

Seaford Head Stroll

A guided wildlife walk



Sussex
Wildlife Trust



Seaford Town Council

5 Rockpool Rambles

On the beach a wave cut platform of more resistant chalk has been eroded into intricate patterns forming pools and channels. Some amazing sea life can be found stranded in these pools at low tide. As there is no other exit from the beach, do not walk east along the beach towards Seaford, keep an eye on changing tides, and avoid walking below the cliffs due to rock falls.

Snakelocks Anemone



© Ryan Greaves

6 Cuckmere Haven

Cuckmere Haven is an area of flood plains where the meandering Cuckmere meets the English Channel, and contains several oxbow lakes. The shingle beach and saline lagoons are home to a number of interesting animals and plants such as Yellow horned-poppy, Sea Milkwort and Rock Sea-lavender.

Yellow horned-poppy



© Barry Yates

This leaflet will guide you on a 4.5 mile loop around Seaford Head. You'll enjoy stunning views of Seaford Head, the Seven Sisters, Hope Gap, Cuckmere Haven and The English Channel. The circular route starts and finishes at Seaford Museum housed in the historic Martello Tower on Seaford Esplanade. Why not check out the museum before or after your walk. seafordmuseum.co.uk

1 Splash Point

Where the beach meets the chalk cliffs the aptly named Splash Point certainly gets a soaking when the sea is rough. The breakwater here is popular with anglers and birdwatchers who monitor seabirds migrating through The English Channel.

2 Buckle Church

Although now named Buckle Church, it's thought that the original name was Puck Church, and was possibly the site of an Elizabethan hermitage. There was a cave below the cliffs here called 'Puck Church Parlour' where a local lad named John Costick fell to his death in 1881 whilst collecting gull eggs. Another theory is that the name 'Buckle' may have come from the old landowner, the Earl of Chichester, whose crest was a shoe buckle.

Common Centaury



© Mark Monk-Terry

7 Step back in Thyme

The chalk grassland to your right is grazed each year and in the summer it is alive with wild flowers and insects. Take a detour (and a deep breath) to enjoy the colours and the smells of the Wild Thyme, bedstraws, knapweeds, trefoils and other downland flowers. Look out for butterflies and moths such as the Marbled White (black and white), the Dark Green Fritillary (big and orange), the Six-spot Burnet (red and black) or the Forester Moth (iridescent green).

Wild Thyme



© Darin Smith

8 Fore!

Part of the nature reserve lies within the boundary of Seaford Head Golf Course where we work with the Greenkeeper to encourage a mowing regime more sympathetic to wildlife. Our invaluable local volunteer group has been working hard to open up more grassland for flowers and insects and our sheep ensure the grass is kept short to allow a rich variety of flowers to grow. And if you think you can see a spaceship parked in the bushes don't worry - it's a beacon for aircraft.

9 The View

We hope you have enjoyed your walk around Seaford Head. You've probably earned yourself a cup of tea or a pint of local ale and a bite to eat at The View Restaurant & Bar above the golf course's 18th hole. the-view.co.uk

More information about the wildlife of Seaford can be found on the Seaford Natural History Society's website: seafordnaturalhistory.org.uk

Potter Flower Bee



© Steven Falk

3 Pope Rear Green

The cliffs you're walking on are formed of chalk laid down in the Cretaceous period between 65 and 100 million years ago when Britain lay closer to the equator and was covered by a warm shallow sea. Chalk is formed from microscopic plankton which dies and sinks to the seafloor, their shells being with and is compressed into chalk.

Chalk is relatively soft and is subject to erosion from constant wave action by the sea. Average erosion is about 4cm a year but in periods of severe storms several metres of Seaford Head can be lost over one winter. Birds such as Fulmar, Raven and Peregrine now nest on these cliffs.

4 Hope Gap

Here you can take a shortcut north along the Hope Bottom path. The bushes alongside the path provide shelter and food for migrating birds in spring and autumn. The Privet bushes here are also an important home to a nationally rare moth - the Barred Tooth-striped. The vegetation is carefully managed to create open areas allowing nectar rich flowers such as Ground Ivy to grow in the spring. These flowers provide vital energy for the rare Potter Flower Bee.

Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve

Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve was established on 1st February 1969 on land owned by Seaford Urban District Council (SUDC). The original 76 acres was part of a much larger area bequeathed to SUDC by local philanthropist Hugh Hamilton Stafford Northcote, to protect it for public use. Seaford Natural History Society was a key player in getting the reserve established 50 years ago and in its subsequent management.

Sussex Wildlife Trust has managed Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve (LNR) since 2013. Over 50% of the LNR is owned by Seaford Town Council and is managed by us, the rest is owned by the National Trust and East Sussex County Council. Lying within the South Downs National Park it is part of the Sussex Heritage Coast and home to many nationally rare and significant species of plants, birds and insects. We are improving this rare habitat at Seaford Head by controlling the spread of bushes and rank grasses.

Help us with our work

Supporting Sussex Wildlife Trust is a great way to ensure we can continue to provide fantastic habitats for wildlife - find out more about our work, volunteering or how you can support us on our website:

sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

[facebook.com/SussexWildlifeTrust](https://www.facebook.com/SussexWildlifeTrust)

[@SussexWildlife](https://twitter.com/SussexWildlife)



Seaford Town Council
supports Seaford Head Nature Reserve



The Seaford Community Wildlife Project has been supported by the The National Lottery



Registered Charity No: 207005

Look out for...



Kittiwakes

On the cliffs at Splash Point you'll see a colony of Kittiwakes (March-August). These gulls started breeding here in 1989 and this is one of the busiest colonies on the South-East coast. Kittiwakes spend the winter out at sea sometimes flying as far as North Africa or Greenland.

Look out for...



Cliff Edge

The cliff edges all along this stretch of coastal path are extremely fragile. Huge fissures are visible in the cliff face and can run many metres away from the edge. It may look safe and solid, but there are many cliff falls in this area each year, sometimes huge sections break off and crash into the sea. Please stay on the paths, and do not under any circumstances cross the marker posts, or any other cliff edge warning signs.

Chalk Grassland



Maintained by munching

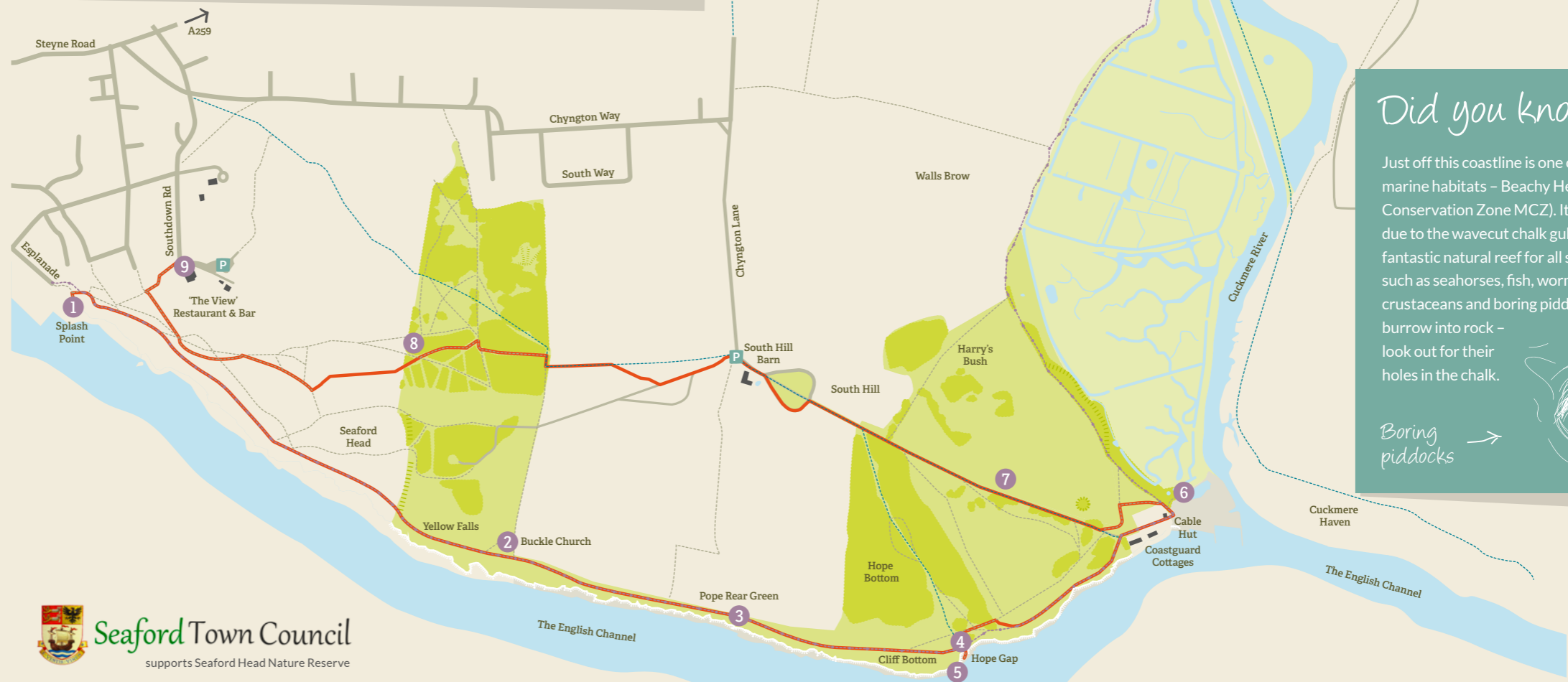
Grazing by Sussex Wildlife Trust's sheep and cattle (along with nibbling by Seaford Head's rabbits) keeps the grass short allowing chalk downland flowers – such as Common and Lesser Centaury, Squinancywort, Clustered Bellflower, Lady's Bedstraw and Kidney Vetch – to flourish. These flowers in turn support butterflies, bees and many other insects. When sheep are grazing please keep dogs on a lead.

Small Copper butterfly on Devil's-bit Scabious



Look out for grazing notices and keep dogs on leads when sheep are present. Please ensure you clean up after them as dog mess can cause lethal diseases in our livestock. Thank you.

Pyramidal Orchid



Did you know...?

Just off this coastline is one of the UK's richest marine habitats – Beachy Head West Marine Conservation Zone MCZ). It was designated due to the wavecut chalk gullies. This is a fantastic natural reef for all sorts of life – such as seahorses, fish, worms, anemones, crustaceans and boring piddocks which burrow into rock – look out for their holes in the chalk.

Boring piddocks →

Seaford Town Council
supports Seaford Head Nature Reserve

Key	
	Seaford Head Circular Walk
	Permissive path
	Vanguard Way
	Buildings
	Grassland
	Woodland/scrub
	Shingle
	Wetland (saltmarsh / wet grassland)
	Public Footpath
	Water
	Cliff
	Road
	Car park
	Bank/ditch

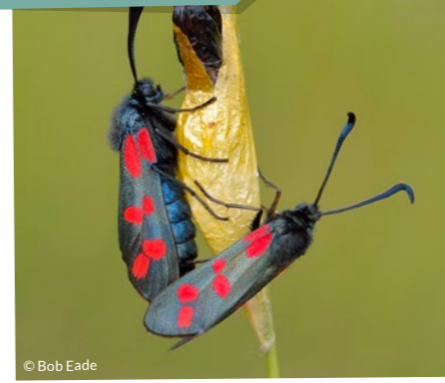


Small spotted catshark – look out for their egg cases on the beach



The chalk cliffs are extremely fragile and rock falls are very common here. Keep away from the cliff edge and the base of cliffs when on the beach.

Look out for...



Six-spot Burnet

From June to August look out for this attractive day flying moth as they nectar on the purple flowers of knapweed and thistle. Their caterpillars feed on Bird's-foot Trefoil and pupate in a papery cocoon high on a grass stalk. There are seven burnet moth species found in the UK including the New Forest Burnet which is only found in Scotland!