

Wildlife Walk – 2 miles

Arnside Knott, Cumbria Coast

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Situated on the edge of Morecambe Bay, this shapely 500 foot limestone hill is a distinctive and beautiful part of the north west countryside that has fine views of the Lake District. The key to the Knott's diversity is its limestone landscape, which was sculpted by glaciers in the Ice Ages. Over time, the rock, wind-blown soil and man's intervention have created a mosaic of habitats including woodland and flower-studded grassland. This two mile walk takes you through a magical place with many orchids and butterflies.

Getting there:

Bike: signed on-road cycle route about 2 ml away. See www.sustrans.org.uk

Bus: bus stop in village (1 ml)

Foot: many footpaths join up to this walk and a bridleway runs through the area

Rail: Arnside  approx 1 ml away via footpaths

Road: M6 (J36); A65 towards Kendal; B6385 to Milnthorpe then B5782 to Arnside

Map & grid ref: OS Landranger 97:SD450774; OS Explorer OL7

Facilities and contact

Shops, cafés, pubs, toilets in Arnside village, NT car park. Walk leaflets available in local shops.
Tel: 01524 701178

Points of interest

- **Grassland:** limestone grasslands (particularly Heathwaite) are filled with flowers in May & June. On Arnside Knott in March & April look for the scarce blue moor-grass with its bright flowerheads.
- **Woodland:** dead and decaying wood make an excellent habitat for both fungi and hole-nesting wasps and beetles. Redhills Wood has a mix of yew, holly, rowan, hazel and sessile oak supporting many birds. The spring birdsong is superb.
- **Pastures:** grazing livestock help keep the grassland in optimum condition for wildflowers.
- **Birds:** nut hatch, bullfinch, marsh tit (seen in woodland), great spotted woodpecker and many other woodland birds.
- **Flora:** there are fantastic displays of orchids in late spring, including the common spotted and fly orchid. Also look for cowslips and limestone specialities such as dropwort and rock rose.
- **Animals:** roe and fallow deer can be found in woodland areas.
- **Insects:** nationally important butterflies such as the dusky black-coloured Scotch argus play out their brief action-packed lives here. At the beginning of August they can be seen in great numbers at the top of Arnside Knott. Look for the caterpillars of the painted lady on nettles and purple hairstreak on oaks. Southern wood ants can be seen foraging for food and even climbing trees. Warm summer evenings are great for watching glow worms on grass stems.



Rare butterflies like the big, chequered high brown fritillary (left) are around in summer. Late July to early August is best to see Scotch argus in huge numbers on Arnside Knott

Ann Kitchen



Common buzzards, like this one crouched in winter, are often sighted over woodland. They make a loud 'mewing' sound that can be heard, mainly in spring, when displaying

RSPB



The Knott is great for orchids like these early purple varieties at Heathwaite (in flower from late April to July). Others include bird's nest and fragrant orchids

NT/Alan Ferguson

This diverse and beautiful wildlife walk is a favourite of mine as it is a four "scape" walk: landscape, seascape, skyscape and... escape from life's pressures!

Alan Ferguson, Warden-in-Charge of Arnside and Silverdale

Distance and terrain

Two miles (3 km) long; easy walking conditions, but steep in places; height gain of 230 ft (70 m) over the walk.

Route and directions

1. Turn left out of the NT car park and after a short walk along the entrance track, climb up the bank on your right to a mountain indicator. There are great views over the Kent Estuary towards the Lake District here.

2. Keep zig-zagging up the hillside to a stone topscope and a breath-taking panorama. If you're lucky you may see the strange-looking Arnside bore – a tidal wave that rolls from the bay into the estuary a couple of hours before high tide.

The slopes here are made of frost-shattered limestone, with areas of distinctive, rare blue moor-grass, yew and juniper. They are some of the few plants that can take hold here.

3. Bear left on the path and climb through woodland up to open grassland (a good spot for picnics) along the crest of the ridge.
4. Reach the highest point on the walk at a bench, continue a short way and head right, downhill, with a wall on your left.
5. The route angles right before reaching a gate to enter Redhills Wood. Soon after, turn left at a cross-roads and tour the woodland, always following paths round to the right.

This area is home to a fantastic range of trees and plants, such as dog's mercury, dog's violet and primrose. Look out for the very pretty peach blossom moth and listen for the song of marsh tits (a loud 'pitchoo' sound).

6. Silverdale Road appears down to your right as you emerge on to open hillside. Pass the Shilla Slopes (steep limestone screes created by Ice Age glaciers). Only some plants like marjoram and thyme can anchor in this rubble. They both attract butterflies too.
7. Take the broad uphill track back to the car park. Go through several gates, avoiding left-hand turns to Heathwaite and Copriding Wood.



NT places nearby: Heathwaite, Silverdale and much of the Lake District's finest countryside

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