knobby head and the five metre long wing-like pectoral fins that they often raise and slap on the surface. Their body is black or dark grey with a white underside. Generally humpbacks can be spotted over the winter months between November and March.



Mounts Bay Marine Trail

Experience the iconic coast path of Mounts Bay between Newlyn and Marazion. Discover interactive features and find out about the wildlife, history and stories of the bay.



8

Looe Island

A whole new world just minutes from the mainland



Observe from a DISTANCE



see page 14

/// what3words pines.flocking.sinkhole

Exploring the site

The island and its foreshore is managed for the benefit of wildlife and our team works hard to keep the reserve special. For this reason visits can only be made on official, organised trips and access by any other means is not permitted.



Trips can be booked in advance via the Looe Island pages of our website: cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/looe-island/getting-island

Getting there

The ferry boat leaves from East Looe, where an information board displays the times for upcoming trips.

All visits are weather and tide dependent. The crossing takes around 20 minutes and you will then have about two hours to explore the island.

Please note that you will need to book ahead to visit Looe Island.

RESERVE SIZE
22 acres (9 hectares)



diversity of marine life. From the charming St Piran's crab ² to the elusive giant goby, the island's marine life is very special indeed.

Grey seals ³ are often spotted in the sea or resting on the island's rocks. Adult males can reach 3m in length and weigh up to 300kg, making them Britain's largest breeding wild mammal. Their Latin name, *Halichoerus grypus*, means 'hooked-nosed sea-pig'!

Across the island, small wildflower meadows are being created. These areas, combined with the mix of grassland, scrub and woods, have allowed numerous moths and butterflies to flourish. Most frequently spotted are speckled wood, meadow brown and red admiral. It is also possible to see beautiful tiger moths or the hummingbird hawkmoth feeding on garden plants such as red valerian.

Unique and magical, a place to cherish

Looe Island is currently our only marine nature reserve and the waters around it are teeming with life.

The island offers a quiet haven for wildlife, with a variety of habitats including maritime-grassland, sand, shingle, rocky reef and, perhaps most importantly, woodland, which provides shelter from the prevailing winds.

The island's wardens keep a small tree nursery to grow stock for future plantings, which are used to create new hedgerows, valuable wildlife corridors, and shelter across the island.

Wildlife

The reserve is home to many coastal nesting birds such as cormorants, shags, fulmars and oystercatchers. Looe Island also has the largest breeding colony in Cornwall of the majestic great black-backed gull ¹ – with a wing span of 1.5m, this is the world's biggest species of gull.

This species is a kleptoparasite, stealing food from other sea birds in order to survive. In 2010 a great black-backed gull ringing project was started on the island. So far almost 700 birds have been ringed and sightings of the birds have been reported from as far afield as north-west Spain!

Located within the wonderful Whitsand and Looe Bay Marine Conservation Zone, the island's varied intertidal belt supports a high



Spotter's checklist



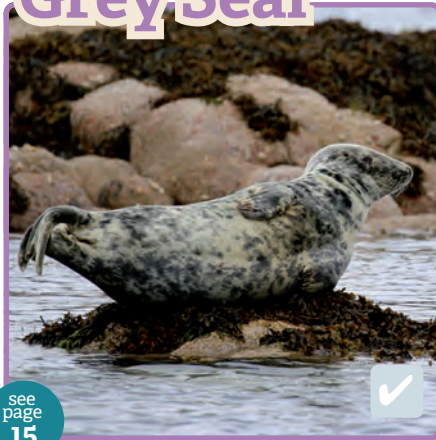
Chough



see page 4



Grey Seal



see page 15



Bottlenose Dolphin



see page 15



Humpback Whale



see page 15



Skylark



see page 6



Otter



see page 11&12



Wildlife spotting - **BE RESPONSIBLE**

Remember to be to be responsible when spotting wildlife; give animals space and time, observe from a distance, be calm and quiet and leave wildlife as you found it.



Give animals **SPACE** and **TIME**

Observe from a **DISTANCE**

Be **CALM** and **QUIET**

Leave wildlife as you found it

Tell us what you see!
Your wildlife sightings provide vital information for research and conservation

Online Recording Kernow and Scilly
www.ORKS.org.uk
DOWNLOAD THE **ORKS APP**

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Creative: graphic design and document preparation by Claire Ireland of **Lou Jones Design** (LJD). Proud to support Cornwall Wildlife Trust and help them in creating a Cornwall where nature thrives.



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